The Gutnick Edition

Chumash

The Book of Leviticus

With Rashi’s commentary, Targum Onkelos, Haftaros and commentary anthologized from Classic Rabbinic Texts and the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Compiled and Adapted by
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Preface

W
e are delighted that Sefer Vayikra of the Kol Menachem Chumash is now entering its third edition, which includes numerous amendments to both the Hebrew and English texts and commentary to the Haftaros.

We once again extend our thanks to Rabbi Meyer Gutnick, who has graciously accepted upon himself the labor and expense of publishing and distributing this work. May this merit be a source of eternal blessing for him and his family.

May we soon merit the true and complete redemption, with Mashiach Tzidkeinu, speedily in our days.

Kol Menachem

25th of Elul 5768
כשאת לבה ומיה פניה מנרה מנורה נורה רביעי
מהפוה פשפשא פייה חמיו ויהיו באלום מרבדא מגה
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דראא בתיר יתיב הפיך | סוד פסוק: שלשלה
קרני פלט ארצה לפיול ירח בנווימא
The person who is called to the Torah takes hold of the handles of the Sefer Torah with his tallis¹, unrolls the Sefer Torah and, with his tallis (or the belt of the Torah) touches the beginning and end² of the reading. The scroll is then closed, he turns slightly to the right and says:

בךכי אתה יִנְחַל בְּמִפְּכָר

The congregation responds:

בורֹךְ יִנְחַל בְּמִפְּכָר leopardus נֶזֶדְרָה

The person called to the Torah continues:

בורֹךְ יִנְחַל בְּמִפְּכָר leopardus נֶזֶדְרָה נָאָר בֶּלֶג בְּלָא פָּרָד יָכָר האֹתּוֹ בֵּית הָרְקָה בֵּית האֹתּוּ בֵּית הָרְקָה בֵּית הָרְקָה

The person called to the Torah now reads along with the reader in an undertone.

After the reading is complete, the person called to the Torah touches the end and the beginning³ of the reading with his tallis (or belt of the Sefer Torah) and kisses it. He then closes the scroll, turns slightly to the right and says:

بورֹךְ אתה יִנְחַל בְּמִפְּכָר leopardus נָאָר בֶּלֶג בְּלָא פָּרָד יָכָר האֹתּוּ בֵּית הָרְקָה בֵּית הָרְקָה בֵּית הָרְקָה

After the reading is complete, the person called to the Torah stays at the bimah until the next reading is concluded (or, if it is the last reading, until the Torah is raised).

¹. Sefer Haminhagim. According to the Rebbe’s personal custom, the handles are held directly, without the tallis in between.

². Sefer Haminhagim. According to the Rebbe’s personal custom, the tallis is used to touch the beginning, the end and then the beginning of the reading again.

³. Sefer Haminhagim. According to the Rebbe’s personal custom, the tallis is used to touch the end, the beginning and then the end of the reading again.
In the early years of his leadership, the Alter Rebbe declared publicly:

“We have to live with the times!”

Through his brother, the Maharil, the senior chasidim discovered that the Rebbe meant that one should live with the Parsha of the week, and the particular Parsha of the day. One should not only study the weekly Parsha, but live with it.

(Hayom Yom, Cheshvan 2)
Vayikra means “He called,” as in the opening verse of our Parsha, “He called to Moshe.” Rashi explains: “Every time God communicated with Moshe—whether it was with the expression רָאָה ('He spoke') or אמר ('He said'), or מָנָא ('He commanded')—it was always preceded by God calling to Moshe by name, for calling (מִקְרָא) is an expression of affection.”

In other words, Rashi teaches us here that when God called out to Moshe, He was not merely doing so in order to attract Moshe’s attention but, more importantly, that it was an “expression of affection.”

And before God would speak words of Torah to Moshe, He first expressed His affection for him. This teaches us that God’s affection for Moshe—and likewise, His affection for every Jew—is more deep-rooted in God’s Essence than even the Torah itself.

This, however, presents us with a problem when we read the end of our Parsha which speaks about the sin of dishonesty. For if the message of Vayikra is the closeness and affection that God feels for every Jew, then why do we find that the Parsha ends with a discussion of sin, something which distances a Jew from God?

In truth, however, the end of our Parsha speaks not of sin, but of teshuvah (repentance; return). For when a Jew transgresses one of the mitzvos of the Torah, and later decides to return to God, we witness the fact that this person has a deep connection to God even when his external connection to Torah has been severed, and it was that deeper connection which motivated him to return.

So in the final analysis, this is a perfect ending to a Parsha which represents God’s unconditional love for a Jew—for it is precisely by virtue of a Jew’s inherent connection to God that he is able to return to His Maker even when his relationship via Torah has become temporarily interrupted.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, pp. 24-26)
What is the unique quality of the Book of Vayikra?

Tosfos: Vayikra is the most difficult of the Five Books of Moshe (Brachos 18b, s.v. sifra de bay rav).

Midrash: In the account of Creation, the word “light” is written five times, corresponding to the Five Books of Moshe:

“God said, ‘Let there be light!’” (Bereishis 1:3)—corresponds to the Book of Bereishis, in which God busied Himself with creating the world. “And there was light” (ibid.)—corresponds to the Book of Shemos, in which the Jewish people emerged from darkness to light. “God saw that the light was good” (ibid. 4)—corresponds to the Book of Vayikra, which is filled with many laws. “God separated the light from the darkness” (ibid.)—corresponds to the Book of Bamidbar, which separates between those who left Egypt and those who came from the Tabernacle. “God called out to the light (and assigned it to the) day” (ibid. 5)—corresponds to the Book of Devarim which is filled with many laws. (Bereishis Rabah 3:5, see Sparks of Chasidus.)

Why is the word הָקַה written with a small alef? (v. 1)

Pane’ach Raza: Because even though Moshe spoke directly with God regularly, he remained humble in his own eyes in the presence of God, and in the presence of the Jewish people. (See The Last Word)

Kli Yakar: The small alef is an allusion to the custom that small children traditionally begin their studies with the Book of Vayikra. As the Midrash states, “Why do we initiate young children with the Parsha which speaks of sacrifices? Because just as the sacrifices are pure, so too the children are pure.” (See Sparks of Chasidus.)

Why does the Torah state only “He called” without stating who it was that called to Moshe? (v. 1)

Hadar Zekeinim: Our verse follows on from the end of the Book of Shemos, which states, “The glory of God filled the Tabernacle” (40:35). Thus, it is obvious that the One Who called out to Moshe from the Tabernacle must have been God.

Who Is Calling? (v. 1)

Why does the Torah simply state, “He called to Moshe,” without clarifying who was calling? And why does Rashi not address this basic question?

Hadar Zekeinim answers that] our Parsha is a direct continuation from the final passage of the Book of Shemos, where it is written that “The glory of God filled the Tabernacle” (40:35). Thus, in our Parsha, it was clearly God calling out to Moshe.

However, it is difficult to accept that this was Rashi’s understanding of the matter, because:

a.) Rashi could not have presumed that the reader would come to this solution himself. Therefore, if Rashi did indeed accept the logic [of Hadar Zekeinim] he would have said so explicitly.

b.) The break between two separate books is a significant one, so it is difficult to accept that one book is a direct thematic continuation of the other.
The Voluntary Offerings

He called to Moshe (affectionately). God spoke to him (alone) from (within) the Tent of Meeting, saying: 2 Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them:

- When a man from (among) you brings a (voluntary) offering to God, you should bring your offering from (domesticated) animals—from cattle (which has not been worshiped as an idol) or from flocks (which have not been set aside for pagan worship, and from those which have not killed people).

Why Do Children Begin with Vayikra?

If a Jew sins, and compromises his relationship with God, how is it then possible that a sacrifice could atone for his sin? How does the sacrifice reconstruct a relationship that has fallen apart? Clearly, there must be some starting point, some remaining ties between the Jew and God even after the Jew has sinned, and it is from this beginning that the relationship is rebuilt.

In other words, even if a Jew sins and rids himself of any merits whatsoever, God’s unconditional love for that person remains. A sacrifice has the ability to reveal that love, mending the faults of whatsoever, God’s unconditional love for that person remains. Between the Jew and God even after the Jew has sinned, it is from this beginning that the relationship is rebuilt.

And that is why we find that even though the Book of Devarim is actually superior, since—as Tosfos writes—it is “the most difficult of the Five Books of Moshe”: Being the most difficult to understand, the Book of Vayikra demands more effort from its reader, which in turn lifts the reader to new heights of understanding and spiritual achievement.

And that is why we find that even though the Book of Devarim is also given the metaphor of “light,” it is only in connection with Vayikra that the Torah states: “God saw that the light was good.” For the Book of Vayikra challenges the reader to a greater extent, and thus reveals within him a greater good.

(Based on Sefer Hasichos 5749, p. 464)

The Book of Vayikra

The Midrash states that the Book of Vayikra is special in that it “is filled with many laws.” At first glance, it shares this quality with the Book of Devarim, which is also described as being “filled with many laws.”

However, it could be argued that in this respect, the Book of Vayikra is actually superior, since—as Tosfos states that the Book of Vayikra is special in that it “is filled with many laws.” At first glance, it shares this quality with the Book of Devarim, which is also described as being “filled with many laws.”

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(Based on Sefer Hasichos 5749, p. 464)

The Last Word

A Small Alef

Being the first of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, alef is the “head” or “leader” of all the letters. This is further hinted to by the fact that alef is etymological derivative of the word aluf which means “leader” or “chief.”

So a small alef (see Pane’ach Raza) is a contradiction in terms: Why is a letter which represents leadership and greatness written small? If the Torah wishes to allude to Moshe’s humility, surely this could have been done by making another letter small, and not the alef?

However, the point here is that a person’s greatness and humility should not be two distinct entities. Some people are generally contrite, but when it comes to their field of expertise, then their feelings of humility become temporarily suspended....

The Torah is teaching us here that a person’s humility (represented by smallness) should be in the very same area as his greatness (represented by the alef). His unique talents as special qualities themselves should lead him to feel humble, when he contemplates the fact that if another person had been given the same capabilities as himself, that person would surely have surpassed his achievements.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5741)

c.) More importantly: The end of the Book of Shemos does not actually speak of God, but rather, of “the glory of God.” Thus, even if we would be willing to ignore the break between books, it would still be difficult to argue that there is any connection here, since it is not “the glory of God” that called out to Moshe, but God Himself.

So, at the literal level, how is the reader supposed to know who called to Moshe?

The Explanation

At the beginning of Parshas Terumah the Torah states, “God spoke to Moshe, saying...They should make a Sanctuary for Me...I will arrange My meetings with you there. I will speak with you from above the lid between the two cherubs that are upon the Ark of the Testimony” (25:1, 8, 22).

Thus, here in our Parshah, Rashi deemed it unnecessary to clarify who is calling to Moshe, since the student of scripture has already learned that the One Who calls to Moshe from the Tent of Meeting is none other than God Himself.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5743)
What is the reason for animal sacrifices?

**Ibn Ezra:** Heaven forefend to say that God actually needs animals to be burned! Rather, the significance here is a mystical one (1:1).

**Rambam:** At the time when the Torah was given, the Jewish people dwelled amongst non-Jewish nations who worshiped cattle and flocks. Therefore, God commanded the Jewish people to slaughter these animals, the deities of their non-Jewish neighbors, in order to rid the Jewish people of the idolatrous influence of the nations (Guide for the Perplexed 3:46).

**Ramban:** Rambam’s assertion, that God’s *mitzvos* were given merely to wean the Jewish people off idolatry, is utter nonsense. The Torah states explicitly that the sacrifices bring pleasure to God (v. 9).

Furthermore, we find that Noach sacrificed animals to God when he came out of the ark—long before the Egyptians worshiped cattle and flocks—and this brought God tremendous pleasure, to the extent that He decided never to destroy the world again (Bereishis 8:21).

Rather, a more acceptable explanation of the sacrifices is that in the process of sinning a person utilizes thought, speech, and action. Therefore, God decreed that atonement for his sin should also be verbally. And finally, the animal’s action—of physical desire—are burned, corresponding to the person’s thoughts and desires that led him to sin. The animal’s innards—the source of physical desire—are burned, corresponding to the person’s action. Then, he confesses verbally. And finally, the animal’s action.
**The Burnt-Offering from Cattle**

- If his offering is a burnt-offering (taken) from cattle, he should bring a perfect (unblemished) male (animal).
- (If a person fails to bring the offering that he has promised, he must be coerced until) he will bring it willingly to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.
- (If the offering is brought) before God (i.e. in the holy Temple, and not on a private altar), he should lean his hands upon the head of the burnt-offering.
- The burnt-offering will be accepted (by God) for him, to atone for him.
- He (is permitted) to slaughter the young bull before God (in the Temple Courtyard, even if he is not a priest, but from that point on) Aharon's descendants (must carry out all the procedures).
- The priests should catch the blood (in a receptacle) and dash the blood on (the wall of) the Altar, around (the four corners of the Altar) which is at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.
- He should skin the burnt-offering and cut it into its (prescribed) pieces.
- The descendants of Aharon the priest should place fire on the Altar and arrange wood on the fire.
- Aharon's descendants, the priests, should then arrange the pieces (of the animal), the head and the fats, on top of the wood which is on the fire, upon the Altar.
- (Beforehand, however,) he should wash its innards and its legs, with water.

**Classic Questions**

Life should have been taken away because of the sin, but that God in His mercy has accepted the life of the animal as a substitute.

The sacrifices also have great mystical significance, as indicated by the fact that when listing the laws of the sacrifices the Torah uses only God's most exalted Name, the Tetragrammaton (1:9).

Kuzari: Sacrifices cause the Divine Presence to dwell among the Jewish people, like food which causes the soul to continue dwelling in the body. Just as we cannot understand why the soul, which is spiritual, requires physical food to keep it attached to the body, likewise we cannot fathom why the Divine Presence requires the physical “food” of animals on the Altar, in order to remain attached to the Jewish people.

Toras Ha'olah: Mystically speaking, the sacrifice represents a unification with God. Thus the word קְרֵבָן (sacrifice) is etymologically related to the word קְרַבָּנָה (coming close), indicating that by offering a sacrifice a person brings the attributes of his soul closer to God.

**Toras Menachem**

Ramban stresses the importance of a person’s intentions and feelings when offering a sacrifice. This is further emphasized by the explanation of Toras Ha'olah that a sacrifice serves to bring a person’s attributes—both intellect and emotion—close to God.

However, this begs the question: If the main purpose of a sacrifice is to evoke the appropriate feelings, then why does the Torah mention only the physical details of a sacrifice, and totally omit the emotional and intellectual demands which an offering to God entails? It could be argued, however, that the Torah did indeed hint to the emotional element of the sacrifices, by recording the voluntary offerings (chaps 1-3) before the obligatory offerings (chap. 4 ff):

At first glance, this appears to be quite puzzling: Surely the Torah should have instructed us first about offerings which must be brought before detailing the optional sacrifices?

With an obligatory sacrifice, a person could be carrying out the mitzvah merely because he has to. With a voluntary sacrifice, the very fact that a person is bringing an offering when he is not required to do so testifies that his intentions are good. Therefore, the Torah recorded the voluntary offerings unexpectedly at the very outset, to teach us that just as a person’s good intentions are self-evident in the case of a voluntary offering, likewise good intentions are of paramount importance with all offerings.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, pp. 12-13)
What is the “pleasant aroma to God”? (v. 9)

RASHI: [God says]: “It causes Me a spirit of contentment that I spoke and My Will was carried out.”

SIFSEI CHACHAMIM: Rashi was troubled by the fact that the Torah seems to suggest that God enjoys the physical aroma of a sacrifice. Therefore, Rashi clarifies that it is not the actual smell which God enjoys, but rather, the spirit of satisfaction which arises from the observance of this mitzvah.

DEVAK TOV: Rashi was troubled by the fact that the offering of sacrifices actually makes a foul smell, and not a pleasant aroma. This forced Rashi to interpret the verse metaphorically, that the “aroma” is a “spirit of contentment.”

The Pleasure of Sacrifices

Rashi’s comment to verse 9 prompts the following questions:

a.) What was troubling Rashi?

The commentators (Sifsei Chachamim and Devak Tov) argue that Rashi found the phrase “a pleasant aroma for God” difficult to accept, either because it does not make sense that God enjoyed a physical smell, or because the smell was actually foul, and not enjoyable.

However, both these interpretations are difficult to accept, since, earlier in the Torah, we read that God enjoyed the “pleasant aroma” of Noach’s sacrifice, and Rashi did not find it necessary to make any comment at all on the matter there. This proves that the phrase “a pleasant aroma for God” is not logically objectionable in itself, for otherwise Rashi would have been forced to clarify its meaning in Parshas Noach, the first time that the phrase occurred. Apparently, Rashi understood it to be self-evident that God did not enjoy the physical aroma of Noach’s sacrifice, and that the reader would be able to understand this simple metaphor unaided.

If so, why did Rashi find it necessary to explain the matter here in our Parsha?

b.) Why did Rashi use the passive expression, “I spoke and My Will was carried out”? Surely it would have been more appropriate to write, “I spoke and you carried out My Will”?

c.) Rashi seems to take the sentence out of second person dialogue (of God talking to the Jewish people), and explains it in first person (as if God is speaking to Himself). Instead of writing, “I commanded and My Will was carried out,” or, “I decreed and My Will was carried out”—which would have emphasized how God is commanding man—Rashi wrote, “I spoke and My Will was carried out,” without making any reference to whom God spoke. Why did Rashi stress only God’s perspective of the sacrifice?

d.) A more general question: Rashi wrote his commentary to clarify the literal meaning of scripture, and not to explain the reasons for all the mitzvos. Nevertheless, since the very notion of animal sacrifices appears to be utterly bizarre—for what is gained by burning an animal?—we would expect Rashi to have offered some sort of explanation of the matter. Especially when we consider that other commentators who devote themselves to a literal rendering of scripture, such as Ibn Ezra and Ramban, do address this question (see Classic Questions on the previous page).

The Explanation

When reading verse 9, Rashi was troubled by the question: Why are sacrifices in particular described as causing a spirit of contentment to God?

In the case of Noach’s sacrifice this did not pose a problem, since it is self-evident that a sacrifice which celebrated the salvation of human and animal life on earth was an event of great satisfaction for both man and God. In our case, however, the reader will be troubled why the Torah singled out the sacrifices among all the mitzvos of the Torah as causing pleasure to God in particular. Surely this is the case by all mitzvos, and not just the sacrifices?

In order to answer this question, Rashi felt it necessary to pinpoint the essential quality of animal sacrifices, in contrast to the other mitzvos of the Torah:

Rosh Hashanah 5774:

Class: 6

Date: 20-09-2023

Parsha: Masei

Unit: 4

Lesson: 2

Topic: 2

Page: 6
Then, the priest should make all (of the animal’s parts) go up in smoke on the Altar, (with the specific intent that it is) a burnt-offering (which was slaughtered specifically as) a fire-offering, a pleasant aroma for God.

**The Burnt-Offering from Sheep & Goats**

- **10** And if his offering is (brought) from the flocks—from sheep or from goats—as a burnt-offering, he should offer a perfect (unblemished) male (animal).
- **11** (If the offering is brought) before God (i.e. in the Holy Temple, and not on a private Altar), he should slaughter it on the northern side of the Altar.
- Aharon’s descendants, the priests, should dash its blood on (the wall of) the Altar, around (the four corners of the Altar).
- **12** He should cut it into its (prescribed) pieces, with its head and its fats.
- The priest should arrange the (pieces) on top of the wood which is on the fire, upon the Altar.
- **13** He should wash its innards and its legs, with water. Then, the priest should bring all (of the animal’s parts) and make them go up in smoke on the Altar, (with the specific intent that it is) a burnt-offering (which was slaughtered specifically as) a fire-offering, a pleasant aroma for God.

With his comment “It causes Me a spirit of contentment that I spoke and My Will was carried out” Rashi teaches us that there simply is no reason why God demanded the slaughter and burning of an animal, other than for the sake of fulfilling the Divine Will. And this represents the unique quality of sacrifices, why they cause God pleasure, so to speak, more than for the sake of fulfilling the Divine Will. And this represents the unique why God demanded the slaughter and burning of an animal, other than teaches us that there 

My Will was carried out” Rashi

Our Sages said, “Whoever studies the laws of bringing a burnt-offering is considered to have brought a burnt-offering.” Therefore, if possible, it is appropriate to study the laws of all the sacrifices in their entirety, and the laws concerning the Temple and all its apparatus, as they are explained clearly in the Rambam’s work [the Mishne Torah], in the Books of Avodah and Korbanos.” (Laws of Torah Study of the Alter Rebbe, 2:11)

This spiritual “substitute” through Torah study compensates for both the act of offering a sacrifice and the effects of the offering:

- Through studying the laws of sacrifices as they are explained in scripture, the effect of the sacrifice is compensated for—namely, atonement. As the Talmud states, “I have arranged for them the order of the sacrifices and when they read them...I forgive them for all their sins.” (Ta’anis 27b, Megilah 31b)
- Through studying the laws of sacrifices as they are explained in the oral law, one substitutes for the act of offering a sacrifice, since the oral law describes at length the detailed procedure of making an offering. As the Talmud states, “When a scholar studies the [Oral] Law...I consider it as if a sacrifice were offered for Me.” (Menachos 110a)

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, p. 38)

Rashi indicated his solution to this question by his exact choice of phrase (“I spoke and My Will was carried out”) which totally de-personalizes the mitzvah (see questions ‘b’ & ‘c’ above), stressing God’s involvement, and apparently ignoring man’s participation. With this emphasis, Rashi wished to stress that a sacrifice is totally for God’s benefit and not for man’s, and it is for this reason that it elicits a particularly great degree of Divine pleasure. Even though man performed the mitzvah, the only matter of importance here is that “My Will was carried out”; and even though man was commanded to offer the sacrifice, God is only concerned that “I spoke,” and it is irrelevant who was spoken to. For a sacrifice is unique in that it is a mitzvah performed exclusively for God.

And this expresses the distinction between sacrifices and the other suprarational commands, the chukim: While the specific details of each chok do indeed defy logic, the general concept of giving a person suprarational commands does have a logic behind it. As Ramban writes (in his commentary to Vayikra 19:19), that the observance of chukim is indeed for the person’s benefit, as the blind observance of laws, even when they do not appear to make sense, cultivates a person’s attributes of fear and subservience to God.

So while a person cannot appreciate the benefit of the particular details of any given chok, he is aware that, in general, the observance of chukim does benefit his character.

Rashi’s innovation here is that, in the case of sacrifices, even this reason is absent. The suprarational act of burning an animal is not carried out to promote the character traits of fear and subservience, but simply to achieve that “My Will was carried out.”
I spoke and My Will was carried out.

But our Sages (understanding 'nuvei' to mean "feathers"), said: He cuts a window-like incision with a knife, and takes (the crop) together with the feathers (Hebrew: نيוקוב), which are on the skin.

In the case of an animal burnt-offering, which eats exclusively from the feeding trough of its owner, the Torah states, "He should wash its innards and its legs, with water...and make them go up in smoke" (v. 13). However, regarding birds, which feed themselves on things that are stolen, the Torah states that the innards are "cast away," for they ate from stolen property.

**Rashi:** With its innards. The word נועי denotes something disgusting, as in the verse, "For they are foul (נועי) and even slip [in their blood]" (Lamentations 4:15). Thus Onkelos translates: "with its digested food (תהליך)." This is the explanation given by Abba Yosay ben Chanah, who said that (when removing the crop) the priest removes the gizzard with it.

In other words, although a sacrifice is above logic, and performing the mitzvos connected with the sacrifices do refine the character of the person who brought the sacrifice, these mitzvos nevertheless were not given to us with that in mind. God did not command the sacrifices to achieve human refinement, but rather, because He wanted His Will to be fulfilled—"I spoke and My Will was carried out."
**The Burnt-Offering from Birds**

- **If his offering to God is a burnt-offering from birds, he should bring (it) from (mature) turtle-doves or from young doves.**
- **The priest should bring it near the Altar and slit away its head (with his fingernail), and make it go up in smoke on the Altar.**
- **(Before the bird is burnt), its blood should be squeezed out on the wall of the Altar.**
- **He should remove its (crop* which contains) waste along with its innards, and cast them away next to the Altar on the east side, where the ashes are.**
- **He should tear it apart (by hand) with its wing feathers (still attached), but he should not split it completely.**
- **The priest should then make it go up in smoke on the Altar, on top of the wood which is on the fire, (with the specific intent that) it is a burnt-offering (which was slaughtered specifically as) a fire-offering, a pleasant aroma for God.**

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**What is Removed from a Bird-Offering? (v. 16)**

In Rashi’s comments to verse 16, a number of details require clarification:

- a.) Rashi informs us that נבלות means “waste.” But why does he not bring any proof for this matter from scripture, as is his custom when explaining unusual words—and like Ibn Ezra does here? Even in a case where Rashi cannot find any scriptural evidence he usually informs the reader, “This word has no parallel in scripture,” but here Rashi writes nothing.
- b.) The most common interpretation of the word נבלות is “feathers.” In fact, Ramban goes so far as to argue that this is the only translation of the word. Why then does Rashi offer this only as his secondary interpretation, placing the more unusual translation of נבלות as “disgusting”) as his first interpretation?
- c.) What prompted Rashi to conclude his comment with the insight that birds feed themselves on stolen food? Since Rashi’s commentary was not written as an explanation for the reasons of all the mitzvos, his comment here must be written in response to a specific problem at the literal level. What is it?

**The Explanation**

Rather than bringing proof from scripture that נבלות means “waste,” Rashi simply alerted the reader to the word’s etymological root: דרות, which means “waste.”** Rashi explains that the Torah is informing us here that the crop of the animal should be removed, which contains foul-smelling, partially digested food.

Having now clarified what the word means, we can now ask the question why the Torah did not refer to the crop directly, but rather as the “place of waste”?

Apparently, the Torah wished to inform us, not only what part of the bird needs to be removed and discarded, but also why it needs to be disposed of. Because the crop contains disgusting waste material, it makes sense for it to be cast away.

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* The crop is an outpouching from the gullet (esophagus) at the lower end of the neck, before the gullet reaches the stomach.

** Here the letters alef and ayin are interchangeable. See Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5731 ch. 7 for further details.
the case of an animal offering, the spiritual “stench” of a bird’s intestines cannot be removed with water. Therefore, “He should...cast them away next to the Altar on the east side, where the ashes are.”

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why does the Torah state that a “soul” brings a meal-offering? (v. 1)

RASHI: Regarding all the voluntarily offerings, the only instance where scripture states the word "soul" is in the case of the meal-offering. Who usually donates a meal-offering? A poor man. God says: “I consider it as if he has sacrificed his very soul!” (see “The Last Word”)

TORAS MENACHEM

its food. And while the physical odor could indeed be washed away, as in the case of an animal offering, the spiritual “stench” of a bird’s intestines
The Unbaked Meal-Offering

2

• If a (poor) soul (vows to) bring a meal-offering to God (without specifying which type of meal-offering he wishes to bring), his offering should be of (unbaked) fine (wheat) flour.

• (Even if he is not a priest, he can carry out the requirement to) pour oil over (all of) it and place frankincense on (part of) it.

• He should bring it to Aharon’s descendants, the priests, and right there, (even in the area where non-priests may stand, the priest) should scoop out a three-finger fistful of its fine flour and its oil, (leaving aside) all its frankincense.

• Then, the priest should make (the scoop and the frankincense) go up in smoke on the Altar—(with the specific intent that) it is a fire-offering—(so that its owner will be) remembered (positively before God), a pleasant aroma for God.

• The remainder of the meal-offering belongs to Aharon and to his descendants. (It is their) most holy (property, only after the scoop and frankincense have been placed on the Altar) as fire-offerings for God.

The Baked Meal-Offering

• If you (vow to) bring “a meal-offering baked in an oven,” it should consist of (either) unleavened loaves (made) of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers smeared with oil.

The Shallow-Fried Meal-Offering

• If your (vow to bring an) offering is “a meal-offering (made) in a shallow pan,” it should be (made) of fine flour mixed with oil (and), it should be unleavened.

• (Before it is scooped) break it into pieces and pour oil over it. It is a meal-offering.

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The Last Word

The Poor Man’s Offering

Unlike a wealthy person, who is able to give voluntary offerings in the Temple from expensive animals and birds, the poor man is only able to offer flour. Nevertheless, the Torah attributes more significance to the poor man’s offering, as Rashi writes (v. 1): “I consider it as if he has sacrificed his very soul!”

This is because the wealthy man’s offering is inevitably connected with a certain amount of self-satisfaction, at the thought of bringing one of the most expensive and impressive sacrifices. The poor man, however, could not possibly be proud of his meager offering, so his is the most genuine offering of all, dedicated to God amid feelings of humility. Thus, to him God says, “It is as if he has sacrificed his very soul!”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 15)
CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Is the Omer offering optional or compulsory? (v. 14)

Rashi: The verses states (כָל) (If you will offer), but here the word כָּל (usually translated as “if”) means when, for this is not an optional offering, since scripture is referring to the נְבֻּךְ דַּאָן (the Omer meal-offering—a communal sacrifice brought on the sixteenth of Nissan) which is obligatory. The term “meal offering of the first ripening grains” refers to the נְבֻּךְ דַּאָן, which is to be offered as soon as the grain has ripened. It is brought from barley.

Ibn Ezra: Many argue that the word כָּל here means “when,” thus indicating an obligation.

However, in my opinion, there is no need for this unusual interpretation of the word כָּל.

For while there is indeed an obligation to bring the communal Omer meal-offering (נְבֻּךְ דַּאָן), our verse refers to an optional additional meal-offering which may be brought by an individual along with the communal Omer offering.

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Does Verse 14 Speak of an Optional or Compulsory Offering?

Rashi and Ibn Ezra argue whether verse 14 speaks of an obligatory offering or an optional one. At first glance, the explanation of Ibn Ezra, that the verse describes an optional offering, is more acceptable at the literal level, since:

a.) In scripture, the term כָּל usually means “if.” Rashi’s interpretation, that the word means “when,” is thus more awkward at the literal level.

b.) All other offerings in the first three chapters of Vayikra are voluntary. In this context, it is much more acceptable to suggest that verses 14-16 here speak of a voluntary offering too, like the other offerings mentioned in these three chapters.
THE DEEP-FRIED MEAL-OFFERING

7. If your (vow to bring an) offering is “a meal-offering (fried) in the deep pot (which is in the Temple),” it should be made of fine flour with oil.

LAWS PERTAINING TO ALL MEAL-OFFERINGS

8. You should bring the meal-offering—which should be made from (any of) these (above-mentioned types)—to God, (i.e.) you should bring it to the priest, and (the priest) should bring it close to the Altar (touching its southwestern corner).

9. The priest should separate from the meal-offering (a three-finger fistful) and should make (the scoop and the frankincense) go up in smoke on the Altar (so that its owner will be) remembered (positively before God). It is a fire-offering, a pleasant aroma for God.

10. The remainder of the meal-offering belongs to Aharon and to his descendants. (It is their) most holy (property, only after the scoop and frankincense have been placed on the Altar) as fire-offerings for God.

11. No meal-offering that you offer to God should be made out of (anything) leavened. For you should not make any leavening or any honey go up in smoke as a fire-offering for God.

12. You (may however) bring (figs and dates, the source of honey,) as a first (fruit) offering to God (and you may bring leavening, as the two loaves of Shavuos), but they should not go up on the Altar as a pleasant aroma to God.

13. You should season every one of your meal-offering sacrifices with salt. You should not leave out the salt from (being placed) upon your meal-offerings (because) your God (made a) covenant (during the six days of creation that salt would always be placed on the Altar).

14. You should offer salt on all your (burnt-)offerings (and on the parts burned on the Altar from every type of offering).

THE OMER OFFERING

14. When you bring the meal-offering of the first ripening grains before God, you should bring the first, fresh kernels of the (barley) harvest, parched in fire (and) coarsely ground, (as) the meal-offering of your first ripening grain.

TORS MENACHEM

The Last Word

“YOU SHOULD OFFER SALT...” (v. 13)

According to Chasidic thought, offering a sacrifice on the Altar is a process of offering up one’s animal soul—the source of all physical desires—to God. Since these desires come primarily from the blood, every sacrifice must be salted to signify the strong resolution of the person bringing the sacrifice to extract those desires from the animal soul, like salt that extracts blood.

(Based on Ohr Hatorah, Vayikra, addendum pp. 226-7)

Why then did Rashi reject Ibn Ezra’s logic that our verse speaks of a voluntary offering?

THE EXPLANATION

Rashi was unable to accept Ibn Ezra’s interpretation, because at the beginning of our chapter Rashi indicated that all voluntary meal offerings are to be brought from fine wheat flour (Rashi to 2:1). Since our verse speaks of an offering of barley, as Rashi writes explicitly here, he could not accept Ibn Ezra’s interpretation that our verse speaks of a voluntary offering— even though it is a more literal and contextually satisfying interpretation— for this would be inconsistent with his earlier statement that all voluntary meal offerings must come from wheat flour.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5741)
THE VOLUNTARY OFFERINGS

Chapters 1-3 of Sefer Vayikra describe voluntary offerings which may be brought by an individual.

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¹ Kemitzah is a parallel step to slaughter in an animal offering.

2 The blood is squeezed directly from the bird onto the upper part of the Altar wall.

3 See Rashi to 1:17.
15. You should put oil on it, and place frankincense upon it. It is a meal-offering.

16. Then, the priest should make (a scoop) from its flour and its oil, as well as its frankincense, go up in smoke on the Altar (so that its owner will be) remembered (positively before God). It is a fire-offering.

The Peace-Offering from Cattle

If his offering is a peace-offering, (then) if he brings it from cattle, he should bring a perfect (unblemished) male or female (animal) before God.

He should lean his hands on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

Aharon’s descendants, the priests, should dash the blood upon the Altar, all around.

From the peace-offering, he should bring a fire-offering to God (comprised of): the fat covering the intestines, all the fat that is on the stomach, the two kidneys, (together) with the fat that is on them, which is over the flanks. He should (also) remove the diaphragm, (and a bit of) the liver (which is connected) to it, (when he takes out) the kidneys.

Aharon’s descendants should make it go up in smoke on the Altar, (after placing) the burnt-offering on top of the wood that is on the fire. It is a fire-offering, a pleasant aroma for God.

The Peace-Offering from Sheep & Goats

If his offering to God for a peace-offering is (taken) from the flocks, (it may be) male or female, (and he must offer) a perfect unblemished (animal).

If he brings a sheep as his offering:

He should bring it before God. He should lean his hands on the head of his offering and slaughter it before the Tent of Meeting.

Aharon’s descendants should dash its blood upon the Altar, (all) around, (using a receptacle).

From the peace-offering, he should bring a fire-offering to God (comprised of): its choicest part—(namely) the entire tail, which he should detach (right up to) above the kidneys—the fat covering the intestines, all the fat that is on the stomach, the two kidneys, (together) with the fat that is on them, which is over the flanks. He should (also)
When is a person liable to bring a sin-offering? (v. 2)

RASHI: Our Rabbis explained: A sin-offering is brought only for a negative commandment, and whose willful violation would incur transgression whose prohibition is expressed (in the Torah) as a penalty of violation of such prohibitions.

OHR HACHAYIM: A sin-offering only achieves atonement for unintentional transgressions, for if a person sins intentionally his soul becomes so distant from God that even a sacrifice cannot help to bring it close again.

When does the High Priest bring a sin-offering? (v. 3)

RASHI: The verse’s midrashic explanation: The High Priest is liable only when the law eluded him, resulting in a transgression.... However, the literal meaning of the verse according to agadic interpretation: When the High Priest sins, it means that the people are guilty, because they are dependent on him to effect their atonement and to pray for them, and now he has become corrupted.

The Sequence of Sin-Offerings (4:1 – 5:13)

After introducing the topic of sin-offerings (v. 1-2), why does the Torah begin with the unusual cases of the High Priest’s sin-offering (v. 3-12), the communal sin-offering (v. 13-21), and the leader’s sin-offering (v. 22-26), before proceeding to the much more common case of the citizen’s sin-offering (v. 27-35)?

Two explanations could be argued:

a.) At the literal level, we can presume that the laws regarding the offering of sacrifices in Parshas Vaayikra (and part of Parshas Tazri), were said before the first day of Nissan, when the inauguration of the Tabernacle was complete (see beginning of Parshas Shemini). Thus, at this point the High Priest (Aharon) would have just been appointed, so...
remove the diaphragm, (and a bit of) the liver (which is connected) to it, (when he removes) the kidneys.

- 11 The priest should make (this) go up in smoke on the Altar, as food for the fire, to God.

- 12 If his offering is a goat:
  - He should bring it before God. 13 He should lean his hands on its head and slaughter it before the Tent of Meeting.
  - Aharon's descendants should dash its blood upon the Altar, (all) around.
  - 14 From his offering, he should bring a fire-offering to God (consisting of): the fat covering the intestines, all the fat that is on the stomach, 15 the two kidneys, (together) with the fat that is on them, which is over the flanks. He should (also) remove the diaphragm, (and a bit of) the liver (which is connected) to it, (when he removes) the kidneys.
  - 16 The priest should make (all this) go up in smoke on the Altar, the food of the fire, a pleasant aroma for God.

### Forbidden Fats and Blood

- All the (above-mentioned) fat is (sacrificed) for God. 17 (Thus) you should not eat any (such) fat or any blood. (This is) an eternal statute for all your generations, in all the places where you live.*

### The Sin-Offering

1 God spoke to Moshe, saying: 2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying:

- When a person sins unintentionally (transgressing) any of God’s commandments which (would be) prohibited (with the punishment of soul-excision for an intentional transgression), or if he (even) does a portion of one of the(se sins, he must bring a sin-offering).

### The High Priest’s Sin-Offering

- 3 If it is the anointed (High) Priest who sins, bringing guilt to the people, then he should bring a perfect (unblemished, three-year-old) young bull as a sin-offering to God, for his sin which he has committed.

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**The Last Word**

**The Sin-Offering**

Even if a person sinned unintentionally the sin was in fact caused by his subconscious thoughts, which indicates that he is spiritually lacking. For if he was not lacking, he would not have sinned as, “No evil will occur to a righteous person” (Prov. 12:21).

Thus, since he is responsible for the sin, which resulted from the willful strengthening of his animal soul by indulging in permitted pleasures, the Torah requires him to bring a sin-offering.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 3, p. 944)

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the Torah stressed the laws concerning the High Priest first, due to the novelty of his appointment.

b.) Alternatively: The Torah wished to juxtapose the sin-offering of the individual citizen (end of ch. 4) with the variable sin-offering (ch.5.), because they are both brought by individual citizens. i.e. at the literal level, the thematic consistency between one section and the next is more important than beginning with the most common case.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5745)
The Explanation

The literal level of Torah interpretation is comprised of many elements:

a.) פֶּתַשָּׂה—Purely literal interpretations.

b.) חֲסֵכָה—When a purely literal solution cannot be found it is often necessary to draw upon solutions based on Rabbinic exegesis of the Torah, from either midrashic (homiletic) or halachic (legal) texts. However, when Rashi cites such solutions, he will only pick midrashic or halachic texts which are close to a literal interpretation.

c.) פְּשָׂכָה—On occasion it is also necessary to draw on agadic teachings. This represents a further deviation from the literal level, for while midrashic and halachic texts will both offer an interpretation of the verse itself, agadic texts will diversify into ethical and mystical interpretations that are only loosely based on the text. Rashi will only cite such explanations when they are necessary to solve a basic problem with the text, and he will only pick agadic texts which are as close as possible to a literal interpretation.

In our case, this clarifies why Rashi cited “the literal meaning of the verse according to agadic interpretation” after “the verse’s midrashic explanation,” since an agadic interpretation represents a further deviation from the literal level than a midrashic interpretation.
He should bring the bull to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting before God, and he should lean his hands upon the bull’s head and slaughter the bull before God.

The anointed priest should take some of the bull’s blood and bring it into the Tent of Meeting.

The priest should dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before God, in front of the partition of the Sanctuary. The priest should place some of the blood on the horns of the incense-Altar which is in the Tent of Meeting, before God, and he should pour all (the rest) of the bull’s blood onto the base of the Altar (used) for burnt-offerings, which is at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

He should separate from the bull of the sin-offering, all its (sacrificial) fat: the fat covering the intestines, all the fat that is on the stomach, the two kidneys, (together) with the fat that is on them, which is over the flanks. He should (also) remove the diaphragm, (and a bit of) the liver (which is connected) to it, (when he takes out) the kidneys—just as was separated from the bull (sacrificed as) a peace-offering. The priest should then make these (parts) go up in smoke on the Altar (used) for burnt-offerings.

He should then take) the bull’s skin, all its flesh, its head, its legs, its innards and its waste matter. He should take out the entire bull to a pure place outside the camp, (namely,) to the ash depository, and he should burn it in fire on wood. It should be burnt on the ash depository (even if there are no ashes there).

The Communal Sin-Offering

If the entire assembly of Jewish (judges, the Sanhedrin,) make a mistake (and rule that an act, which is in fact punishable by soul excision, is permissible), and the matter was not detected by the eyes of the congregation, and they (follow the Sanhedrin, and violate) any of God’s commandments which are prohibited, (thereby) incurring guilt — then when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the congregation should bring a young bull as a sin-offering.

They should bring it before the Tent of Meeting. The elders of the community should lean their hands on the bull’s head, before God, and one (of them) should slaughter the bull, before God.

The anointed priest should bring some of the bull’s blood into the Tent of Meeting. The priest should dip his finger into the blood, and sprinkle (it) seven times before God, before the partition.

13 If the entire assembly of Jewish (judges, the Sanhedrin,) make a mistake (and rule that an act, which is in fact punishable by soul excision, is permissible), and the matter was not detected by the eyes of the congregation, and they (follow the Sanhedrin, and violate) any of God’s commandments which are prohibited, (thereby) incurring guilt — then when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the congregation should bring a young bull as a sin-offering.
Are the diaphragm and kidneys burned too? (v. 19)

**Rashi:** Although scripture does not mention the diaphragm and the two kidneys explicitly, they are derived from v. 20: “He should do to this bull just as one does to the bull of the sin-offering (of a High Priest).”

**Difficulties With Rashi**

Rashi’s comment here prompts a number of questions:

a.) Rashi questions why the Torah did not mention the burning of the kidneys and diaphragm explicitly (and answers with the analogy from the School of Rabbi Yishma’el). But why is this a question at the literal level? The Torah often abbreviates some details when laws are repeated for a second time, so why should this matter alarm the reader here, to the extent that Rashi is forced to explain the matter with an analogy?

b.) What is the need at all for Rashi’s entire explanation here? In verse 19 the Torah informs us that the sacrificial fat is to be removed from the animal, and then in verse 20 we learn that the remaining parts, the kidneys and diaphragm, are to be removed. So why did Rashi deem it necessary to address a matter here in verse 19 which will inevitably be clarified when reading the next verse?

c.) Why does Rashi cite the author of the analogy, “the School of Rabbi Yishma’el,” deviating from his usual practice not to cite his sources?

**The Explanation**

When reading verse 19, we would presume that no mention of the kidneys or diaphragm is made because these parts are simply not offered on the Altar with this type of sacrifice (the communal sin-offering).

The reader will immediately find this notion unacceptable, in light of one of Rashi’s earlier comments: Just two verses previously (v. 17), Rashi offered the following analogy to describe the severity of the communal sin-offering: “This may be compared to a king against whom one of his provinces revolted. If only a minority rebels, his family will survive. But if the entire country rebels, his family will not survive. Likewise, when the entire country...”

**Classic Questions**

**Details of the Communal Sin-Offering (v. 19)**

The first sin-offering whose procedure is described in the Torah is the sin-offering of the High Priest (verses 3-12, above). There we learned that the following parts are burned on the Altar: “the fat covering the intestines, all the fat that is on the stomach, the two kidneys, (together) with the fat that is on them, which is over the flanks...the diaphragm, (and a bit of) the liver (which is connected) to it, and the kidneys” (v. 9-10).

After describing the sin-offering of the High Priest, the Torah continues with the “communal sin-offering.” required when the entire community sins, due to an erroneous ruling from the Sanhedrin (the Supreme Jewish Court). When reading verse 19, which describes the parts which are to be burned on the Altar from this communal offering, the reader will immediately be struck by the fact that, unlike the previous case, the Torah does not make any mention that the diaphragm and kidneys are to be removed and burned on the Altar. Does this mean to say that these parts were not burned, as in the case of the communal sin-offering?

Rashi, in his comment to verse 19, clarifies that this is not the case, for in the next verse we read: “He should do to this bull just as one does to the bull of the sin-offering (of the High Priest),” where the diaphragm and kidneys are indeed offered (as stated explicitly in v. 9).

This, however, begs the question: In the case of the communal sin-offering, why does the Torah only mention the offering of the diaphragm and kidneys indirectly (through comparison to the High Priest’s offering)?

Rashi answers this question by citing the analogy taught by the School of Rabbi Yishma’el, that God (the King) wished to reduce the “bad publicity” for His loved one (the Jewish people), so he did not spell out all the details of the communal sin-offering.
18 He should then place some of the blood on the horns of the Altar that is before God in the Tent of Meeting. Then he should pour all (the rest of) the blood onto the base of the Altar (used) for burnt-offerings, which is at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

- 19 He should separate all its (sacrificial) fat from it and make it go up in smoke on the Altar. (Concerning the details of what should be separated): 20 He should do to this bull just as one does to the bull of the sin-offering (of the High Priest). He should do (exactly) the same with it.

Thus the priest will make an atonement for them (the community), and they will be forgiven.

- 21 He should take the bull outside the camp and burn it, just as one burns the first (mentioned) bull (of the anointed priest). It is a sin-offering for the congregation.

The Last Word

God's deep-rooted, unconditional love for the Jewish people teaches us how strong our love should be for every Jew. For example, each one of us should feel that he is personally lacking so long as his friend is in need of physical or spiritual assistance.

And just as God “kept quiet” the sins of the Jewish people (see Rashi to v. 19), we too should help a Jew in a way that does not highlight his shortcomings, if indeed they exist.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, pp. 22-23)
The word “If” in Hebrew is רָאָשִׁים. Why does verse 22 use the unusual expression רָאָשִׁים and not the usual form (רָאָשִׁים)?

Rashi: רָאָשִׁים is etymologically related to the word יִשְׂרָאֵל, meaning “fortunate.” [Thus, the verse is intimating:] “Fortunate is the generation whose leader takes it to heart to bring atonement for his unintentional sin. And how much more so will he feel remorseful for the sins he has committed willfully!”

Rabbi Yishma’el felt that he was bound up with the Jewish people as a single entity, to such an extent that their sins affected him and he desired to be an atonement for them. So, since Rabbi Yishma’el was a loyal devotee of the Jewish people even when they sinned, he was able to appreciate that, even in their darkest of moments, God would always view the Jewish people with great affection—for God and the Jewish people are bound together as one single entity, so to speak.

(Toros Menachem)

The Jewish Leader – And His People (v. 22)

When introducing the other sin-offerings mentioned earlier in our Parsha, the Torah uses the expression “If (רָאָשִׁים) so-and-so sins…” Here however, in the case of the Jewish leader who sins, the Torah switches expressions, and chooses instead the Hebrew term רָאָשִׁים.

In context, this word clearly means “if.” So there is no difference in the translation of the two terms, and the literal meaning of the verse stays the same. What did trouble Rashi, however, is why the Torah suddenly switched expressions here in our verse, to use the more unusual רָאָשִׁים.

A further problem that bothered Rashi was an additional implication of the word רָאָשִׁים.

Literally, רָאָשִׁים means “that”—a word which connects two ideas together (i.e., it is a conjunctive term which introduces a subordinate clause). Thus, by choosing this term, the Torah appears to be suggesting that the current passage—about the leader who sins—is connected to the previous section, which discusses the communal sin-offering. So Rashi was troubled: What is the connection between our passage and the section that preceded it?

To answer these two problems, Rashi cited the Talmudic teaching that רָאָשִׁים is etymologically related to the word יִשְׂרָאֵל, meaning “fortunate”:

Firstly, by using the unusual term רָאָשִׁים, our verse is intimating: “Fortunate is the generation whose leader takes it to heart to bring atonement for his unintentional sin. And how much more so will he feel remorseful for the sins he has committed willfully!”

Secondly, in addition to explaining the message implied by the Torah’s unusual use of the word רָאָשִׁים, Rashi also explained here why the Torah chose a term which connects our passage with the one that preceded it. However, in order to explain Rashi’s logic, we first need to examine the previous passage in more detail:

In verses 13-21 above, the Torah describes the “communal sin-offering” which is required in an instance where the Sanhedrin (Jewish Supreme
The Leader’s Sin-Offering

- 22 If a (Jewish) leader sins, unintentionally violating any of God’s commandments which are prohibited, (thereby) incurring guilt, 22 he should bring a perfect (blemished) male goat as his offering, when his sin that he has committed is made known to him.

- 24 He should lean his hands on the goat’s head and slaughter it before God, in the place where burnt-offerings are slaughtered. (If it is slaughtered with the specific intention of being a sin-offering, then) it is a (valid) sin-offering.

- 25 The priest should take some of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger and place it on the horns of the Altar (used) for burnt-offerings. Then he should pour (the remainder of) its blood onto the base of the Altar (used) for burnt-offerings.

- 26 He should make all its (sacrificial) fats go up in smoke on the Altar, just like the fats of the peace-offering.

Thus, the priest will make an atonement for his sin, and he will be forgiven.

The Last Word

When is a generation fortunate? Rashi writes: When the leader—the head of the Jewish people—“takes it to heart to bring atonement.”

This alludes to the fact that the head should always be trained to rule over the heart. For the source of all sin, both intentional and unintentional, is from acting upon the desires of one’s heart, for, “every person can rule over his heart’s desires with the will-power in his brain, so that he should not succumb to his heart’s desires in action, speech or thought” (Tanya ch. 12).
### Classic Questions

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1. The failure to observe positive commands must be atoned for with a burnt-offering.
2. The transgression of prohibitions must be atoned for with a sin-offering.
3. If many positive commands are transgressed, separate sin-offerings are required for each.
4. The burnt-offering is brought after all the sin-offerings.
5. The burnt-offering is brought before the sin-offerings.
6. The sin-offerings are similar to a gift to please the king, after he has been appeased by the sin-offerings.
7. The sin-offerings are similar to an advocate who appeases the king, before the gift is given.

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**Notes:**

- The failure to observe positive commands is similar to a gift to please the king, after he has been appeased by the sin-offerings.
- The transgression of prohibitions is similar to an advocate who appeases the king, before the gift is given.
- The burnt-offering is brought last, after all the sin-offerings.
- The sin-offerings are brought before the burnt-offering.
- A sin-offering is required for every transgression.
- The burnt-offering is brought after all the sin-offerings have been brought.
- The sin-offerings are similar to a gift to please the king, after he has been appeased by the sin-offerings.
27. If an individual among the citizens of the land sins unintentionally, by violating any of God’s commandments which are prohibited, thereby incurring guilt—then when his sin that he has committed becomes known to him, he should bring an unblemished female goat as his offering, for his sin that he has committed:

- 29. He should lean his hands on the head of the sin-offering, and he should slaughter the sin-offering in the (same) place as the burnt-offering (is slaughtered).

- 30. The priest should take some of its blood with his finger, and place it on the horns of the Altar (used) for burnt-offerings. Then he should pour all of its (remaining) blood on the base of the Altar.

- 31. He should remove all of its (sacrificial) fats, in the same way that the fats were removed from the peace-offering. The priest should then cause them to go up in smoke on the Altar, a pleasant aroma for God. The priest will make an atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.

- 32. If he brings a sheep for his sin-offering, he should bring a perfect (unblemished) female:

- 33. He should lean his hands on the head of the sin-offering and slaughter it in the place where the burnt-offering is slaughtered, (with the specific intent that it) is a sin-offering,

- 34. The priest should take some of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger and place it on the horns of the Altar (used) for burnt-offerings. Then he should pour all its (remaining) blood onto the base of the Altar.

- 35. He should remove all its (sacrificial) fat, in the same way that the sheep’s fat is removed from the peace-offering. The priest should then cause the(se parts) to go up in smoke on the Altar, upon the (piles of wood that are made as) fires for God.

Thus the priest will make an atonement for him, for his sin which he committed, and he will be forgiven.

TORAS MENACHEM

Atonement via the Burnt-Offering & Sin-Offering

A sin possesses two elements:

a.) It is a violation of God’s specific instruction that a certain thing should or should not occur.

b.) It is an act of rebellion against God in general, regardless of the details of the specific sin.

Thus in order to atone for a sin, a person must mend both of these two breaches:

a.) First we must repair the “insult” to God which was caused by each specific sin, for each detail that is offensive to the Almighty requires atonement in itself. This is achieved by the sin-offering, which explains why a separate sin-offering must be brought for each individual sin (see Table).

b.) Even after the negative effects of each individual sin have been repaired, there still remains the effect of sin in general, that it is a rebellion against God’s authority, an aspect that is common to all sinful behavior. Thus, after all the sin-offerings have been brought, a further “gift” is required, signifying the total acceptance of God’s unequivocal authority—but this need only be done once, due to its general nature. And this is the purpose of the burnt-offering which follows after the sin-offering(s).

The Mechanism of the Sin-Offering

Let us now examine further the process of atonement for the specific transgression of a prohibition. Basically, there are two elements here:

a.) Resolve for the future. When the person resolves never to do the sin again, God forgives him and he is absolved from any punishment.

b.) Remorse over the past (confession). This is necessary to “cleanse” the person from the spiritual “contamination” that a sin brings. Without this, atonement cannot be complete.

We can now pose the following question: Which one of the above two elements of atonement does the sin-offering assist? Perhaps the sin-offering completes the cleansing of the soul after the person has worked on himself as much as possible and confessed? Or, is it the case that the sin-offering is brought after the personal efforts of atonement are complete, as a sign of “resolve for the future”?

This question appears to be addressed by the following ruling of Rambam:

“If a person set aside an [animal for a] sin-offering for the forbidden fat that he ate, he may not use the same offering to atone for his desecration of Shabbos, or for blood that he ate, as the verse states, “He should bring an unblemished female goat as his offering, for his sin that he has
However, if he did do so, the offering is valid.” (Laws of Unintentional Transgressions 3:3).

Now the fact that Rambam concludes, “If he did do so, the offering is valid,” indicates that, ultimately, a sin-offering could atone for two different instances of the same type of sin (and it is only that, for whatever
THE VARIABLE SIN-OFFERING

5

- 1 If a person sins, by accepting an oath (denying that he was witness to a certain matter) and he does not testify, (when in reality) he was a witness because he saw or knew (about it)—he will bear (the consequences of) his sin.

- 2 Or if a person touches anything that is (ritually) impure—whether it is the carcass of an impure wild animal, or the carcass of an impure domestic animal, or the carcass of an impure creeping creature—and he was unaware of the fact (and he subsequently entered the Holy Temple, or ate from a sacrifice), he is guilty.

- 3 Or if he touches a human (corpse which is) impure, or any (source of) impurity through which one can become impure, and he was unaware of the fact (and he subsequently entered the Holy Temple, or ate from a sacrifice), and then (later) he remembers—he is guilty.

- 4 Or if a person swears, expressing verbally to do harm (to himself) or to do good (to himself in the future, or) whatever a person may express in an oath (about the past), and he forgot about (his oath and violated) one of these (oaths), and then (later) he remembered—he is guilty.

- 5 What should happen is, when someone incurs guilt in any one of these cases, he should confess the sin which he had committed.

- 6 He should bring his guilt-offering to God for his sin which he had committed: a female (animal) from the flock, either a sheep or a goat, for a sin-offering, and the priest will make an atonement for him from his sin.

- 7 If he cannot afford a sheep, he should bring as his guilt-offering before God, for that sin that he had committed: two turtledoves or two young doves, one for a sin-offering, and one for a burnt-offering:–

  - 8 He should bring them to the priest, who should first offer up that (bird) which is (designated) for the sin-offering. He should cut its head (by piercing with his nail) opposite the back of its head, but should not separate (the head from the body by severing both the esophagus and the trachea).

  - 9 He should sprinkle some of the blood of the sin-offering (directly from the bird) on the wall of the Altar, and the remainder of the blood should be squeezed out (directly from the bird) onto the base of the Altar.

  - (If it was offered specifically as a sin-offering then it) is a (valid) sin-offering.

  - 10 He should offer up the second one as a burnt-offering, according to the law (of burnt-offerings that come from birds*). Thus the priest will make an atonement for him, for his sin which he had committed, and he will be forgiven.

TORAS MENACHEM

reason, this is not the recommended course of action in the first instance). This indicates that Rambam rules in favor of approach ‘a’ above, that a sin-offering is an act of resolve for the future, for since the person resolves never to do this type of sin again, ultimately only one sacrifice is needed for each type of sin, and not for each individual transgression.

However, there is another textual variant of this ruling of Rambam which concludes: “However, if he did do so, the offering is not valid” (text cited by Tosfos Yom Tov, Mei’el and Tosfos). I.e. that a separate sin-offering is required for each occasion that a sin occurred, even if they are two incidents of the same type of sin. This ruling follows the reasoning that a sin-offering is brought to cleanse the person of the spiritual contamination of the sin. For each sin brings with it further contamination (even if it is the same sin) which requires a further sacrifice to be atoned for.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, p. 7ff.)

* See 1:14-17 above.
11 But if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two young doves, then he should bring as his offering for his sin one tenth of an eifah\(^*\) of fine flour for a sin-offering:

- He should not put oil over it, nor should he place frankincense upon it, for it is a sin-offering.

12 He should bring it to the priest, and the priest should scoop out a three-finger fistful (so that its owner will be) remembered (positively before God), and make it go up in smoke on the Altar, upon the (piles of wood that are made as) fires for God.

- (If it was scooped and burned with the specific intention that it is a sin-offering, then it) is a (valid) sin-offering.

13 Thus the priest will make an atonement for his sin that he committed in any one of these (three above-mentioned cases), and he will be forgiven.

14 If it was a meal-offering, then the leftovers belong to the priest, as (with an ordinary) meal-offering.

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### THE GUILT-OFFERING FOR MISAPPROPRIATION

14 God spoke to Moshe, saying:

- If a person sins unintentionally by wrongfully using something that is sacred to God (i.e. Temple property), he should bring as his guilt-offering to God a perfect (unblemished, two-year-old) ram from the flock, that is worth (at least) two silver shekels, according to the shekel (measurement system which is used for) sanctified (items), for a guilt-offering.

15 He must repay whatever he has deprived the Sanctuary. He should add to it one fifth of its value, and give it to the priest. The priest will then make an atonement for him through the ram of the guilt-offering, and he will be forgiven.

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### THE GUILT-OFFERING IN A CASE OF DOUBT

17 If a person is uncertain if he sinned (by transgressing) any of God’s commandments which are prohibited (with the punishment of soul-excision for an intentional transgression), he is guilty and he will bear (the consequences of) his sin.

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**The Last Word**

THE GUILT-OFFERING IN A CASE OF DOUBT

The guilt-offering, brought in a case of doubt where a person is uncertain if he transgressed a commandment unintentionally, is actually more expensive than a sin-offering, which is brought when a person is sure that he transgressed (Zevachim 48a according to Tosfos in Krisos 10b). This is an indication that, in certain respects, the person who is uncertain if he sins is actually in need of more atonement.

When a person knows that he has sinned, he is aware that something needs correcting, which leads him to act upon his feelings. If he is uncertain that he sinned, he is likely to take the matter less seriously, and this represents a more serious spiritual blemish, for the person becomes indifferent to his own spiritual shortcomings. Thus a more powerful—and more expensive—atonement is needed.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 3 pp. 946-7)
וישא国王: הוא בѣים גלט תמים מְדִינֵתָנוּ בָּעֵרֵךְ לַאֵשָׁה.

אֶל-הָעָם (בְּעֵרֵךְ) עִלְיוּ הַבָּלוֹן. עִלְיוּ הַבָּלוֹן, אַשִּׁרְתָּ שְׁגִין (וְהָאִיר) מַעֲשֶׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל: מָעַל בְּוַיִיתֵנוּ בֵּיתֵנוּ בָּעֵרֵךְ (זְכֶרְתָּ) רְאִיָּה עָלָיוּ שְׁגִין.

בְּעֵרֵךְ. וּבְּעֵרֵךְ! אַשִּׁרְתָּ שְׁגִין (וְהָאִיר) מַעֲשֶׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל.

אָל-הָעָם (בְּעֵרֵךְ) עִלְיוּ הַבָּלוֹן, עִלְיוּ הַבָּלוֹן, אַשִּׁרְתָּ שְׁגִין (וְהָאִיר) מַעֲשֶׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָל-הָעָם (בְּעֵרֵךְ) עִלְיוּ הַבָּלוֹן, עִלְיוּ הַבָּלוֹן, אַשִּׁרְתָּ שְׁגִין (וְהָאִיר) מַעֲשֶׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל.

חַס וְדָכָא, אָל-הָעָם (בְּעֵרֵךְ) עִלְיוּ הַבָּלוֹן, עִلְיוּ הַבָּלוֹן, אַשִּׁרְתָּ שְׁגִין (וְהָאִיר) מַעֲשֶׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל.
He should bring to the priest a perfect (unblemished) ram from the flock, which has the same value as that of a guilt-offering. The priest will then make an atonement for his unintentional sin which he may have committed, and he should be forgiven. It is a guilt-offering, for he has become guilty before God. –

The Guilt- Offering for Dishonesty

God spoke to Moshe, saying:

If a person sins and acts deceitfully against God by making a false denial to his fellow concerning an item deposited (for safekeeping), cash-in-hand (which was part of a business deal or loan), or (an object taken) by robbery, or he withheld wages from his fellow, or he found a lost article—and then he denied (any of the above-mentioned sins) and swore falsely (that he need not return any funds). In any of these cases where a man might sin, what should happen is that when he (feels that he) has sinned and is guilty, he should return the article which he had robbed, or the funds which he had withheld, or the item which had been deposited with him, or the article which he had found, or anything else about which he had sworn falsely. He should pay the principal amount and add one fifth to it. He should give it to its rightful owner on the day (when the sinner repents for) his guilt.

He should then bring his guilt-offering to God: a perfect (unblemished) ram from the flock which has the same value as (that brought) for a guilt-offering, to the priest. The priest will make an atonement for him before God, and he will be forgiven for any of (the above-mentioned ways) that one may commit (a sin), incurring guilt through it.


The Last Word

At the time of a person’s anger, faith in God has left him. For were he to believe that what happened to him was God’s doing, he would not be angry at all. And while it is true that the person who is cursing him, or striking him, or causing damage to his property, possesses free choice, and is therefore guilty...nevertheless, as regards to the person harmed, this incident was already decreed in Heaven and God has many agents through whom He can act. (Tanya, Igeres Hakodesh ch. 25)

Based on the above logic, one might question why a person who denies that an object was deposited with him is required to return it when he finally confesses (v. 23). For the person may argue: “The fact that I have to return the object is an atonement for my wrong deed, but why should he get it back? After all, it was clearly decreed from Heaven that he was to lose it!”

Clearly however, this is false logic. For just as God decreed that the person should lose the object, so too, God decreed in the Torah that the object should be returned. In other words, in the very first instance it was only intended that the person lose the object temporarily.

The lesson: One should be careful not to be enticed by the evil inclination by seemingly “religious” arguments not to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 13ff.)

* See verse 15, above.
Parshas Yayikra contains 11 positive mitzvos and 5 prohibitions

1. The olah sacrifice (burnt-offering) [1:3].
2. The minchah (meal) offering [2:1,5,7].
3. Not to offer yeast or honey on the Altar [2:11].
4. Not to offer up any sacrifice without salt [2:13].
5. The mitzvah of salting an offering [2:13].
6. The offering made by the Sanhedrin if it erred in a ruling [4:14].
7. The chatas (sin-offering): for an individual who unintentionally violated a prohibition for which (when done intentionally) one incurs karais (soul excision) [4:27].
8. The mitzvah of giving testimony [5:1].
9. The variable sin-offering [5:1,6].
10. Not to separate the head of a fowl brought as a chatas (sin-offering) [5:8].
11. Not to put olive oil in the minchah (meal-offering) of an unintentional sinner [5:11].
12. Not to put frankincense in the minchah (meal-offering) of an unintentional sinner [5:11].
13. The mitzvah of adding a fifth (of the value in repayment) when one has eaten of sanctified food or benefited from its use. [5:15,16].
14. The asham taluy (a guilt-offering in a case of doubt) [5:17,18].
15. The asham vadai (a guilt-offering in a case of certainty) [5:21].
16. The mitzvah of returning property seized in robbery [5:23].
Do we really have free choice? Most people tend to view this as a yes-or-no type of question, but the correct answer is in fact, yes and no:

a.) The inner core of the soul is totally at one with God. At this subconscious level, the soul of every Jew wishes to observe all the mitzvos and to avoid transgressing any prohibitions. There is no desire for evil here; there simply is no other option than doing good.

b.) At the conscious level, however, where we interact with the more superficial layers of the soul’s complex psyche, there is room for both good and evil. Here, the soul’s inner desire to observe all the mitzvos is felt only as a weaker “signal,” which is susceptible to “interference” from the opposing messages of our animalistic instincts. So at the conscious level, we do indeed possess free choice.

In general, the Torah speaks to our conscious mind. We are told to observe the mitzvos with the full awareness of what we are doing, and we are charged with bringing an awareness of spirituality into our normal, daily lives.

However, at this conscious level we are susceptible to being drawn away from a life of holiness, or stifled by the limitations that the world appears to present. So while most of the mitzvos were given to the conscious part of the soul, God saw it necessary to give us some mitzvos which speak directly to the inner core of the soul, helping the soul’s unlimited energy and total commitment to good to flow outwards to the conscious mind. These special mitzvos help us stay in tune with our subconscious commitment to Judaism, when our conscious observance becomes strained or limited.

With most mitzvos, God told Moshe to address the Jewish people with the term נִתְנָה (speak) or דוֹבַּל (say). While the mitzvos conveyed with these terms are of course obligatory, the more passive, indirect mood of the words “speak” and “say” indicate that these mitzvos are directed at the superficial layers of the soul which possess free choice.

Our Parsha, in contrast, uses the more direct, imperative term נַעֲשָׂה (“command”), alluding to a type of mitzvah which speaks to the soul’s inner core that does not possess true free choice, and is simply “commanded” to obey God’s will. These special mitzvos which are included in our Parsha are aimed at helping our inner identity of unquestioning and uninhibited commitment to the Jewish faith surface in everyday life.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 30ff.)
CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why does the Torah use the unusual Hebrew expression בְּמִצְרָאָה (command) rather than בְּדַרְכָּרָה (speak) or בְּדַאֲבָא (say)? (v. 2)

**Rashi:** The expression בְּמִצְרָאָה always denotes urging on* (to observe a mitzvah) for the present and also for future generations.

Rabbi Shimon taught: Scripture needs especially to urge (a person to observe mitzvos) that cause him a severe financial loss.**

SIFSEI CHACHAMIM: What is the “severe financial loss” to which Rabbi Shimon is referring?

The Torah is speaking here (v. 1-4) about the burnt-offering. Unlike other offerings, from which the priests are given a significant portion, in the case of the burnt-offering the priest only receives the animal’s hide, and the remainder is burned on the Altar. Thus, this represents a severe financial loss for the priest.

WHAT IS THE SEVERE FINANCIAL LOSS HERE? (v. 2)

*Sifsei Chachamim* writes that Rabbi Shimon’s statement, “Scripture needs especially to urge (a person to observe mitzvos) that cause him a severe financial loss,” refers specifically to the case of the burnt-offering, where the priests have very little benefit from the animal.

However, this explanation is difficult to accept because: a.) It only answers why the priests suffer financial loss, but for the person who offers the animal, there is financial loss with all sacrifices. So why is encouragement needed specifically here in the case of the burnt-offering?

b.) This is not the first time we have read in the Torah about the burnt-offering. If Rashi were referring specifically to this particular sacrifice he would have written so in Parshas Vayikra, where the laws of the burnt-offering are mentioned for the first time.

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* The use of the more direct, imperative term “command” (in contrast to the more passive “speak” or “say”) is suggestive of a greater immediacy—Likutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 30.

** Rashi does not use the term 부ּרֵכָּה (lacking money”), but rather 부ּרֵכָּה בר (lacking a wallet”) indicating a more severe financial loss, such that one is not merely lacking funds, but one’s funds are totally depleted to the extent that one’s wallet is totally exhausted—Sichos Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5744, ch. 34.

*** In the Hebrew text, verses 1-6 constitute an entire paragraph.
God spoke to Moshe, saying:

1. This is the law of the burnt-offering: It is the burnt-offering which (may) burn on the Altar all night until morning. The Altar’s fire should burn with it.

2. The priest should put on his fitted Tunic, and he should put his linen Pants (directly) on his skin. He should shovel out (a shovelful of) the (innermost) ashes that remain from the burnt-offering, which the fire consumed on the Altar, and put them down next to the Altar (on the east ramp).

3. He should (preferably) then take off his garments and put on other garments, and he should take out the ashes to a clean place outside the camp.

### C L A S S I C Q U E S T I O N S

#### Why does the priest remove his garments? (v. 4)

**RASHI:** This is not an obligation, but an appropriate practice, so that he should not soil the garments in which he constantly officiates, when taking out the ashes.

When he pours a glass of wine for his master, a servant should not wear the clothes that he wears while cooking a pot of food for his master. Thus, the verse continues: “and put on other garments,” i.e. inferior ones.

**RAMBAN:** I cannot understand from where Rashi derived that it is not an obligation for the priest to change garments. At the literal level it appears that the Torah demands from the priest that his clothes be clean when serving in the Temple.

1. There were several fires kept burning on the Altar each day (Rashi to v. 5).
2. Each of these fires was required to be kept burning not only when sacrifices were being offered, but rather, all day, and throughout the entire year.
3. When the Jewish people were given these laws, they were living in the desert where wood was not easily available and must have been purchased for a high price.
4. Wood that was infested could not be used (see end of tractate Ta’amis).
5. Each priest that performed the removal of the ashes was required to have two sets of clothes (v. 3).

Thus, while the offering of an individual sacrifice was a one-time expense, the continual maintenance of the Altar itself would have been very costly for the Jewish community. Therefore, Rabbi Shimon taught, “Scripture needs especially to urge (a person to observe mitzvos) that cause him a severe financial loss.”

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5744*)

#### THE PRIEST’S CHANGE OF CLOTHES (v. 4)

Rashi’s comment to verse 4 presents us with the following problems:

1. What led Rashi to conclude that the Torah did not obligate the priest to change clothes when taking out the ashes? Where is the proof, at the literal level that “this is not an obligation, but an appropriate practice”—as Ramban asks?
2. Rashi’s commentary was not written to explain the reasons for the mitzvos, but rather, to solve problems with scripture. Why then did Rashi deem it necessary to tell us the reason why the priest changes his clothes, “so that he should not soil the garments in which he constantly officiates when taking out the ashes”? What scriptural difficulty prompted this comment from Rashi?
3. Why did Rashi not suffice with this explanation, and continue with the analogy of a servant?

#### The Last Word

**Burning of the Fats (v. 2)**

Although partaking of a sacrifice is a mitzvah, a person may not eat from the sacrifice until its fats have been burned on the Altar. This teaches us that a person can only be sure that a mitzvah has been done properly when his “fat”—his pleasure, including the pleasure derived from the mitzvah—has been given to God. Only in this way can he be sure that he is performing the mitzvos, not because of the satisfaction that they bring, but purely for God’s sake.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 3, p. 950)

* For additional explanations see Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5725 and 5748.
He should then put on other garments," and we would have understood and put on other garments," when it would have been sufficient to write, verse: Why does the Torah state, “He should then changed his clothing "so that he should not soil the garments in which he Altar, and put them down next to the Altar." ashes that remain from the burnt-offering, which the fire consumed on the Pants on his skin. He should shovel out (a shovelful of) the (innermost) tency regarding the context of our verse. In the previous verse we read: “He should then put on his fitted Tunic, and he should put his linen Pants on his skin. He should shovel out (a showeful of) the (innermost) ashes that remain from the burnt-offering, which the fire consumed on the Altar, and put them down next to the Altar.”

When reading the next verse, which teaches us that the priest then changed his clothing “so that he should not soil the garments in which he constantly officiates,” the reader will immediately be struck by a question: If the priest needed to keep his special garments clean, then why did he shovel ashes while wearing the very same garments? In order to answer this problem and explain why the shoveling of the ashes needed to be done in full priestly attire, Rashi cited the analogy of a servant cooking food for his master:

Rashi’s analogy stresses the difference between tasks that a servant performs in and out of his master’s presence. When cooking, which is done in the absence of his master, the servant wears inferior clothes; whereas for pouring wine for his master in his master’s presence the servant wears much better garments. This explains the distinction between the shoveling of the ashes (v. 3), and the removal of the ashes (v. 4). For the shoveling takes place “next to the Altar,” in the “Master’s presence,” whereas the removal of the ashes is “outside the camp.” Therefore, even though there is a distinct possibility that the priest may dirty his formal attire when shoveling the ashes, he nevertheless must wear his priestly garments, since he is performing Temple service “in his Master’s presence.”

(b.) Scriptural redundancy. Rashi was troubled by the repetition in our verse: Why does the Torah state, “He should then take off his garments and put on other garments,” when it would have been sufficient to write, “He should then put on other garments,” and we would have understood that he obviously took the other garments off first?

Rashi concluded that the Torah wishes to stress why he is putting on the new ones: because it became necessary to take off the old ones, i.e. it is “so that he should not soil the garments, in which he constantly officiates, when taking out the ashes.”

c.) Contextual incongruity. Rashi was troubled by a further inconsistency regarding the context of our verse. In the previous verse we read: “The priest should put on his fitted Tunic, and he should put his linen Pants on his skin. He should shovel out (a showeful of) the (innermost) ashes that remain from the burnt-offering, which the fire consumed on the Altar, and put them down next to the Altar.”

Even though he changed his garments, it was the same Priest who performed the lofty task of shoveling the ashes in the Master’s Presence who also performed the more menial task of dumping the ashes outside the camp. This teaches us that we should be dedicated to serving God not only with lofty, honorable tasks, but that we should also delight in simple, physical chores that are needed to prepare for the observance of a mitzvah.
Fire on the Altar

- 5 The fire on the Altar should be kept burning upon it. It must not go out.
- The priest should kindle wood upon it every morning, and upon it, he should arrange the burnt-offering and make the fats of the peace-offerings go up in smoke upon it.
- 6 A continuous fire should burn upon the Altar. It must not go out.

Additional Laws of The Meal-Offering

- 7 This is the law of the meal-offering: Aharon's sons should bring it before God, to the front of the Altar.
- 8 He should take out a three-finger fistful from the fine flour of the meal-offering and from its oil. (Afterwards he should gather) all the frankincense that is on the meal-offering, and he should make (the scoop and the frankincense) go up in smoke on the Altar, (so that its owner will be) remembered (positively before God), a pleasant aroma for God.
- 9 Aharon and his sons should eat whatever is left over from it. It should be eaten as unleavened bread in a holy place, (namely), they should eat it in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. 10 (The

Classic Questions

Since the fire on the Altar “must not go out,” what is added by describing it as “continuous”? (v. 6)

Rashi: [The word “continuous” here refers to] the fire regarding which the verse says, “[to ignite the lamp] continually” (Shemos 27:20)—this fire too must also be kindled from [the fire] on the outer Altar.

Ibn Ezra: The word “continuous” here was used for additional stress, that the fire on the Altar should burn continually.

Rambam: If the western lamp of the Menorah becomes extinguished, then it may only be reignited from the outer Altar, (Laws of Regular and Additional Offerings 3:13).

Toras Menachem

The Altar and the Menorah (v. 6)

After reading verse 5 that “The fire on the Altar should be kept burning upon it. It must not go out,” the statement in verse 6, that the fire should be “continuous,” appears repetitive. Rashi learns that this comes to teach us an additional law, that the Menorah must be lit from the Altar. This law is hinted to by our verse, which describes the fire on the Altar as “continuous,” for the very same expression is used to describe the Menorah, in Parshas Tetzaveh: “to ignite the lamp continually.”

Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, who also explains the Torah at the literal level, seems to have a more simple explanation. He writes that the word “continuous” was written to provide additional emphasis, and is not in fact a scriptural redundancy.

The Explanation

At the beginning of Parshas Tetzaveh, Rashi explains the meaning of the word “continuous” (דובנה) at the literal level: “[Since the Menorah burns] every night, it is called דובנה נקיל, as in the verse: ‘a continual burnt offering’ (Bamidbar 28:6), which is called ‘continual’ even though it is only offered up from day to day. Similarly, the shallow pan meal-offering is described as ‘continuous’ even though it is offered up only half in the morning and the other half in the evening. The word ‘continuous’ is mentioned concerning the showbread (Shemos 25:30), however, literally it means from Shabbos to Shabbos.”

Here we see that, at the literal level, the word דובנה does not mean twenty four hours a day, but rather, that an activity is repeated on a regular basis. Therefore, Rashi concluded that the word דובנה here cannot be referring to the lighting of the Altar’s flame which must be lit twenty four hours a day—“It must not go out”—but rather, it is hinting to another law, namely, that the Menorah (concerning which the Torah also uses the word דובנה) must be lit from the Altar’s flame.

(Compiled on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 50ff.)

Sparks of Chasidus

The Altar represents man’s heart. Thus, the requirement to have fire burning continually on the Altar signifies that our hearts should be kept continually afire with palpable love of God.

Then we are promised:ו Worker, א". Literally, this means, “It must not go out,” but the Maggid of Mezritch gave an alternative rendering: “Your negative aspects will be extinguished.”

(Based on Hayom Yom 20 Adar Sheni)
What is the purpose of the daily meal-offering brought by the High Priest? (v. 13)

SEFER HACHINUCH: The High Priest acts as an agent between the Jewish People and their Father in heaven. He prays on their behalf, and they are atoned through his prayers and through the sacrifices that he offers. Therefore, it is appropriate that such a person should have his own daily sacrifice, comparable to that of the daily communal sacrifice. And just like the daily sacrifice is offered twice a day, the High Priest is required to bring his meal-offering twice a day.

ABARBA'NEL: Nine reasons could be offered:

1.) The High Priest needs to be free from sin in order to act on behalf of the Jewish people. Therefore he must bring an offering every day to ensure that his sins are always atoned for.

2.) When the people will see the High Priest atoning for his sins, this will encourage them to do likewise.

3.) The fact that the High Priest brings an offering every day makes it less embarrassing for the sinner to bring his offering.

4.) Poor people who can only afford a meal-offering will be less embarrassed to bring their offering, because the High Priest himself brings a meal-offering every day.

5.) The offering serves to humble the High Priest when he sees that he is bringing a mere meal-offering which is usually brought by the poor.

6.) When the people see that the High Priest’s sacrifice is totally burned on the Altar, they will realize that the priests offer sacrifices for God’s sake, and not because they want to eat the leftovers.

7.) The offering is to thank God for the gifts which the Torah requires to be given to the priests.

8.) Since the priests may err during the day and scoop a three-finger fistful incorrectly, thus stealing from the Altar, this meal-offering is entirely burned on the Altar as compensation.

9.) In addition to the communal sacrifices which are offered every day, God desired that there should also be a daily private sacrifice, so he required the High Priest to bring an offering.

How is the High Priest’s meal-offering burned? (v. 15)

RASHI: The three-finger fistful is not taken in order that the remainder should be eaten. Rather it is all completely burned.

What happens to a regular priest’s meal-offering? (v. 16)

RASHI: All of it must be offered equally to God on High.
leftovers) should not be baked leavened. I have given it to them as their portion, from My fire-offerings. It is a most holy (offering).

- (The meal-offering of the sinner is) like the sin-offering (in that the three-finger fistful must be scooped with the specific intention that it is a sin-offering. But the voluntary meal-offering is) like the guilt-offering (in that the correct intention is not crucial).
- Any male among Aharon’s sons may eat it (even if he has a blemish that disqualifies him from Temple service. This is) an eternal statute for your generations from the fire-offerings of God.
- Anything that touches (the meal offering, and absorbs part of it) will become holy (like the meal-offering and will thus be subject to the same laws).

**Meal-Offerings of The Priests**

12 God spoke to Moshe, saying:

- This is the offering of Aharon and his sons, which they should offer to God, on the day when (one of them) is anointed (and initiated into service): One tenth of an eifah* of fine flour.
- (The High Priest must bring such a) meal offering (too), daily. Half of it (is offered) in the morning and half of it in the evening.
- It should be made in a shallow pan with oil. It should be brought (after being) scalded (with boiling water. It is thus) baked many times: (scalded with water, baked in the oven, then fried in the pan). You should offer (it as) a meal-offering of broken pieces (by folding it repeatedly)—a pleasant aroma to God.
- (When the High Priest dies), the priest who is anointed from among his sons in his place should prepare it.
- (This is) an eternal statute for God: It should be made to go up in smoke completely. Similarly) every meal-offering of a priest should be (burned) completely. It must not be eaten.

**The High Priest’s Meal-Offering (v. 12-15)**

While both the meal-offering of the High Priest and that of the regular priest are both required to be burned completely on the Altar, the Torah uses slightly different expressions in each case:

Regarding the meal offering of the High Priest v. 15 states: כִּלֶלֶל נָשָׁיֶה—that it “should be made to go up in smoke completely.” In reference to the regular priest’s offering, v. 16 uses the expression: כִּלֶלֶל נָשָׁיֶה—that it “should be (burned) completely.”

So Rashi was troubled: Why does the Torah use two different expressions if it means exactly the same thing?

Rashi concluded that there is indeed a difference between the way these two offerings are burned. Thus, regarding the High Priest’s offering (v. 15) he writes: “The three-finger fistful is not taken in order that the remainder should be eaten. Rather it is all completely burned.” i.e. a three-finger fistful is indeed taken, but unlike a normal meal-offering—where the fistful is burned and the remainder is eaten by the priests—in this case, both the fistful and the remainder are burned.

However, in the case of the regular priest’s meal-offering Rashi writes, “All of it must be equally offered to God on High,” i.e. no three-finger fistful is taken at all. Rather, the entire meal-offering is burned undivided (“equally”) on the Altar.

What is the reason, at the literal level, for this difference?

The High Priest’s offering is somewhat enigmatic in that it is not clear whether it falls under the category of a communal sacrifice (as suggested by Sefer haChinuch), or if it is a personal sacrifice of the High Priest (as suggested by reasons 5 and 9 of Abarbanel).

At the literal level, Rashi understood it to be a communal sacrifice on the basis that it is offered daily, like the daily communal sacrifice (korban tamid). Therefore it requires a three-finger fistful to be scooped, like all meal-offerings which are offered on the Altar.

On the other hand, being the meal-offering of a High Priest, it shares some similarity with the meal-offering of the regular priest, which is burned completely (v. 16).

So Rashi concluded that the High Priest’s offering must have both procedures: The three-finger fistful is taken and burned—indicating that it is a communal sacrifice—but then, being the offering of a priest, the remainder is burned too.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol 22, p. 21f.)

* Equivalent to 2.48 liters or 5.26 U.S. pints.


**What do the words “This is the law of the sin-offering” come to teach us? (v. 18)**

**TORAS KOHANIM:** This teaches us that all the sin-offerings share the same law, that (if blood is sprinkled on a garment) the blood must be washed off (in the Temple courtyard—see verse 20).

Why would we think otherwise, (since verse 20 appears to apply to all sin-offerings)?

Because, the Torah states (the following laws together): “The priest who offers it up as a sin-offering should eat it...if any of its blood is sprinkled on a garment, you should wash (that area of the garment) on which it has been sprinkled” (v. 19-20), we might think that one is only required to wash a blood spillage from the (sin offerings which are actually eaten by the priests—namely,) the outer sin-offerings. But from where do we derive that a blood spillage of the inner sin-offerings, (which are completely burned and not eaten by the priests at all), needs to be washed? To teach us this law, the Torah wrote the additional words “(This is) the law of the sin-offering.” as if to say: “all the sin-offerings share the same law, that (if blood is sprinkled on a garment) the blood must be washed off (in the Temple courtyard).”

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**CLASSIC QUESTIONS**

**THE “LAW” OF THE SIN-OFFERING (v. 18)**

Why does Rashi not cite the teaching of Toras Kohanim, which explains the words “this is the law of the sin-offering”?

At first glance, we might argue that Rashi did not deem these words to require any explanation, for while Toras Kohanim saw the term “this is the law of...” to be an unnecessary scriptural redundancy, Rashi understood that at the literal level these words are not superfluous at all.

