



TORAH WEEKLY

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Parshas Behar-Bechukosai

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A Taste of Torah

No Exchanges

by Rabbi Aharon Wilen

Imagine living in the days of the *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple) when, if you wanted to bring a special gift to Hashem, you could bring a *korban* (offering) in the *Bais Hamikdash*. After reviewing your flock, you choose the best-looking lamb as your offering and designate it as a *korban*, imbuing the animal with a special *kedusha* (sanctity).

But then you might notice, standing in the corner, an even better specimen, definitely the best of your sheep. Of course this would make a better gift, you would say; I will simply switch my choice for a *korban* from that sheep to this one by transferring the sanctity.

Not only would your attempt to transfer the sanctity of *korban* status not work, but now, says the Torah in this week's parsha, both animals actually become *kadosh* (holy), and now you must bring both as offerings! Not only that, but your attempt to switch the *korban* is an offense punishable by *malkos* (lashes)!

This needs an explanation. First of all, why can't the animal be switched? And, inasmuch as a switch cannot be made, why does the intended replacement also become sanctified as a *korban*? Finally, why is attempting to switch the sanctity of a *korban* from one animal to another a sin severe enough that it deserves corporal punishment? Seemingly, the owner means well, at least in the case of replacing an inferior animal with a superior one.

The Sefer Hachinuch (mitzvah 352) explains that if we would appreciate the *kedusha* of a *korban*, we would have no problems with this halacha. Actually, explains the Sefer Hachinuch, the point of this mitzvah is to arouse and teach awe and respect for the *Bais Hamikdash* and the service performed there. As the Rambam writes regarding the obligation to fear the Sanctuary (Hilchos Bais

Habechira 7:1), "The fear is not of the house but rather of the one who commanded us to fear it." The *kedusha* of the *Bais Hamikdash* is because it is the house of Hashem, and the service done there is done in His presence. Anything used in this service shares that *kedusha*, as well.

Once something is dedicated as a *korban* to be offered in the *Bais Hamikdash*, it must be treated with the utmost reverence. This extends to the point that any tampering, even to attempt an improvement, is a sin punishable by *malkos*.

The Sefer Hachinuch adds that to properly understand the severity of tampering with a *korban*, one should refer back to his explanation of the mitzvah of building the *Bais Hamikdash* (mitzvah 95). In Parshas Teruma, when the commandment to build the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was transmitted, the Sefer Hachinuch goes to great lengths to demonstrate the purpose and function of the *Bais Hamikdash*. But, perhaps more telling than the explanation itself is the introduction:

"I am afraid, however, of drawing close to the Dwelling of G-d, as I know that 'anyone who comes close, who comes close' (Bamidbar 17:28) who has not sufficiently sanctified himself 'will not see the House and live (see Shemos 33:20).' Even the priests that come forward for the service sanctify themselves in their coming to the sanctum inside; and before the Levites came to raise their voices in the sanctuary of G-d, they purified themselves and Aharon waved them as a wave-offering. Thus, I said, I, too, will say my counsel and arrange my apology in front of my elders, and 'I will wash my palms in cleanliness' (Psalms 26:6) before I go up to the House of G-d."

The Sefer Hachinuch feels the need

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Stories for the Soul

Nighttime Journey

A young married man from Bnai Brak once had to travel with his wife to take their young baby to the emergency room in Beilinson Hospital in Petach Tikva.

Once there, they met a secular Jewish couple whose son was not doing well. Looking for encouragement, the secular couple turned to the religious couple and a lengthy conversation ensued, in which the observant couple attempted to strengthen and soothe the worried parents with messages of belief and trust in Hashem, Who would ultimately determine the fate of their son.

After several hours of discussion that lasted late into the night, the secular man expressed an interest in adopting a more religious lifestyle. The discussion turned to the subject of Torah study, and the observant man endeavored to describe the value and beauty of the in-depth Torah study in which yeshiva students engage at all hours of the day and night.

