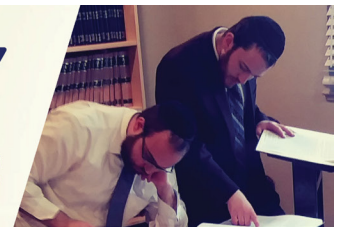




TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Vayikra

March 27, 2020

A Taste of Torah

A Study in Sacrifice

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

It's a small thing, really, yet it attracts quite a bit of attention. I'm referring to the final letter of the first word of the Book of Vayikra. That first word, *vayikra*, ends in the letter *aleph*, and this *aleph* is smaller than the other letters around it. There are different reasons given for the small *aleph*; the Klei Yakar (Rabbi Shlomo Efraim Lunschitz; 1550-1619) cites a Medrash that the small letter is an allusion to a small child, and hints to a recommendation that when a child begins to learn Torah, he should start with the Book of Vayikra, which focuses on the sacrifices that are offered to Hashem. It is fitting that the pure, young children be involved in studying deeds of purity, the acts of bringing offerings before G-d. (It should be noted that today, children generally do not begin with the Book of Vayikra but, rather, with the Book of Bereishis.)

The Pardes Yosef (Rabbi Yosef Poznovsky; 1875-1942) adds another layer of insight to children beginning their study of Torah with the Book of Vayikra. He says that often, parents must scrimp and save to be able to pay a teacher to instruct the child. The cost of educating one's children often comes at the expense of other necessities of life. However, parents recognize the importance of providing their children with a Torah education and prioritize it over other items that they are giving up. The *mesiras nefesh* (lit., giving of one's life) a parent displays to ensure that the child receives a Torah education mirrors what occurs when a person brings a sacrifice to the *Bais*

Hamikdash (Temple). It is clear from the Torah and the teachings of our Sages that often, one must spend money that is not readily available to bring a sacrifice for Hashem (see, for example, Rashi Vayikra 2:1 citing Menachos 104b). Thus, it is fitting that a child whose education is being provided thanks to the parents' *mesiras nefesh* begin the study of Torah with the part of the Torah that focuses on sacrifices. The child learns an important lesson: Torah study demands giving up and sacrificing other things that seem important, be it hard-to-come-by money or any of the other necessities, distractions or temptations that life throws in one's way.

The Pardes Yosef cites an explanation from Rabbi Moshe Shapira of Lublin that dovetails with this approach. The Talmud (Nedarim 81a) states that Torah tends to emerge from the children of the poor. Rabbi Shapira explained that since the parents are of very limited financial means, it is with great sacrifice and hardship that they provide the funds for a Torah education for their children. The spiritual greatness of this *mesiras nefesh* is implanted within their children and enables them to have special success in their Torah studies, helping them to become great in Torah knowledge. We live in an era of financial success, the likes of which have not been seen among the Jewish People in millennia. There are so many different things that vie for our dollars, some important, some less so. Jews throughout history have sacrificed so much to pass on our holy Torah and *mesorah* (tradition)

continued on back

Stories for the Soul

Forgiven at Last

The guests at a bar mitzvah in Bnai Brak were quite surprised to see Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski (1899-1985), better known as the Steipler, walk in the door. As far as anyone knew, the Torah giant was not close with the family of the young man celebrating his entrance into adulthood. In addition, the Steipler was already advanced in years and rarely attended events, even for his own family members.

The Steipler asked to speak privately for a few moments with the bar mitzvah boy, and they went into a room to talk. Several minutes later, the two emerged from the room and the Steipler went on his way.

When asked what had transpired, the boy related a most surprising tale. His family attended the Lederman shul in Bnai Brak, which is where the Steipler himself went to *daven*. Six years earlier, when the boy was a mere seven years old, the Steipler had seen the child holding what he thought was a *sefer*, a Torah book, during the time when everyone else was praying, and he had rebuked him for studying when he should have been praying. The child showed the Steipler that he was, in fact, holding a *siddur*, a prayer book. The Steipler wished to ask forgiveness for falsely accusing the child, but a child under the age of bar mitzvah is halachically unable to forgive a wrong done against him.

For six years, the Steipler waited for the child to become a halachic adult and, at the first opportunity,

continued on back

Kollel Happenings

KOLLEL CLASSES CONTINUE VIA ZOOM MEETING

The Kollel is continuing many of its classes and offering new classes via Zoom Meeting. You can tune in to live classes online or call in on a phone. For a full schedule and the links and phone numbers to access this treasure trove of Torah, visit www.denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is one of 28 local organizations selected to be part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit www.denverkollel.org, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

HELP BUILD THE FUTURE OF TORAH IN DENVER

Claim your part in building the future of Torah in Denver! The Kollel is in the midst of a capital campaign to build a three-story, state-of-the-art Torah Center that will serve the entire Denver Jewish community. To contribute, or for dedication opportunities and details on the building, visit denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

- 1) Just like Adam
- 2) Glorious stench
- 3) Stay away from the salt
- 4) Something for everyone
- 5) It's also your problem
- 6) Sacrificial price adjustment

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk - Part XVIII

A body of Torah leaders was appointed to serve as the Rabbinic policy-making council for Agudath Israel, known as the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah. Despite his absence at the founding convention, Reb Meir Simcha was appointed as one of the initial members of the council.

Reb Meir Simcha is the author of two famous works of Torah. The first work, titled *Ohr Samayach*, is a commentary on the Rambam's halachic compendium *Mishnah*

Torah. The first of four volumes was published in 1904; two more volumes were published in Reb Meir Simcha's lifetime. The final volume was published posthumously by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Zak, the rabbi of Riga.

Reb Meir Simcha's second famous work was his commentary on the Torah, titled *Meshech Chochma*. Although he wrote it when he was younger, it was only published after his passing.

A Taste of Torah

continued from front

to the next generation and have given up so much to provide a proper Torah education for their children. Let us see to it that in our time, when G-d has

blessed us with material success, we continue to make a top-notch Torah education a top priority in our lives.

Stories for the Soul

continued from front

he came and asked him for full forgiveness!

In this week's parsha, the Torah discusses the special sin-offering brought if a *nasi*, a king or ruler of the Jewish People, inadvertently commits a sin. Our Sages, based on the wording

of the verse, teach, "Fortunate is the generation whose leader takes care to bring atonement for an unintentional sin - he will certainly regret his intentional transgressions." How important it is for every person, no matter how great, to self-reflect and recognize his shortcomings.

- (1) Just like Adam 1:2 s.v. adam
- (2) Glorious stench 1:17 s.v. bichnufav
- (3) Stay away from the salt 2:2 s.v. milo (2)
- (4) Something for everyone 3:1 s.v. she'lamim
- (5) It's also your problem 4:3 s.v. im hakohen
- (6) Sacrificial price adjustment 5:13 s.v. al chataso

Parsha Quizzers - Answers

To sponsor Torah Weekly, delivered weekly in print and via email to thousands of Jews worldwide, email info@denverkollel.org
Denver Community Kollel | 1395 Wolff Street, Denver, CO 80204 | 303-820-2855

info@denverkollel.org | www.denverkollel.org

To receive Torah Weekly by email, email to info@denverkollel.org