However, if we take a look at Rashi’s earlier comment, at the beginning of our Parsha, it becomes quite clear that this was not Rashi’s understanding of the matter:

On the words, “This is the law of the burnt-offering” (v. 2, above), Rashi writes: “This teaches us the law regarding invalid sacrifices...which ones need not be taken down (from the Altar) even if they had already been brought up. (This is evident from scripture) because every time the Torah states “(this is) the law of...” (these extra words) form the scriptural basis for an additional law. (In this case, these words) indicate that there is one law for all sacrifices that go up (on the Altar), even invalid ones. Namely, that if they have already been brought up (on the Altar), they need not be taken down.”

Here we see clearly that, according to Rashi, “every time the Torah states “(this is) the law of...” (these extra words) form the scriptural basis for an additional law.” And in the above case of the burnt-offering, Rashi explains exactly what that additional law is.

Similarly, on the words, “this is the law of the meal-offering” (v. 7), Rashi explains which additional law is added by these words.

Thus it is quite perplexing for the reader when reaching our verse, “this is the law of the sin-offering,” that Rashi is totally silent. Why does Rashi not explain the additional law that is included here, as he did in the previous two cases?

A similar question will also face the reader later in our Parsha when he reads the words, “this is the law of the guilt-offering” (7:1), and, “This is the law of the peace-offering” (ibid. v. 11), where Rashi also remains silent. Why did Rashi not explain these further two scriptural redundancies, in keeping with his earlier cited principle that “every time the Torah states “(this is) the law of...” (these extra words) form the scriptural basis for an additional law”?

**THE EXPLANATION**

At the literal level, it only makes sense to write, “This is the law of...” at the beginning of a section of laws, for clearly, it is an introductory statement which could only belong at the outset of a new discussion.

Our Parsha contains laws relating to the burnt-offering (6:1-4), meal-offering (6:7-16), sin-offering (6:17-23), guilt-offering (7:1-7) and thanksgiving-offering (7:11-15). Of these five categories, only the latter two—the guilt offering and thanksgiving offering—are dealt with here for the first time. The laws of the guilt-offering (while touched upon at the end of Parshas Vayikra—5:14-25), are not dealt with thoroughly until our Parsha.
Additional Laws of the Sin-Offering

17 God spoke to Moshe, saying: 18 Speak to Aharon and to his sons, saying:

- This is the law of the sin-offering: The sin-offering should be slaughtered before God in the place where the burnt-offering is slaughtered. It is a most holy (offering).

- The priest who offers it up as a sin-offering should eat it. It should be eaten in a holy place, (namely), in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting.

- Any (food) that touches its meat (absorbing some of it) will become holy (and thus subject to the same laws).

- If any of its blood is sprinkled on a garment, you should wash (that area of the garment) on which it has been sprinkled, in a holy place (i.e. the Temple Courtyard).

Toras Menachem

Rashi does not “Spoon-Feed” his students

In our case, Rashi remained silent because:

a.) He has already explained the general principle that when “the Torah states “(This is) the law of…” (these extra words) form the scriptural basis for an additional law.”

b.) In cases where Rashi felt that the reader would be able to work out what the additional law is himself, Rashi preferred not to “spoon-feed” the reader with every piece of information, so long as there is sufficient information at hand to work out the solution.

In our case, Rashi felt that the solution was fairly straightforward as the additional law is indicated in the very same verse, “This is the law of the sin-offering: The sin-offering should be slaughtered before God in the place where the burnt-offering is slaughtered.” At first glance, this law appears to apply to all sin-offerings, that they are all slaughtered in the northern part of the Temple Courtyard, like a burnt-offering.

However, on further analysis, we might think that this rule would not apply to a certain type of sin-offering: the variable sin-offering (5:1-13). This is a special type of sin-offering where the Torah places different obligations on the person bringing the offering depending on his financial means. Thus, he may be required to offer sheep or goats, or birds, or if he is very poor—flour.

The Last Word

Some of the laws contained within Parshas Tzav are merely supplementary to the laws of Parshas Vayikra—an increase in quantity; whereas other laws (of the guilt-offering and thanksgiving offering) are new concepts—representing an increase in quality.

Generally speaking, quantity refers to physical matters, and quality to spiritual matters. The fact that Parshas Tzav includes both areas teaches us that a person’s Divine service should involve the spiritual and the physical. For in order to reach true spiritual greatness, it is necessary to be involved also in physical matters, to make this world a home for God.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, pp. 48-49)
**Why must one break an earthenware vessel in which meat from a sin-offering was cooked?** (v. 21)

**Rashi:** Because the flavor that has been absorbed in the vessel becomes *nosar*.

This law [of breaking the earthenware vessel in which meat of a sacrifice has been cooked] applies also to all holy sacrifices [not just the sin-offering].

**Rambam:** This law is a suprarational decree of scripture and applies only to the sin-offering, and not to other sacrifices (Laws of Sacrificial Procedure 8:11-14).

**Mizrahi:** There is a principle that when a vessel which has absorbed a prohibited flavor in its walls is left overnight, the flavor decays and thus ceases to be prohibited. So Rashi’s comment is difficult to understand, since the flavor of the sin-offering that has been absorbed within the earthenware vessel will not become prohibited as *nosar* until the following morning (see below 7:15), by which time the flavor will have *already decayed*.

In truth, however, there is an instant in time at the crack of dawn when the prohibition of *nosar* begins and the flavor has not yet decayed. Therefore, the flavor will become prohibited at this point.

**Why must a copper vessel in which meat from a sin-offering was cooked be purged with water?** (v. 21)

**Rashi:** To remove [the flavor] which is absorbed in [the walls of the vessel]. But in the case of an earthenware vessel, Scripture teaches you here that it never rids itself of its defect [and must therefore be broken].

**Rambam & Ra’avad:** This law applies to all sacrifices, not just the sin-offering (ibid.).

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**The Law of Nosar in an Earthenware Vessel** (v. 21)

*Rashi* writes that if the meat of a sin-offering is cooked in an earthenware vessel, the vessel becomes prohibited because the flavor of the meat that has been absorbed into the walls of the vessel becomes *nosar*.

However, *Rashi’s* explanation is difficult to understand, because:

a.) Nosar is meat from a sacrifice that was left past the allotted time when it can be eaten (see below 7:15). Thus, if the flavor absorbed into an earthenware vessel becomes prohibited because it is nosar, then the prohibition would not start until the allotted time had passed. However, the Torah makes no mention that the earthenware vessel is only broken after some time has passed, so it is difficult to accept that this is the reason here.

b.) The question of Mizrahi: Surely the flavor of the meat would have decayed in any case before the prohibition of nosar begins.

c.) Nosar usually refers to meat that has been left past its prescribed time, and not merely the flavor of meat which has been absorbed into a...
An earthenware vessel in which (the meat of a sin-offering) is cooked must be broken. But if it is cooked in a copper vessel, it should be purged (in boiling water, to extract the absorbed flavor) and rinsed with water.

Every male among the priests may eat it. It is a most holy (offering).

Any sin-offering (whose blood was supposed to be poured on the outer Altar, and) some of its blood was brought into the Tent of Meeting, to make atonement in the Sanctuary, (is invalid and) should not be eaten. It must be burned in fire.

The Guilt-Offering

1. This is the law of the guilt-offering: It is a most holy (offering).
2. They should slaughter the guilt-offering in the place where they slaughter the burnt-offering. Its blood should be dashed upon the Altar, all around.
3. He should offer all of its (sacrificial) fat from it: the tail, and the fat covering the intestines, the two kidneys, (together) with the fat that is on them, which is over the flanks. He should (also) remove the diaphragm, (and a bit of) the liver (which is connected) to it, (when he takes out) the kidneys.

The Last Word

A n “earthenware vessel” represents the body of man, which was formed from the earth. Just as an earthenware vessel that absorbs a prohibited substance must be broken, so too, if a man’s body participates in a sin, God forbid, it can be atoned for when his heart becomes “broken” through true repentance.

(Taken from Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5736)
When is a thanksgiving-offering brought? (v. 12)

Rashi: To give thanks [to God] for a miracle that had happened to a person. For instance, 1.) those who made a sea-voyage or 2.) journeyed in the desert, or 3.) those who had been in prison, or 4.) a sick person who recovered. All these are required to give thanks [to God], since they explain that, in Psalms, they are recorded in order of danger, with the most dangerous first. However, in the Talmud, they are recorded in order of frequency.

Tosfos: In Psalms the sequence is: 1.) desert journey (ibid. 4-9), 2.) imprisonment (ibid. 10-16), 3.) illness (ibid. 17-22), 4.) sea journey (ibid. 23-31) i.e. the list is in order of danger, with the most dangerous first. However, in the Talmud the sequence is: 1.) sea journey, 2.) desert journey, 3.) illness, 4.) imprisonment i.e. the list is in order of frequency, with the most common first (Brachos 54b, s.v. abba).

The Thanksgiving Offering (v. 12)
The four categories of miraculous salvation that require a thanksgiving-offering are recorded in a different order in Psalms than the Talmud. Tosfos explains that, in Psalms, they are recorded in order of danger, whereas the Talmud recorded them in order of frequency. Rashi, however, chose neither the sequence of Psalms nor that of the Talmud, but offered yet another permutation. Why? And why did Rashi write the first three cases in the plural, and the last case (recovery from illness) in the singular?
5 The priest should make them go up in smoke on the Altar as a fire-offering to God. It is a guilt-offering.

6 Any male among the priests may eat it. It should be eaten in a holy place. It is a most holy (offering).

Ownership of Sacrificial Remains

7 The guilt-offering is like the sin-offering (in that) they have the same law (in the following instance: Only) a priest who (is permitted to pour blood on the Altar and thus) effect atonement through (the sacrifice) to (its owner is allowed to eat the meat, for) it is his.

8 (Similarly, if such a) priest offers up a person’s burnt-offering, the skin of the burnt-offering which he has offered up belongs to the priest. It will be his.

9 Any meal-offering baked in an oven, or any one made in a deep pan or in a shallow pan, belongs to the priest who offers it up (together with the group of priests that are officiating that day). It will be his (and theirs).

10 Any (voluntary) meal-offering mixed with oil or (the meal-offering of the sinner that is) dry, should belong equally to all the sons of Aharon.

The Thanksgiving Offering

11 This is the law of the peace-offering, which he should bring to God:

12 If he is bringing it as a thanksgiving-offering, he should offer, along with the thanksgiving-offering: (ten) unleavened loaves mixed with oil, (ten) unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and (ten loaves of unleavened bread baked from) flour (which is then) scalded and mixed with oil.
When may the meat of the thanksgiving-offering be eaten? (v. 15)

Rashi: He may eat it during the entire night. If so, why did they say [that it may be eaten only] until midnight? In order to distance people from sin [i.e. as a precaution to ensure that people do not come to eat it after dawn].
13 along with (ten) loaves of leavened bread. He should bring his (bread) offering along with his thanksgiving peace-offering.

- 14 He should offer (to the priest) one (bread) out of each (of the four types of bread) offering, as a donation for God. (These breads) belong to the priest who dashes the blood of the peace-offering.

- 15 (Regarding) the meat of his thanksgiving peace-offering: His sacrifice should be eaten on the day it is offered up. He should not leave any of it over until morning.

- 16 But if his offering is (not an obligatory thanksgiving-offering with bread, but rather) a vow or a voluntary donation, it may be eaten on the day he offers up his offering; and on the next day, whatever is left over from it may be eaten. 17 However, on the third day whatever is left over from the meat of the offering must be burned in fire.

- 18 If (he offers his sacrifice with the intention that) any of the meat of his peace-offering is to be eaten on the third day, it will not be accepted. It will not count for the one who offers it, for it will be rejected, and the person who eats from it will bear (the consequences of) his sin.*

- 19 The meat (of a peace-offering) that touches anything (that is ritually) impure should not be eaten. It should be burned in fire. But regarding (a piece of) meat (which left its designated area): anyone who is (ritually) pure may eat (the rest of) the meat (which remained inside).

- 20 (If) a person eats the meat of a peace-offering of God, while (a state of ritual) impurity is upon him, (his) soul will be cut off from its people.

- 21 (If) a person touches anything (ritually) impure—whether it is impurity from a human or an impure animal (carcass) or any impure (carcass of an) abominable creature—and then eats from the meat of a peace-offering to God, (his) soul will be cut off from its people.

**Additional Laws of Forbidden Fats and Blood**

22 God spoke to Moshe, saying: 23 Speak to the Children of Israel, saying:

- You should not eat any (sacrificial) fat from an ox, sheep, or goat.

- 24 The fat of a carcass and the fat of an animal that was torn (to death), may be used for any work, but you must not eat it. 25 (If) anyone eats (sacrificial) fat of animals from which sacrifices

"TO DISTANCE PEOPLE FROM SIN" (v. 15)

Rashi writes that while, in principle, the meat of a thanksgiving-offering could be eaten at any time of the night before the morning, there is nevertheless a precautionary law that the meat must be eaten before midnight.

At first glance Rashi is referring to the Talmudic teaching that our Sages introduced a precautionary law to ensure that people would not come to eat the meat in the prohibited time (see Zevachim 5:6). Thus, it is Rabbinic law that prohibits the consumption of sacrificial meat past midnight, whereas according to Torah law this is allowed until morning.

However, this begs the question: What prompted Rashi to inform us here of a detail in Rabbinic law? Surely Rashi’s commentary is an explanation of scripture, and not a legal text, so his comment here appears to be out of place.

Furthermore, Rashi’s primary intended readership—the child studying Chumash for the first time—would not be familiar with this detail of Rabbinic law. So why does Rashi write, “If so, why did they say [that it may be eaten only] until midnight?” presuming that the reader will know what he is speaking of, without offering any background information?

**The Explanation**

When the Talmud states that our Sages made precautionary enactments, this generally refers to the laws established during the period

The Torah requires that sacrificial meat that becomes ritually impure should be burned (v. 19), in order that another person should not accidentally come to eat it and sin. This teaches us a powerful lesson: that even if one is sure that an obstacle will not lead himself to sin, he should eliminate it for the sake of his fellow.

(Based on Sicha of 8th Tishrei 5746)
of the second Temple, when a host of additional enactments proved necessary to curb the spiritual regression of the Jewish people which occurred at that time.

However, this could not possibly be what Rashi is referring to here, since a.) It requires a prior knowledge of Talmud, which Rashi’s primary readership lacks, and, b.) It is a detail in Rabbinic Law which is outside the scope of Rashi’s commentary, which is limited exclusively to scriptural analysis. Rashi must therefore be referring to some sort of scriptural (Torah) law which is indicated directly by our verse.

Our verse contains two separate laws: 1.) That sacrificial meat must not be left past dawn, and 2.) Any meat left over must be burned. Naturally, we would expect these two distinct laws to be recorded one after the other: “1.) His sacrifice should be eaten on the day it is offered up, until morning. 2.) He should not leave any of it over.” In fact, however, the verse actually mixes these two laws together, “His sacrifice should be eaten on the day it is offered up. He should not leave any of it over until morning.”

In other words, the verse seems to be going out of its way to avoid saying, “His sacrifice should be eaten until morning,” by placing the “until morning” clause at the end of the verse, in the context of a different law. Rashi concluded that with this turn of phrase the Torah is teaching us here that one should not in fact eat a sacrifice throughout the night “until morning,” but rather, it is only that “he should not eat a sacrifice throughout the night “until morning.”
are brought as fire-offerings to God, the soul (of the person) who eats it will be cut off from its people.

- 26 You should not eat any blood in any of the places where you live, whether from birds or from animals, (but the blood of fish and grasshoppers is permitted).

- 27 (If) any person eats any blood, the soul (of) that (person) will be cut off from its people.

Gifts to the Priests

28 God spoke to Moshe, saying: 29 Speak to the Children of Israel, saying:

- Anyone who dedicates* his peace-offering to God, should bring his offering to God (personally*) from (the animal dedicated as) his peace-offering.

- 30 His own hands should bring the fire-offerings of God. (Namely) he should bring the fat on the breast, so he can wave the breast as a waving before God.

- 31 The priest should make the fat to go up in smoke on the Altar. The breast will belong to Aharon and his sons.

- 32 You should give (a portion of) the right leg from your peace-offering to the priest as an elevation-offering. 33 (Anyone) of the sons of Aharon who (is fit to) offer up the blood of the peace-offering and the fat, should have (a share of) the right leg. 34 For I have taken the breast of the wave-offering and the thigh of the elevation-offering from the children of Israel, from their peace-offerings, and I have given them from the children of Israel to Aharon the priest and to his sons as an eternal statute.

Classic Questions

- How is the “waving” carried out? (v. 30)
  
  Rashi: The priest would move them forward and backward, upward and downward.

Toras Menachem

Rabbinic law, for a difficulty with the verse itself leads us to conclude that sacrificial meat may not be eaten throughout the night.

The only detail which scripture does not inform us of, is from what point in the night a person should refrain from eating the meat as a precautionary measure. Presumably, this detail was omitted not because it is arbitrary, or because it was left for the Sages to decide as a precept of rabbinic law, but rather, because:

a.) This precautionary measure is not the main subject of the verse. Therefore all its details were not stated explicitly.

And: b.) It is a simple fact that an average person would have to stop eating by a certain time of the night to avoid any possibility of the offering being left until the morning. So while the Torah indicated the essential requirement of this precaution, it left the Sages to clarify this detail which can be worked out rationally, without the Torah having to inform the reader exactly what time it had in mind.

We can presume that when this law was given to the Jewish people by Moshe, the sages of that generation, who were familiar with the intricacies of human nature, sought to quantify what the Torah meant by a reasonable precautionary measure to stop people transgressing this particular command, and they concluded that midnight is the appropriate cut-off point.

Thus, in the final analysis we see that the sages to which Rashi refers were not the Sages of the Second-Temple era who are mentioned in the Talmud, but rather, those who were appointed by Moshe to lead the Jewish people. And we also see that Rashi is referring here, at the literal level, to a Torah law, and not a Rabbinic enactment.

The Wave-Offering (v. 30)

Rashi writes, “The priest would move them forward and backward, upward and downward.”

“Upward and downward” represents the ascents and descents that a person experiences in his personal spiritual standing.

“Forward and backward” represents the quality of spreading Judaism outwards, to other people.

The lesson here is that regardless of whether one is “upward or downward”—on a spiritual high or low—a person should endeavor to go “forward and backward,” to influence other people positively.
CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● When was this section actually said (v. 1-3)?

Rashi: This section was stated seven days before the erection of the Sanctuary [in Parshas Pekudei. However], the Torah is not in chronological order (see table on facing page).

Details already commanded in Parshas Tetzaveh are repeated here, because on the first day of the inauguration, God repeated these commands to urge Moshe on [in the matter], when the matter became practically relevant (Rashi to v. 2).

I have already explained the entire passage about the inauguration in Parshas Ve’atah Tetzaveh (Rashi to v. 5).

● What is the Urim? (v. 8)

Rashi: A parchment with the explicit Name of God.

We therefore need to explain why Rashi found it necessary here to explain that the Urim is “a parchment with the explicit Name of God,” when he had already explained this matter earlier in Parshas Tetzaveh (28:30)?

Toras Menachem

? The Urim (v. 8)

Rashi makes few comments here in chapter 8, relying on his earlier words in Parshas Tetzaveh: “I have already explained the entire passage about the inauguration in Parshas Ve’atah Tetzaveh.”

We therefore need to explain why Rashi found it necessary here to explain that the Urim is “a parchment with the explicit Name of God,” when he had already explained this matter earlier in Parshas Tetzaveh (28:30)?
35 (All) these* are the (privileges) of Aharon and his sons from the fire-offerings of God, because they are anointed—(which they received) on the day that He brought them near (to Him) to be priests for God—\(^3\) that God commanded to give them on the day that He anointed them, from the children of Israel. (It is) an eternal statute for their generations.

37 (All) these* are the laws of the burnt-offering, the meal-offering, the sin-offering, the guilt-offering, for the (day of) inauguration (of the priesthood), and for the peace-offering, \(^3\) which God commanded Moshe on Mount Sinai, on the day He commanded the children of Israel to offer up their sacrifices to God in the Sinai Desert.

**Inauguration of Aharon and His Sons**

God spoke to Moshe, saying, \(^2\) “Take Aharon (and persuade him to come) along with his sons. (Take) the garments, the anointing oil, the sin-offering bull, the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread, \(^3\) and assemble the entire community at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.”

4 Moshe did as God had commanded him. The community assembled at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. \(^5\) Moshe said to the community, “These (things that I am about to perform before you) God has commanded (me) to do.”

6 Moshe brought Aharon and his sons near and (immersed) them in water. \(^7\) He placed the Tunic upon (Aharon), girded him with the Sash, clothed him with the Robe, placed the Apron upon him, girded him with the decorative band of the Apron, and adorned him with it. \(^8\) He placed the Breastplate upon him, and he inserted the Urim v’Tumim into the Breastplate. \(^9\) He placed the Turban on (Aharon’s) head, and

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**“The Torah is Not in Chronological Order”**

The sequence of events surrounding the inauguration of Aharon and his sons as they are recorded in the Torah compared with the dates on which they occurred, according to Rashi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offering</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tetzaveh</td>
<td>Instructions for the inauguration of Aharon &amp; his sons</td>
<td>After Yom Kippur</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pekudei</td>
<td>Initial erection of the Tabernacle (for the purposes of inauguration)</td>
<td>23rd of Adar²</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayikra &amp; Tzav</td>
<td>Instructions for offering sacrifices in the Tabernacle</td>
<td>Before Rosh Chodesh Nisan¹</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tzav 8:1-3</td>
<td>Instructions for the inauguration of the Tabernacle are repeated⁴</td>
<td>23rd of Adar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tzav 8:4-36</td>
<td>Seven days of inauguration (Tabernacle dismantled daily)⁴</td>
<td>23rd - 29th Adar²</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shemini 9:1-24</td>
<td>Eighth day of inauguration Tabernacle erected permanently⁶</td>
<td>Rosh Chodesh Nisan¹</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. See Toras Menachem to Shemos 40:2.  
2. Rashi, beginning of Parshas Shemini.  
3. Since Aharon and his sons were required to bring formal public sacrifices for the first time on Rosh Chodesh Nisan (see beginning of Parshas Shemini) the instructions how to do this (recorded in Parshiyos Vayikra and Tzav) must have been said beforehand, possibly as early as 23rd of Adar—Likutei Sichos vol. 17, pp. 10-11 and note 20 ad loc. For an alternative explanation see Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5745, ch. 19; and Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5748, ch. 17.  
4. Rashi here, v. 2.  
5. Rashi 9:23.  

* * *

עיין פ"ה האברכים
The Explanation

While Rashi generally relied on the reader to remember what he had written in Parshas Tetzaveh, he nevertheless deemed it appropriate to re-emphasize those concepts which are particularly difficult to understand.

In our case, the word *Urim* (עִירִים) is particularly difficult, because it is etymologically related to the word *ra‌a* meaning “light.” So the reader will immediately wonder: If the *Urim* is an item placed inside the Breastplate, why is it called a “light”?

Thus, in Parsha Tetzaveh Rashi explains, “This is a parchment containing God’s explicit Name, which was placed within the folds of the Breastplate, through which it would light (דְּרַשְׁא) up its words.”

So here, in Parshas Tzav, Rashi felt it appropriate to re-emphasize the meaning of the word *Urim*, since it is particularly difficult to understand. Nevertheless, Rashi did not repeat his entire comment from Parshas Tetzaveh, but sufficed with a few short words to jog the memory of the reader.
on the cap, towards his face, he placed the golden Forehead-Plate, the Holy Crown, as God had commanded Moshe.

10 Moshe took the anointing oil and anointed the Sanctuary and everything inside it and (thus) sanctified it. 11 He sprinkled from (the anointing oil) upon the Altar seven times. He anointed the Altar and all its apparatus, as well as the washtub and its base, to sanctify them. 12 He poured some of the anointing oil upon Aharon’s head and anointed him, to sanctify him.

13 Moshe brought Aharon’s sons near and clothed them with Tunics, girded them with Sashes, and tied High Hats (Turbans) on them, as God had commanded Moshe.

14 He brought the sin-offering bull close. Aharon and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the sin-offering bull. 15 Moshe slaughtered it. He took the blood and placed it on the horns of the Altar, all around, with his finger, and he (thus) purified the Altar. He poured the (remaining) blood at the (protruding) base of the Altar, and (thus) sanctified (the Altar, giving it the power) to effect atonement upon it.

16 He took all the fat which was on the stomach, the diaphragm (together with some of) the liver, the two kidneys and the fat that was on them, and Moshe made them go up in smoke on the Altar.

17 He burned the bull, its hide, its meat, and its dung in fire outside the camp, as God had commanded Moshe.

18 He brought the burnt-offering ram near. Aharon and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the ram. 19 Moshe slaughtered it and he dashed the blood on the Altar, all around. 20 Moshe cut up the

C L A S S I C Q U E S T I O N S

● When was Moshe commanded to sprinkle anointing oil on the Altar? (v. 11)

Rashi: I do not know where [in scripture] he was commanded to perform these sprinklings.

Ramban: Perhaps Moshe was commanded to sprinkle anointing oil on the Altar with the words, “[You should anoint the Altar and all its

T O R A S M E N A C H E M

The Sprinkling of Oil on the Altar (v. 11)

Every procedure that Moshe carried out during the inauguration of Aharon and his sons was commanded directly by God (see above v. 4-5). However, Rashi was troubled when reaching verse 11, the sprinkling of oil on the Altar by Moshe, since this detail does not appear to be mentioned at all in God’s commands to Moshe (in Parshas Tetzaveh). Unable to find a solution at the literal level, Rashi wrote, “I do not know where [in scripture] he was commanded to perform these sprinklings.”

Ramban, however, appears to offer a simple, solution. He writes that the obligation to sprinkle anointing oil on the Altar can be derived from the verse, “You should sanctify the Altar, and the Altar will become holy of holies” (Shemos 40:10). I.e., after anointing the Altar and the other utensils, as instructed in the first half of the verse, it is then necessary to confer on the Altar a further degree of sanctity, to render it, “holy of holies.” This is done by sprinkling more anointing oil, just as Aharon and his sons were sanctified by sprinkling oil (29:21).

The Explanation

Rashi rejected the logic of Ramban, because:

a.) Earlier, in Parshas Tetzaveh, Rashi wrote that the term “holy of holies” applies to all the utensils of the Tabernacle, and not just the Altar— but the Torah states this explicitly only in the case of the Altar. Therefore, Rashi could not accept the argument of Ramban here, that Moshe sprinkled anointing oil on the Altar so that it could reach a higher level of sanctity than the other utensils, since this would be inconsistent with his earlier comment in Parshas Tetzaveh.

b.) In Parshas Tetzaveh, Rashi writes that it is prohibited to use anointing oil in any case, “which is not needed for the priesthood or the kingship,” for this is considered to be an abuse of the holy oil for “alien” purposes.

Thus, in our case it is out of the question that Moshe would have made an additional application of anointing oil to the Altar after it had already been sanctified, as this would be considered a use for alien purposes.

So Rashi was left without a solution. Nevertheless, despite being a great Torah scholar and halachic authority, Rashi was not ashamed to write, “I do not know where he was commanded to perform these sprinklings,” thus teaching the reader that even those of a lesser stature than Rashi should not be embarrassed to admit their shortcomings.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5735)

Sparks of Chasidus

In Chasidic thought, oil represents the secrets of Torah which are so sublime that they cannot be understood. This is the inner reason why Rashi wrote “I don’t know,” in the case of anointing oil.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5735)
Why is the second sacrifice in particular referred to as the “inauguration ram”? (v. 22)

**Rashi:** The term מָלַאכַי means [not “inauguration ram” but] “completion ram” מָלַאכַי, for these rams filled מָלַאכַי and completed מָלַאכַי the [status of the] priests in their priesthood.

**Ramban:** The bull sin-offering (v. 14-17) was brought to atone for the Altar and sanctify it. The ram burnt-offering (v. 18-21) was brought to achieve Divine favor for the priests. And the ram peace-offering (v. 22-29) was brought to thank God for the privilege of priesthood. This final offering is referred to by the Torah as the “inauguration ram,” as it completed the process of inauguration.

What did Moshe wear during the inauguration? (v. 28)

**Rashi:** Moshe performed the [priestly] service throughout all the seven days of inauguration, dressed in a white robe.

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**Why is the second sacrifice in particular referred to as the “inauguration ram”? (v. 22)**

The inauguration process of Aharon and his sons required the sacrifice of three animals: a.) A bull, for a sin offering (v. 14-17). b.) A ram for a burnt-offering (v. 18-21). c.) A second ram for a peace-offering (v. 22-29).

Obviously, it was the cumulative effect of these sacrifices together that inaugurated Aharon and his sons. So, when reaching our verse Rashi was troubled why the Torah refers to the second ram in particular as the “inauguration ram.” Surely, wondered Rashi, all the sacrifices were inauguration offerings.

To solve this problem, Rashi suggested that the word מָלַאכַי here, which usually means “inauguration,” actually means “filling” or “completion” in this case. Thus it is incorrect to say that the Torah referred to the third offering as the “inauguration ram,” but rather, it is the “completion lamb” that “filled מָלַאכַי and completed מָלַאכַי the [status of the] priests

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SIXTH

Reading

in their priesthood.” And this explains why only the second ram is referred to as the אֶל (completion ram), since this was the final sacrifice that actually completed the inauguration process.

This, however, presents us with the following difficulties:

a.) Why does Rashi use the unusual expression, that the lamb inaugurated the “priests in their priesthood,” rather than the more common expression that the priests were inaugurated into service?

b.) Rashi’s interpretation of the same concept in Parshas Tetzaveh seems to differ from his understanding here. In Parshas Tetzaveh he writes that this offering “is a peace-offering, because it makes peace for the altar, for the one who performs the service, and for the owner,” i.e. Rashi understood that the word מלאך means a peace-offering. Here, however, in Parshas Tzav, Rashi wrote that מלאך means “completion.”

Why is Rashi not consistent in his understanding of this term?

The Explanation

In Parshas Tetzaveh the Torah states, “You should take out of the ram the (abdominal) fat, the tail-fat, the fat that covers the innards, the diaphragm of the liver, the two kidneys along with the fat that is upon them, and the right thigh, because it is a מלאך ram” (29:22).

Now, if we translated מלאך to mean “completion” in this case, the above verse would make no sense at all. For completion occurs for one reason alone: because it is the very last procedure. So it makes no sense to say that certain parts were removed from the animal and placed on the Altar because this was the ram of completion, for what do offering parts and completion have to do with one another?

Therefore, in this case, Rashi understood that the word מלאך means that it was a peace-offering, for the key identifying feature of a peace-offering is that part of the animal is offered on the Altar and part is eaten by the owners—and thus, in Rashi’s words, “it makes peace for the Altar, for the one who performs the service, and for the owner.”

In our Parsha however, the Torah does not state that the parts were offered on the Altar “because it is a מלאך ram.” Therefore, Rashi was not forced to follow the above logic.

Rashi reasoned if the Torah meant to tell us that this was a peace-offering it would have said so. Thus the term מלאך must mean something else here. Therefore he wrote, that “The term מלאך means “completion,” for these rams filled (מלאך) and completed (מלאך) the [status of the] priests in their priesthood.”

To explain why it was the second ram alone that is described as an “inauguration ram,” (when it was both rams that inaugurated Aharon and his sons), Rashi stressed that the second ram “completed the [status of the] priests in their priesthood.” I.e. it did not inaugurate the priests into service, allowing them to officiate in the Tabernacle—for this was achieved by the first ram. Rather, the second ram imparted the priests with the sanctity required to eat the parts of the sacrifices that only a priest may eat, i.e. it “completed the [status of the] priests in their priesthood.”

[cf. Ramban].

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5730)

Was Moshe a Priest? (v. 28)

Rashi’s comment to verse 28 presents the following problems:

a.) Why did Rashi wait until this point to teach us that, “Moshe performed the [priestly] service throughout all the seven days of inauguration, dressed in a white robe”? Surely this point should have been made at the beginning of this discussion or at the end, but not somewhere in the middle?

Sparks of Chasidus

One of the unique qualities of a Jew is that he is able to elevate the process of eating food—a mundane act which even animals perform—to be an act of serving God. The priests achieve this in the fullest sense, since the part of the sacrifices which they eat becomes spiritually uplifted, just like the rest of the sacrifice that is burned on the Altar. Therefore, in addition to inaugurating the priests to carry out the holy service in the Temple, an additional inaugural sacrifice was required to grant the priests with the ability to perform this holy task of eating the sacrifices (see Toras Menachem to v. 22).

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5730)
CLASSIC QUESTIONS

b.) What led Rashi to conclude that Moshe was “dressed in a white robe”?

c.) Rashi's source, the Toras Kohanim, states that Moshe acted as the High Priest during the days of inauguration. Why did Rashi omit this point?

THE EXPLANATION

In verse 12, above, we read that Moshe “poured some of the anointing oil upon Aharon’s head and anointed him, to sanctify him.” This suggests that Moshe was in fact a High Priest, for in order to anoint Aharon into office as High Priest surely Moshe needed to have been of at least an equal stature himself. Therefore, the Toras Kohanim concluded that Moshe was indeed a High Priest, at least during the period of inauguration.

However, at the literal level, Rashi found this argument unconvincing. For Moshe began the week of inauguration by announcing to the Jewish people, “These (things that I am about to perform before you) God has commanded (me) to do” (v. 5). So clearly, Moshe did not need to possess any special status in order to anoint Aharon as High Priest, since he was following an explicit command of God. Similarly, all the other procedures which Moshe carried out during the inauguration were direct commands from God, as the Torah stresses no less than 18 times in this passage, “...as God had commanded Moshe.”

Therefore, at the literal level there is no need to presume that Moshe was a priest (or High Priest), since all his actions were directly commanded by God, and not a function of his own authority or status.

However, on reaching our verse (v. 28) the reader will immediately notice an exception to this rule. For here we read that Moshe took the right thigh (along with the sacrificial parts of the peace-offering and breads) and “made it go up in smoke on the Altar.” Now, the right thigh is one of the gifts which is given to the priests, as we read above, “You should give the right leg from your peace-offering to the priests” (7:32). So, upon reading our verse that the right thigh was burned on the Altar by Moshe, the reader will immediately wonder: Why was the thigh not given to Aharon and his sons?

Rashi concluded that this proves that Moshe was in fact a priest, and that consequently he was able to take the right thigh (which was one of the gifts given to the priests) for himself and do with it as he pleased—and he chose to burn it on the Altar. Therefore, it is only upon reaching our
with the burnt-offering. They were inauguration-offerings—a pleasant aroma, a fire-offering to God.

29 Moshe took the breast and waved it as a wave-offering before God. It belonged to Moshe as a portion from the inauguration ram, as God had commanded Moshe.

30 Moshe took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the Altar, and he sprinkled it on Aharon and on his garments, on his sons and on his sons’ garments. He (thus) sanctified Aharon, his garments, his sons and his sons’ garments with him.

31 Moshe said to Aharon and to his sons, “Cook the meat at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and eat it there, together with the bread that is in the basket of the inauguration offerings, as I have commanded, saying, ‘Aharon and his sons should eat it.’ 32 You should burn whatever is left over from the meat and the bread in fire.”

33 “You should not leave the entrance of the Tent of Meeting for seven days, until the concluding day of your days of inauguration, because you will (now) be inaugurated for seven days. 34 God has commanded that whatever was done on this day must be done (all seven days) to atone for you. 35 You

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● If the Tabernacle was dismantled at night during the seven days of inauguration, how could Aharon and his sons stay there for seven days and nights? (v. 33, 35)

Sforno: The outer curtains of the Tabernacle were not dismantled.

Bachaye: The Torah does not mean that they were literally not allowed to leave the Tabernacle day and night, but rather, that any verse that Rashi explained, “Moshe performed the [priestly] service throughout all the seven days of inauguration, dressed in a white robe,” for it only at this point that we have proof that Moshe was in fact a priest.

However, this begs the question: Why did Moshe offer up the thigh on the Altar, rather than keep it for himself as a gift?

Sifsei Chachanim answers that this was to indicate Moshe’s inferior status to Aharon and his sons. But, at the literal level, it is difficult to accept that any aspect of the sacrificial procedure in the Tabernacle was done for negative reasons, to stress inferiority, etc.

Rather, it would seem that—on the contrary—Moshe’s offering of the thigh on the Altar stresses Moshe’s greatness, i.e. in addition to the usual parts which are offered up on the Altar when a priest brings a peace-offering, Moshe offered an additional part: the thigh. (In this way Moshe’s sacrifice resembled the meal-offering of the High Priest, where additional portions of the offering were burned on the Altar to stress the importance of the one who is offering it—See above 6:12-15 and Toras Menachem ibid.)

Thus, Rashi writes here, “With the exception of this one, we do not find any case where the thigh of a peace-offering was offered up [on the Altar],” in order to stress Moshe’s greatness, that his level of priesthood was even higher than that of all the other priests.

Moshe’s White Robe

One detail that remains to be explained is that if Moshe were indeed a priest then why did he not wear special priestly garments, but instead, a “white robe,” as Rashi writes?

However, it could be argued that Moshe’s white robe was indeed a special priestly garment, but one suited to the unique priesthood of Moshe: It was explained above that, at the literal level of Torah interpretation, Moshe was indeed a priest. Therefore, he must have worn priestly garments, which are a crucial element of all priestly service in the Tabernacle. However, the priestly garments which are described in Parshas Tetzeveh were given exclusively to Aharon and his sons, and we do not find any indication in the Torah as to what Moshe’s priestly garments should be.

Therefore, Rashi concluded that the absence of detail in the Torah about Moshe’s garments indicates that the garments themselves should lack any details or features whatsoever. So Rashi wrote that Moshe wore one single, plain white garment, which was devoid of any enhancements or color at all.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5747*)

Where Did the Priests Go at Night? (v. 33, 35)

Throughout the seven days of inauguration, the Tabernacle was erected and dismantled daily (Rashi to 9:23, below), and only on the eighth day did it stand permanently (Rashi to Bamidbar 7:1). Thus many commentators—Sforno, Bachaye, Ramban and others—address the obvious question how the priests did “not leave the entrance of the Tent of Meeting for seven days... day and night for seven days” (v. 33,35), when the Tabernacle was clearly dismantled at night? How could the priests possibly “stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days,” when there simply was no “entrance” at night?

While the commentators offer various solutions, we would have expected Rashi to answer this basic problem. Apparently, Rashi deemed the answer to be self-evident from scripture itself or from one of his previous comments, such that Rashi felt the reader could fathom the matter for himself. So, what is the explanation of the matter, at the literal level?

* For an analysis of the halachic status of Moshe’s priesthood, see Likutei Sichos vol. 32, p. 28ff.
The Explanation

At first glance, verses 33 and 35 seem to be unnecessarily repetitive. Verse 33 states, “You should not leave the entrance of the Tent of Meeting for seven days, until the concluding day of your days of inauguration, because you will (now) be inaugurated for seven days.” And verse 35 appears to repeat the same idea, “You should stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days, and you must guard your appointed duty to God.”

Nevertheless, on closer examination it becomes apparent that these two verses are speaking about two distinct obligations:

Verse 33 stresses that “You should not leave the entrance of the Tent of Meeting,” i.e. we are speaking here about a priest who is already inside, carrying out his service, and is prohibited to leave. This prohibition applies “for seven days,” i.e. during the daytime only, and it is “because you will (now) be inaugurated for seven days.” In other words, the priest may not leave the Tabernacle complex because he is being inaugurated.

On the other hand, verse 35 instructs, “You should stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting,” which is clearly speaking to a person who is already outside, and is required not to distance himself further (cf. Bereishis 18:1). This applies “day and night for seven days,” i.e. at any time when the priest has left the Tabernacle complex when he is not performing his service. And the reason for the prohibition is because “you must guard your appointed duty to God,” i.e. to guard the Tabernacle and its contents.

Since all these details are self-evident from the verses themselves, Rashi did not need to explain them. Likewise, he did not need to answer how the priests remained in the Tabernacle at night when it was dismantled, since from the above it is clear that their obligation at night was to guard the dismantled Tabernacle from the outside.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5745)

* While the Torah actually refers to the פִּסְתַּחַת אֲדֹלֶת מִצְיָד, the entrance to the Tabernacle itself, and not the entrance to the surrounding courtyard, it is clear from the context here that the term refers to the entrance of the courtyard, and not the Tabernacle itself. For above, the Torah states, “The community assembled at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting,” and clearly the entire Jewish nation could not have assembled inside in front of the Tabernacle entrance itself, inside the Tabernacle courtyard. (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5745)
should stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days, and must guard your appointed duty to God so that you will not die, for this is what I was commanded.”

Aharon and his sons did everything that God commanded through Moshe.

Why does the Torah stress that “Aharon and his sons did everything that God commanded”? (v. 36)

Rashi: To tell their praise: that they did not drift [from their instructions] to the right or to the left.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

The Last Word

The Praise of Aharon’s Sons

The Torah “tells the praise” of Aharon and his sons, that “they did not drift to the right or to the left.” Now clearly, it is self-understood that Aharon and his sons would not have neglected to observe any of the commands which they had received from God. Rather, Rashi’s intention here is that there may have been the tendency to “drift” in a slightly different path:

The “right” represents the side of holiness. Thus, the tendency to drift to the right would be to follow a path of additional holiness, more than was requested. Conversely, to drift to the left means to place more emphasis on methods of combating the forces of evil.

Aharon and his sons did not need to drift to the right or to the left, as they were righteous individuals, such that the Torah “tells their praise.” But in other times, when we are surrounded by negative influences, it is indeed necessary to drift to the right and to the left, finding methods of combatting the surrounding spiritual darkness, while at the same time adding to our personal religious conduct.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5748)
Parshas Tzav contains 9 positive mitzvos and 9 prohibitions

1. Lifting off the ashes (from the Altar) [6:3].
2. Kindling the fire on the Altar every day [6:6].
3. Not to extinguish fire on the Altar [6:6].
4. Eating the remainder of meal-offerings [6:9].
5. Not to make the remainder of meal-offerings leavened [6:10].
6. The daily meal-offering of the High Priest [6:13].
7. That the meal-offering of a priest is not eaten [6:16].
8. The procedure of the chatas (sin-offering) [6:18].
9. Not to eat of the flesh of any chatas whose blood is sprinkled inside (the Sanctuary) [6:23].
10. The procedure of the asham (guilt-offering) [7:1].
11. The procedure of the shlamim (peace-offering) [7:11].
12. Not to leave over any flesh of a todah (thanksgiving-offering) past the allotted time for eating it. [7:15].
13. The mitzvah of burning the remnants of the sacred offerings [7:17].
14. Not to eat pigul (an offering sacrificed with incorrect intentions) [7:18].
15. Not to eat the flesh of holy offerings that became impure [7:19].
16. The mitzvah of burning holy flesh that became impure [7:19].
17. Not to eat chailev (forbidden sacrificial fat) [7:23].
18. Not to eat the blood of any animal or bird [7:26].
At first glance, the beginning of our Parsha would belong better at the end of the previous Parsha. For the end of Parshas Tzav describes the first seven days of inauguration of the Tabernacle, and the beginning of our Parsha describes the final, eighth day of inauguration, when the Divine presence finally descended into the Tabernacle.

By breaking to begin a new Parsha in the middle of this story, the Torah appears to be hinting to us that the eighth day, while superficially a mere continuation of the days that preceded it, actually had a totally different character. So the discussion of the eighth day Shemini must begin a new chapter.

Since there are seven days in the week, it follows that the number seven alludes to the cycle of the natural world. Eight, therefore, represents that which is beyond the world, the most sublime spiritual realm which defies any interaction with physicality. Being truly infinite it can have no meaningful relationship with the finite.

And it is this fundamental incompatibility between “seven” and “eight” to which the Torah alludes by placing Shemini in a Parsha of its own. The Torah is teaching us that “eight”, that which is infinite and Godly, and “seven,” the worldly and the physical, cannot be mixed.

That is to say, that they cannot be mixed by man alone. But God and His commands, of course, are not bound by the paradox of matter and spirit. Thus, when man follows God’s command to perform a particular task with a physical object, we witness a most unlikely fusion of opposites: that physical object, whose very nature is to conceal the presence of God, now becomes a pure expression of the infinite Divine Will.

Thus, the 613 mitzvos are, in effect, 613 bridges between “seven” and “eight.” Consequently, it is through the observance of these mitzvos that God’s presence will become visible within this physical world with the true and complete Redemption—like the eighth day of inauguration, when “the glory of God appeared to all the people.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 92ff.)
God has told you to carry out (is done, then) the glory of God will appear to you!

Aharon) in verses 2-4 were unclear. Moshe declares to the Jewish people, because the commands which Moshe gave the Jewish people (via Aharon) in verses 2-4 were actually carried out in verse 5: “They took what Moshe had commanded to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and the entire community approached and stood before God.” So Moshe would not be encouraging the people to do something in verse 6 which they had already done.

Other commentators [such as Sforno] argue that Moshe was instructing the people with the precept of semichah, that those offering a sacrifice must place their hands on the animal’s head before it is slaughtered.

However, at the literal level, it is difficult to accept that this was Moshe’s intentions with the words, “(When) this thing which God has told you to carry out (is done, then) the glory of God will appear to you!” For why should an event so great as the dwelling of the Divine Presence in the Tabernacle be achieved specifically through the act of semichah?

And clearly, the explanation of Targum Yonason is non-literal.

**What is the “thing” referred to in verse 6?**

Sforno: Moshe was referring to the leaning of the hands (semichah) on the communal sin-offering and burnt-offering.

Ibn Ezra: In verse 6, Moshe was referring to the commands given in verses 2-4, that the Jewish people should bring animals.

Ramban: After the Jewish people brought the appropriate animals to be sacrificed (in verses 2-4), Moshe continued to stress that they must be offered in the correct order (in verse 6).

**What is the Meaning of Verse 6?**

The commentators note that the meaning of verse 6 appears to be unclear. Moshe declares to the Jewish people, “(When) this thing which God has told you to carry out (is done, then) the glory of God will appear to you!” but he does not appear to clarify what “thing” he is referring to.

Ibn Ezra argues that in verse 6 Moshe is referring to the details specified in verses 2-4. However, at the literal level, this is difficult to accept, because the commands which Moshe gave the Jewish people (via Aharon) in verses 2-4 were actually carried out in verse 5: “They took what Moshe had commanded to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and the entire community approached and stood before God.” So Moshe would

**Classic Questions**
The Eighth Day of Inauguration

It was on the eighth day (of inauguration*), that Moshe called for Aharon and his sons, and the elders of Israel (so that Aharon’s appointment should be in their presence).

2 He said to Aharon, “Take for yourself a young bull as a sin-offering (as an atonement for the Golden Calf), and a ram as a burnt-offering, (both) unblemished, and bring them close, before God.”

3 “You should speak to the children of Israel and say, ‘Take a he-goat as a sin-offering; and for a burnt-offering (take) a calf and a lamb, (both) in their first year, and (both) unblemished; and for peace-offerings (take) an ox and a ram, to be slaughtered before God; and (take) a meal-offering mixed with oil—for today (the Tabernacle will be fully inaugurated and) God’s presence is (going to) appear to you.’”

5 They took what Moshe had commanded to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and the entire community approached and stood before God.

6 Moshe said, “(When) this thing which God has told you to carry out (is done, then) the glory of God will appear to you!”

7 Moshe said to Aharon, “Approach the Altar and carry out your sin-offering and your burnt-offering, atoning for yourself and for the people, and carry out the people’s offering, atoning for them, as God has commanded.”

8 Aharon approached the Altar and slaughtered his sin-offering calf. Aharon’s sons brought the blood

We are thus left without a satisfactory explanation, at the literal level, as to what Moshe was referring to in verse 6. And why does Rashi, who explains every difficulty that arises at the literal level, fail to address this significant point?

The Explanation

Rashi made no comment here as he held the matter to be self-evident. In verses 2-4 we read how the people were given instructions from God to bring animals to the Tabernacle to be sacrificed, and in verse 5 we read that they followed these instructions. Then, as the people were standing at the entrance, along with the animals which they were told to bring, Moshe declared (in verse 6): “(When) this thing which God has told you to carry out (is done, then) the glory of God will appear to you!,” i.e. that when the animals which they had brought would actually be sacrificed, (by the priests) then the Divine Presence would appear. Thus the Torah continues in verse 7 how Moshe instructed Aharon to bring these sacrifices: “Moshe said to Aharon, Approach the Altar and carry out your sin-offering and your burnt-offering, atoning for yourself and for the people, and carry out the people’s offering, etc.”

However, this leaves the reader with the question: What is the connection between the people’s offering in particular and the arrival of the Divine Presence?

Rashi did not address this matter here because: a.) It is not crucial to understanding the verse; and, b.) He clarifies the matter in one of his later comments:

Rashi explains below (in his commentary to verse 23), that verse 6 was said by Moshe in response to a complaint of the Jewish people: “Moshe, our teacher! All this effort that we have made was so that the Divine Presence should dwell among us, so that we would know that we have been forgiven for the sin of the Golden Calf!” Moshe replied, “(When) this thing which God has told you to carry out (is done, then) the glory of God will appear to you!” (v. 6).

Thus, Rashi makes clear that it was not this sacrifice alone that was responsible for bringing the Divine Presence to the Tabernacle. Rather it was the collective contribution of all the efforts of the Jewish people, culminating with this sacrifice.

Based on the above, we can also explain Rashi’s comment to verse 7, “Aharon was embarrassed and afraid to approach [the Altar].” At first glance this is difficult to understand, since we are speaking here about the eighth day of inauguration, which means that Aharon had been approaching the Altar already for seven days. So why now, all of a sudden, should he become “embarrassed and afraid”?

However, in light of the above explanation we can understand that Aharon knew that this sacrifice was going to be responsible for the actual dwelling of the Divine Presence in the Tabernacle. So we can appreciate that Aharon would have felt the utmost trepidation when considering the awesome consequences of his acts.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5732)

The Last Word

Even though Moshe received the Torah from its heavenly source and transmitted it to the people below, Aharon actually caused the Divine Presence to come down to earth.

Similarly, in these final moments of exile, it is the approach of Aharon bringing the Jewish People closer to observing the Torah (Avos 1:12) which will bring the Divine Presence back to earth once again. For, in this respect, the approach of Aharon is even greater than that of Moshe (Torah study).

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5732)

* See Rashi here and Toras Menachem to Shemos 40:2.
to him. He dipped his finger into the blood, placing (some of it) on the horns of the Altar. He then poured the (remaining) blood at the base of the Altar. He made the fat, the kidneys, and the diaphragm with (a piece of) the liver from the sin-offering go up in smoke on the Altar, as God had commanded Moshe, and he burned the meat and the skin in fire, outside the camp.

He slaughtered the burnt-offering. Aharon’s sons presented the blood to him, and he dashed it on the Altar, all around. They presented the burnt-offering to him in its (prescribed) pieces, along with the head, and he made the (pieces) go up in smoke on the Altar. He washed the intestines and the legs, and he made them go up in smoke on the Altar, along with the burnt-offering.

He brought the people’s offering forward: He took the people’s sin-offering goat, slaughtered it, and prepared it as a sin-offering, like the first one. He brought the burnt-offering forward and prepared it according to the law. He brought the meal-offering forward, filled his palm with it (making a three-finger fistful), and made it go up in smoke on the Altar. (All these sacrifices were offered) in addition to the morning burnt-offering (which came first).

He slaughtered the ox and the ram—the people’s peace-offering. Aharon’s sons presented the blood to him, and he dashed it on the Altar, all around. (They also presented) the fats from the ox and from the ram: the tail, the (fatty) covering (of the intestines), the kidneys and the diaphragm with (a piece of) the liver. They placed the fats on top of the breasts, and he made the fats go up in smoke on the Altar. (Before they were burned) Aharon had waved the breasts and the right thigh as a wave-offering before God, as Moshe had commanded.

Aharon lifted up his hands towards the people and blessed them. He then came down from where he had made the sin-offering, the burnt-offering, and the peace-offering. Moshe and Aharon went into the Tent of Meeting (and Moshe taught Aharon how to offer the incense.) Then, they came out and blessed the people, and the glory of God appeared to all the people.

**Classic Questions**

**What blessing did Aharon give the people? (v. 22)**

**Rashi:** The Priestly Blessing: "May God bless you...," "May God make His face shine...," "May God lift His face...".

**Ramban:** Although the Priestly Blessing is recorded later in the Torah (Bamidbar 6:23-26), it had already been taught to Moshe, who then taught it to Aharon.

**Maskil LeDavid:** Rashi concluded that Aharon must have made the Priestly Blessing here as he gave this blessing alone, unlike in the following verse where he gives a blessing together with Moshe. Presumably, Aharon made a blessing on his own that was unique to the priests.

**Ba’al Haturim:** The three Priestly Blessings correspond to the three sacrifices which Aharon offered: “May God bless you and guard you” (from sin), alludes to the sin-offering. “May God make His face shine” corresponds to the burnt-offering, which the Jewish people are required to bring to Jerusalem when they come to see the Divine Presence in the Temple during a festival. “May God lift His face to you and make peace for you,” corresponds to the peace-offering.

**Aharon’s Blessing (v. 22)**

What led Rashi to conclude that Aharon made the special Priestly Blessing, when the mitzvah of making the priestly blessing had not yet been given to the priests? (See Bamidbar 6:22-26)

Ramban answers that the mitzvah had indeed been given, even though it is written later in the Torah, since the Torah is not written in chronological order. However, it is difficult to accept that this was Rashi’s understanding of the matter, since generally speaking the Torah is written in chronological order, and any exceptions to this rule cannot be presumed unless they are noted explicitly by Rashi. Thus, in our case, it is very unlikely that Rashi understood that the mitzvah of giving the Priestly Blessing was not recorded in chronological order, as he makes no mention of such an idea.

Maskil LeDavid writes that Aharon must have given the Priestly Blessing here, as in the following verse we read that Aharon blessed the people again, together with Moshe. So here, in verse 22, when Aharon blessed the people alone, it follows that he must have blessed them in a way that he alone was capable of—namely, the Priestly Blessing.

However, at the literal level, this argument is difficult to accept because:

a.) We do not find any mention in scripture that Aharon had been inaugrated by Moshe to give the Priestly Blessing at this point.

b.) The Priestly Blessing is a mitzvah which is incumbent on every priest, not just the High Priest, so why did Aharon bless the people alone?

c.) According to Rashi, Moshe also had the status of a priest at this point (see Rashi to Shemos 40:31; Toras Menachem to 8:28 above), so why did he not give the Priestly Blessing too?

Thus, we are left with our original question: What led Rashi to conclude that Aharon made the special Priestly Blessing, when the mitzvah of making the Priestly Blessing had not yet been given to the priests?
The Explanation

Aharon clearly did not perform the mitzvah of giving the Priestly Blessing since, at the literal level, this mitzvah had not yet been given. Rather, Rashi’s intention here is that when Aharon wished to bless the people, he chose the text of the Priestly Blessing, because it was appropriate for that particular occasion.

In other words, even though the mitzvah of making the Priestly Blessing had not yet been given by God, Aharon nevertheless chose to use the formula of this blessing, even before it was given, rather like the patriarchs who observed the mitzvos of the Torah even before they were given (see Rashi to Bereishis 26:5, 32:5).

At this moment in time, Aharon had just finished the service of the eighth day of inauguration, which completed the entire effort of the Jewish people to build a Sanctuary which would be a home for the Divine Presence (“They should make a sanctuary (dedicated) to Me, and I will dwell among them”—Shemos 25:8). The work of this final eighth day was to be completed by Aharon alone, as Moshe stressed: “My brother Aharon is more worthy and important than me. Through his offerings and his service the Divine Presence will dwell among you, and you will know that God has chosen him” (Rashi to v. 23).

Thus, at the auspicious moment when Aharon had finally completed all his service for that day, it was appropriate for him to offer a blessing (and a prayer) that all his actions should have their desired effect, that the Divine Presence should enter the Tabernacle.

Rashi wrote earlier, in Parshas Pekudei, that the entering of the Divine Presence into the Tabernacle was to be a sign that God had forgiven the Jewish people for making the Golden Calf (Rashi to Shemos 38:21). Even though God had already forgiven the Jewish people the previous Yom Kippur (Rashi ibid. 33:11), nevertheless, when the Tabernacle had been fully constructed and inaugurated and the Divine Presence had still not entered, it appeared that God had not yet fully forgiven the Jewish people.

Therefore, while still standing on the Altar, Aharon said the words of the Priestly Blessing, asking God to grant complete forgiveness to the Jewish people and that the Divine Presence should enter the Tabernacle. This was clearly Aharon’s task, as he had been the one who had just offered the sin-offering, which was to make known that God had granted him atonement through this calf for the Golden Calf, which he had made” (Rashi to v. 2).

Thus, Aharon said:

“May God bless you...”—Since the Jewish people may be wondering how Aharon, who was responsible for making the Golden Calf, could achieve atonement for it, Aharon stressed, “May God bless you...”, i.e. that God Himself would give the blessing of atonement.

“May God make His face shine upon you...”, i.e. that the Jewish people should be favorable in God’s eyes.

“May God lift His face to you...”—In his commentary to this verse, Rashi explains: “He should calm his anger.” Thus, in this context Aharon was asking God to forgive the people for making the Golden Calf.

Nevertheless, even after Aharon’s blessing (in v. 22), it was still necessary for Moshe and Aharon to give a further blessing together (in v. 23), for Aharon’s blessing was related to the matter which concerned him personally, i.e. atonement for the Golden Calf. Moshe and Aharon’s joint blessing however, was a general blessing to the entire Jewish people that all their work in constructing the Tabernacle should bear fruit: “They said: May the pleasantness of God, our God, be upon us. (Psalms 90:17). May it be God’s will that the Divine Presence will rest in the work of your hands” (Rashi to v. 23).

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22, p. 39ff.)
Fire came out from before God and consumed the burnt-offering and the fats upon the Altar. All the people saw. They sang praises, and fell upon their faces.

**The Passing of Nadav and Avihu**

Each of Aharon’s sons, Nadav and Avihu, took his own fire pan. They put fire in them and placed incense on top, and they brought an extraneous* fire before God, which He had not commanded them (to bring).

1. Fire came out from before God and consumed them, and they died before God.
2. Moshe said to Aharon, “When God said, ‘I will be sanctified through those whom I have chosen, and I will be glorified before all the people,’ this (event) is what He was talking about.” Aharon was silent**.

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**Classic Questions**

- Why did Nadav and Avihu die? (v. 2)

  **Rashi**: Rabbi Eliezer says: Aharon’s sons died only because they rendered a halachic decision in the presence of Moshe, their teacher [that incense should be offered on the Altar].

  Rabbi Yisha’el says: Because they entered the Sanctuary while intoxicated with wine. The proof of this is that after their death, [the Torah] warned the surviving priests that they may not enter the Sanctuary after having drunk wine (below v. 8-11). This is analogous to the parable in Vayikra Rabah (12:1) about a king who had a personal assistant etc.

  **Midrash**: A king had a personal assistant, whom he found hanging around the entrance of taverns. The king severed his head without explaining why, and appointed another assistant in his place. We would not know why he put the first one to death if he had not told the second one, “You must not enter the entrance of taverns,” from which we known that for this reason he had put the first one to death.

Similarly, when the Torah states, “Fire came out from before God and consumed them, and they died before God,” we would not know why they died. But when Aharon is commanded, “Do not drink (enough) wine to make (yourself) intoxicated” (v. 9), we know that they only died on account of the wine (Vayikra Rabah 12:1).

**Gur Aryeh**: The Torah itself specifies the reason why Nadav and Avihu passed away, because “they brought an extraneous fire before God, which He had not commanded them” (v. 2). The two reasons which Rashi cites are thus additional explanations why they died so quickly. For normally, if a person is liable for death at the hands of heaven, the punishment does not come so quickly.

**Maskil leDavid**: Rashi was troubled why Nadav and Avihu were killed with fire in particular. Rashi thus explains that their sin was connected to fire, since they rendered a halachic decision (about offering incense in fire) in the presence of Moshe. Therefore, their punishment was also with fire, measure for measure.

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**Toras Menachem**

**The Reason for Nadav and Avihu’s Death** (v. 2)

Since the Torah states explicitly the reason for Nadav and Avihu’s untimely passing—“they brought an extraneous fire before God, which He had not commanded them”—Rashi’s two explanations here seem to be totally unnecessary.

**Gur Aryeh** explains that Rashi is merely offering additional explanations why they were killed so quickly, since death by Divine decree is not usually an immediate process. However, it is difficult to accept that this was Rashi’s intention, for Rashi writes, “Aharon’s sons died only because...,” suggesting that Rashi is not offering an additional reason at all.

**Maskil leDavid** suggests that Rashi was troubled why Nadav and Avihu were killed with fire in particular. But at the literal level this does not appear to be a problem, for the Torah stresses that “they brought an extraneous fire before God,” so it makes sense that their punishment was with fire, measure for measure, even without Rashi’s explanation.

In addition to the above problem, we also need to explain:

a.) Why Rashi found it necessary to cite two explanations.

b.) Why he quoted the names of the sages who authored the teachings that he cites, since Rashi usually cites his sources anonymously.

c.) Why Rashi cites only a small part of the analogy in Vayikra Rabah.

Surely he should have either quoted the whole analogy or just given a reference. Why does Rashi quote just the first line of the analogy?

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* The Hebrew word מַעֲנֵי literally means “strange” or “alien.” Since, at the literal level, this fire was not prohibited (see Toras Menachem) we have translated: “extraneous,” which has a less negative connotation. “Extraneous” is derived from the Latin extraneus, which is the etymological root of the English word “strange.”

** Sparks of Chasidus **

Why did Nadav and Avihu enter the Sanctuary “while intoxicated with wine”? (See Rashi)

Chasidic thought explains that while they did actually drink physical wine, their desire was not for the wine per se but rather, the heightened spiritual awareness that can be obtained through drinking. Nadav and Avihu were indeed holy people, as Moshe declared to Aharon after their passing, “Now I see that they were greater than me or you!” (Rashi to v. 3). So, not only did they enter the Sanctuary to be close to God, they did so under the influence of alcohol, as they felt this would help them to come even closer by heightening their spiritual sensitivity.

But their desire for spirituality was unbalanced. Nadav and Avihu simply expired because they came so close to God that they no longer wanted a bodily existence. And while it is indeed appropriate and admirable for a Jew to have an intense yearning for God, like that of Nadav and Avihu, one must be able to refocus spiritual inspiration back into everyday life.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, pp. 179-180)
The Explanation

Rashi was troubled by an inconsistency between verses 9:24 and 10:2. In verse 24, we read about a very special moment when the Tabernacle was finally complete and “fire came out from before God and consumed the burnt-offering and the fats upon the Altar. All the people saw. They sang praises, and fell upon their faces.” From this the reader will understand that “fire coming out from before God” was an extremely positive occurrence, for it represented the tremendous reward that the Jewish people were given for building the Tabernacle.

In verse 2 (of the following chapter) we read of the tragic passing of Nadav and Avihu when “fire came out from before God and consumed them, and they died before God.”

Rashi was troubled: Why did the Torah use exactly the same expression to describe the glorious fire which came to reward the Jewish people in the Tabernacle (v. 24), as it uses to describe the tragic fire which came to punish Nadav and Avihu for their sin—“Fire came out from before God”?

The identical phraseology here in the two verses led Rashi to conclude that both fires must in fact be exactly the same type of fire. In other words, just like in verse 24 when the Tabernacle was completed, the “fire... from before God” was clearly a Divine revelation, so too, the fire in verse 2 which resulted in Nadav and Avihu’s death was also a Divine revelation and was not in itself a punishment. The only problem was that there was some sort of deficiency in their offering (relative to their spiritual standing), and they were unable to cope with the Divine revelation which followed, and died.

Thus, Rashi was left to explain: What spiritual deficiency did Nadav and Avihu’s offering possess that led to their death?

Rashi rejected the argument that their spiritual deficiency was that “they brought an extraneous fire before God, which He had not commanded them,” since from these words alone there is no proof that their fire was sinful. The Torah merely states that they brought an offering which had not been required by God, but there is no real indication here that their offering was against God’s will. It is only referred to as an “extraneous fire,” since it was not intrinsic to the service in the Tabernacle (c. Rashi to Shemos 30:9), but it was nevertheless a holy offering which brought about a revelation of the Divine Presence.

Rashi offers two possibilities as to what Nadav and Avihu’s spiritual deficiency might have been: Rashi’s first answer is that “they rendered a halachic decision in the presence of Moshe, their teacher,” that incense should be offered on the Altar. At first glance this solution is somewhat difficult to accept, since the punishment appears to be much more severe than the crime. Therefore, Rashi stressed that this was the solution of Rabbi Eliezer, who was famous for teaching that “any person who says something which he has not heard from his teacher causes the Divine Presence to depart from Israel” (Branchos 27b). Clearly, Rabbi Eliezer would have perceived the act of ruling a new halachic decision in the presence of one’s teacher to be a heinous crime, so it is perhaps understandable why he thought that Nadav and Avihu deserved death for such an act.

In the final analysis, however, there remains an inconsistency with this solution. For if Rabbi Eliezer held that Nadav and Avihu’s sin caused “the Divine Presence to depart from Israel,” then how is it that they were punished by a “fire that came out from before God,” which was a revelation of the Divine presence (as explained above)? Surely their sin should have caused the Divine Presence to depart, and not reveal itself?

Due to this problem, Rashi offered a further interpretation (that “they entered the Sanctuary while intoxicated with wine”), which explains simultaneously why the Divine Presence revealed itself (and did not depart), and also why Nadav and Avihu were punished.

The Divine Presence revealed itself because, as mentioned above, the offering of Nadav and Avihu was acceptable to God, even though it was not requested. And the Divine Presence did not depart because there was no sin involved, despite Nadav and Avihu being intoxicated, as Rashi writes: “The proof of this is that after their death, [the Torah] warned the surviving [priests] that they may not enter the Sanctuary after having drunk wine,” indicating their total innocence.

However, we are left with the obvious question: If they did nothing wrong, why were they punished?

To address this problem, Rashi continues: “This is analogous to the parable in Vayikra Rabah about a king who had a personal assistant, etc.” (see the full analogy cited in Classic Questions). The key point of the analogy here (which Rashi extracts) is that being a “personal assistant” of the king, this man should have realized on his own, without being told, that “hanging around the entrance of taverns” was an activity displeasing to the king. Likewise in our case, Nadav and Avihu should have realized that it is inappropriate to enter the Sanctuary while intoxicated, even without being told, due to the fact that they were so close to God.
4 Moshe summoned Misha’el and Eltzafan, the sons of Uziel, Aharon’s uncle, and said to them, “Come close and carry your brothers from the Sanctuary outside the camp.”

5 So they approached and carried them outside of the camp (as they were, dressed) in their tunics, as Moshe had said.

Laws of Mourning During Priestly Service

6 Moshe said to Aharon, and to his sons Elazar and Isamar:

- “Do not let your hair grow wild and do not rend your clothes (when you carry out the service in the Tabernacle), so that you will not die, and so that He will not be angry with the entire community.”

   “Your brothers, the entire house of Israel, will weep about the fire that God has (caused to) burn.”

Classic Questions

Why did Moshe instruct Misha’el and Eltzafan to “carry your brothers from the Sanctuary”? (v. 4)

Rashi: Like a person would say to his fellow: “Remove the deceased from before the bride so as not to disturb the joyous occasion.”

Tur Ha’aruch: Why did Moshe not tell Elazar and Isamar, the brothers of Nadav and Avihu, to remove the bodies? Because while, generally speaking, a regular priest may come into contact with a corpse of a close relative, on the day of his inauguration even a regular priest must adopt the stringency of the High Priest who may not come into contact with a corpse of a close relative. Therefore, Misha’el and Eltzafan were asked to remove the bodies instead, since they were levites and not priests.

Toras Menachem

But again, the punishment appears to be much more severe than the crime. So Rashi writes that we should bear in mind that this is the solution of Rabbi Yishma’el, of whom it was said, “Yishma’el the priest helps other priests” (Chullin 49a). Thus, it is understandable that Rabbi Yishma’el would have “helped” his fellow priests Nadav and Avihu by offering an interpretation that minimized the gravity of their sin as much as possible. So he was willing to accept an interpretation that Nadav and Avihu did very little wrong, even if we are left puzzled as to why they were severely punished.

In the final analysis, however, this second solution of Rashi is somewhat inadequate, because it turns out that Nadav and Avihu’s “sin” was not directly connected with their “extraneous” offering, but it was merely “because they entered the Sanctuary while intoxicated with wine.” According to the first interpretation, however, it was the offering itself which caused them to be punished, since they brought the incense as a direct result of rendering, “a halachic decision in the presence of Moshe, their teacher.” So, since Rabbi Eliezer’s explanation is preferable at the literal level, Rashi wrote it as his first, primary interpretation.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 12, p. 49ff.)

Moshe’s Request (v. 4)

After the passing of Nadav and Avihu, Moshe instructed Misha’el and Eltzafan, Aharon’s nephews, to remove the corpses from the sanctuary. Tur Ha’aruch asks why Moshe gave this task to Nadav and Avihu’s cousins, rather than their brothers Elazar and Isamar. For while a priest may not usually come into contact with a corpse, an exception is made in the case of close relatives. So why were Elazar and Isamar denied the mitzvah of assisting with their brother’s burial?

Tur Ha’aruch offers a halachic solution, citing the principle that an ordinary priest is like a High Priest on the day of his inauguration, who is not permitted to come into contact with a corpse.

However, this is difficult to accept at the literal level of Torah interpretation, for at the literal level there can be only one High Priest, as the verse stresses, “(When the High Priest dies), the priest who is anointed from among his sons in his place should prepare it” (Tzav 6:15. See also Rashi to Shemini 9:1 and Korach 16:6).

Rather, the Torah itself clarifies just a few verses below why Elazar and Isamar were not able to remove their brothers from the sanctuary: “Do not go out of the entrance of the Tent of Meeting (when you are in the middle of service), so that you will not die, because God’s anointing oil is upon you” (v. 7). I.e. since Elazar and Isamar had not yet completed their service in the Tabernacle, they were not permitted to involve themselves with another matter.

However, this begs the question: Misha’el and Eltzafan, were also busy serving in the Tabernacle at the time, since they were levites. Thus, while they were not bound by the above prohibition of leaving the Tabernacle during service (which only applies to priests), surely it would have made more sense to find other candidates (to remove the bodies) who were neither priests nor levites, and thus they would not have to abandon their duties in the Tabernacle?

A further question concerns Rashi’s comment here: Rashi writes that Misha’el and Eltzafan were told to remove the bodies of Nadav and Avihu, “As a person would say to his fellow: ‘Remove the

The Last Word

Even though Misha’el and Eltzafan were levites, who are usually given jobs of honor and holiness in the Tabernacle, in this case their service consisted of removing something negative. This teaches us that a person should not only be willing to serve God with honorable, positive acts, but that he should also be willing to serve God through more lowly tasks that are required to remove things that are negative.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, pp. 107-108)
deceased from before the bride so as not to disturb the joyous occasion." Thus, Rashi argued that it was to, “remove the deceased from before the bride so as not to disturb the joyous occasion.” I.e. in addition to being an act of respect for Nadav and Avihu (a fact so obvious that it does not need to be written explicitly) the removal of the bodies was carried out in order to remove something of disrespect to the Sanctuary.

The Explanation

Rashi was troubled why verse 4 needed to be written in the Torah at all, for it is self-understood that after Nadav and Avihu passed away their bodies had to be removed from the sanctuary.

Rashi concluded that the Torah must be informing us of this detail to suggest that the removal of Nadav and Avihu’s bodies was not merely out of respect for them, but for an additional reason too.

* At first glance these words appear to be superfluous, since the first half of the verse stated that Misha’el and Eltzafan were “the sons of Uziel, Aharon’s uncle,” from which we are already aware that they are close relatives (“brothers”) of Nadav and Avihu. Rashi thus understood that the Torah’s additional stress here that they were “brothers” indicates that their family connection the fact that they were levites was crucial to the task which they were to perform.
7 Do not go out of the entrance of the Tent of Meeting (when you are in the middle of the service), so that you will not die, because God’s anointing oil is upon you.”

They did according to Moshe’s word.

Prohibition of Being Intoxicated During Priestly Service

8 God spoke to Aharon, saying:

9 “When you go into the Tent of Meeting do not drink (enough) wine to make (yourself) intoxicated, neither you nor your sons with you, so that you will not die. (This is) an eternal statute for your generations. 10 (This is) so that (you will be able to) distinguish between the holy and the profane and between the unclean and the clean, 11 and to (be able to) instruct the children of Israel regarding all the statutes which God has told them, through Moshe.”

End of the Day’s Service After Nadav & Avihu’s Passing

Moshe spoke to Aharon and his surviving sons, Elazar and Isamar:

“(Even though you are mourners), take the meal-offering that is left over from God’s fire-offerings, and eat it as unleavened loaves beside the Altar, for it is a most holy (offering). 13 You should eat it in a holy place, because it is your portion and your sons’ portion from God’s fire-offerings, for (even though mourners are usually forbidden to eat offerings) that is what I have been commanded (in this case). 14 You should eat the breast of the wave-offering and the thigh of the raised-offering in a pure place (i.e. the Jewish camp)—you, your sons and your daughters with you—for they have been given from the peace-offerings of the children of Israel as your portion and your sons’ portion.

Why Did God Permit His Sanctuary to Be Spoiled?

At this point, the reader may be troubled: If the bodies of Nadav and Avihu were an obstacle to the rejoicing of completing the Tabernacle’s inauguration, then why did God choose to punish Nadav and Avihu on that very day? Surely God should have delayed their punishment out of respect for rejoicing in the inauguration of His own Sanctuary?

To answer this question, Rashi stresses, “As a person would say to his fellow: ‘Remove the deceased from before the bride so as not to disturb the joyous occasion.’” I.e. when Moshe told Misha’el and Eltzafan to remove the bodies of Nadav and Avihu, he did not do so as a direct command from God—for then we would have the above question: Why did God allow this to happen in the first place? Rather, it was a suggestion of Moshe, and it was thus, “Like a person would say to his fellow.” In other words, Moshe was saying: “We cannot understand why God has decided to do what He did, but we at least must do what is incumbent upon us and remove the bodies out of respect for His Sanctuary.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 100ff.)

The Last Word

“DO NOT DRINK WINE…” (v. 9)

There is a view (see Rambam, Laws of Entering the Temple 1:7) that even nowadays a priest may not drink a revi’is (86ml) of wine, for this is sufficient to cause some degree of intoxication, and since it is quite feasible that the Holy Temple will be rebuilt within the time it takes for him to become sober, the wine would thus render him unfit for service in the Temple.

Now, according to Jewish law, intoxication caused by a revi’is of wine can be removed by either a short sleep, or by waiting the time it would take to walk a mil. (There are different views as to precisely how long this is: either 18 or at most 24 minutes).

From here we see a remarkable ramification of the above principle: that Jewish Law takes seriously into consideration the fact that it is possible for Mashiach to come, with a completed Holy Temple, within a maximum of 23 minutes and 59 seconds, thus requiring the priests to be ready for service immediately!

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 2, pp. 618-9)
What did Moshe investigate? (v. 16)

**Rashi:** The he-goat of the additional offerings of Rosh Chodesh.

On that day, three sin-offering goats were sacrificed:

a) “[Take] a he-goat [as a sin-offering]” (above 9:3).

b) The he-goat of Nachshon [the son of Aminadav, leader of the tribe of Yehudah] [See Bamidbar 7:16].

c) The he-goat [of the additional offering] of Rosh Chodesh (ibid 28:15).

Now, of all of these, the only one which was burned [and not eaten as a sin-offering] was this one [the additional offering of Rosh Chodesh].

The Sages of Israel were divided as to why [it needed to be burned]: Some said that it was burned on account of ritual uncleanness that had come into contact with it. Others said that it was burned because [Aharon’s sons were] in a state of mourning.

[However, this begs the question why the other sin-offerings were not burned, for they too were offered while in a state of mourning? The Sages explained that this was] because this [sacrifice came under the category of] holy sacrifices that would also be sacrificed in future generations too, [so they deemed it fit for burning, as the law would require in future generations.]

However, when it came to holy sacrifices that were brought only at that time, [i.e. the other two he-goat offerings], they relied on [a logical extension of] Moshe’s earlier instruction, when he instructed them [to eat another offering which was only brought at that time:] the meal-offering—“eat it as unleavened loaves” (v. 12). [They thus presumed that Moshe’s command here to eat the meal-offering while in a state of mourning would apply to all holy sacrifices that were brought at that time only. But the Rosh Chodesh offering, which was to be brought for all generations, was to be burned.]
15 They should bring the thigh of the raised-offering and the breast of the wave-offering on the fats for fire-offerings, to wave as a wave-offering before God. It will belong to you along with your sons as an eternal statute, as God has commanded.”

16 Moshe made two investigations about (what had happened to) the (three) sin-offering goats, and—look!—(two had been eaten correctly, but one) had been (completely) burned! So he became angry with Elazar and Isamar, Aharon’s surviving sons, (demanding them) to say (an answer): 17 “Why did you not eat the sin-offering? (Did it accidentally go outside) the holy place (where it may be eaten), and being a most holy offering (it became invalidated? God) has given it to you to gain forgiveness for the sin of the community, to atone for them before God! 18 Look, its blood was not (required to be) brought inside the Sanctuary (in which case there would indeed have been an obligation to burn it), so you should have eaten it in the holy place, even though you are in a state of mourning), as I commanded! (Did you, perhaps, sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice while you are in a state of mourning, and thus invalidate it, requiring it to be burned?)”

19 Aharon spoke (sternly) to Moshe: “(Do you think) it was they who offered up the sin-offering and

TORAS MENACHEM

THE DISPUTE BETWEEN MOSHE & AHARON (v. 16-20)

Rashi explains the logic why two of the three sin-offerings were eaten by the priests, whereas one was burned. Aharon had reasoned that in the case of the Rosh Chodesh sin-offering, which was a permanent law to be observed in future generations, the offering should be treated in the same way that all such sin-offerings would be treated in future generations—namely, that a priest should not eat from the offering in a state of mourning, and the parts normally eaten should be burned. However, since the other two sin-offerings that were offered on that day were one-time events, the stringency of not eating the offering while in a state of mourning did not apply. This leniency was derived from Moshe’s instruction that the priests should eat the meal-offering, even though they were in a state of mourning, since it was a one-time sacrifice (v. 12). Aharon thus extended this principle to apply to the other two offerings which were unique to that day, but the third offering which was to apply in the future was burned.

Moshe’s reaction however was most surprising. First, he strongly reprimanded Aharon for burning the third sacrifice, which clearly demonstrated that he had not perceived the law in the same light as Aharon. And then, when Aharon explained himself, Moshe was instantly satisfied with the explanation (v. 20).

Now, Moshe was not a person who was easily enraged. In fact, we find that the Jewish people were constantly testing his patience with complaints and accusations, yet he very rarely became angry. So, in this case, we need to explain why Moshe reacted so impetuously, and why he was so easily calmed.

Why does Rashi not clarify these points which are difficult to understand at the literal level?

THE EXPLANATION

Shortly after Nadav and Avihu’s passing, “Moshe summoned Misha’el and Eltzafan...and said to them, ‘Come close and carry your brothers

Sparks of Chasidus

MOSHE AND AHARON—TRUTH AND PEACE

W

hy does the Torah “advertise” the fact that Moshe erred in a matter of Jewish Law and became angry, only to be corrected by his brother Aharon (v. 16-20)? The Torah avoids making disparaging remarks even about animals (See Bereishis 7:8 and Pesachim 3a), so why is Moshe discredited here?

In fact however, the Torah records the dispute between Moshe and Aharon to indicate that both their stances are correct—not just in principle, but in practice too....

M

oshe embodied the attribute of truth, and Aharon excelled in the quality of peace. Thus Moshe’s tendency was to perceive the true identity of the world, how it is an expression of God’s will, and how it is a reflection of its blueprint, the Torah. Aharon, on the other hand, tended to perceive the apparent identity of the world, with all its imperfections, limitations and obstacles that make serving God difficult. Thus Aharon sought to make peace between the world’s apparent identity and its true identity, accepting the world’s flaws and limitations as being genuine, but nevertheless gradually cajoling the world and its inhabitants towards perfection. Moshe, on the other hand, could perceive how, on a deeper level, that perfection was already there.

B

ecause Aharon accepted the limitations of time, he perceived a distinction between offerings that were made in the present and those that were made in the future (see Rashi to v. 16). Because he accepted there is a difference between death and life, he understood that the law is different for a mourner than it is for others (ibid).

But Moshe perceived an underlying truth that transcends time, where life is eternal. So Moshe ruled that all the sin-offerings must be eaten, regardless of whether they are applicable just now or later too, or whether they were carried out in a state of mourning or not.

A

nd even though in this case Moshe acquiesced to Aharon, the Torah nevertheless records his opinion too, because both approaches—truth and peace—are valid from the Torah’s point of view.

(Based on Sefer Hasichos 5748, p. 370ff.)
the joy of the day, since he understood that the “joyous occasion” was disturbed?

Thus, when Moshe discovered that one of the offerings had been burned, and not eaten, he was horrified. How is it possible that this “joyous occasion,” the completion of God’s Sanctuary, had been disturbed?

Aharon, however, had understood the matter in a slightly different light. Aharon did not perceive eating the sacrifices to be a key component of the joy of the day, since he understood that the “joyous occasion” was the completion of God’s Sanctuary, not the eating of the offerings.

Moshe’s logic was that the “joy of the day” consisted primarily of the sacrifices made on the Altar. Thus, in verse 12, when Moshe instructs Aharon and his sons to eat the remainder of the offerings, he is instructing them to eat the sacrifices, not the meal-offerings.

Why were the Dietary Laws given at this point? (ch. 11)

ARABANEL: After the Tabernacle was completed and the priests inaugurated, they were given the command not to carry out their service while intoxicated. The Torah explains, that “As a person would say to his fellow: ‘Remove the sacrifices to be a key component of the joy of the day’” (above 10:10).

Furthermore, since the priests were forbidden to enter the Tabernacle in a state of ritual impurity, it now became crucial for them to know which creatures would render them impure.

SFINNO: After the Jewish people sinned with the Golden Calf, God said that His Presence would not accompany the Jewish people to the Land of Israel (see Shemos 33:3). Moshe succeeded with his prayers that God grant the Jewish people the privilege of building the Tabernacle, through which the Divine Presence would return to dwell among the Jewish people.

Now that this was complete further mitzvos followed, to continue the process of spiritual refinement of the Jewish people, such as the Dietary Laws and the Laws of Family Purity (in Parshas Tazria).

Why, in addition to Moshe, were Aharon, Elazar and Isamar told to speak to the Jewish people? (v. 1-2)

RASHI: God made them all equal messengers to relay the following section, because they all remained equally silent (above 10:3), accepting God’s decree [against Nadav and Avihu] with love.

from the Sanctuary to outside the camp”” (v. 4). Rashi explained that Moshe’s logic was “As a person would say to his fellow: ‘Remove the deceased from before the bride so as not to disturb the joyous occasion’” (See, at length, Toras Menachem ibid.).

Thus, in verse 12, when Moshe instructs Aharon and his sons to eat the remainder of the meal-offering as normal, it follows that this was also part of Moshe’s plan “not to disturb the joyous occasion,” and ensure that all the offerings of this final day of inauguration were completed. Moshe understood that in order for the joy of the inauguration of the Tabernacle to be complete, all the offerings that had been brought needed to be eaten as normal.

Thus, when Moshe discovered that one of the offerings had been burned, and not eaten, he was horrified. How is it possible that this “joyous occasion,” the completion of God’s Sanctuary, had been disturbed?

Aharon, however, had understood the matter in a slightly different light. Aharon did not perceive eating the sacrifices to be a key component of the joy of the day, since he understood that the “joyous occasion” was only concerned with the completion of God’s Sanctuary, not the eating of the offerings.
the burnt-offering before God today? (No, it was I who offered them! And being the High Priest, I am allowed to sprinkle the blood while in a state of mourning). But if I had eaten the (third) sin-offering today, would it have pleased God? (For unlike the other two sin-offerings which are temporary, the third is a permanent one, for all generations, and it is not appropriate to be lenient and allow a mourner to eat from it. Even if) this (tragedy) had happened to me (not with my sons, but with other relatives, it would not have been appropriate to eat from such a sin-offering).”

20 (When) Moshe heard (Aharon’s explanation) it pleased him, (and he was not ashamed to admit that he had been mistaken).