The secular man suddenly became silent, immersed in thought. After a few minutes, he turned and asked the religious man if he knew of a yeshiva where he could witness yeshiva students engaged in Torah study at that very moment. He added that if a yeshiva where there were ten students learning in the middle of the night could be shown to him, he would immediately become religious.

The religious man saw that it was two o'clock in the morning, and he hesitated, unsure of how to respond to the offer. He decided that he would do as much as he was capable of doing, and leave the rest up to Hashem. The two men left the hospital and began to drive. Their destination was the

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Kollel Happenings

MILE HIGH TORAH PODCAST FROM THE KOLLEL

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SPRING-SUMMER AVOS UBANIM ON SHABBOS AFTERNOON

The Kollel's spring-summer Avos Ubanim program continues this Shabbos afternoon at the Kollel Torah Centers in West Denver and Southeast Denver. Learning begins one hour before mincha, followed by nosh and prizes. For sponsorships and more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

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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.

Halacha Riddles

Last week's question: How is it possible for there to be three different proper blessings on the same food depending on the degree to which it is cooked?

Answer: Barley. The proper *bracha* for uncooked barley grains (assuming they are edible, such as fresh or roasted) is *shehakol* (Rema Orach Chaim 208:4). If the barley is whole (i.e., it is not milled and thus none of the kernel has been removed)

and it is cooked but still firm and has not lost its form, the proper *bracha* would be *ha'adama* (Shulchan Aruch *ibid.*). If the whole barley grains are cooked to the extent that they lose their form, the proper *bracha* is *mezonos* (Mishna Berura *ibid.*:3)

This week's question: How is it possible for a *bracha* of a fruit to change based on how the tree came into existence?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Saadia Gaon - Part XXVIII

Rav Saadia wrote one of the earliest prayer books, or *siddurim*, putting together the different prayers that are recited on weekdays, Shabbos, and Yom Tov. While there is no known copy of the

entire siddur – though a nearly complete manuscript survives today in the Oxford museum – his siddur is the basis for the siddur of Yemenite Jewry.

A Taste of Torah

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to “arrange his apology” before talking about the *Bais Hamikdash*. Apparently, he understands that even simply discussing the mitzvos of the *Mishkan* requires the utmost reverence!

The Talmud teaches that a synagogue is regarded as a *mikdash me'at*, a miniature temple, and thus contains a similar,

though lesser, degree of sanctity. Indeed, many laws regarding proper behavior and attitude toward the *Bais Hamikdash* also apply to a synagogue, as well. Though we, unfortunately, do not merit to have an actual *Bais Hamikdash* today, we can apply the ideas of its proper reverence to our own miniature temples.

Stories for the Soul

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illustrious Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnai Brak, where they arrived at 2:10 a.m.

The two men entered the building slowly, both wondering what they would behold upon entering the *bais medrash*. When they reached the door and swung it open, both men were astonished to see more than 50 dedicated young men enthusiastically engaged in their Talmudic studies, completely oblivious of the clock.

The secular man stood in dumbfounded disbelief for several minutes, as he watched the students passionately arguing with their *chavrusos*. Eventually he pulled himself together and uttered three words: “*Ani chozer b'teshuvah.*”

The two men returned to the hospital to tend to their children, but the once-

secular man was a changed individual. He kept his promise and began to observe the mitzvos at once. A short while later, the doctors came to check on his child, and they were astounded to see that the boy, whose initial prognosis was that he would live no more than a day, showed remarkable improvement. He continued to progress and get better until, a mere 48 hours after his father's visit to the yeshiva, he was deemed fully recovered and sent home with his loving and appreciative parents.

In this week's parsha, the Torah teaches us that it is not sufficient to merely study Torah; rather, one must fully dedicate himself, to whatever degree possible, to its study.

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Denver Community Kollel | 1395 Wolff Street, Denver, CO 80204 | 303-820-2855

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