

# A Taste of Torah Ups & Downs

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Sacrificial law is pretty complicated. Even if you've managed to figure out what type of animal or bird, and what gender, is valid for what sacrifice (and I'm not even starting with meal-offerings), you then have to clarify where the sacrifice is to be slaughtered, which parts of the animal are offered on the Altar, which sections go to the Kohanim, and what the owner is entitled to. Wait, wait, I'm not done yet. There's also the matter of the application of the blood upon the Altar. There's the northern side, the southern side, the western and eastern sides, and, of course, the corners where two of them meet. Then there's sprinkling the blood, pouring the blood, and placing the blood with one's finger. And, after you've gone through all that, you still have to know if the blood goes on the upper or lower part of the Altar. (By the way, all this is just the tip of the iceberg.)

Now, I'm not here to try and figure this all out for you; I'll let you do that after you finish reading this article. I just wanted to focus on the last thing I mentioned; the upper and lower wall of the Altar. You see, there is some pretty peculiar stuff going on with the top and bottom. If one brought an animal for a sin-offering, the blood was applied to the top part of the Altar, but if one brought an animal as a burnt-offering, it was placed on the bottom. When it comes to birds, the opposite is true; the blood of a sin-offering goes down, while a burnt-offering ends up on top. Why the sudden reversal from animals to birds?

Rabbi Meir Shapiro (1887-1934; founder of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin and the Daf Yomi program) explains that the top is more prestigious than the bottom; thus blood applied to the

upper area gives the sacrifice greater importance. An animal is far more pricey than a bird; thus, when given a choice, a wealthy individual would bring an animal, while a pauper would bring a bird. A burnt-offering is voluntary; hence, a wealthy individual bringing an animal as a voluntary offering would, perhaps, think highly of himself for bringing such an expensive gift for G-d. To avoid such a mishap, the blood of the animal burnt-offering is placed on the bottom; this will knock the owner down a few notches. When it comes to a sin-offering, though, the wealthy man is feeling down-hearted for having erroneously committed a sin. To raise his spirits, the blood is applied to the upper part of the Altar.

When a pauper has scraped a few coins together to purchase a bird as a voluntary burnt-offering, he may very well feel that his paltry offering is of little meaning. To show the importance of his offering, the blood is placed on the upper part of the Altar. The bird sin-offering, though, which he must bring due to his misdeed, does not receive the same preferential treatment as the voluntary offering; hence, it ends up at the bottom of the Altar.

Our performance of mitzvahs often echoes the above sentiments. Often, we puff up with pride at our spiritual accomplishments, when in fact we would do well to remember that we are trying to serve G-d, not ourselves. At other times, we belittle our accomplishments when we should be deriving great satisfaction from them. It can be tough to strike the right balance, but Rabbi Shapiro informs us that the elements of humility and self-satisfaction are both vital to serve G-d and live our lives as committed Jews.

## Stories For The Soul

### The Power to Soar

It is said that when G-d created the world, he created birds without wings. The birds complained saying, "L-rd of the Universe, You have put us at a disadvantage compared to all the other animals. They have powerful muscular legs, enabling them to run fast and far. We have only these scrawny bird legs. The other animal predators can easily pursue us and feast on us."

Hashem performed a miracle and gave them an amazing gift - wings.

Now the birds really complained, "Ribbono shel Olam, it was bad enough before when we had to evade our pursuers with our scrawny bird legs. Now, You have made things much worse by giving us these huge clunky things on our sides. Now we can barely waddle, much less run. All the other animals will prey on us, catch us and kill us."

Hashem replied, "My dear children, these wings are not a burden, nor an impediment. You just don't understand how to use them. If you utilize these wings properly, you will be able to soar to the greatest heights. You will achieve that which was thought to be unachievable."

The word korban, offering, comes from the word karov, close. When we bring offerings to the Temple, it brings us closer to Hashem. The korbanos have many seemingly daunting details, but we can never lose sight of the big picture. The korbanos offer us an intensity of closeness that is otherwise unimaginable; they enable us to soar to the greatest heights.

Adapted with permission from Shul-Week by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.

## Kollel Happenings

### 'CLOSER LOOK AT PARSHA' NOW SUNDAYS AT EDOS

'A Closer Look at the Parsha,' Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher's popular Parsha class, is now also be offered on Sundays at 8 a.m. at EDOS, following Shacharis. Each week Rabbi Fleisher discusses a topic in the Parsha and its relevancy today.



### WEST SIDE NIGHT SEDER AT THE KOLLEL

Join the West Side community for vibrant Torah learning at the Kollel. Sunday- Thursday, except Wednesday, learning from 8-9 p.m., followed by Ma'ariv. For chavrusas or other information, contact Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher at [rmf@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmf@denverkollel.org) or 303-820-2855.



### DERECH HASHEM SERIES MON. NIGHTS

Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher for "Derech Hashem: Who is G-d and Why Did He Create the World?", a series for women based on Derech Hashem by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato. The classes are held on Mondays at 7:45 p.m., at EDOS. For info, contact Mrs. Tzippy Sommers at [pit@denverkollel.org](mailto:pit@denverkollel.org) or 303-257-1089.

## Interpersonal Issues Returning Lost Objects

If an item falls into a place where it will not ordinarily be recovered, such as the middle of the ocean, it is regarded as hefker (ownerless), and it may be kept by one who finds it. This is true even if the owner announces he is not relinquishing ownership.

In this case, as well, one who wishes to be an upright and good individual

will return the object. However, if the finder is poor, and the loser wealthy, there is no requirement to go beyond the letter of the law.

*Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)*

## Ask the Rabbi The Nature of the Evil Nature

Arie Benzaken from France wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

First of all, thanks a lot for all the previous answers you made, which really helped and guided me! Second of all, thanks for your time and for the forthcoming answers! I'd like to know how come Moshe, in Shemos, argued so many times (revealing his doubt concerning what Hashem was telling him) with Hashem, when Hashem asked him to go and tell the Jewish People that they will soon be delivered from slavery! He already was a great tzaddik and should have an entire faith and trust in what Hashem was saying! I'm not judging, I just didn't get all the thing that is written in my book: "Le Midrash Raconte" (The Midrash Says).

Also, I've heard from two different Rabbis two different versions of the notion of the yetzer hara (evil inclination) and yetzer hatov (good inclination). One told me that at the time of creation, G-d in His infinite kindness created Adam without the yetzer hara, and by eating the forbidden fruit Adam absorbed the notion of Good and Bad! The other Rabbi told me that in the Mishna it

is said that at the time of Creation of Adam, G-d created him with Good and Bad in him!? Toda Raba.

Dear Arie Benzaken,

Whenever Moshe seems to question Hashem's behavior, he is not questioning the justice or the reality of what Hashem is saying. Rather, Moshe is questioning whether the Jewish People and the other nations of the world are on the spiritual level that they can understand why Hashem wishes to act in the way that He wants to.

Regarding good and evil: Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler teaches that Adam was created with a yetzer hara. However, it was not the same kind of yetzer hara that we would recognize today. Adam's yetzer hara was purely spiritual in nature and its drive was to convince Adam that he needed to become a partner with Hashem rather than be a "passenger," allowing Hashem to do everything for him. It was only after Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge and internalized the sin that the yetzer hara "evolved" into something that was physical in nature.

*Reprinted with permission of Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem, [www.ohr.edu](http://www.ohr.edu)*