**Laws of Forbidden Animals**

God spoke to Moshe (telling him to say) to Aharon who should say to (Elazar and Isamar):

2 (You should all) speak to the children of Israel, and say:

These are the living creatures that you may eat, from among all the animals on earth:

Therefore, immediately after the giving of the Torah the Jewish people were given commands of the most immediate importance, concerning the construction of the Tabernacle, and it was only afterwards that they were given the laws of forbidden animals etc., which would become relevant only later, when they would reach inhabited lands.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5744)

Elazar and Isamar’s Silence? (v. 1-2)

Rashi writes that God addressed the following laws, not only to Moshe, but to Aharon, Elazar and Isamar too, since they all accepted God’s decree against Nadav and Avihu in silence, without complaining to God (see above 10:3).

Where, however, is Rashi’s proof at the literal level that Elazar and Isamar accepted God’s decree “with love”? Rashi wrote above, concerning the case of the burned sin-offering: “How is it possible that Moshe vented his anger at Elazar and Isamar, and yet Aharon answered? This was only out of respect [for Aharon]. They said, “It is inappropriate that while our father is sitting in front of us, we should answer in his presence, and it is also inappropriate that a student should refute his teacher” (Rashi to 10:19).

With this in mind, there appears to be no proof that Elazar and Isamar’s silence after the passing of their brothers was because they accepted God’s decree with love. Perhaps they were unaccepting of God’s decree, but nevertheless, they remained silent merely because “Aharon was silent,” and they felt it inappropriate to speak up in front of their father?

The Explanation

Even a child who is studying the Chumash for the first time knows that when a person is in pain, rules of etiquette are inevitably disregarded. The child knows that when his friends hurt him he reacts, even if it is not appropriate to do so, for human nature is to react instantly to pain.

So, even though Elazar and Isamar had the courtesy in general not to speak up in the presence of their father Aharon, nevertheless, the pain of the sudden passing of their brothers Nadav and Avihu would certainly have caused them to cry out in anger, out of sheer pain, even if it was inappropriate to do so. The fact that they remained silent was thus proof to Rashi that they had accepted God’s decree with love.

And since the matter is self-understood even to a small child, Rashi felt no need to make any comment.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5731)
Happy is the one who pays you your retributions
O daughter of Babylon, you are to be destroyed.

(Midrash: The camel (gamal) alludes to the Babylonian Exile, as the verse states, “[O daughter of Babylon, you are to be destroyed.] Happy is the one who pays you your retributions (gemul) according to how you have dealt (gamal) with us” (Psalms 137:8).

The hyrax alludes to the Exile of Media...just as the hyrax possesses signs of uncleanness and signs of cleanliness, so too Media produced a righteous man (Mordechai) as well as a wicked man (Haman).

The hare alludes to the Greek Exile, since the mother of Ptolemy was [Lagos, which is the Greek word for hare].

Why were these four animals specified? (v. 4-7)

Midrash: The camel (gamal) alludes to the Babylonian Exile, as the verse states, “[O daughter of Babylon, you are to be destroyed.] Happy is the one who pays you your retributions (gemul) according to how you have dealt (gamal) with us” (Psalms 137:8).

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The hare alludes to the Greek Exile, since the mother of Ptolemy was [Lagos, which is the Greek word for hare].

Why did Moshe mention three animals in one verse and the last in another verse [when he repeated them in Parshas Re’eh 14:7-8]?

R’ Yochanan said: Because the pig is equivalent to the other three.

R’ Shimon ben Lakish said: It is even more than that....

Our Sages said that in the future the pig will become kosher, and will bear both signs of split hooves and chewing the cud.

The pig alludes to the Roman Exile (see below).

Why is Rome compared to a pig? For just as the pig reclines and puts out its hooves, as if to say, “Look! I am clean,” so too the empire of Rome arrogantly commits violence and robbery, while pretending to enact justice. (Vayikrah Rabah 13:5 and Matnos Kehunah ibid.)

Ohr Hachayim: Our Sages said that in the future the pig will become kosher, and will bear both signs of split hooves and chewing the cud.
You may eat any animal which has a split hoof which is completely split into two hooves, if it chews the cud.

But, among those that chew the cud and those that have a cloven hoof, you must not eat these:

- The camel, because it chews the cud, but does not have a (completely) split hoof. It is impure for you.
- The hyrax*, because it chews the cud, but does not have a (completely) split hoof. It is impure for you.
- The hare**, because it chews the cud, but does not have a (completely) split hoof. It is impure for you.
- The pig, because it has a split hoof which is completely split, but does not chew the cud. It is impure for you.

You must not eat their flesh. You must not touch their carcasses (when you are ritually pure, during the festivals), for they are impure for you.

Among all (the creatures) that are in the water, you may eat these: You may eat any (of) those (creatures) in the water that have fins and scales, whether (they live) in the seas or in the rivers.

But any that do not have fins and scales among all the creeping creatures in the water and among all living creatures that (live) in the water, whether in the seas or in the rivers, are an abomination for you. (Even if they are mixed with other food) they shall be an abomination for you. You must not eat their flesh, and you should hold their dead bodies in abomination.

In order to serve God properly, we need to train our natural animalistic drive—the animal soul—to stretch beyond its natural limitations. This involves two stages:

a) Split hooves. The split hoof is effectively a double hoof. This teaches us that our actions in the service of God—represented by the foot, or hoof, that propels a person into action—should be recognizably doubled. I.e. when we are involved in any holy matter it should be apparent to an onlooker that, in addition to our current actions, we are already preparing for a higher, more lofty achievement too.

b.) Chewing the cud is also a process of doubling, where food is digested for a second time. This teaches us that when it comes to personal, spiritual refinement (represented by the digestion which takes place inside), we should not be satisfied with one phase of refinement, but we should seek to fine-tune our spiritual sensitivity to greater heights.

The pig has split hooves, but it does not chew the cud. According to the above analogy, this represents a person who has many good deeds, but lacks a certain degree of internal spiritual refinement. Nevertheless, since “the deed is the main thing,” the person’s more subtle problems can be rectified by placing him in a more refined environment. Thus, the pig will become kosher in the Messianic Era, when the spiritual climate of the world will be uplifted, since its basic, external signs are in order.

* This does not ruminate in the conventional sense, but it may practice a minor form of regurgitation. Alternately, it might be described as “bringing up the cud” because of its ruminant-like chewing movements.
** This does not ruminate in the conventional sense, but it practices a form of pseudo-rumination called caecotrophy whereby it produces special pellets for reingestion.
Griffon vulture (Nesher)—Although conventionally translated as the eagle, the description of the nesher being bald (Michah 1:16), feeding on carrion (Proverbs 30:17) and being the highest flying bird (Ibn Ezra to Shemos 19:4; Ibn Ezra, Metzudas David and Malbim to Job 39:27) match the griffon vulture rather than the eagle. Bearded vulture (Perez)—also known as the lammergeyer. This is not a definitive translation, but the word peres means "pieces" or "smasher" which may refer to the bearded vulture's habit of smashing the bones on which it feeds by dropping them from great heights. Osprey (Azniyah)—or white-tailed sea eagle. Neither of these translations are definitive. Buzzard (Ayah)—described in the Talmud (Chullin 63b) as possessing superb eyesight, this is probably the buzzard. Ostrich (Bas Ha'yanah)—probably the ostrich, but possibly a type of owl. Tachmas—Unknown. Possibly a type of owl, or a cuckoo. Kos—Probably a type of owl. Barn Owl (Tishmem)—or possibly a bat. Ka'as-Owl—Although many identify it as a water bird such as the pelican, its description as living in the desert (Psalms 102:7) better matches an owl, possibly the little owl. Roller (Racham)—the Talmud (Chullin 61a) identifies it with a bird onomatopoetically called sherakak, which is the roller.
• 12 Any creature in the water that does not have fins and scales is an abomination for you (but if it had fins and scales but shed them in the water, it is permissible to you).

**Laws of Forbidden Birds**

• 13 Among birds, you shall hold the following in abomination. They must not be eaten (because) they are an abomination: the griffon vulture, the bearded vulture, the osprey, 14 the kite, the buzzard family, 15 the entire raven family, 16 the ostrich, the tachmas, the gull, the hawk family, 17 the kos-owl, the cormorant, the yanshuf-owl, 18 the barn owl, the ka’as-owl, the roller, 19 the stork, the heron family, the hoopoe and the bat.

**Laws of Forbidden & Permitted Insects**

• 20 Any flying insect that walks on four (legs) is an abomination for you.

• 21 However, among all the flying insects that walk on four (legs), you may eat (from) those that have (additional) jointed legs with which they hop on the ground, above its (regular) legs.

• 22 From this (locust) category, you may eat the following: The red locust family, the yellow locust family, the spotted grey locust family and the white locust family.

• 23 Any flying insect that has four legs, is an abomination for you (but a five-legged flying insect is permissible).

**Laws of Ritual Impurity from Non-Kosher Animals**

• 24 Through (contact with) the following (animals), you will become ritually impure;

• Anyone who touches (one of) their carcasses will be ritually impure until evening;

• 25 Anyone who carries (one of) their carcasses (acquires a more severe form of impurity.) He should immerse his garments, and he will be ritually impure until the evening:

TORAS MENACHEM

**The Last Word**

**The Dietary Laws**

For Jews, the Dietary Laws have come down with the Torah itself, which revealed the true meaning of monotheism, of which the Jewish People have been the bearers ever since. It was relevant not only in those days of old, when paganism and idolatry were the general practice in the world, but it is just as relevant in the present day and age, since it is only the Torah and mitzvos that are the basis of pure monotheism, rooted in the absolute unity of God. This means that the Jew brings unity and harmony in this, the physical world, eliminating any departmentalization in the daily life, or having occasional practices; or, as some misguided and misconceived individuals might think, that they can practice Judaism at home, but must make concessions and compromises outside the home. All such differentiations are contrary to true unity, pure monotheism. For the concept of pure monotheism is not confined to One God, but at the same time it requires unity in the personal life of each and every Jew, who is a member of the One People, of which it is said that it is “One People on earth.” According to the explanation of the Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad, “One People on earth” means that they bring oneness and unity also in earthly things, and it is only in this way that the individual can achieve complete personal harmony and unity of the body and soul, at all times, whether in the synagogue, at home, or in the office.

Thus, it is obvious how important kashrus is for a Jew, since the food and beverages that he consumes become blood and tissue and energy, and food that is not suitable (kosher) for a Jew can only alienate him from matters of Yiddishkeit [Judaism], and only the right and kosher food can nourish him physically, mentally and spiritually.

(Excerpt from a Letter written by the Rebbe on 15th of Av 5735)
CLASSIC QUESTIONS

**Is it permissible to become ritually impure or to eat food that is ritually impure? (v. 24-40)**

**Rambam:** Everything that is written in the Torah and in Scripture about the laws of ritual impurity and purity applies only to the Temple, its offerings and to terumah and ma’aser sheni (agricultural offerings and tithes). For the Torah forbids those that are ritually impure from entering the Temple, or from eating sacrifices, terumah or ma’aser. But there is no prohibition with regard to ordinary non-sacrificial foods, and it is permissible to eat all ordinary foods that are in a state of ritual impurity.  

Just as it is permitted to consume ordinary non-sacrificial foods and drinks that are ritually impure, so too it is permitted to cause these foods to become ritually impure, [even] in the Land of Israel. In fact, there is no objection at all to actively rendering ordinary non-sacrificial food impure, once it has been made fit for ordinary consumption [by the separation of terumah and ma’aser]. So too, a person is free to touch any ritually impure item, and become ritually impure from it. We see this from the fact that the Torah only commanded the priest and the nazirite not to become contaminated with the ritual impurity of a corpse, from which it follows that all other people may contaminate themselves [with any kind of impurity]. And even the priests who are warned [against becoming ritually impure], may allow themselves to become ritually impure with any type of impurity other than that of the corpse. [However, during Temple times] the entire Jewish people are required to become ritually pure on each festival, so that they are fit to enter the Temple and eat sacrifices.
26 Any animal that has a split hoof which is not completely split, and which does not chew the cud, is ritually impure for you. Anyone who touches them will become ritually impure.

27 Among all the animals that walk on four legs, any (animal) that walks on its paws (such as a dog, bear or cat) is ritually impure for you. Anyone who touches their carcass will be ritually impure until evening. 28 One who carries their carcass should immerse his garments, and he will be ritually impure until evening. They are ritually impure for you.

29 The following are ritually impure for you among creeping creatures that creep on the ground: the weasel, the mouse, the toad family, 30 the hedgehog, the chameleon, the lizard, the snail, and the mole. 31 (All) these are the ones that are ritually impure for you, among all creeping creatures. Anyone who touches them when they are dead will be ritually impure until the evening.

32 If any of these dead (creatures) fall upon anything, it will become ritually impure, whether it is any type of wooden object, a garment, an (article of) leather or sackcloth. (This applies to) any object with which work is done. It should be immersed in water, but it will remain ritually impure until the evening. It will become clean (when the sun sets).

33 If any of these (dead creatures) falls into the interior of any (type of) earthenware object, whatever is inside it will become ritually impure, (and the vessel) itself should be broken; (but if the creature falls on the outside of an earthenware object, it remains pure).

34 (If what is inside the earthenware object is) any (kind of) food that is edible it will (only) become ritually impure (if) water has come upon it (first, at some time in the past). And any liquid that is (normally) drunk, which is in any (impure) vessel, will become ritually impure.

From oral tradition we know that a person who is ritually impure may eat from the same plate as one who is ritually pure....

Even though a person is permitted to eat foods that are ritually impure and drink drinks that are ritually impure, the pious members of the early generations would eat [even] ordinary, non-sacrificial food in a state of purity, and they would steer clear of any sort of ritual impurity their entire lives. [Thus,] they were called: isolationists (perushim). Such a lifestyle is one of additional holiness, for the pious tend to separate themselves and become isolated from the rest of the people, so as not to touch them or eat or drink with them [while they are in a state of ritual impurity]. Being isolated leads a person to purify the body from bad deeds; purity of the body leads one to sanctify the soul from bad traits; and sanctity of the soul causes a person to resemble the Divine Presence, as the verse states: “You should sanctify yourselves and be holy, because I am holy” (below, v. 44 and 21:8; End of Laws of the Ritual Impurity of Foods)

At first glance, Rambam’s words appear to be somewhat contradictory. First he writes, at great length, how it is permissible for a person to become ritually impure, suggesting that there is nothing to be gained by avoiding impure objects. And then, at the conclusion, he writes that it is indeed admirable to avoid all forms of impurity, and he even suggests that such an activity is crucial in order to remove bad traits, achieve sanctity of the soul, and to begin to “resemble the Divine Presence.” Surely this contradicts his earlier statement that it is quite unobjectional to become ritually impure, and opposes the Talmudic principle not to seek additional prohibitions: “Be satisfied with what the Torah has forbidden for you!” (Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 9:1, Rambam, Laws of Moral Conduct 3:1).

In truth however, Rambam is speaking here of different levels of Divine Service. At first, a person should indeed avoid taking on any additional prohibitions, more than the Torah has commanded. But since a person should never be satisfied with his spiritual achievements, Rambam then informs the more advanced reader of the route to higher levels of personal refinement and spiritual perfection.

(Based on Sichas Yud Tes Kislev 5745)
• **35** Anything upon which any of the carcasses of these (animals) falls will become ritually impure. (Thus,) an (earthenware) oven or stove (cannot be purified) and should be demolished (because) they are ritually impure. (However, you may still possess these items, bearing in mind that) they are ritually impure for you.

• **36** Only a gathering of water—(be it) a pit, or a spring—will remain ritually pure (even if it comes into contact with impurity, and it has the power to purify others. However, if a person) touches a carcass (while he is in one of these purifying waters) he will (still) become ritually impure.

• **37** If part of a carcass falls upon any seed which is sown (and has never become wet), it remains ritually pure. **38** But if water (or another liquid) is put upon seeds, and (then) part of a carcass falls on them, they will be ritually impure for you.

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**Laws of Ritual Impurity of Kosher Animals**

• **39** If an animal that you (are allowed to) eat, dies, anyone who touches (the flesh of) its carcass will be ritually impure until evening.

• **40** Anyone who eats (part) of a carcass (without touching it first is not) ritually impure until evening and (does not) have to immerse his clothes, (unless he also) carries (at least a kazayis* of) its carcass, (in which case) he should immerse his garments, and he will be ritually impure until evening (when the sun sets).

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**Laws of Forbidden Reptiles and Insects of the Ground**

• **41** Any creeping creature that creeps on the ground is an abomination. It must not be eaten (or fed to others).

• **42** You must not eat: any (snake or worm) that goes on its belly, and any (scorpion) that walks on four (legs) or any (centipede) that has many legs, and all creeping creatures that creep on the ground (including the beetle family), for they are an abomination.

• **43** You should not make your souls abominable (by eating) any creeping creature that creeps. You should not defile yourselves with them, so that you will become impure through them (in the World to Come).

• **44** For I am God your (holy) God. You should sanctify yourselves and be holy, because I am holy, and you should not defile yourselves through (eating) any creeping creature that crawls on the ground.

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**Sparks of Chasidus**

“**IF WATER IS PUT UPON SEEDS...THEY WILL BE RITUALLY IMPURE FOR YOU**” (v. 38)

Water has the tendency to fall from a high place to a lower place. It is also a binding agent which tends to cause substances to adhere together. In practical terms, these two qualities represent a Judaism which is not “dry” and purely academic, but “moist” and vibrant. It will thus cause a person to attract and “bind” with people who are not as knowledgeable as him, in an effort to bring them closer to Judaism.

Hasidic thought explains that the forces of impurity are spiritual “parasites” that target specifically those areas which are potential places of holiness. This is the inner reason why food must first become wet in order to become susceptible to ritual impurity, for only a “moist” Judaism permeated with the “waters” of love and communication is a source of true holiness and spiritual vitality.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, pp. 75-76)

* 0.9 ounces or 25.6 grams.
What is the connection between coming up from Egypt and not eating insects? (v. 45)

Rashi: The school of Rabbi Yishma'el taught: [God says,] “If I had brought up the Jewish people from Egypt only so that they would not defile themselves [by eating] creeping creatures like the other nations, it would have been a sufficient [reason] for them [to be redeemed].”

Talmud: Is their reward [for this] greater than [the reward for obeying the precepts on] interest, tzitzis and [honest] weights [which the Torah also connects with coming out of Egypt]? Though their reward is no greater, it is more loathsome to eat these [insects, than to engage in the other sins] (Bava Metzia 61b).

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

The Severe Prohibition of Eating Insects (v. 45)

Rashi cites the teaching of Rabbi Yishma’el’s school concerning the great significance of refraining from eating insects. However, this presents us with a question: Why does Rashi not explain the reason why the prohibition against eating insects is so severe and important? The Talmud, from which Rashi cited the above teaching, does indeed explain the unique quality of this mitzvah. Why did Rashi omit this point, and offer the reader no explanation at all why this precept is so important?
ground.  

For I am God who is bringing you up from the land of Egypt to be your God. Thus, you shall be holy, because I am holy.

(The above) is the law regarding animals, birds, and all living creatures that move in water and all creatures that creep on the ground, to distinguish between the ritually impure and the pure; between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.


The Explanation

Rashi did not have to explain why the prohibition of eating crawling insects is so severe, since he relied on the reader to work the matter out for himself, based on Rashi’s earlier comments.

Verse 42 above states, “You must not eat anything that goes on its belly,” on which Rashi comments, “this refers to the snake.” Now, we might ask: Why did the Torah use the vague expression “anything that goes on its belly,” requiring Rashi to clarify that this refers to a serpent? Surely the Torah should have been more clear with its choice of words, and written the intended meaning in a straightforward manner, “You must not eat: the serpent”?

Apparently, the Torah wishes to stress here that the reason why it is prohibited for a Jewish person to eat a serpent is because it “goes on its belly.”

The reader will recall that, in Parshas Bereishis, after the serpent incited Chava to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, it was cursed by God: “Because you have done this, you are (now) cursed more than all the cattle and more than all the wild animals of the field! You (will have your legs cut off so that you) shall walk on your belly, and you shall eat soil all the days of your life!” (3:14). Now, clearly, the sin of the Tree of Knowledge was a very serious matter, for it introduced the phenomenon of death into the world, and the serpent’s punishment needed to fit the crime. From this the reader will have gathered that for a creature to have to “walk on its belly” without being able to raise itself from the ground, and to “eat soil,” is the lowest form of existence for any living creature.

Therefore, it is quite obvious why the serpent, and all other creatures which crawl on the earth, are prohibited by the Torah in the most severe fashion, since they represent the very lowest of animal existence, which is totally unsuitable for consumption by the Jewish people. Thus Rashi felt it unnecessary to explain why eating such creatures is such a serious offense, as he reasoned that the reader would be able to figure the matter out for himself, based on his prior knowledge of the Chumash and Rashi’s commentary.

(Tora Menachem)

The Last Word

The Torah records the laws of forbidden reptiles and insects of the ground after the laws of forbidden animals, fish and birds, in order to hint that even those Jews who are on a low spiritual level, and do not observe the Dietary Laws, would still avoid eating snakes and insects and “would not defile themselves [by eating] creeping creatures like the other nations” (Rashi to v. 45).

Here we see, once again, that however low a Jew may stumble in the service of God, evidence can still be found of his unique Jewish character, and his inner desire to return to God.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5743)
Parshas Shemini contains 6 positive mitzvos and 11 prohibitions

1. The priests should not enter the Temple with hair grown long [10:6].
2. The priests should not enter the Temple with torn clothing [10:6 and 21:10].
3. The priests should not go out from the Temple in the middle of their holy service [10:7].
4. The priests should not enter the Temple having drunk wine, nor should any judge give a ruling while intoxicated [10:9].
5. The mitzvah of examining the signs of domestic and wild animals (to determine if they are kosher) [11:2,3].
6. Not to eat a non-kosher species of domestic or wild animal [11:4-7].
7. The mitzvah of examining the signs of fish (to determine if they are kosher) [11:9].
10. The mitzvah of examining the signs of locusts (to determine if they are kosher) [11:21].
11. The laws of ritual impurity of the eight crawling creatures [11:29, 30].
12. The laws of ritual impurity of food [11:34].
15. Not to eat the species of minute insects that come from grains and fruits [11:42].
17. Not to eat of swarming creatures that come into being from decayed matter [11:44].
Our Parsha begins, “If a woman conceives (Tazria) and gives birth...” After discussing laws associated with childbirth, the Parsha deals with the supernatural “disease” called tzara’as* which afflicted the skin and possessions of those who spoke lashon hara (gossip).

Since the vast majority of the Parsha deals with the laws of tzara’as, we need to explain the connection between this affliction and the name of the Parsha—Tazria—which refers to conception and birth.

At first glance, they seem to be contradictory themes: tzara’as is an unpleasant condition, which requires total isolation from the Jewish camp, such that the Talmud states: “The tzara’as sufferer is comparable to a dead person” (Nedarim 64b). How then is this connected with Tazria—conception and birth?

A fundamental principle of Jewish Philosophy states that the punishments administered by the Torah are not intended to harm a person in return for the harm that he caused, but rather, that the punishment is primarily for the benefit of the transgressor himself (see Kuzari 2:44; Ikarim 4:38). This is because suffering caused by a punishment cleanses the soul, allowing it to come close to God once again, either in this world or the next.

In most cases, the goodness within a punishment is not apparent to an onlooker, or to the sufferer himself. With the tzara’as sufferer, however, it is clear that his punishment is actually for his own benefit. For by being declared ritually impure, requiring total isolation, he will soon learn not to speak gossip any more, since there is simply no one to speak with him.

Thus from the case of the tzara’as sufferer we understand that in all other cases too, even where it is less apparent, the Torah’s “punishments” are aimed at helping the sufferer correct his ill ways, and begin a new life, corrected of his former faults.

And that is why our Parsha is called Tazria, alluding to conception and birth, to teach us that just like the case of tzara’as, all the punishments of the Torah are intended to help a person have a spiritual rebirth in their lives, correct their past ways, and start anew.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22, pp. 70-73)

* See note on page 91
Why are the laws of childbirth recorded here? (v. 2)

**Rashi**: Rabbi Simlai said: “Just as man was formed after all animals, wild beasts and birds, so too, his laws are explained [here] after the laws of animals, wild beasts, and birds [written in Parshas Shemini].”

**Talmud**: Why was Adam created last of all beings on the eve of Shabbos? In order that, if a man becomes proud, he may be reminded that the gnats preceded him in the order of creation.

**Another answer**: So that he could go straight “into the banquet” [i.e. creation] (Sanhedrin 38a).

**Be’er Haitev**: Rashi was troubled by two questions: a.) What is the connection between this section of the Chumash and that which preceded it? b.) Since man is greater than the animals, surely his laws should have been recorded first?

**Maskil LeDavid**: Rashi was troubled: When discussing the laws of ritual impurity of human beings, why should the Torah begin with the laws of ritual impurity of childbirth? Surely the laws of the ritual impurity of *nidah* (menstruation) should have been discussed first, for by purifying herself from this ritual impurity, a woman becomes permitted to her husband, thus enabling her to conceive and give birth. Thus, logically speaking, the laws of *nidah* should have been written first.

In order to answer this problem, Rashi cited the teaching of R’ Simlai.

**Gur Aryeh**: What is the connection between the sequence of Creation, and the sequence of the laws recorded in the Torah? Why should these two different accounts follow the same sequence?

Because since the world was created for the sake of the Torah, it follows that through observing the laws of the Torah one brings the world to the perfection for which it was created. Thus, since there is a strong connection between the Creation and the laws of the Torah, their details are recorded in the same order.

**Levush Haohra**: The Talmud explains that man was created last after the animals in order to humble him. So too, explains R’ Simlai, the laws of man’s impurity were also recorded last for the same reason: in order to make man humble.

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THE POSITION OF PARSHAS TAZRIA (v. 2)

In his comment to verse 2, Rashi explains why Parshas Tazria follows on from the laws of ritually pure and impure animals at the end of Parshas Shemini: “Just as man was formed after all animals, wild beasts and birds, so too, his laws are explained [here] after the laws of animals, wild beasts, and birds.”

Now, we do not find that Rashi always explains the reason why one section of the Torah follows on from another, even when the Midrash or Talmud do offer an explanation. From this it follows that Rashi did not perceive it crucial at the literal level to explain the connection between each section of the Torah and the next. Thus, when Rashi does offer an explanation, there is clearly some additional question bothering Rashi.

In our case we need to clarify: What problem, at the literal level, prompted Rashi to cite the teaching of R’ Simlai?

At first glance, it appears that Rashi was bothered by the simple question why the laws of ritual purity of man should be recorded after that of the animals, when man is far greater than the animals [c.f Be’er Haitev].
God spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, saying:

- If a woman conceives and gives birth to a male (or miscarries), she will be ritually impure for seven days, (even if there is no flow of blood accompanied with the birth). She will be ritually impure just like during the days of her menstrual flow.
- On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin should be circumcised*.
- (When she immerses in the mikvah after seven days), then for thirty-three additional days she will have a waiting period, (during which even if she sees) blood (she) is ritually pure (to her husband**). Nevertheless, she should (still) not touch (or eat) any holy (terumah), nor may she enter the Sanctuary, until the(se additional thirty-three) days of her (total) purification have been completed.
- If she gives birth to a female, she will be ritually impure for two weeks, just like during her menstruation (period. Then,) for sixty-six days, she will have a waiting period (during which even if she sees) blood (she) is ritually pure (to her husband**).
- When the days of (total) purification for a son or a daughter is complete, she should bring a male lamb in its first year as a burnt-offering, and a young dove or a turtledove as a sin offering.

However, at the literal level it is difficult to accept that this was troubling Rashi since, in the final analysis, it is not a question that is crucial to answer at the literal level. For while it is somewhat peculiar that the Torah should describe the laws of the animals before those of man—which is why the Midrash does discuss the issue—it is nevertheless not a taxing issue which must be answered at the literal level.

Rather it would appear that Rashi was troubled by the question [of Maskil leDavid] why the Torah chose to describe the laws of ritual impurity of childbirth before the laws of impurity of nidah (menstruation). For a woman must first purify herself from the ritual impurity of nidah to be with her husband in order that she might conceive and give birth to a child. Thus the laws of nidah are a crucial preface to the laws of childbirth.

Furthermore, the laws of childbirth here actually make reference to the laws of nidah, “If a woman conceives and gives birth... she will be ritually impure just like during the days of her menstrual flow,” which presumes that the reader already has a familiarity with the laws of nidah.

To answer this problem, Rashi cited the teaching of R’ Simlai, which explains why the laws of ritual impurity caused by human beings must follow on directly from the laws of childbirth.

(Toras Menachem

Sparks of Chasidus

“FOR ZION HAS BEEN IN LABOR AND HAS GIVEN BIRTH TO HER CHILDREN” (Isaiah 66:8)

Our Sages said that when an infant is in his mother’s womb, “his head is between his knees, his mouth is closed and his navel is open” (Niddah 30b), i.e. even though he has eyes they do not see, and his nourishment passes through his navel, directly to his lower faculties.

This is analogous to the Jewish people during exile:

Since God’s presence is not revealed in the world, our eyes do not see Him. Furthermore, the spiritual energy of the mitzvos does not pass “through the mouth” to the higher faculties, but rather, directly “through the navel,” i.e. mitzvos are carried out by rote.

The redemption is thus compared to birth, when the eyes of the Jewish people will see Godliness in the world, and our mitzvos will be fulfilled with inner commitment and true understanding.

(Based on Torah Ohr, Va’eira, p. 55a)

The Last Word

Unlike animals, which do not possess free choice, man is capable of rebelling against his Creator. Thus, before man has actually performed good deeds he is on a lower level than the animals, for he has the potential to sin whereas the animals do not. Therefore, man was created last, for until he has made the effort to perform good, man is the lowest of creatures.

From this we can learn the importance of actions and good deeds, for without them a person has no merits to the extent that even “the gnats preceded him in the order of Creation.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 74ff.)

* See Bereishis 17:10ff. and commentaries there. ** Nevertheless, in practice, Jewish Law requires separation between husband and wife, even if she sees blood during these “pure” days—See note of Rema to Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 194:1.
Why does a woman who gave birth need to bring a sin-offering in atonement? What sin did she commit? (v. 6-7)

Ramban: Our Sages said that when a woman is giving birth she swears that she will never come to her husband again and conceive (Nidah 31b). Thus, she requires atonement.

Bachaye: The woman is required to bring a sin offering due to Chava's sin with the Tree of Knowledge, for "when the roots are damaged the branches are affected too."

Sefer HaChinuch: The sacrifices are to thank God for the miracle of safe childbirth.

What is the woman's status before and after she brings her offerings? (v. 7)

Rashi: [The verse states that only after offering the sacrifice.] "She will be purified." From here we see that until this point, she is called ritually impure.

Rambam: The verse states, "She will be purified." From here we see that until this point she has not completed her ritual purification (Laws Pertaining to Those Entering the Sanctuary 4:5).

Ra'avad: The verse states, "She will be purified." From here we see that until this point she was ritually impure (ibid.).

The Woman's Atonement Offering (v. 6-7)

In verses 1-5 the Torah teaches us that when a woman gives birth to a child, it renders her ritually impure for seven days for a boy, or fourteen days for a girl. Then, after immersing in a mikvah, the woman finds herself in a "limbo" period where she no longer has the ritual impurity of a menstruant, but where she is still prohibited from eating terumah or sixty-six days (for a girl). After this she becomes permitted to eat terumah and enter the Temple, and she brings her atonement sacrifices. The exact status of the woman during this "limbo" period is not made clear by the Torah. Do we say that during this time the woman is partially impure, which is why she may not eat terumah etc., but that she is also partially pure, which is why she is permitted to her husband? Or, is she deemed to be completely pure, and the prohibition against eating terumah and entering the Temple is unrelated to impurity?

Rambam took the latter stance. He did not stress that the woman is ritually impure during the limbo period, but rather he emphasized the positive, that until she has brought her sacrifices, "she has not completed her ritual purification." I.e. since she has not completed all the procedures that she is required to perform (offering the sacrifices) she is prohibited from eating terumah etc. due to a technicality, and not because she is actually impure.

Ra'avad criticized Rambam, arguing that during the limbo period the woman does have a certain degree of ritual impurity, which is why the Torah stresses that only after this time period is completed is she ritually pure.

Rashi in his commentary to the Torah seems to have a view that differs from both Rambam and Ra'avad. Rashi writes that during the limbo period, "she is called ritually impure." I.e. she is not in fact ritually impure, but she is nevertheless associated with the state of ritual impurity to the extent that "she is called ritually impure."

Here we see that Rashi accepted, in part, the arguments of both Rambam and Ra'avad:

Like Rambam, Rashi was of the opinion that during the limbo period a woman is not ritually impure. Nevertheless, like Ra'avad, Rashi rejected Rambam's argument that the prohibition against eating terumah and
to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. 7 He should offer it up before God and atone for her, and she will be (totally) purified from (being called impure due to) the source of her blood.

The (above) is the law of a woman who gives birth to a male or to a female.

- If she cannot afford a sheep, she should take two turtledoves or two young doves: one as a burnt-offering and one as a sin-offering. The priest should (offer them and thereby) atone for her, and she will become ritually pure.

### Laws of Tzara’as

1. God spoke to Moshe and Aharon, saying:

2. If a man has on the skin of his body: a (white) blotch, a creamy blotch, or a (bright) spot, and it forms (a suspected) lesion of tzara’as on the skin of his body, he should be brought to Aharon the priest, or to one of his sons, the priests (for examination).

### Classic Questions

- Why must a suspected lesion of tzara’as be examined specifically by a priest? (v. 2)

_**Rashi**_: It is a [suprarational] decree of Scripture that the ritual impurity and purity of lesions can only be through pronouncement of a priest.

### Torah Menachem

Entering the Temple during this period are secondary prohibitions that are unassociated with the concept of ritual impurity, and he wrote, that “She is called ritually impure.” i.e. she is given the name of ritual impurity (and thus cannot eat terumah etc.) but she does not have the actual status of being even partially ritually impure.

Having clarified Rashi’s opinion we are now faced with two questions:

a.) If during the limbo period the woman is not ritually impure, why does she nevertheless retain the “title” of being called ritually impure?

b.) What is the practical relevance of Rashi’s stance at the literal level of Torah interpretation?

### The Explanation

In order to answer these two questions, we need first to turn to another major issue concerning the woman who gives birth. The Torah states that the woman must bring a “sin-offering,” and that the priest “should offer it up before God and atone for her.” This begs the question: We are not speaking here of a sinner, but a woman who has conceived and given birth, so why is atonement required? And why does Rashi fail to address this obvious question?

Rashi did not address this matter, since he did not believe in spoon-feeding the reader with answers which could be worked out logically, with the reader’s pre-existing knowledge.

Earlier, in Parshas Bereishis, we read that after the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge, God told Chava, “I will greatly increase...your (labor pains of) pregnancy. You will give birth to children in pain” (3:16). From this the reader will have understood that every birth is somewhat connected with childbirth (c.f Rashi to Shemos 32:34).

Thus, Rashi writes that a woman is called “called” ritually impure right until she has brought her final sacrifice, since her complete cleansing of the impurity associated with childbirth depends on her complete atonement, which is achieved by bringing a sin-offering.

Based on the above, we can also understand the practical ramification of Rashi’s stance:

The final offering that a woman brings permits her to eat terumah and sacrifices, and to enter the Temple. Now, it might well be the case that she was not planning on doing any of these activities for a long period of time, and that therefore she might push off the final offering. However, according to Rashi’s view that she still has the “title of impurity” because she is in need of atonement, it follows that she will want to bring her offering as soon as possible.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 80ff.)

### The Last Word

“HE SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO AHARON THE PRIEST” (v. 2)

Kohanim (priests) are people of inherent kindness who bless the Jewish people with love. Therefore, when it comes to declaring somebody with the severe condition of tzara’as, which requires total isolation from the Jewish camp, it is imperative that this harsh judgment be done out of love, so the Torah requires it to be done by a priest.

From this we can learn a powerful lesson: that if one feels that another person has acted disgracefully and one wishes to chastise him, one must first examine one’s own motives to see if one’s desire to rebuke another is truly being done out of love.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 88ff.)

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* Tzara’as is a miraculous affliction of the skin which occurred as a punishment for idle talk or gossip, rendering the sufferer ritually impure. It has been mistakenly identified with leprosy, which is a bacterial infection of mycobacterium leprae (Hansen’s disease), but in truth tzara’as is a totally supernatural and non-contagious affliction that affected garments and buildings as well as people. (See Classic Questions and Torah Menachem on the following page)
What is tzara'as? (ch. 13-14)

Rambam: Tzara'as is a collective term for many things that do not resemble each other. The whitened skin in man is called tzara'as, as is the fallen hair* from the head or the beard. The change of appearance which occurs to a garment is also called tzara'as, and the change of appearance which occurs to a house is [also] called TZARA'AS (Laws of Ritual Impurity of Tzara'as 16:10).

Is tzara'as natural or supernatural?

Rambam: This change that occurs in clothes and buildings which the Torah calls tzara'as...is not a natural phenomenon, but a miraculous sign and wonder (ibid).

Kli Yakar: The fact that the tzara'as of clothes and buildings is clearly supernatural suggests that the tzara'as of skin is supernatural too (13:47).

What causes tzara'as?

Rambam: The Jewish people were given this miraculous sign and wonder, to caution them from speaking nonsense...and then it leads to speaking badly about the righteous...and then they will speak badly of the prophets and find fault in their words...and this will eventually lead to a denial of God and the principles of faith... (ibid.)

Why does tzara'as not occur nowadays?

Alshich: Only when the Jewish people are in an otherwise advanced spiritual state do they merit to have the miraculous sign of tzara'as.

This is hinted to by the term that is used to describe the victim of tzara'as in the Torah (in v. 2). The Hebrew word מִנְאָז is the highest of four terms used to describe man, which is an allusion to the fact that tzara'as only afflicts individuals who are otherwise perfect.

Likutei Torah: Physically, tzara'as is a superficial affliction. This indicates that the victim is in a healthy spiritual state internally, and that he has merely erred in a superficial manner.

Consequently, those who are not in a good spiritual state internally (as is the case nowadays) do not require a miraculous sign that something is wrong superficially, since there are more serious internal problems that need to be addressed first (Tazria 22b).

Classical Questions

Closely

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

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What causes tzara'as?

Rambam: The Jewish people were given this miraculous sign and wonder, to caution them from lashon hara (gossip).

If a person speaks lashon hara, the beams of his house will change. If the person stops, then the house will become pure once again, but if he persists in his wickedness, until the house is demolished, then the leather items from his house, upon which he sits and lies, will become afflicted. If he repents, they are purified. But if he persists in his wickedness to the extent that they are burned, then the clothing he wears will become afflicted. If he repents, they are purified, but if he persists in his wickedness to the extent that they are burned, his skin will become afflicted, and then he will have to be isolated in public [disgrace], until he stops occupying himself with wicked speech, mockery and gossip....

This is the way of those wicked people who sit and mock: First they speak nonsense...and then it leads to speaking badly about the righteous...and then they will speak badly of the prophets and find fault in their words...and this will eventually lead to a denial of God and the principles of faith... (ibid.)

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Natural or Supernatural?

At first glance, Rambam appears to maintain that only the tzara'as of clothes and buildings is supernatural, since he writes, “This change that occurs in clothes and buildings...is not a natural phenomenon, but a miraculous sign and wonder.” However, from Rambam’s later description of the development of the “disease”—how it first affects buildings, then clothes and then skin—it is obvious that the affliction of skin too is supernatural, since it follows on directly from the supernatural afflictions which preceded it.**

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22, p. 72)

* See Toras Menachem 13:29 regarding Rashi’s opinion on this matter.  
** This is also clear from his Guide to the Perplexed (3:47).
The priest should examine the lesion on the skin of his body: If (at least two) hair(s) within the lesion have turned (from black to) white and the appearance of the lesion (is white, making it look) deeper than the (surrounding) skin of his body, then it is a (genuine) tzara’as lesion. When the priest examines it, he should pronounce him ritually impure.

\[\text{Laws of the White Spot}\]

If there is a white spot on the skin of his body, and its appearance is not deeper than the (surrounding) skin, and its hair has not turned white, then:

- The priest should quarantine the (person who has the) lesion for seven days.

On the seventh day, the priest should examine him. (If the lesion has spread, then he should be pronounced ritually impure. But) if the lesion has remained the same in its appearance and the lesion has not spread on the skin, then the priest should quarantine him for a further seven days.

\[\text{The Cause of Tzara’as}\]

In his “Laws of the Ritual Impurity of Tzara’as,” Rambam describes at length how tzara’as is caused by lashon hara (gossip). The topic of lashon hara is also dealt with by Rambam in his “Laws of Moral Conduct” (Hilchos De’os)—where Rambam writes: “Our Sages said: If a person speaks lashon hara it is as if he denied God Himself” (Laws of Moral Conduct 7:3).

Is Rambam speaking about the same type of lashon hara in these two different places? They certainly appear to be similar, but subtle differences suggest that the lashon hara associated with tzara’as is something altogether different from the ethical speech which Rambam speaks about in the Laws of Moral Conduct.

In the Laws of Moral Conduct, Rambam makes a clear, unequivocal statement: “If a person speaks lashon hara it is as if he denied God Himself.” In other words, as soon as the gossip is uttered a severe sin is transgressed.

This is not the case, however, with the lashon hara which brings about tzara’as. Here we are informed that gossip is not so much a problem in itself, but that it represents the planting of a seed for future ills: “...First...and then...and then...and this will eventually lead him to speak against and eventually deny God Himself...” So, here we are speaking of an aspect of lashon hara that does not represent an immediate sin, but rather the initiation of a slow, downward path.

Furthermore, when describing the lashon hara which leads to tzara’as, Rambam teaches us that there is a subtle, seemingly innocuous activity which is the root of all this evil, namely, “speaking nonsense.”

But what is so evil about speaking mere nonsense? And how could it possibly lead to a total denial of God?

**The Explanation**

To answer and clarify all of the above we must first identify two distinct aspects of lashon hara:

A.) Abuse of another human being.

Be it directly or indirectly, a person who is spoken of in a negative way is hurt by the process.

However, there is a further, more subtle aspect to lashon hara, namely:

B.) Abuse of speech itself.

Any failure to speak positively and constructively represents an abuse of speech itself. Speech is a uniquely human quality, and a misuse of speech is therefore the squandering of a precious faculty. This brings about a regression in a person’s character, which can ultimately lead to disastrous results.

The abuse of another person through speech (‘a’) has two implications:

1. The speech must have an obviously negative content; and,
2. As soon as the words are uttered, irreparable damage has been done, and so a severe sin has been committed.

This is the aspect of lashon hara that Rambam describes in the Laws of Moral Conduct which is 1.) blasphemous and; 2.) immediate—“If a person speaks lashon hara it is as if he denied God Himself.”

In contrast, the abuse of speech itself (‘b’) has two logical consequences:

1. Any speech that is not constructive or positive is an abuse of speech. There do not need to be any detrimental words spoken, since merely talking nonsense is an abuse of the God-given gift of speech.
2. Since there is not any negative or malicious content to the speech the effects are subtle and far-reaching.

This is the aspect of lashon hara which Rambam writes about in connection to tzara’as, which:

1. Begins with the speaking of mere nonsense, and;
2. Has a subtle, long-term effect: “...First...and then...and then...and this will eventually lead to a denial of God and the principles of faith....”

**The Absence of Tzara’as Today**

Based on the above, we can add some further explanation why we do not find any cases of tzara’as today. Alshich and Likutei Torah both explain that tzara’as only affects people on a high spiritual level. However this begs the question: how could a person who spoke lashon hara, which is such a serious sin, be described as being on a lofty spiritual level?

However, based on the above distinction between the two different aspects of lashon hara, this question pales away. Of course the lashon hara described in the Laws of Moral Conduct (where another person is abused through speech) is a serious sin—but that is not the type of lashon hara that brings about tzara’as. Rather, it is the more subtle abuse of speech itself, the sin of inane verbosity, which brings about tzara’as. And a failure to speak only when necessary would indeed be a relatively superficial blemish for a person who has otherwise achieved perfection in his service of God.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22, p. 65ff.)
Why is a person ritually pure if tzara’as has spread all over his skin? (v. 12)

Ibn Ezra: When tzara’as covers the person’s entire body it indicates that it has completely exited his system and is only on the outside.

Tur Ha’aruch: Thus the fact that it covers his whole body is a sign that he will soon be completely cured.

Bachaye: This case is like the law of the red heifer, a suprarational decree of scripture.

Toras Menachem

Rashi does not discuss the law that if a person’s entire skin is covered with tzara’as then he is ritually pure. At the literal level, is this considered to be a suprarational decree of scripture, as Bachaye writes, or does it have a simple rationale, as Ibn Ezra and Tur Ha’aruch argue?

Since Rashi does not write that this law is a decree of scripture, we can presume that he deemed it to be a rational law, at the literal level of Torah interpretation. In fact, Rashi deemed the explanation to be so simple and self-evident that he presumed that the reader would understand it for himself.

Clearly, when a certain part of the body suffers a discoloration, it indicates that one part has become afflicted. When, however, a person’s entire body is of a certain color, it indicates that this is actually the nature of this particular person’s body. In other words, a partial discoloration is an exception which suggests that affliction has occurred, but a total discoloration indicates that this is in fact the normal color of this person’s skin.

With this in mind we can explain an apparent redundancy in verse 13. After stating, “If he sees that the tzara’as has covered all his body, he should pronounce the lesion ritually pure,” the Torah continues, “(For since the person) has turned completely white, he is ritually pure.” Now, at first glance, these final words seem to be superfluous. Surely, after the Torah has already told us that when the priest sees tzara’as covering the entire skin, “he should pronounce the lesion ritually pure,” it is unnecessary to add, “(For since the person) has turned completely white, he is ritually pure”?

However, based on the above, we see that with these final words the Torah is actually explaining the logic behind this law: “(Since the person) has turned completely white”—it follows that this is the very nature of his body, and that therefore—“he is ritually pure.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, pp. 80-81)
The priest should then examine him on the seventh day of the second quarantine. If the lesion has remained the same in appearance, or it has spread, then he should be pronounced ritually impure. But if he sees the lesion has faded, and the lesion has not spread on the skin, the priest should pronounce him ritually pure. It is merely a discoloration (which does not cause ritual impurity, and not tzara’as).

(However, since the person was quarantined) he must cleanse his garments (in a mikvah) and then he will become ritually pure.

If the discoloration spreads on the skin after it had been shown to the priest to be pronounced ritually pure, then it should be shown to the priest a second time. The priest should examine it, and if he sees the discoloration has spread on the skin, then the priest should pronounce him ritually impure, for this (discoloration) is actually tzara’as.

If a man has a (suspected) tzara’as lesion, and he is brought to the priest, and the priest examines it and he sees there is a white blotch on the skin, and it has turned the hair (within it) white (the priest should pronounce him ritually impure).

Or, if there is healthy-looking, live skin within the white blotch, then (one should not think that this is not tzara’as, for in fact) there is an old (wound underneath which is giving the appearance of healthy skin, and the person does indeed have) tzara’as on the skin of his body. The priest should pronounce him ritually impure and he need not quarantine him because he is ritually impure.

If the tzara’as has spread extensively over the skin, such that the tzara’as covers all the skin of the afflicted (person) from his head to his feet, wherever the eyes of the priest might see, then the priest should examine it. If he sees that the tzara’as has covered all of his body, he should pronounce the lesion ritually pure. (For since the person has turned completely white, he is ritually pure.)

The Talmud states: “The son of David (Mashiach) will only come when every government becomes heretical. Rabah said, ‘Where do we see an allusion to this in Scripture? From the verse, “He has turned completely white, he is ritually pure”’” (Sanhedrin 97a).

Rashi (ibid.) explains: “Just as when the affliction has spread throughout the entire skin the person is ritually pure, so too, when all the governments have become heretical, the redemption will come.”

This sign of redemption could be seen as either:

a.) A negative sign, that people have become so corrupt that God is forced, so to speak, to save the world and bring redemption.

b.) A positive sign, that the world has become so refined that it is clear to everybody that any regime or government which is not based on Torah is heretical and corrupt.

This parallels the two views expressed above:

a.) If the corruption of governments is a negative sign, it follows that God is “forced” to bring the redemption, so to speak, despite the world. This corresponds to the view that the law (“he has turned completely white, he is ritually pure”) is a suprarational decree of scripture, which is followed despite the fact that it is illogical.

b.) But if the corruption of governments is a positive sign, it follows that God is bringing the redemption because the world has become good. This corresponds to the view that the law is logical.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, pp. 82-83)
CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Rashi: It comes to teach us that there is a day on which [a suspected lesion] may be examined, and there is a day on which it may not be examined. From here [the Sages] derived that a bridegroom is exempt—for himself, his garments, and his house—[from having a lesion examined] throughout all the seven days of the wedding feast. Similarly, during a festival one is exempt [from having a lesion examined] throughout all the days of the festival.

Talmud: [The opinion cited by Rashi, above] is the view of Rabbi Yehudah. Rebbi says: “There is no need [to derive it from a verse, for the matter can be derived logically. Concerning the tzara‘as of houses], the verse states: ‘Upon the priest’s instructions they should clear out the house’ (Mo‘ed Katan 7b & Rashi ibid).
• 14 But on the day that healthy-looking, live skin appears in (the lesion), he will become ritually impure. 15 When the priest sees the healthy-looking, live skin, he should pronounce him ritually impure. The live skin is ritually impure, (for that skin) is tzara’as.

• 16 But, if the healthy, live skin once again turns white, he should come to the priest, 17 and the priest should examine it. If he sees that the lesion has turned white, the priest should pronounce the lesion ritually pure (and the person will thus become) ritually pure.

laws of tzara’as on an infected area which healed

• 18 If (a person has on) the skin of his body an inflammation (caused by an infection) which heals, and then on the place where the inflammation was there appears a white blotch, or a (streaked) red and white spot, it should be shewn to the priest. 19 The priest should examine it, and if its appearance (is white, making it look) deeper than the (surrounding) skin of his body, and its hair has turned white, then the priest should pronounce him ritually impure, (for) it is a lesion of tzara’as that has erupted on the (previously) inflamed area.

• 21 But if the priest looks at it, and he sees that it does not contain white hair, nor does it appear to be deeper than the (surrounding) skin, and it is faded, the priest should quarantine him for seven days. (Then):
  • 22 If it spreads on the skin, the priest should pronounce him ritually impure, for it is a (tzara’as blotch) lesion.
  • 23 If the spot remains in its place, without spreading, then it is (merely) the scar tissue of the inflammation, and the priest should pronounce him ritually pure.

laws of tzara’as on a burn

• 24 If (a person has on) the skin of his body a burn caused by fire on his skin, and on the healed area of the burn there is a (streaked) red and white (spot) or a white spot, 25 the priest should examine it. If he sees that the hair in the spot has turned white, and if its (white) appearance

Delivering the Tzara’as Inspection (v. 14)
Both Rabbi Yehudah and Rebbi agree that one does not inspect suspected lesions of tzara’as during a festival, or a bridegroom in the week of celebration of his wedding. What they disagree on is the source of this law: Rabbi Yehudah maintains that the law is derived from a scriptural redundancy in verse 14 (“on the day”); whereas Rebbi holds that the law is derived by logical extension of another law, that one may delay an inspection of tzara’as for a good reason.

According to Rabbi Yehudah, it follows that during a festival etc., a person is exempt from an inspection, since the Torah itself indicates (via a scriptural redundancy) that tzara’as inspections are simply not made on a festival or to a bridegroom. Rebbi, however, followed the logic that, even on a festival etc., the requirement for an inspection is only being postponed for a good reason, but that there is an underlying requirement to inspect a tzara’as lesion on that day.

In other words: the difference between exemption and a postponement is that an exemption represents the elimination of any obligation, whereas a postponement merely delays that obligation which actually still exists.

We might be tempted to think that if a Jew has a very low spiritual standing, to the extent that he should be removed from the community – like a person with tzara’as—then his identity as a Jew has lost its significance, and that even the mitzvos he performs are of little worth, since they are sure to be done with inappropriate motives.

Thus the Torah teaches us here that even if a person is struck with tzara’as, eventually requiring him to be exiled from the camp, nevertheless: a) Since “the Torah cares about the possessions of a Jewish person,” we delay the inspection to help him. This indicates that even at his low spiritual state, his identity as a Jew remains strong. b) His mitzvos are still of genuine worth, to the extent that we delay the inspection to allow him to observe the festival, or the mitzvah of the wedding feast.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 37, pp. 39-40)
A practical difference between these two opinions would occur if a priest accidentally inspected a tzara’as lesion on a festival (or on a bridegroom) and pronounced the lesion ritually impure. According to Rashi, the law simply does not apply on these days, since they are days of complete exemption, so it follows that the priest’s words carry no weight in Jewish law.

However, according to Rebbi, the priest’s words would be effective, since the festival (or wedding celebrations) were only a means of delaying the inspection, but in principle, the inspection can be carried out on these days.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 37, p. 37ff.)

**CLASSIC QUESTIONS**

- **What is different about tzara’as that occurs in a place where hair grows? What is nesek?** (v. 29-30)

  **RASHI:** Scripture is coming here to distinguish between a lesion in a place where hair grows and a lesion in a place of normal skin. In the latter case, the sign [of ritual impurity] is white hair; while in the former case, the sign [of ritual impurity] is golden hair.

  Nesek is the name of a lesion [of tzara’as when it occurs] on an area of [skin where] hair [normally grows].

  **RAMBAN:** Nesek means “torn away.” In the case of a nesek lesion hair first falls away, and then golden hair grows in its place—not like Rashi’s argument that the golden hair grows without the original hair falling out first.

**TORAS MENACHEM**

Ramban’s Dispute with Rashi (v. 29-30)

Having read the laws of tzara’as concerning exposed skin (13:1-28), in the current section we read the laws concerning a tzara’as lesion which occurs on a place usually covered by hair—the head or beard.

Rashi argues that, essentially, the lesion of the hair and beard area is the same as a lesion of the skin, with the exception that the lesion of the hair area must produce a golden hair in order to be pronounced ritually impure, whereas the lesion of unexposed skin must produce a white hair.

Ramban, however, argues that the “nesek” is a totally different type of lesion altogether. The nesek is not merely a lesion of the skin with yellow hair instead of white, but rather, it is a special type of lesion which is...
(makes it look) deeper than the (surrounding) skin, then it is tzara’as which has erupted in the burn. The priest should pronounce him ritually impure (for) it is a tzara’as lesion.

- 26 But, if the priest examines it, and he sees that there is no white hair in the spot, nor does it appear to be deeper than the (surrounding) skin, and it is faded, the priest should quarantine him for seven days.

- 27 The priest should examine it on the seventh day, and:
  - If it has spread on the skin, the priest should pronounce him ritually impure (for) it is a tzara’as lesion.
  - 28 But if the spot remains in its place, without spreading on the skin, and it is faded, then it is (merely) a white blotch caused by the burn, and the priest should pronounce him ritually pure, because it is the scar tissue of the burn.

**FIFTH READING**

- 29 If a man or a woman has a (suspected tzara’as) lesion on the head or beard (area), the priest should examine the lesion. If he sees that its (white) appearance (makes it look) deeper than the skin, and that the (black) hair in it (has turned) golden, the priest should pronounce him ritually impure. It is (called) a nesek lesion, which is tzara’as of the head or beard (area).

- 30 If the priest looks at the (suspected) nesek lesion, and he sees that its appearance is not deeper than the skin, and that there is no black hair in it (which would render it ritually pure), then the priest should quarantine (the person with) the nesek lesion for seven days.

- 31 On the seventh day, the priest should examine the lesion and if he sees that the nesek (has spread or that it has golden hair in it, then the priest should pronounce him ritually impure. But if it) has not spread, and there is no golden hair in it, and the appearance of the nesek is not

**NESEK—TZARA’AS OF THE HAIR & BEARD AREA**

Comparison of the opinions of Rashi & Ramban (v. 29-30)

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CLASSIC QUESTIONS

What does verse 40 teach us?

**Rashi:** [That a person with a bald patch] is exempt from the impurity of nesek, [i.e., a lesion here] is not ascertained by the criteria of lesions of the head and beard area, which are places of hair (v. 29-37). Rather, [it is ascertained] by the criteria for a lesion on the [normal, unexposed] skin of the flesh, namely: white hair, healthy flesh, and spreading (above v. 2-11).

**Ramban:** If a person goes bald, then we do not consider this to be the beginning of a development of a nesek lesion, since the fact that he has gone bald over a large area indicates that this is not tzara’as, but natural balding.

TZARA’AS OF A BALD PATCH (v. 40)

We can now attempt to analyze a further dispute between Rashi and Ramban, concerning the tzara’as of a bald patch, which is connected to the above discussion.

On reading verse 40—“If a man loses the hair on (the back of) his head, his bald patch, he is ritually pure” — the reader will be left with two obvious questions:

a.) Why would we think that mere baldness alone is a sign of tzara’as, to the extent that the Torah needs to inform us otherwise, “If a man loses the hair on (the back of) his head...he is ritually pure”?

b.) Why does the Torah repeat, “If a man loses the hair on (the back of) his head, his bald patch...”? Surely the verse could simply have stated, “If a man loses the hair on (the back of) his head, he is ritually pure”?

Rashi and Ramban addressed these issues in different ways, consistent with their explanations to verse 29, above:
deeper than the skin, (then the afflicted person) should shave himself (around the nesek), avoiding shaving the nesek (itself, and leaving a two-hair border around the nesek so it can be determined if it is spreading), and the priest should quarantine (the person with) the nesek for a further seven days.

- 34 The priest should then examine the nesek on the seventh day, and if he sees that the nesek did not spread on the skin, and that its appearance is not deeper than the skin, the priest should pronounce him ritually pure. (However, since the person was quarantined) he must (still) cleanse his garments (in a mikvah) and then he will become ritually pure.

- 35 If the nesek spreads on the skin (at the end of the first or second week’s quarantine, or) after he has been declared ritually pure, the priest should examine it, and:
  - If he sees that the nesek has spread on the skin, the priest need not look for golden hair, (for) he is ritually impure.
  - But if the appearance of the nesek has remained the same, or if dark hair has grown in it, the nesek has healed, He is (thus) ritually pure, and so the priest should pronounce him ritually pure.

**Additional Laws of the White Spot**

- 38 If a man or a woman has spots on the skin of their flesh, white spots, The priest should examine them, and if he sees that there are (only) dull white spots on the skin of their flesh, it is (merely) a white patch (of normal skin, devoid of pigment) which has spread on the skin (and) he is ritually pure.

**Laws of Tzara’as on a Bald Patch**

- 40 If a man loses the hair on (the back of) his head, his bald patch, he is ritually pure.
- 41 (Likewise,) if he loses his hair on the front toward his face and he is bald at the front (and then contracts a nesek), he is ritually pure.

**Opinion of Ramban**

Ramban explained above, that a tzara’as lesion in the area of the hair or beard (known as nesek) must have two signs in order to be pronounced ritually impure:

i.) There must be some initial hair loss.
ii.) Golden hair must then appear.

In other words, Ramban perceived hair loss itself to be a sign of ritual impurity.

Thus, when reaching our verse—“If a man loses the hair on (the back of) his head, his bald patch, he is ritually pure”—it is understandable why the Torah needs to inform us that baldness is not a sign of ritual impurity, because, according to Ramban, partial baldness is a sign of potential tzara’as. Therefore, the Torah informed us that if the baldness is on a larger scale, it ceases to be a sign of tzara’as, for the significant extent of the baldness makes it clear that this is not an affliction at all, but rather, natural baldness.

So, according to Ramban, our verse reads: “If a man loses the hair on (the back of) his head—it is not a sign of tzara’as, but merely—his natural bald patch. Therefore he is ritually pure.”

**Opinion of Rashi**

Rashi, however, took a totally different approach to explaining tzara’as of skin which is covered by hair, leading him to a different conclusion too in our case.

Earlier, in his commentary to verse 29, Rashi indicated his stance that hair loss is not one of the signs of tzara’as of an area normally covered by hair. Rather, it is the appearance of golden hair alone, without accompanying hair loss, that renders a person ritually impure (see Classic Questions and table ibid.).

Thus, when reaching our verse—“If a man loses the hair on (the back of) his head, his bald patch, he is ritually pure”—Rashi confronted a major problem: Why would we possibly think that if a person loses hair that he would be ritually impure? We do not find anywhere in the Torah that loss of hair is considered to be a sign of tzara’as, so why does the Torah need to tell us, that “If a man loses the hair he is ritually pure,” when we would never have thought otherwise? (Obviously, this was not a problem for Ramban, for he did consider loss of hair to be a sign of tzara’as.)

This problem led Rashi to conclude that our verse must be speaking of a case not of hair loss alone, but rather, a case where a person went bald.
and then developed a tzara’as lesion on his bald patch. This presents us
with the question: Is a lesion on a bald patch considered to be “tzara’as
in an area normally covered by hair”—i.e. nesek (which is declared
impure with the presence of golden hair)? Or do we say that since the
person is now bald, this area reverts to the status of ordinary, exposed
skin (that is declared impure with the presence of white hair etc.)?

Rashi concluded that the apparently superfluous words in our verse, “If
a man loses the hair on (the back of) his head, his bald patch, he is ritually
pure,” come to teach us his bald patch reverts to the status of normal,
exposed skin. Thus, according to Rashi our verse reads: “If a man loses
the hair on (the back of) his head—and then develops a tzara’as lesion
there—his bald patch reverts to the status of normal, exposed skin. So, if
he develops a nesek lesion there, with golden hair—he is ritually pure.”

A Problem with Rashi

At first glance, however, Rashi’s interpretation seems to be problematic:
Rashi has derived two laws from our verse: a.) That if a nesek lesion
appears on a bald patch then a person is exempt. b.) That if a normal
tzara’as lesion (with white hair etc.) appears on a bald patch then the
person is ritually impure.

Now, the first law ‘a’ is clearly indicated by a scriptural redundancy (“his
bald patch”), as explained above. But, there appears to be no scriptural
basis for Rashi’s second assertion (‘b’) that if a normal tzara’as lesion (with
white hair etc.) appears on a bald patch then the person is ritually impure.

In truth, however, it was explained above (Toras Menachem v. 29), that
according to Rashi the nesek lesion is not a different category of lesion to
a tzara’as lesion that occurs on normal, exposed skin; rather, they are
essentially the same lesion which occurs in different locations.

If Rashi had understood them to be different lesions, then here in verse
40 Rashi would have needed two scriptural sources: a.) One to prove that
a bald patch is exempt from the lesion called “nesek,” b.) Another
redundancy to prove that a bald patch is subject to a tzara’as lesion of
ordinary skin.

However, since Rashi understood nesek to be the same type of tzara’as
lesion, it turns out that ‘a’ and ‘b’ are not in fact two different laws, but
that rather, they are two aspects of the relocation of the same tzara’as to
a different place. Since only one parameter has changed—the location—
Rashi sufficed with one scriptural source.
If there is a (streaked) red and white lesion on the back or front bald area, and it is (suspected to be) a spreading tzara'as in his back or front bald area, the priest should examine it. If he sees there is (indeed) a (streaked) red and white blotch lesion on his back or front bald area, like the appearance of tzara'as on the skin of the body, then he is a man afflicted with tzara'as (and) he is ritually impure. The priest should pronounce him ritually impure (due to) his lesion on his head.

(The following should be done to) a person with tzara'as, who has a (genuine) lesion: His garments should be torn, his hair should be grown long, he should wear his cloak down to his moustache (like a mourner) and call out, “(I’m) ritually impure! (I’m) ritually impure!”

So long as the lesion is upon him, he will be ritually impure. He should remain isolated. His place should be outside the camp.

If a garment has a tzara'as lesion on it—be it a woolen garment, or a linen garment, or on (threads prepared for the) warp or woof of linen or wool, or on leather or on anything made from leather:

If the lesion on the garment, the leather, the warp or woof (threads) or on the various types of leather articles is deep green or deep red, it is a lesion of tzara'as, and it should be shown to the priest.

**Isolation of the Tzara'as Sufferer**

(Why is the tzara'as sufferer isolated? (v. 46))

Rashi: So that other ritually impure people should not be with him. Our Sages said: “Why is he different from other ritually impure people, that he must be isolated? Since he caused a severance between man and wife or between man and his fellow with his gossip, he too is severed from society.”

Talmud: He must be isolated so as not to contaminate the other people that are around him with ritual impurity (Pesachim 67a).

Rambam: He will [have to be] isolated in public [disgrace], until he stops occupying himself with wicked speech, mockery and gossip (Laws of the Ritual Impurity of Tzara'as 16:10).

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**Laws of Tzara'as of Garments**

If a garment has a tzara'as lesion on it—be it a woolen garment, or a linen garment, or on (threads prepared for the) warp or woof of linen or wool, or on leather or on anything made from leather:

If the lesion on the garment, the leather, the warp or woof (threads) or on the various types of leather articles is deep green or deep red, it is a lesion of tzara'as, and it should be shown to the priest.

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**Classic Questions**

Why is the tzara'as sufferer isolated? (v. 46)

Rashi: Since the tzara'as sufferer is contaminated with a severe degree of ritual impurity, it is inappropriate for him to be found inside the Jewish camp. Therefore, he is isolated (see Talmud).

Talmud: He must be isolated so as not to contaminate the other people that are around him with ritual impurity (Pesachim 67a).

Rambam: He will [have to be] isolated in public [disgrace], until he stops occupying himself with wicked speech, mockery and gossip (Laws of the Ritual Impurity of Tzara'as 16:10).

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**Toras Menachem**

Isolation of the Tzara'as Sufferer (v. 46)

The law that a tzara'as sufferer must be isolated has two distinct aspects:

a.) Negative. Since the tzara'as sufferer is contaminated with a severe degree of ritual impurity, it is inappropriate for him to be found inside the Jewish camp. Therefore, he is isolated (see Talmud).

b.) Positive. Since this person was afflicted by tzara'as because he had a tendency to gossip, the best therapy for him is to be isolated from all other people so that he will have nobody to gossip with (see Rambam).

Aspect ‘a’ applies to all individuals who must be isolated due to a severe form of ritual impurity, and not just to the tzara'as sufferer (see Bamidbar 5:1-4). Aspect ‘b,’ however, is unique to the case of tzara’as.

The addition of aspect ‘b’ in the case of tzara'as has a number of practical ramifications:

1.) If the Jewish camp ceases to exist, for whatever reason (e.g., due to the destruction of the Temple), then there is no longer an obligation to isolate the tzara'as sufferer (or any other ritually impure person) for the benefit of the Jewish camp, since the camp no longer exists. Nevertheless, there remains an obligation to isolate the tzara'as sufferer for his own benefit.

2.) If the tzara'as sufferer was sent out of the camp merely to avoid contaminating other members of the camp with ritual impurity, then it follows that he would be allowed to mix with other tzara'as sufferers who had also been sent outside the camp. There is no fear that he would contaminate them, since they are already contaminated themselves.

However, with the addition of aspect ‘b’ above—that the isolation is for the benefit of the sufferer himself—it follows that he must be totally isolated even from other tzara'as sufferers, in order to train himself to avoid speaking gossip. In fact, for him to be isolated with other tzara'as suffers would be totally counterproductive to this goal, for being in the company of other gossips he is hardly likely to wean himself off gossip! Rather, if the law of isolation is for his benefit too, then he must be placed in total isolation.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22 pp. 73-74; see also “The Name of the Parsha”)

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* “Warp” is yarn arranged lengthways on a loom and crossed by the “woof,” the yarn woven in the opposite direction at right angles.
priest. 50 The priest should examine the lesion, and he should quarantine (the article with) the lesion for seven days.

- 51 On the seventh day, he should examine the lesion: If the lesion has spread on the garment, or on the warp or woof (threads), or on the leather—for whatever purpose the leather had been made—the lesion is a piercing tzara‘as (and) it is ritually impure. 52 He must burn the garment, the warp or woof (threads) of wool or of linen, or the leather article which has the lesion upon it, for it is a piercing tzara‘as. It should be burned in fire.

- 53 But if the priest examines it, and sees that the lesion has not spread on the garment, the warp or woof (threads), or the leather article, 54 the priest should instruct that (the part of the garment) which the lesion is upon should be cleansed (by washing it), and he should quarantine it for a further seven days.

- 55 After the lesion has been cleansed (and quarantined) the priest should examine it. If he sees that the lesion has not faded in appearance, and that the lesion has not spread, then it is ritually impure. You should burn it in fire. It is a penetrating lesion on the used or new (article).

- 56 But if the priest examines it after it has been cleansed (and quarantined), and he sees that the lesion has become dimmer, he should tear (the lesion) out of the garment, the leather, or the warp or woof (threads, and burn it).

According to Rashi
How is the garment “cleansed a second time”? (v. 58)

Rashi: Through immersion in a mikvah [ritual bath].

Ibn Ezra: The Torah commands us to wash the garment a second time [and not to immerse it in a mikvah].

Classical Questions

The “Second Cleansing” (v. 58)

When a suspected tzara’as lesion is found on a garment, it is shown to the priest who quarantines it for seven days. If the lesion has not spread, then the afflicted area of the garment is washed to remove the lesion, and the garment is quarantined for a further seven days.

At this point there are three possibilities (See v. 47-58 and flow chart on previous page):

1.) The lesion has returned in full force, in which case the entire garment must be burned.

2.) The lesion has returned, but it is more dim than it was originally. In this case, the afflicted part of the garment is torn out and burned, and the remaining part may be used.

3.) The lesion has not returned at all, in which case the garment must be “cleansed” for a second time, and then it may be used.

Rashi and Ibn Ezra argue as to the precise nature of this second “cleansing.” Rashi writes that this refers to immersion in a mikvah (ritual bath), whereas Ibn Ezra argues that the garment must be washed.

At the literal level, Rashi’s stance is difficult to understand, for the following reasons:

a.) The verse states, “If the lesion disappeared from the garment...it should be cleansed a second time.” This suggests that we carry out the same cleansing procedure with the garment that was done the first time—namely, washing—for a second time. However, according to Rashi’s interpretation, this further cleansing is a different process than what was carried out the first time. So why does the Torah state, “It should be cleansed a second time,” suggesting that we are doing the same thing for a second time? It might have been appropriate to refer to a “further cleansing,” suggesting an additional but different cleansing method, but not a “second cleansing,” which—at the literal level—suggests a repeat of the same procedure.

b.) Rashi’s interpretation presents us with a logical inconsistency: The less severe case, where the lesion does not return, is treated more severely with a cleansing of the entire garment in a mikvah; whereas the more severe case, when the lesion returns in a dimmer form, can be rectified by tearing out and burning only the afflicted part, without immersion in a mikvah.

According to Ibn Ezra’s interpretation, that the second cleansing is a washing, this problem does not arise. For a major distinction between washing and immersing in a mikvah, is that we only need to wash the afflicted part of a garment, whereas when immersing an item in a mikvah the entire item must be totally submerged. Thus, if we follow Ibn Ezra’s interpretation it does indeed turn out that the more severe case is treated more severely: If the lesion returns in a dimmer form, that part of the garment is torn out and burned; whereas if the lesion does not return we merely have to wash that part of the garment, and not burn it.

So why did Rashi reject the interpretation of Ibn Ezra, which appears to be far less problematic at the literal level?
MAFTIR

- 57 If it appears again on the garment, the warp or woof (threads) or the leather article, it is a recurrent growth (of the lesion). You should (therefore) burn (the entire garment) upon which the lesion is (found) in fire.

- 58 But if the lesion disappeared from the garment, the warp or woof (threads) or the leather article which was cleansed, it should be cleansed a second time (through immersion in a mikvah), and it will be ritually pure.

59 (The above) is the law of a tzara’as lesion on a woolen or linen garment, warp or woof threads, or any leather article, to render it ritually pure or ritually impure.


THE EXPLANATION
There are two ways of understanding the Torah’s requirement to make a second cleansing of a garment afflicted by tzara’as:

a.) In the case of tzara’as of the skin, even when the physical signs of a lesion have completely disappeared, the person is not free of tzara’as from a halachic (legal) point of view, until the priest pronounces him ritually pure. So too in our case, it could be argued that the first cleansing is merely a physical cleansing of the garment, in order to determine if the lesion is spreading etc., and the second cleansing is a procedure which is required to render the person halachically free of tzara’as.

According to this logic, the second cleansing could feasibly be achieved by either washing or immersion in a mikvah—whichever the Torah deemed to be the most appropriate halachic conclusion to the affliction of tzara’as.

  b.) Alternatively, it could be argued that the first cleansing was both a physical and a halachic cleansing, which removed the tzara’as from the garment completely. Nevertheless, the presence of the tzara’as lesion on the garment had rendered the remainder of the garment (that was not directly afflicted with tzara’as) ritually impure. Therefore, a second cleansing is required, not to remove the tzara’as, but to purify the rest of the garment.

According to this interpretation, the second cleansing would have to be in a mikvah, since only a mikvah is capable of removing ritual impurity which has been contracted from another source.

Now, at the literal level, the expression “it should be cleansed a second time” suggests that each cleansing procedure had its own independent effect. For if the two cleansings had one single cumulative effect, then it would not be correct to call them “first” and “second” cleansings, but rather, they would be two phases within a single cleansing.

According to the first interpretation above, only one cleansing took place, for the first washing of the garment was not intended to cleanse it from its impurity at all. Rather, it was a diagnostic procedure used to ascertain whether the lesion was spreading or shrinking. Thus, the final “cleansing” was in fact the one and only cleansing that rendered the garment free of tzara’as. Therefore, Rashi rejected this interpretation, since it is inconsistent with scripture which suggests that there were two independent cleansing procedures.

However, according to the second interpretation, there were in fact two cleansings: First, the garment was washed to remove the tzara’as; and then it was immersed in a mikvah to remove the ritual impurity that had spread through the rest of the garment.

Therefore Rashi wrote that the second cleansing was through an immersion in a mikvah, for this is the only interpretation which is compatible with scripture at the literal level.

Based on the above we can also answer the second question (‘b’) posed earlier, why the apparently more severe case (where the lesion returns partially) is exempt from immersion in a mikvah. For, since the partially returning lesion is removed from the garment before it is declared ritually impure, it does not have the opportunity to contaminate the rest of the garment with ritual impurity. Consequently, no immersion in a mikvah is required.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 92ff.)

SPARKS OF CHASIDUS

The double cleansing of a garment afflicted by tzara’as is an analogy for the “cleansing” of a sin from the soul of man:

The first cleansing is repentance, through which a person is forgiven by God for his sin, completing his atonement.

Nevertheless, even after a person has completely repented, the Torah nevertheless suggests that he carries out a series of fasts (see Igeres Hateshuvah ch. 2)—and in Temple times, bring a burnt-offering—in order that God look on him favorably, just like before the sin occurred.

Now, one might think that since fasts are still required after the repentance, it is a sign that the original repentance is not complete. In truth however, the fasting is merely a “second cleansing,” which helps to imbue the person with additional purity. But his “first cleansing,” the repentance, is complete in its own right.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, pp. 99)
Parshas Tazria contains 5 positive mitzvos and 2 prohibitions

1. The ritual impurity of a woman who gives birth [12:2,5].
2. A ritually impure person should not eat holy sacrifices [12:4].
3. The offering brought by a woman who has given birth [12:6].
4. The ritual impurity of a person with tzara‘as [13:2].
5. Not to shave the hair of a nesek lesion [13:33].
6. A man with tzara‘as, or anyone who can render others ritually impure, should leave his hair untrimmed and his clothes torn [13:45].
7. The laws regarding tzara‘as of clothing [13:47].
parshas Metzora

The Name of the Parsha

The previous Parsha, Tazria, describes the onset and identification of the supernatural “disease” tzara’as.* Our Parsha, by contrast, details the process by which the tzara’as sufferer rids himself of the affliction, to become ritually pure.

Thus it is somewhat surprising that our Parsha is called Metzora—meaning, “one who is afflicted by tzara’as”—since our Parsha deals not with the affliction of this condition, but rather its spiritual remedy.

If something bad occurs, it can be for one of two reasons. Either:

a.) It is an expression of the forces of evil.

b.) It is actually an expression of a very intense form of good, but the good was so intense that the world was unable to cope, so the good was “misdirected” to the forces of evil.

The method of correcting the problem will differ in both cases: a.) Plain evil needs simply to be eradicated. The problem and its solution are thus diametrically opposed: the problem is bad, and the solution is good.

b.) However, if the bad occurrence is in fact a “misdirected” form of intense good, then the remedy is not through eradication, for there is a tremendous power of good here. Rather, the solution lies in revealing the true nature and source of the problem, how below the surface there is really something very good.

Hasidic thought explains that tzara’as falls into the latter category and, that in truth, the affliction belies a tremendously positive spiritual energy (Likutei Torah, Tazria 22b). Thus its remedy—described in our Parsha—is not in fact an eradication of the tzara’as but rather, a revelation of the good, inner nature of the affliction. Consequently, our Parsha, which describes the cure for the disease, is called by the very name of the disease, Metzora, to hint to the fact that the “remedy” for this problem is through revealing the true inner nature of the affliction itself.

(Based of Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5751)

* See note on page 91
Rashi's commentary, which is aimed at solving problems with the literal
language of scripture and not at explaining the reasons behind the mitzvos.

The explanation

The Torah states here that the birds brought for the purposes of ritually purifying the tzara’as sufferer must be “live” and “pure.” Rashi explains that this means they must not be treife and they must be of a non-kosher species.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

What kind of birds must be used? (v. 4)

Rashi: “Live birds” means birds that are not treife [i.e. they need to be without a disqualifying defect or injury]. “Pure birds” excludes those of a non-kosher species.

This is because lesions of tzara’as come as a result of gossip, which is done by chattering. Therefore, this person is required to bring birds for his ritual purification, which twitter constantly with chirping sounds.

Why is a cedar stick required? (v. 4)

Rashi: Because lesions of tzara’as come due to haughtiness [symbolized by the tall cedar].

Why is crimson wool and hyssop taken? (v. 4)

Rashi: What is the remedy to be healed [of tzara’as]? He must humble himself from his haughtiness, like the worm [used to make crimson dye] and the hyssop plant [which does not grow tall].

The Ritual Purification of Tzara’as (v. 4)

In his comments to verse 4, Rashi describes the messages behind the various items used to ritually purify a person from tzara’as: the birds allude to gossiping, the cedar alludes to haughtiness both of which are the causes of tzara’as—and the crimson wool and hyssop to humility, the “remedy” for tzara’as.

At first glance, these comments appear to be totally out of character with Rashi’s commentary, which is aimed at solving problems with the literal level of scripture and not at explaining the reasons behind the mitzvos. What prompted Rashi to explain the messages and hints behind the details of this mitzvah?

TORAS MENACHEM

The Torah states here that the birds brought for the purposes of ritually purifying the tzara’as sufferer must be “live” and “pure.” Rashi explains that this means they must not be treife and they must be of a kosher species.
God spoke to Moshe, saying: 2 This will be the law of the tzara’as sufferer, on the day of his ritual purification:

- His (case*) should be brought to the (attention of the) priest.
- The priest should go outside the camp (where the tzara’as sufferer was isolated).
- If the priest examines the tzara’as sufferer and sees that his tzara’as lesion has healed, 4 then, upon the priest’s instructions, two live, pure birds, a stick of cedar wood, a strip of crimson wool, and hyssop should be taken for the person who is to be ritually purified.
- Upon the priest’s instructions, one bird should be slaughtered (allowing its blood to fall) into an earthenware vessel (containing) spring water.
- The (remaining) live bird should then be taken, along with the stick of cedar wood, the strip of crimson wool, and the hyssop. (The stick and hyssop should be tied together with the crimson wool) and he should dip them, together with the live bird, into the blood of the slaughtered bird (which was mixed with) the spring water.
- He should then sprinkle (some of the blood and water mixture) seven times upon the person being cleansed from tzara’as. (This is a crucial part** of) his ritual purification (process).
- He should then send away the live bird into the open field.
- The person undergoing ritual purification should then immerse his garments (in a mikvah). (This is a crucial part of) his ritual purification (process).

**Sparks of Chasidus**

Mashiach: A Tzara’as Sufferer

The Talmud describes Mashiach—as he exists during the state of exile, waiting to redeem the Jewish people— as a tzara’as sufferer (Sanhedrin 98b). For while Mashiach himself is a totally pure and holy individual, he nevertheless bears the suffering of the Jewish people in exile— “In truth he has borne our sicknesses and endured our pains, yet we held him to be stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted” (Isaiah 53:4, cited by Talmud ibid.). The ritual purification of the tzara’as sufferer that we read in our Parsha thus alludes to the true and final redemption, when Mashiach takes the Jewish people out of exile.

From this we can learn:
- Mashiach is not a person who will spontaneously arrive with the redemption. Rather, he is found in exile with the Jewish people, and helps to bear their difficulties and sorrows.
- Parshas Tazria contains the laws of the affliction of tzara’as, alluding to exile. Parshas Metzora, on the other hand, contains the laws of ritual purification of tzara’as, alluding to redemption. The fact that these two Parshiyos are usually read together teaches us that we should not perceive exile and redemption as two separate, sequential events. Rather, each mitzvah that we observe in exile should be actively infused with the knowledge that it is an act which is hastening the redemption.
- In earlier generations our Parsha was referred to not as Metzora, but as Zos Tihiyeh (“This will be [the Law...]), but more recently this name was rejected, by Jewish custom. The inner reason for this change is that the Jewish people became more aware (at least subconsciously) that Mashiach’s coming is very close, and it is thus inappropriate to refer to this Parsha, which alludes to Mashiach’s coming, in the future tense (“This will be”).
- The ritual purification of the tzara’as sufferer is through the laws of the Torah (“This will be the law (lit. “Torah”) of the tzara’as sufferer). Thus, one of the most effective ways to accelerate the coming of Mashiach is to study the concept of Mashiach and redemption as it is described in the Written and Oral Torah.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, pp. 103-4; vol. 22, pp. 76-77; Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5751; see also Likutei Sichos vol. 37, p. 33ff.)
Of course, these details are not unique to this case. All sacrifices must be brought from animals that are not *treife* and from a kosher species, as Rashi stated explicitly in his commentary at an earlier point (Bereishis 7:2; Vayikra 1:2). In fact, even without proof from Rashi, it is only logical that since we are forbidden to eat animals that are *treife* or not kosher, then all the more so is it forbidden to offer them up on the Altar to God.

Thus, on reaching our verse, the reader will be troubled: Why did the Torah choose to stress specifically here that these sacrifices must be kosher and not *treife*, if this is a law that applies to all sacrifices?

Rashi concluded that the Torah must be adding this additional stress here to indicate a special connection between the birds and the ritual purification of the *tzara'as* sufferer. Therefore, he wrote, "Because lesions..."
• After this, he may enter the camp, but he should remain “outside his tent” (i.e. separate from his wife) for seven days.

• "Then, on the seventh day, he should shave off all his hair—(not only the hair of) his head, his beard and his eyebrows, (but) he should shave off all his (other visible) hair (too).

• He should then immerse his garments and immerse his body in (mikvah) water, and then he becomes (partially) ritually pure.

• On the eighth day, he should take:
  • Two perfect (blemished) male lambs (for a guilt-offering and a burnt-offering);
  • One perfect (blemished) female lamb in its first year (for a sin-offering);
  • Three tenths (of an eifah*) of fine flour mixed with (olive) oil as a meal-offering;
  • One log** of (olive) oil.

• The priest who is performing the ritual purification should place the person who is to be ritually purified (together) with these (things) before God, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

• The priest should take one (male) lamb and bring it as a guilt-offering, along with the log of oil, and wave them as a wave-offering before God.

• He should slaughter the lamb in the place where the sin-offering and the burnt-offering are slaughtered, in the holy place (north of the Altar), for this guilt-offering is like (any) sin-offering (in terms of the service performed) by the priest. It is a holy of holies.

• The priest should take some of the blood of the guilt-offering, and the priest should place it above the cartilage of the right ear of the person being cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.

• The priest should then take some of the log of oil, and pour it onto the priest’s (own*** left palm.

• The priest should then dip his right index finger into some of the oil that is on his left palm, and sprinkle some oil with his index finger seven times (towards the Holy of Holies) before God.

• The priest should then place some of the remaining oil in his palm on the cartilage of the right ear of the person being cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, on (top of) the blood of the guilt-offering.

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**TORAS MENACHEM**

of tzara’ as come as a result of gossip, which is done by chattering. Therefore, this person is required to bring birds for his ritual purification, which twitter constantly with chirping sounds."

The Torah’s two additional terms here—live and pure—thus refer to two aspects of the gossip which brought about the person’s tzara’ as:

a.) The content of the gossip. Gossip is “impure” speech which maligns another person. Therefore, to remove the tzara’ as, a pure (kosher) species of bird must be brought, hinting that the person’s speech from now on must be totally pure.

b.) The manner of the gossip. In addition to the inappropriate content of gossip, the manner in which gossip is carried out is also sinful. For a person tends to gossip incessantly, with energy and enthusiasm.

Therefore, the sacrifice that comes to correct this sin must be from a bird that is not treife, i.e. a bird which is not terminally ill and is thus full of energy. This hints to the person that his sin was not only that of gossip, but furthermore, that of “twittering constantly.” And, furthermore, his gossip was with energy and enthusiasm—“with chirping sounds.”

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**CEDAR STICK, CRIMSON WOOL & HYSSOP**

When reading that the ritual purification of the tzara’ as sufferer requires the use of a cedar stick, crimson wool and hyssop, Rashi was troubled by the question: Why does this procedure involve such bizarre objects?

At first glance, we might think that these details are suprarational decrees of scripture, and thus have no real explanation at the literal level. However, Rashi rejected this explanation because the passage begins: נאום התנח 만들어ו法庭 התוכננה ("This will be the law of the tzara’ as sufferer"), suggesting a normal, rational law—and not: נאום התנח מעשה המוכנה ("This will be the statute of the tzara’ as sufferer"), which would suggest that we are speaking here of a suprarational command.

Therefore, in a similar vein to the above explanation about the birds, Rashi concluded that these rather bizarre items must have been chosen to hint a message to the tzara’ as sufferer who is about to undergo purification. Namely, that he should no longer be haughty like a cedar, but rather, humble like a lowly worm or hyssop plant.

*(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Metzora 5746)*
What must be brought if a rich person makes the offering of a poor tzara’as sufferer on his behalf? (v. 10, 21-22)

Rambam: If a rich person says, “I will bring the sacrifices of this tzara’as sufferer on his behalf,” and the tzara’as sufferer was poor, then he must bring a rich man’s sacrifice, for it is within the means of the one who vowed [i.e. the rich sponsor] to bring the sacrifice.

(end of Laws of Individuals Requiring Atonement)

The Offering of a Poor Tzara’as Sufferer (v. 21-22)

Rambam’s logic here does not seem to be consistent:

First, he rules that the rich man who sponsors a poor man’s sacrifice must bring a rich man’s sacrifice because he is able to do so. This suggests that the key factor is the financial means of the sponsor.

Then in the second case, where the poor man sponsors the rich man’s sacrifice, Rambam ignores the financial means of the sponsor and rules instead that he must bring a rich man’s sacrifice, since we follow the financial status of the tzara’as sufferer.

But how could we follow the financial status of the sponsor in one instance, and the status of the tzara’as sufferer in another?

A further problem is that Rambam seems to contradict himself when recording this law in another place, in his Laws of Sacrificial Procedure:

“If a person says, ‘I will bring the sacrifices of this tzara’as sufferer or this woman who has given birth on their behalf,’ then if the tzara’as sufferer or woman was poor, he brings a poor man’s offering. But, if they were rich, then he must bring a rich man’s offering, even if the one who made the vow [i.e. the sponsor] was poor” (Laws of Sacrificial Procedure 14:9).

In this codification of the law we see a consistency: Rambam rules that, whatever the financial status of the sponsor, we always give a sacrifice according to the means of the tzara’as sufferer.

But this openly contradicts the ruling of Rambam in his “Laws of Individuals Requiring Atonement” cited above, that when the sponsor is rich he must bring a rich man’s sacrifice, even if the tzara’as sufferer is poor!

The Explanation

When a person vows to bring a sacrifice on behalf of a tzara’as sufferer, there are two distinct elements to the sacrifice:

a.) To fulfill the vow. The person who made the vow must now bring the sacrifice in order to fulfill the obligation that he took upon himself. This is...
The priest should place the leftover oil in his palm on the head of the person being rendered ritually pure, and (thus) the priest will atone for him, before God.

The priest should then perform (the service of) the sin-offering, to atone for the person being rendered ritually pure, from his ritual impurity.

After this, he should slaughter the burnt-offering.

Then the priest should bring up the burnt-offering and the meal-offering to the Altar. The priest will thus atone for him, and he will be (completely) ritually pure.

**Offerings of the Poor Tzara'as Sufferer**

If he is poor and cannot afford (the above offerings), he should take:

- One male lamb, as a guilt-offering, for a wave-offering to atone for him;
- One tenth (of an eifah*) of fine flour mixed with oil, as a meal-offering;
- A log of oil (to apply on the thumb and big toe);
- Two turtledoves or two young doves, according to what he can afford: one for a sin-offering, and one for a burnt-offering.

He should bring them on the eighth day of his ritual purification to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, before God.

The priest should take the guilt-offering lamb and the log of oil, and the priest should wave them as a wave-offering before God, and He should slaughter the guilt-offering lamb.

The priest should take some of the guilt-offering’s blood and place it on the cartilage of the right ear of the person being rendered ritually pure, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.

similar to the many other cases in Jewish law where a person makes a vow to bring a sacrifice, and is then required to bring it by force of Torah law.

b.) To achieve atonement. The sacrifice of the tzara’as sufferer is brought for a particular reason, namely, to complete his atonement.

Now, at first glance, it appears peculiar how one person could bring a sacrifice to achieve atonement for another person. After all, it is the tzara’as sufferer who is in need of atonement, so how could somebody else atone on his behalf?

However, in accordance with the Talmudic principle that “all Jews are guarantors for each other” (Shavuos 39a), the Torah breaks down the boundaries between individuals and allows one person to achieve atonement on behalf of another.

In his Laws of Sacrificial Procedure, Rambam is discussing how a person can become obligated to bring sacrifices through making a vow, i.e. the former aspect (‘a’) above. Whereas, in his Laws of Individuals Requiring Atonement, the emphasis is on the ability of the sacrifice to bring atonement (i.e. ‘b,’ above).

Let us examine each in order:

When making a vow (as part of normal sacrificial procedure), we follow the precise wording that the person uttered when making the vow. So, when a person declares, “I will bring the sacrifices of this tzara’as sufferer on his behalf,” he means exactly what he said: that he is taking upon himself the obligation of “this tzara’as sufferer.” Thus, if the tzara’as sufferer is poor, he brings a poor man’s offering. If the tzara’as sufferer is rich, he brings a rich man’s offering, because he only has to bring whatever “this tzara’as sufferer” would have brought himself.

Thus, in his Laws of Sacrificial Procedure Rambam rules, “If the tzara’as sufferer or woman who gave birth was poor, he brings a poor man’s offering. But, if they were rich, then he must bring a rich man’s offering, even if the one who made the vow was poor.”

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* Equivalent to 2.48 liters or 5.26 U.S. pints.
However, when speaking of atonement (the “Laws of Individuals Requiring Atonement”), the tzara’as sufferer and his sponsor merge identities, for the sponsor can only achieve atonement for another person because “all Jews are guarantors for each other.” Therefore, if the sponsor is rich he must bring a rich man’s sacrifice, even if the tzara’as sufferer is poor, because he (the sponsor) is achieving atonement personally on the tzara’as sufferer’s behalf, and he is a wealthy man.

Therefore, Rambam rules in his Laws of Individuals Requiring Atonement: “If a rich person says, ‘I will bring the sacrifices of this tzara’as sufferer on his behalf,’ and the tzara’as sufferer was poor, then he must bring a rich man’s sacrifice, for it is within the means of the one who vowed to bring the sacrifice.”

However, in the reverse case (that the sponsor is poor and the tzara’as sufferer is rich), we cannot allow the sponsor to bring a poor man’s sacrifice, because it would contradict his vow that “I will bring the sacrifices of this (rich) tzara’as sufferer on his behalf.” Therefore, Rambam stresses, “If a poor person says, ‘I will bring the sacrifices of this tzara’as sufferer on his behalf,’ and the tzara’as sufferer was rich, then he must bring a rich man’s sacrifice, for the person who is making the vow has obligated himself with the sacrifices of a rich man.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 101f.)
The priest should then pour some of the oil into the priest’s (own) left palm. The priest should sprinkle some of the oil that is in his left palm with his right index finger, seven times (towards the Holy of Holies), before God.

The priest should place some of the oil in his palm on the cartilage of the right ear of the person being rendered ritually pure, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, on top of the blood of the guilt-offering.

The priest should place the leftover oil in his palm on the head of the person being rendered ritually pure, and (thus) the priest will atone for him, before God.

The priest should then perform (the service of) one of the turtledoves or of the young doves, from whatever (the person) can afford: From whichever (type of bird) he can afford—one (bird) as a sin-offering, and one (bird) as a burnt-offering, besides the meal-offering. (Thus) the priest will atone for the person being rendered ritually pure, before God.

(All) this is the law of ritual purification of a person who has a tzara’as lesion, who cannot afford (animal sacrifices).

**The Tzara’as of Houses**

God spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, saying: When you come to the Land of Canaan, which I am giving you as (your) possession, and I place tzara’as lesions on houses in the land (of the Amorites) which (the children of Re’uwain and Gad will choose) to possess:

The owner of the house should inform the priest, saying, “There appears to me to be something like a (tzara’as) lesion in (my) house.”

Upon the priest’s instructions, they should clear out the house before the priest comes to inspect the lesion, so that every (earthenware vessel) in the house should not become (irreversibly) ritually impure (if the priest pronounces the house ritually impure).

Afterwards, the priest should come to inspect the house. He should inspect the lesion, and if

Why did God promise to bring tzara’as? (v. 34)

Rashi: It is good news for them that tzara’as lesions are to come upon them! Throughout the entire forty years that the Jewish People were in the desert the Amorites had hidden away treasures of gold inside the walls of their houses and, as a result of the tzara’as lesion, a person would demolish his house (see verses 43-45) and find them.

Midrash: Why was it good news that tzara’as lesions were to come upon them? Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught: “When the Cana’anites heard that the Jewish People were approaching, they went about hiding their valuables in their houses and fields.... What did God do? He plagued a [Jewish person’s] house with tzara’as, and when he demolished it he would find treasure in it.”

Does this mean to say that somebody came and told the Cana’anites that the Jewish people were entering the Land?

Rabbi Yishma’el ben Nachman said: “[Yes,] Yehoshua sent them three letters [saying]: ‘Whoever wishes to leave, let him leave! Whoever wishes to make peace, let him make peace! Whoever wishes to wage war, let him wage war!’” (Vayikra Rabah 17:6).

The Jewish People’s Hidden Treasure (v. 34)

While Rashi’s comments to verse 34 are clearly based on the Midrash, Rashi nevertheless adapted this Midrashic teaching to be compatible with scripture at the literal level. Rashi’s two most significant changes are:

a.) He writes that treasures were being hidden, “inside the walls of their houses throughout the entire forty years that the Jewish People were in the desert,” whereas, according to the Midrash, the treasures were hidden at the end of this forty-year period, in a direct response to Yehoshua’s three letters.

b.) While the Midrash states that “the Cana’anites” were the ones who hid their treasures, Rashi writes that it was “the Amorites” instead.

What forced Rashi, at the literal level, to make these significant changes?
The Explanation

At first glance, the statement of the Midrash—that Yehoshua sent three letters to announce that the Jewish people were about to invade—is difficult to understand. The Torah states explicitly that at the time of the splitting of the Reed Sea, “all the inhabitants of Cana’an melted” (Shemos 15:15), and Rashi explains, “They said, ‘[the Jewish People] are coming upon us to destroy us and inherit our land!’” Even forty years later, when the Jewish people were about to conquer the land, this feeling was still strong, as we find that Yehoshua’s spies were told, “I know that God has given you the Land and that fear of you has fallen upon us, and all the

The Question

1. If the fear of the Jewish people has fallen upon the Canaanites, why did Yehoshua have to send three letters to announce to the Canaanites that the Jewish people are about to invade? Why was it necessary for Yehoshua to send three letters? What was the purpose of each letter? How long did it take for each letter to be sent?

2. The Midrash states that Yehoshua sent three letters to the Canaanites: one letter to the king of the Amorites, one letter to the king of the Amalekites, and one letter to the king of the Moabites. What was the content of each letter? What message did Yehoshua want to convey to each king? Why did Yehoshua choose to send letters to these specific kings? How did Yehoshua know that these kings would receive the letters?

The Solution

1. Yehoshua sent three letters because the Canaanites were still afraid of the Jewish people even after the splitting of the Reed Sea. Each letter contained a different message. The first letter was sent to the king of the Amorites, informing him that the Jewish people were about to invade. The second letter was sent to the king of the Amalekites, warning him of the approaching invasion. The third letter was sent to the king of the Moabites, informing him of the impending invasion.

2. The king of the Amorites was located to the north of Canaan, the king of the Amalekites was located to the south, and the king of the Moabites was located to the east. Yehoshua knew that these kings controlled the major passes through which the Jewish people would have to pass to invade Canaan. Therefore, he sent letters to each king to warn them of the impending invasion and to request that they help the Jewish people. Yehoshua knew that these kings would receive the letters because they controlled the passes.

The Explanation

The Midrash states that Yehoshua sent three letters to announce to the Canaanites that the Jewish people were about to invade. The Torah states explicitly that at the time of the splitting of the Reed Sea, “all the inhabitants of Cana’an melted” (Shemos 15:15), and Rashi explains, “They said, ‘[the Jewish People] are coming upon us to destroy us and inherit our land!’” Even forty years later, when the Jewish people were about to conquer the land, this feeling was still strong, as we find that Yehoshua’s spies were told, “I know that God has given you the Land and that fear of you has fallen upon us, and all the
the lesion in the walls of the house consists of dark green or dark red sunken looking stains, appearing as if they are deeper than the wall, 38 then the priest should go outside the house to the entrance of the house, and he should quarantine the house for seven days.

- 39 The priest should return on the seventh day. If he sees that the lesion has spread in the walls of the house, 40 then the priest should instruct that they remove the stones which the lesion is on, and they should cast them away outside the city, to a ritually impure place.

- 41 He should scrape out the house from the inside, all around (the lesion), and they should pour out the (mortar) dust from what they scraped outside the city, to a ritually impure place.

- 42 They should take other stones and bring them instead of those stones. He should take other (mortar) dust, and plaster the house.

- 43 If the lesion returns and erupts in the house (at the end of the week), after he had removed the stones, scraped the part of the house (around the lesion) and plastered it, 44 the priest should come and inspect it. If he sees that the lesion in the house has spread, it is piercing tzara’as in the house (and) it is ritually impure:
  - 45 He should demolish the house, its stones, its wood, and all the (mortar) dust of the house, and he should take (the rubble) outside the city, to a ritually impure place.

**Sparks of Chasidus**

According to Chasidic thought, tzara’as has an extremely sublime spiritual source, which was “misdirected” and “fell down” to become the most severe of all types of ritual impurity. This idea is expressed most poignantly by the case of tzara’as of houses. For when the Jewish people destroyed their houses only to find hoards of Amorite gold, they had a clear, visible indication that there is a great degree of goodness “locked up” in the affliction of tzara’as.

And this is the inner reason why the laws of the tzara’as of houses are recorded in a section unto themselves (unlike the laws of contamination and purification of tzara’as of skin and clothes which are interwoven together). For since the tzara’as of houses openly reveals a deeper, inner good, it is utterly unique.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 107ff.)

Jewish people were delayed in the desert for many years indicated that they were not ready to launch a military attack, so why would the inhabitants have cemented their gold inside their walls, rendering their valuables unavailable, for no apparent reason?

To solve this problem, Rashi wrote that the nation that hid their treasures was not in fact the Canaanites, but rather, the Amorites:

The reader will remember that at the “Covenant of the Parts” God told Avraham:“(After three generations of exile in Egypt), the fourth generation will return here (to this land), for the Amorites (who currently inhabit the land) will not be completely sinful (deserving eviction) until then” (Bereishis 15:16). Here we see explicitly that the conquest of the ten (or seven) lands which God had promised to give Avraham’s descendants was to take place in phases, beginning with the land of the Amorites, since they would deserve eviction first.

Thus, as soon as the Jewish people had left Egypt, the Amorite people knew that their “sin was complete” and that the time for their eviction had come. Consequently, from that very moment they would have begun hiding their valuables, since their fear of being conquered was not due to the strategical positioning of the Jewish people for an attack, but rather, because they were aware that the time allotted by God for their eviction had arrived.

**Why Did They Hide Their Valuables?**

One difficulty with the above explanation is that it is based on a presumption that the non-Jewish nations knew the details of what God had told Avraham at the Covenant of the Parts. Why did Rashi not offer a more straightforward solution, that the nations were prompted to hide their treasures due to a strong strategic positioning of the Jewish people for an attack, but rather, because they were aware that the time allotted by God for their eviction had arrived.
In order to answer this question we need first to clarify the reason why one might hide one’s valuables in the walls of a house, which seems to express rather a strange mixture of fear and confidence: On the one hand, hiding one’s valuables is quite a drastic measure, which indicates a strong
46 Anyone who enters the house during all the days of its quarantine will become ritually impure until the evening.

47 Whoever lies down in the house should immerse his garments (in a mikvah). Whoever eats in the house should immerse his garments (in a mikvah).

48 But if the priest comes and comes again and looks (at the lesion), and sees that the lesion did not spread in the house after the house has been plastered, the priest should pronounce the house ritually pure, because the lesion has healed.

49 To (ritually) purify the house:

- He should take two birds, a stick of cedar wood, a strip of crimson wool, and hyssop.

50 One bird should be slaughtered (allowing its blood to fall) into an earthenware vessel, (containing) spring water.

51 He should take the cedar stick, the hyssop, the strip of crimson wool, and the live bird, and he should dip them into the blood of the slaughtered bird (which was mixed with) the spring water and sprinkle (some of the mixture) towards the house seven times. 52 (Thus) he will ritually purify the house with the bird’s blood, the spring water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop and the strip of crimson wool.

53 He should then send away the live bird outside the city, into the open field.

He will thus be alone for the house, and it will be ritually pure.

54 (All) this is the law for every lesion of tzara’as, a nesek, tzara’as of garments and houses, a (white) blotch, a creamy blotch and a white spot—(in order) to render decisions as to (which is) a day of ritual impurity and (which is) a day of ritual purity. (All) this is the law of tzara’as.

THE RITUAL IMPURITY OF A MAN’S UNHEALTHY DISCHARGE

1 God spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, saying: 2 Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them:

- If any man has an (unhealthy, watery venereal) discharge from his body, his discharge is ritually impure.

3 This will be (the law of) his ritual impurity when he discharges—whether his ritual impurity is due to discharge running from his body, or due to discharge clogging up his body:

According to Rashi’s interpretation, the Amorites had feared an attack from the Jewish people immediately after the Exodus from Egypt, as they knew, from the Covenant of the Parts, that they would eventually be evicted from their land due to sinful behavior. However, this itself also provided a glimmer of hope for the Amorites, for they would have understood: just as they would be evicted from the Land due to sinful behavior, there was also a possibility that the Jewish people would sin and that they too would be evicted from the Land at some later date. And this would provide an opportunity for the Amorites to return and rescue their hidden treasures.

Nevertheless, their plan was thwarted when God miraculously afflicted the houses with tzara’as, allowing the Jewish people to become wealthy from Amorite gold.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32 p. 91ff.)
In addition to the natural "evil inclination" which God implanted into man (see Bereishis 8:21), a person’s tendency to evil is further strengthened by sin. This can occur at three different levels:

a.) **Primordial.** The Sin of the Tree of Knowledge strengthened the evil inclination of Adam and Chava and all their descendants.

b.) **Acute.** In addition to the above, a person can choose to "incite" his evil inclination to sin even more than its own tendency to do so.

c.) **Chronic.** After doing this for a period of time, the evil inclination will become "addicted" to its excessive sinful behavior, so that it no longer needs to be "incited."

A "zav" is a person who is in a state of ritual impurity due to sickness. In spiritual terms, this corresponds to the "sickness" of increasing the natural strength of the evil inclination by sinful behavior.

More precisely, the three levels of strengthening the evil inclination described above correspond to the three types of zav:

a.) A person who has a single unhealthy discharge becomes a zav even if it was accidental (see facing table). This corresponds to the **primordial** strengthening of the evil inclination which affects every person, through no fault of his own.

b.) The second discharge must, however, be intentional (see table). This corresponds to the **acute** strengthening of the evil inclination, where a person actively incites his evil inclination to sin more.

c.) The third discharge of the zav could be accidental, so long as the previous two discharges were intentional (see table). This corresponds to the **chronic** strengthening of the evil inclination, which begins intentionally but eventually causes the person to sin "addictively" even without choosing to do so.*

Nevertheless, the Torah provides a means of removing even this form of ritual impurity (v. 14-15), teaching us that there is hope for every person to free himself from the confines of his evil inclination.

*(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 37, p. 42ff.)

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* As in the case of Pharaoh, whose heart became “hardened” by his earlier sins. See Classic Questions to Shemos 7:3; Sparks of Chasidus, beginning of Parshas Bo.
THE RITUAL IMPURITY OF A ZAV*

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<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF DISCHARGES</th>
<th>WERE THEY ACCIDENTAL?</th>
<th>RENDERS RITUAL IMPURITY</th>
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* A zav is a man who has a seminal discharge that is watery, due to testicular sickness. See v. 2 above and Rashi ibid. 1. Nidah 35a; Rambam, Laws of Individuals Requiring Atonement 2:6; See note 1. 2. Rashi to v. 32 below; Nidah ibid.; Rambam ibid. 3. See Mishnah, Zavim 2:2. "Intentional" means that its cause must not be traceable to a secondary cause such as eating or drinking certain foods, physical exertion etc., and thus the discharge was clearly caused by the person’s physical desires [See Rashi to Krisus 8b]. 4. Verses 1-12. 5. verse 13; in this case, a “mikvah” (a collection of rainwater) is not sufficient. Rather, a spring must be used. See Mikva’os 1:8; Beginning of Zavim; Rambam, Laws of Mikva’os 1:4. 6. Opinion of the Sages, Zavim 2:2; Nidah 35a; Rambam, Laws of Individuals Requiring Atonement 2:6. See also Rashi to Nazir 65b and Bartenura ibid. 7. Verses 14-15. See also Rashi to v. 3; Megilah 8a; Rambam, ibid.
The Last Word

Family Purity (Taharas Hamishpacha)

- "This is the great task and mission which God gave to Jewish women—to observe and disseminate the observance of Taharas Hamishpacha, and of the other vital institutions of Jewish family life. For besides being the fundamental mitzvos and the cornerstone of the sanctity of Jewish family life, as well as relating to the well-being of the children in body and soul, these pervade and extend through all Jewish generations to eternity."

- "Even if the observance of the laws and regulations of Taharas Hamishpacha entailed a certain effort or even sacrifice on the part of the people, surely it would be done eagerly, knowing that in addition to the essential thing of the need of observing God's commands for their own sake, these observances have a direct influence on children, and through them on grandchildren and so on. Of what account, therefore, is a temporary inconvenience or effort by comparison to the everlasting benefit in terms of good health, physical and spiritual, and true nachas, etc. All the more so since the inconvenience or effort are smaller than imagined."

- "As a matter of fact, in regard to the observance of Taharas Hamishpacha, even the plain statistics of reports and tables by specialists, doctors and sociologists etc., who cannot be
An earthenware vessel which the man with the discharge will touch (inside, or move) should be broken. Any wooden vessel (that he touches or moves) should be immersed in (mikvah) water.

When the man with the discharge stops having discharges, he should count seven (consecutive) days (free of discharges) from (the day) when he stopped (seeing any discharge), and then immerse his garments and immerse his flesh in living (spring) water, and he will be ritually pure.

On the eighth day, he should take for himself two turtledoves or two young doves, and come before God, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and give them to the priest. The priest should carry out (their service): one as a sin-offering and one as a burnt-offering, and thus the priest will atone for him from his discharge, before God.

If a man has an emission of semen, he should immerse all his body in (mikvah) water, and he will remain ritually impure until the evening.

Any garment or any leather (object) which has semen on it should be immersed in (mikvah) water, and will remain ritually impure until the evening.

If a woman will lie with a man and he will have a seminal emission, they should immerse themselves in (mikvah) water, and they will remain ritually impure until the evening.

If a woman has a (menstrual) discharge and her (uterus) discharges blood, she will remain in a state of “nidah” (physical separation) for seven days.

Whoever touches her will become ritually impure until the evening.

Whatever she lies upon while in the state of nidah will become ritually impure, and whatever she sits upon will become ritually impure.

Anyone who touches her bedding should immerse his garments and immerse (himself) in (mikvah) water, and he will remain ritually impure until the evening.

Anyone who touches any object on which she will sit should immerse his garments and immerse himself in water, and he will remain ritually impure until the evening.

considered partial towards the religious Jew, clearly show the benefits which accrued to those Jewish circles which observed Taharas Hamishpacha. These statistics have also been published in various publications."

"Needless to say I am aware of the “argument” that there are many non-observant married couples, yet seemingly happy, etc. The answer is simple. First of all, it is well known that God is very merciful and patient, and waits for the erring sinner to return to Him in sincere repentance. Secondly, appearances are deceptive, and one can never know what the true facts are about somebody else’s life, especially as certain things relating to children and other personal matters are, for obvious reasons, kept in strict confidence."

"Since men and women have opposite natures, a union between them needs to recognize their differences. The Torah recognizes the existence of these two opposing tendencies. Therefore it provides for times when a couple join together and times when their union is forbidden. This pattern has been successful in developing harmonious marriages. Scientists and doctors have explained reasons for that success, but the underlying reasons extend beyond human knowledge, for the laws of Taharas Hamishpacha are God’s Wisdom and Will."

"This pattern of union and separation is so important, that it will continue even after the Messianic redemption."

(Excerpted from letters written by the Rebbe on 18th of Elul 5735; 14th of Sivan, 5724; and based on Sichas 19 Kislev 5739)
23 (This is also the case) if someone (sits or lies indirectly) on the bedding or on the object which she is sitting on (without making direct contact with it).

24 If someone touches (riding gear which she has used) he will become ritually impure until the evening (but he does not have to immerse his garments in the mikvah).

24 If a man lies with her (the ritual impurity of) her menstruation will be upon him, and he will be ritually impure for seven days. Any bedding he lies upon will become ritually impure.

The Ritual Impurity of Abnormal Menstruation

25 If a woman has blood flowing (from her uterus) for (as) many (as three) days when it is not the time of her menstrual separation (after counting seven days from her normal period), or she has a discharge (of uterine blood for three days that occurs a day or more) after her (counting seven days from her normal) menstrual period, then (she has a more severe ritual impurity* than that of normal menstruation):

26 Any bedding upon which she lies during all the time of her discharge will have the same (ritual impurity) for her as the bedding of her menstruation.

26 Any object upon which she will sit will become ritually impure, like her menstrual ritual impurity.

27 Anyone who touches them will become ritually impure. He should immerse his garments and immerse (himself) in (mikvah) water, and he will remain ritually impure until the evening.

28 When her discharge stops, she should count for herself seven (clean) days (devoid of any discharge) and after this she can become ritually pure (by immersing in a mikvah).

29 On the eighth day, she should take for herself two turtledoves or two young doves, and bring them to the priest, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. The priest should carry out (their service): one as a sin-offering and one as a burnt-offering, and the priest will atone for her from her discharge, before God.

30 You (Moshe and Aharon) should ensure that the Children of Israel are dissociated from their ritual impurity, so that their ritual impurity does not cause them to die if they defile My Tabernacle (that I have placed) among them.

31 (All) this is the law for the man who has an (unhealthy, watery venereal) discharge, a man who has a seminal emission (or an apparent emission) through which he becomes ritually impure, a woman who has her menstrual flow, a man or woman who has (multiple) discharge(s), and a man who lies with a ritually impure woman.

* See verses 28-30.
Parshas Metzora contains 11 positive mitvos

1. The ritual purification of tzara’as [14:2].
2. The shaving of a man with tzara’as on the seventh day (of his ritual purification) [14:9].
3. Immersion in a mikvah for ritually purifying the impure [14:9].
4. The offering of a man with tzara’as when he is cured of his affliction [14:10].
5. The laws of ritual impurity of a house contaminated with tzara’as [14:35].
6. The laws of ritual impurity of a person with unhealthy venereal discharge (zav), that he is both the subject and cause of ritual impurity [15:2,3].
7. The offering by a zav when he is healed of his discharge [15:13,14].
8. The laws of ritual impurity of semen, that it is ritually impure and causes ritual impurity [15:16].
9. The laws of ritual impurity of a menstruant, that she is herself ritually impure and is a cause of ritual impurity [15:19].
10. The laws of ritual impurity of a woman who menstruates abnormally, that she is ritually impure and causes ritual impurity [15:25].
11. The offering by a woman who menstruated abnormally, when she is ritually purified [15:28,29].
Acharei means “after,” as in the opening verse of our Parsha: “God spoke to Moshe after the death of Aharon’s two sons—when they came near, before God, and they died.”

Chasidic thought explains that Aharon’s sons did not die because they were wicked and transgressed God’s will. Rather they were righteous individuals who wanted to come closer to God. But this yearning became so strong that it reached the point where they no longer wished to continue a normal, bodily existence, which makes a person feel distant from his Maker, and they simply expired. Thus, the verse actually describes the cause of their death: “They came near, before God, and—therefore—they died.”

At first glance, it might appear that the yearning of Nadav and Avihu to come close to God was misplaced, as God clearly does not want us to die out of love for Him.

In truth, however, Nadav and Avihu’s desire to come close to God and leave their bodily existence was entirely appropriate to have—on a temporary basis. Their fault was in their inability to redirect those energies back into normal, everyday life, after a period of heightened spiritual arousal.

In other words, if a person does not have times when he simply wishes to leave the confines of corporeal existence and come closer to his Maker, then that person is lacking a certain spiritual sensitivity. But, on the other hand, when a person does have these feelings he must eventually come to the realization that God placed him in this world for a purpose which necessitates his soul remaining in his body. The harmonious fluctuation of these two opposite emotions is thus the sign of a healthy spirituality, rather like the rhythmic beating of the heart is a sign of physical wellbeing.

So, the intense spirituality of Nadav and Avihu was actually a good thing from which we should all learn. The fact that they failed to channel their love of God back “down to earth” was indeed a fault, but that does not mean that we cannot learn from their positive qualities.

And it is precisely for this reason that the Parsha is called Acharei (“after”). For Nadav and Avihu were the first individuals (recorded in the Torah) to demonstrate an intense spiritual yearning, which set a new precedent for all Jewish people as to what levels of emotional attachment to God could be achieved. Thus, “after the death of Aharon’s two sons,” the Jewish people entered a new era where higher standards of spirituality had been set.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim 5750)
Why was it necessary to stress to Aharon that the prohibition of entering the Holy of Holies was “after the death” of his two sons? (v. 1-2)

Rashi: Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah illustrated this with a parable of a patient who was visited by a doctor. [The doctor] said to him, “Do not eat chilled foods, and do not lie down in a cold, damp place.”

Rashi’s Analogy (v. 1-2)

Our Parsha opens with the prohibition against Aharon, the High Priest, entering the Holy of Holies at any time other than Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement). This command is particularly unusual in that, rather than merely being informed what the prohibition was, Aharon was given extra motivation to observe the command through being warned that his sons had died through negligence in this area. Rashi cites the parable of R’ Elazar ben Azaryah, who compared this to a doctor warning his patient of the severe consequences of failing to heed his medical advice.

The following points, however, require clarification:

a.) Why did Rashi need to cite an analogy of two doctors? Surely the point is made clear from the advice of the second doctor alone (“Do not eat cold foods or lie down in a cold, damp place, so that you will not die like so-and-so died.”)?

b.) Why did Rashi compare Aharon to a “sick person,” suggesting some sort of deficiency on Aharon’s part? Surely it would be more appropriate to compare Aharon to a well person who was warned not to do a certain activity that might prove detrimental to his health?

c.) There are many things which can worsen the state of health of a sick person, God forbid. Why did Rashi pick specifically the cases of “eating chilled foods” and “lying in a cold, damp place”?

d.) Why did Rashi cite the author of the parable—R’ Elazar ben Azaryah? Of what relevance is it, at the literal level, to know the original source of this idea?

The Explanation

As a direct consequence of the passing of Aharon’s sons, who entered the Holy of Holies while intoxicated, two commands were given to the priests: 1.) The prohibition of a priest performing Temple service while intoxicated [above 10:8-11]. 2.) The prohibition of entering the Holy of Holies (here, v. 1-2). In the first case, Aharon was simply given the command without any special warning or motivation. But here, when receiving the instruction not to enter the Holy of Holies, Aharon was warned explicitly that his sons had died through being lax in this area.

So Rashi was troubled: If Nadav and Avihu had died through being lax with both precepts—1.) being intoxicated while performing Temple service, and, 2.) entering the Holy of Holies—then why was Aharon only warned here that his sons had died through negligence in the latter case, when the negligence was equal in both cases?

To answer this question, Rashi cited the parable of a sick person who desired to eat chilled foods and sleep in a cold, damp place. Presumably, the sick person desired this because his temperature was so high that he was desperate to make himself cooler in any way possible. And, even after hearing the advice of the first doctor, he simply could not refrain from eating the chilled food etc., even though generally speaking he did listen to the doctor’s advice, since he found his high temperature absolutely unbearable. Thus, a more graphic warning was required in this case: “Do not eat cold foods or lie down in a cold, damp place, so that you will not die like so-and-so died.”

With this analogy Rashi explains clearly why Aharon might have been tempted to disobey this command, despite his otherwise impeccable observance of the mitzvos:

Aharon’s love for God, and his desire to come close to Him was so great that he may have chosen to enter the Holy of Holies, even if it cost him his life. For he may have felt that being close to God was even more important than continued physical existence in a body—just as his two sons had indeed concluded [see Ohr haChayim].

In other words, Aharon was literally “love-sick” for God to such an extent that he may have been tempted to ignore the prohibition of entering the Holy of Holies, in order to come closer to God. Therefore...
Prohibition of Entering the Holy of Holies

16 God said to Moshe, “(When you relate the following command, stress that it is*) after the death of Aharon’s two sons—when they came near, before God, and they died.”

* God said to Moshe:
• Speak to your brother Aharon, that he should not come at all times into the Holy (of Holies) inside the partition, in front of the lid which is on the Ark, so that he should not die. For My (Presence always) appears (there) with a (pillar of) cloud, (so one should not go there regularly).

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

• Why did Aharon’s two sons die? (v. 1)

OHR HACHAYIM: God told Moshe that they had died due to “coming near” to God. Namely that they came close to the supernal Godly light through their desire for holiness, and this caused their death.

This is the mystical phenomenon known as “death by Divine kiss,” through which the righteous pass away. Only, normally, the righteous are “kissed” by God, causing their passing, whereas in this case Nadav and Avihu “kissed” God. The love of holiness was so strong in these righteous people that even when they felt that they were about to die out of their closeness to God, they did not hold themselves back from attaching themselves more strongly to God in a bond of sweetness and love, to the point that their souls expired from them.

TORAS MENACHEM

Rashi cited an analogy of two doctors, to illustrate how in this case normal instructions (given by the first doctor) might prove insufficient, and he needed an especially strong warning.

RABBI ELAZAR BEN AZARYAH

One more subtle question that remains unanswered after the above explanation: Where do we find, at the literal level, that Aharon had such an intense yearning to be close to God that he would be willing to give up his life for it? Nadav and Avihu did indeed possess this quality, but we do not appear to find it explicitly in Aharon himself.

Rashi hinted a solution to this problem by citing the author of this parable—R’ Elazar ben Azaryah:

The Talmud relates that R’ Elazar ben Azaryah was appointed as the spiritual leader of the Jewish people (nasi) at the young age of eighteen. When his wife heard that he was to receive this appointment, she doubted that he possessed sufficient maturity for the position at such a young age, and exclaimed, “Why, you do not even have any white hair!” The Talmud relates that God performed a miracle, causing R’ Elazar ben Azaryah to have white hair overnight. This was as a sign from above that he did indeed possess sufficient knowledge and maturity, despite his young age (see Brachos 27b).

This, however, begs the question: how was it possible for a young man of a mere eighteen years to be so mature?

Presumably, this was because of his fine lineage—as the Talmud relates that he was a direct descendant of Ezra—through which he inherited qualities that enabled him to reach a remarkable level of knowledge and maturity in a short period of time.

Thus, says Rashi, if we bear in mind that it was R’ Elazar ben Azaryah who offered the above parable of the two doctors, then we will understand why Aharon would have been “love-sick” for God, desiring to enter the Holy of Holies. For since we find that Aharon’s two sons, Nadav and Avihu, did indeed possess such a love of God, we can only presume that they inherited this quality through their lineage, as descendants of Aharon. So, it follows that Aharon would have an equal—if not greater—love of God as his two sons, for their emotional attachment to God was directly inherited from their father.

The Last Word

How can one expect a person at the climax of his spiritual bliss, to want to return back “down to earth,” to his mundane life (see Ohr haChayim)? If his love of God is genuine, how can he hold himself back at the height of his arousal, and re-immers himself into the constraints of corporeal existence? From where can a person acquire the vigilance not to go too far?

It depends on how the person starts his spiritual “voyage”:

If he starts with the goal of self-satisfaction, he will not want to turn back from his spiritual bliss to attend to the needs of the physical world. But if his initial intention is to follow God’s Will, then even at a point of heightened spiritual arousal, he will still be willing to “return” back to the world, and carry out the mission for which he was created. For God “created [the world] not to be empty, he formed it to be inhabited” (Isaiah 45:18).

On a smaller scale, every Jew sometimes has a “spiritual awakening”—perhaps on Shabbos or the Festivals, or more particularly during the Ten Days of Repentance and Yom Kippur. At such a time he should remember that whatever he experiences during this special, holy moment needs to be taken back with him when he returns to normal, everyday life. This spiritual awakening must not be allowed to “evaporate” without having a tangible effect. It must be “harnessed” as a moment of true, lasting inspiration.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 117ff.)

(Rashi cited an analogy of two doctors, to illustrate how in this case normal instructions (given by the first doctor) might prove insufficient, and he needed an especially strong warning.)

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 3, p. 987ff.)

*(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 117ff.)*

(While always) appears (there) with a (pillar of) cloud, (so one should not go there regularly).
Yom Kippur Service—According to Rashi

On Yom Kippur all services were carried out by the High Priest. He would wear white linen garments for services connected with the Holy of Holies, and his normal golden garments for the other services (shown at left). He would thus change garments five times, washing his hands and feet before and after, and each time immersing in a mikvah.

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* See Likutei Sichos vol. 14, pp. 129-130.
Aharon should enter the Holy (of Holies only on Yom Kippur, when he should bring) these (offerings): a young bull for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering.

He should wear:
- A linen tunic (that belongs to the) holy (Sanctuary);
- Linen pants should be on his body;
- He should gird himself with a linen sash;
- He should place a linen turban (on his head);
- (Since) these are holy garments, he should immerse in (mikvah) water (before) he puts them on.

Why does the Torah specify only four garments, when the High Priest usually wore eight garments? (v. 4)

Rashi: Scripture is telling us that [the High Priest] does not perform the “inner service” [i.e. service connected with the Holy of Holies] wearing the eight priestly garments with which he performs the “outer service.” For [the eight garments] contain gold [which is reminiscent of the sin of the Golden Calf]; so the gold which was the “prosecuting attorney” [of the Jewish people] cannot become a “defense attorney” [to atone for them].

Rather, he wears four garments, like an ordinary priest. They are all made of linen.

Rambam: There are three types of priestly garments: the garments of an ordinary priest, the golden garments, and the white garments.... The golden garments are the garments of the High Priest.... The white garments are used by the High Priest when he serves on Yom Kippur (Laws of Temple Apparatus 8:1-3).

All the daily communal offerings and festival offerings are offered by the High Priest while he wears the golden garments. The services which are unique to this day [Yom Kippur], namely the High Priest’s bull, the two goats (one of which is the scapegoat), offering the incense in the Holy of Holies—all these procedures are carried out in the white garments (Laws of the Service of Yom Kippur 2:1).

...THE HIGH PRIEST’S YOM KIPPUR GARMENTS (v. 4)

Rashi’s comment to verse 4 presents us with the following difficulties:

a.) What is troubling Rashi? At first glance, verse 4 appears to be quite straightforward: The Torah requires the High Priest to wear a particular set of garments when serving on Yom Kippur. Since Yom Kippur is a unique day—as the Torah stresses below, that it is “once a year” (v. 34) it is quite logical that this special day might require its own set of garments. Why did Rashi find this problematic, at the literal level?

b.) Rashi writes that the golden garments were not worn by the High Priest for the “inner service” of Yom Kippur because gold is reminiscent of the Golden Calf and that “the prosecuting attorney cannot become a defense attorney” to atone for the Jewish people.

But if gold indeed has negative connotations, how can the High Priest wear the golden garments at all when carrying out the services of Yom Kippur? Rashi himself writes that the High Priest wears golden garments when performing the “outer service,” which consists of offerings specifically associated with the Day of Atonement, and yet we are told that gold is a total anathema, as far as atonement is concerned!

c.) Rashi writes a negative reason why the priest does not wear only golden garments (because they are reminiscent of the Golden Calf). This suggests that, in principle, the High Priest should really be wearing all his garments—which are made “for honor and for splendor” (Shemos 28:2)—but since it is Yom Kippur he is deprived from wearing his golden garments, which are inappropriate for this day.

This however leaves us with the question: How could we allow the “honor and splendor” of the High Priest to be compromised? The requirement to wear all of the priestly garments is so serious that a priest who is missing just one garment is liable for the death penalty (Rashi ibid., v. 33). So it seems unreasonable that such an important mitzvah is compromised merely because gold has negative connotations?

Why did Rashi reject the more straightforward interpretation of Rambam that the white garments of Yom Kippur are not a compromised version of the High Priests’ regular garments but rather, a different type of priestly garment altogether (as he stresses, “There are three types of priestly garments...”? For, according to Rashi’s negative approach we are left with the above question: How could the High Priest be “lacking garments” on Yom Kippur? 
The Explanation

On reaching verse 4, Rashi was troubled by the following question: Why did the Torah choose to teach us about the garments of Yom Kippur here, in the middle of a passage dealing with the special sacrifices of the day? Surely the dress requirements of the High Priest should have been recorded either before the details of the day’s offerings (before verse 3), or afterwards (i.e. after verse 22)? Why does the Torah begin to tell us that Aharon must bring “a young bull for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering” (v. 24), i.e. the Torah states explicitly that Aharon does not wear his white linen garments when offering the ram.

So Rashi wondered: What is the Torah suggesting by placing verses 3 and 4 together?

Rashi concluded that the Torah wished to connect the beginning of verse 3 with verse 4: “Aharon should enter the Holy (of Holies only on Yom Kippur).... He should wear a linen tunic...”, i.e. that the linen garments worn by the High Priest are associated, not with the day of Yom Kippur in general, but rather, with the entrance into the Holy of Holies in particular. And while the entire day of Yom Kippur is associated with the atonement of the Jewish people, the fact that the Torah begins this passage with the words “Aharon should enter the Holy (of Holies only on Yom Kippur)....” suggests that the primary atonement is achieved through the entry into the Holy of Holies in particular. Therefore the High Priest “does not perform the ‘inner service’ wearing the eight priestly garments... which contain gold, for the ‘prosecuting attorney’ [of the Jewish people] cannot become a ‘defense attorney.’”

Nevertheless, he may perform the “outer service” in the golden garments, for this involves sacrifices which are not directly connected with
He should take from the community of the children of Israel: two male goats as a sin-offering, and one ram as a burnt-offering.

Aharon should (first) bring his own sin-offering bull, and (confess over it) atoning for himself and for his household.

He should take the two male (communal) goats, and place them before God at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Aharon should place lots upon the two male goats: one lot “For God,” and the other lot, “For (casting off) a high cliff.”

Aharon should bring the male goat upon which the lot “For God” came up, and designate it as a sin-offering. The male goat upon which the lot “For (casting off) a high cliff” came up should be placed before God while it is still alive, to (confess on it) atoning (for the Jewish people—before it is) sent away to the high cliff (to its death), in the desert.

Aharon should bring his own sin-offering bull, and he should (confess upon it again) atoning for himself and for his (priestly) household. Then he should slaughter his sin-offering bull.

He should take a pan full of burning coals from upon the (outer) Altar, from (the west side of the Altar, which) faces (the entrance to) God’s House, and a double handful of (extra) finely

any service in the Holy of Holies, and thus they do not bring about the primary atonement of the day.*

(In this respect, Rashi’s interpretation is superior to that of Rambam. For according to Rambam’s view, that the white garments are for “services which are unique to this day,” we are left with the question: Why are the two ram burnt-offerings not offered in white garments, since they are offerings that are indeed unique to Yom Kippur (see v. 3, 5, 24)? According to Rashi however, this does not pose a problem at all, as Rashi’s view is that the linen garments are worn for services specifically connected with the Holy of Holies, which clearly excluded the two rams whose service is completely entirely “outside”).

However, according to Rashi’s interpretation we are still left with the question: How could the High Priest be “lacking garments” on Yom Kippur?

To address this problem, Rashi continues: “He wears four garments, like an ordinary priest. They are all made of linen.” At first glance, this statement appears to be totally superfluous, for the reader can count for himself that four garments are listed here and the Torah states explicitly that they are made of linen. Furthermore, since the services of Yom Kippur may only be carried out by the High Priest, it appears improper to state that he is dressed “like an ordinary priest”!

In truth, however, with these words Rashi wishes to inform the reader that the High Priest has not compromised four of his eight garments, but rather, that the correct attire for the High Priest when entering the Holy of Holies is that of an ordinary priest. Proof for this point is that “they are all made of linen.” For if the High Priest was merely wearing four of his eight garments, then he would not be wearing only linen, since the High Priest’s sash was made of “fine linen twisted with turquoise, purple, and crimson wool” (Shemos 39:29). Thus, the fact that he is wearing only linen proves that he is not wearing a partial set of High Priest’s garments, but rather, a full set of ordinary priest’s garments, for (at the literal level**) Rashi was of the opinion that an ordinary priest wears a pure linen sash.

SUMMARY OF THE VIEWS OF RASHI & RAMBAM

Rashi was of the opinion that: a.) The white garments of the High Priest are associated with the location of the service performed while wearing them—the Holy of Holies. b.) Thus gold garments are not worn since, they have negative connotations for the service in this special location.

Rambam was of the opinion that: a.) The white garments of the High Priest are associated with the time of the service performed while wearing them—Yom Kippur. b.) The gold garments have no negative connotations. The white garments are worn for positive reasons—because they are the appropriate priestly garments for this day.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22, p. 89ff.)

If one wishes to be involved with the “inside service” of bringing another Jew closer to Judaism, by arousing in him an inner desire to return to God and help him atone for his sins, then one must first remove one’s metaphorical gold garments which are “for honor and for glory,” and adopt the attitude of selfless dedication, symbolized by the ordinary priest’s garments of plain, white linen.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22, p. 95)

* It still remains to be clarified why the service of the scapegoat is carried out in white garments, since its blood is not sprinkled inside the Holy of Holies. Perhaps the two goats are in fact considered to be one single sacrifice (as suggested by the verse, “He should take... two male goats as a sin-offering”—v. 5), and thus the blood of the goat “for God” which is sprinkled in the Holy of Holies achieves atonement on behalf of both goats. In fact, this connection would seem to be supported by the law stated in the Talmud (Yoma 40b), that the scapegoat must be kept alive until the blood of its fellow goat has been sprinkled. However, Rashi does not cite this law in his commentary to the Torah and it appears to be incompatible with Rashi’s commentary, since the Talmud derives the law from a scriptural redundancy (in v. 10) which Rashi interprets differently.

** Shemos 39:27-28 describes the linen tunics, turbans and pants of Aharon and his sons, whereas verse 29 describes a single sash, suggesting that only Aharon’s sash was made of “fine linen twisted with turquoise, purple, and crimson wool.” Thus it follows that, at the literal level, the ordinary priest’s sash was made of plain linen, like his other garments. For differing views on this matter in Jewish law see Yoma 6a; Rambam, Laws of Temple Apparatus B.1.
C L A S S I C Q U E S T I O N S

For what sins does the scapegoat atone? (v. 20-22)

RAMBAM: The scapegoat atones for the entire Jewish people...for all transgressions of the Torah, both severe and less severe sins; those violated intentionally and those violated unintentionally, whether the person was aware of his sin or not all are atoned for by the scapegoat. But this is provided that one does teshuvah (repentance). If one does not do teshuvah, the goat atones only for less severe sins.

Which sins are considered “severe” and which are considered “less severe”? The “severe sins” are those for which a person is liable either for execution by a court or soul excision (kares).... Other prohibitions and all positive commands that are not punishable by soul excision are “less severe sins.”

Now that the Temple no longer exists and there is no Altar to atone, there is only teshuvah, and teshuvah atones for all sins.

(Laws of Teshuvah, 1:2-3)
ground incense, and bring it inside the partition. He should place the incense on the fire (that is in the fire pan), before God, so that a cloud of the incense covers the Ark’s lid that is above the (tablets of) Testimony. (He must do this precisely) so that he will not die.

- He should take some of the bull’s blood and sprinkle it (once) with his index finger towards the top (edge) of the Ark’s lid (which is facing) eastwards. And he should sprinkle some blood seven times with his index finger, towards (the lower part of) the front of the Ark’s lid.
- He should then slaughter the male goat, which (was designated by the lottery as) the people’s sin-offering, and bring its blood within the partition. He should do with its blood just as he had done with the bull’s blood, and he should sprinkle it towards the top (edge) of the Ark’s lid and towards (the lower part of) the front of the Ark’s lid. He will (thus) make an atonement for the Holy (of Holies) from the defilements (caused by) the children of Israel who sinned intentionally or unintentionally (by entering the Temple while in a state of ritual impurity).
- He should do likewise within the Tent of Meeting, (sprinkling blood towards the partition where God’s Presence) dwells with the (Jewish People, despite) their ritual impurity.
- No man should be in the Tent of Meeting when (Aharon) comes to atone in the Holy (of Holies), until he comes out. He will atone for himself, for his household, and for the entire congregation of Israel.
- He should then go out (of that part of the Tent of Meeting where he had sprinkled blood towards the partition) to the (Golden) Altar that is before God (in another part of the Tent of Meeting) and atone upon it (as follows): He should take some of the bull’s blood and the male goat’s blood (mixed together), and place it on the horns of the Altar (with his finger), all around.
- He should then sprinkle some of the blood on (top of the Altar) with his index finger seven times, and he will thus purify it from the ritual impurity of the Jewish people, and sanctify it (for further use).
- When he is finished atoning for the Holy (of Holies), the Tent of Meeting, and the (Golden) Altar, he should bring the living male goat. Aharon should lean both of his hands upon the living male goat’s head and confess all the sins of the Jewish people upon it—all their intentional sins.

**SECOND READING**

**The Atonement Power of The Scapegoat (v. 20-22)**

Rambam writes that the mitzvah of offering the scapegoat on Yom Kippur was so powerful that it atoned for (the less severe) sins of the Jewish people, even if they had not done teshuvah. This presents us with a number of problems:

a.) Later in the same law (cited in Classic Questions to v. 30), Rambam writes:

Chasidic thought explains that the incense of the rest of the year was comparable to teshuvah out of fear, which has the power to wipe away the sins of the past. The incense of Yom Kippur, however, is comparable to teshuvah out of love, which has the power to transform intentional transgressions into merits. Thus, the incense of Yom Kippur is not a negative service aimed at wiping away the evil inclination, but has the positive goal of elevating the Jewish people to serve God in a truly unlimited manner, such that even the past is transformed for the good. For this reason, the incense was burned specifically in the Holy of Holies, where God’s absolute infinitude was revealed.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 14, p. 129)
The scapegoat atones for (less severe) sins even without teshuvah, but the day of Yom Kippur will atone for a person’s sins only if he is remorseful and penitent.

Why is this the case?
and unintentional sins. He will thus place the (sins) on the male goat’s head and send it off to the desert with a pre-designated man. The male goat will thus carry upon itself all their sins to an uninhabited land. He should send off the male goat into the desert.

(The instructions within the next verse are actually carried out after verse 28):

- Aharon should (remove his golden priestly garments, immerse in a mikvah, wash his hands and feet, put on his linen garments and) enter the Tent of Meeting. (He should remove the ladle used to bring the incense into the Holy of Holies and the firepan.) He should then remove the linen garments that he had worn when he came into the Holy (of Holies), and he should store them away there (never to be used again).

- (Before doing the above) he should immerse his body in (mikvah) water (found) in the holy (Temple Courtyard, on the roof of the House of Parvah) and put on his (golden priestly) garments. He should go out and offer his burnt-offering (ram) and the people’s burnt-offering (ram), atoning for himself and for the people, and he should make the fat of the sin-offering go up in smoke on the (outer) Altar.

- The person who sent off the male goat to the high cliff should immerse his garments and immerse his body in (mikvah) water, and (only) after this may he come into the camp.

- Someone should take the sin-offering bull and male goat of the sin-offering—whose blood was brought to atone in the Holy (of Holies)—outside the camp, and their skin, flesh, and waste matter should be burned in fire. The person who burns them should immerse his garments and immerse his body in (mikvah) water, and (only) after this may he come into the camp.

(Yom Kippur) will be an eternal statute for you:

- In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you should afflict yourselves.
- You should not do any work—neither the native nor convert who lives among you. For on this day (God) will atone for you, to cleanse you. You will be cleansed from all your sins before God.

**CLASSIC QUESTIONS**

- If “on this day (God) will atone for you” (v. 30)—does one still have to do teshuvah on Yom Kippur?

**TALMUD:** “[The Sages said]: ‘Yom Kippur brings about atonement with teshuvah.’ This means to say that [the day] will only bring about atonement if it is accompanied by teshuvah, but [the day] will not atone in itself.... Rebbi said: Yom Kippur brings atonement for all transgressions of the Torah, regardless of whether the person did teshuvah or not. Except in the case of one who throws off the yoke [Divine Authority], interprets the Torah unlawfully, or breaks the covenant of [circumcision of] Avraham our father (Yoma 85b).

**RAMBAM:** The day of Yom Kippur itself brings about atonement—[but this atonement will only be effective] for those who are remorseful—as the verse states (v. 30): “For on this day (God) will atone for you” (Laws of Teshuvah, 1:2-3).

**TORAS MENACHEM**

b.) Rambam appears to contradict himself. First he writes, that “Now that the Temple no longer exists... there is only teshuvah, and teshuvah atones for all sins,” suggesting that teshuvah and teshuvah alone can bring about atonement in the current era. But then, he concludes, “The day of Yom Kippur itself brings about atonement, for those who are remorseful,” suggesting that the actual day of Yom Kippur also helps to bring atonement, in addition to a person’s remorsefulness and teshuvah. So it turns out that there is not ‘only teshuvah” to “atonate for all sins,” but there is Yom Kippur too!

c.) Why does Rambam mention the atonement power of the day of Yom Kippur (”The day of Yom Kippur itself brings about atonement”) in reference to the current era only? Are we to conclude that the day of Yom Kippur did not bring about atonement in Temple times?

**THE EXPLANATION**

Every sin has a twofold implication: 1.) Its effect on the person who commits the sin, i.e. how the sin causes a spiritual regression in the person who commits it, thus rendering him in need of atonement.

2.) The very existence of the sinful act. I.e. in addition to its effect on the sinner, the sin is an evil entity in itself, which adds to the collective evil that exists in the world—as in the saying, “He who commits one transgression acquires against himself one accuser” (Avos 4:11).

Thus, when we speak of the atonement power of the scapegoat and the day of Yom Kippur, we need to clarify: Do they atone merely for the effects of the sins on the guilty person, leaving the sins as evil entities that continue to exist in the world? Or do they achieve atonement by totally eradicating the very existence of the sins?
When describing the atonement power of the scapegoat, the Torah states: “Aharon should lean both of his hands upon the living male goat’s head and confess all the sins of the Jewish people upon it—all their intentional and unintentional sins. He will thus place the (sins) on the male goat, and send it off to the desert with a pre-designated man. The intentional and unintentional sins. He will thus place the (sins) on the male goat and send it off to the desert with a pre-designated man. The male goat will atone even if it is not accompanied by another.” (v. 21-22).

This appears to suggest that the very sins themselves (and not just their effect) are “placed” on the scapegoat and “sent away.” Consequently, Rambam rules, that “The scapegoat atones...for all transgressions of the Torah...all are atoned for by the scapegoat,” indicating that the scapegoat has the power to atone for the sins themselves, and not merely their effect on the sinner.

On the other hand, in reference to the atonement power of the day of Yom Kippur, the Torah states: “On this day (God) will atone for you, to cleanse you. You will be cleansed from all your sins before God” (v. 30). This suggests that the day of Yom Kippur only atones for the effect of the sins on a person, but it does not eliminate the sins themselves.

Thus, Rambam did not write that the day of Yom Kippur atones for actual sins, but that rather, “The day of Yom Kippur itself brings about atonement for those who are remorseful,” i.e. for the spiritual regression suffered by the penitents themselves.

With this distinction in mind, we can answer our earlier questions:

a.) The scapegoat clearly has a greater power of atonement than the day of Yom Kippur itself, since the scapegoat eliminates the very existence of sin, whereas the day of Yom Kippur merely wipes away the personal effects of one’s sin. Since the scapegoat has a greater power of atonement, it is more capable of achieving atonement without any additional “assistance” from the person doing teshuvah. So, while the day of Yom Kippur only atones for “those who are remorseful,” the scapegoat will atone even if it is not accompanied by teshuvah. (Nevertheless, this is only the case for “less severe sins.” In the case of “severe sins,” however, even the scapegoat requires the additional atonement power of teshuvah to be effective.)

b.) When Rambam writes, that “Now that the Temple no longer exists...there is only teshuvah, and teshuvah atones for all sins,” he is speaking of the total eradication of these sins. And, since the scapegoat is no longer available, there is indeed no method of eliminating the existence of one’s sins from the world, other than through teshuvah.

But this does not contradict his later statement, that “The day of Yom Kippur itself brings about atonement,” since the day of Yom Kippur only atones for the effects of one’s sins, and not for the sins themselves. Therefore, it is still true to say that if one wishes to eliminate the sins themselves “there is only teshuvah,” for the day of Yom Kippur is not effective in this area.

c.) Since the atonement power of the day of Yom Kippur is inferior to that of the scapegoat, there is no need to mention the former when the latter is available. Thus, it is only when discussing atonement during the current era that Rambam mentions for the first time that “The day of Yom Kippur itself brings about atonement,” for when the more powerful atonement via the scapegoat is available, the relatively weaker power of the day of Yom Kippur pales in comparison.

**Practical Ramifications**

The above discussion has the following practical ramifications:

1.) In chapter two of his “Laws of Teshuvah,” Rambam describes the method of repenting for one’s sins: one first needs to identify each sin specifically, feel bitter and remorseful about each one, and resolve never to do them again. This should be accompanied with verbal confession and preferably, donations to charity along with a complete change of identity and lifestyle.
It could be argued, however, that this detailed process is primarily connected with the unique power of teshuvah to eradicate the sins themselves. In order for a person to completely eliminate any trace of the sin from the world, it is necessary to carry out all of the above procedures.

Nevertheless, in order to benefit from the atoning effect of the day of Yom Kippur (which only atones for the effects of the sins on a person, and not the sins themselves), it could be argued that the above-detailed process is not required. For since we are only atoning for the person (and not his sins), it is only necessary that the person feels remorseful in general. The main power of Yom Kippur is to alleviate the negative effects of the sins on himself, and for this a more general spirit of remorse will suffice.

Thus, when discussing the teshuvah required on Yom Kippur in order to benefit from the atonement effect of the day, Rambam does not write, “The day of Yom Kippur itself brings about atonement if it is accompanied by teshuvah”—which would suggest that Yom Kippur accomplishes nothing unless there is a full detailed teshuvah. Rather, he writes, “The day of Yom Kippur itself brings about atonement for those who are remorseful,” suggesting that as long as the person feels generally remorseful, he benefits from the spiritual “cleansing” power of Yom Kippur.

2.) In his “Laws of Unintentional Transgressions,” Rambam writes, “Yom Kippur...only atones for those who are remorseful, believing in the atonement it brings. But those who spurn [the power of the day] will not be atoned by it” (3:10).

Presumably this is based on the principle that “the prosecuting attorney cannot become a defense attorney” (Rosh Hashanah 26a), i.e. if a person “indicts” himself with a denial of Yom Kippur, then Yom Kippur can no longer act as a “defense attorney” on his behalf (See Tzafnas Pane’ach to Laws of Levirate Marriage 4:20).

At first glance, this principle appears to be limited to personal atonement of the day of Yom Kippur, but not to atonement for sins via the scapegoat:

If one spurns the notion of Yom Kippur, it makes sense that the day no longer can cleanse him spiritually, as the person’s denial of the power of the day acts as an “obstruction” which prevents the day from assisting the person.

However, in the case of the atonement for the sins themselves via the scapegoat, it would appear that even if the person denied the power of the scapegoat it would still nevertheless atone on his behalf. For the scapegoat is sufficiently powerful to atone for sins independently, even without the combined assistance of teshuvah from the person himself.

In truth however, one cannot totally disassociate the scapegoat from the “day of Yom Kippur,” for ultimately, the scapegoat is only effective because it is part of the special service of Yom Kippur. Therefore, if a person were to spurn the atonement power of Yom Kippur, the scapegoat would not atone for him either, since the latter is a function of the former.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that there is a practical ramification between the spurning of the power of the day of Yom Kippur and that of the scapegoat. For Rambam writes explicitly that the day of Yom Kippur only atones for those who are actively remorseful. In the case of the scapegoat, however, it could be argued that if a person was totally passive (and did not actively spurn the power of the scapegoat), then the scapegoat would still atone for him, since, ultimately, the scapegoat has the power to atone for (less severe) sins without the “assistance” of teshuvah from the person himself.*

(Excerpted from a public letter written by the Rebbe during the days of Selichos, 5720)

* In Likutei Sichos, this practical ramification concludes with the words “the matter still requires further clarification.”
What is God's reaction to a person who eats blood? (v. 10)

**RASHI:** [God says]: “I will make Myself free from all My affairs, and I will deal with this person!”

**ONKELOS:** [God says]: “I will become angry with him.”

Why is it prohibited to eat blood? (v. 10-12)

**RAMBAM:** This is to prevent Jewish people from occult practices which involve blood, such as the Chaldean practice of attempting to summon demons by using pools of blood, and eating blood in an attempt to enhance the power of prophecy. Therefore, the Torah prohibits the consumption of blood, to guide the Jewish people away from foolishness (Guide for the Perplexed 3:46).

**RAMBAN:** Since “the soul of the body (of every creature depends on) the blood” (v. 11), if a person eats the blood of an animal, the animal’s soul becomes connected with the person and will bestow animalistic characteristics upon him.
God spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to Aharon and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, “This is the thing which God has commanded (me) to say (to you)”:  
• Any man of the House of Israel, who slaughters an ox, a lamb, or a goat (which has been sanctified as an offering) inside the camp (but outside the Temple Courtyard), or one who slaughters outside the camp, and does not bring (his offering) to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to offer up as an offering to God, in the presence of the Tabernacle of God—this (act) will be counted for that man like (shedding the) blood (of a human being).  
• (Similarly, if he sprinkles sacrificial blood outside the Temple he is punished as if) he has shed (human) blood, and that man will be cut off from among his people.

This warning is in order that the children of Israel should take their offerings which they (are in the habit of) slaughtering in the open field, and bring them to God, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, to the priest, and slaughter them as peace-offerings to God. The priest will dash the blood on God’s Altar at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and he will make the fat go up in smoke, as a pleasant aroma to God. They should no longer slaughter their sacrifices to demons after whom they stray. This should be an eternal statute for them, for (all) their generations.

You should say to them:  
• Any man from the House of Israel, or from the converts who will live among them, who offers up (the sacrificial parts of) a burnt-offering or a (peace-)offering, and does not bring them to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to be (burned) for God—that man will be cut off from his people (i.e. he will die prematurely and his children will die).

Laws Pertaining to Eating & Covering Blood

• If any man from the House of Israel, or from the converts who live among them, eats any blood, I will devote My time (away from all My affairs and deal) with the soul who eats the blood, and I will cut him off from among his people. Because the soul of (every creature’s) body

Why did God forbid Adam to eat meat and then permit it to Noach? Rashi did not explain this matter, as he held it to be self-evident: God forbade Adam to take the soul from a living creature merely for the sake of eating it. But after the flood, there was a weakening of the physical makeup of man, requiring the additional nutritional value of meat, and therefore God permitted man to eat meat.

Nevertheless, even after God permitted man to eat meat, He imposed certain restrictions: To non-Jews He prohibited eating meat which had been detached from a living animal (Noach 9:4); and to Jews he also prohibited the consumption of the animal’s blood. For while a dispensation had been granted to eat meat, it was nevertheless not absolute. So, while it became necessary (for nutritional reasons) to allow man to eat the flesh of the animal, it remained prohibited to eat its blood, which contains the very life and soul of an animal.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acharei 5746)

* For further details about this prohibition, see Devarim 12:4-7.
to bring atonement on the Altar. For in Temple times, most cattle were slaughtered for sacrificial purposes. Cattle may be offered on the Altar. Thus blood from cattle is not covered, since it is a type of blood which, in the majority of cases, is used in Temple times for sacrificial purposes.

Why does the mitzvah of covering blood apply only to wild animals and birds but not to cattle? (v. 13)

Ramban: Generally speaking, wild animals and birds are not offered on the Altar (except for two species of birds), whereas most species of cattle may be offered on the Altar. Thus blood from cattle is not covered, since it is a type of blood which, in the majority of cases, is used to bring atonement on the Altar. For in Temple times, most cattle were slaughtered for sacrificial purposes.

The lesson here is that one should attempt to “cover” and reduce any signs of one’s energy (“blood”) in mundane matters; whereas with high pursuits, the energy and enthusiasm should be “uncovered,” i.e. visible and palpable. This is achieved by covering the blood “with earth” (v. 13), i.e. with a spirit of humility and dedication to God, represented by the lowly earth.

(The Last Word)

Ramban explains that the blood of cattle is not covered because, generally speaking, it is a type of blood which is offered on the Altar. Since blood is a symbol of energy, it follows that the blood of cattle represents energy in holy matters (which are “offered on the Altar”) and that the blood of birds and wild animals represents energy and enthusiasm in one’s mundane physical pursuits of eating, sleeping etc.
(depends on its) blood, and that is why I assigned it to you (to be placed) upon the Altar, to atone for your souls, for it is the blood (of an animal) that atones for the soul (of man). Therefore, I said to the children of Israel: None of you(r parents) should (allow their children to) eat blood. The convert who lives among you should not eat blood.

- **13** Any man from the children of Israel, or from the converts who live among them, who traps (or finds) trapped, a wild animal or bird (of a kosher species) that may be eaten, and sheds its blood—he should cover (the blood) with earth. For the soul of the body of every (creature depends on) its blood. (Therefore) I said to the children of Israel: You should not eat the blood of any body, for the soul of every (creature’s) body (depends on) its blood. Anyone who eats it will be cut off.

### The Ritual Impurity of an Unslaughtered Bird

- **15** Any person, whether a native or a convert, who eats (a kosher species of bird) which died on its own (without ritual slaughter) should immerse his garments and immerse himself in (mikvah) water, and he will remain unclean until the evening, when he will become clean. (But if a person merely touched such a bird, he does not become ritually impure).

- (The unslaughtered carcass of a bird will only transmit ritual impurity through being eaten if it is from a kosher species which is susceptible to being rendered) treife.

- **16** (If a person becomes ritually impure in this manner) but he does not immerse (his garments) or immerse his body (in a mikvah, and then he eats from a sacrifice or enters the Temple), he will bear (the consequences of) his sin.

### Laws of Forbidden Relations

**God spoke to Moshe, saying:** “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘I am God, your God.’”

“Do not follow the practices of the land of Egypt where you lived. And do not follow the...”

#### Classic Questions

- **Why does the verse state “I am God, your God”? (v. 2)**

  **Rashi:** [This means to say]: “I am the One who said at Sinai, ‘I am God, your God’ (Shemos 20:2), [but then] you [only] accepted My sovereignty upon yourselves. Now, accept My decrees [too]!”

  [Another explanation]: Rebbi says: “God knew in advance that, in the days of Ezra, the people would ultimately become disconnected [from Judaism] through forbidden relations. Therefore, [when beginning these laws,] God came upon them with a decree: “I am God, your God!” [As if to say]: ‘You should know who is placing these decrees upon you: the Judge who exacts retribution, and who is faithful to pay rewards.’”

### The Laws of Forbidden Relations (18:1ff.)

In his commentary to verse 2, Rashi offers two interpretations for the words “I am God, your God”:

1.) With these words, God was encouraging the people to accept His “decrees,” in addition to His “sovereignty” which the people already accepted at the giving of the Torah.

2.) That God is a Judge who exacts retribution and pays rewards. This was a warning that served as an introduction to the severe prohibitions that follow.

This presents us with the following general questions:

a.) Earlier in his commentary, Rashi already wrote: “We find this expression used in many places: ‘I am God’—to exact retribution...to pay rewards” (Rashi to Shemos 6:2). So what was troubling Rashi here? And if for some reason he found it necessary to explain the matter, why did he give two explanations?

b.) Questions on Rashi’s first interpretation:

When the Jewish people accepted the “sovereignty of God” at the giving of the Torah, we can presume that this included a general
acceptance of all the commandments. So why was it now necessary to accept God’s “decrees”?

c.) And, if the acceptance of His decrees was crucial, then surely it should have taken place before the giving of the Torah?

d.) Furthermore, what exactly does the term “decrees” refer to?

e.) In Rashi’s second interpretation, why does Rashi choose the unusual expression that the Jewish people became “disconnected” through this sin?

**The Explanation**

While we find the expression “I am God, your God” many times in the Torah, it usually comes at the end of a section of laws or instructions, to stress the serious nature of the laws that preceded it.

So, on reaching our verse, Rashi was troubled: Why did this passage begin with the words “I am God, your God”? These words were clearly not said for additional stress, since nothing has yet been said that could need stressing!
practices of the land of Cana'an, where I am bringing you (for these two nations are the most depraved of all). Do not (even) follow their customs.”

4 “You should fulfill My rational laws, and guard My suprarational commands and (always) follow their (wisdom, and not secular wisdom). I am God, your God. 5 You should guard My suprarational commands and My rational laws which a man should do, and you will live by them (in the next world, for) I am God (who is faithful to pay reward).”

- 6 No man (or woman) may come near to any of his (or her) close relatives, to uncover (their) nakedness (and cohabit with them). I am God (who is faithful to pay reward).
- 7 You must not uncover the nakedness of your father’s (wife) or the nakedness of your mother (if she is not your father’s wife. Since) she is your mother, you must not uncover her nakedness.
- 8 You must not uncover the nakedness of your father’s wife (even after death, since) it is your father’s (wife’s) nakedness.
- 9 You must not uncover your sister’s nakedness, (whether) she is your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, (and regardless of whether) she is born to a woman who may remain in the home or (if she is) born to a woman who must be expelled.
- 10 You must not uncover the nakedness of the daughter of your son or daughter (who was born from a forbidden relationship), for they are (like) your own nakedness.
- 11 You must not uncover the nakedness of your father’s (Jewish) wife’s daughter, born to your father (because) she is your sister.
- 12 You must not uncover the nakedness of your father’s sister (because) she is the close relative of your father.
- 13 You must not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister, because she is the close relative of your mother.
- 14 You must not uncover the nakedness of your father’s brother, (namely) you must not come near his wife, (because) she is your aunt.

TORAS MENACHEM

One instance where we do find that the words, “I am God, your God,” are said at the beginning of a passage, is in the case of the Ten Commandments: “I am God, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Shemos 20:2). Rashi explains that God was telling the Jewish people “to be subservient to Me” (ibid.)—in other words, to accept God’s sovereignty.

So Rashi concluded that, likewise in our case, the introductory words, “I am God, your God,” indicate that God was now instructing the Jewish people to raise themselves to a greater degree of subservience to God, as He did at the giving of the Torah. And this was necessary before proceeding with the following section, since the Jewish people were about to receive a series of commands that would prove to be more demanding than anything they had been given up until this point (a type of command called “decrees”).

In other words: The statement “I am God your God” is (not a direct introduction to the following section of laws, but rather) an instruction in itself for the Jewish people to increase their subservience to God. This was placed here in particular, before the section of forbidden relations, since these commands were the first instance where this higher degree of subservience was required.

But why do the following laws demand an unprecedented level of subservience?

Rashi indicated the answer to this question by his use of the term “decrees”:

Until this point, the commandments which the Jewish people had received could be divided into two broad categories: a.) Those which have a rational explanation. b.) Those for which no rational explanation can be found (chukim), e.g. not wearing a mixture of wool and linen etc.

The term “decrees,” however, suggests a type of command which defies logic even more than the chukim. For, while the chukim have no rational explanation, they do not run contrary to reason. On the other hand, decrees are irrational and logically absurd, appearing at first glance to be totally unreasonable.

An example of a decree would thus be God’s instructions to Avraham concerning the slaughter of his only son, Yitzchak, which seemed to be totally irrational. As Rashi writes (Bereishis 22:12): “Avraham said to God, ‘I will explain my complaint before You: Beforehand, You said to me, “Your (true) descendants will be through Yitzchak” (Bereishis 21:12), and then You retracted and said: “Please take your son... (and bring him up there for a

The opening of Parshas Va’eira appears, at first glance, also to be an instance where God began a passage in this way: “God spoke to Moshe, and said to him, ‘I am God.”’ In truth, however, this is not the beginning of a new section but a continuation of the discussion from the end of the previous Parsha, as Rashi clarifies there.
burnt offering]” (ibid. 22:2). Now, You are saying to me, “Do not stretch out your hand to (slaughter) the boy!” (ibid. 12).”

Now, at the literal level, the prohibition against marrying close relatives which we read in this passage would have appeared to the Jewish people to be totally absurd. For, up until that point, it had been desirable to seek a marriage partner among one’s close relatives, to ensure good lineage.

Thus we find that:

i.) The Torah praises Aharon’s wife as being “the daughter of Aminadav, the sister of Nachshon” (Shemos 6:23), to stress the importance of marrying a person of good lineage—as Rashi comments (ibid.): “From here we learn that one who contemplates taking a wife must investigate her brothers.”

ii.) Avraham told his servant Eliezer: “You should go to my Land, to my birthplace, and you will take a wife for my son, for Yitzchak,” i.e. he sought a marriage partner for his son specifically from his own family.

iii.) Ya’akov married two sisters, through which he built a “complete complement” of children who were righteous, and loyal to the principles of Judaism.

iv.) Amram married Yocheved, his aunt, a union from which Moshe, Aharon and Miriam were born (Shemos 6:20).

v.) In fact, God created the world in such a way that its entire population is derived from a relationship of close relatives, for the sons of Adam and Chavah married their own sisters.

vi.) Logically speaking, since the purpose of marriage is to become “one flesh” (Bereishis 2:24), it follows that this is achieved to the greatest degree if both partners are closely related.

Thus, at the literal level of Torah interpretation, the principle, “No man (or woman) may come near to any of his (or her) close relatives” (v. 6) is a totally irrational “decree.”

So, before giving the Jewish people mitzvos that were irrational for the first time, God began with the words: “I am God, your God,” as if to say, “I am the One who said at Sinai, ‘I am God, your God,’ [but then] you [only] accepted My sovereignty upon yourselves” i.e. to observe mitzvos which were rational, or devoid of explanation, “Now, accept My [irrational] decrees [too]!”

Rashi’s Second Explanation
Rashi was not entirely satisfied with the above explanation since:

a.) While, in theory, it was not crucial for the Jewish people to accept upon themselves the irrational mitzvos until this point, it is nevertheless rather peculiar that the acceptance of God’s authority should have taken place in two stages. We would expect the Jewish people to have accepted all the mitzvos unconditionally at the giving of the Torah.
• 15 You must not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife (so) you must not uncover her nakedness.

• 16 You must not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife (for she) is your brother’s nakedness.

• 17 You must not uncover the nakedness of a woman (to whom you are married) and her daughter. You must not take her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter (in marriage) to uncover her nakedness. It is the advice (of the evil inclination since) they are close relatives.

• 18 You must not take a woman (in marriage) in addition to her sister, to make them rivals by uncovering one’s nakedness in addition to the other’s. (Even if you divorce one sister you may not marry the other one) in her lifetime.

• 19 You must not come near a woman during the ritual impurity of her menstruation, to uncover her nakedness.

• 20 You must not lie carnally with your fellowman’s wife, to make yourself impure with her.

• 21 You must not give any of your offspring (to pagan priests) to pass through (between two bonfires, in worship of the pagan deity) Molech. You must not profane the Name of your God. I am God.

• 22 You must not lie down with a man, as one lies with a woman. This is an abomination.

• 23 You must not cohabit with any animal, to become impure from it. A woman must not stand in front of an animal to cohabit with it. This is depravity.

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**TORAS MENACHEM**

b.) Some of the prohibitions against marrying close relatives were part of the Noachide code binding on non-Jews (see Rashi to Bereishis 2:24; 39:9). These laws were accepted by the Jewish people even before the Torah was given (see Shemos 24:3 and Rashi ibid.). So, it follows that many of the laws of forbidden relations were not being given to the Jewish people for the first time here.

Due to these two problems, Rashi found it necessary to offer an alternative explanation: Rebbi says: “God knew in advance that, in the days of Ezra, the people would eventually become disconnected [from Judaism] through forbidden relations. Therefore, when beginning these laws, God came upon them with a decree: “I am God, your God!” [As if to say]: You should know who is placing these decrees upon you: the Judge who exacts retribution, and who is faithful also to pay rewards.”

Above, we explained that Rashi’s problem with our verse was why the Torah states the words “I am God, your God,” at the beginning of this passage, when these words usually come to offer additional emphasis after a section of laws has been given. In Rashi’s first interpretation, he solves this problem by explaining that these words formed a general introduction which was necessary before a new type of mitzvah was encountered.

But here, in his second interpretation, Rashi accepted the notion that in this exceptional case the words “I am God, your God” could have been said to offer additional emphasis to the passage that follows. This is because “God knew in advance...that the people would eventually become disconnected [from Him] through forbidden relations.” Therefore, when beginning this section, God deemed it appropriate to make an extra warning (He “came upon them with a decree”) at the very outset. The words “I am God, your God,” thus mean: “You should know who is placing these decrees upon you: the Judge who exacts retribution, and who is faithful also to pay rewards.”

However, this leaves the reader with the question: What makes these laws more severe than the other prohibitions of the Torah, such that other prohibitions have (at most) additional emphasis at the end of a passage, whereas these prohibitions have additional emphasis at the beginning and the end?

Rashi indicated the answer to this question with the phrase, “the people would eventually become disconnected [from Judaism] through forbidden relations”:

At first glance, this is a rather peculiar expression. Normally, we would say that a person “sinned” or “transgressed,” etc. Why did Rashi choose the unusual expression “become disconnected”?

Clearly we are speaking here of a very serious type of forbidden relations, which causes a person not only to stumble in sin, but leads to a total disconnection from Judaism.

In order to clarify exactly which type of forbidden relations this refers to, Rashi writes that this was the sin of “the days of Ezra”—namely, that of marrying a non-Jewish woman (see Ezra 9:11). This particular sin causes a “disconnection” in the Jewish lineage, since the child born from the union of a Jewish man with a non-Jewish woman is not Jewish (as Rashi writes [Devarim 7:4] that a “son born from a non-Jewish woman is not called ‘your son’ but ‘her son’”).

Thus, to avert as much as possible this tragic “disconnection” which “God knew in advance” would eventually happen, the Torah made an unprecedented move of stressing the severity of these laws not only at the end of the passage, but at the beginning too. And, even though the section here at the end of Parshas Acharei does not in fact include the prohibition of marrying a non-Jewish woman, God nevertheless chose to add this additional emphasis here at the outset of the discussion of forbidden relations in general.
Nevertheless, in the final analysis, Rashi found it somewhat difficult to accept that our verse was written here as a warning against a prohibition recorded later in the Torah, and to forewarn an event that was only to happen many generations in the future. Of course, if the warning had not been written, it might have indeed occurred much sooner, but nevertheless, Rashi was sufficiently dissatisfied with this solution that he left it as a secondary interpretation. But in order to diminish the above problem as much as possible, Rashi cited the author of this teaching, “Rebbi says....”

Rebbi (Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi) was the author of the Mishnah, the first text of Oral Law to be formally codified. In principle, the Oral Law should not have been written down, as it was intended to be transmitted orally from generation to generation. Nevertheless, Rebbi proved the necessity of writing down the Oral Law from a verse in Psalms: “A time to do for God; they have made your Torah void” (119:126). This suggested that since there was a danger of the Oral Law being lost, it was “a time” when appropriate to write down the law “for God,” and make “void” the prohibition of writing it down.
24 You must not defile yourselves by any of these things, for the nations whom I am sending away from you have defiled themselves with all these things. 25 The land became defiled. I remembered its sin (bringing punishment) upon it, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

26 But you will observe My suprarational commands and My rational commands, and you will not do any of these abominations—neither the native, nor the convert who lives among you.

27 The people of the land, who preceded you, did all of these abominations and the land became defiled. 28 Let the land not vomit you out for having defiled it, as it vomited out the nation that preceded you. 29 For if anyone commits any of these abominations, (both) the people (the man and the woman) who committed (the act) will be cut off from the midst of their people.

30 (The courts should) enforce My restrictions, not to commit any of the abominable practices that were done before you, and you will not become defiled by them.

(If you keep My laws then) I am God your God.

SHABBOS HAGADOL—P. 286.

TORAS MENACHEM

From this we see that Rebbi perceived that in the Psalms, which were written many generations earlier, a message was included that was relevant for his time. Thus it is not surprising that Rebbi also saw our verse, “I am God, your God,” as a warning for many generations after the Torah was given—the time of Ezra.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 12, p. 83ff.)

 Rebbi perceived messages that were written in the Torah which only became relevant many generations later (see Toras Menachem). From this we see the infinite scope of the Torah, which is God’s wisdom, how it contains unique guidance for every generation, even though it was written many years ago.

In fact, Rebbi’s teaching here, about the tragic “disconnection” that occurs through marrying a non-Jewish woman, is extremely relevant today.

The prohibition against intermarriage is not based on chauvinism, for it is indeed true that “God created us all” (Malachi 2:10). Nevertheless, God made it known that the holiness of the “Godly offspring” of the Jewish people must be preserved and the unique holiness associated with a Jew is only inherited from a union with a Jewish woman.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim 5731)
Parshas Acharei contains 2 positive mitzvos and 26 prohibitions

1. The priests should not enter the Temple at all times (only for the Temple service), and all the more so a non-priest [16:2].
2. The Temple service on the Day of Atonement [16:3].
3. Not to ritually slaughter sacrifices outside the Temple courtyard [17:3,4].
4. The mitzvah of covering the blood (after ritual slaughter) [17:13].
5. Not to have pleasure with those who are forbidden [18:6].
6. Not to have relations with one’s father [18:7].
7. Not to have relations with one’s mother [18:7].
8. Not to have relations with one’s father’s wife even if she is not his mother [18:8].
9. Not to have relations with his sister, if she is his sister in any way [18:9].
10. Not to have relations with one’s son’s daughter [18:10].
11. Not to have relations with one’s daughter’s daughter [18:10].
12. Not to have relations with one’s daughter [18:10].
13. Not to have relations with one’s son’s sister on one’s father’s side, who is the daughter of his father’s wife [18:11].
14. Not to have relations with one’s father’s sister [18:12].
15. Not to have relations with one’s mother’s sister [18:13].
16. Not to have relations with one’s father’s brother [18:14].
17. Not to have relations with the wife of one’s father’s brother [18:14].
18. Not to have relations with one’s son’s wife [18:15].
19. Not to have relations with one’s brother’s wife [18:16].
20. Not to have relations with both a woman and her daughter [18:17].
21. Not to have relations with both a woman and the daughter of her son [18:17].
22. Not to have relations with both a woman and her daughter’s daughter [18:17].
23. Not to have relations with two sisters while both are living [18:18].
24. Not to have relations with a menstruous woman [18:19].
25. Not to give any of one’s children in idol-worship to Molech [18:21].
26. A man should not have relations with a man [18:22].
27. A man should not have relations with animals [18:23].
28. Women should not have relations with beasts [18:23].
A unique quality of Parshas Kedoshim is that it was said directly by Moshe to the people, unlike the other laws of the Torah, which were first taught to Aharon and the elders. As Rashi writes at the opening of the Parsha: “This Parsha was said to the assembled [congregation of Israel] because most of the basic teachings of the Torah depend on it.”

The first thing that the Jewish people were told after being assembled was: “You should be holy because I, God your God, am holy.”

Now, we might have thought that when addressing the public about “the basic teachings of the Torah,” the first thing to do would be to warn the people about keeping the mitzvos, and the grave consequences of their non-observance. And only then would it be appropriate to stress the positive side of the mitzvos, such as the great merit that the Jewish people have to be given these laws. Moshe would thus have followed the sequence of the verse: “Turn away from evil, and do good” (Psalms 34:16).

In fact, however, Moshe did the very opposite. First, he stressed the positive aspects of being Jewish and observing the mitzvos: “You should be holy because I, God your God, am holy,” that the holiness of a Jew is connected with the holiness of God Himself. And, only after this positive introduction did he begin to stress the seriousness of the mitzvos, etc.

From this we can learn that we should always approach another Jew with warmth, friendliness and positivity. Experience has shown that intimidating people with fear of Divine retribution and prophecies of doom is simply not as effective as taking a positive approach, which draws people towards observant Judaism, rather than scaring them away, God forbid.

And even though the verse seems to suggest that the negative must come first (“turn away from evil, and do good”), we could nevertheless interpret the verse as follows: In order to turn away from evil, simply do good and the evil will take care of itself.

(By Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim 5748)
Why does verse 2 stress that Moshe spoke to “the entire congregation of the Children of Israel”?

RASHI: This teaches us that this Parsha was said to the assembled [congregation of Israel] because most of the fundamental teachings of the Torah depend on it.

MASKIL LE DAVID: The majority of this Parsha does not contain new principles that have not been taught elsewhere in the Torah, but rather, the clarification of existing laws, through the addition of further details. Therefore, in this case, it was unnecessary to employ the normal lengthy system where Moshe would first teach the laws to Aharon, and Aharon to the elders etc., for everybody was already familiar with the general principle of these laws, so they did not have to be repeated several times. Rather, in this case, one public teaching was sufficient.

MIDRASH: Rabbi Yudan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, “Moshe, our teacher, wrote for us three sections in the Torah, each of which contain sixty mitzvos: the section dealing with the Passover Sacrifice (Shemos 12:1ff), the section dealing with the laws of damages (ibid. 21:1ff) and Parshas Kedoshim (Vayikra Rabah 24:5).

The Public Teaching of Parshas Kedoshim (v. 2)

Rashi writes that this Parsha was taught publicly to an assembly of the entire Jewish people, because “most of the basic teachings of the Torah depend on it.” At first glance, this is difficult to understand because:

a.) Moshe had effectively communicated all the laws of the Torah, including many fundamental principles, using a different system up to this point, where the laws were first taught to Aharon and then to the elders [see Rashi to end of Parshas Ki Sisa]. Why did this now need to change?

b.) Most of the “fundamental teachings” in this Parsha such as the laws of Shabbos, honoring parents, sacrifices etc. are not actually recorded here for the first time. So why would a new method of communication between Moshe and the people be required?

c.) The Midrash cites two other examples of sections of the Torah that contain many fundamental teachings, so why does Rashi write that Parshas Kedoshim in particular has “most of the fundamental teachings of the Torah”?

The Explanation

Rashi did not write that this section contains most of the fundamental teachings of the Torah, but rather that “most of the fundamental teachings of the Torah depend on it.” This means that while many of the fundamental teachings discussed here have already been introduced to the reader before, nevertheless, their precise implementation is clarified here. And without this clarification, it is likely that these fundamental precepts would not be observed properly.

For example, the reader has already learned the principle of observing Shabbos and the mitzvah of honoring parents. But what the reader does not yet know is how to reconcile these two principles in a case where they contradict—e.g. if a person’s parents tell him to break Shabbos. In our Parsha the Torah clarifies, “(Every) person should fear his mother and his father. But you should not listen to them if they tell you not to observe My Sabbaths (or any other mitzvah), for I am God, your God (whom your parents must honor too)” (v. 2).
God spoke to Moshe, saying: "(Many basic laws depend upon the following section, so) speak to the entire congregation of the Children of Israel, and say to them:

- You should be holy, because I, God your God, am holy.
- (Every) person should fear his mother and his father. But you should (not listen to them if they tell you not to) observe My Sabbaths (or any other mitzvah), for I am God, your God (whom your parents must honor too).
- You should not turn to the worthless idols (and worship them). You should not make molten deities for (other people, nor should they make them for) you. I am God, your God.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- How should the Jewish people “be holy”? (v. 2)
  **Rashi:** Through refraining from forbidden relations.
  **Ramban:** While Rashi understood that the Jewish people “become holy” by refraining from forbidden relations in particular, I see this as a command to be self-restraining in general. I.e. even when the Torah permits a person to eat food that is kosher and to have permissible relations, it is nevertheless desirable to exercise moderation even in permitted matters.

TORAS MENACHEM

Similarly, most of the verses that follow are in fact further clarifications of fundamental laws of the Torah, which are essential for the proper observance of these mitzvos. That is why Rashi stressed the crucial nature of this Parsha, that most of the fundamental precepts of the Torah depend on it, for without this section many errors would be made in the observance of the Ten Commandments, the offering of sacrifices, etc.

Consequently, on this occasion it was necessary for Moshe to change the method by which he communicated these laws to the people. Normally, “Aharon would enter and Moshe would teach him. Aharon would then move away and sit at Moshe’s left, Aharon’s sons would enter and Moshe would teach them. They would then move away...the elders would enter and Moshe would teach them. The elders would move away and sit down on the sides. Then the people would enter and Moshe would teach them” (Rashi to Shemos 34:32).

Thus, in the case of a new law that the people had not heard before, the additional delay of Moshe first teaching Aharon, his sons and the elders would not pose a problem, for the people would be taught the law a little later. In our case however, Moshe was (primarily) not teaching new laws but rather, he was clarifying mitzvos which the Jewish people were already observing. Thus, during the extra time needed to first teach Aharon, his sons and the elders, it is quite feasible that the Jewish people might be desecrating Shabbos, offering sacrifices incorrectly etc., since the points in our Parsha had not been clarified to them.

Thus, since in our case we are speaking of clarifying fundamental teachings of the Torah, it was therefore deemed appropriate to temporarily deviate from the lengthy sequence of teaching, in order that the information should reach the people as quickly as possible.

A parallel for this in Jewish Law is that while one may not teach Torah in a bathroom, it is nevertheless permitted to inform a person of the law in a bathroom if one sees him transgressing a command due to lack of knowledge (Shabbos 40b). Likewise, in our case, it was permissible for Moshe to shorten his method of teaching the Jewish people, in order to minimize the potential for transgressions that might occur while he was teaching.

**Rashi’s Commentary to Parshas Kedoshim**

Based on the above, we can explain a more general problem with Rashi’s commentary to Parshas Kedoshim. On reading the verses that follow, the reader will notice that Rashi’s comments contain an unusually large amount of halachic information. This seems to be out of character with Rashi’s commentary which aimed at explaining scriptural inconsistencies at the literal level, and not at clarifying matters of Jewish law.

However, based on the above we can understand Rashi’s change of emphasis here. At the beginning of our Parsha, Rashi lays down the

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**Sparks of Chasidus**

"YOU SHOULD BE HOLY..." (v. 2)

There is a principle in Chasidic thought, that “The higher something is, the lower it falls.” For this reason, a person reaches the highest levels of spiritual greatness, not through intellectual endeavors alone, but by involving himself in the physical world, observing the mitzvos and helping others to do likewise.

Thus, at the literal level, one actually fulfills the command “You shall be holy,” by refraining from the lowest and most debased of acts (i.e. forbidden relations—See Rashi v. 2). For the route towards the highest degrees of holiness, becoming holy like God (“You should be holy, because I, God your God, am holy”), is through refraining from the lowest of acts, because “the higher something is, the lower it falls.”

This also explains why, at the minchah prayer on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year—before beginning the Ne’ilah prayer, the climax of the day—the Torah portion that is read discusses forbidden relations. For it is through restraint from the very lowest of acts that one reaches the very highest degrees of holiness.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim 5725)
foundation that “most of the fundamental teachings of the Torah depend on it,” i.e. that this Parsha comes to clarify the precise implementation of laws that were taught for the first time on an earlier occasion (as explained above). Therefore, Rashi needed to clarify on a verse-by-verse basis how every detail in our Parsha is in fact a clarification of fundamental principles of the Torah.

In other words, even though the halachic information which Rashi conveys in his commentary to each verse is not required to understand the verse itself at the literal level, we nevertheless need to know this information to understand how the verse is compatible with this Parsha which, at the literal level, is a clarification of principles that were taught earlier.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim 5725)

**Sparks of Chasidus**

**Left-Over Sacrificial Meat (v. 6, 8)**

If, when sacrificing a peace-offering, a person has the intention of leaving over some of its meat past the prescribed time, then the entire sacrifice will not be “accepted favorably” by God (v. 6).

If however a person slaughtered the sacrifice with the intention of eating the meat within the correct time, but then he actually eats it after the time limit had elapsed, then while he has indeed “profaned what is holy to God” (v. 8), his sin does not invalidate the entire sacrifice.

At first glance, this appears to be illogical. For if he merely intends to eat part of its meat past the correct time, it invalidates the whole sacrifice; whereas if he actually did so, only the part of the sacrifice that was left over becomes invalid.

Surely, the act of leaving over sacrificial meat should be more severe than the mere intention to do so?
When you slaughter a peace-offering to God, you must slaughter it (with the correct intentions for it) to be accepted favorably for you (by God):

1. When you sacrifice a peace-offering to God, you must sacrifice it with the intention of offering it to God, and it must be accepted favorably by God.

2. It must be slaughtered with the intention that it will be eaten on the day you slaughter it or on the next day, for anything left over until the third day must be burned in fire.

3. If it (was slaughtered with the intention of eating it outside its prescribed area or with the intention) of being eaten on the third day, it is repulsive (to God) and it will not be accepted favorably (by Him).

4. (If sacrificial meat is indeed left over to the third day) then whoever eats it will bear (the consequences of) his sin, for he has profaned what is holy to God that person will be cut off from his people.

5. When you reap the harvest of your land, you should not fully reap the corner of your field, (since this should be left for the poor); nor should you gather the individual stalks of your harvest (that have fallen). Similarly, you should not harvest the young grapes of your vineyard, nor should you gather the (fallen) individual grapes of your vineyard. You should leave them for the poor and for the convert. I am God, your God.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why does verse 10 conclude “I am God, your God”?

Rashi: [This means, “I am] a Judge who exacts punishment! [And for this sin,] I will demand from you nothing less than your souls.” As the verse states, “Do not rob a poor man...for God will plead their cause etc.” (Prov. 22:22-23).

Leaving Food for the Poor (v. 9-10)

Rashi writes that the mitzvos to leave food from one’s field are so serious that God will punish a person with his very life for failing to observe them. To substantiate his argument, Rashi cites proof from Proverbs: “Do not rob a poor man... for God will plead their cause etc.” (22:22-23).

But how do these words prove Rashi’s point that “I will demand from you nothing less than your souls”?

Be’er Mayim Chayim argues that Rashi’s proof is from the end of this verse, “Do not rob a poor man...for God will plead their cause and rob those who rob them, of life.” However, it is difficult to accept that Rashi failed to cite the key part of the verse in which his proof lies.

We are thus left to explain why Rashi concluded that these mitzvos are so serious, and how this point is proven from the above verse.

The Explanation

Rashi was troubled by the following question: After teaching us these mitzvos, why does the Torah stress, “I am God, your God”?

Rashi answers: “[This means, “I am] a Judge who exacts punishment!” i.e. unlike an ordinary judge, who merely leaves it to law enforcement agencies to ensure the ruling is carried out, God is a judge “who exacts punishment” Himself in the case of an individual who neglects the mitzvos of leaving food for the poor.

In order to explain why God is so exacting in this particular case, Rashi continues, “I will demand from you nothing less than your souls”:

Rashi relied on the fact that the reader would remember one of his earlier comments, in Parshas Vayikra. On the verse, “If a soul (vows to) bring a meal-offering to God” (2:1), Rashi comments: “The only instance where the Torah states the word ‘soul’ is in the case of the meal-offering.

Be’er Mayim Chayim: The proof for Rashi’s statement—that God will punish a person with his very life if he neglects the mitzvah of leaving the corners of his field to the poor—is from the end of the verse that Rashi cites: “Do not rob a poor man...for God will plead their cause and rob those who rob them, of life.”

Who usually donates an [inexpensive] meal-offering? A poor man. [But despite his inexpensive offering] God says: ‘I consider it as if he has sacrificed his very soul!’

From this comment of Rashi, the reader will have learned the great importance which a poor person attaches to even a small amount of food. The reader will thus understand in our case, that to deprive a poor person even of the left-over crops at the corner of a field would be a crushing experience for him. Therefore, just as God considers the meager food offering of the poor person “as if he has sacrificed his very soul,” likewise...

The Last Word

The mitzvah of leaving over the corners of one’s field to the poor (v. 9-10) does not only apply in Temple times, but there is a Biblical obligation to do so even today, in the Land of Israel (Rambam, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 1:14).

The Code of Jewish Law exempts a person from this mitzvah in a case where the majority of local people are non-Jews, who would take the crops before the poor Jewish people are able to do so (Rema to Yoreh De’ah 332:1). However, nowadays in the Land of Israel this exemption would no longer appear to apply. Thus it is appropriate that people endeavor to fulfill this mitzvah today in the Land of Israel—especially when everyone is trying to elicit God’s abundant blessings for the crops of the Holy Land.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Va’eschanan 5745)
What is the distinction between “stealing” (v. 11) and “robbery” (v. 13)?

**Rambam:** What is the definition of a “thief”? One who secretly acquires the property of another person, without the owner knowing. E.g. if a person puts his hand into another’s pocket and takes the owner’s money without his detecting, etc.

However, if a person takes possession openly in public, by force, then he is not a “thief” but a “robber” (Laws of Theft 1:3).

How serious is robbery? (v. 13)

**Rambam:** Any person who robs from another so much as a prutah (small coin) is considered to have taken his life away, as the verse states (Prov. 1:19), “So are the ways of every one who is greedy of gain; it takes away the life of its owners” (Laws of Robbery and Lost Property 1:11).

**Tosfos:** The reason why a person who robs from another so much as a prutah (small coin) is considered to have taken his life away, is because sometimes a person is so poor and so hungry that a single prutah would be enough to keep him alive. By robbing him of a prutah therefore, it is possible that the poor man will meet his demise (Bava Metzia 58b, s.v. zeh begulo).

How does a person become a robber? (v. 13)

**Rambam:** Desire leads to coveting, and coveting leads to robbery. For if the owner does not wish to sell [a certain object], despite being offered large sums of money and being urged to do so by colleagues, then a robbery may result. And if the owner stands up against the robber and tries to defend his property, an act of murder may follow (ibid. 11).

How can the robber be helped to correct his ways? (v. 13)

**Rambam:** Nevertheless, if the object that was robbed no longer exists and the robber wishes to repent, and he comes of his own volition, offering money to the value of the object that he robbed—our Sages instituted that the money should not be accepted from him. Rather, he should be assisted and forgiven, to make the path easier for those who return. The Sages did not approve of any person who would accept money in compensation for robbery (ibid. 13).

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God exacts punishment from those who deprive the poor from their rights to left-over food with “nothing less than your souls.”

At this point, however, the reader may be troubled by the following question: A meal-offering must contain a certain amount of fine flour (one tenth of an eifah=2.48 liters or 5.26 U.S. pints). On the other hand, when leaving the corners of the field, any amount is sufficient to perform the mitzvah. So how can we compare the two cases?

To answer this question, Rashi continues, “as the verse states, ‘Do not rob a poor man...for God will plead their cause.’” Since the verse does not give any minimum amount for which one may “rob the poor man” before “God will plead their cause,” this supports Rashi’s argument that God will exact punishment from a person even if the amount taken from the poor person is very small.

(Based on Sichos Shabbos Parshas Kodoshim 5744)

The Severity of Robbery (v. 13)

At first glance, Rambam’s statement, “Any person who robs from another so much as a prutah (small coin) is considered to have taken his life away,” seems difficult to accept. How could the robbery of a small coin possibly be tantamount to a termination of life? Even in such a case where one person has maliciously harmed another the Torah does not use such extreme language. An offender is required to pay compensation for damages, infliction of pain, medical fees and public humiliation etc—but we do not find that the aggressor is considered to have taken away life. And yet here, by the forced possession of an extremely small amount of money, Rambam makes a statement in his legal code that this act opposes the very notion of life!

Tosfos explains the matter by depicting a case where a person is so poor and so hungry that a single prutah would be enough to keep him alive. By robbing him of a prutah, it is therefore possible that the poor man will meet his demise.

However, it is difficult to argue that this was Rambam’s understanding of the matter, for the following reasons:

1.) The possibility that a person will be so hungry and so poor that the robbery of a single prutah will save his life is extremely remote. We are not dealing here merely with a minority case, but an example of the most obscure proportions. How could we possibly compare an act of robbery to the termination of life due to such an extremely rare potential outcome?
11 You should not steal (money).

No man (among) you should make a false denial or false oath against his fellowman.

12 You should not swear falsely by (any of) My Name(s), thereby profaning the Name of your God. I am God.

13 You should not oppress your fellow (by withholding his wages).

You should not rob.

A (daily) hired worker’s wage should not be withheld by you overnight, until morning.

TORAS MENACHEM

2.) Furthermore, Rambam writes, “Any person who robs from another so much as a prutah (small coin) is considered to have taken his life away,” suggesting that this comparison is appropriate to every case of robbery, and not merely the obscure case described by Tosfos.

3.) In the above scenario (of an extremely poor person) it would make no difference if the prutah was robbed, in the owner’s presence, or stolen, in his absence. Nevertheless, the concept of “taking away life” is mentioned by Rambam only in reference to robbery, and not theft. We must therefore find a solution that explains why robbery is tantamount to taking away life, whereas theft is not.

An alternative answer could be argued on the basis of an earlier law recorded by Rambam (cited in Classic Questions to v. 13):

“Desire leads to coveting, and coveting leads to robbery. For if the owner does not wish to sell...a robbery may result. And if the owner stands up against the robber and tries to defend his property, an act of murder may follow.”

This might explain why Rambam writes that “any person who robs from another so much as a prutah is considered to have taken his life away,” for human nature is such that the corruption of robbery can soon degenerate into the deeper evil of murder. Therefore, at the very inception of the robbery, the Torah already considers the person to have killed, since he is following a path of social deterioration that could lead to murder.

In fact, we find other instances where Torah rules a present condition in light of an impending deterioration. For example, the Torah requires that the “rebellious son” must be put to death in his youth due to the potential threat that he presents to society (Devarim 21:18). Likewise, in our case, the Torah sees a robber in the present as a potentially murderous personality, and so at the very outset he is considered to have “taken life away.”

This also explains why the concept of “taking away life” only applies to robbery and not theft. Since robbery, which takes place in front of the owner, presents the possibility of a murder, if the owner resists. With theft, this is not a likely eventuality, since the act takes place when the owner is absent.

However, while this solution answers our above questions, it does not appear to be consistent with the wording of Rambam, because:

1.) If this was the case, Rambam should have begun, “Any person who desires from another is considered to have stolen from him etc.” If Rambam genuinely held that when a person begins a process of deterioration we credit him with its completion, then not only would desire be tantamount to robbery (and eventually murder), but desire would also be tantamount to theft.

2.) “Murder” (lit. “spilling blood”) and “taking away life” (lit. “taking away a soul”) are two quite different expressions. Thus, the “taking away of life” which Rambam describes in law 13 does not appear to be the same as the “murder” in law 11.

3.) There is no indication that the two laws are connected, and Rambam does not write any connecting phrase that would suggest that they are discussing the same point.

THE EXPLANATION

The reason why the Torah compares robbery to ending life is not because it could lead, in some way or another, to a person actually passing away. Rather, the act of robbery deprives the victim of some of the inherent rights that life brings. And this is the case regardless of how much money was taken.

When a person suffers a robbery, it is not merely that his assets have decreased as a result of an unlawful act, (as is the case with theft). Rather, when a robbery occurs, the person’s rightful ownership of an object is openly challenged and taken away by force. The robber says, “I am denying you the fundamental human right of owning your own property,” which, in a certain respect, is depriving a person of the privilege of being alive. Hence, “it is as if he took his life away.”

With theft, which occurs secretly, there is no outright challenge of ownership. It is only that, at some later date, a person will discover that

LESSONS CAN BE LEARNED EVEN FROM NEGATIVE CHARACTER TRAITS.

Rabbi Meshulam Zusya of Anapoli learned a number of lessons in Divine service from the thief:

a.) He keeps to himself. b.) He is willing to place himself in danger. c.) Even the smallest detail is very important to him. d.) He works extremely hard. e.) He works quickly. f.) He is confident and hopes for the best. g.) If he does not succeed the first time, he will try again and again.

(Hayom Yom, 3rd of Iyar)

IS GOD NOT “WITHOLDING THE WAGES” (V. 13) OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE BY ONLY OFFERING REWARDS IN THE WORLD TO COME, AND NOT IN THIS WORLD? SURELY, IT IS A MITZVAH TO PAY A WORKER DAILY (V. 13)?

In truth, however, God does pay us daily for our work, but He “invests” the rewards on our behalf for the future, so that we continue working properly until the entire job is complete. Despite the fact that we cannot yet “access” the reward, its “ownership” has been completely handed over to us.

(Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim 5744)
he does not have as many possessions as he did previously. But there was damage he caused.

When, however, “the object that was robbed no longer exists,” there is no possibility of returning the victim his right of ownership of that object which was taken away. To repay the value of the object would merely be had in refusing his money.

When this enactment is entirely for the benefit of the “one who returns,” it is imperative that he be a sincere returnee who “wishes to repent, and he comes of his own volition.” Otherwise there is no gain to be had in refusing his money.

Based on the above, we can explain why Rambam rules that if “the object that was robbed no longer exists and the robber wishes to repent,” he should not accept compensation for the following reason:

“Nevertheless,” writes Rambam, our Sages instructed that a person should not accept compensation for the following reason:

It was explained above, that the distinction between robbery and theft is that theft involves primarily a financial loss, whereas robbery (in addition to the financial loss) is a direct attack on a person’s rights of ownership. Therefore, in the case where the stolen object still exists, Torah requires the robber to return the object that was stolen, thus reversing the damage he caused.

Tora Menachem

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, p. 112ff.)

When, however, “the object that was robbed no longer exists,” there is no possibility of returning the victim his right of ownership of that object which was taken away. To repay the value of the object would merely be had in refusing his money.

When this enactment is entirely for the benefit of the “one who returns,” it is imperative that he be a sincere returnee who “wishes to repent, and he comes of his own volition.” Otherwise there is no gain to be had in refusing his money.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, pp. 118-9)
1. You should not curse a deaf person (or any other living person).
2. You should not place a stumbling block before a person who is “blind” (to a certain matter. Since nobody can know your true intentions, and you could always escape blame,) you must fear your God. I am God.

Classical Questions

- What does it mean to “place a stumbling block before a blind person”? (v. 14)
- Why does the verse end “you must fear your God”? (v. 14)
- Why does the verse say “You should not give advice that is inappropriate for a person who is blind” regard a certain matter? Surely the most straightforward meaning of the verse is that one may not place an actual stumbling block in front of a person who is blind, in the literal sense (as Ramban learns)?
- Why did Rashi cite only one of three illustrations given by Torah Kohanim (Rashi’s source for this teaching)?
- Of what relevance is it that “your plan is to take advantage of him and acquire [the field] from him.”

The Explanation

In Parshas Mishpatim we learned, “If a person opens (the cover of) a pit, or if a person digs (an existing) pit (making it larger) and does not cover it, and then an ox or a donkey (or any other animal) falls into it, the one responsible for the pit must pay (compensation, either) giving money to its owner (or any produce of value)” (Shemos 23:33-34).

From here, the reader is already familiar with the principle that it is forbidden to place an obstacle which causes damage for otherwise the Torah would not require the guilty party to pay compensation. Thus, on reaching our verse Rashi was troubled: Why does the Torah state that one may not place a stumbling block before the blind, when we already learned in Parshas Mishpatim that one may not carry out an act which is potentially damaging to any person?

Rashi came to the conclusion that our verse must be speaking of a totally new prohibition, not that of a potentially damaging act, but rather that of giving “inappropriate advice.” I.e. here we are not speaking about something that might hurt or injure another person physically, but rather, a type of advice which is “inappropriate” in that one is not thinking of the benefit to the recipient of the advice.

In order to clarify exactly what this means, Rashi cited an example: “Do not tell a person, “Sell your field and buy a donkey,” if your plan is to take advantage of him and acquire [the field] from him.”

Selling a field to buy a donkey is not necessarily bad advice. For the agricultural life of ploughing, planting and reaping fields is more labor intensive than earning a living by transporting cargo from place to place on a donkey. On the other hand, driving a donkey also has its disadvantages, since a person is forced to be constantly on the move and spend long periods of time away from his family.

So, suggesting to a person to “sell your field and buy a donkey,” is not necessarily bad advice, for such a change in lifestyle may indeed suit a person. The problem here is that the advice was not appropriate for the recipient, i.e. the advice was not given solely in the recipient’s best interests. Rather, this “advice” was actually given to benefit the “advisor.”

Since the recipient of the advice will not suffer physically in this instance, a person might think that it is permissible to give such “advice.” To contradict this notion, the Torah instructs us: “Do not place a stumbling block before a blind person,” i.e. do not selfishly offer “advice” which is not intended to benefit the recipient, even if it does not harm him.

Based on the above, we can understand why Rashi did not cite the two cases brought by Torah Kohanim: “Do not tell a person, ‘leave early in the morning,’ so that bandits will attack him. Do not tell a person, ‘leave at midday,’ so that he will be struck by hot winds [and sun].” For, in both of these cases, the advice is potentially hazardous to the other person and this is a matter which (at the literal level) was already dealt with in Parshas Mishpatim.

Our verse prohibits a form of deception whose evil is less obvious, that of appearing to offer genuine advice when, in fact, one is acting in one’s own self-interest. Thus, the verse concludes, “You must fear your God,” for He knows your thoughts....
What is the meaning of “standing by your fellow’s blood”? (v. 16)

Rashi: “Do not stand by your fellow’s blood,” watching his death, if you are able to save him. For example, if he is drowning in the river and a wild animal or robbers come upon him.

The Obligation to Save Another’s Life (v. 16)

Rashi’s comment to verse 16 presents us with the following problems:

a.) What is Rashi adding to verses we do not already know from the verse itself?

b.) Why did Rashi need to bring examples of how a person may save another’s life? Surely Rashi’s examples are straightforward and obvious?

c.) On closer examination, Rashi appears to have cited a rather obscure example. Rashi did not write, “If he is drowning in the river or a wild beast or robbers come upon him,” but rather, “If he is drowning in the river and a wild animal or robbers come upon him.”

Is Rashi suggesting that there is only an obligation to save one’s fellow whose life is being threatened simultaneously by two hazards—he is drowning and being attacked?!

The Explanation

Rashi’s comment to v. 16 was not intended to explain the basic meaning of the words, “You should not stand by your fellow’s blood,” because this obviously refers to saving another person’s life. What troubled Rashi was why the Torah codified a positive command to save another person who is in danger as a negative prohibition: “You should not stand by your fellow’s blood.” Clearly, the Torah is requiring action here, so why are we told this information in a convoluted fashion: that we should not be passive?

The negative tone indicated to Rashi that the Torah is not coming here to inform us of the actual obligation to save a person from a life-threatening situation, but rather, to qualify the extent of that obligation.

In other words, there is a case where we might think it is indeed permissible not to attempt to save a person’s life, and to contradict this notion the Torah states, “You should—nevertheless—not stand by your fellow’s blood.”

But what is this case to which the verse refers? And if our verse is not the source for the mitzvah of saving another person’s life, then from where do we learn this principle?

The answer is that, according to Rashi, no verse is required to teach us the obligation to save another person’s life, because this requirement is a logical extension of the mitzvah to help save another person’s money (see Shemos 23:4-5). Clearly, reasoned Rashi, if a person is required to extend himself to help save another person’s property, then all the more so would one be required to help save his very life.

What is not clear however, is how far a person must go to save another’s life. We might think, for example, that one would not be required to endanger one’s own life in order to save the life of another.

To clarify this point, the Torah states, “You should not stand by your fellow’s blood.” I.e. even when a person may think it is permissible not to attempt to save his fellow, because he does not want to put his own life at risk, the Torah nevertheless instructs us: “You should not stand by your fellow’s blood”—since we are talking about a person’s very life, his “blood,” we simply cannot stand by and watch him die.*

Nevertheless, it is also self-understood that there is no point in attempting to save a person if the risk is so great that one’s attempts might not prove successful. In such an instance we could not argue, at the literal level, that one should risk one’s own life to save another’s when it is not clear if one’s efforts would bear any fruit.

The Last Word

The Ba’al Shem Tov taught that everything that a person sees is orchestrated by God as a specific message to him. This is the inner significance of Rashi’s comment to verse 16: The fact that you see someone whose life is in danger proves that “you are able to save him.” For the fact that God allowed you to witness this event must surely be for a practical reason—namely that you, of all people, have the ability to save this person.

Likewise, if one sees a person “drowning” spiritually, it is a sign from above that one has the ability to draw him back to the fountains of living Judaism.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, pp. 125-6)
• You should not stand by your fellow’s blood (if his life is in danger, and you are able to save him). I am God (who is faithful to pay reward and exact punishment).

• 17 You should:
  
  • Not hate your brother in your heart.
  
  • You should continually rebuke your fellow, but you should not bear a sin (by embarrassing him) in public.

• 18 You should neither take revenge nor bear a grudge against the members of your people.

• You should love your fellow as (you love) yourself. I am God.

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CLASSIC QUESTIONS

• How important is it to “love your fellow like (you love) yourself? (v. 18)

Rashi: Rabbi Akiva says: “This is a major principle of the Torah.”

Talmud: Hillel said: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. This is the entire Torah—the rest is commentary” (Shabbos 31a).

Sefer HaChinuch: In other words, many of the commandments of the Torah depend on it. For a person who loves his fellow as he loves himself will not steal his property, commit adultery with his wife, cheat him financially, abuse him verbally, go into unfair competition with him, or harm him in any way, etc.

• Is it possible to love another as you love yourself? (v. 18)

Ramban: No. The Torah means that one should show love towards him, i.e. to have respect for his property as if it were your own.

Chizkuni: It is impossible to love another like oneself. Verse 18 means you should love to give assistance to your fellow.

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TORAS MENACHEM

So, our verse is speaking of a particular kind of case: It is an instance where, a.) a person is required to put his life at risk to save his fellow; but, b.) the risk is not so great that it puts the entire mission in jeopardy.

Thus Rashi could not bring an example of a person who is attacked by bandits. For, generally speaking, a person is attacked by bandits when traveling alone, and in such a situation it is by no means clear that one other person will be able to save the lone traveler from numerous bandits. Therefore, there would be no requirement to attempt to save a person in such a situation, for it is not clear that one’s attempts would be effective.

Rashi could not also bring the example of a person drowning, for in such a case there is normally no personal risk involved in attempting to save the person, and so this case does not fall into the category described by our verse.

Rather, to clarify what exactly the verse is referring to, Rashi continues: “For example, if he is drowning in the river and a wild animal or robbers come upon him.”

This is a case where, if one would attempt to save the drowning person one could certainly be sure to save him, but it is likely that the savior would then be attacked by the animal soon after. Or similarly, if robbers were approaching a drowning man, it is possible that one might have enough time to save the man, but one would thereby put one’s own life in jeopardy from the robbers.

Thus, both these cases are possible scenarios of the specific case referred to by our verse, where a person can definitely save the victim, but in doing so he is putting his own life in danger. Nevertheless, the Torah instructs us: “You should not stand by your fellow’s blood.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, p. 120ff.)

 Goa “MAJOR PRINCIPLE” (v. 18)

In his commentary to verse 18, Rashi cites Rabbi Akiva’s teaching that the requirement to love one’s fellow like one loves oneself is “a major principle of the Torah.”

What difficulty in the verse prompted Rashi to make this comment? And why is it necessary to know, at the literal level, that Rabbi Akiva was the author of this teaching?

Ramban and Chizkuni both address the question how it is possible for one to love another person as much as oneself, which seems to be impossible for the average person. Furthermore, how can the Torah legislate an emotional feeling between one person and another? Surely, the law can only require action, which is within a person’s direct control, and not emotions, which are not?

How would Rashi answer these questions?

THE EXPLANATION

Rashi’s basic question is that the verse, “You should love your fellow like (you love) yourself,” appears to render many of the other prohibitions of the Torah redundant. For if a person is already fulfilling the command to love his fellow as much as he loves himself, he will clearly not steal from him, take revenge against him etc. So why did the Torah need to record so many laws concerning the conduct between man and his fellow, if they...
are all included in this one simple mitzvah: “You should love your fellow (you love) yourself”?

To answer this question, Rashi wrote: “This is a major principle of the Torah,” i.e. our verse is not a single mitzvah in its own right, for then it would render so many other mitzvos redundant. Rather, it is a principle which takes expression through many mitzvos of the Torah [c.f. Sefer haChinuch].

However, this begs the question: We would expect a general principle to be recorded alongside the various specific methods through which it is expressed. In our case however, the practical laws through which the principle of loving one’s fellow are expressed are scattered throughout the Torah. Why do we not find the general “principle” and its detailed expression recorded together?

To answer this question Rashi stressed: “This is a major principle of the Torah.” In other words: Normally, we would expect a general principle to be written alongside its detailed implementation, but in this case the principle is so far-reaching it is a “major” principle that it is not possible to record all the details together, since they span the entire Torah.

Based on the above, we can also understand that our verse is not coming to legislate emotion at all. For the verse is not expressing a new law, but rather, it is stressing the underlying principle of many of the laws of the Torah. Thus, the way to “love your fellow as (you love) yourself,” is by fulfilling the practical laws of not gossiping, not taking revenge, not stealing, etc.

Why though does the Torah use the expression, “You should love your fellow as (you love) yourself”? Surely this is not possible for the average person? [And it contradicts the teaching of Rabbi Akiva himself that, in a case of threat to life, “Your life takes precedence over that of your fellow” Baia Metzia 62a].

Rashi did not need to clarify this point, as the reader will already be aware that, at the literal level, the term קבוצ ("like yourself") does not mean “exactly the same as” yourself:

**The Last Word**

A Jew has no right to think only of himself and his own spiritual perfection, but must do everything possible to spread and strengthen Yiddishkeit in his surroundings to the fullest extent of his ability and influence. And if this was done under circumstances of grave peril to one’s life in that country [Russia] and in those days, how much more should a Jew do under circumstances of freedom and ease, where no real self-sacrifice is required, but only the good will and determination to act in accordance with the great principle in our Torah, “Ve’ahavta lere‘acha kamocha [You should love your fellow like yourself].”

(Excerpted from a letter written by the Rebbe on 4th Tammuz, 5741)
• 19 You should observe My suprarational commands*: 
  - You should not crossbreed your livestock with different species.
  - You should not sow your field with a mixture of seeds.
  - A garment which has a mixture of sha’atnez (wool and linen) should not come upon you.
• 20 If a man will lie with a woman and he will have a seminal emission, and she is a (non-Jewish) slavewoman who is partially married to a (Jewish slave) man, and she has been (allowed to partially marry this Jewish slave since she has been) redeemed (by one of her masters) and she has not been redeemed (by the other), or she has not been given a document of release (by just one of her masters)—then:
  - There should be an investigation (to verify the above details).
  - They should not be put to death, because she had not been (completely) freed (and thus she was not fully married). Rather she is given lashes.
• 21 He should bring his guilt-offering to God, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting a guilt-offering ram. 22 The priest should atone for him with the guilt-offering ram, before God, for the sin that he had committed, and he will be forgiven for the sin that he had committed.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

How are the three years calculated? (v. 23)

Rashi: When does one start counting? From the time of planting.

TORAS MENACHEM

At the beginning of Parshas Vayigash, Yehudah tells Yosef, “You are like Pharaoh” (בראשית כבראשית). Rashi explains: “You are as important in my eyes as the king.” Clearly though, Yehudah did not mean that in his eyes Yosef was actually equal to the king, for Yehudah would certainly have been aware that Pharaoh had the ultimate authority in Egypt (See Bereshis 41:40).

Similarly in our case, the principle of loving one’s fellow does not mean (at the literal level**) that the love for the other person must be identical to the love for oneself. Rather, we are told to love one’s fellow as—but not in exactly the same way—as one loves oneself. It is thus no contradiction to the teaching of Rabbi Akiva, that “your life takes precedence over that of your fellow.”

We still, however, need to explain why Rashi deemed it necessary, at the literal level, to cite Rabbi Akiva as the source of his comment: “Rabbi Akiva says, “This is a major principle of the Torah.””

With these words Rashi was hinting at a solution to two subtle questions that the reader may have:

a.) How is it possible to love a Jew whom the Torah itself condemns as a sinner, deserving punishment?

b.) If loving one’s fellow is indeed “a major principle of the Torah,” then why are we only introduced to this concept here for the first time in Parshas Kedoshim, and not earlier?

Both these questions can be answered by bearing in mind that our teaching was authored by Rabbi Akiva:

a.) Rabbi Akiva taught, “Beloved are the Jewish people, for they are called the children of God” (Avos 3:14). Thus, by meditating upon the fact that all Jews are brothers, a person will come to love every Jew.

b.) Rabbi Akiva taught, “The general principles of the Torah and the details were given at Sinai, and repeated in the Tent of Meeting” (Chassag 6b). Thus, our Parsha which relates what God told Moshe in the Tent of Meeting is only the repetition of the principle to love one’s fellow, which was said for the first time at Sinai. Thus, according to Rabbi Akiva, it is not the case that this principle is being introduced here for the first time.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 215ff.)

RESTRICTED FRUIT (v. 23)

Verse 23 states, “When you come to the Land and you plant any (type of) food tree: Its fruit will be consistently restricted from you. You will be restricted from its fruit for three years, and may not eat it.”

For further details about the mitzvos of this verse, see Devarim 22:9-11 and commentaries there.  **According to Chasidic teachings however, it is possible to love another Jew as much as oneself. See Tanya chap. 32 (cited in Sparks of Chasidus on p. 163).
The Explanation

When the Torah forbids a person to eat a certain substance, there are two possible reasons: a.) The substance itself is forbidden. e.g. meat from a non-kosher animal.

Or: b.) The substance itself is intrinsically permitted, but it is forbidden for the person to eat it, due to the circumstances in which the person finds himself. For example, on Yom Kippur, it is forbidden to eat even kosher food.

With this in mind, we can examine Rashi’s comment to verse 23:

Rashi was troubled by the repetition in verse 23. Why does the verse repeat: “Its fruit will be consistently restricted from you. You will be restricted from its fruit for three years, and may not eat it” when this could have been phrased more succinctly: “Its fruit will be consistently restricted from you for three years, you may not eat it”?

This repetition indicated to Rashi that our verse contains two distinct prohibitions:

1. “Its fruit will be consistently restricted from you.”
2. “You will be restricted from its fruit for three years, and may not eat it.”

The first prohibition (1) stresses that the fruit itself is prohibited: “Its fruit will be consistently restricted from you,” i.e. that the Torah renders this fruit as a prohibited substance, like meat from a non-kosher animal.

The second prohibition (2) stresses that, in addition to prohibiting the substance itself, the Torah also decrees upon the person that this fruit may not be eaten during a period of three years: “You will be restricted from its fruit for three years, and may not eat it,” i.e. just as any food may not be eaten for three years, you may not eat it for three years.”

Sparks of Chasidus

“In the Fifth Year, You May Eat its Fruit” (v. 25)

While the fruits of a tree’s fourth year are holy, and may be eaten only in Jerusalem, the fruits of the fifth year may be eaten anywhere (v. 24-25).

According to Chasidic thought, the fruits of the fifth year actually correspond to a greater degree of spirituality than those of the fourth year (Likutei Torah, Kedoshim 30d). This is because the ultimate expression of spirituality is not that which must remain confined to a certain holy place (such as Jerusalem). Rather, the greatest holiness is that which penetrates the mundane fabric of everyday life, so that even the lowest parts of this physical world are devoted to the “praise of God” (v. 24).

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 139ff.)
24 In the fourth year, all its fruit should be holy (only to be eaten in Jerusalem,) in praise of God.

25 In the fifth year, you may eat its fruit.

(Observe this law, in order) to increase (the tree’s) produce for you. I am God, your (trustworthy) God.

**Laws of Personal Sanctity**

- 26 You should not eat (sacrificial meat) when (its) blood (has not yet been sprinkled on the Altar).
- You should not practice divination, or act on the basis of fortuitous times.
- 27 You should not remove (the hair from around) the circumference of your head (making the hair behind the ears level with the hair of the temples).
- You should not destroy the extremities of your beard.
- 28 You should not make scratches in your flesh, (to mourn) a person (that died).
- You should not put a tattoo on yourselves. I am God.
- 29 You should not defile your daughter, allowing your unmarried daughter to have relations (not for the sake of marriage. If you do) the Land will become “unfaithful” (another land will produce its fruits), and the Land will be filled with immorality.

TORAS MENACHEM

be eaten throughout the night and day of Yom Kippur, so too the Torah forbade a person from eating the fruit of a tree for a period of three years.

While this distinction may appear at first glance to be purely academic, there are a number of practical ramifications:

i.) If the Torah had connected the three-year period with the prohibition on the fruit itself (1), then one would expect the three-year period to begin when the fruit first appears. In fact, however, the three-year time period is included in the second half of the verse, which speaks of the prohibition on the person (“You will be restricted from its fruit for three years, and may not eat it”), suggesting that the three-year period is a function of the person’s involvement. Therefore, **Rashi** wrote: “When does one start counting?”, i.e. when does the person’s involvement begin? “From the time of planting.”

ii.) If a person took a branch from a tree that was over three years old and planted it in the ground, would we have to wait three years to eat from its fruit or not (according to **Rashi**)?

If the three-year period were a function of the prohibition on the tree itself, we could argue that this tree had already passed its initial three years, and thus the fruit should be permitted. Since, however, the three-year period is in fact connected to the prohibition on the person, it follows that a further three-year period is now required after the person planted this new tree.

(Based on **Likutei Sichos** vol. 22, p. 103ff; vol. 12, pp. 199-201)

**The Last Word**

“YOU SHOULD NOT DESTROY...YOUR BEARD” (v. 27)

- **Tzemach Tzedek** (the third Lubavitcher Rebbe) ruled in his responsa that it is a Biblical prohibition to cut the beard, even with a scissors, as did many other halachic authorities both before and after him (**Responsa, Yoreh Deah** chap. 93; See also **Chidushim al HaShas**, Makos chap. 3, p. 160a; **Piskei Dinim, Yoreh Deah**, chap. 181-2).
- Rabbis and spiritual leaders who remove their beards, following a lenient opinion, may lead other Jews to transgress the outright prohibition of shaving with a razor, since people will be unaware of the manner in which the Rabbi shaves. (**Igros Kodesh** vol. 9, p. 247)
- The thirteen parts of the beard correspond to the thirteen attributes of Divine mercy, and assist the person in eliciting Divine mercy in financial matters, even when he may not be deserving. The beard thus opens channels of additional blessing. (ibid. p. 235)
- According to **Chabad** custom the peyos (hair on the circumference of the head—see v. 27), may—and indeed should—be trimmed with a scissors. This is based on the precedent of the **Arizal** (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria 1534-1572, founder of the dominant system of Kabalistic mysticism on which Chasidism is based), of whom it is explicitly documented that he trimmed his peyos with a scissors. Thus, it is difficult to fathom why a person who follows in the paths of the **Arizal** would grow his peyos long (ibid. vol. 20, pp. 9-10).
Why does the Torah connect the mitzvah of accurate measures with the Exodus from Egypt? (v. 36)

Rambam: If a person denies the mitzvah of accurate measures, it is as if he denied the Exodus from Egypt, which was the beginning of the [Torah’s] commandments (Laws of Theft, end of chap. 7).

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

The Mitzvah of Accurate Measures (v. 36)

Magid Mishneh writes that a person who transgresses the mitzvah of accurate measures is considered to have “denied the Exodus from Egypt,” for his willingness to practice covetous corruption suggests that he does not believe that God’s providence (proven at the Exodus) extends to his covetous affairs.

However, this does not appear to have pinpointed the unique quality of the mitzvah of accurate measures. For an ordinary thief also carries out his corrupt activities covertly, and yet we do not find that our Sages equated theft with a denial of the Exodus.

What then is the exceptional evil of having non-accurate measures which is tantamount to a rejection of the Exodus from Egypt?
30. You should revere My Sanctuary (by not entering the Temple with your staff, shoes, moneybelt or dust on your feet. But despite the great importance of the Temple) you should observe My Sabbaths (rather than building the Temple on the Sabbath). I am God.

31. You should not turn to (the sorcery of) Ov or Yid’oni. You should not seek (these, and thereby) defile yourselves through them. I am God, your God.

Laws of Honesty and Respect for Others

32. You should rise in the presence of an old person and you should honor the presence of a sage. (Do not shut your eyes to avoid doing this mitzvah, but rather,) you should fear your God. I am God.

33. When a convert lives with you in your land, you should not (verbally) harass him (by reminding him of his past). 34. The convert who lives with you should be considered by you like a native among you, and you should love him as (you love) yourself. For you (too) were (once) strangers in the land of Egypt. (Just as) I am your God, (I am his) God (too).

35. You should not commit a perversion of justice (with false) measures, weights, or liquid measures. 36. You should have accurate scales, accurate weights, an accurate dry-measure, and an accurate liquid measure. I am God, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt (on condition that you keep accurate weights and measures).

37. You should observe all My suprarational commands and all My rational commands, and fulfill them. I am God.

The Explanation

The use of false weights and measures is a form of theft: A person attempts to acquire another’s money unlawfully, without the owner discovering what has happened. However, the use of false weights and measures is a greater act of deception than a regular act of theft. For while a regular thief keeps his activities totally covert, the person who uses false weights actually pretends to his victim that he is honest, since the weights are perceived to be used for the sake of accuracy and fairness. Thus, this act is particularly evil and deceptive, for the person is creating a veil of righteousness by the use of weights, and yet, at the very same time, these same weights are being used as tools of corruption.

To understand why, according to Rambam, this specific type of corruption is connected to the Exodus from Egypt, we need first to examine Rambam’s explanation of why the Egyptian people were punished for enslaving the Jewish people:

It is written in the Torah, “[You should know that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs.] They will enslave them and oppress them” (Bereshis 15:13). This suggests that it decreed upon the Egyptians [against their will] that they would act wickedly.

It is also written, “this people will rise up, and go astray after the gods of the people of the land” (Devarim 31:16) which suggests it was decreed upon the Jewish people to serve idols. So why did God punish them? This is because the decree was not made upon a particular person about whom it was known that he would go astray. Rather, all those who chose to go astray chose to do so of their own volition. God was merely making known what would happen on a global scale.

It is similar to [God] saying that a nation has both righteous people and wicked people. This clearly does not give license to a wicked person to say to himself that it has been decreed upon him to be wicked....

Likewise with the Egyptians: All those Egyptians and persecutors of the Jewish people had the free choice not to harm the Jewish people if they wished, for [God] did not decree upon any person in particular. Rather, it was [merely] made known to Abraham that his children will, in the future, be enslaved in a foreign land” (Laws of Teshuvah 6:5).

The Egyptian persecution of the Jewish people was thus done under a pretense. They appeared to be following God’s will, for God had decreed, “They will enslave them and oppress them.” In truth, however, the Egyptians were carrying out an act of wickedness, for they chose to harm the Jewish people. They were thus not carrying out God’s will at all, for if the Egyptians had chosen not to harm the Jewish people, God would have found another way to carry out His decree.

This subterfuge, of appearing to be righteous while at the same time carrying out an act of wickedness, resembles the sin of having false weights and measures. For, as explained above, the use of false measures is an attempt to “dress up” an act of theft as an act of honesty.

Thus: “If a person denies the mitzvah of accurate measures, it is as if he denied the Exodus from Egypt,” for the Exodus freed us from the dishonest subterfuge which was typified by the Egyptian people.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev 5746; Likutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 149ff.)
וַאֲלֵהֶם בְּנֵי יְשָׁרְאֵל הַנַּחֲלוּ אֲשֶׁר יָשִּׁי וָמָבֵן יְשָׁרְאֵל וְדַעְתָּם.

וַאֲלָדָיו בְּנֵי יְשָׁרְאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָשִּׁי וָמָבֵן יְשָׁרְאֵל וְדַעְתָּם.

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Punishments for Transgressing Prohibitions of the Torah

1 God spoke to Moshe, saying: 2 You should say (the following punishments for transgressing the prohibitions of the Torah) to the Children of Israel:

- Any man of the Children of Israel, or from the converts who live among Israel, who gives any of his offspring in (worship of the pagan deity) Molech, should be put to death (by the court. If the court does not have the power to do so) the public should (assist the court and) pelt him to death with stones.

- I will devote My time (away from all My affairs and deal) with this man (individually) and I will cut him off from among his people, (even if) he gave his (grandson) to Molech, in order to defile (the assembly of Israel) which is sacred to Me, and to profane My holy Name.

- If the public consistently ignores that man, when he gives (even) his (illegitimate) offspring to Molech, not putting him to death, then I will devote My time (away from all My affairs and deal) with this man and with his family. (But) I will (only) cut him off, and all who follow after him to go astray after Molech, from among the people, (but I will not cut off his family too).

- (If) a person turns to Ov or Yid’oni, to go astray after them, I will set My attention upon that person, and I will cut him off from among his people.

- You should sanctify yourselves (by separating from idolatry) and be holy, for I am God, your God.

- You should observe My suprarational commands and fulfill them. I am God, who sanctifies you.

- If any man curses his father or his mother, he should be put to death, (even if) he has cursed his father or his mother (after their death). His blood (y death by stoning) is his own (fault).

- (If) a (grown) man commits adultery with (another grown) man’s wife: (if the person he) committed adultery with (was) the wife of his fellow (Jew), the adulterer and the adulteress should both be put to death (by strangulation).

- A man who lies with his father’s wife (is considered to) have uncovered his father’s nakedness. Both of them should be put to death. Their blood (y death by stoning) is their own (fault).

- (If) a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them should be put to death. They have committed a shameful act. Their blood (y death by stoning) is their own (fault).

- (If) a man lies with a man as one would with a woman, both of them have committed an abominable act. They should both be put to death. Their blood (y death by stoning) is their own (fault).

Sparks of Chasidus

“You Should Sanctify Yourselves (by Separating from Idolatry) and Be Holy” (v. 7)

To receive sustenance from the forces of holiness it is essential for a person to strive to be in a state of submission to a Higher Authority. Those unwilling to make this effort follow the path of idol worship, which does not require any compromise of the ego. In this vein, the verse testifies, “We ate in Egypt for free” (Bamidbar 11:5).

A further reason why individuals choose to receive their sustenance by means of idol worship, is because the short-term benefits are greater. This is because the sustenance of the forces of evil is rooted in the transcendent realm of Godliness beyond reason and logic, so energies are bestowed even without the appropriate effort.

Nevertheless, despite a.) the difficulty of obtaining sustenance from the side of holiness, and b.) the reduced immediate reward, the Jewish people still opt for a life of Torah and mitzvos, since it is the way of truth, and lasts forever.

(Biurei HaZohar, Tzemach Tzedek pp.248-9, Sefer HaMa’amorim 5660, p.11; Torah Ohr 61a)
How should the suprarational commands be kept? (v. 22)

Rashi: A person should not say, “I find pork disgusting,” or “I don’t want to wear a mixture of wool and linen.” Rather, he should say, “I do wish to, but what can I do since my Father in heaven has imposed these decrees upon me?” (Rashi to v. 26, below).

How should the rational commands be observed?  

Rambam: The principle that a person should desire to transgress the commandments, and refrain only because “my Father in heaven has imposed these decrees upon me,” only applies to suprarational commands. However, a person should not carry out the rational prohibitions, such as theft, murder and disgracing one’s parents (Shemoneh Perakim ch. 6).

Can the suprarational commands be understood at all?  

Rashi: They are “decrees of the King” which have no reason (19:19).  

Rambam: The suprarational mitzvos do not have a revealed reason.... Nevertheless, it is appropriate to meditate upon their significance, and to find explanations for them whenever possible (Laws of Misappropriation 8:8; Laws of Sacrificial Exchanges 4:13).
• 14 (If) a man takes a woman and her mother (in marriage, in addition to his initial wife), it is the advice (of the evil inclination). They should burn him and them in fire (but not his initial wife), so there should be no evil advice in your midst.

• 15 A man who lies with an animal should be put to death, and the animal should be killed.

• 16 (If) a woman comes close to any animal so that it will mate with her, you should kill the woman and the animal. They should both be put to death. Their blood(y death by stoning) is their own (fault).

• 17 If a man takes his sister (in marriage), either his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter, and he sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgraceful act. They will be cut off from the sight of the members of their people, because he uncovered his sister’s nakedness. He will bear (the consequences of) his sin.

• 18 (If) a man lies with a woman who is menstruating and uncovers her nakedness, he has exposed her source, and she has exposed the source of her blood. Both of them will be cut off from among their people.

• 19 You should not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister or your father’s sister, for he (who does so) has exposed his close relative. They will bear (the consequences of) their sin.

• 20 (If) a man lies with his aunt, he (is considered to) have uncovered his uncle’s nakedness. They will bear (the consequences of) their transgression. They will die childless.

• 21 (If) a man takes his brother’s wife, it is a repulsive act. He (is considered to) have uncovered his brother’s nakedness. They will be childless.

22 You should guard all My suprarational commands and all My rational commands, and observe them. Then the land, where I am bringing you to live, will not vomit you out.

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**RATIONAL AND SUPRARATIONAL COMMANDS (v. 22)**

Rambam’s comments about the suprarational commands appear, at first glance, to be contradictory. On one hand, he accepts the notion that suprarational commands should be observed only because “my Father in heaven has imposed these decrees upon me.” But on the other hand he writes that a person should “meditate upon their significance, and to ascribe to them whatever explanation is possible.” Now, if a person would indeed find some sort of explanation for a suprarational command, he would no longer be able to observe this precept purely because “my Father in heaven has imposed these decrees upon me,” for this would now be a command which makes sense to the person. So, Rambam’s instruction to find reasons for the suprarational commands appears to be counterproductive to the requirement to observe these precepts as pure Divine decrees.

**THE EXPLANATION**

In his Guide for the Perplexed, Rambam writes: “There is a reason for every commandment. Every positive or negative precept serves a useful purpose; in some cases the usefulness is evident, e.g. the prohibition of murder and theft. In others, the usefulness is not so evident, e.g. the prohibition of enjoying the fruit of a tree in the first three years, or a vineyard in which other seeds have been growing” (part 3, chap. 26).

Later in the chapter he clarifies: “The repeated assertion of our Sages that there are reasons for all the commandments, and the tradition that Shlomo knew them, refers to the general purpose of the commandments, and not to the details of the commandments, which cannot be explained.”

To illustrate this point, Rambam cites an example: “The law that sacrifices should be brought is clearly of great value, as will be shown by us (ibid. chap. 46). But we cannot say why one offering should be a lamb, while another is a ram, and why a fixed number of them should be brought. Those who trouble themselves to find a cause for any of these detailed rules are, in my eyes, devoid of sense.”

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**Sparks of Chasidus**

The Magid of Mezritch taught that a ba’al teshuvah—a person who previously lived a non-observant life—should not say “I do wish to [transgress the commandments], but what can I do since my Father in heaven has imposed these decrees upon me?” (see Classic Questions). For since the ba’al teshuvah has tasted sin there is a danger that he may return to his former ways if he actively desires to transgress the mitzvos (Likutei Torah, Va’eschanan 96).

However, this refers to a certain type of ba’al teshuvah who has merely reformed his ways, without actually transforming the nature of his personality. But if a person does such a profound teshuvah that the very nature of his character is transformed, then he may indeed say, “I do wish to [transgress the commandments], but what can I do since my Father in heaven has imposed these decrees upon me.”

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5742)
According to Rambam’s view that the details of the mitzvos do not have any reason, it follows that even the totally rational mitzvos do possess super-rational elements, since many of the details of these commands will have no explanation.

On the other hand, in contrast to Rashi’s view that the super-rational commands are “decrees of the King which have no reason” (see Classic Questions), Rambam is of the opinion that the super-rational commands do have reasons, and it is only that they “do not have a revealed reason.”
23 You should not follow the practices of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they committed all these (sins), and I was disgusted with them. 24 That is why I said to you: You should possess their land, and I will give it to you so that you can inherit it. (It is) a land flowing with milk and honey.

I am God your God, Who has distinguished you from the nations.

25 You should distinguish between animals that are pure (to you, because they have been slaughtered properly) and those that are impure (to you, because they have not been slaughtered properly); between birds that are pure (to you, because they have been slaughtered properly) and those that are impure (to you, because they have not been slaughtered properly). You should not make yourselves disgusting through such animals and birds, or any (creature) which crawls on the earth, that I have distinguished for you to be impure (and thus, forbidden).

26 You should be holy to Me, for I, God, am holy, and I have distinguished you from the nations, to be Mine.

27 A man or a woman who practices (the sorcery of) Ov or Yid’oni, should be put to death (if witnesses were present when they sinned, and the sinners were warned not to perform the sin). They should be pelted with stones. Their blood(y death by stoning) is their own (fault).


Maftir: Rosh Chodesh—p. 289.

**TORAS MENACHEM**

The Last Word

Suprarational commands foster a person’s unquestioning subservience to God, as one is forced to obey a Divine decree that is incomprehensible. On the other hand, rational commands promote a person’s enjoyment and enthusiasm in the observance of mitzvos, since a person can appreciate the value of observing such commands.

Since God wishes us to fulfill all His commands with both obedience and enthusiasm, He incorporated suprarational and rational elements into all the mitzvos.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, p. 179)

i.e. they have a rationale, but it is too sublime for the human intellect to appreciate completely.

Thus, in the final analysis, we see that the rational and suprarational commands both contain rational and suprarational elements: many details of the rational mitzvos have no reason, and even the so-called suprarational mitzvos also have a reason, albeit not a “revealed” one. Consequently, when we say that a certain mitzvah is “rational” or “suprarational,” we are referring to which aspect of the command predominates.

We can now appreciate that Rambam’s directive, “to meditate upon the significance,” of suprarational commands, “and to find explanations for them whenever possible,” does not contradict the requirement to observe these commands subserviently. For even when a person will ascribe some reason to the suprarational commands, they will still remain predominantly and overwhelmingly suprarational. Thus a person will still be able to declare that he does wish to transgress them “but what can I do, since my Father in heaven has imposed these decrees upon me?”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, p. 174ff.)
Parshas Kedoshim contains 13 positive mitzvos and 38 prohibitions

1. To fear one’s father and mother [19:3].
2. Not to turn astray after idol-worship, in thought, speech or even by watching [19:4].
3. Not to make an idol, for oneself or for another person [19:4].
4. Not to eat the leftover meat from sacrifices after the prescribed time [19:6,8].
5. Leaving the ends of one’s field for the poor [19:10].
6. Not to reap the ends of one’s field [19:9].
7. Leaving gleanings for the poor [19:10].
8. Not to gather stalks of grain that fell during the harvest [19:9].
9. Leaving an end of a vineyard for the poor [19:10].
10. Not to reap the ends of a vineyard [19:10].
11. Leaving fallen grapes in a vineyard for the poor [19:10].
12. Not to gather the fallen grapes in a vineyard [19:10].
14. Not to deny possessing something of value that belongs to another person [19:11].
15. Not to swear over a false denial about something of value [19:11].
16. Not to swear falsely [19:12].
17. Not to withhold another’s property [19:13].
18. Not to commit robbery [19:13].
19. Not to delay payment of a hired worker [19:13].
20. Not to curse a Jew, neither man or woman [19:14].
21. Not to make a person stumble by giving him misleading advice [19:14].
22. Not to pervert justice in a civil judgment [19:15].
23. Not to honor an eminent person at a trial [19:15].
25. Not to gossip [19:16].
26. Not to stand by idly over the blood of another [19:16].
27. Not to hate one’s fellow Jew [19:17].
28. To rebuke a Jew who does not conduct himself properly [19:17].
29. Not to embarrass another Jew [19:17].
30. Not to take revenge [19:18].
31. Not to bear a grudge [19:18].
32. Loving one’s fellow Jew [19:18].
33. Not to mate one animal with another which is not of the same species [19:19].
34. Not to sow different kinds of seed together, anywhere in the Land of Israel, or graft a tree with a different species [19:19].
35. Not to eat the first three years' produce of a tree [19:23].
36. The laws of the fruit of a tree’s fourth year [19:23,24].
37. Not to eat or drink like a glutton or a guzzler [19:26].
38. Not to practice divining [19:26].
39. Not to conjure [19:26].
40. Not to remove the hair of the temples of the head [19:27].
41. Not to destroy the extremities of the beard [19:27].
42. Not to make a tattoo in one’s flesh [19:28].
43. To have respect for the Temple [19:30].
44. Not to perform the act of a medium (ov) [19:31].
45. Not to perform the act of a yidoni (magician) [19:31].
46. Honoring Torah scholars [19:32].
47. Not to cheat with measures [19:35].
48. Making accurate scales, weights and measures [19:36].
49. Not to curse one's father or mother [20:9].
50. To burn a person who has been sentenced to death by burning [20:14].
51. Not to follow the ways of the non-Jewish nations [20:23].
The Name of the Parsha

On the opening words of our *Parsha*, “Speak (Emor) to the priests,” *Rashi* comments: “Speak...to warn the adults about [educating] the children.”

At the literal level, the verse is speaking of the specific responsibility of adult priests to educate their children about the priestly duty to remain ritually pure. However, in a broader sense, since this is the opening of a *Parsha* which contains guidance for Jews in general, our verse could be understood as a warning to all parents about the importance of educating their children.

In this case, we are not speaking about the basic necessity of education that is required to raise up the next generation, since such a fundamental principle would surely have been given soon after the giving of the Torah, rather than here, near the end of the Book of Vayikra.

Rather, the opening of our *Parsha* is hinting to a more advanced approach to education, which becomes relevant after a child has already been taught the basic principles of right and wrong.

The precise nature of this advanced approach is highlighted by another important concept in our *Parsha*: the counting of the Omer (23:15-16). Not only is this a *mitzvah* which is recorded in our *Parsha*, it is a precept that we actually observe at the same time as reading the *Parsha*, since *Parshas Emor* is always read during the Jewish month of Iyar, during which the Omer is counted every day.

Chasidic thought explains that Counting the Omer is, in fact, an advanced form of education, where a person progressively advances to higher levels of spiritual achievement as he refines different aspects of his personality step by step, on a daily basis.

The lesson here is: “to warn (רְאוֹעִים) the adults about [educating] the children.” The Hebrew term רְאוֹעִים is a derivative of the word רוא, meaning “light.” So *Rashi* is teaching us that education is a neverending process that needs to grow constantly on a daily basis, bringing many positive qualities to our children so that they literally shine with light.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Emor, 5750)
**Why does verse 1 repeat: “speak...and say”?**

**RASHI:** [The double expression] “speak...and say” [means that, in addition to telling the priests themselves to observe the following precepts, Moshe should also] warn the adult [priests] about [educating] their children [in these areas].

**BACH:** Perhaps the double expression “speak...and say” is teaching us, that in addition to telling the priests themselves to observe the following precepts, the Beis Din (Jewish Court) must force the priests to do so if they are lax. How do we know that the verse comes to warn the adults about [educating] the children [in these areas]?

Because, normally the Torah states, “Aharon’s son’s, the priests,” but our verse changes the order, “the priests, Aharon’s sons,” suggesting that the priests are required to educate their sons in these laws (commentary to Tur, Yoreh De’ah ch. 373).

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**The Unique Commandments that are Given to the Priests (v. 1-24)**

The current chapter introduces a number of commandments which are addressed specifically to those of priestly lineage, including: special regulations about mourning (v. 1-6), whom a priest may marry (v. 7-8), laws pertaining to the High Priest (v. 10-15), and the blemishes which disqualify a priest from service in the Temple (v. 16-23).

At the very beginning of the chapter, when God introduces Moshe to these laws, there is a scriptural redundancy: “God said to Moshe: Speak (רָאוַי) to the priests, Aharon’s sons, and say (אָמַרְתָּ) to them. Rashi explains that the Torah’s repetition here comes to teaches us that in addition to the priests themselves following these laws, they must also teach their children to observe them.

However, at first glance Rashi seems to have overlooked a much simpler explanation of the repetition in our verse. Below, at the end of the chapter, we read that after receiving all these instructions from God, Moshe “told (this to) Aharon and his sons, and to all of the children of Israel” (v. 24). Why did Moshe tell to “all of the children of Israel” laws that are only relevant to the priests? Rashi answers that Moshe came “to warn the Beis Din, [the court, to enforce] the priests [to observe these laws].”

Now, at first glance, Rashi could have brought this same answer to explain the scriptural redundancy at the beginning of our chapter. And it
# Laws Addressed to the Priests

God said to Moshe: Speak to the priests, Aharon’s sons, and say to them:

- Let no (priest) become ritually impure (through contact) with a (dead) person (when there are others) among his people (who can tend to the burial).

- Except for: (his wife, who is) his closest relative, his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother, his virgin sister, if she is still close to him (because) she was never with a man. He must make himself ritually impure (to bury) her, (and all his other close relatives).

- A husband should not make himself ritually impure for (a wife) who violated his sacred character (because, as a priest, he was forbidden to marry her. However, this is only when there are others) among his people (who can tend to her burial).

- (The priests) should not make bald patches on their heads (as a sign of mourning).

- They should not shave the extremities of their beards.

- They should not make scratches in their flesh. (If they do, they will be liable for every) scratch.

- (Even against their will, the court may force) them to be holy to their God (by following the above laws), so they should not desecrate their God’s Name. For they are the ones that offer up God’s fire-offerings, the food-offering of their God, so they should be holy.

- They may not marry an immoral woman (who has had forbidden relations), nor a woman who (was born from a union which) violated the sacred character (of the priesthood), nor may they marry a woman who is divorced from her husband, for each (priest) is holy to his God.

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## Sparks of Chasidus

**“Let no (Priest) Become Ritually Impure” (v. 1)**

The priests are a particularly kind group, who devote much of their time to guiding the rest of the people on the right path. However, since this requires them to rebuke the people, they are warned: “Let no (priest) become ritually impure with a person among your people.” When you are “among your people,” i.e., giving them words of rebuke, be careful that you do not have any ulterior motive—because if you do, you (the priest) will become “ritually impure.”

*(Likutei Amarim of the Mezritcher Magid, ch. 23)*

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## The Last Word

“NOR MAY THEY MARRY...” (v. 7)

In all matters of matrimony, the happiness of two partners is involved, and if there is any issue, the happiness of children and future generations is at stake. Obviously, a marriage which has been prohibited by the Creator and Master of the Universe is one that cannot possibly be a happy one, and is certain to be harmful to both parties concerned. In other words, if the said kohen [priest] has any feelings for the divorcee in question, he should realize that his marrying her would expose her to untold harm, not only in the afterlife and in a spiritual sense, but also in this life, and even in a physical and material sense. The fact that this may be beyond one’s comprehension is immaterial, for it is certain that the Creator of the world knows best what is good for His creatures, and since He has so strictly prohibited such a marriage, there can be no doubt that it is harmful. Therefore, even on humanitarian grounds, the said kohen, if he has any feeling for the said divorcee, should give up the idea and avoid causing himself and her irreparable damage, physically and spiritually.”

*(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe on 19th Sivan 5717)*
children), for then Moshe would have carried out God’s instruction from verse 1 in verse 24.

**The Explanation**

Verse 1 states clearly that the laws in our chapter were addressed to priests only: “God said to Moshe: Speak to the priests, Aharon’s sons, and say to them.” Therefore, Rashi could not learn that the repetition here (“speak...and say to...”) means that Moshe must “warn the Beis Din [to enforce] the priests [to observe these laws],” because the Beis Din does not consist exclusively of priests. So Rashi was forced to conclude that this must be an obligation resting on the priests themselves, namely: “to warn the adults about [educating] the children [in these areas].”
8 (If he wishes to marry a divorcee) you should (force him) to be holy (against his will), for he offers up the food-offering of your God.

You should treat him as a holy (person, by honoring him first in all matters), for I am your Holy God who makes you holy.

9 If a priest’s (married) daughter violates her sacred character through adultery, she violates the sacred character of her father. She should be burned in fire.

Laws Addressed to the High Priest

The (High) Priest, who is elevated above his brothers, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured and who was inaugurated to wear the (special) garments (of the High Priest must observe the following):

- (When he is in a state of mourning) he should not leave his hair uncut (for thirty days) or tear his garments.
- He should not come (under the same roof) as any dead bodies.
- He should not make himself ritually impure (to bury) his father or his mother (if there are others who can tend to the matter).
- He should not leave the Sanctuary (to follow the funeral procession of his parents. He may continue to carry out the service of the Sanctuary in a state of mourning, for in doing so) he will not violate the sacred character of his God’s holy Sanctuary, for (being the High Priest) the crown of his God’s anointing oil is upon him. I am God.
- He should marry a woman who is a virgin. He may not marry the following: a widow, a divorcee, a woman who (was born from a union which) violated the sacred character (of the priesthood), or an immoral woman (who has had forbidden relations). He should only take a virgin of his people as a wife, and (thus) he will not violate the sacred character of his children from among his people. (All this is) because I am God, who sanctifies him.

Blemishes that Disqualify a Priest from Service

God spoke to Moshe, saying, Speak to Aharon, saying:

- Anyone among your descendants who has a blemish should not come close (in service), to offer up food for His God. For (it is) not (flattering to God) that any man who has a blemish should come close (to serve):
  - A blind man, or a lame one, or one with a sunken nose or with disproportionate limbs,
  - or a man who has a broken leg or a broken arm, or one with unusually long eyebrows, or a cataract, or an imperfect iris, dry lesions, weeping sores, or one with crushed testicles.

However, this leaves us with the question: Why did Moshe indeed “warn the Beis Din [to enforce] the priests [to observe these laws],” in verse 24, when he had not been told to do so by God? And, on the other hand, why did God Himself not insist that the Beis Din enforce these laws?

The answer to this latter question is based on the Talmudic principle that “priests are zealous” (Shabbos 20), which means that priests in general are blessed with an unusual degree of natural enthusiasm and conscientiousness in the observance of mitzvos. From this it follows that they simply do not require any additional encouragement from the Beis Din, so God did not stipulate this as a requirement.

However, while this is true in principle, Moshe feared that priests might only be zealous when working in the Sanctuary, which arouses their...
אלה היא העונה המוארת עלתהANO תצוגה לא מתאימה לא נימוקה ל𬭎 לזרום ולא יש לה עקביים: 
כך לזרום קדמו הקדושים ימי הצרה ונודע הילא: 
אל ההפרת לא נאם לא למקום לא עשה מילים בלא
אלא הפסוק א שהוא על הפרת כי נגזרה תורה הצבירה בא

היה אלמונים עלה: יבר אלגורות לפני בתיווק וגו
מקושה ב OCI יא רחמן יבלו הצלחתו איש
בשכר מכל-ﯙ עמה אל-הקדושי אשך ידיעה בינ
ישאר לזרום ממאתה דודי נפגש החרם עלה המלוב

והា: אה לא יאמר ישראל הזה אחת וא תו בקיע לא
יוכל ואיש יאמר בהנה את יבגל המא ממע
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מקושה בOCI יא רחמן יבלו הצלחתו איש

אכל-מקדשיך כי ממע הוה: יבר אלגורות לפני בתיווק וגו.
21:21 - 22:8

- **21** Any man from among the children of Aharon the priest who has any (other) blemish should not come close to offer up God's fire-offerings.

- **22** (So long as) there is a blemish in him, he should not come close to offer up food to his God (but if the blemish passes, he may serve).

- **23** (Even a blemished priest) may eat his God's food, (both) from the most holy (sacrifices) and from the (less) holy ones.

- **24** But he may not come to the partition (to sprinkle blood upon it), nor may he come close to the (outer) Altar, because he has a blemish, and (thus) he should not violate the sacred character of My holy things, for I am God Who makes them holy.

**Moshe told (this to) Aharon and his sons, and to all of the children of Israel.**

## Restrictions to the Consumption of Sacrifices & Terumah*

God spoke to Moshe, saying: **2** Speak to Aharon and to his sons, (and tell them that if they are in a state of ritual impurity) they should keep away from the holy (sacrifices) of the children of Israel, (and from sacrifices that the priests themselves) sanctify to Me, so as not to violate the sacred character of My Holy Name. I am God. **3** Say to them:

- Throughout your generations, (if) any man from among any of your descendants comes near to (eat) the holy sacrifices which the children of Israel consecrate to God while he is in a state of ritual impurity—that soul will be cut off from before me. I am God.

- **4** If any man from among Aharon’s descendants who has tzara’as, or has had an (unhealthy, watery venereal) discharge, should not eat from the holy sacrifices, until he renders himself ritually pure (by immersing in a mikvah and waiting until the evening).

- **5** (Likewise,) a person who becomes ritually impure by contact with a (dead) person, or a person who has a seminal emission, or a person who becomes ritually impure through contact with a creeping creature, or he becomes ritually impure through touching (even part of a dead) body, (or a person) who becomes ritually impure through any other source of ritual impurity (such as one who touches a man who has an unhealthy venereal discharge, or a woman who is menstruating normally or abnormally, or a woman who has given birth)—the person who touches (such a source of ritual impurity) will remain ritually impure until the evening, and he may not eat from the holy sacrifices unless he has immersed his body in (mikvah) water. **6** Then, when the sun sets, he becomes ritually pure, and afterwards, he may eat the holy (terumah), which is his food.

- **7** He should not eat a carcass (of a kosher species) or anything that was torn (because) it will render him ritually impure (and he will not be able to eat from the sacrifices). I am God.

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*Terrah* is a portion separated from all produce grown by a Jew in the Land of Israel that is fit for human consumption, which must be given to the priests (See Devarim 18:4).

**The Last Word**

Just as the enthusiasm of a priest in his holy duties is a natural quality which can only become dormant but never lost (see Toras Menachem)—so too the fiery love of God which exists within the heart of every Jew can fall temporarily “asleep,” but can always be awakened.

*(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 37, p. 61ff.)*
How could a person “violate the sanctity of the holy (terumah)?” (v. 15)

Rashi: By feeding terumah to non-priests.

Talmud: By eating tevel [produce from which terumah and tithes have not yet been separated, which may not be eaten] (Sanhedrin 83a).
9. (The priests) should observe My precautions and not bear a sin by (eating terumah in a state of ritual impurity) and thereby die through it, since they will have violated its holy character. I am God Who sanctifies them.

10. No non-priest may eat holy (terumah).

11. A (slave who refused to be freed and is) resident with a priest, or his (regular Hebrew slave) who works for him may not eat holy (terumah).

12. If a priest acquires a (non-Jewish) person (as a slave), he becomes the financial property (of his master), so he may eat (terumah). Likewise, the children of a non-Jewish slave-woman who were born in his house may eat of his (terumah).

13. If a priest’s daughter is married to a person who is a non-priest, she may (no longer) eat the holy terumah.

14. If the priest’s daughter becomes widowed or divorced (from a non-priest) and she has no offspring (from him), she may return to her youthful status in her father’s household and eat of her father’s (terumah).

15. No non-priest may eat (terumah, but a priest who is in a state of mourning may eat terumah).

16. If a man (who is not a priest) eats holy (terumah) unintentionally, he should add a fifth of it to its (value) and give the priest (fruits to this value, which will then become) holy (terumah).

17. (The priests) should not violate the sanctity of the holy (terumah) of the children of Israel, which they have set aside for God, thereby bringing sin and guilt upon themselves when the (non-priest) eats their holy (terumah), for I am God Who sanctifies them.

Prohibition Against Offering A Blemished Animal

17. God spoke to Moshe, saying, 18. Speak to Aharon and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel and say to them:

- If any man from the house of Israel, or from the Jewish converts (or non-Jews) brings his offering to fulfill one of his vows or one of his pledges which he (promised to) offer up to God as a burnt-offering 19. (it should be an animal which will) be accepted favorably (by God) for him, (namely, a perfect) unblemished male, from cattle, sheep or goats.

- You should not (consecrate) any (animal) that has a blemish as an offering, because it will not be accepted favorably (by God) for you.

Violating the Sanctity of Terumah (v. 15)

In verse 15 we read a prohibition against violating the sanctity of terumah (the first portion of crops which are separated and given to the priests). However, Rashi and the Talmud disagree as to what type of “violation” the verse is referring to. According to Rashi, the verse is prohibiting a priest from feeding his terumah to a non-priest. But according to the Talmud, the Torah prohibits a person from eating crops from which terumah has not yet been separated (tevel), thus violating the sanctity of the terumah which is still mixed together with the other crops.

At first glance, Rashi’s stance appears to be difficult to understand. For the reader has already learned from verse 10 above that a non-priest is forbidden from eating terumah. Thus, according to Rashi’s stance, verse 15 seems to be an unnecessary repetition of verse 10.

According to the Talmud however verse 15 is indeed teaching us new information: the prohibition against eating tevel.

So why did Rashi reject the Talmud’s solution, which seems to be preferable?

The Explanation

The Talmud perceived tevel to be a mixture of: a.) ordinary crops, and b.) the terumah offering which was destined to be separated from it. Therefore, if a person eats tevel, he is “violating the sanctity” of the holy terumah offering which is currently mixed into the tevel.
However, Rashi found this argument unacceptable because, at the literal level, before the terumah is separated it does not yet exist, i.e. the act of separating the portion renders it terumah. Therefore, if a person eats tevel he would indeed be transgressing Torah law, but he would not be violating something of sanctity since the holy terumah had not yet come into existence. Therefore, Rashi rejected the notion that our verse refers to the prohibition of eating tevel, as this would not be considered an act which “violates the sanctity of the holy (terumah) of the children of Israel.”

(Toras Menachem)
If a man brings a peace-offering to God from cattle or from flocks to fulfill a vow or a pledge, it should be perfect in order to be accepted (by God). It should not have any blemish in it.

You should not (slaughter) any of these as an offering, or place any of them on the Altar as a fire-offering for God: (An animal suffering from) blindness, or a broken (limb), or a split (eyelid or lip), or (one that has) warts, or dry lesions or weeping sores.

You may bring an ox or sheep that has disproportionate limbs or unclenved hooves as a pledge (for the upkeep of the Sanctuary), but it will not be accepted as a vow (to be offered on the Altar).

You should not offer up to God (or sprinkle the blood from any animal whose testicles are) squashed, crushed, (or whose ducts have been) ripped or cut.

You should not (castrate any animal of a species that is found) in your land (be it kosher or non-kosher).

You should not offer up any of these (blemished animals) from the hand of a gentile as food for your God. For since they are injured, they have a (disqualifying) defect. They will not be accepted (by God, to atone) on your behalf.

God spoke to Moshe, saying:

When an ox, a sheep or a goat is born (naturally), it should remain with its mother for seven days. Then, from the eighth day onwards, it will be accepted as a fire-offering to God.

You should not slaughter an ox or sheep (mother) and her child in one day.

When you slaughter a thanksgiving-offering to God, you should slaughter it in a way that it is accepted (by God) for you: (At the time of slaughter you should have in mind that the sacrifice) will be eaten on the same day, and that it will not be left over (uneaten) until morning. I am God.

Why must an animal offering “be perfect”? (v. 21)

Sefer haChinuch: Since the basic purpose of the sacrifices is to arouse a person’s thoughts and feelings towards God, it follows that the animal which he offers needs to be perfect; otherwise his inspiration will be incomplete (mitzvah 286).

May a blemished bird be offered? (v. 22-23)

Rambam: A blemished bird is not disqualified.... However, this only applies to minor blemishes. A bird whose body is mauled, or whose eye or leg is missing may not be offered on the Altar, since we do not offer animals that are lacking a whole limb (Laws of Prohibited Sacrificial Procedure 3:1).

Why is a non-Jew’s blemished offering not accepted? (v. 25)

Rashi: Even though blemished animals are not invalid as sacrifices from the descendants of Noach [non-Jews], unless they have a whole limb missing—this rule applies only to private altars, in the fields. On the Altar in the Tabernacle however, one should not offer them up. One may, however, accept an unblemished animal from them.

The Jew must offer an animal of a higher degree of perfection than the non-Jew, so the sacrifice will assist him in reaching the more profound awareness of God that is expected of him.

Similarly, there are different levels of perfection within the animal sacrifices themselves. Jewish law is more stringent in the case of animal offerings, which are typically a rich man’s type of sacrifice, than with bird offerings which are typically offered by the poor man (See Rambam). Here we see, once again, that the Torah demands a higher level of perfection from those who are more capable.

(Based on Likutei Sichos, vol. 35, p. 24ff.)
If a person sacrifices his life to sanctify God’s Name, should he hope for a miracle that will save him? (v. 32)

RASHI: Surrender yourself and sanctify My Name... when the person surrenders himself, he should be prepared to die, for any person who surrenders himself while expecting a miracle will not merit a miracle.

TORAS KOHANIM: Any person who surrenders his life, relying on God to save him miraculously, will not be saved through a miracle. And, if he does not rely on being saved by a miracle, then he will be saved through a miracle. As we find by Chananya, Misha’el and Azarya, who said to Nebuchadnetzer, “We have no need to answer you in this matter. Behold, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us. He can deliver us from the fiery furnace, and out of your hand, O King. But if he does not, let it be known to you, King, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up” (Daniel 3:16-18). And, when [the Roman emperor] Tyranus seized Papus and Lulyanus his brother in Laodicea, they said to him, “Chananya, Misha’el and Azarya, were righteous people, and Nebuchadnetzer was an emperor worthy of bringing about a miracle.

But you are a wicked king, unworthy of causing a miracle, and we are guilty that God should take away our lives. And, if you do not kill us, God has many other methods of causing damage. He has many bears, many lions, many panthers, many snakes and many scorpions that can deal with us. However, [you were chosen as the agent] so that God can demand our blood from you!” And it is said that he [Tyranus] did not even leave that town before a despatch arrived from Rome and removed his brains with wooden rods.

RAMBAM: In any case where the Torah says that one should be killed rather than transgress, and the person indeed allowed himself to be killed and did not transgress, he sanctifies God’s Name. And if there were ten Jews present, then he publicly sanctifies God’s Name, like Daniel, Chananya, Misha’el and Azarya, and like Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues. Such individuals are the victims of regimes, and there is no way of achieving such great sanctity as theirs. Of them, the verse states, “For your sake we are killed all day long, we are reckoned as sheep for the slaughter” (Psalms 44:23), and it is said of them (ibid. 50:5), “Gather my pious ones together to Me, those that have made a covenant with Me through sacrifice” (Laws of Foundations of the Torah, 5:4).

THE MITZVAH OF SANCITFYING GOD’S NAME (v. 32)

In order to clarify Rashi’s opinion regarding the mitzvah of kiddush Hashem (sanctifying God’s Name), we need first to examine the statements of Toras Kohanim and Rambam:

1.) Why does Rambam not incorporate the warning of Toras Kohanim that “any person who surrenders his life, relying on God to save him miraculously, will not be saved through a miracle, etc.”?

2.) Why does Rambam instead bring the explanation that “there is no way of achieving such greatness,” quoting verses from Psalms?

3.) A person must first refuse to transgress, and only then is he killed. Why does Rambam write this in the reverse order, “…and the person indeed allowed himself to be killed and did not transgress…”?

Underlying all these subtle details is a fundamental difference in the concept of kiddush Hashem. When a person surrenders his life rather than transgressing in public, there are two possible outcomes: either he will die, or God will save him through a miracle. This leads us to the following questions:

a.) What is a greater sanctification of God’s Name: if he dies or if he is saved?

b.) If the person is indeed saved by a miracle, then: i.) Is that miracle actually a part of the mitzvah of kiddush Hashem?

ii.) Or is it the case that the miracle is a feat performed by God, totally independent of the requirement that the Jew has to sacrifice his life?

iii.) A practical ramification which arises from these two questions is whether a person should expect (or even declare) that God might save him through a miracle. For, if it is a greater kiddush Hashem that a miracle
Sanctifying the Name of God

You should not desecrate My holy Name (by violating My commandments intentionally).

- (You should be willing to give up your life rather than transgress My commandments so that My Name) should be sanctified, (if you are challenged to transgress a commandment in the presence of witnesses) from among the children of Israel.

I am God Who sanctifies you, 31 Who is taking you out of the land of Egypt to be your God (on condition that you sanctify My Name). I am God.

occurs (above, ‘a, i’), and that the miracle is considered to be part of his mitzvah (above ‘b, i’) that the person should hope and intend that a miracle occurs, so that the mitzvah of kiddush Hashem will be complete and fulfilled in the best possible manner.

(However, he should not rely on a miracle occurring, merely in order that he be saved (for his own sake alone). For then it would turn out that he was not really willing to surrender his life in the first place, and that he did so only because he was expecting God to save him.)

The Explanation

It would appear that Toras Kohanim was of the opinion that it is a greater kiddush Hashem if a person is saved by a miracle, and the miracle is part of the mitzvah of kiddush Hashem. Therefore:

1.) Toras Kohanim mentions the likelihood of a miracle occurring, implying that this would be the greatest possible kiddush Hashem.

2.) Since a miracle increases the kiddush Hashem and is part of the mitzvah, it is appropriate to have in mind (and even declare) that God may perform a miracle, when a person surrenders his life. Thus, Toras Kohanim mentions that Chananya, Misha’el and Azaryah said to Nebuchadnetzer, “Behold, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, and out of your hand, King.”

3.) The second proof that Toras Kohanim cites—from Papus and Lulyanus—stresses a similar idea, that when a miracle does not occur to save the person who surrenders his life, it is indeed an inferior mitzvah (“But you are a wicked king, unworthy of causing a miracle, etc.”).

4.) Nevertheless, Toras Kohanim does cite that a miracle occurred (“he did not even leave that town before a dispatch arrived from Rome, and removed his brains with wooden rods”), for this does magnify further the extent of the kiddush Hashem which they accomplished.

Rambam, on the other hand, was of the opinion that it is a greater kiddush Hashem if the person is not saved by a miracle (or another means), and that any miracle that would occur would not be part of the mitzvah. Therefore:

1.) He makes no mention of miracles whatsoever, as it is not part of the mitzvah of kiddush Hashem, in his opinion.

2.) Rambam writes, “...and the person indeed allowed himself to be killed and did not transgress...” (even though this actually occurs in the reverse order), to stress that the mitzvah consists (ideally) of actually being killed, and not being saved.

(In fact, this is similar to the view expressed by the Zohar [142a], that it was sinful for Chananya, Misha’el and Azaryah to say to Nebuchadnetzer, “Behold, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us.” Rabbi Chaim Vital explains that this was because it would have been a greater kiddush Hashem if they had expected to die.)

Rashi’s Opinion

Until now, we have argued that if a miracle were to occur, saving the person’s life, it would either: a.) Enhance the kiddush Hashem and also be part of the mitzvah (Toras Kohanim); or, b.) Be detrimental to the kiddush Hashem and not part of the mitzvah (Rambam).

There is, however, a third alternative: that a miracle would not actually be part of the mitzvah (like Rambam), but that would nevertheless enhance the kiddush Hashem (like Toras Kohanim). In other words, when a person is saved by a miracle it is the best possible demonstration of God’s might, but God’s miracle remains His own act; it is not part of the person’s mitzvah.

The practical ramification of this position is that, since the miracle is not part of the mitzvah which is incumbent on the person, he is not required to hope or inform others that a miracle might occur. If a miracle occurs it is “God’s business” and not the person’s.

However, on the other hand, the person’s intentions are not altogether irrelevant. For if the person does not fulfill the mitzvah of kiddush Hashem with a pure motive, then it is unlikely that God will perform a miracle to

Sparks of Chasidus

In Chasidic thought it is explained that a person who actually surrenders his life to God is superior to one who merely wishes to do so. This is because the desire to surrender to God stems from the Godly Soul, and so long as the person has not surrendered himself in actuality, then his Animal Soul has not been affected by this desire.

Furthermore, the Animal Soul’s inherent desire is to live. Therefore, if the person actually surrenders his life, the Animal Soul has consented to an act which is the very opposite of its nature. Since the Godly Soul and Animal Soul are coupled together, the act of surrendering one’s life also teaches the Godly Soul how to go beyond its own nature, as it learns from the Animal Soul’s total sacrifice.

(Sefer Hama’amorim Melukat, vol. 2, p. 72)
save him. So the person should not surrender his life while secretly suspecting that God will save him, for then he would not have genuinely surrendered his life. And this lack of pure intentions may actually prevent him from having a successful miracle at all. Therefore, it is not incumbent on the person to have an intention specifically to perform a miracle (“...then he will be saved through a miracle”). Rather, Rashi writes, “Surrender yourself and sanctify My name,” for that is the only intention that the person need have in actuality.

So, in the final analysis, it turns out that Rashi and Rambam were in agreement as to the way in which a person must perform the mitzvah of kiddush Hashem. Both agreed that one should not think of miracles at all, and that one should merely surrender oneself to God, in order to sanctify His Name. They only differed on what the preferred outcome should be. Rashi maintained that it would be a greater kiddush Hashem if God would perform a miracle to save the person, whereas Rambam maintained that actual martyrdom is the greatest kiddush Hashem of all.

What is the sequence of the festivals? (23:1-44)

BACHAYE: The three festivals of Pesach, Shavuos and Succos, follow the agricultural cycle. Pesach is the time when the produce ripens, Shavuos is harvest time, and Succos is the completion of the harvesting season, when all the produce has been gathered in from the field (commentary to Shemos 23:17).

MAGID MISHNEH: Rambam codified the laws dependent on time: Shabbos, Eruvin, Yom Kippur, Yom Tov, Chametz & Matzah, Shofar, Succah, lulav, Shekalim, Kiddush HaChodesh (sanctifying the new month), Ta’anis (fasts), Megilah and Chanukah. The logic behind this sequence is: First comes Shabbos, as it is one of the Ten Commandments, and its penalty is the most severe. It is also the most common of the list, and it is fundamental to the Jewish faith. Eruvin follows, as the laws of eruv are directly related to Shabbos. Yom Kippur is next, as its penalty is the most severe of all the festivals, and its practical observance is identical to that of Shabbos. The laws of Yom Tov follow, as they are general in nature, applying to all of the festivals. Next, we move on to the details specific to each festival, beginning with Pesach, since it is the first recorded in the Torah and its penalty is severe. Then the mitzvos pertaining to the month of Tishrei follow as they are Biblical...The conclusion is with the laws of Purim and Chanukah, as they are Rabbinic festivals.

(The Introduction to Sefer Zemanim)

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

THE SEQUENCE OF THE FESTIVALS (23:1-44)

In the current chapter, many time-bound mitzvos are recorded in the order in which they occur throughout the year: After an introduction about Shabbos (v. 3), we read about Pesach which occurs on the fifteenth of Nissan (v. 5-8), the Omer offering, which occurs on the sixteenth of Nissan (v. 9-14), counting the Omer, which continues until Shavuos (v. 15-22), Rosh Hashanah (v. 23-25), Yom Kippur (v. 26-32) and Succos (v. 33-43).

Based on this scriptural precedent, the Mishnah, authored by Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, codifies the laws of the festivals in this order.

However, in his halachic code the Mishneh Torah, Rambam formulated a different sequence in which he recorded the festivals and other time bound laws—and Rambam’s logic is explained by Magid Mishneh.

Nevertheless the question remains: why did Rambam not choose the simple, chronological order in which the laws are presented here in our Parsha? Why did Rambam reject the sequence in which the Torah gave the festivals and choose another?

Furthermore, Rambam himself named the volume of the Mishneh Torah which pertains to the festival laws as Sefer Zemanim (“Book of Laws Concerning Various Times”). In choosing this title, Rambam seems to stress that the theme of all the laws in this book (in contrast to the other laws of the Torah) is that they are periodic, following a yearly cycle. So, if he considered the chronological sequence to be sufficiently important that
The following are My festivals:

- (Just as) for six days work may be performed, but the seventh day is a day of complete rest, a holy celebration (on which) you should not do any work, (so too the festivals must be observed punctiliously, as you observe) a Sabbath to God in all the places where you live.*
- These festivals of God are holy celebrations, which (should be) fixed in their appropriate times (by the High Court, which establishes the beginning of each month, when the moon appears).

Based on the above, we can now suggest a rationale behind Rambam’s decision to abandon the chronological order of festivals that the Torah uses here, when writing his halachic work.

When the festivals are placed in the order in which they occur during the year it suggests that time is the key focus of the festivals, and that it is primary to the laws. As the Torah stresses, “These festivals of God are holy celebrations, which (should be) fixed in their appropriate times” (v. 4), indicating that time is the key consideration.

When Rambam came to codify the festival laws, he understood that when discussing Jewish Law it is more appropriate to emphasize time as being secondary, rather than primary. He reasoned that a halachic text should bring out the human factor, i.e. what is required from the person his positive feelings towards God take outward expression.

What is the connection between obedience and joy?

The answer is hinted to by the fact that the Torah fixed the festivals according to the agricultural cycle (see Bachaye). In order for a seed to grow, it must first shed its outer shell, and only through this is the seed able to grow many hundreds of times in size. Similarly, when a person puts aside (“sheds”) his superficial preconceptions (“shell”) about Judaism and observes all the mitzvos with absolute loyalty he will experience an enormous spiritual growth.

And likewise, a person who serves God with joy which “breaks all boundaries” will experience an unrestrained spiritual growth.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 36, pp. 82-4)

*rtv keuWa jhWz gw 242 uthkl/
While the Torah refers to “A Festival of Matzos to God” (v. 6), the festival is more commonly referred to as Pesach (Passover). Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev explained:

In the Torah itself, God referred to the festival with a name which highlights the greatness of the Jewish people: “Festival of Matzah.” For matzah reminds us of how the Jewish people left Egypt, the most civilized country at the time, and headed into a desert with just a few unleavened cakes. The Jewish people, however, refer to the festival as Pesach, a name which highlights God’s greatness, how He passed over the houses of the Jewish people, despite their lowly spiritual state, and redeemed us from Egypt.

(Sicha of the Last day of Pesach 5737)
In the first month, on the fourteenth of the month, (after the sixth hour) in the afternoon, (you should offer) the Pesach-offering to God.

On the fifteenth day of that month is a Festival of Matzos to God. You should eat matzos for a period of seven days.

The first day will be a holy celebration for you (when) you should not perform any manual work.

You should bring an (additional) fire-offering to God for a period of seven days.

The seventh day will be a holy celebration (when) you should not perform any manual work.

God spoke to Moshe, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them:"

When you come to the Land which I am giving you, and you reap its harvest, you should bring an Omer-measure* from the first of your reaping to the priest.

He should wave the Omer (backwards, forwards, upwards and downwards) before God, so that it will be accepted (by God) on your behalf. The priest should wave it on the day following the (first) rest day (of Pesach).

On the day that you wave the Omer, you should offer up (the following as its accompaniment):

A perfect (unblemished) lamb in its first year as a burnt-offering to God.

Its (associated) meal-offering (should be) two tenths (of an eifah)** of fine flour mixed with oil, as a fire-offering (which causes) a pleasant aroma to God.

Its (associated wine) libation (should be) a quarter of a hin*** of wine.

You should not eat bread, parched grain flour or parched kernels (from the new crop), until this very day, until you bring the (Omer) offering for your God. (This is) an eternal statute throughout your generations, in all the places that you live.

What does “in all the places that you live” mean? (v. 14)

Rashi: The Sages of Israel were divided about this matter. Some derived from here that chadash (the prohibition of eating new crops before the Omer is offered—see v. 14) applies even outside the Land of Israel. Others were of the opinion that this phrase merely teaches us that [the Jewish people] were only required to observe the laws of chadash after possession and settlement, i.e. after they had conquered and apportioned the Land [of Israel].

The Prohibition of Chadash (v. 14)

Rashi’s comments here prompt the following questions:  

a.) What was troubling Rashi? Surely the phrase, “in all the places that you live,” is quite straightforward and self-understood, and thus does not require any comment from Rashi. In fact, this identical phrase is mentioned both above (v. 3) and below (v. 31), and Rashi does not comment in either of those places, which appears to prove that these words are straightforward.

b.) Why did Rashi begin with the words, “The Sages of Israel were...”?

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* Equivalent to 2.48 liters or 5.26 U.S. pints.  
** Equivalent to 4.96 liters or 10.52 U.S. pints.  
*** Equivalent to 1.04 liters or 2.19 U.S. pints.
divided about this matter”? In numerous instances Rashi will cite more than one interpretation on any given verse without making an introduction, so why did Rashi feel the need to do so here?

The Explanation

Above, when describing the prohibition against castrating an animal, the Torah states that this only applies “in your land” (22:24). Rashi writes: “the words ‘in your land’ come to include any species found in your land—even non-kosher species. For it is impossible to say that castration is prohibited only in the Land of Israel because the prohibition of castration is a non-agricultural obligation, and every non-agricultural mitzvah applies both in and outside the Land of Israel.”

Here we see that the principle that “every non-agricultural mitzvah applies both inside and outside the Land of Israel” is so powerful and overriding that it forced Rashi to interpret the words “in your land” non-literally (to include “any species found in your land”—even in the Diaspora).

Consequently, when reaching our verse, Rashi was faced with a problem: How could the prohibition of Chadash, an agricultural mitzvah, apply “in all the places that you live,” including the Diaspora? Surely it is only the non-agricultural mitzvos that apply “both in and outside the Land of Israel”!

Just as Rashi interpreted the previous verse (22:24) non-literally (that although the verse says “your land,” it means everywhere), he could do the same here (to explain, “in all the places,” as meaning only the Land of Israel). In this case, however, Rashi was more reluctant to do so, since the same phrase (“in all the places that you live”) appears a number of times in our Parsha, and it is consistently taken in the most literal sense. On the other hand, the above case (of castration) proved that we can interpret a verse non-literally in order to uphold the principle that agricultural and non-agricultural mitzvos are different.

So Rashi was left with an unusually difficult dilemma, that both interpretations of this verse violate established principles. The first interpretation (that Chadash applies also in the Diaspora) violates the principle that agricultural mitzvos are limited to the Land of Israel; and the

Sparks of Chasidus

By bringing the first of the crops as an offering for God (the “Omer”), the community is aroused to feel that the first and best of all one’s affairs should be devoted to God.

But since the Omer was only brought from produce of the Land of Israel, how are those outside the Land aroused to have the feeling that the first of everything must be for God?

This point was debated by “the Sages of Israel”:

According to one opinion, those living in the Diaspora must also observe the prohibition of Chadash, so as to instill in them the feeling that the “first” must be for God—even though the Omer offering is not brought from their crops.

The other opinion held that, to the contrary, withholding the prohibition of Chadash from those outside the Land will arouse feelings of lowliness, making the people recognize that they are not deserving to bring the Omer from their crops—and this will result in a greater feeling to give their first and best to God.

The former opinion relates primarily to the Animal Soul and the body, which are influenced by food being withdrawn and forbidden. The latter reasoning relates more to the Godly Soul, which yearns to be closer to God, and feels the deficiency in being distant from Him.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, pp. 252-4)
COUNTING THE OMER & SHAVUOS

- From the day following the (first) rest day (of Pesach)—the day you bring the Omer as a wave-offering—you should count for yourselves seven weeks. (When you count them) they should be perfect.

- You should count up until (but not including) fifty days, (i.e.) the day following the seventh week. (On the fiftieth day) you should bring (the first) meal-offering (from the) new (crop) to God:
  - From the places where you live (in the Land of Israel), you should bring bread that is designated (for a higher purpose): two (loaves made from) two tenths (of an eifah).* They should be made from fine flour, (and) they should be baked leavened, (since they are) the first (meal-)offering to God.
  - You should offer in association with the bread: seven (perfect) unblemished lambs in their first year, one young bull, and two rams. These should be a burnt-offering to God, (along with) their (associated) meal-offerings and (wine) libations. It is a fire-offering (causing) a pleasant aroma to God.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

How is the counting of seven weeks considered to be “perfect”? (v. 15)
- Rashi: One must begin counting in the evening [since each 24-hour period begins at night], otherwise they would not be complete.
- Bahag: Every night must be counted. If one night is forgotten, a person may no longer continue to count, as the Torah requires “perfection” (Hilchos Menachos, cited by Tosafos, Menachos 66a).
- Sa’adiah Gaon: Only the first night is crucial. If another night was missed, the person may still continue counting (Tur, Orach Chaim 489).

Sefer haChinuch: Bahag sees counting the 49 days as one single mitzvah. Therefore, if even one day is omitted, the mitzvah cannot be carried out, and there is nothing to be gained if the person continues counting (Mitzvah 306).
- Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch: If a person forgot to count one night, he should continue to count the following days. However, he should not make a blessing before he counts, since in a situation of halachic doubt [caused here by the view of Bahag] one does not make a blessing (Orach Chaim 489:24).

TORAS MENACHEM

* Spars of Chasidus

“THEY SHOULD BE BAKED LEAVENED” (v. 17)
Leavened bread (chametz), which is puffed up with air, represents the arrogance of a puffed-up ego. Conversely, unleavened bread (matzah) represents humility.

Ego is not necessarily a bad thing, if it represents a healthy self-esteem in one’s observance of Judaism—as the verse states: “His heart was lifted up in the ways of God” (Chron. II 17:6). However, such a “healthy” ego is only possible when a person’s Judaism becomes developed. At the outset, however, there is nothing for him to be proud about, so his ego would be destructive.

Thus, at Pesach, the birth of the Jewish nation, chametz (ego) is forbidden. But on Shavuos, after counting the Omer, which represents the refinement of the Jewish personality, chametz becomes an obligation: “they should be baked leavened.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22, pp. 31-2)

* Equivalent to 4.96 liters or 10.52 U.S. pints.
a.) If the counting of 49 nights constituted one single mitzvah, then one single blessing would be made. The fact that we are required to make a blessing every night suggests that, even according to Bahag, the counting of each night constitutes a mitzvah in its own right.

b.) If there is indeed a danger that a person might miss a night and fail to observe this mitzvah, then how could we permit a person to make any blessing before he has counted all 49 nights, for perhaps he will lapse one night? (cf. Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch)

Thus, even according to Bahag, the counting of each of the 49 days of the Omer is a mitzvah in itself. Nevertheless, Bahag maintained that the failure to count one day would invalidate a person from continuing.

What is the logic behind Bahag's stance?

The Explanation

From the Torah's point of view, a physical object could fall under one of three categories:

a.) Objects which have been used to perform a mitzvah. When a mitzvah is performed with a physical object, that object becomes imparted with holiness. Thus, any object with which a mitzvah has been performed at some point falls into a special category of its own.

b.) Objects which have not been used to perform a mitzvah. These are devoid of holiness.

While the above two categories would appear to have already covered every conceivable type of object, it could be argued that there is a third, intermediate category:

c.) Objects which are ready to perform a mitzvah. E.g., an unleavened cake (matzah) before the festival of Pesach. In this case, the object does not yet contain any holiness. Indeed, if this matzah is not eaten by a Jewish person on Pesach it will never be imparted with holiness. Nevertheless, the fact that it is ready for the performance of a mitzvah, means that in the value system of Torah, this object falls into a class of its own. From the Torah's point of view, this is now an important object, since it is something which is a suitable receptacle for holiness, if the appropriate act would be done with it.

Most mitzvos are performed with a distinct, clearly defined object, so there is an obvious transformation of 'c', the mitzvah-ready object, into 'a', the holy object which has been used to perform a mitzvah. (In our above example: the transition from a matzah which has not been eaten by a Jew on Pesach to a matzah which has).

However, in the case of mitzvos that involve counting, such as the laws of Sabbatical and Jubilee years, the matter becomes more complex, as there does not appear to be, at first glance, any physical object with which the mitzvah is performed.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that in the above two cases the object is time itself. (This is consistent with the concept brought in many places that time itself is a creation.) In other words, time flows on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis, and it is a mitzvah to count the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. Thus, the established measurement of time is effectively an "object" which is ready to perform a mitzvah.

However, in the case of counting the Omer, even this does not appear to exist. For in the case of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, we take the entire span of time, which obviously exists, and perform a mitzvah with it—by counting it. But in the case of the Omer, if it were not for the Torah, there would be no clearly delineated span of time between Pesach and Shavuos. Thus, the Omer is effectively a new "unit" of time which did not exist before, so we are not simply taking the previously existing measurement of time and using it for a mitzvah (as in the case of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years).

Thus, we are left with the question: With what pre-existing "mitzvah-ready object" is the counting of the Omer performed?
The Unique Quality of the Omer

In the case of every other *mitzvah* there is a pre-existing “*mitzvah*-ready object” which is used to perform the *mitzvah*. The unique quality of the counting of the Omer is that the *mitzvah*-ready object only exists due to the *mitzvah* itself. i.e. in addition to the existing system of time which functions throughout the year, the Omer introduced a new category of time, which only functions for 49 days of the year, between Passach and Shavuos.

Based on the above, we can now explain the view of Bahag (that despite the fact that the counting of each day is a *mitzvah* in itself, if a person omits just one day of counting the Omer, he may not continue to count). When a person counts the Omer he is effectively taking a *mitzvah*-ready object (his personal Omer count up to that day) and using it for a *mitzvah* (counting the Omer). In this case, the Torah stipulates that the counting of the Omer should be “perfect,” which means, according to Bahag, that the individual’s personal Omer time period must be perfect up to that point. So when the person declares, for example, “today is the tenth day of the Omer,” his *mitzvah* consists of taking his so far complete personal Omer time period (the *mitzvah*-ready object) and counting a further day.

Thus, if for whatever reason, he forgot to count a day in the past, he can no longer continue to count, since this *mitzvah* requires a perfect *mitzvah*-ready “object” (the time itself) which is now lacking. Thus, he simply is unable to count since he does not have an appropriate “object” to perform this *mitzvah*, just as a person cannot perform the *mitzvah* of eating matzah on Passach if he has no matzah.

Some Practical Ramifications

An important point arises from the above discussion: the *mitzvah*-ready object could be prepared by a person who is not obligated in that *mitzvah*.

For example, the Torah states that a sacrifice may only be offered from an animal that is at least eight days old: “When an ox, a sheep or a goat is born, it should remain with its mother for seven days. Then, from the eighth day onwards, it will be accepted as a fire offering to God” (above 22:27). Now, if a non-Jew owns “an ox, a sheep or a goat” which gives birth, the newborn animal will become a *mitzvah*-ready object as soon it reaches the age of eight days, regardless of the fact that the non-Jew has no obligation to offer sacrifices.

With this in mind we can now examine an interesting scenario. According to Bahag, could a child continue to count the Omer if he becomes obligated in *mitzvos* (Bar Mitzvah) during the counting of the Omer?

At first glance, it would appear that he could not continue to count, since, according to Bahag, one may only count the Omer if he had counted all the previous nights, and previously the child was not fully obligated in this *mitzvah*.

However in light of the above explanation it turns out that the child could continue to count. For his earlier counting on every single night created a perfect *mitzvah*-ready “object” (a personal Omer time period) which the child could immediately “use” as soon as he reached adulthood, some time during the Omer. The fact that he was not fully obligated in this *mitzvah* during childhood is irrelevant here, as one does not need to be obligated in a *mitzvah*-ready object to make a *mitzvah*-ready object.

In other words: When the Torah introduced the concept of counting a forty-nine day period from the sixteenth of Nissan, the Torah defined a new type of *mitzvah*-ready object which did not exist up to that point. Any person can “make” such an “object,” regardless of whether he is obligated in *mitzvos* or not, by counting each night. If that person would suddenly become obligated in *mitzvos* during the Omer, he could then continue to count, even according to Bahag (and thus, in practice, he would make a blessing), since he had prepared a perfect *mitzvah*-ready object during the previous days.*

A further practical ramification concerns the scenario where Mashiach arrives and the Temple is built some time during the counting of the Omer. This presents a halachic problem, since the requirement to count the Omer during exile times is, according to many authorities, only Rabbinic, but when the Temple is built it will revert to being a Biblical requirement. Thus, we are faced with the question: Does the Rabbinic counting of the Omer which was carried out during exile times suffice for a person to continue counting with a blessing in Messianic times?

The answer, according to the above logic, is yes. For even though a person’s counting of the Omer during exile times did not constitute a Biblical *mitzvah*, it nevertheless created for that person a *mitzvah*-ready personal time period with which he may continue counting (Biblically) after the true and complete redemption arrives.

*(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 38, p. 7ff.)*
The celebration of Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the year, has been ordained by our Torah to take place on the anniversary of the Creation, but not on the first day of Creation. It has been made to coincide with the sixth day of Creation, the day when Man was created.

The significance of this day, and of this event, is not in the fact that a new creature was added to Creation, a creature one plane higher than the rest of the animal kingdom, as the animal is superior to plant, and plant to mineral.

The significance lies in the fact that the new creature Man was essentially different from the others.

For it was man who recognized the Creator in and through Creation, and what is more, brought about the elevation of the entire Creation to that recognition and thus to the fulfillment of its Divine design and purpose.

On Rosh Hashanah man stands not only before the Divine Judgment, but also before his own.

The verdict of his own judgment, with regard to the future, must be: that he takes upon himself to fulfill his duty, that is, to work for the fulfillment—in himself and in his surroundings—of the call:

“Come, let us worship, bow down and kneel before God our Maker” (Psalms 95:6). A call for absolute submission to God, first sounded by the first man, Adam, on the day of his creation, on the first Rosh Hashanah.

This can be attained only through a life inspired and guided by the Torah.

Let no one think: who am I and what am I to have such tremendous powers of building or destruction. For we have seen—to our sorrow—what even a small quantity of matter can do in the way of destruction through the release of atomic energy. If such power is concealed in a small quantity of matter—for destructiveness, in denial of the design and purpose of Creation—how much greater is the creative power entrusted to every individual to work in harmony with the Divine purpose, for in this case one is also given special abilities and opportunities by Divine Providence to attain the goal for which we have been created: the realization of a world in which “each creature shall recognize that You created him, and every breathing soul shall declare: ‘God, the God of Israel, is King, and His reign is supreme over all’” (Amidah, Rosh Hashanah).

(Excerpt from a public letter written by the Rebbe, Days of Selichos 5715—Free Translation)
God spoke to Moshe, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying:

- In the seventh month, on the first of the month, there will be a Sabbath for you, (when you will recite verses that) recall (the binding of Yitzchak, and that mention the) blowing (of the Shofar), a holy celebration.
- You should not perform any manual work.
- You should offer up a fire-offering to God.

God spoke to Moshe, saying:

- On the tenth of this seventh month is a Day of Atonement, but (it will only atone for those who return to God).
- It will be a holy celebration for you. You must afflict yourselves, and you should offer up a fire-offering to God.
- You should not perform any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, for you to be atoned before God, your God. For any person who does not afflict himself on that very day will be cut off from his people. (This means that) if any person will perform any work on that very day, I will destroy that person from among his people. You should not perform any work. (This is) an eternal statute throughout your generations in all the places that you live. It is a complete day of rest for you, and you should afflict yourselves. (Starting from) the ninth of the month in the evening, from evening to evening, you should observe your rest day.

Unfortunately, for various reasons, the inspiration engendered by the Days of Rosh Hashanah and the Ten Days of Return has not always, nor everywhere, been put to the best or fullest advantage. In some congregations, and in many individuals, the inspiration evaporated with the passing of the Days of Awe, without a discernable change or improvement in the personal day-to-day life of the individual Jew and Jewess. And where there is a lack of improvement on the individual level, there must inevitably be a lack of improvement on the social level.

One of the main reasons for this failure is that the spiritual awakening and inspiration of the Days of Awe are not directed towards the self, but towards matters relating to others. Not infrequently these auspicious days serve as an occasion for general pronouncements on world problems—"messages" that do not implicate anyone in particular, least of all anyone in the immediate environment. This approach "satisfies" everybody, all the more so since it has some claim to "justification" in view of the fact that Rosh Hashanah embraces the whole of Creation, and the world is not lacking in universal and vital problems requiring improvement or change.

The concentration on, and preoccupation with, such lofty world problems and resolutions (resolutions which, in the majority of instances, are beyond the control of those making them) provide a convenient justification for diverting the necessary, vital and utmost attention from the self, from self-searching and the reappraisal of one's personal life (precisely those areas where personal resolutions can be effective).

An indication as to the proper use of the spirit of these holy days is to be found in the details prescribed for the mitzvah of Sounding the Shofar, the only special mitzvah of Rosh Hashanah. This commandment does not prescribe the use of an ensemble of instruments, but only one; and that also not a delicate instrument producing extraordinary musical compositions. The insistence is that the Shofar be a plain horn of an animal, and "all sounds are proper in a Shofar." Thus, the Shofar emphasizes that the orientation should be, first and foremost, on the individual self, with the accent on the duty to introduce sanctity even into the ordinary and commonplace of the daily life of the individual, and then into the social life of the individual as a member of the community, and so forth.

(Excerpt from a public letter written by the Rebbe, Days of Selichos 5723)
Why is the esrog (citron) described as פירות עיני ידועים: "beautiful fruit of the tree"? (v. 40)

Alter Rebbi’s Shulchan Aruch: The words פירות עיני ידועים ("fruit of the tree") indicate that it must have the appearance of a completely grown fruit. The word עיני ידוע means that it must be beautiful and attractive in appearance (as defined by halacha). If either of these qualities is missing, the esrog is invalid (Orach Chaim 648:29; 645:2).

Why is the lulav described as הפרחים הקטנים: "date fronds"?

Alter Rebbi’s Shulchan Aruch: The Torah does not describe them as date leaves but rather date fronds, suggesting that they must be those leaves which can be bound together with the spine because they are still soft (Orach Chaim 645:3).

Why is the hadas described as עצי עזר: "branches of a (myrtle) tree (which are plaited like) cords"?

Alter Rebbi’s Shulchan Aruch: The term עצי עזר means that if it does not have at least three leaves emerging from its stem at each knot (which resemble a plaited look), it is invalid (646:2).

Why is the aravah described as עצי עזר: "willows of the brookside"?

Alter Rebbi’s Shulchan Aruch: This refers to a certain species of willow. Generally, this species grows by the brookside, but it is valid as long as it is from this species, even if it grows in the desert or on mountains (647:1).
God spoke to Moshe, saying: 34 Speak to the children of Israel, saying:

- On the fifteenth day of this seventh month, is the Festival of Succos, a period of seven days for God.

- The first day is a holy celebration. You should not perform any manual work.

- For a period of seven days, you should bring a fire-offering to God.

- The eighth day will be a holy celebration for you, and you should bring a fire-offering to God. It is a (time when God) holds back (the Jewish people to be with Him for another day). You should not perform any manual work.

- These are God's festivals which you should designate as holy celebrations. (On) them (you should) offer up a fire-offering to God: a burnt-offering and (its associated) meal-offering, (other) sacrifices and (their associated) libations—each day's requirement on its appropriate day.

- In addition to God's Shabbos offerings (if the festival occurs on Shabbos), your gift-offerings, all your vows, and all your pledges that you must give to God.

- On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you gather in the produce of the Land, you should celebrate the festival of God for a period of seven days (by bringing festival peace-offerings), but (you should not bring these offerings on Shabbos).

- The first day should be a rest day, and the eighth day should be a rest day.

- On the first day, you should take for yourselves: The fruit of the (citron) tree, (which) dwells (on its tree for an entire year, and whose wood tastes like the fruit), the fronds of a date palm, branches of a (myrtle) tree (which are plaited like) cords, and willows of the brookside.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

What is the significance of the four species? (v. 40)

MIDRASH: They represent four types of Jews. An esrog, which possesses a good taste and a pleasant smell, represents the Jew who possesses both Torah learning and good deeds. The date-palm branch has a good taste but no fragrance, signifying Jews who have Torah knowledge but lack [sufficient] good deeds. Those who possess good deeds but are lacking in Torah knowledge are represented by the myrtle, which has a fragrant odor but lacks taste. The willow, which is inedible and has no aroma, represents those people lacking both in Torah and good deeds (Vayikra Rabah 30:12).

TORAS MENACHEM

Sparks of Chasidus

In the case of all mitzvos, the actual halacha is derived from the Oral Law. Even when the mitzvah has its origin in a written verse, it is the Oral Law that tells us the precise halachic meaning for each expression.

In the case of three of the four species, we find that the conditions described in the verse must be present; if not, they are not valid. The esrog (citron) must be a “beautiful fruit of the tree” literally; the lulav must be “date fronds that can be bound” literally, and the hadasim (myrtle) must be “like cords” literally, with three leaves emerging from each knot (see Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch). However, the fourth species does not have to be “willows of the brook” literally. Rather, from a halachic perspective, this condition was intended in a more general sense, to mean a species of willow which normally grows by the brook.

The inner reason why this fourth sign is not taken literally, can be understood according to the teaching of the Midrash, that the willow represents the Jew who is lacking in both Torah and good deeds. Since this Jew does not demonstrate any signs of his Jewishness, his corresponding species, the willow, is valid even if it does not openly demonstrate the sign which it is given in the verse ("brookside willow"). Nevertheless, the verse does indicate that the willow must come from a specific species, alluding to the fact that this simple Jew is also from an esteemed "species," for he is a descendant of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22, pp. 132-4)


**CLASSIC QUESTIONS**

**What is unique about the rejoicing of Succos? (v. 40)**

**Rambam:** Even though it is a mitzvah to rejoice on all the festivals, in the Holy Temple there was additional rejoicing on the festival of Succos, as the verse states: “You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days” (v. 40). How was this carried out?

On the eve of the first day of the festival they constructed a place for the ladies above and the men below, so that they should not mix with each other. They started to rejoice on the evening following the first day of the festival, and they continued to do so on each day of Chol haMo’ed (the intermediate days of the festival). Following the daily communal afternoon sacrifice (the last sacrifice of the day), they would rejoice the rest of the day and throughout the entire night.

**How was this rejoicing carried out?** The flute was blown, and they played the harp, lyre, and cymbals, each person according to his talent. Those who could sing would sing. People would dance etc., each person according to his ability, and they would sing songs and praises. However, this rejoicing did not override the observance of Shabbos or the festival.

It is a mitzvah to increase in this rejoicing. However, the dancing and rejoicing in the Temple during the festival of Succos was not done by the uneducated or anyone who so desired, but rather, by the greatest Sages of Israel, the heads of the yeshivos (academies), the Sanhedrin (Supreme Court), the chasidim (pious ones), the elders, and men of high caliber. The rest of the people, both men and women, would come to see and listen (Laws of Lulav 8:12-14).

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**THE ADDITIONAL REJOICING OF SUCCOS (V. 40)**

There seems to be a contradiction in the words of Rambam here. First he writes that the additional rejoicing of Succos is derived from a Biblical verse, “You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days” (v. 40). From this we can conclude that the additional rejoicing of Succos was—according to Rambam—not a custom, or even a Rabbinic mitzvah, but rather, a mitzvah from the Torah itself. And since the verse states explicitly, “You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days,” we can presume that this mitzvah must be carried out on every one of the seven days of Succos.

However, Rambam then informs us, “They started to rejoice on the evening following the first day of the festival,” i.e. they did not rejoice on the first day of Succos at all.

But, if the verse requires that “you should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days,” then how could they have omitted the observance on the first day?

If the additional rejoicing of Succos had only been a custom, or a Rabbinic mitzvah, there would have been good reason to start only on the second day, since there is a Rabbinic prohibition against playing musical instruments on Shabbos and festivals—and a Rabbinic command does not override another Rabbinic prohibition. But here, Rambam appears to rule that the additional rejoicing of Succos is a Biblical command (“You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days”) and a Biblical commandment should surely override the Rabbinic enactment against playing musical instruments on Shabbos? So, how can Rambam rule that “they started to rejoice on the evening following the first day of the festival,” giving the reason that “this rejoicing did not override the observance of Shabbos or the festival”?

A number of other issues seem perplexing:

a.) The Talmud does not mention at all the verse, “You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days,” as a source for this mitzvah. From where did Rambam deduce this “Biblical precept”?

b.) Rambam writes in the previous chapter (law 13): “The mitzvah of taking the lulav applies...in the Temple on every day of the festival, as the verse states, ‘you should rejoice before God, your God, for seven days.’” How can Rambam apply this very same verse again in our case, to teach us the law of additional rejoicing on Yom Tov?

c.) A Biblical commandment is incumbent on every Jew, regardless of his stature, unless the Torah states specifically otherwise. So how can this apparently Biblical requirement of additional rejoicing be exclusive to “the greatest Sages of Israel, the heads of the yeshivos, the Sanhedrin, the chasidim, the elders, and men of high caliber”?

d.) In the Talmud (Succah 53a), an additional group of esteemed performers is mentioned: the ba’alei teshuvah (those who returned to observant Judaism). Why did Rambam omit this group, and mention only “the greatest Sages of Israel, the heads of the yeshivos, etc.”?
You should rejoice before God your God, for a period of seven days. You should celebrate it as a festival to God for seven days in the year. (It is) an eternal statute throughout your generations (that) you celebrate it in the seventh month.

For a seven day period you should live in Succos (=booths). Every native Jew (and convert) should live in Succos, in order that your (ensuing) generations should know that I caused the children of Israel to live in (clouds of glory that resemble) Succos when I took them out of the land of Egypt. I am God, your God.

Moshe told the children of Israel (these laws) of God’s festivals.

The Explanation

Due to all of the above difficulties, it would appear that when Rambam cited the verse, “You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days,” he did not intend to suggest that we are speaking here of a separate Biblical command to rejoice in an extra measure on Succos more than on other festivals.

Rambam states that the Torah stresses the rejoicing of Succos in particular (“You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days,”) suggests, that the commandment to “rejoice on your festival” (applying to all festivals) should be carried out to a greater degree on Succos.

I.e. we are not speaking here of a new, independent mitzvah (requiring its own independent verse) to rejoice additionally on Succos. Rather, the verse, “You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days,” hints to us that on Succos we should carry out the existing mitzvah to rejoice to a greater degree.

Thus, Rambam did not write, “It is a mitzvah to rejoice additionally on Succos,” which would suggest that he was citing the verse as an independent source for a mitzvah in its own right. Rather, Rambam wrote, “there was additional rejoicing on the festival of Succos, as the verse states etc.,” i.e. it became customary to excel in the Biblical mitzvah of rejoicing on a festival especially on Succos, in light of the fact that the Torah stresses this rejoicing more.

Based on the above, we can answer our earlier questions:

a.) Through citing the verse, “You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days,” Rambam was not attempting to bring a source for a separate Biblical precept. He was merely highlighting the verse which had hinted to the Jewish people to rejoice more on Succos than any other festival. Since the verse was not quoted in a legal context, no proof was necessary.

b.) The fact that Rambam also cites proof from this verse (“You should rejoice before God, your God, for a period of seven days”) for the legal obligation to take the lulav all seven days in the Temple is no longer a problem. There, the verse was indeed cited in a legal context; whereas here, the verse was only cited in the form of a “hint” (as above), but not a halachic requirement.

c.) We can also understand now why only the greatest and most pious Sages of Israel were the ones that actually danced and performed. Because, we are not speaking here of a separate mitzvah (incumbent on every person) to rejoice in an additional measure. Rather, it was a matter of feeling the existing joy of the festival to an additional degree.

Obviously, a person must be of a considerable spiritual stature to feel the true joy of the festival to a great extent. Therefore, it was the spiritual giants of the Jewish people who were chosen to be the focus of the rejoicing, for it was they who were capable of excelling in the mitzvah in an exceptional manner. Simply watching how they excelled in the observance of this mitzvah was an education for everybody else.

d.) As for the fact that Rambam omitted ba’alei teshuav from his list of spiritual giants—this can be solved more simply. Rambam did not disagree with the Talmud that many of the performers were indeed ba’alei teshuav, but they were ba’alei teshuah who had later become Sages, heads of yeshivos and chasidim etc. Once integrated into the community, of Sages there would have been no need to “label” them with a term which suggests a negative past, so Rambam writes simply that there were “the greatest Sages of Israel, the heads of the yeshivos, the Sanhedrin, the chasidim, the elders, and men of high caliber,” without making any distinction between those who were ba’alei teshuah and those who were not.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 267ff.)

Sparks of Chasidus

“YOU SHOULD LIVE IN SUCCOS” (v. 42)

Even though there are two special mitzvahs which are specifically connected with the festival, these days are nevertheless known as “the festival of Succos” (v. 34), and not the festival of the Four Species. This is because the mitzvah of living in the Succah has a number of superior qualities:

- It is an obligation which spans all the days of the festival, from the moment when it begins to the moment that it ends.
- It requires constructional preparation before the festival.
- A person does not exempt himself from this mitzvah for the day with a solitary act.
- It involves the person’s entire body.
- Even doing mundane activity (such as eating) in the Succah is a mitzvah.
- A person remains associated with his Succah even when he is not inside it, since it is considered to be his home.

Thus, the mitzvah of living in the Succah trains a person to bring the awareness of God into every aspect of his life, in the spirit of the verse: “Know Him in all your ways” (Prov. 3:6).

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 2, pp. 417-8)
**What happened to the bread on Shabbos? (v. 8-9)**

**Rambam:** Each Shabbos they would remove the multi-surface bread which had been on the table since the previous Shabbos, and they would arrange different breads. The bread that was removed was divided between the priests who had been on duty the past week, and those that were currently on duty for the upcoming week, together with the High Priest, and they would eat it (Laws of Regular and Additional Sacrifices 5:3).

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**Why is the blasphemer’s mother’s name specified? (v. 11)**

**Rashi:** To praise the Jewish people. Scripture publicizes this case, to inform us that she was the only one who had illicit relations.

Her name Shelomis (שלומיס) indicates that she was verbose, going about saying “How are you...” She was called the daughter of Divri (ודי רבי), suggesting that she was verbose, talking (פ適合) with every person. That is why she fell into sin.
God spoke to Moshe, saying:

- **2** Command the children of Israel that they should bring to you clear olive oil, crushed for lighting, to ignite the lamp continually (from night to night).
- **3** Outside the partition in front of the (Ark of) testimony in the Tent of Meeting, Aharon should arrange that it (has sufficient oil to burn) from evening to morning before God. This is an eternal statute for your generations. **4** Upon the Menorah of pure (gold), he should arrange the lamps (to burn) before God continually.
- **5** You should take fine flour and bake it into twelve loaves. Each loaf should be (made from) two tenths (of an eifah** of flour).
- **6** You should place them in two stacks, six in each stack, upon the table of pure (gold), before God.
- **7** You should place pure frankincense (in a ladle) on each stack. (Unlike the bread, the frankincense will be offered on the Altar) as a fire-offering to God, which will remind (God about) the bread.
- **8** On each Shabbos day, he should set it up before God (to be there) continuously, from the children of Israel, as an eternal covenant.
- **9** It will belong to Aharon and his sons, and they should eat it in a holy place, for it is a most holy offering for him among the fire-offerings of God, an eternal statute.

**The Blasphemer**

The son of a Jewish woman who was the son of the Egyptian man (that Moshe killed, who converted, to be totally) among the children of Israel (wanted to pitch his tent in the camp of Dan) and this son of the Jewish woman quarreled in the camp with a Jewish man (who opposed his claim. When) he went out (of Moshe’s court, having lost the case), **11** the son of the Jewish woman pronounced the (Divine) Name and cursed.

They brought him to Moshe. His mother’s name was Shelomis, the daughter of Divri, of the tribe

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**Sparks of Chasidus**

**“On Each Shabbos Day...” (v. 8)**

There is a principle that the day of Shabbos brings blessing to all the days of the week that follow (Zohar II 63b). However, it is not clear from the Zohar whether one Shabbos blesses the following Shabbos too. From the case of the multi-surface bread, however, we see clearly that one Shabbos does indeed bless the next, as the bread placed on the table on Shabbos is not removed until the following Shabbos. This point is further highlighted by the law recorded by Rambam, that the multi-surface bread was eaten not only by the priests who served while this bread was displayed, but by the shift of priests for the following week as well.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acharei 5746)

**The Last Word**

**“Shelomis, the Daughter of Divri” (v. 11)**

Why does the Torah “praise the Jewish people” at the expense of incriminating Shelomis (see Rashi)?

This could be compared to the principle that if a person does a profound teshuvah (repentance), his “transgressions become for him like merits” (Yoma 86b). For since the person’s sins made him feel distant from God, they were ultimately the inspiration for his return. Thus retroactively we perceive them as merits. So too, in the case of Shelomis: When her example inspires other women to behave modestly, her transgression will be rendered retroactively as a merit for her. Therefore, it is publicized here.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 37, p. 67f.)

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* See Shemos 27:20-21; Bamidbar 8:1-4  ** Equivalent to 4.96 liters or 10.52 U.S. pints.
שלום עומת פעמים שלמה בברכה למלשון׃ י"ט פינחה: "יכלה חיה אלהי ה' אלהי כל העמים.\\nבלאשה: "והנה א compra אפרים אלמוור אבניים".

השומיעון הספירות עלייה ומעליה ובניהם中国传统 השמות המוכרים בלשון ה' של פינחה: "יכלה חיה אלהי ה' אלהי כל העמים.\\nבלאשה: "והנה א compra אפרים אלמוור אבניים".

אלהי השם אמינו שלמה בברכה למלשון׃ י"ט פינחה: "יכלה חיה אלהי ה' אלהי כל העמים.\\nבלאשה: "והנה א compra אפרים אלמוור אבניים".

כבוד פסוקים. עודאיא לטרון.
of Dan. 12 They placed him under guard, (until his sentence would) be clarified to them by the word of God.

13 God spoke to Moshe, saying: 14 Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All (the judges and the witnesses) who heard (his blasphemy) should lean their hands on his head. (Then they should) stone him (on behalf of) the entire community.

15 You should speak to the children of Israel, saying:

- Any man who blasphemestes his God will bear (the consequences of) his sin (by being cut off from his people, if he was not warned beforehand).
- One who blasphemously pronounces the (explicit) Name of God (in a curse and was warned not to do so), should be put to death. The entire community should stone him, convert and native alike. If he pronounces the (Divine) Name, he should be put to death.
- If a man strikes any human being (including a woman or child, and the victim dies), he should be put to death.
- One who strikes an animal fatally should pay for it. (He should pay the value of the animal's life (as compensation) for its life (that he took).
- If a man inflicts an injury upon his fellow man, he should be penalized according to (the severity) of what he did: 20 (The value of) a fracture for a fracture (injury, the value of) an eye for an eye (injury, the value of) a tooth for a tooth (injury). He should be penalized according to (the severity) of the injury which he caused to the person.
- One who strikes an animal should pay (compensation) for its (injury).
- One who strikes (one of his parents while they are still alive, causing a bruise) should be put to death.

22 There will be one law for you, convert and native alike, for I am God, your God.

23 Moshe told (all this) to the children of Israel.

The (judges and witnesses) took the blasphemer outside the camp and threw a stone at him. The children of Israel did (the other procedures of first pushing him off a high place, then additional stoning until he died, and the hanging of the corpse. They all did) as God had commanded Moshe.*

THE HAFTARAH FOR EMOR IS ON PAGE 268.
Parshas Emor contains 24 positive mitzvos and 39 prohibitions

1. An ordinary priest should not make himself impure for a dead person, other than close relatives [21:1-3].
2. The ritual impurity of priests for their near relatives, including the mitzvah that every Jew should mourn for the six relatives mentioned in Scripture [21:3:6].
3. A priest who is ritually impure for a day, and has already immersed in a mikvah, should not serve in the Temple until sunset. [21:7].
4. A priest should not marry a woman who has had forbidden relations [21:7].
5. A priest should not marry a woman born from a union which violated the sanctity of the priesthood [21:7].
6. A priest should not marry a divorced woman [21:7].
7. Laws of sanctification of Aharon’s descendants [21:8].
8. The High Priest should not enter the tent of a dead man [21:11].
9. The High Priest should not make himself ritually impure (to bury) a dead man [21:11].
10. The High Priest should marry a virgin [21:13].
11. The High Priest should not marry a widow [21:14].
12. The High Priest should not have relations with a widow [21:15].
15. A priest with a disqualifying blemish should not enter the Temple [21:23].
17. A ritually impure priest should not eat terumah [22:4].
18. A non-priest should not eat terumah [22:10].
19. The permanent worker or the hired worker of a priest should not eat terumah [22:10].
20. An uncircumcised person should not eat terumah [22:4].
21. A woman born from a union which violated the sanctity of the priesthood should not eat terumah [22:12].
22. Not to eat tevel [22:15].
23. Not to consecrate blemished or defective animals to be offered up on the altar [22:20].
24. An animal offering should be perfect (without blemish) [22:21].
25. Not to make a blemish in animals consecrated for offerings [22:21].
26. Not to sprinkle the blood of blemished animals on the altar [22:22].
27. Not to ritually slaughter blemished animals for offerings [22:22].
28. Not to burn portions on the altar from blemished animals [22:22].
29. Not to castrate any creature [22:24].
30. Not to offer up a blemished offering received from a non-Jew [22:25].
31. An animal offering should be eight days old or more [22:27].
32. Not to ritually slaughter an animal and its child in one day [22:28].
33. Not to do something which will cause God’s Name to be profaned among people [22:32].
34. Sanctifying the Name of God [22:32].
35. To rest from work on the first day of Pesach [23:7].
36. Not to do any work on the first day of Pesach [23:7].
37. The additional offering, all seven days of Pesach [23:8].
38. To rest from work on the seventh day of Pesach [23:8].
39. Not to do any work on the seventh day of Pesach [23:8].
40. To offer the Omer on the second day of Pesach [23:10,11].
41. Not to eat (bread) from the new crop of grains before the end of the sixteenth of Nissan [23:14].
42. Not to eat parched kernels from the new crop until the end of the sixteenth of Nissan [23:14].
43. Not to eat parched ears from the new crop until the end of the sixteenth of Nissan [23:14].
44. To count forty-nine days from the offering of the Omer [23:15].
45. The meal-offering of new wheat on Shavuos [23:16].
46. To rest from work on Shavuos [23:21].
47. Not to do any work on Shavuos [23:21].
48. To rest from work on Rosh Hashanah [23:24].
49. Not to do any work on Rosh Hashanah [23:24,25].
50. The additional animal offering of Rosh Hashanah [23:24,25].
51. To fast on the tenth of Tishrei [23:28].
52. The additional offering on the tenth day of Tishrei, which is the Day of Atonement [23:27].
53. Not to do any work on the tenth day of Tishrei [23:27].
54. Not to eat or drink on the Day of Atonement [23:29].
55. To rest from work on the Day of Atonement [23:32].
56. To rest from work on the first day of Succos [23:35].
57. Not to do any work on the first day of Succos [23:34,35].
58. The additional offering, all the seven days of Succos [23:36].
59. To rest from work on the eighth day of Succos [23:36].
60. The additional offering on Shemini Atzeres [23:36].
61. Not to do any work on Shemini Atzeres [23:36].
62. Taking the lulav [23:40].
63. Living in the succah [23:42].
Behar means “on the mountain,” as in the verse, “God spoke to Moshe on Mount Sinai.” The Midrash states that God chose to give the Torah on Mount Sinai since it is the “smallest of mountains,” suggesting humility (Midrash Tehilim 68:9).

However, this begs the question: If God wished to give the Torah in a place that is indicative of humility, surely a valley would have been more appropriate? Admittedly, Sinai is the “smallest of mountains,” but ultimately, it is still a mountain, which is hardly suggestive of lowliness and humility!

Furthermore, our Parsha has become known by the name “on the mountain” without even the clarification that it is Mount Sinai, the smallest of mountains. Surely the name “on the mountain” alone has lost any connotation of humility at all?

The need for humility in the service of God varies according to one’s level of knowledge and spiritual growth. Generally speaking, a person might fall under one of three categories:

a.) Beginner. A beginner in the study and practice of Judaism has not yet trained his mindset and personality to be in harmony with the values of Judaism. Thus, at this stage, any traces of ego would prove totally counter-productive to his spiritual growth, for his ego would serve to strengthen his unrefined personality.

b.) Intermediate. Here the person has considerably refined his personality to adhere to Jewish values, and has acquired much knowledge. Therefore, while humility will still be the dominant feature of his personality, it may prove necessary on occasion for this person to use his ego, to protect the interests of Judaism in general, and himself as an observant Jew in particular. Nevertheless, his ego should be carefully tempered with humility to prevent it from leading to arrogance or selfishness.

c.) Advanced. If a person has totally transformed his mind and body to want only the values of Judaism, then his ego no longer poses a threat to his relationship with God. By exercising his ego, he will only reinforce and strengthen a personality which is totally dedicated to the Torah.

And this is why our Parsha is called Behar (“on the mountain”), without the clarification that it is Sinai (a small mountain). The Torah is teaching us that every Jew is capable of becoming a spiritual giant, whose personality is so holy that it does not need to be “restrained” with humility.

(Based on Likutei Sichos, vol. 1, p. 276ff.; vol. 22, p.159ff.)
Why does the verse stress that “God spoke to Moshe at Mount Sinai”? (v. 1)

Rashi: “What is the connection between the concept of the Sabbatical year and ‘Mount Sinai’ [that the verse stresses this commandment was given at Sinai]? Were not all the commandments given at Sinai?”

“This teaches us: Just as in the case of the Sabbatical year, whose general laws and details were all stated at Sinai, the general laws and details of all the other mitzvos were also said at Sinai.”

The above was taught in Toras Kohanim, and it appears to me that its explanation is as follows:

We do not find that the law of resting the soil [during the Sabbatical Year was mentioned] together with the details of the other mitzvos at the plains of Mo’av, in the Book of Devarim. From this it is understood that both the general laws and the details [of observing the Sabbatical Year] had already been taught at Sinai.

Therefore, our verse [which stresses that the agricultural laws of the Sabbatical year were said “at Sinai”] is redundant, since this matter is already known from the Book of Devarim, as above. Consequently, this phrase comes to teach us something else—that the theory and precise method of all the commandments was conveyed to Moshe at Sinai, and that what was said later at the plains of Mo’av was [merely] repetition.

Talmud: Rabbi Yishma’el said: “The general laws were said at Sinai, and the details were said in the Tent of Meeting.” Rabbi Akiva said, “The general laws and the details were said at Sinai. They were then repeated in the Tent of Meeting and at the plains of Mo’av (Chagigah 6a-b).

What Was Said at Mount Sinai? (v. 1)

When Moshe spent forty days and nights on Mount Sinai, he must have learned a considerable amount of information. Clearly, Moshe’s studies would have at least touched upon every one of the mitzvos that were given to the Jewish people. What is not clear, however, is whether the mitzvos were explained to Moshe on Mount Sinai with all the details required for practical observance, or whether the details were added by God at a later point, after Moshe had descended from the mountain.

This was the basis of a dispute between Rabbi Yishma’el and Rabbi Akiva in the Talmud. R’ Yishma’el maintained that only “the general laws were said at Sinai,” i.e., the general outline of the commandments, without the details. The details required to observe the mitzvos were communicated to Moshe later, in the Tent of Meeting, at some point before they became practically relevant.

R’ Akiva maintained that both “the general laws and the details were said at Sinai.” Thus, the fact that we find a further elaboration of the mitzvos to Moshe, in the Tent of Meeting (throughout the book of Vayikra), and later in the plains of Mo’av, represents a repetition of what God had already told Moshe on Mount Sinai (which was not recorded in the Torah).

In his commentary, Rashi appears to reject the view of R’ Yishma’el in favor of R’ Akiva, writing: “The general laws and details of all the commandments were conveyed to Moshe at Sinai.”

However, on closer analysis, Rashi does not appear to disprove R’ Yishma’el’s position. For R’ Yishma’el maintained, “The general laws were said at Sinai, and the details in the Tent of Meeting,” yet Rashi only proves his case from the fact that “we do not find that the law of resting the soil was mentioned at the plains of Mo’av, in the Book of Devarim.”

Surely, if Rashi wished to refute the position of R’ Yishma’el (that “the details were said in the Tent of Meeting”) he should have written, “We do not find that the law of resting the soil was mentioned either in the Tent of Meeting or at the plains of Mo’av”?

The Explanation

It could be argued that Rashi’s comment here is compatible even with the view of R’ Yishma’el. Note that throughout his explanation, Rashi does not refer to “Mount Sinai,” but rather, “Sinai” alone*, suggesting not only the mountain itself, but the Sinai Desert in general. Thus, it could be argued that the Tent of Meeting came under the heading of what Rashi

* With the exception of the first occasion it is mentioned, where it could be argued that Rashi is quoting the verse itself.
**THE SABBATICAL YEAR**

**25**

God spoke to Moshe (in the desert*) at Mount Sinai, saying: 1. Speak to the children of Israel, saying:

- When you come to the Land that I am giving you, the Land should rest a Sabbath to God:

  2. You may sow your field for six years, and for six years you may prune your vineyard and gather in its produce, but in the seventh year, the Land should have a complete rest, a Sabbath to God. You should not sow your field, and you should not prune your vineyard.

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calls “Sinai,” since at this point in time it was camped in the Sinai Desert

(see Bamidbar 10:12).

So when Rashi writes, “The general laws and details of all the commandments were conveyed to Moshe at Sinai,” he is not making a statement which is only compatible with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, for “Sinai” here could refer to the Tent of Meeting—and even Rabbi Yishma’el maintained that “the general laws were said at Sinai, and the details were said in the Tent of Meeting” (in the Sinai Desert).

(Thus Rashi’s only innovation here is that none of the practical details of the mitzvos were said for the first time at the plains of Mo’av. They were said either on Mount Sinai, or next to Mount Sinai—before they traveled away (Bamidbar 10:12)—which is, according to R’ Yishma’el, at “Sinai,” i.e. in the Sinai Desert).

What forced Rashi, at the literal level, to interpret the expression “at Mount Sinai” to mean the Sinai Desert in general, rather than the mountain specifically?

A number of points could be argued: a.) If one takes the verse literally, that “God spoke to Moshe” while he was on the mountain itself, then it follows that our Parsha was actually said before the erection of the Tabernacle—as Rashi stated earlier, in Parshas Ki Sisa: “Once it was erected, God only spoke with him from the Tent of Meeting” (Rashi to Shemos 33:11). So, if Parshas Behar was said on Mount Sinai literally, it would turn out that this Parsha was actually said before the entire Book of Vayikra, and before the Tabernacle was erected (at the end of the Book of Shemos). Thus, Rashi preferred the explanation that “at Mount Sinai” means “in the desert at Mount Sinai” (which includes the Tent of Meeting), for then our Parsha follows in chronological order.

b.) R’ Akiva’s position, that God told Moshe all the practical details of the mitzvos while he was on Mount Sinai, is hard to accept at the literal level, since there is no indication in the Torah that all the communications from God to Moshe in the Tent of Meeting were merely a repetition of what He had said before. Therefore, Rashi interpreted the phrase “at Mount Sinai” to mean “in the desert at Mount Sinai,” so as to be compatible with the view of R’ Yishma’el, which is more acceptable at the literal level.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 276ff.)

**THE SABBATICAL YEAR AND MOUNT SINAI (v. 1)**

Rashi asks, “What is the connection between the concept of the Sabbatical Year and Mount Sinai?” He answers: “Just like the case of the Sabbatical year, whose general laws and details were all stated at Sinai, likewise, the general laws and details of all the other mitzvos were also said at Sinai.”

However, this begs the question: Why did the Torah choose the mitzvah of the Sabbatical year in particular to teach this principle in the case of “all the other mitzvos”?

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**The Last Word**

“The Land Should rest a Sabbath to God. You May Sow Your Field for Six Years...” (v. 2:3)

Similarly, in daily life there are those aspects which have to do with material preoccupations (to earn a livelihood, etc.) and “common” necessities, such as eating and drinking, etc.—all those aspects wherein there is “no pre-eminence in man over animal.” But there is also the area of “earthly rest”—of breaking away from mundane living. Here, too, the teaching of the Sabbatical year is that it is necessary to begin the day with the idea and approach that, although it may be necessary later in the day to engage in “mundane” activities, the essence and purpose of these things are—to attain a “Sabbath unto God.” In this way, even the mundane aspects will attain refinement and real content, while the aspects of holiness and Godliness will be intensified and elevated to a higher order. This is the way to attain a complete and harmonious life.

(Free translation of excerpts from a public letter written by the Rebbe during the Days of Selichos 5725)

* See Toras Menachem.
The Explanation

Of all the mitzvos given to the Jewish people, resting the soil during the Sabbatical year was one of the last precepts which was put into practical implementation. Being an agricultural mitzvah it was only observed after the Jewish people entered the Land, forty years after the giving of the Torah. Even then, many of the agricultural laws did not come into effect until the land was fully conquered and occupied by the Jewish people, fourteen years later. And, even at that point, the mitzvah of resting the soil would not have taken place for a further seven years; since the Sabbatical year only occurs after six years of work.

Thus, when the Torah was given at Mount Sinai, the mitzvah of resting the soil during the Sabbatical year was one of the last practically relevant mitzvos at the time. Therefore, the Torah taught us here that even the “details” of this mitzvah were said “at Sinai,” for if the details of the least practically relevant mitzvah at the time were said at Sinai, then it follows that the “details of all the other mitzvos were also said at Sinai.”

One problem with the above explanation is that there was a further precept which only became relevant after the Sabbatical year. This was the mitzvah of Hakhel, the gathering of the entire nation which occurred on the festival of Succos following the Sabbatical year (Devarim 31:10).

Since the Torah wanted to teach us that the details of even the least practically relevant mitzvah at the time were taught to Moshe at Sinai, why was the case of Hakhel not chosen?

The answer to this point is that while the mitzvah of Hakhel was indeed more distant in time from the giving of the Torah at Sinai, it is nevertheless more conceptually close. This is because one of the reasons for gathering the people together is to remind them of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai (see Rambam, Laws of Festival Offerings 3:6).

The mitzvah of resting on the Sabbatical year, however, is both distant from Sinai in both time and concept, because: a.) It was one of the last mitzvos to be performed, as explained above, and b.) It is a mitzvah connected with agriculture, a concept totally unrelated to a mountain found in a barren desert land.

So if even the details of this mitzvah were taught at Sinai, then we can be sure that the details of all the other mitzvos were taught there too.

(Based on Sichos Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukosai 5748)
5 You should not reap (for yourself) the aftergrowth of your (previous year’s) harvest (which sprouted on its own), and you should not pick the grapes which you had set aside (for yourself), for it will be a year of rest for the Land.

6 (The produce which grows on its own during) the Sabbath of the Land will be (ownerless, and thus available) to you to eat (equally with everybody else) – you, your male and female slaves, your (non-Jewish) hired worker and lodger who lives with you.

7 All of its produce may (be retained in your house to) be eaten by your domestic animals, (so long as there is sufficient produce remaining) in your Land for the wild animals.

THE JUBILEE YEAR

8 You should count for yourself seven Sabbatical years, seven years seven times. The days of these seven Sabbatical years will amount to forty-nine years for you.

9 The following year you should announce (the Jubilee Year with) shofar blasts, in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month. On the Day of Atonement, you should sound the shofar throughout your land.

10 (The court) should sanctify the (entire) period of the fiftieth year, and proclaim freedom throughout the land for all (the Hebrew slaves) who live on it. It will be (called) a “Jubilee (year)” for you.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

For whom is the “freedom” of the Jubilee Year? (v. 10)

Rashi: For [Hebrew] slaves. Whether he is one who had his ear pierced [because he chose to remain after six years of service, when a slave may go free – see Shemos 21:6] or one who had not served for six years since being sold [when the Jubilee arrives].

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THE RELEASE OF SLAVES DURING THE JUBILEE YEAR (v. 10)

The Torah states in Parshas Mishpatim: “If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall work for six years. But, in the seventh year, he is to be released without liability” (Shemos 21:2).

However: “If the slave says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children. I will not go free,’” his master shall bring him to the judges. Standing (the slave) next to a door (which is attached to) a doorpost, his master shall pierce his (right) ear with a pointed tool. He must then serve (his master) forever” (ibid. 21:5-6).

The Last Word

Although the lessons we learn from Shabbos and from the Sabbatical year are similar in many respects, there is a difference in the main concept which they stress:

Shabbos emphasizes mainly that God is the Creator of the world (“For in six days God made the heaven and the earth”—Shemos 20:11); the Sabbatical year accentuates mainly the fact that God is the Master of the world, now as at all times. Man must attest by his actions that he “owns nothing; but that everything is in the possession of the Master of all” (See Yevamos 63a).

In the Seventh Year the land owner renounces his ownership to these properties, in fulfillment of the Torah injunction: “(The produce which grows on its own during) the Sabbath of the land will be (ownerless, and thus available) to you to eat (equally with everybody else)—you, your male and female slaves etc.” (v. 6). Commenting on this verse, Rashi explains: “[God says]: I have not excluded these from your use or food, rather that you should not act as their proprietor, but everyone shall have equal right to them.”

In other words: The Sabbatical year emphasizes that although the Creator has given the earth to man, for food and use, he must remember that the real and permanent proprietor is God, as it is written, “The earth and everything in it belongs to God” (Psalms 24:1). In order to emphasize and reinforce this awareness at all times, so that it be actualized and implemented into daily life, God set aside the Seventh Year as a Shabbos-like year, when all work of the land ceases, during which period the proprietor no longer claims possession of these properties, but is on par with his servant, maid, etc. This is how a Jew attests to the fact that the true Master of the world is God.

(Free translation of excerpts from a public letter written on 6th of Tishrei 5733)
Rashi explains: “The reason that the ear is bored is because it is the ear that heard. ‘For the children of Israel are slaves to Me’ (below v. 55), and nevertheless went and acquired a master for himself, etc.”

Here in Parshas Behar, Rashi explains that upon the arrival of the Jubilee year all slaves go free, both those who had their ears pierced, and those who were in the middle of their six-year service.

Out of these two groups, the more surprising case is that of the slave whose ear was pierced. For the ordinary slave, who wants to go free (but

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Each person’s hereditary land (allotted to his ancestors when they first entered the Land of Israel) should return to his (possession, if it had been sold).*

(A Hebrew slave who chose to remain with his master indefinitely should return) to his family.

This fiftieth year will be a Jubilee for you (but it may not be extended further, into the next year).

Just like during a Sabbatical year you should not sow, you should not reap (for yourself) its aftergrowth or pick (its grapes) which you had set aside (for yourselves).**

Because it is Jubilee (if you sell produce from this year) your (money) will become (restricted as if it had been dedicated to the) Holy (Temple).

(Just like during the Sabbatical year) you may eat its produce (and retain it in your house, so long as it is still freely available for the wild animals) from the field.***

If a person (sells a field from) his hereditary land (and his son then buys it from the purchaser, the property) should be returned in the Jubilee year (to the father, who is its rightful owner).****

When you make a sale to your fellow Jew or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow Jew, you should not cheat one another: 15 When you buy (a field) from your fellow Jew he should sell it to you (at a price) based on the number of years since the (last) Jubilee (bearing in mind) the number of years of crops (that you will be able to reap from the land until you return it to him at the next Jubilee. 16 If) more years (remain), you should increase its purchase price, and if fewer years (remain), you should decrease its purchase price, because he is selling it to you (for a price based on the) number of crops (it can produce).

A person should not (verbally) harass his fellow Jew (or give him bad advice. Since nobody can know your true intentions, and you could always escape blame,) you must fear your God – for I am God, your God.

You should observe My suprarational commands, guard My rational commands and perform them, (but in the merit of keeping the Sabbatical & Jubilee years alone*****, the Jewish people) will live on the Land securely. 19 (If you keep all the mitzvos, then your own portion of) the Land will yield its fruit and you will eat to satisfaction, and live upon it securely (without fear of drought).

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** The Explanation

When the student of scripture reads about the concept of the Jubilee year for the first time, he will be struck by an obvious question: How can the Torah allow all slaves to go free at the Jubilee year, when the master has paid for the services of his slave? Surely the Torah is being unfair to the master?

In response to this problem, Rashi listed the two types of slaves in order of fairness to the master. The freeing of a slave who chose to stay with his master after six years is the most fair case, since the master only paid for six years of service, presuming that the slave would leave afterwards. Since the current period of service after six years was unpaid for, it is much less obvious that he is freed.

So why did Rashi write, “Whether he is one who had his ear pierced, or one who had not served for six years since being sold,” placing the less obvious case first?

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** Sparks of Chasidus

The purpose of the mitzvos is to fuse the infinite (Godliness) with the finite (the world). Thus, a Jew constantly fluctuates between six days of working in the finite world, and the day of Shabbos, when he lifts himself above worldly matters and dedicates the day to God.

However, the Sabbatical year actually represents a greater fusion of the infinite and finite than the weekly Shabbos. For on Shabbos a person is totally disconnected from worldly matters. During the Sabbatical year, however, a person may do work (except for field labor), but nevertheless that work is done with the heightened spiritual awareness of the Sabbatical year.

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* See below v. 13ff. ** See above, v. 5. ***See above, v. 7. ****See above v. 10. ***** See above v. 10.
Is the question in verse 20 an inquiry or a challenge?

Ohr HaChayim: The question in verse 20 could be understood in one of two ways: a) A challenge: If we do not sow crops then how will we possibly eat in the seventh year? Or, b) An inquiry: Since we will not be sowing crops, could you explain what our source of food will be?

At the literal level, the verse would appear to be an inquiry, like a child inquiring from his father. For if it would indeed be a challenge from a non-believer, God would not reply, “I will direct My blessing to you etc.” (v. 21).

Do the sixth year’s crops have to last for a full “three years”? (v. 20-22)

Rashi: [No. They must last for] part of the sixth year, from Nissan when the crops are reaped, until Rosh Hashanah; the entire seventh year; and [part of] the eighth year, for they will sow a new crop in Marcheshvan of the eighth year and reap it in Nissan.

[Thus God’s three-year blessing lasts] “until the ninth year” (v. 22), i.e. until the Festival of Succos in the ninth year, when the eighth year’s crop is brought into the house. For throughout the summer season, it is kept in granaries in the field, and in Tishrei the crop is gathered into the house.

There were occasions when it would need to yield for four years. Namely, in the sixth year preceding the seventh Sabbatical year [of a 49-year cycle], when they would refrain from doing work on the land for two consecutive years – the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year. Our verse, however, refers to normal Sabbatical years [where a blessing is only required for three years].

Abarbanel: According to Rashi’s understanding that the “three years” of blessing in our verse refers to a normal Sabbatical year, we are left with the question why this passage (v. 20-22) is recorded after the laws of the Jubilee Year, and not after the laws of a normal Sabbatical year (i.e. after v. 7 above)?

Rather, a better explanation is that the “three years” of blessing refers to the seventh cycle of Sabbatical years, where the Jubilee year follows straight on from the Sabbatical Year. Therefore three years of blessing are required, to cover the Sabbatical year, the Jubilee Year and the following year until the crops are harvested.

God’s Additional Blessing (v. 20-22)

After discussing the laws of the Sabbatical Year (v. 1-7) and the Jubilee Year (v. 8-16), and describing the blessings of security and fruitful crops that will come as a result of observing these mitzvos (v. 18-19), the Torah discusses the question, “What will we eat in the seventh year, if we will not sow, and we will not (even) gather our produce (into) the (house from the crops which grow on their own)?” (v. 20).

God answers, “I will direct My blessing to you in the sixth year, and it will yield produce (sufficient) for three years” (v. 21).

There is a dispute between Rashi and Abarbanel as to which case this “three year” blessing refers to. Rashi understood that it referred to a normal Sabbatical year (which is not followed by a Jubilee year), and thus the “three years” consist of part of the sixth year (after the crop is harvested), the whole Sabbatical year, and part of the eighth year (until the new crop is harvested).

Abarbanel criticized Rashi’s approach, arguing that if verses 20-22 were a clarification of God’s blessing during a normal Sabbatical year, then this discussion should have been recorded immediately after the laws of the normal Sabbatical year, i.e. after verses 1-7. Its inclusion here, after the laws of the Jubilee year, suggests strongly that we are speaking of “three years” that include the Jubilee too.

How would Rashi respond to Abarbanel’s criticism?

The Explanation

Ohr Hachayim asks whether the question in verse 20 (“What will we eat in the seventh year, if we will not sow” etc.) represents a challenge from a non-believer, or an inquiry from a person who does not make his
20 When you will say*: “What will we eat in the seventh year, if we will not sow, and we will not (even) gather our produce (into) the (house from the crops which grow on their own)?” 21 You should know that I will direct My blessing to you in the sixth year, and it will yield produce (sufficient) for three years. 22 You will sow in the eighth year, while (still) eating from the old crops until the (Festival of Succos in) the ninth year. You will be eating the old (crops) until the (new) crops arrive (from the harvest).

Redemption of Hereditary Land & Property

- 23 The Land should not be sold permanently, because the Land belongs to Me; since you are strangers and residents with Me.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

- What does it mean that “the Land belongs to Me”? (v. 23)
  RASHI: Do not begrudge [returning it to its rightful owner at the Jubilee], because the Land does not belong to you.

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Observance conditional on his understanding, and simply wishes to understand how he will survive during the Sabbatical year.

At the literal level there is a significant difference when a question is asked depending on whether it is a challenge or an inquiry. A challenge tends to be launched immediately, as soon as the listener finds a concept difficult to accept. On the other hand, a person who is accepting will tend to make his inquiry after he has been given all the information available, if a matter remains that he cannot comprehend.

Thus, at the literal level, it is not a problem that the question “What will we eat in the seventh year?” was not recorded immediately after the discussion about the normal Sabbatical year (and it only appears after the discussion of the Jubilee year), for Rashi would answer that this teaches us that the question is meant as an inquiry and not as a challenge.

However, this begs the question: How did Rashi expect the reader to realize the above difference between an inquiry and a challenge without the matter being explained?

Rashi did not feel there was any need for further clarification here, since Rashi had already explained the difference between these two types of questions on an earlier occasion.

In Parshas Bo, Rashi discusses the “four sons” about whom the Torah speaks: the simple son, the wicked son, the one who does not know how to ask, and the wise son (see Rashi to Shemos 13:14, and 12:26). The wise son and the simple son accept the precepts of Judaism, and thus only ask questions in the form of an inquiry, i.e. to gain information and understanding. The wicked son, on the other hand, asks his question in the form of a challenge.

Thus, since the reader has already been familiarized with these two types of question—the inquiry and the challenge—from the case of the four sons, Rashi deemed it unnecessary to repeat the matter here. Rashi presumes the reader will understand without any help that our verse speaks of an inquiry, since it comes at the very end of the passage, after the promises of blessings (v. 18-19). The question is therefore an inquiry, as if to say, “In which manner will the blessing come?”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 183ff.)

God’s Ownership of the Land (v. 23)

In verse 23, we read the prohibition of selling any part of the Land of Israel “permanently,” i.e. for eternal possession, since the Torah mandates that all lands must be returned to their original owners at the Jubilee year (see above, v. 10, 13). The verse states that the reason why this Land may not be sold permanently is because “the Land belongs to Me (God).”

However, this begs the question: Ultimately the Land belongs to God regardless of whom its mortal owner may be. So why may Mr. A not sell his land to Mr. B permanently because “the Land belongs to Me”? Surely God would also own the Land if Mr. B had bought it?

To answer this question Rashi explains that the words “the Land belongs to Me” are not an explanation why the Land may not be sold “permanently.” Rather, they are words of consolation to the purchaser, who must return the land which he bought at the Jubilee year: “Do not begrudge [returning it to its rightful owner at the Jubilee], because the Land does not belong to you.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, pp. 189-190)
אלחיה כשאמרת את הכתובות, ראה שהיה אברך שלום. כתובות קהל הקדש.

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 אלחיה כשאמרת את הכתובות, ראה שהיה אברך שלום. כתובות קהל הקדש.
Throughout the Land which you possess, (it is a mitzvah) to redeem land (as follows):

- **25** (Only) if your fellow Jew becomes destitute (may he) sell some (but not all) of his hereditary land. (If this happens) his close relative should come as his advocate and (buy the land back from the purchaser, thus) redeeming his relative’s (undesirable) sale.

- **26** If a man does not have a (close relative who is able to act as) an advocate, but he (later) becomes wealthy enough to afford its redemption, **27** he should calculate the number of years for which the land has been sold (causing its devaluation*), and give back the balance to the man whom he sold it to. He can then return to his hereditary land.

- **28** If he cannot find sufficient funds to repay (the purchaser), then what he sold will remain in the possession of its purchaser until the Jubilee year (approaches. Before) the Jubilee year (begins) the hereditary land will leave (the purchaser’s possession) and return to its (rightful owner).

- **29** (Unlike hereditary land, which may not be redeemed within two years of its sale), when a man sells (hereditary property consisting of) a residential house in a walled city, it may be redeemed until one year after its sale has elapsed. Its (period of possible) redemption should be a full year.

- **30** If it is not redeemed by the end of a complete year, then that house which is in the walled city will be transferred absolutely to its purchaser (to be passed down) to his descendants. It will not leave (his possession) in the Jubilee, (unless the Jubilee year arrives within a year of the purchase).

- **31** Houses in open cities which do not have a surrounding wall have a similar law to a field of the Land: (such a house) may be redeemed (at any time) and will leave (the purchaser’s possession) in the Jubilee year.

- **32** (Regarding) the (forty-eight) cities (given to) the levites:

  - The houses of their inherited cities will forever have a (right of immediate) redemption for the levites (unlike the houses of non-levites in walled cities which lose their right of redemption after a year**).

  - **33** If one purchases from the leviite either a house or an inherited city, it will leave (the possession of the purchaser) in the Jubilee year, because (the levites were not given land to inherit, only cities; therefore) the houses in the levites’ cities (have the same law as) hereditary land among the (other) children of Israel—(it never loses its right of redemption**).

  - **34** (If a leviite consecrates) a field in the open areas of their cities (to the Holy Temple and it is sold by the Temple treasurer) it cannot change hands (absolutely, i.e. the leviite will always be able to redeem it), because (these cities) are their eternal inheritance.

However, the question still remains: how can it be said that “the Land does not belong to you,” when God gave the Land of Israel to the Jewish people?

In answer to this question, the verse continues: “since you are strangers and residents with Me,” i.e. before the Jewish people entered the Land of Israel, they certainly did not own the Land, and are thus described as “strangers.” And even after they entered the Land and inhabited it, God still refers to them as “residents with Me,” as if to say that the ownership of the Land is shared between man and God.

Thus, when Rashi writes, “Do not begrudge [returning it to its rightful owner at the Jubilee], because the Land does not belong to you,” he means to say that the Land does not fully belong to the Jewish people, since its ownership is shared with God. Therefore, none of the Land may be sold “permanently,” since God will not allow any of his “partners” to sell the land permanently.

Thus, in the final analysis, our verse reads: “The Land should not be sold permanently. Do not begrudge (returning it to its rightful owner at the Jubilee) because the Land belongs to Me—since (before you occupy it) you are strangers (to it, and even after) you live in it (you are still only joint owners) with Me.”

(But on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar-Bechukosai 5745)

*See above v. 14-16. **See above v. 29-30.
MIDRASHI: On verse 42: "They should not be sold as slaves."

HARIB: [God says:] "They should not be sold by public announcement, saying, 'For (the Jewish people) are My slaves, whom I brought out of Egypt,' on the condition that they should not be sold as slaves."

RASHI: God says: Their contract with Me came first. And the Jewish people, whom I brought out of Egypt, to be My slaves and not yours, so you do not have the right to work them with slave labor.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

How are the Jewish people “My servants”? (v. 42)

RASHI: [God says:] “Their contract with Me came first.”

What does “They should not be sold as slaves” mean?

RASHI: They should not be sold by public announcement, saying, "Here is a slave for sale!" Nor may one stand him on an auction block.

TORAS KOHANIM: [The two halves of verse 42 are connected:] “They are My slaves, whom I brought out of Egypt,” on the condition that “they should not be sold as slaves.”

The Jewish Slave (v. 42)

Rashi and Toras Kohanim differed in their understanding of verse 42. Toras Kohanim perceived the two halves of the verse as being one single statement. “For (the Jewish people) are My slaves, whom I brought out of Egypt,” on the condition that “they not be sold as slaves.” In other words, Toras Kohanim saw verse 42 as a general explanation for all of the laws in the current passage which limit the extent to which a Hebrew slave may be worked. Effectively, God is saying, “I took the Jewish people out of Egypt to be My slaves and not yours, so you do not have the right to work them with slave labor.”

Rashi however rejected this interpretation. He perceived the verse to be divided into two distinct halves. First, we are told, “For (the Jewish people) are My slaves, whom I brought out of Egypt.” Yisrael is perceived as the two halves of the verse as being one single block.

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Here is a slave for sale!” Nor may one stand him on an auction block.
Prohibitions Against Taking Interest

- **35** If your fellow among you becomes needy and his hand is wavering, you should support him (before he becomes completely destitute) so that he can live with you – even if he is a convert or a resident (non-Jewish) alien, (provided he is not an idol-worshiper). **36** You should not take interest from him, (for taking) interest (is a double sin. While this may be difficult for you) you should fear your God, and (help) your fellow to live with you. **37** You should not lend him your money with interest, nor should you lend your food with interest. **38** I am God, your God, who took you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the Land of Canaan, (and) to be a God to you.

Laws of Jewish Slaves that are Owned by Jews

- **39** If your fellow among you becomes needy, and he is sold to you (as a slave), do not make him do demeaning labor. **40** He should (be treated by) you like an employee or a (hired) resident.
- **41** He should work with you (for six years or) until the Jubilee year (whichever comes first), and then he should leave you. He (should leave) along with his children. He should return to his family and resume the (dignified) status of his ancestors.
- **42** For (the Jewish people) are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. They should not be sold as slaves.
- **43** You should not burden him with (unnecessary) labor (merely to torment him), and you should fear your God.

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people) are My slaves, whom I brought out of Egypt,” i.e. a general statement. But, in the second half of the verse, the subject changes to a very specific law. The words “they should not be sold as slaves” teaches us, “They should not be sold by public announcement, saying, ‘Here is a slave for sale!’ Nor may one stand him on an auction block.”

This begs the question: Why is the technical detail about not selling a Jewish slave on an auction block placed in the same verse alongside the general principle that “(the Jewish people) are My slaves, whom I brought out of Egypt”?

Two possible answers could be suggested:

a.) Standing a person on an auction block is a most degrading experience for a slave. Thus, it is a most blatant violation of the principle that the Jewish people “are My slaves.”

b.) The sale of a slave is his entry into slavery. Therefore, this detail was chosen as a contrast to the concept that the Jewish people are “My slaves.”

Nevertheless, the explanation of Toras Kohanim appears to be much more straightforward at the literal level. Why did Rashi reject the interpretation* that the entire verse is a general statement, and opt instead for a seemingly more tenuous argument that the verse switches from the general to the particular midway?

The Explanation

In the current passage (v. 39-46), we read various laws that limit the extent to which a Hebrew slave may be worked. The reason why the Torah limits the type of work which may be demanded from a Hebrew slave could be understood in one of two ways:

- **39** If your fellow among you becomes needy, and he is sold to you (as a slave), do not make him do demeaning labor. **40** He should (be treated by) you like an employee or a (hired) resident.
- **41** He should work with you (for six years or) until the Jubilee year (whichever comes first), and then he should leave you. He (should leave) along with his children. He should return to his family and resume the (dignified) status of his ancestors.
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Sparks of Chasidus

“YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE INTEREST” (v. 36)

When a person lends money at interest, he wishes his money to work for him to bring in revenue, without making any effort himself.

This opposes the very notion of Torah and mitzvos. God gave us laws which require a tremendous effort on the part of man, for an unearned glory is not a glory at all. Ultimately, the requirement of effort is for our own benefit, so that our achievements should not be mere “bread of shame” which we do not truly appreciate. To be meaningful, even spiritual “revenue” must be earned by active involvement.

*(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 3, pp. 1010-2)*
Thus, it follows that in being enslaved to another Jew, one is merely being enslaved to a hired worker. Therefore, the master who buys the slave is also a hired worker. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, we are left with the question: How can a Jew become a slave (approach 'b' above)?

The answer to this is simply that the master who buys the slave is also a slave himself. However, Rashi maintained* that, at the literal level, a Jew can become a slave (approach 'b' above). Therefore, he could not render the second half of our verse that "they should not be sold as slaves" literally (that the Jewish people cannot be sold as slaves, because they are God's slaves). Therefore, Rashi was forced to interpret the second half of the verse as a separate law in itself: "They should not be sold by public announcement, saying, 'Here is a slave for sale!' Nor may one stand him on an auction block."

Nevertheless, in the final analysis, we are left with the question: How could Rashi maintain that, at the literal level, a Jew could be sold as a slave if, in truth every Jew is a slave of God alone—"they are My slaves"?

* See Likutei Sichos vol. 32, p. 164 for a number of proofs.

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Toras Kohanim took approach 'a,' that a Jewish slave is not a slave at all, but a hired worker. Therefore, Toras Kohanim was able to render verse 42 as one single, general statement: "Since they are My slaves, whom I brought out of Egypt, they cannot become slaves to anybody else. Therefore I brought them out on the condition that they should not be sold as slaves, and even if they are sold, they will not become true slaves."

However Rashi maintained* that, at the literal level, a Jew can become a slave (approach 'b' above). Therefore, he could not render the second half of our verse that "they should not be sold as slaves" literally (that the Jewish people cannot be sold at all as slaves, because they are God's slaves). Therefore, Rashi was forced to interpret the second half of the verse as a separate law in itself: "They should not be sold by public announcement, saying, 'Here is a slave for sale!' Nor may one stand him on an auction block."

Nevertheless, in the final analysis, we are left with the question: How could Rashi maintain that, at the literal level, a Jew could be sold as a slave if, in truth every Jew is a slave of God alone—"they are My slaves"?

The answer to this is simply that the master who buys the slave is also a "slave of God," by virtue of the fact that God took him out of Egypt. Thus, it follows that in being enslaved to another Jew, one is merely being enslaved to a person who himself is enslaved to God — in the spirit of the saying, "A slave of the King is like the King" (Rashi to Bereishis 16:18).

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 32, pp. 162-5)
• **44** (However) you may acquire a male or female slave from the nations that are around you(r Land and work these) male or female slaves that you have (with harsh labor). **45** You may also acquire (slaves for harsh labor) from the (non-Jewish) immigrants that live among you (who came to marry Canaanite women), and from their families that (live) with you in your Land, where they were born. These (slaves) will remain yours as a permanent possession. **46** You should hold onto them as an inheritance for your children after you, as acquired property, (and) they will serve you indefinitely. But (when dealing with slaves from) your brothers, the children of Israel, a person should not work his brother with harsh labor.

## Laws of Jewish Slaves that are Owned by non-Jews

**47** If a resident (non-Jewish) alien gains wealth (by being associated) with you, and your fellow Jew becomes needy (by being associated) with him (and his non-Jewish customs), and (the Jew) is sold to a resident (non-Jewish) alien (who lives) among you, or to (the maintenance of) idols, or to an idol worshiper—**48** (then) as soon as he is sold, he should be redeemed. One of his fellow (Jews) should redeem him, **49** or his uncle or his cousin should redeem him, or another close relative from his family should redeem him; or, if his own hand will acquire (wealth), he should redeem (himself).

**50** He should calculate with his purchaser (the period) from the year when he was sold to him until the Jubilee year (when he would have been freed). The purchase price should then be (divided) by the number of years (to arrive at a yearly cost), as if he were a hired worker on a daily basis. **51** (Thus,) if there are still many years (until the Jubilee year), the redemption money that he returns (to his master) should be in proportion to (the work that he had already carried out, deducted from) the amount for which he was (originally) sold. **52** If only a few years remain...

## Classic Questions

**Is it appropriate to give a non-Jewish slave harsh labor? (v. 44-45)**

**Rambam:** While this may be legally permissible, kindness and intelligence dictate that a person should be merciful and pursue justice. Therefore, he should not overburden his slave or distress him, and he should feed him with all types of food and drink.

The Sages of old used to feed their slaves from every single dish that they were eating, and they would feed their animals and slaves first before feeding themselves... One should not be too loud or get angry with them. Rather, one should speak with them gently, and listen to their complaints.

**Working a Non-Jewish Slave (v. 44-45)**

**Rambam**’s comments prompt the following questions:

1.) The Torah forbids cruelty to animals, and according to many opinions this is a Biblical prohibition. So, how could the Torah sanction cruelty to a non-Jewish slave, even though it is “recommended” not to?

2.) Why does Rambam compare the feeding of a person’s slave to the feeding of his animal? (Especially, as this comparison is not mentioned in the Talmud—Brachos 40a.)

**The Explanation**

*Rambam* indicates an answer to these problems with the statement, “Kindness and intelligence dictate that a person should be sympathetic”:

Intelligence alone would be insufficient for a person to come to the conclusion that he must feed his animals before himself. For, a person could reason that his animals are inferior to him, and that God made them to assist man, so it makes sense that a person eat before feeding his animals. Therefore, *Rambam* writes, “kindness and intelligence dictate that a person should be merciful and pursue justice”—for intelligence alone might suggest otherwise.

Similarly with a slave: Logic alone may reason that it is permissible to overwork a slave. For a master might think that if he is too easy on the slave, the latter will slack off and not do his work properly. Therefore, it might seem appropriate to overburden the slave from time to time in order to remind him that he is a slave.

Since intellect alone may come to the conclusion that an excess of unnecessary or overburdening work would be the best thing for a slave, *Rambam* stresses that it is through the attribute of kindness and compassion that a person will realize that overburdening a slave is wrong. Only a person’s quality of kindness will lead him to feed his slave before he feeds himself.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 37, p. 72ff.)
To whom is verse 1 speaking?

Rashi: It is addressed to one who has been sold [as a slave] to a non-Jew, that he should not say, “Since my master has illicit relations, I will also be like him! Since my master worships idols, I will also be like him! Since my master desecrates Shabbos, I will also be like him!” This is why these verses [6:1-2] are stated here.

Malbim: In other words even though it is difficult for a Jew to keep the mitzvos while in the house of a non-Jew, he should not learn from his master’s actions to cast off the yoke of mitzvos that is upon him.

A Jewish Slave in a Non-Jewish Environment (v. 1-2)

Rashi writes that the warnings in verses 1 and 2 are addressed to the Jew who is sold as a slave to a non-Jew, and might be tempted to follow his master’s ways.

Malbim suggests that the Jewish slave might learn from his non-Jewish master to cast off the yoke of mitzvos completely. However, the fact that Rashi specifies three examples in particular—illicit relations, idol worship and Shabbos desecration—suggests strongly that the concern is about these three cases in particular.

We therefore need to explain why being sold as a slave to a non-Jew might lead a person to transgress these three specific sins.

The Explanation

When a Jew is sold into slavery to a non-Jewish master, he has a moral and contractual obligation to serve his master. Therefore he may reason

that the Torah does not require him to observe the mitzvos in an instance where the observance would compromise his ability to fulfill his obligations to his master. In other words, the fact that the Torah classifies him as a "slave" means that the Torah itself requires him to serve his master properly, and thus he is exempted from those mitzvos which prevent him from doing so.

Rashi cites three cases where such a scenario might arise:

a.) “Since my master worships idols, I will also be like him!”

Idol worship can fall into one of two categories: i.) Absolute idol worship, where a person believes that God has abandoned the earth and left it under the control of other forces. ii.) “Collaboration,” where the person believes that God is in charge of the world, but that He has delegated some control to intermediaries (see Rambam, Laws of Idol Worship chap. 1, cited in Classic Questions to Bereishis 4:26).

A Jew is prohibited from all forms of idol worship. But a non-Jew, according to many opinions, is only forbidden from “absolute” idol worship. For him, collaboration is permitted (see Rema, Orach Chayim ch. 156).

Rashi is referring here to a non-Jewish master who worships idols in the manner of “collaboration.” On seeing this, his Jewish slave may argue: “Since collaboration is permitted for my master, and I am enslaved to him, then surely it is permitted for me too!”

(On the other hand, if the master was involved in genuine idol-worship, which is forbidden even for a non-Jew, the above argument would not follow).

b.) “Since my master desecrates Shabbos, I will also be like him.”

A non-Jew is forbidden to rest on Shabbos (Sanhedrin 58b). Therefore, his Jewish slave may reason that since his master is obligated to work on Shabbos, likewise his slave is required to serve him.

c.) “Since my master has illicit relations, I will also be like him!”

As in the above cases, we are speaking here of a specific type of illicit relations. In Parshas Re’eh, Rashi writes, “A Hebrew slave works both by day and by night, double the amount of labor carried out by a day-worker. What is his service during the night? His master gives him a Cana’anite maidservant [as a wife] and the offspring belong to the master” (Devarim 15:18).

Since the Jewish slave is required in such a case to marry a non-Jewish woman, he may reason that he is permitted to have relations where it would otherwise be prohibited.

Thus, to counteract all of the above notions, the Torah stated explicitly* in verses 1-2 that the Jewish slave may not compromise his observance of any of the mitzvos whatsoever.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar 5725; Likutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 177ff.)

The status of the Jewish people in exile is compared to that of being sold into slavery to non-Jewish masters (see Esther 7:4). In such a difficult situation a Jew may argue: “How can I possibly keep all the mitzvos when I have to live in a predominantly non-Jewish world?”

Nevertheless, just as the Jewish slave is required to keep all the mitzvos even in the house of his non-Jewish master, likewise, the Jewish people have been given the strength from God not to be perturbed by the challenges of the non-Jewish world, and to observe all of the mitzvos with pride.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Behar 5725)

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* Nevertheless, the prohibition of illicit relations was not recorded explicitly in these verses, since the Jewish slave is required to marry a non-Jewish woman upon the instructions of his master. Rashi informs us, however, that this sanction should not be extended to apply to other cases too.
Parshas Behar contains 7 positive mitzvos and 17 prohibitions

1. Not to work the earth during the Sabbatical year [25:4].
2. Not to do any work with trees during the Sabbatical year [25:4].
3. Not to harvest that which grows wild during the Sabbatical year [25:5].
4. Not to gather the fruit of the tree during the Sabbatical year in the way that it is gathered every year [25:5].
5. Counting seven cycles of seven years [25:8].
6. Sounding the shofar on the Day of Atonement of the Jubilee year [25:9,10].
7. Sanctifying the Jubilee year [25:10].
8. Not to work the Land during the Jubilee year [25:11].
9. Not to harvest produce that grows wild during the Jubilee year [25:5].
10. Not to gather the fruit of trees during the Jubilee year in the manner that it is gathered in other years [25:11].
11. To enact justice between buyer and seller [25:14].
12. Not to wrong another in buying and selling [25:14].
14. Not to sell a field in the Land of Israel permanently [25:23].
15. To return land in the Land of Israel to its original owners at the Jubilee year [25:24].
16. To redeem inherited property in a city up until a year (from its sale) [25:29].
17. Not to alter the open land around the cities of the levites, or their fields [25:34].
18. Not to charge interest when lending to a Jew [25:37].
19. Not to make a Hebrew slave do demeaning work, like a Cana’anite slave [25:39].
20. Not to sell a Hebrew slave on an auction block [25:42].
21. Not to work a Hebrew slave with hard labor [25:43].
22. To keep a Cana’anite slave permanently [25:46].
23. Not to allow a Hebrew slave to be overworked by his non-Jewish master [25:53].
24. Not to bow down to the ground on a figured stone, even in worship to God [26:1].
Our Parsha begins, “If you pursue My laws (Bechukosai).” Rashi explains: “This means that one must toil in the study of Torah.”

In other words, this does not refer to the basic requirement to observe the mitzvos—for that is mentioned in the second half of the verse, “guard My commands and observe them.” Rather, we learn here that in addition to basic observance one should immerse oneself in the mitzvos with the utmost dedication—“one must toil” both “in the study of Torah” and likewise with all the other mitzvos.

So, the term Bechukosai represents a higher level of keeping the mitzvos where a person uses all of his energy and concentration.

To stress this point further, Chasidic thought explains that BeCHuKosai is a derivative of the term CHaKikah, which means “engraving.” For, unlike ink, which is used to write on paper, engraved words are written in stone, i.e. the words and the stone become fused into one single entity.

Likewise, if a person totally immerses himself in the observance of a mitzvah, he and the mitzvah are no longer two separate entities, but one.

The above point, that Bechukosai teaches us a lesson about observing all the mitzvos in the best and most perfect manner, is a unique quality which we do not find by the name of any other Parsha.

Parshas Mishpatim only speaks about the rational laws, and Parshas Chukas takes its name from one mitzvah in particular, the red heifer, rather than the concept of mitzvos in general. Only Parshas Bechukosai teaches us a general message about observing all the mitzvos in the best possible manner.

Thus Parshas Bechukosai is a fitting end to the Book of Vayikra, a book which stresses the observance of mitzvos more than any other book of the Torah, simply by virtue of the fact that Vayikra contains more laws and less narrative than the other four books of the Torah.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai 5749)
Why does the Torah only mention physical rewards for observing the mitzvos? (v. 1-13)

**Rambam:** The main reward for observing the mitzvos is not mentioned here at all. Rather, here God is merely promising to remove physical obstacles that interfere with the observance of the mitzvos. The Torah does not mention any rewards at all, since a person is supposed to observe the mitzvos for the sake of Heaven, and not in order to reap reward (Laws of Teshuvah 9:1, according to Kli Yakar).

**Ibn Ezra:** Since a person cannot understand spiritual rewards, the Torah did not specify them (Devarim 32:39).

**Bachaye:** The Torah mentions physical rewards because they are miraculous. For example, rain does not naturally fall when a person observes mitzvos. By contrast, the spiritual rewards for the soul in the next world are a natural consequence of the mitzvos observed in this world. Thus, the Torah only mentions the more surprising supernatural rewards, and not the obvious, natural ones.

**Kuzari:** The Torah specifies these rewards for the skeptic who denies that everything is orchestrated by God. In order to convince the skeptic, physical proofs are more effective (8:104-6).

**Sa'adia Ga'on:** Before the Torah was given, the Jewish people were idol-worshippers who believed that their physical needs were provided by their idols. Thus, when the Torah was given, forbidding idol worship, it was necessary to explain how people would obtain their physical needs (Emunos Vede'os).

**Ran:** The Torah does state that a person is given spiritual reward for observing the mitzvos, below in verses 11-12 (Drashos).

**Ikarim:** The physical rewards mentioned here, such as rain, are for the nation as a whole, since rain does not fall for each individual according to his actions, but according to the deeds of the majority. Spiritual rewards, however, are bestowed to each individual according to his actions (4:40; See also Ramban to 11:13; the above seven opinions are cited and explained by Kli Yakar to v. 12; See Sparks of Chasidus).

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**Sparks of Chasidus**

**The Physical Rewards of the Torah (v. 1-13)**

A person’s dedication to Torah and mitzvos should be to the extent that Torah and mitzvos are not merely an important aspect of his life. Rather, a Jew should feel that the Torah and its mitzvos are his very life, i.e. that his goals are all part of and one with the Torah’s value system.

The Talmud expresses this point with an analogy: “Man is like the fish of the sea. For just as the fish of the sea die as soon as they come on dry land, likewise man will die if he separates himself from Torah and mitzvos” (Avodah Zarah 3b).

When a person has such a thorough commitment to Judaism, there will cease to be a dichotomy between his physical and spiritual life. For so long as the person sees Torah and mitzvos as merely the spiritual “side” of his life and his physical pursuits as separate, he has not succeed in becoming entirely united with the Torah, like the fish who live exclusively in water and are entirely dependent on it. But when the person adopts the view that his only value system is that of the Torah, then even basic acts of eating, sleeping and recreation will be carried out as an integral part of his Torah lifestyle.

It is for this reason that the Torah chose to emphasize physical, rather than spiritual rewards (see Classic Questions). For since a reward is granted “measure for measure,” as a direct consequence of a person’s actions, a stress on spiritual rewards might give the mistaken impression that the Torah is only addressed to our spiritual and not our physical lives. In truth, however, the Torah is our very essence, so it addresses even the most external part of our lives. And it is in order to emphasize this point that the stress here is on physical rewards.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 37, pp. 82-3)
Blessings for Observing the Mitzvos

26:3 If you pursue (the study of) My laws (in order to) guard My commands and observe them, then I will give you rain at (a convenient) time, the Land will yield its produce, and, (in the future, even) the (non-fruit-bearing) trees of the field will produce fruit. You will be (busy) with threshing until the grape-harvest, and the grape harvest will keep you (busy) until the sowing season. You will be satisfied with (even a small amount of) your bread, and you will live safely in your Land.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Which “trees of the field will produce fruit”? (v. 4)
   RASHI: This refers to non-fruit-bearing trees, which will bear fruit in the future [Messianic Era].
   RAMBAM: Do not allow yourself to become excited that in the Messianic Era any aspect of the natural order will change, or that there will be any change in the fabric of creation. Rather, the world will continue as normal.
   When Isaiah said, “The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat” (Isaiah 11:6), his words were intended as a metaphor and a riddle, meaning to say that the Jewish people will dwell securely together with the wicked nations who are likened to wolves and leopards. Similarly, other prophecies of this nature concerning Mashiach are metaphors. In the Era of the King Mashiach, everyone will realize what was implied by these metaphors and allusions [Laws of Kings 12:1].
   TALMUD: R. Alexandri said: R. Yehoshua pointed out a contradiction between two verses: One verse states [about Mashiach], “He will come on heavenly clouds” (Daniel 7:13), while another verse states [that Mashiach will be], “a poor man riding on a donkey” (Zech. 9:9).
   [The answer is that]: If they have merits he will come on heavenly clouds. If not, he will be a poor man riding on a donkey (Sanhedrin 98a).

“THE TREES OF THE FIELD WILL PRODUCE FRUIT”? (v. 4)

In his comment to verse 4, Rashi takes the position that the Messianic Era will witness changes in the fabric of creation, and trees which do not currently bear fruit, “will bear fruit.”

This appears to differ from the position of Rambam that the Messianic Era will not introduce any change in the natural order and that “the world will continue as normal.”

At first glance, we might argue that Rashi and Rambam are speaking about the two different cases described by the Talmud:

Rambam is describing a Messianic redemption where the Jewish people do “not have merits” and therefore Mashiach comes without breaking the laws of nature—“riding on a donkey.” Rashi, however, is speaking about a case where the Jewish people “have merits” and thus the redemption is associated with miracles—“on heavenly clouds.”

However, this begs the question: Rambam’s comment was written as a legal ruling (halacha). How could he possibly rule that the Jewish people will be lacking in merits at the time of the coming of Mashiach? Surely, the merit of the Jewish people is something dependent on their own free choice, and cannot be decided beforehand?

THE EXPLANATION

Rambam was not attempting to describe what will actually happen in the Messianic Era, for man’s free choice will dictate how the Messianic Era will unfold, as explained above. Rather, Rambam’s intention was to clarify the purpose of Mashiach’s coming, from a halachic point of view.

In the previous chapter of his “Laws of Kings,” Rambam explains at length that, in Jewish thought, the Mashiach is not a person who frees the Jewish people from the observance of mitzvos, God forbid. To the contrary, he is a person who leads the Jewish people towards the observance of Torah and mitzvos. And this ultimately climaxes in a scenario where the Jewish people are observing all the mitzvos (for which it is necessary for them to live in the Land of Israel, with the Temple rebuilt etc.), a situation which is called “redemption.”

In other words, the Messianic process has a very strict definition in Jewish Law: it is a process that leads the entire Jewish people to freely observe all the mitzvos. The other Messianic phenomena of world peace, an end to persecution and disease, and emigration to the Land of Israel etc., are not ends in themselves, but rather, necessary steps towards the single goal of returning to full Torah observance. For example, a person can only observe the mitzvos properly if he is well, and he can only perform certain mitzvos if he lives in the Land of Israel, etc.

From this it follows that miracles will play no direct role in the Messianic process, for a fundamental principle of the Torah is that mitzvos must be performed in the natural order, and not via miracles. Thus Rambam wrote, “Do not allow yourself to become excited that in the Messianic Era any aspect of the natural order will change, etc.” because this is not the point of Mashiach’s coming.

Nevertheless, Rambam was not ruling out the possibility that miracles would indeed occur, for Rambam certainly accepted the fact that ultimately the dead would be resurrected. Rather, he was simply making a halachic ruling that miracles play no part in the Messianic redemption itself. The blossoming of fruit from a non-fruit-bearing tree, for example, would simply be an affectionate “gesture” from God in response to the additional merits which the Jewish people had accumulated, and not an integral part of the Messianic return to total mitzvah observance.

Thus, the comments of Rashi and Rambam are compatible with one another. Rashi is describing an example of the miracles which may occur with the Messianic redemption if the Jewish people merit it. Rambam, on the other hand is stressing that even if such miracles do occur, they are not part of the Messianic process itself.

FURTHER RECONCILIATION BETWEEN RAMBAM & RASHI

Based on the above, it could be argued that even according to Rambam, miraculous occurrences such as those described by Rashi will inevitably occur at some point in the future. For even if Mashiach arrives naturally, without special merit from the Jewish people, it is inevitable that the merits of the Jewish people will eventually accumulate during the
Rashi: “I will turn away from all My affairs to pay your reward.”

What is this analogous to? To [the story of] a king who hired some workers, which is taught in Torah Kohanim.

TORAS KOHANIM: A king hired some workers, and only one of them worked for him for a long time, while all the others did not. When they came to receive payment, the king quickly paid the others a small amount, whereas to the one who had worked a long time, he said, “They worked only a little for me, but I must now turn my attention to you, to calculate the substantial amount that I owe you.”

Likewise, God will quickly pay the nations the small amount He owes them for their few good deeds, and then He will turn His attention to you, to calculate the substantial amount that I owe you.”

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Where will God “turn”? (v. 9)

Rashi: “I will turn away from all My affairs to pay your reward.”

What is this analogous to? To [the story of] a king who hired some workers, which is taught in Torah Kohanim.

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Likewise, God will quickly pay the nations the small amount He owes them for their few good deeds, and then He will turn His attention, as it were, to the Jewish people, to calculate their great reward (26:11).

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Messianic Era itself. Thus it is inevitable, even according to Rambam, that at some point God will be sufficiently satisfied with the Jewish people that He will choose to shower them with miracles, as an affectionate “gesture.” (Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 191ff.)

“Where will God ‘turn?’” (v. 9)

Rashi’s comment to verse 9 prompts the following questions:

a.) What forced Rashi to cite the analogy from Torah Kohanim about “a king who hired some workers.” Surely, Rashi’s comment is straightforward without this addition?
In fact, on two earlier occasions, Rashi has interpreted the phrase, “I will turn” to mean “I will turn away from all My affairs”—in Parshas Acharei (17:10) and in Parshas Kedoshim (20:3)—and yet in neither of these instances did Rashi feel the need to add further clarification through citing an analogy. So what prompted Rashi here to ask, “To what is this analogous?”

b.) The analogy of Toras Kohanim appears to be a non-literal interpretation of our verse. It thus seems inappropriate for Rashi to have cited it, since (Rashi’s commentary is aimed specifically at explaining scripture at the literal level.

c.) Rashi stresses that the analogy is about “a king who hired some workers.” Why is it crucial, at the literal level, that we are speaking here of a king. What would be lacking in our understanding of this verse if it were some other form of employer?

The Explanation

The beginning of our Parsha lists a series of blessings which the Jewish people will receive for observing the mitzvos. We read blessings of rain and good harvests (v. 4-5), safety (v. 5-6), easy victory over our enemies (v. 7-8), accumulation of crops (v. 10) and closeness to God (v. 11-12).

However, sandwiched in the middle of these quite specific blessings is the rather general promise of verse 9: “I will turn to you,” which Rashi renders as, “I will turn away from all My affairs to pay your reward” (an interpretation which the reader is familiar with from Parshiyos Acharei and Kedoshim).

Thus, the reader will be troubled: Why is verse 9 a general comment about the method of God’s rewards, placed between a series of specific and detailed blessings? Surely, a general statement such as this should have been made either at the beginning or at the end of the current passage.

To answer this question, Rashi writes: “To what is this analogous? To [the story of] a king who hired some workers which is taught in Toras Kohanim.”

Since Rashi’s commentary provides all the information required to understand the Torah at the literal level, the fact that Rashi does not cite the entire analogy indicates that we do not need to be aware of all its details to understand this verse. Rather, all we need to know is that it is a parable of “a king who hired some workers.” In case the reader is curious to know more, Rashi informs us that the parable “is taught in Toras Kohanim,” but the only details that are crucial here are that a king hired some workers.

The reader will immediately ask: Why would a king need to hire workers? Surely a king, who is the ruler of an entire country, does not need to hire staff for pay?

Clearly, we are speaking of a case where a worker was asked to perform a duty which extends beyond his basic obligations to the king, and therefore he was required to be paid for the job.

Thus, with these words, Rashi is indicating to us that the reason why the general statement of verse 9 is sandwiched between a series of specific blessings is because verse 9 speaks of a higher level of reward which comes to the Jewish people when they extend themselves beyond their basic obligations in Torah and mitzvos—like a king who pays a worker handsomely for work that he was not obligated to do.

In fact, these two levels of Divine service were indicated by Rashi in his comments to the opening verse of our Parsha. On the words “If you pursue My laws” (v. 5), Rashi explains that this means one should “toil in the study of Torah.” i.e. in addition to one’s basic obligation to study Torah (which falls under the basic necessity to “guard My commands and observe them”—ibid.) we are encouraged to extend ourselves to the point of “toiling.” From this the reader will understand that likewise in the case of all the other mitzvos there are two levels of observance: a.) Basic obligation and, b.) A total dedication to the point of “toiling” (see “The Name of the Parsha” to this Parsha).

Consequently, there are two forms of reward: a.) The basic rewards of food and safety, outlined in verses 4-8; and, b.) The additional bonus that “I will turn away from all My affairs to pay your reward,” i.e. a more substantial reward (described in verses 9-12) that comes to a person who observes the mitzvos with total dedication, beyond the basic requirements of Jewish Law.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 321ff.)
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO OBSERVE THE MITZVOS

26:14
But if:

1. You do not listen to Me (by studying the Oral Law);
2. And you do not perform all these commandments;
3. And if (this leads you to find people who keep) My laws disgusting;
4. (And if this leads) you to hate (Torah scholars who study) My laws;
5. (And this leads you to) stop (others from) performing (the commandments);
6. (And you deny) that (they are in fact) My commandments at all;
7. (And you eventually) break My covenant (by denying the principles of faith);

—16 then I too will do the same to you. I will direct upon you: panic, inflammation, fever, and diseases that cause hopeless longing (for a cure) and anguish (to your family members, when you pass away). You will sow your seed in vain (for it will not sprout), and (if it does sprout) your enemies will eat it.

17 I will devote My time (away from all My affairs and deal) with you, and you will be struck down before your enemies. Your enemies will rule over you. You will flee (out of terror) but no one will be pursuing you (since you pose no threat to them).

18 If you do not listen to Me while these (punishments are upon you), I will add a further seven punishments corresponding to your (seven above-mentioned) sins:

1. I will destroy (the Holy Temple, which is) the pride of your strength.
2. I will make your skies (as dry as) iron (causing a drought).

TORAS MENACHEM

Sparks of Chasidus

THE ADEMPTION (v. 14ff.)

In truth, they are nothing but blessings.” With these words, Rabbi Schne’ur Zalman of Liadi encapsulated the Chasidic view of the harsh punishments which the Torah promises if “you do not listen to Me etc.” (v. 14). While openly these verses speak of the very opposite of blessing, there nevertheless exists too an inner, subconscious element of the Torah, at which level we read here only of blessings. Through the study of Chasidic teachings, which reveal the inner subconscious aspects of the soul, a person can reach a sublime union with God, at which point he will be able to see through the “disguise” in which these blessings are enclosed and appreciate them for their true worth (See Likutei Torah, Bechukosai 48b).

In fact, the concept that a sublime blessing may be expressed through negative language is not of uniquely Chasidic origin, but it is found in the Talmud (Mo’ed Katan 9a-b). When R’ Shimon Bar Yochai sent his son, R’ Elazar, to receive the blessings from two of the Sages (R’ Yonasan ben Asmai and R’ Yehudah ben Gairim), they responded with what appeared to be a series of curses: “May it be God’s will that you will not sow and reap. That what you bring in will not go out, and what you take out will not come in. That your house will be desolate and your temporary lodgings inhabited. That your table will be disturbed, and that you will not see a new year.”

When R’ Elazar came home and reported what had happened, his father explained:

These are all blessings! “You will not sow and reap,” means that you will have children and they will not die.

“What you bring in will not go out,” means that you will bring home daughters-in-law and your sons will not die, so that their wives will not leave again.

“What you take out will not come in,” means that you will give your daughters in marriage and their husbands will not die, so that your daughters need not come back.

“You will not see a new year,” means that your wife will not die and so you will not have to take another wife.

Likewise, all the verses in the admonition belie very lofty blessings, blessings so sublime that they could not be expressed straightforwardly.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 1. p. 283ff.)
"Ten Women Will Bake Bread in One Oven" (v. 26)

Bread, which is the basis of man’s physical sustenance, is an analogy for Torah, which is his spiritual sustenance. However, just as dough needs to be baked into bread for it to become edible, so too, the Torah that a person learns needs to be “baked” in the fiery love that the soul has for God. Only then will the Torah be “absorbed” into the person’s system and sustain him spiritually.

How is this baking of one’s spiritual bread to be achieved? The Torah teaches us, “Ten women will bake bread in one oven,” i.e. using all ten faculties of the soul, a person should meditate at length on the absolute Oneness of God, until this produces a fiery love of God in the heart.

And then, “You will eat (bread) and not be satisfied.” However many times you review the study of a topic in the Torah, it will still be as exciting as if you were studying it for the first time, and your desire to study it again will never cease.

(Based on Likutei Torah, Bechukosai 48b-c)
If you (still) treat My (commands) offhandedly, and you do not wish to listen to Me, I will add seven (further) punishments corresponding to your (seven above-mentioned) sins:

1. I will incite the wild animals of the field against you,
2. (together with domesticated animals that kill),
3. (and venomous snakes),
4. and they will bereave you (by killing your children).
5. They will completely destroy your livestock (that pasture outside),
6. and diminish (the number of) your livestock that you keep inside.
7. Your (major and minor) roads will become desolate.

If, despite these (calamities), you will still not be (sufficiently) chastised (to return) to Me, and you treat My (commands) offhandedly, then I too, will be offhand with you, and I Myself will strike you again with seven punishments for your (seven above-mentioned) sins:

1. I will bring upon you an (army armed with the) sword, to avenge you (with the punishment described in the Book of Devarim, where the) avenging of the covenant (is detailed).
2. You will gather into your cities (because of the siege).
3. I will incite a plague in your midst, and you will be (forced to bury the corpses outside Jerusalem, where you will be) delivered into the enemy’s hands.
4. I will cut off your source of food.
5. (Due to a shortage of wood) ten women will bake bread in one oven.
6. (The bread will crumble in the oven) and they will bring back your bread (as crumbs measured) by weight.
7. You will eat (bread), and not be satisfied.

If, despite this, you do not listen to Me, and treat Me offhandedly, I will act with anger (against your) offhandedness, and I Myself will chastise you seven (times) for your (seven) sins:

1. You will eat the flesh of your sons, and you will eat the flesh of your daughters.
2. I will demolish your tall buildings, (both towers and castles, causing your rooftop) idols (that stand in the) sun to be destroyed.
נא לשוחח עם ה══תMetro City וה══תאזרחות על médecin גליליאו על花纹フリーアルメレピーマニアクスתיו נמסך לא אליה באורגנום וריכת וידמה על איהaniaי

אלא המשמע של אופיצם מתלווה במילום מתשווה בשיתוף עם אופיצם מתלווה במילום מתשווה בשיתוף עם שיתוף עם אופיצם מתלווה במילום מתשווה בשיתוף עם

אך שוגג עם אופיצם מתלווה במילום מתשווה בשיתוף עם אופיצם מתלווה במילום מתשווה בשיתוף עם

אך שוגג עם אופיצם מתלווה במילום מתשווה בשיתוף עם אופיצם מתלווה במילום מתשווה בשיתוף עם

אך שוגג עם אופיצם מתלווה במילום מתשווה בשיתוף עם אופיצם מתלווה במילום מתشو
[3] (When your bellies will swell from hunger, and you take your idol to kiss it) I will make (your bellies burst so that) your corpses (fall) upon your idols.

[4] My Spirit (the Divine Presence) will be disgusted by you (and will depart from you).

[5] I will lay your cities to ruins (that nobody even passes through).

[6] I will make your (Holy) Temple devoid (of visitors).

[7] I will not smell the pleasant aroma (of your sacrifices in the Holy Temple, for they will cease).

I will make the Land desolate (which will have the positive outcome that) it will (also) become desolate of your enemies who (now) live in it. I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unleash (armies equipped with) the sword (to pursue) after you. Your Land will be desolate (for a long time), so your cities will become ruins.

Then, during all the time that it remains desolate while you are in your enemies’ land, the Land will appease (God) for its (many unobserved) Sabbatical years. (When) the Land will rest, (God) will be appeased for its (many unobserved) Sabbatical years. During all the days that it remains desolate (during the Babylonian exile) it will rest for (the same number of years) that it had not rested during your Sabbatical years, when you lived there.

To those who survive among you—I will bring (such) terror into their hearts in their enemies’ lands that the (mere) sound of a rustling leaf will (appear to be an enemy) pursuing them, and they will flee as one flees from the sword. They will fall (even though) there will be no pursuer. (They will flee so hurriedly that) each man will stumble over his brother, (for they will always feel they are being chased) by the sword, while there is (in reality) no pursuer. You will not be able to stand up against your enemies.

You will become lost (from each other, scattered) among the nations, and your enemies’ land will consume you. Those of you who survive will not away in your enemies’ lands because of their sins. They will indeed rot away in your enemies’ lands because of their sins. They will confess their sins and their fathers’ sins, for the treachery with which they betrayed Me, and for following

CLEAN QUESTIONS

Will they “confess their sins” sincerely, or not? (v. 40)

CHIZKUNI: Their confession will not be sincere, as we see from the following verse (41) that God will continue to punish them.

KLI YAKAR: Thus their “confession” will merely be a recognition that they had sinned, without an accompanying feeling of remorse. It is thus like one who immerses in a mikvah, while holding a ritually impure creature in his hand.

TORAS KOHANIM: Their confession is an act of genuine teshuvah. Thus verse 41 is not a curse but a blessing: while the Jewish people are in their enemies’ lands, God will send them prophets who will help the Jewish people to return to God fully.

The Jewish People’s Confession (v. 40)

Verses 40 and 41 appear to contradict each other. In verse 40 we read that the Jewish people “will confess their sins and their father’s sins, etc.” suggesting that they had repented. But the following verse suggests that they had not repented at all: “Then I too, will treat them offhandedly, and I will bring them to the land of their enemies, perhaps then their stubborn heart will become humbled and their sins will then be atoned.”

The commentators solve this problem by reinterpreting one of the two verses: either the teshuvah of verse 40 was not genuine (as [Chizkuni and] Kli Yakar argue); or the “curse” of verse 41 was not a curse, but a blessing, as Toras Kohanim suggests.

Rashi, however, appears to reinterpret both verses. While Rashi does not address the issue directly whether the confession of verse 40 is genuine or not, in his commentary to verse 41 Rashi explains that the Jewish
people’s sins will be forgiven “through their sufferings” in the lands of their enemies, and not through their own teshuva. This suggests that, according to Rashi, the Jewish people’s earlier confession in verse 40 was insincere, for if they had atoned for their sins by confession, they would not need to undergo any further suffering.

Nevertheless, Rashi accepts Torah Kohenim’s explanation of verse 41 that the verse is speaking of “good for the Jewish people,” namely the sending of prophets (See Classic Questions to v. 41). This begs the question: Since Rashi accepted Torah Kohenim’s interpretation of verse 41, why did he reject Torah Kohenim’s interpretation of verse 40, that the Jewish people’s confession was genuine?

And if the Jewish people did not confess sincerely in verse 40, why did God send them “good” in verse 41?
Me offhandedly. 41 Then I too, will treat them offhandedly, and I will bring them to the land of their enemies, perhaps then their stubborn heart will become humbled and their sins will then be atoned.

42 But I will remember My covenant with Ya’akov, and My covenant with Yitzchak too. I will also remember My covenant with Avraham, and I will remember the Land.

43 The Land, left behind by them, will have appeased (God) for its (unobserved) Sabbatical years by lying desolate without them, and they will be atoned for their sins.

(This was all) to pay them back for having despised My rational commands and to pay them back for their having been disgusted by My suprarational commands.

44 But despite all this (above-mentioned punishment), while they are in their enemies’ land, I will not despise them and become disgusted by them to (the extent that I) annihilate them, breaking My covenant that is with them, for I am God, their God. 45 I will remember, for their sake, the covenant made with the original (tribes), whom I took out from the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, so as to be a God to them. I am God.

46 These are the suprarational and rational commands (from) the (Written and Oral) Laws that God gave through Moshe on Mount Sinai, (as a covenant) between Himself and the children of Israel.

**Valuation of Dedications to the Temple**

God spoke to Moshe, saying, 2 Speak to the children of Israel and say to them:

- If an adult makes a vow, (pledging the) value of an (adult or child’s) life to God’s Sanctuary, then the pledge must be given according to the following fixed amounts:

**Classic Questions**

- If chapter 27 was also given through Moshe at Mt. Sinai, why was it recorded after the concluding statement of v. 46?

**Sforno:** The mitzvos recorded in chapter 27 were additional commands which are not part of the covenant between God and the Jewish people (i.e. the blessing and the curses above were not said in connection with the mitzvos of chapter 27).

**Kli Yakar:** People tend to make promises to God when distressed. Therefore the laws of voluntary dedications follow the admonition.

**Toras Menachem**

Nevertheless, Rashi maintained that even though the Jewish people’s confession was not genuine—i.e. it was not accompanied by a true resolution not to sin again—nevertheless, it was not a completely worthless act. For any verbal declaration of sin will ultimately bring a person’s sins to the forefront of his consciousness, which is a form of arousal towards teshuvah, albeit an incomplete one. And this is certainly a move which will assist a person do a complete teshuvah at a later date.

So while the confession of the Jewish people in verse 40 was sincere, it was not meaningful, i.e. it did contain some good. Consequently, God responded in verse 41 with something that was “good for the Jewish people,” namely, the sending of prophets to the people to “bring them back under My very wings.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 207ff.)

**The Position of Chapter 27**

After appearing to conclude the Book of Vayikra in verse 46, the Torah surprisingly opens a new chapter of laws. **Sforno** explains that the laws detailed here in chapter 27 were not included in the covenant between the Jewish people and God. Therefore they were listed after the admonition, which describes the consequences of breaking the covenant.

At the literal level we do indeed find different levels of mitzvos: some were said as part of the Ten Commandments, others were said to Moshe
According to Rashi, we are thus left with our original problem: Why does chapter 27 appear after the “conclusion” of verse 46?

The Explanation

The current passage describes the concept of a person vowing to make a dedication to the Temple equivalent to the “value” of a certain person. For example, he might say, “I vow to give the value of this person to the Temple.”

At the literal level, the person whose value is vowed could be a non-Jew, since the Torah sets a fixed value for all adult males (of a certain age)
Between twenty years old and sixty years old, the amount for a male will be fifty silver shekels, according to the shekel (measurement system which is used for) sanctified items. For a female, the amount will be thirty shekels.

Between five years old and twenty years old, the amount for a male will be twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels.

Between one month old and five years old, the amount for a male will be five silver shekels, and the amount for a female will be three silver shekels.

For sixty-year-olds and over, the amount for a male will be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels.

If he is too poor to pay the (above fixed) amount, then (the one who made the pledge) should bring (the person whose value he pledged) to stand before the priest, and the priest should evaluate him according to how much the one who is pledging can (possibly) afford.

Consecration of Animals to the Temple

If a person consecrates to the Temple even one limb of an animal (from a species) which is suitable to be brought as an offering to God, then whatever part of it the person consecrates to God will become holy. (The animal must then be sold, and the value of the part that was consecrated is given to the Temple).

One should not exchange (a consecrated animal for somebody else’s animal) or offer a substitute for it (from his own stock, regardless of whether) one swaps a good (unblemished) one for a bad (blemished) one, or a bad one for a good one.

If one does substitute one animal for another animal, (both) that one and its replacement will become consecrated.

If it is a blemished animal which is not suitable to be brought as an offering to God:

He should stand the animal before the priest, and the priest should set its value according to its good and bad qualities.

(If somebody other than the original owner wishes to purchase it from the Temple he should pay) what the priest assessed it at.

But if (the original owner) redeems it, he should add its fifth to its value.

Do the laws of valuations apply to non-Jews too? (v. 2-8)

Toras Kohanim: According to R’ Meir, a non-Jew may not make a vow to donate money to the Temple. However, he may be the subject of the vow of a Jew, i.e. the Jew may vow to donate to the Temple the “value” of a non-Jewish person. According to R’ Yehudah, a non-Jew may make a vow to donate money to the Temple, but he may not be the subject of such a vow made by a Jew.

Toras Menachem

regardless of who they may be. Similarly, at the literal level, a non-Jew may make one of the vows described here, as Rashi writes in Parshas Emor, “Non-Jews may make vows and donations, like Jews” (22:25).

(In Jewish law, the above two issues are the subject of dispute (see Toras Kohanim). However, at the literal level, it is straightforward that a non-Jew may make, or be the subject of a vow to the Temple, as explained above). Therefore, the answer to our earlier question why chapter 27 is placed after the laws of the Book of Vayikra appeared to be concluded in verse 46 is because the Torah wished to make a distinction between the laws up to chapter 26 that apply only to Jews, and the current section which applies to both Jews and non-Jews.

(And, while discussing the laws of valuation here for the above reason, the Torah recorded many related laws, even though some apply exclusively to Jews).
How much of a person’s property may one consecrate or dedicate? (v. 1-24)

Rambam: It is appropriate for a person to observe these precepts [of consecrating and dedicating one’s property] so as to cohere his [evil] inclination not to be miserly....[However,] A person should never consecrate or dedicate all his property....This is not piety but foolishness, for in losing all his property he becomes dependent on the assistance of others. One should not have mercy upon him. In reference to such people, our Sages said: “A man of foolish piety is among those who destroy the world” (Sotah 20a). Instead, one who spends his wealth to observe mitzvos should not spend more than a fifth (Laws of Valuations and Dedications 8:13).
CONSECRATION OF REAL ESTATE TO THE TEMPLE

14 If a man consecrates his house to God’s Temple to be holy:

- The priest should value it according to its good and bad (qualities), and the price will be fixed at the amount the priest values it.

15 If the one who consecrated it wishes to redeem his house, he should add a fifth to its fixed value, and it will become his (once again).

16 If a person consecrates a field from his hereditary land to God’s Temple:

- The valuation should (not be according to market value, but rather) according to its sowing capacity: fifty silver shekels for each chomer* of barley seed.

17 If he consecrates his field (immediately after) the Jubilee year, its value will stay (at the above-mentioned price). 18 But if he consecrates his field (a number of years) after the Jubilee, the priest should calculate its price according to the remaining years of (the lease which expires) the (next) Jubilee year. (The percentage of the lease which has elapsed) should be deducted from the valuation.

19 If the one who consecrated it redeems the field, he should add a fifth to its fixed value (based on the above calculation), and it will become his (once again).

20 If he does not redeem the field, and (the treasurer of the Temple) sold the field to somebody else it will no longer be redeemed (back to the possession of the original owner at the Jubilee year. 21 Rather,) when the field leaves (the purchaser’s possession) at the Jubilee year, it will (belong to priests and) be holy to God as a segregated field. (The original owner’s) hereditary property will now belong to the priests.

22 If (a person) consecrates to God a field that he had purchased, which is not part of his hereditary property:

- The priest should calculate the valuation price for him (based on the time remaining) until the Jubilee year. From that day, (anybody can redeem the field) by giving its valuation (to the Temple, to be) holy to God.

23 In the Jubilee year, the field will return to the one from whom (the initial purchaser) bought it, namely the one whose hereditary property it was.

TORAS MENACHEM

Sparks of Chasidus

During the early stages of a person’s spiritual growth, he will tend to observe the mitzvos for the sake of the personal refinement which they bring, rather than purely out of obedience to the Divine Will. Consequently, the mitzvos of the beginner are spiritually hampered by his own self-orientated intentions, for only a mitzvah which is done without any ulterior motive whatsoever even a noble or holy one—can form a perfect “connection” between man and God. Thus, when Rambam speaks to a person who needs “to coerce his [evil] inclination not to be miserly”—the beginner—he is strongly advised to limit his donations (to no more than a fifth), for we are speaking here about a person whose Divine service is limited by his unrefined personality.

Once, however, a person is able to rid himself of all ulterior motives, and give away his possessions (not to refine himself, but rather) because others need the money, then there is no limit to how much one may give. Thus, in his “Commentary to the Mishnah” (Pe’ah 1:1), Rambam writes, “deeds of kindness have no fixed measure.”

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 27, pp. 221-2)

* Equivalent to 248.9 liters or 65.8 U.S. gallons.
Why may an animal not be substituted? (v. 33)

Rambam: The Torah anticipated man’s thoughts and his evil inclination: By nature a person seeks to increase his possessions and to be sparing with his money....If he were allowed to exchange a poor animal for a good one, he might exchange the good animal for a poor one and claim that it is good. The Torah therefore made an unequivocal prohibition against substitution (Laws of Sacrificial Exchanges 4:13).

TORAS MENACHEM

A person might prefer an approach to serving God which he feels is superior to that which has been demanded of him. For example, a person might feel that simple tasks can be entrusted to anyone, whereas he should be involved in loftier matters, such as the study of Chasidus. On the other hand, another person may argue that he is not sufficiently worthy to study Chasidus, since his understanding is not so profound, and that he should be involved with more simple tasks.

The response to such arguments: “He should not select a good or a bad one, nor should he offer a substitute for it” (v. 33). The desire to substitute one’s allotted task for another comes from the evil inclination (ct. Rambam). Initially it tells him to swap a more menial task with dedication, without looking for a substitute. Thus, a person should carry out his allotted task for a loftier one, but it will eventually tell a person to swap a good task for a bad one. This, a person should carry out his allotted task with dedication, without looking for a substitute.
25. Every valuation should be made according to (the measurement system which is used for) sanctified (items), whereby twenty gerahs equal one shekel.

26. A firstborn animal must be (sacrificed as) a firstborn to God. Nobody may consecrate it (as a different offering). Whether it is an ox or a sheep, it belongs to God.

27. If (someone consecrates) a non-kosher (species of) animal (as a donation towards the upkeep of the Temple), he may redeem it by paying the valuation price, plus an additional one fifth. If it is not redeemed (by the one who consecrated it), it should be sold for the valuation price.

28. However, anything that a man dedicates from any of his possessions as segregated property to God’s priests—whether it be a person, an animal, or part of his inherited field—it may not be sold, nor should it be redeemed, for all segregated property is most holy to God.

29. (If a person) consecrates (the value of) a person who has been condemned (by the court) to be put to death, (it is meaningless) and need not be redeemed.

30. (The second) tithe of the Land, whether it be from the crops of the Land or the fruit of the tree, belongs to God. It is holy to God.

31. If a man redeems some of his tithe, he should add one fifth of its value to it.

32. (When a person comes to tithe his animals, and they come out from an entrance, one after the other, the tenth animal) that passes under the rod (will be) the tithe of the cattle or the flock. The tenth will be holy to God (in that its blood and fats will be offered on the Altar, but a non-priest may eat the meat).

33. (Despite the fact that sacrifices are generally offered from the best animals) he should not select a good (unblemished animal) or a bad (blemished) one (for his tithed animal), nor should he offer a substitute for it.
המעון במקדש אותה

ועז פסוקים. עד אسمي.

scssבם פסוקים ד私服 ויקרם שמנון מדアウト ויהיה והשרעהêt'א סתם. חציוوحدים ובושר ההב. פרשנייה

עששה ב'א'ג' סתם. תסריר י"ג'بوتורות היהודים יהלם הלכלכל סתם.حرفעה'א'ג'א'זא'ה'א'ג'בך

סתם: מנך' בתורות שתים והמשים. התורות שתים ואראבעם. כל успמה ו 사람은 פורשיםDER

ועז אודיו סתם:___

וככתי

ורכ הים ח כותים סמוך לה ביכר בין מואב גמל, בינ הש בני גמל הגל גמל, יחד פירות בני מוז

לאחר יחלו חתיה מ Marriage והבואר גמל. חתלה טמר ויוונית 

ב"ג בנוותי.
If he does substitute it, then (both) that one and its substitution become holy. It cannot be redeemed.

34 These are the commandments that God commanded Moshe (in the desert*) at Mount Sinai for the children of Israel.

The congregation**, followed by the reader, proclaims:

**Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!**

THE HAFTARAH FOR BECHUKOSAI (& BEHAR-BECHUKOSAI) IS ON PAGE 271.

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Since “the beginning is wedged in the end, and the end in the beginning” (Sefer Yetzirah 1:7), we find that the Book of Vayikra, which begins with the subject of animal sacrifices, ends with the same topic—the firstborn sacrifice (v. 26), and animal tithes (v. 32-33).

A key distinction between these two types of sacrifice is that the firstborn are “selected” by God, whereas the animal tithes are selected by man: “(The tenth animal) that passes under the rod (will be) the tithe” (v. 32). Thus, by ending the Book of Vayikra with the subject of animal tithes, the Torah stresses to us the importance of man’s initiative in Divine service:

- God made us in a way that “a person prefers a measure of his own produce more than nine measures of his fellow’s” (Bava Metziah 38a).

The inner reason for this is so that man can be truly immersed in his own Divine service, rather than constantly rely on inspiration from above, thus fulfilling God’s intention that the world be made holy through the efforts of man.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 17, pp. 332-7)

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* *See Toras Menachem to 25:1.

**According to Chabad custom, the person called to the Torah also recites chazak chazak venischazeik, in contrast to those authorities who deem this to be an interruption before the blessing which is said after reading the Torah (Sefer Haminhagim, p. 31; See Likutei Sichos vol. 24, p. 411; ibid. vol. 25, p. 474ff. See also Chikrai Minhagim by Rabbi Eliyahu Yochanan Gurary (Oholei Shem, Lubavitch 5759), p. 126ff).
Parshas Bechukosai contains 7 positive mitzvos and 5 prohibitions.

1. One who vows to give a man’s valuation should give the price written in scripture [27:2].
2. Not to substitute animals consecrated for holy offerings [27:10].
3. If an animal consecrated for an offering is substituted for another one, both are consecrated [27:10].
4. One who vows an animal’s valuation should give the price that the priest values it at [27:11,12].
5. One who vows the valuation of a house should give the value that the priest values it at, with the addition of one-fifth [27:14].
6. One who vows the valuation of a field should give the value set in scripture [27:16].
7. Not to substitute consecrated animals from one type of offering to another [27:26].
8. If one vows a chairem on part of his property, it goes to the priests [27:28].
9. Land put by its owner under chairem is not to be sold, but given to the priests [27:28].
10. Land under chairem is not to be redeemed [27:28].
11. The tithe of kosher species of animals, to be given every year [27:32].
12. The tithe of animals is not to be sold, but eaten in Jerusalem [27:33].
Haftaros

הף טראוס
The person who was called up for Maftir says the following before reading the Haftarah:

בָּרֹךְ אֲמֹתְנֵה יְהוָה אֲלָלִגְנָו מֶלֶךְ הַעֲולָם אָשֶׁר בָּהּ
גֵּבֵלֵי יְהוָה וּרְאֵת בְּדַברֵיהֶם הַנְּבָרִים
בָּמַת אֲמֹתְנֵה יְהוָה יָהָהּ הַבָּהָרָה בָּהָרָה וּבְפַשֵּׁשָׁה
עֲבֹדָה וּכְלַיְשָׁרָה לְהוֹיָה בְּנָבְעֵי הָאָמָתְךָ

After the Haftarah the following blessings are recited:

בָּרֹךְ אֲמֹתְנֵה יְהוָה אֲלָלִגְנָו מֶלֶךְ הַעֲולָם, צוּר כַּל
הָעֲולָם, זָרִיךְ בֶּל הָהוּרָה, הָאָל הַנְּבָרִים
האָמֶר עָשֶׂה, הַמְּכַרְכֵּךְ הַמְּכַרְכֵּךְ, בָּלַח בָּדִירֵי אָמָתְךָ
נָאִלָּה אֲמֹתְנֵה יְהוָה אֲלָלִגְנָו, נְגַמְנִי נְגַמְנִי
וֹרָבָּר אָמֶרְכֵּךְ אָמֶרְכֵּךְ לֹא יֶשֶׁב רִיקְמָ, כְּאֶל
מֶלֶךְ בְּכָל וְרָהָמָה אָמֶרְךָ, בָּרֹךְ אֲמֹתְנֵה יְהוָה אֲלָלִגְנָו
בָּלַח בָּדִירֵי
רָהָמָה שְׁלָחֵנָה יְהוָה בְּכָל וְרָהָמָה, אֲלָלִגְנָו בְּכָל וְרָהָמָה
הוֹרֵשׁוֹת וּפֹשֵׁפָה מִפְּרַתָּה בְּכָל וְרָהָמָה בָּרֹךְ אֲמֹתְנֵה יְהוָה אֲלָלִגְנָו
מִשָּׁמָה צוּר בְּבָנִי:
שְׁלָחֵנָה יְהוָה אֲלָלִגְנָו בְּכָל וְרָהָמָה, בְכָל וְרָהָמָה
בָּרֹךְ דָּדוּ מִשָּׁפַיּוֹת, מִפְּרַתָּה יְבָא וּנְגַל לָפֹנָה
עַל בְּכָל מִשָּׁפַיּוֹת, כְּמִשָּׁפַיּוֹת, בְּכָל וְרָהָמָה
כִּי בֵּשָׁמַיְהוֹ וּשְׁפֹּאָה, כִּי בֵּשָׁמַיְהוֹ וּשְׁפֹּאָה כְּמִשָּׁפַיּוֹת
לְעָלָם וּדָרָה. בָּרֹךְ אֲמֹתְנֵה יְהוָה אֲלָלִגְנָו.
On fast days end here. On Shabbos (including Shabbos Chol HaMo’ed) continue:

[[Ul haTovora Ul haMubadra Ul haMefora Ul haMemora Ul haShemura Ul haKiska]]

On a Festival, and Shabbos that coincides with a Festival continue here:

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Shabbos Chol HaMo’ed Succos add

On Shabbos Chol HaMo’ed (including Shabbos Chol HaMo’ed) continue here:

On Rosh Hashanah continue here:

On Yom Kippur continue here:
Vayikra / ויקרא
(Israel 43:21 – 44:23)

I formed this nation for Myself. They will declare My praise.

But you, (children of) Ya`akov, did not call upon Me, (and rather, you followed other gods). You tired of serving Me, O Israel, (and ceased). You did not bring Me sheep for your burnt-offerings nor honor Me with your (other) sacrifices. I did not burden you with meal-offerings, (for only a three-finger fistful is offered on the Altar, nor did I) cause you tremendous effort (to bring a large amount) of frankincense. I did not require you to buy herbs with (your) money (to offer on the altar) for Me (since it grew in Jerusalem. But you did not) satisfy Me with the fat of your sacrifices (because you did not bring any). Instead you burdened Me with your sins and wearied Me with your iniquities.

It is I Who wiped away your transgressions (and)
I (Who wipe them away now—not for your righteousness, but) for My sake. I will (erase them completely so that) I will have no remembrance of your sins.

(Perhaps I need to be reminded about some favor that I owe you, so) remind Me (of your merits) and let us judge together. (Even if you) state your case (first) you will (not) win.

Your first father (Adam) sinned (even though He was formed by My hands), and your spokesmen, (the best in each generation, on whom you rely to defend you, also) transgressed against Me. (Therefore), I will profane (your) holy nobles. I will give (the people of) Ya`akov to utter destruction and Israel to disgrace (by their enemies).

Now listen, My servant Ya`akov, Israel whom I have chosen, (about the good that is to come)! This is what was said by God, your Maker, your Creator, Who helped you since birth:

Fear not, My servant Ya`akov, the upright people whom I have chosen! Just as I pour water on the thirsty land and liquid on the parched earth, so too I will pour My good will on your children and My blessing on your offspring. They will sprout like grass, like willows by streams of water. (The righteous among them) will say: “I am for God”; (the children of the wicked) will call (themselves) by Ya`akov’s name (so as not to follow in their fathers’ footsteps; the Ba`alei Teshuwha will oblige themselves to return to God as if, “I am) for God” is written by their hand (as a binding contract); and (the righteous converts) will call themselves by the name of Israel.

This is what was said by God, the King of Israel and its Redeemer, the God of Hosts:

Haftarah of Parshas Vayikra

Both the Parsha and the Haftarah speak of sacrificial worship. The Parsha introduces a number of basic sacrificial rites, whereas the Haftarah criticizes the Jewish people for their abandonment of sacrificial worship.

Chasidic thought stresses a positive connection between the Parsha and Haftarah. At the opening of the Parsha (“He called [vayikra] to Moshe”) the unusual term vayikra expresses affection (Rashi). Likewise, the Haftarah’s opening highlights God’s profound love of Israel, that the Jewish people are intrinsically bound with God by virtue of the fact that “I formed this nation for Myself.”

Note further that the verse does not employ the usual expression, “I created...” but rather, “I formed this nation for Myself,” suggesting that God’s love for the Jewish people is not merely a distant soul-connection,
I am the first (preceding the world) and the last (Who will continue after the world has ended). There is no god besides Me!

7 Who can declare and say that he is like Me? (Who) can relate and specify (before) Me (all that happened) since I placed the people of the world (upon the earth, until now)? Let them tell the things which are soon to come, and the things which are to come in the distant future, (to prove their words).

6 Do not fear (other gods), and do not be frightened! Did I not tell you and relate to you back then (at Mount Sinai that there is no other god besides Me)? You are My witnesses (to this fact, as I opened up the seven heavens and showed you that there is no other god). Is there any god beside Me? There is no power without My knowledge (because all power comes from Me)!

9 Who will hold the idol sculptors accountable. Furthermore, the fact that the verse states categorically, “I formed this nation for Myself,” without any further qualification, indicates that this affectionate bond exists unconditionally, regardless of a person’s spiritual standing.

This insight also clarifies a difficulty with the second part of the verse, “They will declare My praise.” At first glance, the voice of certainty here (“they will declare”) seems misplaced: How could we be sure that the
means that the Jewish people in a manner that they are intrinsically connected with Him living miracle that “declares the praise” of God. (what He is destined to do, to redeem Israel)! Shout, depths of the earth! Mountains, burst out in song, forests and all your trees! For God has redeemed Ya’akov, and by Israel’s redemption He will be glorified by all.

Tzav

(Jeremiah 7:21 - 8:3. Ibid. 9:22-23)

The God of Hosts, Almighty God of Israel, says: “(Instead of making completely) burnt-offerings, add to your other sacrifices (from which you are able to) eat the meat, (because the burnt-offerings are not pleasing God in any case, so why lose the meat)?” For I did not speak to your ancestors and command them

Jewish people will indeed succeed in praising God? However, based on the above, we can appreciate that the very fact that God formed the Jewish people in a manner that they are intrinsically connected with Him means that the very existence of Jewish people, throughout their long and difficult history, is itself a praise of God. This is especially true in our post-Holocaust generation where every single Jew is, quite literally, a living miracle that “declares the praise” of God. (Sichos Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5750).

After this positive introduction, the Haftarah turns to rebuke the Jewish people for their sins and improper worship (43:22-28). Nevertheless, a glimpse of a brighter future is offered, when God will bestow abundant blessings (44:1-5). God declares His own unique greatness (6-7), and the vanity of all other gods (8-11).

To reinforce this message, the prophet mocks the absurd notion that man can manufacture his own god with a satirical description of how various craftsmen construct an idol (9-20). The Haftarah concludes with a warning to Israel not to follow after idols, a call for repentance and promises of forgiveness and redemption (21-22).
about burnt-offerings and (other) sacrifices when I took them out of the land of Egypt, (so this is clearly not the main reason why I took them out).

23 “Rather, this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Listen to My voice (and obey Me)! I will be your God and you will be My people. Follow the path I commanded you, so things will go well for you.’

24 “But they did not listen or pay attention. Rather, they acted upon their own desires, whatever their evil hearts saw fit. (Every day,) they went backwards, not forwards (in their Divine service), 25 from the day your ancestors left the land of Egypt, to this day. I sent them all My servants, the prophets—every day I would prepare early and send. 26 But they did not listen to Me or pay attention. They stiffened their necks and acted worse than their ancestors.

27 “You (Yirmiyahu) will speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. When you call out to them, they will not answer you. 28 (Then) you will say to them, ‘(It is as if) this is a nation which did not hear the voice of God, your Almighty God, (at Mount Sinai) and (as if it never) learned a lesson. Faith (in God) is lost (from their hearts), cut off from their mouths.’"

Chabad communities omit the following and continue below:

29 “Tear out your hair and throw it away! Raise (your voice in) a lament on the high places, for God has become disgusted and he has abandoned the generation that angered Him. 30 For the men of Yehudah have done what is evil in My eyes,” says God. “They have put their abominations in this House which bears My Name, to defile it. 31 They have built “drumming” altars in the Ben Hinom Valley to burn their sons and daughters in fire, (while the drums are sounded to drown out the child’s last cries). I never commanded this (activity in My worship), and it never occurred to Me (to ask for such a thing).

32 “Therefore, days are coming,” says God, “when people will not speak of “drumming (altars)” or the Ben Hinom Valley, but of the Valley of Slaughter. People will be buried at the “drumming (altars)” until no room is left. 33 The carcasses of this people (for whom there is no room to bury) will be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts on earth, and no one will scare them away. 34 I will banish the voice of rejoicing and the voice of joy, the privileges of sacrificial worship (7:21-22). A harsh criticism follows, in which the Jewish people are chastised for being disobedient (23-28). In the following section (omitted by Chabad communities), the nation is warned of impending doom for their sins of placing abominations in the Temple, child sacrifices, and worshiping heavenly bodies (7:29-8:3). The concluding passage is a call for true Divine worship (9:22-23).
The wise man should not praise himself because of his wisdom, etc. At first glance, verses 22-23 appear to suggest that a person should not be proud of 1.) his wisdom, 2.) his strength or 3.) wealth, but only of 4.) his knowledge of God. In truth, however, the fourth quality elevates the prior three, i.e. his awareness of God permeates and sanctifies his wisdom, strength and wealth so that he may now be proud of them. Likewise, when we read, “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears God shall be praised” (Prov. 31:30), the lesson is that when a woman fears God, her charm and beauty then become praiseworthy (Sicha Shabbos Parshas Eikev 5748).

This Haftarah relates the untimely passing of Uzzah which occurred during the transportation of the Ark to Jerusalem, similar to the passing of the Ark of the Covenant as related in (I Samuel 6:1 - 7:17), where Uzzah was the only one killed in order to prevent the Ark from falling. According to the Torah, Uzzah’s spine was broken, and his hand was cut off, in order to prevent his sin from being repeated.

All communities conclude:

D David gathered thirty thousand selected men of Israel, in addition (to those who had gathered to him after his appointment as King). He proceeded with all his troops from Ba’alei Yehudah (where they had
gathering) to bring up from there the Ark of God, which was called by a (special) name. (It was called), “The Name of the God of Hosts, enthroned on the Cherubs.”

3 They placed the Ark of God on a new wagon and (the cattle which pulled the wagon) carried it from Bais Auinadav in Givah. Auinadav’s sons, Uzzah and Achyo, led (the cattle which drove) the new wagon. 4 The (wagon) carried the Ark of God from Bais Auinadav in Givah. Achyo walked in front of the Ark (and Uzzah to the side of the Ark). 5 David and all Israel played before (the Ark of) God on all sorts of cypress-wood instruments: lyres, harps, drums, castanets, and cymbals.

6 When they arrived at Goren-Nachon, Uzzah reached out to the Ark of God and grabbed it, because (being on the side, he noticed that) the oxen had slipped (and he thought that the Ark would fall off the wagon).

7 God became angry at Uzzah (for his lack of faith in thinking that the Ark would fall), and God struck him for (inadvertently) forgetting (that it was God’s Ark) and he died there, (next to) the Ark of God.

8 David was upset (with himself) because of God’s outburst against Uzzah, and he called the place Peretz-Uzzah (“the breach of Uzzah,” as it is known) to this day.

9 David feared God’s Ark that day, and he said (to himself), “How can God’s Ark come (safely) with me (since it is so holy? How can I possibly look after it properly?)” 10 So David did not want to bring the Ark of God to his (place) in the City of David, and he made a detour to the house of Ovaid Edom the Gittite.

11 The Ark of God was delayed there for three months, and God blessed Ovaid Edom and his entire household.

12 Then King David was informed, “God has blessed the household of Ovaid Edom and everything he owns (in an unprecedented manner) because of the Ark of God (which is in his house).” Then, David proceeded joyfully from the house of Ovaid Edom with the Ark of God, towards the City of David.

of Nadav and Avihu in the Parsha, that occurred during the dedication of the Tabernacle.

Chasidic thought stresses that the Parsha and the Haftarah both share the theme of joy. The eighth day of the inauguration, after which the Parsha takes its name, is described by the Talmud as “a joyous day before God” (Megilah 10b), and the Parsha also relates how the people “sang praises” (Vayikra 9:24) when the inauguration was complete. Likewise, the Haftarah relates how King David “danced joyfully with all his strength before God” (6:14) and was “leaping and dancing before God” (ibid. 16)—an example which Rambam recommends should be emulated by all Jews (end of Laws of Lulav; Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5748, note 82).

The Haftarah relates events that occurred after King David’s coronation, conquest of Jerusalem and victory against the Philistines (I Samuel ch. 5). David now perceived it as the opportune moment to bring up the Holy Ark to Jerusalem from Bais Auinadav, where it had been safeguarded since the times of Shmuel.

The initial procession is tragically interrupted by the death of Uzzah, who attempted to grab the Ark when he feared it was going to fall, forgetting that God’s Ark did not need such assistance. David took personal responsibility for what had occurred, and was no longer willing to continue the procession (6:1-11). After three months, the transportation of the Ark is resumed, and this time the destination is reached successfully, amid national celebration (12-19).

According to Ashkenazic custom, the Haftarah then continues to relate a criticism leveled by Sha’ul’s daughter, Michal, against David for dancing in a fervent manner which, she felt, was not befitting the King. David
Each time the men carrying the Ark of God took six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened ox. David danced joyfully with all his strength before God, dressed in a linen apron. He proceeded with bringing up the Ark of God, along with the entire House of Israel, with (horn) blasts and the sound of the shofar.

When the Ark of God arrived at the City of David, Sha’ul’s daughter, Michal, was gazing out the window. She saw (her husband) King David leaping and dancing before God; she looked upon him with contempt (because she felt that it was not appropriate for the King to dance, and certainly not in front of the Ark).

They brought the Ark of God and set it in its place in the tent which David had pitched. Then David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before God.

When David finished bringing the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the Name of the God of Hosts. He distributed to all the people, to the whole crowd of Israel, men and women: a loaf of bread, a (generous) portion of good meat, and a bottle of wine, (after which) everyone went home.

Chabad and Sefardi communities conclude here. Ashkenazi communities continue:

David then returned to bless his household, and Sha’ul’s daughter Michal went out to meet him. “What an honorable day it was,” she said (cynically), “when the King of Israel exposed (some of his body while dancing) in the sight of his servants’ maids, just like a simpleton.”

“(We were dancing) before God,” David said to Michal, “who chose me over your father and his entire house to appoint me as ruler over God’s people Israel. (Therefore) I will rejoice before God! (If) I would have lowered myself even further, and become humble in my own eyes (to dispense with my honor), then I would be (even more) honored among the maids which you mentioned.”

(For the sin of insulting King David), Michal, Sha’ul’s daughter, had no child to the day of her death.

What happened was, as the King was sitting in his palace after God had given him peace from all his enemies surrounding him, “the King said to Nan an prophet: “See now! I live in a cedar palace (fit for my honor), but God’s Ark is sitting in a (mere) tent!”

6:21. אָשֶׁר בְּחַרְתִּי אֶת אֲבֵיהּ—Who chose me over your father. At first glance, this statement of David appears to be unnecessary. One can appreciate his difference of opinion with Michal regarding the appropriateness of exuberant dancing, but what was David’s purpose in stressing God’s preference for himself over Sha’ul?

It could be argued, however, that with this statement David was explaining why he deemed fervent dancing to be so important. Sha’ul brushes her words aside, arguing that he was not ashamed of dancing in God’s honor, and that she should remember that it was David who was appointed as King, and not Sha’ul, her father! As a punishment, Michal remains barren all her days (20-23).

This is followed by a further chapter, in which David desires to make a permanent home for the Ark, a request which is denied by God, and postponed instead for one of David’s sons (7:1-17).
Nathan said to the king, “Go and do whatever you have in your heart, for God is with you.”

That night, God’s word came to Nasan, saying, “Go and inform My servant David, ‘This is what God says, ‘(Are you not happy with all the good I have done for you that) you (want to) build Me a house to live in? ’ I have not resided in a house from the day I brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt to this day, and I have moved around in a Tent and a Tabernacle (and you want to change that)?’ In all my travels among all the Jewish people, have I ever spoken to any of the judges of Israel whom I commanded to look after My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’”

“Now say this to My servant David, ‘This is what the God of Hosts says, ‘(Have I not done enough for you already?) I have taken you from the sheep pen, from (following) after the sheep, to be leader over My people Israel. I was with you wherever you went and I eliminated all your enemies before you. I made your name great, like the name of the greatest men on earth. (In your days) I will make a place for My people Israel, and I will plant them firmly. They will remain secure and will not be disturbed any more. Evil people will no longer oppress them, as they did initially, before the day I commanded the judges about My people Israel. I gave you peace from all your enemies and God told you that He would establish a (royal) house for you (and your descendants—and you are still not satisfied!)

“When your days are complete and you lie with your fathers, I will raise up your descendants that follow you, (one) who comes from your loins, and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for My Name, and I will establish his royal throne forever. I will be a (like) father to him, and he will be a (like) son to Me, (in that) I will rebuke (him) with the rod of men and the plagues of mortals when he sins.

“But my kindness will not depart from him as I withdrew it from Sha’ul, whom I removed before you (due to his sins). Your house and your sovereignty will remain before you forever; your throne will be firmly established forever.”

Nasan told all these words and all this vision to David.

was stripped of the monarchy, since he failed to eradicate the nation of Amalek completely, and this was because his commitment to Divine instruction had been compromised by his own reason and logic (see Haftarah to Parshas Zachor). David thus stressed that it was for this very
A man came from Ba’al Shalishah and he brought bread from the first harvest to (Elisha) the man of God—twenty loaves of barley bread and fresh grain (still) in its husks, in a sack.

(Elisha) said, “Give it to the people to eat.”

1 He (Na’aman) went and told his master (the King), saying, “The girl from the land of Israel told me this...etc.”

2 The King of Aram replied, “Go and approach (the prophet). I will send a letter to the King of Israel (telling him to instruct the prophet to cure you).”

Na’aman left, taking ten talents of silver, six thousand gold shekels, and ten items of clothing with him (as a gift for the prophet).

3 He brought the letter to the King of Israel, which read, “When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent my servant Na’aman to you, that you should heal him of his tzara’as,” (thinking that the King would understand for himself that he should instruct the prophet to heal Na’aman). 4 But when the King of Israel read the letter (the prophet did not even enter his mind, since he did not really believe in the prophet, and thought that the King of Aram was asking him to heal Na’aman himself), he rent his clothes (in fright) and said: “Am I God Who can kill or restore to life, that he sends someone to

reason that he had been dancing so fervently, to demonstrate that his commitment to God was not bound by his own logic, but was based on the pure acceptance of Divine authority (Likutei Sichos vol. 1, p. 228, 230).

Haftarah of Parshas Tazria

This Haftarah relates the miraculous healing of Na’aman’s tzara’as, in connection with the laws of tzara’as delineated in the Parsha.

The Haftarah relates two miracles performed by Elisha, a prophet living in the northern kingdom during the reign of King Yehoram (9th century B.C.E). In the first miracle, Elisha is offered a sack of twenty bread-rolls, but he declines, saying that it should be offered to the crowd of one hundred men. While the suggestion appears ludicrous, as there does not appear to be enough food, Elisha’s word is nevertheless fulfilled and, miraculously, there is even food left over (4:42-44).
me to cure him of his tzara'as? He is obviously seeking a pretext (to come and fight) against me!"

10 When Elisha, the man of God, heard that the King of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent (a messenger) to the King, saying: “Why have you rent your clothes? Let him (Na’aman) come to me, and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel!”

Na’aman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha’s house. 11 Elisha sent (a messenger) to tell him, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your (healthy) skin will be restored to you, and you will be ritually pure.”

12 Na’aman became angry and walked off. “Here I was thinking that he’ll come out (in my honor), stand (before me respectfully), and (in order to cure me) he’ll call out in the name of God, his God, and he’ll wave his hand towards the (afflicted) area and (I,) the tzara’as sufferer, would (miraculously) be healed! 13 Aren’t Amanah and Parpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel! I (am always) wash(ing) there, and yet am I pure (of tzara’as)?” He turned away and left in anger.

14 His servants approached him and spoke to him. They said, “Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something difficult, wouldn’t you have done it? All the more so when he tells you (an easy thing), ‘Wash and become pure,’ (you should listen)?”

15 (Na’aman) went and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, as the man of God had told him. His skin returned to be like the skin of a young child, and he was pure (of tzara’as).

16 (Na’aman) returned to the man of God—both he and all his entourage—and came and stood before him. (Na’aman) said, “Now I know that there is no God in the whole world other than in Israel. Now, please accept a gift from your servant.”

17 (Elisha) replied, “By the living God, before Whom I (regularly) stand (in prayer), I cannot accept (any gift)!” (Na’aman) begged (Elisha) to take (something), but he refused. 18 Na’aman said, “At least let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth (from the Holy Land, to build an Altar), for your servant will no longer offer burnt-offerings or sacrifices to other gods, but only to God!”

19 “May your servant please (ask God) to forgive me though for this (one) thing: When my master (the King) goes to the temple of Rimon to bow down there, (his bowing) coerces

The second miracle centers around Na’aman, the commander of Aram’s army, a tzara’as sufferer who receives news of Elisha’s healing powers (5:1-3). Na’aman approaches the King of Israel with a formal letter from the King of Aram, but the move is misunderstood—the King of Israel presumes that this is the pretense of an imminent attack, and he rents his clothes (4-7). Elisha hears of this and offers his services, and Na’aman soon arrives (8-9). However, Elisha does not even come to the door to greet Na’aman, and merely sends a message that he should bathe in the Jordan (10). Although initially outraged, Na’aman is pressured by his servants to listen to Elisha’s advice, and he is cured (11–14). Na’aman

...
returns to Elisha offering gifts, but Elisha declines (15-16). Finally, Na'aman seeks Elisha’s advice in spiritual matters, pledging allegiance to monotheism (17-19).

**Haftarah of Parshas Metzora**

This Haftarah relates the account of “four tzara’as sufferers,” in connection with the Parsha which discusses the purification from tzara’as.

The Haftarah takes place during the siege of Shomron (Samaria) by King Ben-Hadad of Aram, which caused a terrible famine, even bringing people to cannibalism (II Kings 6:24-29). The King blames Elisha, who in the past had averted famine with his prayers, but Elisha states calmly—to the disbelief of the King's messenger—that food will be freely available "at this time tomorrow" (6:30-7:3).

When they came to the edge of the Aramean camp, there was no one there, (because) God had caused the Aramean camp to (imagine that they) heard the sound of chariots and horses, the sound of a great army. (The Arameans) said to each other, “Look! The King of Israel has hired the Chitte kings and the Egyptian kings to attack us (and it is their sound we are hearing)!” They got going and fled in the evening, abandoning their tents, horses, and donkeys. (They left) the camp as it was and fled for their lives. When these tzara’as sufferers came to the edge of the camp, they entered one of the tents. They ate and drank, and carried away silver, gold, and clothing from there. Then they went and hid it, came back, entered another tent, carried away (its contents) from there, and hid it (again).

They said to each other, “We’re not doing the right thing! Today is a day of good news, and we’re being me to bow down too in the temple of Rimon. May God please forgive your servant for this, for bowing down in the temple of Rimon.” (Elisha) told him, “Go in peace,” and (Na’aman) traveled away from him some distance.
silent. If we wait until daybreak, (the King will find out about it through other sources) and we’ll be guilty (in his eyes of withholding good news). Let’s go and inform the King’s palace.”

10 When they arrived they called out to the city’s gatekeeper and told him, “We entered the Aramean camp and—look!—there was not a person or a sound there; only horses tied up, donkeys tied up, and tents, just as they were.”

11 The city gatekeepers called (the gatekeepers of the King’s palace) who informed the King’s household within.

The King suspects a conspiracy

12 The King got up in the night and said to his servants, “Now I’ll tell you what Aram (is plotting) to do to us. They know that we’re starving, so they’ve left their camp and hidden in the fields, saying, ‘When (the Jews) will leave the town (looking for food), we’ll take them alive and enter the town.’”

A party is sent to investigate

13 One of his servants responded, saying, “Let us take five of the horses which are still here (to investigate). Their rider’s lives are in danger anyway like the masses of Jewish people who remain here (and even if they die a bit sooner they will be like) the masses of Jewish people who have (already) perished. So let us send (the riders) and see (what happens).”

14 (Because of the danger) they took (just) two horsemen. The King sent them out to the Aramean camp, saying, “Go and investigate.” 15 They followed (the Arameans) to the Jordan, and—look!—the whole road was filled with clothing and utensils which the Arameans had thrown away in their haste (so they could flee quickly).

The messengers returned and reported back to the King. 16 and the people went out and plundered the Aramean camp.

Elisha’s predictions come true

(Then)—as (Elisha, the man of God) had predicted—a se’ah of fine flour went for a shekel, and two se’ahs of barley (also went) for a shekel.

17 The King put the official, on whom he had relied, in charge of the gate. The people trampled him to death at the gate, just as (Elisha) the man of God had said when the King came to him and (Elisha) spoke (with the official).

18 For when the man of God told the King, “Two se’ahs of barley will go for a shekel, and a se’ah of fine flour will go for a shekel tomorrow at the gate of Shomron,” 19 the official answered the man of God, “Even if God made windows in the sky, could such a thing happen?” and (Elisha) responded, “You will see it with your eyes, but you will not eat any of it.”
And so it happened to him (as Elisha, the man of God had said): the people trampled him at the gate, and he died.

9-10

ch. of Israel,” says God, “you are to Me like the (loyal) children of Cush (who serve their masters for life). For I (only) took Israel out from Egypt (to serve Me), but (I did not take) the Philistines from Kaftor, nor Aram from Kir.”

But (since you sinned,) the eyes of God Almighty are upon the sinful kingdom (of Efrayim), and I will wipe it off the face of the earth! But I will not completely destroy the House of Ya’akov,” says God, (“I will only destroy the monarchy of Efrayim.”) For I am going to issue a command, and I will exile the House of Israel among all the nations! (But the righteous will persevere) just as a pebble shakes back and forth in a sieve but does not fall to the ground. All the sinners of My people who say, “No evil will approach or come to us quickly,” (because they deny the principle of reward and punishment) will die at the sword (of the nations, but the righteous will persevere).

On that day (when the wicked are punished), I will erect David’s fallen succah (i.e. the fallen Davidic monarchy). I will build its broken walls (caused by the split into two kingdoms), erect its ruined (status during exile), and rebuild it (as it was) in former times. (The monarchy will be such) that (the Jewish people), who are called by My Name (‘the people of God’) will inherit the remaining (peoples) of Edom and all the other nations (to be their servants),” says God, who will carry out this (promise).

Look! Days are coming,” says God, “when the plowman (will be so busy with the large amount of crops that he continues plowing up to the time of reaping, so that he) meets up with the reaper. The treader of grapes (will be so busy with the large

story, the King’s messenger who initially dismissed Elisha’s prediction is trampled to death, fulfilling the prophet’s words, “You will see it with your eyes, but you will not eat any of it” (17-20).

Haftarah of Parshas Acharai

This Haftarah contains God’s rebuke to the Jewish people for acting like the non-Jewish nations, similar to that found in the Parsha (18:3:28).

Amos, the author of the Haftarah, lived in the mid-eighth century B.C.E. in Tekoa, five miles to the south of Bethlehem. The predominant theme of his prophecies is morality and Divine justice. He was killed by King Uzziah, who struck him on the forehead with a glowing iron (Seder Hadoros). (The Haftarah of Parshas Vayeishev is also taken from Amos.) The Haftarah, taken from the concluding chapter of the Book of Amos, contains a message of comfort. After a brief introduction in which the prophet criticizes the Jewish people for their sins, and threatens Divine retribution (7-8), the mood shifts swiftly to one of hope and promise. We are consoled that God will not wipe out the Jewish people entirely (8-10), that the Davidic monarchy will be re-established (11-12), and that the remnant will return and the land will yield abundantly (13-15).
volume of grapes, that he meets) with the seed carrier (who is going to plant the new crop. So many grapes will grow on the mountains that wine will drip from the mountains and (there will be such an abundance of food that it will appear as if) the hills have melted (forming oil and milk).”

14 “I will then pacify the exiles of Israel, My people. They will rebuild the cities (that were) destroyed (during the exile) and inhabit them (forever). They will plant vineyards and (they alone will) drink their wine. They will cultivate gardens and eat their fruits. 15 I will plant them on their land (with firm roots, like a tree, and) they will never again be uprooted from the land that I have given them,” says God, your God.

Kedoshim

(Ezekiel 20:2-20; 22:1-16)

According to Chabad and Sefardic communities [Sefardic communities read this Haftarah when Acharei and Kedoshim are combined]:

The word of God came to me, saying, 3 “Son of Man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘This is what God Almighty says: “Have you come to petition Me (in prayer, to save Jerusalem)? As I live,” says God Almighty, “I will not let you petition Me!”’

4 “If you (need to) debate with them (to prove that I am the One) Who passes judgment on man, (then) inform them of their ancestors’ abominations (in addition to their own sins)! 5 Say to them, ‘This is what God Almighty says, “When I chose Israel (at the time they were in Egypt), I raised My hand (and took an oath) to the descendants of Ya`akov’s house and I revealed Myself to them in the land of Egypt (by bringing the Divine Presence upon Aharon). I raised My hand (and swore to them), saying, ‘I am God your God (who guides you personally).”’ On that day I (also) lifted My hand (and swore) to take them out of the land of Egypt to a land which I had sought out for them—a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands.

7 “I said to them (through Aharon), ‘Let each man discard the detestable things which your eyes (attract you to)! Do not contaminate yourselves (by following after) the idols of Egypt. I will then pacify the exiles of Israel, My people.”

Haftarah of Parshas Kedoshim (Chabad & Sefardim)

The Haftarah and the Parsha both stress the theme of observing the law (Vayikra 20:8; Ezekiel 20:19), and doing so “in order to live” (Vayikra 18:5; Ezekiel 20:11,13).

The Haftarah is a historical review of Israel’s sinful past, spanning a number of different time periods. Each unit concludes that God
flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. This is because they had spurned My rational laws, not followed My suprarational commands and profaned My Sabbaths, for their hearts followed their idols (which they had worshiped in Egypt).

17 “(Even though they deserved) to be destroyed, I had pity on them, so I did not wipe them out in the desert.

18 “I said to their children, (the next generation), in the desert, ’Do not follow the statutes of your parents, and do not keep their laws (which God has not commanded). Do not defile yourselves with their idols.

preserved Jewish people only so that His Name would not be profaned among the nations. Initially, the Jewish people in Egypt are condemned for clinging to idolatry (2–9), and this is followed by a rebuke to the same generation for abandoning God’s commands after reaching the desert (10–14). They are then criticized for the sin of the spies (15–17). Finally, the second desert generation are warned not to follow in their parents’ ways (18). The Haftarah concludes with a call to observe the commandments and keep the Sabbath (19–20).
The sins of Jerusalem

22:1 God’s word came to me, saying, “And you, son of man, will you contest? Will you contest (with the people of) the city (who spill innocent) blood, and declare to her all her abominations? You should say (to them), ‘This is what God Almighty says, “To a city in which blood is shed, its time (of retribution) will come. (The city is also guilty of) making idols with which to defile itself. You are guilty because of the blood you shed, and you have become defiled by the idols which you made! You have brought near the days (of your retribution), and caused your years (to end). Therefore, I have made you an (object of) shame for the nations, a mockery for all the lands. Those near and far from you will mock you, (Israel), you who have a defiled name, (and who) are of great turmoil.

“Look, leaders of Israel! Each one (of you) used his strength to shed blood. Fathers and mothers have been disgraced by you, the concert has been oppressed by you, the orphan and widow have been cheated through you. You desecrated My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. Gossips were among you (whose goal was) that blood be shed. Through you, they ate (the remains of idol worship) on the mountains, and performed disgraceful acts in your midst. Through you, they revealed the nakedness of (their) father’s wives; through you they violated (women who were in a state of) ritual impurity. Through you, a man would perform abominations with his friend’s wife; another man would defile his daughter-in-law in lust; another would rape his sister, his father’s daughter. They took bribes to (pervert justice and) shed (innocent) blood in your midst. You took cash-interest and goods-interest, and made your (idol worshiping) friends rich through fraud, but you forgot Me,” says God Almighty.

I clapped My hands (in distress) over the fraud you have committed and over the (innocent) blood (spilled) in your midst.

Haftarah of Kedoshim read by Ashkenazic communities (Ezekiel 22:1-16):

19 “I am God your God. So (listen to Me and) follow My suprarational commands; guard (your hearts) and observe My rational commands. 20 Keep My Sabbaths holy, (in order that) they should be a sign between Me and you, to know that I am God your God.”
44:15  “The priests who (are from the tribe of) Levi—the descendants of Tzadok who kept the watch of My Sanctuary (in the times of Shlomo even) when the Jewish people strayed from Me—they will draw near to Me to serve Me, and they will stand before Me to offer Me fat and blood,” says God Almighty. 16 They will enter My Sanctuary and draw near to My table to serve Me (by arranging the multi-surface bread), and they will observe My precautions (regarding all the other forms of service).

17 "(On Yom Kippur) when the (High Priest) enters the gates of the Inner Courtyard (standing before the Holy of Holies), he must wear linen garments. (His regular garments which contain) wool should not be on him when he serves inside the gates of the Inner Court and (further) inward.

18  "Linen turbans should be on (the priests’) heads and linen pants should be on their hips. They should not tie their belts where they perspire.

19  "When (the priests) go out (from the Temple courtyard) to the outer court (where the) people (stand), they should remove the (priestly) garments in which they serve, and leave them in the holy chambers. They should put on other (non-holy) clothes and not make the people (appear holy by allowing them to come in contact) with their vestments.

20  "They may never shave their heads, nor let their hair grow longer (than thirty days). The High Priests) must keep their heads trimmed.

21  “All priests (and High Priests) may not drink wine when they enter the Inner Court.

**Haftarah of Parshas Emor**

This *Haftarah*, like the *Parsha*, mentions many laws which relate to priests. The *Haftarah* opens by delegitimizing all priests who are not descendants of Tzadok, due to past offenses (44:15-16). We then read various details of the priestly rites: Yom Kippur attire (17-19), hairstyles (20), not to drink wine (21), marriage laws (23), communal responsibilities (23-24), rules of ritual purity (25-26), inaugural sacrifices (27), land-related rights (28-30) and the prohibition of eating carcasses (31).

44:15—*لي תלבּנָה*—To offer Me fat and blood. Fat represents pleasure, as pleasure produces fat (see *Gittin* 56b; *Hayom Yom* 15th of Tamuz). Blood represents enthusiasm, for it is the blood that provides
Marriage laws

22 “The (High Priests) may not take widows or divorcées as wives, but only virgins of Jewish lineage. A widow who is a widow (that did not need to perform chalitzah) may be taken (as a wife) by a priest, (but not a High Priest).

23 “(The priests) should teach My people about the (differences) between holy and mundane. They should make (the differences) between ritual impurity and purity known to them.

24 “They will act as judges in (financial) disputes, and they will judge according to My laws (and not their own views). They should observe My teachings and My statutes (pertaining to) My holy days, and they should sanctify My Sabbaths (with the appropriate sacrifices).

25 “(The priests) may not come (in contact with) a human corpse and become ritually impure. They may make (themselves) ritually impure only for a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother or sister who has not married. 26 After (he is ready for) purification (having separated from the corpse), they must count seven days for him (and then he will be ritually pure).

27 “On the day that (a priest) begins his holy (service) in the Inner Court (by the Altar), to serve in the Sanctuary, he must offer his sin-offering,” says God Almighty.

28 “Do not give them possession of the Land of Israel, (for the priesthood) is their (full-time) inheritance. I am their inheritance (so they shall have leftovers of My sacrifices). I am their possession (and so are My sacrifices). 29 They will eat (the leftovers of) the meal-offering, the sin-offering, and the guilt-offering; what Israel sanctifies will be theirs. 30 All the first-fruits of every (kind), and every (kind) of terumah from all the terumah that you (are required to) give will go to the priests, and you should give the first portion of your dough to the priest. (By doing all this) a blessing will rest upon your house.

Carcasses

31 “The priests shall not eat from any carcass or mauled animal, of any (type of) bird or animal.”

Jeremiah 32:6-27

Yirmiyahu said: God’s word came to me, saying,

7 “Chanamail, the son of your uncle Shalum, (is going to) come to you and say, ‘Buy my field in Anasos, for you have the right to redeem it by purchasing it.’”

This Haftarah mentions the concept of buying and redeeming fields, mentioned in the Parsha.
My cousin Chanamail came to me, to the prison courtyard, as God said. He said to me, “Please buy my field in Anasos, which is in the land of Binyamin, for you (are my closest relative who will) have the right to take possession of it. (So you might as well) redeem it (now, rather than have to redeem it from another person, to whom I am forced to sell it). Buy it for yourself.”

I knew that this was God’s Word, “so I bought the field in Anasos from my cousin Chanamail. I weighed out the money for him: seven (silver) shekels and ten silver (sela’im).” I instructed that the transaction be recorded in a deed of sale, and (I instructed the vendor to) sign (his name. I summoned) witnesses (who watched me) weigh the silver on a balance.

Then I took the signed deed of sale (which had been made in accordance with) the laws and statutes (of those times) with the deed of public endorsement. I gave the deed of sale (and the deed of public endorsement) to Baruch the son of Neriyah (who was) the son of Machsaiyah, in the presence of my uncle Chanamail, (for they were) the witnesses who signed the deed(s. This also was done) in the presence of all the Jews who were sitting in the prison courtyard.

In their presence, I instructed Baruch, saying, “This is what the God of Hosts, God of Israel, says: ‘Take these deeds—the signed deed of sale and the deed of public endorsement—and put them into an earthenware jar, so they should be preserved for a long time.’

(Do not think that all this is being done in vain) because (the fact that) the God of Hosts, God of Israel said (to me to buy Chanamail’s field, is a hint that the time will come when) houses, fields, and vineyards will again be purchased in this land.”

After I gave the deed of sale (and the deed of public endorsement) to Baruch, the son of Neriyah, I prayed to God, saying, “Ah (if only I knew the true reason why You told me to buy this field)! God Almighty! You have made heaven and earth with Your great might and Your outstretched arm, so nothing is concealed from You.

You show kindness (to a righteous man’s descendants) for a thousand generations, and You punish children for the sins of their ancestors—O great and mighty God, who is called the God of Hosts!”

Great in counsel, mighty in (the ability to do any) deeds (You choose), Your eyes are open to (oversee)
all the ways of men, to repay each man according to his ways and (even according to) his (unintentional) deeds.

20 “You performed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, (which people remember) to this day—(both miracles to help) Israel and (miracles to hinder) other men (who were our enemies). You made a great name for Yourself that lives on to this day. 21 You took Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, (placing) great terror (upon the Egyptians), 22 and You gave them this land which You swore to their ancestors that You would give them—a land flowing with milk (from its animals who enjoy its good pasture) and (dates dripping with) honey.

Chabad communities conclude here. All others continue:

23 “They came and took possession of it, but they did not listen to Your voice, they did not follow Your Torah. They did not do everything that You commanded them, so You caused all this tragedy to befall them.

24 “The (enemies have already climbed the) mounds (which are piled up) at the city (so they are ready) to conquer it. (It is as if) the city has (already) been handed over to the Kasdim who are attacking it because (the people are weak and will soon die) by the sword, through hunger or plague. Whatever (disaster) You said (might happen) will occur, and You will see it.

25 But You, God Almighty, said to me, ‘Buy for yourself this field with money and call witnesses,’ though the city is in the hands of the Kasdim!”

God responds

26 God’s word came to Yirmeyahu, saying, 27 “Look! I am God, the God of all flesh! Is anything too difficult for Me (that I cannot return the field later)?”

BECHUKOSAI (& BEHAR-BECHUKOSAI) / (бедар-бедукосей)

( jeremiah 16:19 – 17:14)

God! My strength and stronghold! My refuge in times of trouble! (One day,) nations will come to You from the ends of the earth, and they will say, “Our ancestors inherited (idols as gods, but they are) false—

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS BECHUKOSAI

This Haftarah mentions calamities that were forewarned by the “curses” issued in the Parsha.

The Haftarah was said by the prophet Yirmiyahu in the Kingdom of Yehudah, close to the turn of the sixth century B.C.E.

Despite its overall theme of punishment and retribution, the Haftarah opens on a positive note, as Yirmiyahu affirms his trust in God and the fallacy of idol-worship (16:19-21). This is contrasted with sins of idol-worship committed by the Kingdom of Yehudah (1:4), and those fools who trust in man and not in God (5-8). The prophet then describes how God probes the heart of man, and treats him accordingly (9-11). In a final
Haftarah needs to come to the realization all his successes are a Divine gift, as the intellectual and spiritual qualities (who sees himself as already being strong (spiritual prowess. The verse could thus be rendered, “Cursed is a person strength of man, whereas
providence (12-14).

encouragement to man, and reaffirms his absolute trust in Divine plea for obedience, Yirmiyahu mentions the Temple as a symbol of God’s encouragement to man, and reaffirms his absolute trust in Divine providence (12-14).

17:5—Cursed is the man who...puts his trust in man. This verse employs two different terms for “man,” gever (גבער) and adam (אדם). In Hebrew, gever is a word which connotes the strength of man, whereas adam is a term that indicates his intellectual and spiritual prowess. The verse could thus be rendered, “Cursed is a person who sees himself as already being strong (gever) due to his natural intellectual and spiritual qualities (adam)—leading him to the conclusion that he can succeed in life without making much effort. Such a person needs to come to the realization all his successes are a Divine gift, as the Haftarah concludes, “(Only when you) save me (from those that rise against me)...will I be saved” (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai 5711).

7. בורא בֵּית אֵזוּר (Blessed is the man who trusts in God, and to whom God will be his trust. The Baal Shem Tov explained that the verse speaks of two very different types of trust in God. The first half of the verse (“Blessed is the man who trusts in God,”) speaks of a person who relies on God for all his needs but nevertheless sees a natural route in which God may garb His blessings. The second part of the verse speaks of a person who cannot imagine how God might provide his needs in the natural order, but nevertheless he still trusts in God. Thus, for this person, “God will be his

fruit. (Likewise the person who trusts in God will be devoid of problems, and never lack anything).

9 (But) the heart (of man) is (the most) crooked of all (his limbs), and it is warped. (It says:) “Who will know (if I really trust in God or not?)”

10 (So) I, God, probe the heart and test the kidneys (to see where each person really holds), repaying each man according

20 Could a man (possibly) make a god, when he himself is not a god?”

21 So this time I will let them know My might and power, and they will know that My Name is God!

17:1 Yehudah’s sin (is kept in their hearts as if it were) inscribed with an iron pen, with a steel nail. It is engraved on the walls of their hearts and on the horns of their altars. 1 As (frequently as) they remember their children, (they also remember) their altars and their idol-worship trees, near the leafy trees and on the high hills. 3 (O Yehudah who serves idols which stand on) mountains in the plain! I will hand over your wealth, all your treasures as booty, because of your private altars made in sin throughout your boundaries. 4 You will (be forced) to withdraw from your inheritance which I have given you (since you did not observe the Sabbatical year), and I will make you serve your enemies in a land which you do not know. For you have kindled a fire (of anger) in My nostrils, which will burn for a long time.

5 God says: (You will not escape My anger with mortal help, for) cursed is the man who turns his thoughts away from God and puts his trust in man, relying on (mortal flesh for his strength. 6 (A person who trusts in man alone) will be like a tree in the desert, which does not witness the good when it comes (for when it rains everywhere else, it does not rain in the desert). He will dwell in scorched places in the wilderness, in a salt-sodden soil that is not inhabitable.

7 Blessed is the man who trusts in God, and to whom God will be his trust. 8 He will be (devoid of problems) like a tree planted by water, which sends its roots out into a stream, so it is not affected by the coming of the heat and its leaves remain fresh. It does not worry in a year of drought, and it never stops produ

Not to place trust in man

The sins of Yehudah

God probes the heart of man
The Plan

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for the

all our activities
to bring the redemption. Being that this is the underlying significance of

redemption, and therefore, by logical extension, the eve of the new moon

(20:18). At first glance, this connection appears

more pertinent than reading the

not connected with the theme of

Erev Rosh Chodesh: "Tomorrow is the

first of the new month." Y onasan said to (David), “Tomorrow is the (first of the) new month. You shall be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 For three (days) you should go down (and hide yourself) and come to the place where you hid on the day of the incident (when the King swore to me not to kill you), and sit by the traveler's (marker) stone. 20 “I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target. 21 Then, I will send a lad (saying to him), ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to the lad, 'look!'—the arrows are on this side of you,' then you should take them and

trust,” i.e. God Himself is the person's only source of trust and security (The Tzemach Tzedek, cited in Pelach Harimon 62c).

Haftarah of Erev Rosh Chodesh

This Haftarah mentions the eve of Rosh Chodesh: "Tomorrow is the (first of the) new month." (20:18). At first glance, this connection appears to be somewhat tenuous, as the remaining narrative of the Haftarah is not connected with the theme of Erev Rosh Chodesh. Why should this be more pertinent than reading the Haftarah connected with the weekly Parsha? Chasidic thought explains that the renewal of the moon signifies redemption, and therefore, by logical extension, the eve of the new moon (Erev Rosh Chodesh) represents the work carried out during exile in order to bring the redemption. Being that this is the underlying significance of all our activities, it was considered a sufficiently important replacement for the Haftarah of the week (Hisaaduyos 5711, vol. 2, p. 50, 56).

The Haftarah describes a climactic moment in the rift between David and Sha’ul, which arose from David’s successful military career. Sha’ul, who was king at the time, perceived David as a rebel that needed to be eliminated. Fearing for his life, David seeks the assistance of Yonasan, the king's son, who was David’s passionate admirer, but Yonasan finds the conspiracy theory difficult to believe. In order to verify his suspicions, David suggests a plan: he will disappear for three days to test the king’s reaction, which would then be reported to David by Yonasan with a secret sign.

The Haftarah opens as Yonasan reviews David’s plan and confirms a secret sign to be enacted by shooting arrows and instructing certain phrases to his servant (20:18-23). Initially, the king appears indifferent to David’s absence (24-28), but on the second day he becomes furious with Yonasan and states that David “deserves death” (29-34). So, the next morning, Yonasan goes out to the field and communicates their pre-arranged sign by shooting arrows, and sends his servant home (35-40). David then comes out of hiding, and they part amid tears, swearing an oath “between my descendants and your descendants forever.” (41-42).

The arrows are on this side of you, etc. When arrows are shot from a bow, the more the bow is extended backwards,
accomplishment. David wanted to know if these accomplishments had circumstantial circumstances, the greater and more “far reaching” is the spiritual themselves” to deal with the physical world in the most difficult of accomplishments of exile: The more the Jewish people “extend their reach,” the greater and more “far reaching” is the spiritual accomplishment. David wanted to know if these accomplishments had already been completed, heralding the time of redemption. So Yonasan told him that if “the arrows are on this side of you,” i.e. if the task of exile, represented by the arrows, is complete, “then you should take them and return, for it is safe for you,” i.e. the time of redemption has arrived. But if the arrows are beyond you,” then there is still much work to be done in exile. But do not be afraid to continue this work, “because God has sent you” (Hisvadayos ibid.).
This Haftarah mentions the sacrificial worship that will occur every new month (Rosh Chodesh) after the ingathering of the exiles. The Haftarah was addressed by the prophet Yeshayah (Isaiah) to the Jewish people in Babylon after the exile, at the end of the 6th century B.C.E.

The Haftarah opens with God’s proclamation of omnipresence and the insufficiency of one House to contain Him (66:1). God will turn His attention to those that fear Him (2), and all types of insincere worship are abhorred by Him (3-4). Those who hate and ostracize God’s servants will be chastised by a “voice from the Temple” (5-6). Tziyon’s (Zion’s) deliverance is compared to that of a mother who gives birth without pain (7-9), and the rejoicing at Jerusalem’s rebuilding is depicted (10-14). All enemies and idol-worshippers will be punished (15-18) and the nations that remain will come to Tziyon, bringing the Jewish people along with them (19-20). New priests will be appointed, and all mankind will worship God (21-23). The rebels’ corpses will remain in the valley of Yehoshafat as an ominous reminder to all mankind (24; verse 23 is then repeated so as to finish on a positive note).

1. The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. According to Chasidic thought, the various gradations of the human soul can be divided into three broad categories: a.) Internal. Those powers which rest within the body and interact with it. These parts of the soul give life to the body and control its intellectual and emotional activity. b.) External. The aura (makif) of the soul which surrounds the body and ordinarily has no direct contact with it.

God is everywhere (Isaiah 66:1-24, ibid. 23)

The Maltir reading for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh is on page 289. (Bamidbar 28:9-15)

Shabbos Rosh Chodesh / שבת ראש חודש

was with him. “He said to his lad, “Run! Find now the arrows which I shoot.” As the lad ran (for the first arrow), he shot an arrow beyond him.

37 When the lad came to the place of the (first) arrow which Yonasan had shot, Yonasan called out after the lad and said, “Isn’t the (last) arrow beyond you?”

38 Yonasan called out after the lad, “Go quickly! Hurry (after the second arrow). Don’t stay (by the first)!”

Yonasan’s lad gathered up (both) the arrows, and came to his master. 39 The lad knew nothing (about the sign). Only Y onasan and David knew the matter.

40 Yonasan gave his bow and arrows to his lad, and said to him, “Go and carry them to the city.” 41 As soon as the lad had gone (towards the city), David (understood that it was safe and) stood up from near the south (side of the stone). He fell on his face to the ground, and prostrated himself three times. They kissed one another, and wept with one another, until David (wept) greatly (more than Yonasan).

42 Yonasan said to David, “Go in peace, as both of us have sworn in the name of God, saying, ‘God be (a witness) between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.’”
attention: to he who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word. 1 “However, he who kills an ox (offering his sacrifice without trembling at My word) it is as if he slew a man. He who sacrifices a lamb (without trembling), is as if he cut off a dog’s neck. He who offers a meal-offering (without trembling), is as if he offered suine’s blood. He who burns incense (without trembling), is as if he blessed an idol. He who offers up frankincense (without trembling) is as if he offered an inappropriate gift. They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations. 4 So too I will choose to mock them, and will bring their fears upon them, because when I called (to them through the prophets), none answered. When I spoke, they did not listen. They did evil before My eyes, and chose what I did not desire.”

5 “Hear the word of God, you who tremble at His word! Your (wicked) brothers who hate you and who ostracize you say, ‘(I am so great that) God is glorified because of my name!’ (But in truth) we shall see your joy and they shall be shamed. 6 (Then there will be) a voice of rumbling from the city of Tziyon, a voice from the Temple, the voice of God rendering recompense to his enemies (Gog and Magog).”

7 “Before she (Tziyon) feels labor pains she will give birth. Before her labor pain will come, she will be delivered a son. 8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such a thing? Has a land gone through its labor in one day? Has a nation been born all at once, for Tziyon labored and gave birth to her children? 9 Shall I bring to the birthstool, and not cause her to give birth?” says God. “Shall I, who cause birth, hold back?” says your God.

10 “Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her (to see her rebuilt). Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her (in her destruction), 11 so that you may (be rewarded to) nurse, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations. That you may drink deeply, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12 For this is what God says: ‘Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations (will rush to her) like a flowing stream. (You who mourned for her) shall (be rewarded) to draw (effortlessly from) the wealth of the nations. You shall be (honored by the nations, like a baby who is) carried on (its mother’s) sides, and dandled on her knees. 13 Like one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem (for your suffering).”

On occasion, however, one can draw from these energies of the soul in order to break free from existing limitations in one’s life.

c.) Essence. Then there is the very essence of the soul which is not limited to being inside or outside the body. The route to access the soul’s essence is through humility, simplicity and sincere dedication.

These three levels of the soul are alluded to in the opening of the Haftarah. “The heavens” and “earth” allude to Torah and mitzvos respectively (because Torah was given from Heaven, and the mitzvos are performed with physical objects here on earth), i.e. things which are observed in everyday life with the normal faculties of the soul found in the body. The “house” mentioned by the verse alludes to the soul powers which encompass the body, just as a house encompasses a person. While these powers are indeed impressive, scripture nevertheless bemoans their insufficiency (“What house could you build (worthy) for Me?”), because the most profound form of Divine service comes from the essence of the soul. And this essence is reached through humility: “To this I will pay
see (Jerusalem rebuilt), your heart will rejoice, and (the health of) your bones will (be strengthened) like flourishing grass. The (mighty) Hand of God will be known to His servants, and His anger toward His enemies.

15 For, behold, God will come with fire (to destroy the armies of Gog and Magog), and with His chariots like a storm to repay (His enemies) with fury. His rebuke (will be) with flames of fire. 16 For by fire God will execute judgment, and by His sword upon all flesh. The slain by God will be many.”

17 “Those who prepare and purify themselves (to go) to the gardens (of idolatry, one group) after another (to worship the idol) in the center (of the garden); those who eat swine’s flesh, abominable creatures, and mice—they all perish together,” says God. 18 “I (know) their works and their thoughts. (The time) has come, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see My glory. 19 I will scar them, but from them I will let survivors escape to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, the archers, to Tuval, and Yavan, to far off islands, that have not heard My fame, nor have they seen My glory. They shall declare My glory among the nations. 20 They will (then) bring all your brothers from all nations as an offering to God, on horses, in chariots, in covered wagons, on mules and with songs and dances to My holy mountain in Jerusalem,” says God, “just as (respectfully as) the people of Israel bring an offering in a pure utensil to the House of God.

21 From them too I will take to be priests and Levites (even though they will have forgotten their lineage),” says God. 22 “For just as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make (in those days), shall remain before Me, says God, so shall your descendants and your name remain (forever).”

23 “It will then be, that every (first of the) new month, and every Shabbos, all mankind shall come to worship before Me (in the holy Temple),” says God. 24 The (non-Jews) shall go out (of Jerusalem, to the valley of Yehoshafat), and look upon the corpses of the men (of Gog and Magog) who have rebelled against Me, for the worms (that eat them) will not die, and the fire (that burns them) shall not be extinguished. They shall be a (symbol of) disgrace to all mankind.”

25 “It will then be, that every (first of the) new month, and every Shabbos, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says God.

attention: to he who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word” (v. 2).

This explanation adds further significance to the reading of this passage on Rosh Chodesh (new moon). For just as the disappearance of the moon and its re-emergence as a miniscule point is the key to its later growth, likewise it is the path of humility and self-renunciation which reaches the essence of the soul, bringing the person to a genuine spiritual rebirth (Sefer Ha’ama’arim Melukat vol. 3, p. 133).
Parshas Zachor / חפירות לפרסות זכור

(I Samuel 15:1-34)

The Mashiach for Parshas Zachor is on page 289 (Devarim 25:17-19).

Some communities begin here.

The Haftarah describes King Sha’ul’s victory over the nation of Amalek and his subsequent rejection as King by God for failing to obliterate the nation completely—a command which we read at the opening of the Haftarah (15:1-3). We are informed briefly of the preparations for battle, Amalek’s defeat, and the sparing of Yisro’s descendants, the Kenites (4-7). All the Amalekite people are executed, but their King Agag is spared along with all the choice livestock, because Sha’ul and the people “took pity” on them (8-9). God soon makes His disapproval known to the prophet Shmuel, who is profoundly distressed and prays all night (10). He confronts the King, and cautiously offers the criticism he has heard from God (11-19). Sha’ul defends his actions, claiming that the animals had been spared for a holy purpose, to offer sacrifices (20-21). When

15:1 Shmuel said to Sha’ul, “God sent me to anoint you as King over Israel, His people. Now listen to God’s voice!”

Command to destroy Amalek

JShmuel said to Sha’ul, “God sent me to anoint you as King over Israel, His people. Now listen to God’s voice!”

Kenites are spared

JSha’ul came to the city of Amalek, and fought (them) in the valley.

Amalek is defeated

JSha’ul defeated the Amalekites from Chavilah to the approach to Shur, which faces Egypt. *He took Agag the king of Amalek captive*.

Haftarah of Parshas Zachor

Parshas Zachor (Devarim 25:17-19) is a supplementary reading for the Shabbos read before the festival of Purim, dealing with the obligation to remember the evil nation of Amalek (being that Haman, whose downfall was on Purim, was a descendant of Amalek). The requirement to listen to this reading is of Biblical origin (Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch 282:16), and according to many authorities, women are obligated in this mitzvah. It has therefore become common practice for women to come to the synagogue to hear this reading (Sichos Shabbos Parshas Zachor 5743). For further discussion of the commandments to remember and eliminate Amalek, see commentaries to Shemos 17:8-15 and Devarim 25:17-19.

Chabad and Ashkenazic communities begin here:

1 This is what the God of Hosts said, “I remember what Amalek did to Israel, how they set (an ambush) for them on the way, when they were coming up from Egypt.

2 Now, go and strike Amalek, and completely destroy all that they have! Do not have compassion on them. Slay both man and woman, children and babies, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys.”

3 Sha’ul called the people together, and counted them in (the place called) Telaim (alternatively: he counted them with sheep, to avoid the evil eye. There were) two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Yehudah.

4 Sha’ul came to the city of Amalek, and fought (them) in the valley.

5 Sha’ul said to the Kenites (who were descended from Yisro), “Go, depart, descend from among the Amalekites, lest we destroy you (accidentally) with them, for your father Yisro) showed kindness to all the people of Israel, when they came out of Egypt (helping them to appoint judges).” The Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

6 Sha’ul defeated the Amalekites from Chavilah to the approach to Shur, which faces Egypt. *He took Agag the king of Amalek captive*.
King of the Amalekites alive, and completely destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

9 Sha’ul and the people took pity on Agag, and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fat cattle, the fat lambs, and all that was good, and would not completely destroy them. The cattle that were of low quality or slaughtered they destroyed.

10 The word of God came to Shmuel, saying,

11 “I regret that I have appointed Sha’ul to be king. For he has turned away from Me and has not performed My word.” It upset Shmuel and he prayed to God all night (on Sha’ul’s behalf).

12 Shmuel rose early to (go and) meet Sha’ul in the morning. Shmuel was told as follows, “Sha’ul came to Carmel, and behold, he was setting up a place for himself there to distribute (the spoils), and then he turned around and continued traveling to Gilgal.”

13 (When he arrived in Gilgal), Shmuel came to Sha’ul. Sha’ul said to him, “May God bless you (because, through you) I have (been able to) perform God’s command (to me)!”

14 Shmuel said, “(But if you have fulfilled God’s command then) what is the sound of sheep in my ears, and the sound of the cattle which I hear? (Are they from Amalek?)”

15 Sha’ul said, “They have (indeed) brought them from the Amalekites. The people (only) spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen (not for themselves, but for a mitzvah:) to sacrifice to God your God (so I could not rebuke them). The rest (which were not fit to be sacrificed) we have completely destroyed.”

16 Shmuel said to Sha’ul, “Retract (your words)! I will tell you what God has said to me last night.”

He said to him, “Speak.”

17 Shmuel said, “Even if you are little in your own eyes, you are (nevertheless) the chief of the tribes of Israel, and (furthermore) God anointed you king over Israel (so why did you not exert your authority and rebuke them?). 18 God sent you on a (mission), and said, ‘Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are annihilated.’ 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of God (to destroy them completely)? Through failing to rebuke the people it is as if you (yourself) rushed to grab the booty and did evil in the eyes of God!”

20 Sha’ul said to Shmuel, “(Actually), I have obeyed the voice of God and have followed the way which God sent me. I have detained Agag the King of Amalek, and I have completely destroyed the Amalekites. 21 (I, personally, have taken nothing and)
the people took from the booty sheep and oxen—the best of what was to be destroyed—for a holy purpose to sacrifice to God your God in Gilgal.”

22 Shmuel said, “Does God have as great a delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of God? Indeed, to obey (God) is better than a sacrifice (to Him), and to listen (to Him) better than the fat of rams (offered from a sacrifice).”

23 For disobedience is like the sin of sorcery (since both sinners believe in man more than God), and adding (to a prophet’s words) is like (serving) false gods and idols. Because you have rejected the word of God, he has also rejected you from being King.”

24 Sha’ul said to Shmuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the command of God and (added to) your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. But now, please forgive my sin (against you). Return with me, and I will prostrate myself before God!”

25 Shmuel said to Sha’ul, “I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of God, and God has rejected you from being King over Israel.”

26 Shmuel turned about to go away, and (Sha’ul) grabbed the hem of his cloak (to prevent him from going), and it ripped.

28 Shmuel said to him, “(This is a sign that) God has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a peer of yours (David), who is better than you. Furthermore, the Powerful One of Israel (has already given the monarchy to somebody else, and He) will not lie or change His mind, for He is not a man that He should change his mind.”

29 (Sha’ul) said, “(Even though) I have sinned, please honor me in the presence of the elders of my people, and before Israel, and return with me, and I will prostrate myself before God, your God.” Sha’ul admitted doing wrong.

28 Shmuel said, “Bring Agag the king of the Amalekites to me.” Agag came to him in chains.

Agag said, “Surely, the bitterness of death is turned (to me)!”

with a note that Shmuel and Sha’ul then parted company and returned to their respective homes (34).

22. Ḥakaf v’Ḥakaf—Does God have as great a delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of God? The Talmud states, “with regard to sin, Sha’ul was untainted, like a one-year-old child” (Yoma 22b), so clearly, it cannot have been Sha’ul’s intention to disobey God’s command. Sha’ul must have spared Agag and the Amalekite herds because he felt that this was God’s will, as he initially responded to Shmuel, “I have obeyed the voice of God and have followed the way which God sent me” (v. 20).

Sha’ul understood that a sacrifice gives pleasure to God because one takes something low and physical, such as an animal, and dedicates it to a lofty, spiritual purpose. He thought, “How apt it would be to take the evil Amalek’s animals and transform them to a state of holiness!”

In theory, his argument was extremely convincing—but it was a conclusion based on logic, not obedience. Even rational thought which follows the principles laid down by our holy Torah must have the underpinnings of unquestioning obedience and dedication to God. So Sha’ul’s mistake was not in the quality or spiritual truth of his reasoning; it was a subtle lack of plain obedience that belied his thought process. And it is this suprarational commitment to God that we celebrate on Purim, when a person must reach the level where “he does not know the difference between ‘Cursed be Haman’ and ‘Blessed be Mordechai’” (Megilah 7b; Likutei Sichos vol. 3, p. 913ff).
Shmuel said, “Just as your sword has made women widowed and childless, so shall your mother be childless among women!”

Shmuel cut Agag in pieces before God in Gilgal.

Shmuel went to Ramah. Sha’ul went up to his house at Sha’ul’s hill.

36:16 The word of God came to me, saying, 17 “Son of man, when the House of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their way and by their doings. Their way was before Me like the uncleanliness of a menstruating woman (which causes a woman to distance herself from her husband) 18 Therefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. 19 I scattered them among the countries, according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. They came to the nations (where they were exiled), and they profaned My holy Name, because it was said of them, ‘These are the people of God, and yet (God could not help them and) they have gone out from his land!’ 20 But I had concern for My holy Name, which the House of Israel had profaned among the nations (where they were exiled).”

21 Therefore say to the House of Israel, ‘This is what God, Almighty God, says: “I do not do this for your sakes, O House of Israel, but for My holy Name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations (where you were exiled).”’ 22 I will sanctify My great Name, which was profaned among the nations, which you have profaned.

Haftarah of Parshas Parah

Parshas Parah (Bamidbar 19:1-22) is a supplementary reading for Shabbos read in the weeks preceding the festival of Pesach. The reading discusses the ritual purification process through the Red Heifer that is required as a preparation for offering the Pesach sacrifice (Rashi to Megilah 29a), and the theme of ritual purity is likewise stressed by the Haftarah, “Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you etc.” (v. 25).

While we sometimes find that there is an interval between the supplementary readings of Shekalim, Zachor and Parah, the final reading of Hachodesh is always read on the Shabbos which follows the reading of Parah (Rambam, Laws of Prayer 13:21). This suggests that the themes of Parah (purification and repentance) and Hachodesh (exodus and redemption) are intimately linked: when the Jewish people repent, they are immediately to be redeemed (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei 5748, par. 9-10).

The Haftarah is a prophecy of hope and comfort addressed by the prophet Yechezkel (Ezekiel) to the Jewish community in Babylon (6th century B.C.E). The opening words of the Haftarah constitute a sharp criticism of the people for defiling the land, which was the cause of the subsequent exile (36:16-21). The ingathering will ultimately occur so as not to profane God’s holy Name (22-24), and only then will the Jewish people be purified and given a new spirit (25-28). Israel will live in...
shall know that I, God, have rebuilt the ruined places, and have replanted that which was desolate. I, God, have said it (will happen), and I (am the one who) will do it.”

In their midst, and the nations shall know that I am God,” says God, Almighty God, “when I shall be sanctified through you, before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you from all countries, and will bring you into your own Land.”

25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you (from the ashes of the red heifer), and you shall be clean from all your filth, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 I will also give you a new (upright) heart, and a new spirit I will put inside you. I will take away the (stubborn) heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give you a (soft) heart of flesh. 27 I will put My spirit inside you (so that you will become prophets), and cause you to follow My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them.”

28 “You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and you shall be My people, and I will be your God.”

29 “I will save you from all the sinful uncleanness to which you were accustomed (for I will arouse your heart to be aware of it). I will command (My blessing upon) the grain that it should increase, and lay no famine upon you. 30 I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the produce of the field, so that you shall never suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and will feel cut off due to your (former) sins and your (former) abominations.”

32 “Not for your sake will I make this (redemption),” says God, Almighty God, “Let it be known to you, be ashamed and confounded from your (bad) ways (which were insufficient to bring the redemption), O House of Israel!”

33 This is what God, Almighty God, says: “On the day when I will have atoned you from all your iniquities I will populate cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt (fit for human habitation). 34 The land which is desolate (now) will be tilled, instead of being the desolation that was in view of all who passed by. 35 (Passersby will be shocked, and) they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden! The waste and desolate and ruined cities have become fortified, and are inhabited!’ 36 Thus, the nations who remain around you

shall know that I, God, have rebuilt the ruined places, and have replanted that which was desolate. I, God, have said it (will happen), and I (am the one who) will do it.”

comfort and will be ashamed of her past sins (29-32). Finally, God promises to repopulate the land extensively (33-38).

25. —Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you etc. The verse describes three phases of the teshuva (repentance) process: a.) Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you—Initially, God sends the person a spiritual awakening; b.) And you shall be clean from all your filth—the person then repents, thus cleansing himself spiritually; c.) And from all your idols, I will cleanse you—After the person’s own efforts, God then provides further spiritual assistance from above to bring the person to a higher level of teshuva (Sichas Vav Tishrei 5742, par. 37).
This is what God Almighty says: I will be sought by the House of Israel to do one more thing for them, I will make them multiply, men like sheep. Like holy sheep, like the sheep brought to Jerusalem (for sacrifices) on its holidays, the ruined cities will be filled with flocks of men, and they will know that I am God (faithful to My word)!

Parshas Hachodesh / Parshas Hachodesh

(Ezekiel 45:16 - 46:18)

The Mefarsh for Parshas Hachodesh is on page 290. (Shemos 12:1-20)

Many communities begin here. Chabad communities begin below:

45:16 All the people of the land should join (in giving) this contribution (including) the leader in Israel. In addition to the contribution, the leader will bear (responsibility for) the burnt-offerings, the meal-offerings and the (wine) libation of the festivals, new months and sabbaths, all the gatherings of the Jewish people. He will provide the sin-offering, the meal-offering, the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings (from his personal property) to atone for the House of Israel.

18 This is what God, Almighty God, says: "In the first (month), on the first day of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish (for a sin-offering), and (with it) you shall cleanse the sanctuary (thus inaugurating it). The priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering, and put it upon the doorposts of the sanctuary, and upon the four corners of the ledge of the Altar, and upon the doorposts of the gate of the men's courtyard. So you shall do (every day until) the seventh day of the month (to inaugurate the Temple. These sacrifices) will

Chabad and Sefardic communities conclude here. Ashkenazic communities continue:

The word hachodesh is a derivation of the term chidush, which means “novelty” or “innovation.” As an annual event, the reading of Parshas Hachodesh thus serves to awaken our potential to constantly refresh our observance of Judaism. Being that the challenges to our observance in exile times are many, there is a temptation to suffice with merely preserving our existing achievements; but the Torah demands—and therefore empowers us spiritually—that we constantly grow and “innovate” new levels of commitment to our mitzvah observance (Sichos Shabbos Parshas Taazria, Parshas Hachodesh 5744, par. 3).
In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall bring the Pesach (sacrifice). (During) the festival of seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten. On that day (the fourteenth of Nisan) the leader shall bring a bull for a sin-offering from his own property, for all the people of the land. He shall prepare a burnt-offering to God (from his own property) for seven days of the festival: seven bulls and seven rams without blemish daily for seven days, and a kid of the goats daily for a sin-offering. He shall prepare a meal offering of an eifah for a bull, and an eifah for a ram, and a hin of oil for an eifah.

In the seventh (month), on the fifteenth day of the month, he shall do the same in the festival of seven days, like the (above-mentioned) sin-offering, like the burnt-offering, like the meal offering, and like the oil.

This is what God, Almighty God, says: “The gate of the men’s courtyard that faces the east shall be closed for the six working days (since people do not come during the week), but on Shabbos it shall be opened, and on the first day of the month it shall be opened.

The leader shall enter by way of the outer porch of that gate from outside, and he shall stand by the post of the gate. (While he stands there) the priests shall prepare his burnt-offering and his peace offerings, and he shall bow down at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be closed until the evening (because) the people of the land shall bow down at the door of this gate before God on Shabbos and (the first day of) the month.

The burnt-offering that the leader shall offer to God on the Shabbos day (for the inauguration) shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish.

The meal offering shall be an eifah for a ram. The meal offering for the lambs should be whatever he is capable of bringing, and a hin of oil to an eifah.

On the (first day) of the month it shall be a young bull without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram. They shall be without blemish. He shall prepare a meal offering, an eifah for a bull, and an eifah for a ram, and for the lambs according to his means, and a hin of oil to an eifah.

When the leader shall enter (to watch the sacrifices being offered), he shall go in by way of the outer porch of that gate, and he shall go out by the same way. But when the people of the land shall come before God on the festivals (to offer their obligatory sacrifices), he who enters in by way of the north gate to bow down shall go out by the way of the south gate, and be without blemish.

He shall prepare a meal offering, an eifah for a bull, and an eifah for a ram, and for the lambs according to his means, and a hin of oil to an eifah.

When the leader shall enter (to watch the sacrifices being offered), he shall go in by way of the outer porch of that gate, and he shall go out by the same way. But when the people of the land shall come before God on the festivals (to offer their obligatory sacrifices), he who enters in by way of the north gate to bow down shall go out by the way of the south gate, and be without blemish.

The Haftarah opens with regulations pertaining to communal donations to the Temple, and the responsibilities of the leader to provide offerings for the festivals, new months and Sabbaths (45:16-17). The next passage, where Chabad communities begin the Haftarah, details laws pertaining to the inauguration of the Temple (18-20) and the Pesach offerings (21-25). We also read various rules pertaining to gate regulations (46:1-3) and details of the regular sacrificial offerings (4-15). Chabad and Sefardic communities end here, but Ashkenazic communities add a brief codification of inheritance laws for the leader and his family (16-18).
The leader’s route

he who enters by the way of the south gate shall go out by the way of the north gate. He shall not return by the way of the gate by which he came in, but shall go out straight ahead. 10 The leader among them (shall join them). When they go in, he shall go in (with them), and when they go out, he shall go out (with them).

Opening of the gate

11 On the festivals, the meal offering shall be an eifah for a bull, and an eifah for a ram, and for the lambs whatever he is capable of bringing, and a hin of oil to an eifah.

Daily offerings

12 (During the six working days) when the leader shall prepare a voluntary burnt-offering or peace offering to God, the gate facing east shall be opened for him, and (the priest) shall bring his burnt-offering and his peace-offerings, as he does on the Shabbos day. Then he shall go out. After he goes out, the gate shall be closed (since people are working and cannot come to the Temple).

13 (In addition to the above inaugural sacrifices) you shall prepare a burnt-offering to God of a year-old lamb without blemish. You shall prepare it every morning.

14 You shall prepare a meal offering for it every morning, the sixth part of an eifah, and the third part of a hin of oil, to moisten the fine flour—a meal offering continually by an everlasting ordinance to God.

15 (In addition to the above) they shall (continue to) prepare the (usual) lamb, meal offering and oil, (required by the Torah) every morning for a continual burnt-offering.

Chabad and Sefardic communities conclude here. Ashkenazic communities continue:

Inheritance of the Leader

16 This is what God Almighty says, “If (during his lifetime) the leader gives one of his sons a gift, since it is his rightful property, it will belong to his sons, and it will be their possession by inheritance. 17 If he gives one of his servants a gift from his property, it shall be (the servant’s possession only) until the Jubilee. It then returns to the leader’s possession, and it remains as an inheritance for his descendants. 18 The leader may not take (land) from the people’s portion and defraud them of their property. He may give his sons an inheritance (only) from his own property, in order that My people not be scattered, each man from his property.

If Shabbos is Rosh Chodesh, Chabad communities add the following (Isaiah 66:1,23-24; ibid. 23):

66:1 This is what God said: “The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool, (so) what house could you build (worthy) for Me, and what place (is worthy for) My
(Presence to) rest?25 “It will then be, that every (first of the) new month, and every Shabbos, all mankind shall come to worship before Me (in the holy Temple),” says God. 24 The (non-Jews) shall go out (of Jerusalem, to the valley of Yehoshafat), and look upon the corpses of the men (of Gog and Magog) who have rebelled against Me, for the worms (that eat them) will not die, and the fire (that burns them) shall not be extinguished. They shall be a (symbol of) disgrace to all mankind. 21 It will then be, that every (first of the) new month, and every Shabbos, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says God.

If Sunday is Rosh Chodesh, Chabad communities add the following (I Samuel 20:18,42):

Yonasan said to (David), “Tomorrow is the (first of the) new month. You shall be missed, because your seat will be empty.

Yonasan said to David, “Go in peace, as both of us have sworn in the name of God, saying, ‘God be (a witness) between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.’”

Shabbos Hagadol / שבת הגדול

(Malachi 3:4-24. Ibid. 3:23)

According to Chabad custom, this Haftarah is read only when Shabbos Hagadol coincides with Erev Pesach.

The offerings of Yehudah and Yerushalayim will be sweet to God (in the time of the future Redemption) as in the early days (of Moshe) and the former years (of Shlomo, and fire will once again descend on the Altar).”

Then I will approach you in judgment. (I will not delay judgment in order to examine witnesses, for) I will act as the (sole) witness (and enact judgment) quickly upon sorcerers, adulterers, those who swear falsely, those who cheat their salaried workers, (those who cheat) a widow or an orphan, or pervert (the justice of those who cheat) a widow or an orphan, or pervert (the justice of...in future Redemption, as in the early days (of Moshe) and the former years (of Shlomo, and fire will once again descend on the Altar).”

For I, God, have not changed (My mind—I still hate evil). And you, the children of Ya’akov, have not reached the end (of your judgment, for many wicked people died without retribution, and I will only punish them when they are resurrected).”

Haftarah of Shabbos Hagadol

Many communities, including Chabad, have the custom to recite this Haftarah only when Shabbos Hagadol (the Shabbos prior to the festival of Pesach) falls out on the eve of the festival (Erev Pesach). This is because the Haftarah alludes to the precept of removing tithes from one’s possession (“bring all the tithes to the storehouse” v. 10), which, according to Jewish law, must be completed by Erev Pesach (Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch 430:3; see Devarim 26:12ff.). Others have the custom to read the Haftarah every Shabbos Hagadol, because it mentions Eliyahu
Return to God

“Ever since the days of your fathers, you have turned away from My laws and did not keep them. Return to Me (and keep My mitzvos),” says the God of Hosts, “and I will return to you (and treat you well, as in the past).”

“But you (have the nerve to) say, ‘What (sins have we done for which) we need to repent?’”

“So I reply to you, ‘Is it right that a human being should steal from God, because you steal from Me?’

“And (if) you will say, ‘What did we steal from You?’ (My reply is that you stole) the tithes and the terumah (which you failed to give to the priests and the levites.

“Because of this) you are under a curse (causing the land to be infertile). Yet you—the entire people (without a single exception)—go on stealing from Me.”

“(So now,) bring all the tithes to the storehouse (in the Holy Temple), so that there should be food (for the priests and levites in) My House. Please, test Me with the observance of this (mitzvah),” says the God of Hosts, “(and see) if I do not open up the apertures of the skies and pour down (such) blessings upon you (that your crops) cannot be contained (in your storehouses).

“I will (also) destroy all the locusts for you, so that they do not destroy the Land’s produce or make the vines of the field lose their fruit,” says the God of Hosts. “Then, all the nations will praise you, for you will be in a land (which) satisfies (its inhabitants),” says the God of Hosts.

“Your words distressed Me,” says God.

“If you say, ‘What did we say against You?’ (the answer is that) you said, ‘It’s worthless to serve God! Have we gained by keeping the laws which He told us to keep, and by walking humbly before the God of Hosts?’ Now (we see there’s no value to the mitzvos) let us praise the intentional transgressors (who were not so foolish as to observe the Torah)! The wicked have established themselves: they have tested God (to see if He enacts punishment) and have survived!”

“The response to these people is: Then (while the wicked were sinning), the God-fearing people discussed among themselves (that God is indeed just). God listened and heard (their words). A scroll of remembrance was then written at His

(Elijah, the harbinger of redemption, “I will send you the prophet Eliahu before the arrival of God’s great and awesome day” v. 23), and the miracles of Shabbos Hagadol—when the Egyptian firstborn fought a war against their own people—are somewhat reminiscent of the future redemption (Maharshal, cited in Mateh Moshe ch. 542). Maharshal himself, however, questions the validity of this custom, for if the Haftarah is read every year then the Shabbos should have been named after the Haftarah “Shabbos Ve’arvah” (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav, Shabbos Hagadol 5748, note 112).

The Haftarah, said by the prophet Malachi shortly after the rebuilding of the Temple, opens with a brief glimpse of the “sweet” sacrifices of the future era (3-4), before passing swiftly to discuss the punishments of the Judgment Day (5-6). A lengthy substantiation of these punishments follows. God criticizes the people for failing to observe the commandments and for acting nonchalantly before Him (7-17). We are warned that the Day of Judgment is coming and only those who fear God will be saved (18-22). Nevertheless, Eliahu (Elijah) the prophet will come beforehand and “bring back the hearts of parents with their children” (23-24).

10. בקשתו אצויג בֵּן דָּמָא—Please test me with (the observance of) this (mitzvah). This invitation to test God refers specifically to the mitzvah of ma’aser (tithes), so as to verify the promise, “tithe and you will become rich” (Shabbos 119a). With other mitzvos, it is prohibited to test God (To’anis 9a). While Rema rules that this sanction to test God refers specifically to the precept of tithing crops (Yoreh De’ah 247), the consensus of most authorities is that it also applies to tithing one’s income to give to charity (see sources cited in Sdei Chemed, kuntres haklalim, ma’areches nun, klal 16; see also Sefer Chasidim ch. 144; Sichos Yud Gimel Tamuz 5712).

12. וְיִהְיֶה אֵשֶׁת אָדָם אֲחֹז—For you will be in a land (which) satisfies (its inhabitants). On this verse, the Ba’al Shem Tov taught: Just as the greatest geniuses will never discover the limits of the enormous
natural resources which God has implanted in the land—“everything come from the earth” (Ecc. 3:20)—neither will anyone fathom the great treasures which lie within the Jewish people, God’s “Land of desire.” The Ba’al Shem Tov concluded, “I want to make the Jewish people yield the kind of produce which the God’s ‘Land of desire’ is capable of yielding” (Hayom Yom, Iyar 17th).

16. אֶּנֶּנְבֵּרְו יִרְאֵי יְהֹוָה —Then the God-fearing people discussed among themselves. Here we see the importance of self-motivated discussion and action among synagogue congregants and members of the community in general. Some people refuse to assume a role of responsibility unless they are formally asked to do so by the Rabbi or other authority figure. This verse teaches us that “God-fearing people discuss among themselves” and inspire themselves to action (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re’eh 5748, par. 19).

18. יִשְׁפַּחֵם אֶרֶאָהָם...ןִּיַּהְבִּרְו עָלָיוֹת לָא עֹבְרִי—You will return and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between the one that serves God and the one that does not serve Him.

On this verse the Talmud asks: Surely ‘the righteous’ is synonymous with ‘the one that serves God,’ and ‘the wicked’ is the same as “the one that does not serve Him”? The Talmud answers: The one that serves Him” and “the one that does not serve him” both refer to perfectly righteous people, but you cannot compare a person who reviews his studies 100 times to a person who reviews it 101 times.

The Talmud asks: Could this person possibly be called “one that does not serve God” because of a single review less?

The Talmud replies: Yes. Go and learn from the mule-rental market: It costs one zuz [to drive the mule a distance of] ten Persian miles, and two zuz for eleven Persian miles (Chagigah 9b).

“Looking back in those days it was common practice to review each lesson 100 times...so the 101st revision, which was beyond the norm which the student had been accustomed since childhood, is considered equivalent to all the others, and surpasses them in endurance and effort, thus entitling the person to be called ‘One who serves God.’ For in order to change his habitual nature, he must arouse the love of God by contemplating the greatness of God in his mind” (Tanya ch. 15).
Maftir for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh

(Bamidbar 28:9-15)

Maftir for Parshas Zachor

(Devarim 25:17-19)

Maftir for Parshas Parah

(Bamidbar 19:1-22)
Maftir for Parshas Hachodesh

(Shemos 12:1-20)

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<td>Dishonesty (False-Denial)</td>
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<td>First &amp; Second Pesach Offering</td>
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<td>High Priest on Yom Kippur</td>
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* Commentary to the Mishnah, introduction to Seder Kodshim.  **Not always offered. See p. 277.  ***These are described by Rambam as “resembling a peace-offering,” though in fact their sacrificial procedure differs somewhat from that of a peace-offering. Below (p. 279), we have described them as “other-offerings.”

**SUMMARY OF ANIMAL & BIRD OFFERINGS**

The various types of animal offerings and the reasons why they are brought, classified according to Rambam.*
### THE BURNT OFFERING — עליה

*Slaughtered* in northern part of the Temple Courtyard – Blood is thrown upon lower part of NE and SW corners of the Outer Altar – Totally burned (except for its hide) on the Outer Altar – Every burnt-offering is accompanied by a meal-offering of flour and oil (minchas nesachim) and a wine libation – Classified as one of the “most holy” offerings

#### KEY:

- ✓ = Option of different animals, depending on financial circumstances
- Number = Fixed number of animals to be sacrificed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sacrifice</th>
<th>Dove or Turtle Dove</th>
<th>Lamb (M) (&lt;1 Yrs)</th>
<th>Sheep (M) (14 Mo - 2 Yrs)</th>
<th>Goat (M) (&lt;2 Yrs)</th>
<th>Bull (1-3 Yrs)</th>
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<td><strong>Offerings to Keep Altar Busy</strong> (see Shekalim 6:6)</td>
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</table>

1. The above is the sacrificial procedure for animal offerings. For bird offerings see Vayikra 1:14-17.  
2. Two birds must be brought, if this option is chosen.  
3. One per tribe.  
4. One in the morning and one in the afternoon.  
5. Thirteen bulls on the first day, twelve on the second day, etc.
### THE “INNER” SIN OFFERING — חטאת בוניםיה

Only type of offering whose blood is not placed on the Outer Altar, but sprinkled by finger in the inner Sanctuary, onto the partition in front of the Holy of Holies and on the horns of the Inner Altar (The blood of inner sin-offerings of Yom Kippur is also sprinkled inside the Holy of Holies) – Slaughtered in the north of the Temple Courtyard – Sacrificial fats and some internal parts are removed, salted and burned on the Outer Altar – The meat is not eaten, but rather, the remainder of the carcass is taken outside Jerusalem and burned – Classified as one of the “most holy” offerings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAT (M) (&lt; 1 Yrs)</th>
<th>BULL (1 - 3 Yrs)</th>
<th>TYPE OF SACRIFICE</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1 SIN OFFERING OF HIGH PRIEST ON YOM KIPPUR <em>(Vayikra 16:3)</em></td>
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<td>12 *</td>
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<td>ERRONEOUS COMMUNAL SIN (CAUSED BY SANHEDRIN) <em>(Vayikra 4:13-21)</em></td>
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### THE “OUTER” SIN-OFFERING — חטאת חיצונית

Slaughtered** in northern part of the Temple Courtyard – Blood applied onto the four horns of the Altar, by daubing with the finger – Sacrificial fats and some internal parts are removed, salted and burned on the Outer Altar – Meat eaten by male priests in the Temple Courtyard for up to one day and one night – Classified as one of the “most holy” offerings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOVE OR TURTLEDOVE</th>
<th>LAMB (F) (&lt; 1Yrs)</th>
<th>GOAT (F) (&lt; 1Yrs)</th>
<th>GOAT (M) (&lt; 1Yrs)</th>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>VARIABLE SIN-OFFERING <em>(Vayikra 5:1-13)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WOMAN AFTER GIVING BIRTH <em>(Vayikra 12:6-8)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PURIFICATION FROM TZARA’AS <em>(Vayikra 14:9-22)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PURIFICATION OF ZAV &amp; ZAVAH <em>(Vayikra 15:29-30)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NAZIRITE THAT TOUCHES CORPSE <em>(Bamidbar 6:8-11)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NAZIRITE THAT COMPLETES VOW <em>(Bamidbar 6:13-16)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UNINTENTIONAL IDOL WORSHIP <em>(Bamidbar 15:28)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SHAVUOS (OFFERED WITH TWO LOAVES) <em>(Vayikra 23:19)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MUSAF OF ROCH CHODES AND FESTIVALS <em>(Bamidbar ch. 28-29)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY: ✓ = Option of different animals, depending on financial circumstances. Number = Fixed number of animals to be sacrificed.

* One per tribe. ** The above is the sacrificial procedure for animal offerings. For bird offerings see Vayikra 5:8-9. ***If a bird is brought, then an additional bird must be brought as a burnt-offering (not shown on page 276). A person who is poorer still may bring a “sinners’s meal-offering” (see p. 280).
### THE GUILT-OFFERING — אשם

Sacrificial procedure similar to that of the burnt-offering, except that the meat of the guilt-offering is eaten by the male priests, in the Temple Courtyard for up to one day and one night – Sacrificial fats and some internal parts are removed, salted and burned on the Outer Altar – Classified as one of the “most holy” offerings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sacrifice</th>
<th>Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misappropriation of Temple Property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonesty (False-Denial)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purification from Tzara’as</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relations with Partially Married Slavewoman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilt Offering in a Case of Doubt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazirite that Touches Corpse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:** Number = Fixed number of animals to be sacrificed.

### THE PEACE-OFFERING — שלם

Slaughtered in any part* of the Temple Courtyard – Blood is thrown upon lower part of NE and SW corners of the Outer Altar – Sacrificial fats and some internal parts are removed along with the breast and right thigh, which are held by the priest and waved in six directions – Fats and parts are then salted and burned on the Outer Altar – Breast and thigh** given to priest, to be eaten by his household within Jerusalem – The one who offers the sacrifice and his guests must eat the remaining meat within Jerusalem for up to two days and one night*** – Every peace-offering is accompanied by a meal-offering of flour and oil (minchas nesachim) and a wine libation – Classified as one of the “offerings of lesser holiness”

**KEY:** ✓ = Option of different animals depending on financial circumstances. Number = Fixed number of animals to be sacrificed.

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* Except for the communal offering of Shavuos which is slaughtered in the north of the Temple Courtyard. **In the case of the Nazirite’s offering, the right front leg is also given (see Bamidbar 6:19-20). ***Except for the communal offering of Shavuos which is eaten by the priests in the Temple Courtyard, for one day and one night.
The Pesach has numerous additional details. For example, only those who are “registered” before the sacrifice may eat from it. It must be roasted and eaten with matzah and bitter herbs. See Shemos 12:4-10; Devarim 16:1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAMB OR KID GOAT (MALE &lt; 1YR)</th>
<th>COW, GOAT OR SHEEP (FEMALE)</th>
<th>BULL, GOAT OR SHEEP (MALE)</th>
<th>TYPE OF SACRIFICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>FIRSTBORN (Devarim 15:19-23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>ANIMAL TITHES (Vayikra 27:32-33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>PESACH OFFERING (Shemos 12:5; Devarim 16:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SECOND PESACH OFFERING (Bamidbar 9:11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Pesach has numerous additional details. For example, only those who are “registered” before the sacrifice may eat from it. It must be roasted and eaten with matzah and bitter herbs. See Shemos 12:4-10; Devarim 16:1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF OFFERING</th>
<th>PERSONAL / VOLUNTARY</th>
<th>PERSONAL / OBLIGATORY</th>
<th>COMMUNAL</th>
<th>PIC</th>
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<tr>
<td>FINE FLOUR MINCHAH' מנותח סלעך</td>
<td>W</td>
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<td>SHALLOW-FRIED MINCHAH' מנותח משותך</td>
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<td>DEEP-FRIED MINCHAH' מנותח מרדשת</td>
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<td>OVEN-BAKED UNLEAVENED LOAVES' לחלה קולות</td>
<td>W</td>
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<td>OVEN-BAKED UNLEAVENED WAFERS' לקיקים</td>
<td>W</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIGH PRIEST'S MINCHAH' מנותח קהלUSH</td>
<td>W</td>
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<td>SINNER'S MINCHAH' מנותח שדוא</td>
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<td>SOTAH'S MINCHAH' מנותח מוטק</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE OMER' הקנופר</td>
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<td>TWO LOAVES OF SHAVUOS' שבויים שניים</td>
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<td>MULTI-SURFACE BREAD' לחם נקניקים</td>
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<td>LIBATION MINCHAH' מנותח נקניקים</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bibliography

רשימת המקורות
**Abarbanel** — Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel (1437-1508), famous Jewish philosopher and leader of Spanish Jewry. Authored an extensive, running commentary to the entire Bible.

**Alshich** — Popular commentary on the Bible by Rabbi Moshe Alshich (1508-1593?), Rabbi and preacher in Safed in the Land of Israel. Often cited in Chassidic discourses.

**Alter Rebbe** — Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, author of the *Shulchan Aruch* and *Tanya*, the First Rebbe and founder of the Chabad Movement (1745-1812).

**Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch** — Major recodification of the *Shulchan Aruch* by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (the *Alter Rebbe*), author of the *Tanya*. Also known as *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*. First section printed in Shklov in 1814.

**Aruch Ha’Shulchan** — Halachic code following the sequence of the *Shulchan Aruch*, where each law is analyzed according to its development from *Mishnah* and *Talmud* by R’ Yechiel Michel Epstein, Rav of Novardok, Russia (1829-1908).

**Avos** — Tractate of *Mishnah* in Order of *Nezikin* (Damages) devoted exclusively to the ethical teachings of the Sages.

**Avos d’Rabi Nasan** — Minor tractate by R. Nasan of Babylonia; a commentary on *Avos*.

**Ba’al Haturim** — Commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Ya’akov Meir ben Asher (1268-1340), author of the *Tur*, analyzing the significance of word usage. (See *Tur Ha’aruch*).

**Bach** — Acronym for “Bayis Chadasch,” a legal commentary on the *Tur* by R’ Yoel Sirkis (c. 1561-1640).

**Bahag** — Acronym for Ba’al Halachos Gedolos, lit., “Master of Great Laws,” an early halachic compendium by either Rabbi Shimon Kiara, Rabbi Yom Tov Elem, or Rabbi Yehuda’i Gaon (8th cent.).

**Bachaye** — Rabbi Bachaye ben Asher (1263-1340) of Saragosa, Spain. Author of a popular Torah commentary which incorporates literal, allegorical and kabbalistic interpretations, often cited in Chassidic discourses.

**Bamidbar Rabah** — The section of *Midrash Rabah* on the Book of Numbers. (See “Midrash Rabah”)

**Bartenura** — Rabeinu Ovadiah, Italy (1445-1515), author of *Amar Nekei*, a supercommentary on Rashi’s commentary to the Torah. Author of classic commentary to the Mishnah, printed in most editions.

**Bava Basra** — Talmudic tractate in Order of *Nezikin* (Damages).

**Bava Kama** — Talmudic tractate in Order of *Nezikin* (Damages).

**Bava Metzia** — Talmudic tractate in Order of *Nezikin* (Damages).

**Bechor Shor** — R’ Yosef Bechor Shor (c.1140-1190). Talmudist of the school of the Tosafists who lived in Northern France. A disciple of Rabeinu Tam and a direct descendant of Yosef Hatzadik.

**Be’er Basadeh** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Meir Binyamin Menachem Danon of Bosnia, a student of Rabbi David Pardo (author of *Maskil leDavid*). First printed in 1806 in Jerusalem.

**Be’er Haitev** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Moshe Moss (c. 1540-1606) of Poland. Author of the Halachic work *Mateh Moshe*; a disciple of the Maharal.

**Be’er Mayim Chayim** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Chaim ben Betzael (1515-1588), older brother of the Maharal of Prague, first published in Brooklyn and London between 1965 and 1971.

**Be’er Yitzchak** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Yitzchak Ya’akov Horowitz of Yaroslav (d. 1864).

**Beis Yosef** — Halachic commentary by R’ Yosef Caro (1488-1575) on the *Tur*. He was also the author of the *Shulchan Aruch* and *Kesef Mishneh*, a commentary on *Rambam’s* code.

**Bereishis Rabah** — The section of *Midrash Rabah* on the Book of Genesis. (See “Midrash Rabah”)

**Bi’ur HaGra** — Commentary to *Shulchan Aruch* by the Vilna Ga’on. (See: *Vilna Ga’on*).

**Biuray Maharay** — Commentary to the Torah by R’ Yisra’el Isserlein (c.1390-1460), German halachist, author of *Sha’alos v’Teshuvos Terumas Hadeshen*. First printed in Venice in 1419.

**Chacham Tzvi** — Responsa by R’ Tzvi Ashkenazi of Amsterdam (1660-1718).

**Chelkas Mechokaik** — Primary commentary to the *Even Ha’ezer* section of *Shulchan Aruch* by Reb Moshe Lima of Vilna (17th cent.).

**Chiddushei Aggados** — See Maharsha.

**Chizkuni** — Commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Chezkiyah ben Manoach, who lived in the thirteenth century, in Provence.

**Da’as Zekeinim** — Commentary to the Torah by the Tosafists of France and Germany, circa. 1100-1300. Edited by Rabbi Yehudah ben Eliezer and first printed in 1783.

**Degel Machaneh Efraim** — Important chassidic commentary to the Torah, based strongly on the teachings of the *Ba’al Shem Tov*, by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Efraim of Sidlilkov (1748-1800), a grandson of the *Ba’al Shem Tov*. Published in Koretz.

**Devarim Rabah** — The section of *Midrash Rabah* on the Book of Deuteronomy. (See “Midrash Rabah”)

**Devek Tov** — Commentary on Rashi by Rabbi Shimon Oshenburg Halevi of Frankfurt, 16th century.
**Derech Mitzvosecha** — Compendium of fundamental Chasidic discourses on many mitzvos of the Torah by the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (the “Tzemach Tzedek”). Also known as “Talm nei Hamitvos.” First published in 1911, in Poltova Ukraine.

**Durei David** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary on the Torah by Rabbi David ben Shmuel HaLevi (1586-1667), author of Taz, a major commentary on the Shulchan Aruch.

**Drashos Haran** — Fundamental discourses by Rabbi Nissim of Gerona, Spain (14th century). See: Ran.

**Eitz Yosef** — Commentary to Ein Yaakov, the homiletic passages of the Talmud, by Rabbi Chanoch Zundel (d. 1867).

**Emunos v’Deos** — Classic philosophical work written by Sa’adiah Ga’on, discussing the basic foundations of Judaism. First published in Constantinople in 1562. (See: Sa’adiah Ga’on)

**Epistle to Yemen** — Letter written by the Rambam in 1172 to the Jews of Yemen who were suffering from a fanatical Muslim movement that threatened the existence of their community.

**Gur Aryeh** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary on the Torah by the Maharal of Prague, Rabbi Yehudah Loew, (1512-1609), Chief Rabbi in Moravia, Posen, and Prague. Author of numerous works in all fields of Torah. He was a descendant of King David. All the Chabad Rebbeim are descendants of the Maharal.

**Hadar Zekeinim** — Commentary to the Torah by the Tosafists of France and Germany from around 1100-1300. First published in 1840.

**Har Tzvi** — Responsa by Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank (1874-1960), Rabbi of Jerusalem for many decades; active in establishing the chief rabbinate of Israel.

**Hatamim** — Scholarly journal published by the Students’ Organization of the Lubavitcher Yeshivah in Warsaw. A total of eight issues were printed, between 1935 and 1937.

**Hayom Yom** — Handbook of chasidic insights following the calendar, compiled by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. First printed in 1942.

**Ibn Ezra** — R’ Avraham (1080-1164). Born in Spain, he was the author of a classic commentary to Tanach, and was also a prominent grammarian and poet.

**Igeres Hateshuvah** — Third section of Tanaja, discussing the concept of Teshuvah according to Talmudic and Kabbalistic sources (see Tanaja).

**Ikarim** — “Book of Principles” which stresses three fundamental aspects of Jewish belief – faith in G-d, Torah from Sinai, and reward and punishment – by R’ Yosef Albo (1380-1444) of Spain.

**Imray Shefer** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s and Mizrachi’s commentary on the Torah by R’ Yosef Natan Shapira (d. 1577). First published in 1597.

**Iyun Yaakov** — Commentary to the homiletic passages of the Talmud by Rabbi Yaakov Back Reischer (1670-1733), which appears in standard editions of Ein Yaakov.

**Kesef Mishneh** — Commentary to Rambam’s Mishneh Torah by R’ Yosef Caro, author of Shulchan Aruch.

**Kli Yakar** — Commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Lunshitz (c.1550-1619), Rosh Yeshiva in Lemberg and Rabbi of Prague.

**Kuzari** — Important work on Jewish Philosophy by Rabbi Yehuda Halevi (1074-1141) written in the form of a dialogue between the King of the Khazars and a Jewish scholar.

**Levush Ha’ahrah** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe (c. 1535-1612). Commonly known as the “Levush” after the ten works he wrote which contain that word within their names.

**Likutei Torah** — Fundamental chasidic discourses of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, author of the Shulchan Aruch Ha’Rav and Tanya, on Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

**Likutei Sichos** — 39-volume work of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, analyzing all parts of the Torah in an original manner and bringing them into harmony with one another. Published by Va’ad Lehafatzas Sichos (Kehos) from 1962 to 2001.

**Magid Mishneh** — Commentary to Rambam’s Mishneh Torah, by Rabbi Vidal of Tolosa (c. 1360), printed in standard editions.

**Maharik** — Rabbi Yosef ben Shlomo Kolon (1420-1480) of France, author of classic responsa and teacher of Rabbi Ovadiah of Bartenura. His commentary to the Torah was first published in Jerusalem in 170.

**Maharsha** — Acronym for Moreinus HaRav Shmuel Eliezer Halevi Eidels of Ostroh, Poland (1555-1632), Rosh Yeshiva and Rabbi in a number of the leading communities of Poland. Author of important commentaries on the Talmud, divided into halachic and Aggadic sections.

**Maharshas** — Acronym for Rabbi Shlomo ben Yecheil Lorja (1510-1573), famed Talmudist, author of Yem Shel Shlomo, Chochmas Shlomo, Yerios Shlomo, and other important works.

**Maharzu** — Commentary to the Midrash Rabah by Rabbi Ze’ev Wolf Einhorn (19th century). (See “Midrash Rabah”)

**Malbim** — Acronym for Meir Leibush ben Yecheil Michel (1809-1879), Rabbi in Germany, Romania, and Russia. Author of popular Bible commentary which connects the Oral and Written traditions.
**Maskil leDavid** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary on the Torah by Rabbi David Pardo (1710-1792), Rabbi in Sarajevo and Jerusalem, author of important commentaries on Tosefta and Sifri. He was one of the leading Sephardic Torah scholars of the eighteenth century.

**Matnos Kehunah** — Commentary on Midrash Rabbah by Rabbi Yissachar Ber HaKohen (c.1520-1590), a student of the Rama.

**Mechilta** — Halachic Midrash of the Tannaic period to the Book of Exodus.

**Megaleh Amukos** — 252 explanations of Moshe’s Prayer in Parshas Vaeschanan and 1000 explanations on the small alef in the first word of Vayikra, according to Kabbalah, by R’ Neson Noteh Shapiro. First printed in Cracow in 1637.

**Megillas Esther** — Scholarly commentary to Sefer haMitzvos defending the Rambam against attacks from the Ramban, by Rabbi Yitzchok Lioven. First published in Venice in 1591.

**Me’or Einayim** — Chasidic commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (1730-1797), a student of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezritch. First published in Slavita, 1798.

**Meiri** — Extensive Commentary to the Talmud by R’ Menachem HaMeiri (c. 1249-c. 1306).

**Metzudos** — Commentary to the Prophets and Writings, consisting of two parts, Metzudas Tziyon, which explains the meaning of individual words, and Metzudos David, a running commentary to the text. Initial manuscripts of the commentary were authored by Rabbi David Altschuler, and published shortly before his passing in 1753. The commentary was edited and completed by his son, Rabbi Yecheil Hillel, and published in 1780. The commentary has attained great popularity for being concise and comprehensive.

**Midrash** — Aggadic and Halachic teachings of the Talmudic period arranged according to the verses of the Torah.

**Midrash Hagadol** — Midrashic anthology arranged by R’ David al-Adeni of South Arabia (13th century). Many Midrashic teachings which were lost throughout the course of time have been preserved in this work. First printed in 1967 in Jerusalem.

**Midrash Lekach Tov** — (also known as Pesikta Zutrasa). Midrashic anthology arranged by R’ Toviah Hagadol (1036-1108) of Greece and Bulgaria.

**Midrash Rabah** — A major collection of homilies and commentaries on the Torah, ascribed to R’ Oshiah Rabah (c. 3rd century), perhaps assembled during the early Geonic period. First printed in Constantinople 1512.

**Mikdash Melech** — Commentary to the Zohar culled from the works of R. Chaim Vital, R. Avraham Azulai, and their students R. Yaakov Pinto, R. Yeshaya Cohen and R. Moshe Zacutto.

**Minchah Belulah** — Commentary to the Torah by R’ Avraham Menachem Rapaport (c. 1540-1604), Italian Torah scholar, doctor and grammarian.

**Minchas Chinuch** — Scholarly supercommentary to Sefer haChinuch by Rabbi Yosef Babad (1800-1875), Rabbi of Tarnipol, Poland.

**Mishnah** — Fundamental collection of the legal pronouncements and discussion of the Tanna’im, edited by Rabbi Yehuda haNassi early in the third century. The Mishnah is the basic text of the Oral Law.

**Mishneh Torah** — 14-volume halachic code by Rambam (Maimonides) encompassing all the laws found in the Talmud.

**Mitteler Rebbe** — Rabbi Dov Ber Schneuri (1773-1827), son of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi; second Lubavitcher Rebbe.

**Mizrachi** — Exhaustive supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi (1450-1525) of Constantinople, Chief Rabbi of the Turkish Empire.

**Moreh Nevuchim** — “Guide for the Perplexed” by Maimonides.

**Moshav Zekeinim** — Anthology of comments of about 130 different sources, the majority of whom are Tosafists of France and Germany, circa. 1100-1300. First printed in 1959.

**Nachalas Ya’akov** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Ya’akov Yekl Solnick. First published in Cracow in 1642.

**Nimukei Yosef** — Halachic commentary on Sefer Halalachos (of the Rif), by R’ Yosef Chaviva of Spain (14-15th centuries).

**Noda Biyehudah** — Halachic Responsa of Rabbi Ezekiel Landau, (1713-1793) Chief Rabbi of Prague.

**Ohr haChayim** — Commentary on the Torah by Talmudic and Kabalist scholar Rabbi Chaim ben Attar (1696-1743).

**Ohr haTorah** — Extensive exposition of Chabad Chasidic thought by the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel (the Tzemach Tzedek, 1789-1866). Printed in New York between 1951 and 1983 in 48 volumes.

**Orach Chayim** — One of the four sections of the Tur and Shulchan Aruch, dealing with laws that follow a time cycle.
Onkelos — Proselyte (c. 90 C.E.) who reinstated a forgotten, authoritative translation of the Torah into Aramaic, which was read alongside the Torah in Talmudic times to assist the congregation in understanding the Torah reading.

Pane‘ach Raza — Commentary to the Torah by R’ Yitzchak ben Yehudah Halevi of France, 13th century. First printed in Prague in 1607.

Parashas Derachim — Treatises by Rabbi Yehudah Rozanes (1657-1727) of Constantinople, Turkey, author of Mishneh Lemelech, a major commentary to Rambam’s Mishneh Torah.

Pesachim — Tractate of Talmud in the Order of Moed (Festivals).

Pesikta Rabasi — Compendium of teachings by Sages of the Talmud, first published in Prague in 1653.

Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer — Midrashic work by the school of Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (c. 100). First published in Constantinople in 1514.

Pnet Moshe — Running commentary to the Jerusalem Talmud, by Rabbi Moshe Margulies of Amsterdam and Zamut. (1710-1781).


Rabeinu Tam — Rabbi Yaakov ben Meir (1100-1171), his Talmudic discourses served as the basis for the Tosfos commentary to the Talmud. He often challenged Rashi’s interpretations, offering original and brilliant insights. Rabeinu Tam was also a successful wine merchant and financier.

Radvaz — (c. 1480-1573) Acronym for Rabbi David ibn Zimra, Chief Rabbi of Egypt. Author of a commentary to the Rambam’s Mishneh Torah and extensive responsa.


Ramak — R’ Moses Cordovero, Kabalist of 16th century Safed. Student of R’ Yosef Caro. Author of numerous works, including Pardes Rimonim, a classic work which explains fundamental concepts of Kabalah.

Rambam — “Nachmanides” (1194-1270), Acronym for Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman of Gerona, Spain, one of the leading Torah scholars of the Middle Ages; author of major commentary to the Torah and numerous other works.

Ran — Acronym for Rabbenu Nissim (1308-1376). Authored an important commentary to the Talmud, published in most major editions.

Rashbam — Acronym for Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir, Talmud and Torah Commentator, who supplemented Rashi’s (his grandfather’s) commentary on the Talmud (c. 1085-1174). Brother of Rabeinu Tam.

Rashi — Acronym for Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105), author of basic commentary on the Bible and Talmud. According to Chasidic tradition, his commentary to the Torah contains allusions to kabalistic concepts.

Rema — R’ Moshe Isserles (1530-1572), Rav and Rosh Yeshiva of Cracow. Author of many works. Most famous are his Ashkenazic annotations to Rabbi Yosef Caro’s Shulchan Aruch, which transformed this predominantly Sephardic work into a universal Code of Jewish Law.

Ritvah — Acronym for R’ Yom Tov Ibn Asevili (1248-1330), Talmudic Commentator and Halachist.


Rosh — Acronym for R’ Asher ben Yechiel, Talmudic commentator and author of halachic compendium arranged on the tractates of the Talmud (c. 1250-1327).

Sa’adiah Ga’on — (882-942) Author of works in many areas of Torah, including the philosophical work, Emunos v’Deos.

Sanhedrin — Tractate of Talmud in Order of Nezikin (Damages).

S’dei Chemed — Extensive Halachic encyclopedia by R’ Chaim Chizkiyahu Medini (1832-1904), Rav of Karasubazar in Crimea, Russia, and later Chief Rabbi of Chevron in the Land of Israel. Revised edition by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, New York, 1949-1953 (Kehos Publication Society).

Seder Hadoros — A chronology of events and personalities from creation until 1696, based on rabbinic sources, by Rabbi Yechiel Heilprin (1660-1746) Lithuanian Rabbi, Kabbalist, and chronicler. First published in 1769.

Sefer Chasidim — Classical work of ethical and halachic instruction by R’ Yehudah haChasid, (c. 1150-1217).

Sefer Ha’Agur — Halachic compendium by R. Yaakov ben Yehuda Landa (Germany, fifteenth century), based primarily on the Tur. Widely used as a source for halachic decisions until the appearance of the Shulchan Aruch.
Sefer haChinuch — Compendium of basic explanations on the 613 mitzvos by an unknown Spanish author among the Rishonim of the 13th century.


Sefer haMitzvos — Comprehensive list of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah and their basic requirements, by Rambam.

Sefer haSichos — Public talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, from the years 1986-92.

Sefer haZikaron — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary to the Torah, by R’ Avraham Bukrat Halevi (15th Century) of Spain. First published in Leghorn in 1845.

Sforno — Commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Ovadiah Sforno of Rome and Bologna, Italy (1470-1550).

Sha’ar haGemul — Short eschatological treatise of the Ramban discussing reward and punishment. In this work the author refutes Ramban’s assertion that the climax of Creation will be a spiritual “soul world,” arguing instead that the Resurrection of the Dead will be the ultimate era of perfection.

Shach al Hatorah — Abbreviation for Sifsei Kohein, a commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Mordechai Hakohen, incorporating numerous mystical interpretations and gematrios. First published in 1610. (Not to be confused with Rabbi Shabsai Hakohen of Cracow, author of Shach, a major commentary to the Shulchan Aruch).

Shaloh — Acronym for Shnei Luchos Habris (“The two tablets of the Covenant”), by Rabbi Yeshayahu Hurwitz (1560-1630). There is a tradition that the Tanya is significantly based on the Shaloh.

Shemoneh Perakim — Philosophical treatise of Rambam, discussing the ills and cures of man’s soul, prophecy, reward and punishment, free will, and the rule of the “golden mean.”

Shemos Rabah — The section of Midrash Rabah on the Book of Exodus. See “Midrash Rabah.”

Shitah Mekubetzes — Compilation of numerous medieval commentaries to the Talmud by R’ Betzalel Ashkenazi (1520-1592).

Shulchan Aruch — Universally accepted halachic code encompassing all areas of practical halacha, by Rabbi Yosef Caro (1488-1575).

Sifri — Halachic Midrash on the books of Bamidbar and Devarim.

Sifri debay Rau — Comprehensive commentary to Sifri by Rabbi David Pardo (1710-1792), author of Maskil leDavid.

Sifsei Chachomim — Anthology of supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Shabsai Bass (1641-1719). First published in 1712.

Smag — Acronym for Sefer Mitzvos Gadol, an important compendium of the 613 mitzvos by the Tosafist R’ Moshe ben Ya’akov of Coucy (13th century).

Talmud — Comprehensive term for the Mishnah and Gemara as joined in the two compilations known as Babylonian Talmud (6th century) and Jerusalem Talmud (5th century).

Tanchuma — Aggadic Midrash on the Torah by Rabbi Tanchuma bar Abba (4th cen.)

Tanna de’ey Eliyahu — A Midrash, consisting of two parts, whose final redaction took place at the end of the tenth century of the Common Era. The first part is called “Seder Eliyahu Rabah” (31 chapters); the second, “Seder Eliyahu Zuta” (15 chapters).

Tanya — Primary chasidic text authored by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi. (See: Alter Rebbe)

Targum Yonason — Elaborate Aramaic translation of the Torah by Yonason ben Uziel, a disciple of Hillel.

Tiferes Yehonason — Commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Yehonason Eybeshutz (d. 1764) of Prague, Metz and Altona.

Tikunei Zohar — Section of the Zohar discussing seventy permutations of the first word of the Torah – Bereisheis, and commentaries on various other sections of Scripture.

Torah Shlaimah — Comprehensive encyclopedia of all Talmudic and Midrashic commentaries on the Torah, with scholarly notes and essays, by R’ Menachem Kasher (1895-1983). This work is still being compiled and currently spans 47 volumes, covering the books of Bereishis-Bamidbar, Megillos and Hagadah Shel Pesach.

Torah Temimah — Anthology of main Talmudic references to the Torah, along with commentary, by Rabbi Baruch Epstein (1860-1942), son of Rabbi Yechezkel Michel Epstein, author of Aruch Hashulchan.

Toras Ha’olah — A work discussing the measurements of the Holy Temple and reasons for sacrifices according to philosophy by Rema. (See: Rema)

Toras Kohanim — Halachic Midrash to the Book of Leviticus. Also known as Sifra.


Tosfos — Talmudic commentary of the French, German and English rabbis of the 12th and 13th centuries.

Tsafnas Pane’ach — Precedent setting commentary to the Torah and Rambam’s Mishneh Torah which innovated a fresh, deeply analytical approach to Talmudic study, by Rabbi
Yosef Rozin, Chief Rabbi of Dvinsk, known as the Rogatchover Gaon (1858-1936). He also authored Responsa and a commentary on the Torah by the same name. Likutei Sichos makes much use of the Rogatchover’s methodology.

**Tzemach Tzedek** — Title of responsa authored by the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (1789-1866), after which he is usually referred to.

**Tzror Hamor** — Commentary to the Torah by R’ Avraham Saba (15th century) of Portugal, and later Morocco.

**Tur Ha’aruch** — Second half of commentary to the Torah by Rabbi Ya’akov Meir ben Asher (1268-1340), author of the Tur. (See Ba’al Haturim)

**Turei Even** – Prodigious commentary to tractates Rosh Hashanah, Chagigah, Taanis and Megilah by Rabbi Aryeh Leib of Metz, author of Sha’agas Aryeh.

**Tzeidah Laderech** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Yissachar Ber Ailenberg. First printed in Prague in 1623.

**Vayikra Rabah** — The section of Midrash Rabah on the Book of Leviticus. (See “Midrash Rabah”)

**Vilna Ga’on** — R’ Eliyahu ben Shlomo of Vilna (1720-1797) Lithuanian Talmudist, Kabalist, grammarian, and mathematician.

**Yad Malachi** — Compendium of rules and principles on which various major Rabbinic texts are based (including the principles on which the Mishneh Torah is based) by R’ Malachi ben R’ Yaakov haKohain, published in 1767.

**Yefay To’ar** — Major commentary on Midrash Rabah, by R’ Shmuel Yaffa-Ashkenazi, Rabbi in Constantinople, 16th century.

**Yalkut Re’uvaini** — An anthology of Midrashic and Kabalistic commentaries on the Torah, collected by Rabbi Avraham Re’uvaini Hakohain Katz of Prague (d. 1673).

**Yalkut Shimoni** — Comprehensive Midrashic anthology, covering the entire Bible, attributed to Rabbi Shimon HaDarshan of Frankfurt (13th century).

**Yere’im** — Halachic discussion of the mitzvos, by Tosafist R. Eliezer ben R. Shmuel of Metz (France, twelfth century) a student of Rabeinu Tam. First printed in condensed form in Venice, in 1565. Unabridged version published in 1892 in Vilna.

**Yerios Shlomo** — Supercommentary to Rashi’s commentary on the Torah. (See: Maharsha)

**Yoma** — Tractate of Talmud in the Order of Mo’ed (Festivals).

**Zohar** — Basic text of Kabalah, compiled by Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai and his disciples in the form of a commentary on the Torah. First published in the late 13th century by Rabbi Moshe de Leon (c.1250-1305), in Spain.
לעוליית נשמת

רו' יִעַכַּב בן ר' מַנְחֵם דָּוִד

ניומא

זָכַרְוִי לָבָכָה

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

לעוליית נשמת

רו' הַרְזָהָה הַרְזָה ר' יֵסַף יִצָּחֵק בן ר' יִעַכַּב

לִפְסֵקֵי

זָכַרְוִי לָבָכָה

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
לليلלי נשמות

הר”ג הר”ה"ת ר’ מרדכי אבל החן גוטניק

חתים ר’ אברם ונותנו עלאים פיגלין

הר”ג הר”ה"ת ר’ אשר ונותנו חיות בתיה אברמסא

הר”ג הר”ה"ת ר’ דוד אריה החן יאمورו

نصوص עברית

תהלות

הר”ג הר”ה"ת ר’ שלום דובר משיח החן גוטניק

ראב”ד דק” מעלבור ע”א

ותנומרה תורה תחתי.

rrha שרה נמחה תחתי יאمورו

דפים ע”י

הר”ג הר”ה"ת ר’ מאיר שיחי החן גוטניק

ותנו מורת שינדל טעמה תחתי

בניהם ינוהים:

הר”ג שמואל מרדכי ואבraham הכהן זרגינק

וילדהיםしゃינא אסתר שפרה, דוד אריה וחי, מושקאר

תניה בעלת הר”ה"ת תבי אלינמל שפרור

וילדהים חי, מושקאר, מנוהים מעננ.Cursor, דוד אריה

מידות רוחל בעלבת הר”ה"ת יוסף חתך באברער

וילדהים אינא וחי, מושקאר

עדלאה בעלבת הר”ה"ת מיכאל אעלער עטרע

וילדהים חי, מושקאר ושברית

מנוהים מעננ.Cursor, שיסמך אסתר, שפרוראלא, יוסף יצחק הכהן,

אברם שמואל הכהן, חיי בתיה, דוד אריה הכהן

שיהי לארוך ימים והנים טובי.
לעיל ממות
ר’ דוד וחוזתי לאח שלגאער
ר’ דוד וחוזתי רינה עטר
עזרו לנו לברכה
היה נשמתיייו צדורת ברורות החמימה

נדס על יד
ר’ דוד וחוזתי שלגאער
וזנות מרת הראיה התהיה
בנונית:
הנה ושרת מלכה

ולכען
ר’ ראובן וחוזתי שלגאער
וזנות מרת מרים התהיה

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למִוקֶד
לחייottie heתקשהית
לכבוד קדושת שעון 모르נו וברון
נשיא דונג