

Pulse OF Emunah

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life

LESSONS


IN HIS LIGHT

Rav Shlomo Zalman *zt"l* lived his whole life in the city of Yerushalayim. While he spent most of his years as *rosh yeshivah* of Yeshivas Kol Torah virtually unknown, towards the end of his life, Yidden from all over flocked to hear his wisdom. A brilliant *posek* with expertise in every area of *halachah*, Rav Shlomo Zalman's every interaction was conducted with the utmost sensitivity.

Rabbi Yerachmiel Fried once had the *zechus* to spend *shalosh seudos* with Rav Shlomo Zalman. Rav Shlomo Zalman did not use the electricity on Shabbos, although he held it was *mutar*. As *shalosh seudos* went on, it became darker and darker, until the people in the room could not longer see each other.

Except for Rav Shlomo Zalman. His face continued to glow, even in the dark. *Chochmas adam ta'ir panav*—he had the visible glow of Torah on his face.

Over a quarter of a century since the passing of this *gadol b'Yisroel*, his light continues to illuminate us through his incredible *sefarim*, all those who quote him, and through all his *talmidim*.

May we merit to bask in some of that light. 

Courtesy of Agudas Yisroel of America



gem

OF THE WEEK

OFFERED BEFORE G-D

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

The offering of *ketores* in the *kodesh hakedashim* was a point of contention between the *chachamim* and the Tzedokim, the Sadducees. The Tzedokim taught that *yetakein mibachutz v'yichaneis*: the *kohen gadol* puts the *ketores* onto the coals outside the *kodesh hakedashim*, then enter with the incense already smoking. According to the tradition of the *chachamim*, however, he would bring inside the coals and the ladle of *ketores* simultaneously, and only between the *badim* of the *aron* would he pour the *ketores* onto the coals.


This doctrine was very important to the Tzedokim. Hence, one of them was noted to be overjoyed when he was given the opportunity to put it into practice. Consequently, the Sages would appeal to every *kohen gadol* on *erev Yom Kippur* to offer the *ketores* in the traditional way.

Toras Kohanim informs us what motivated the Tzedokim to contradict the Torah. They put it as a matter of etiquette: *im lifnei basar v'dam osin kein, kal v'chomer lifnei haMakom!* At human parties, the incense is already smoking; it is not lit in the presence of guests. How much more so should polite

continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER 

HARACHAMAN:
BRINGER OF PEACE

Between the Harachaman that prays for “abundant blessing upon this house and this table” and the one for the *baal habayis*, a plea for the coming of Eliyahu Hanavi is inserted—the one who will bring us “good tidings and consolation.” Eliyahu is the *navi* who will bring peace to the home by overcoming the divergences of generations, restoring parents' hearts to their children, and children's to their parents. We then move on to the Avos. To be as contented with our lot as they were with theirs—*bakol, mikol, kol*—is the greatest blessing we could ever hope for. 

Adapted from *World of Prayer* by Rabbi Elie Munk

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ABOVE AND BEYOND

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

The more precious something is, the more carefully it is guarded to avoid loss or damage. A rare plant is protected by netting. Expensive jewelry is kept in a safe. And what could be more precious than the *mitzvos*?

As Jews, we are commanded to ensure that we never transgress a negative command or neglect a positive one: “*ushemartem es mishmarti*, guard the mission I have given you.” *Torah shebaal peh* explains that this is an obligation upon the Sanhedrin to enact protective laws that prevent transgression of the Torah itself. In Parshas Shoftim, the Torah commands us not to turn away from the dictates of our *batei din* “to the right or the left.” The Rambam and Rabbeinu Yonah understand this to include all rabbinic laws. When we disobey a *mitzvah derabbanan*, we actually break a *de’oraisa* command.

Maseches Shabbos states that the correct *bracha* for the Chanukah candles is “*asher kideshanu b’mitzvosav v’tzivanu lehadlik ner shel Chanukah*.” The Gemara asks, “Where did Hashem command this?” There is obviously no such *mitzvah* in the Torah, *neis Chanukah* having occurred after all of the events in our Tanach. The Gemara answers with the *pasuk* above: do not turn away from the instruction of our Sages to the right or left. The *mitzvah* to obey *mitzvos derabbanan* such as Chanukah is from Hashem Himself.

The Torah itself states a protective measure: if a person takes a vow of *nezirus*, he is forbidden to drink wine—but the Torah additionally forbids him to eat or drink grapes. Mesilas Yesharim writes, “Although the main *issur* is drinking wine, the Torah forbade anything that could be connected to it. This is an example for the *chachamim*, to teach them to make their own protective laws... that they should know that this is the will of Hashem.”

Much of Shas is made up of *mitzvos* and *issurei derabbanan*. *Brachos* and *tefillos* were authored by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah. Without rabbinic prohibitions, it would be possible to evade the 39 *melachos* of Shabbos while having a normal weekday. We could fast on Yom Kippur while playing games and strolling in the park, saying one short Vidui to fulfill the minimum Torah requirement. But despite their critical importance, these aspects are not *min hatorah*. It was left to our Sages to enhance these *mitzvos* in a meaningful way.

The Gemara in Maseches Brachos relates that the Torah states that Hashem shows favor to no one. If so, the *malachim* asked, why does Hashem favor Klal Yisrael? Hashem answered, “How can I not? I wrote that one must *bentch* when satiated, yet they *bentch* after eating only a *kezayis*.” Our *mitzvos derabbanan* are a way of showing dedication to Hashem. Because we go above and beyond the minimum requirements, He does the same for us. 🕯

conduct be followed in the presence of G-d! And so the ancient Sadducees bowed to the idol of good manners, as do their modern heirs.

Further reflection reveals that this method of offering *ketores* was also employed by Nadav and Avihu in their disastrous offering. As the *pasuk* says, *vayikchu...ish machtaso vayitnu bahen eish vayasimu aleha ketores vayakrivu lifnei Hashem*. Clearly, they too did not pour incense onto the fire *lifnei Hashem*, but brought it before G-d already smoking! According to Toras Kohanim on Shemini, they acted exactly as the Tzedokim later insisted: They went in “before G-d,” to the Holy of Holies, with the *anan haketores* rising like a palm!

This is so very characteristic: the Tzedokim, in their time, were students of Nadav and Avihu, just as the Karaites later based themselves on others whose opinions and teachings were rejected by *chachmei Yisrael*.

This Tzedoki doctrine—*tikkun bachutz v’hachnasa bifnim*—is emblematic of their entire worldview. He turns the altar fire into an instrument for his own action. Ignoring the Torah, he lights the *ketores* outside, and that which is fragrant to his subjective senses, he brings into the *kodesh hakedashim* and forces on G-d. That which fits his conception of *reiaich nichoach*, G-d, too, will find pleasing.

The true *kohen gadol*, however, is a servant of G-d, subordinating his subjective views to G-d’s. To him, the *mizbeiach* fire is the fire of the Torah, and only that which is pleasing to G-d is pleasing to him. Only under the watchful eye of G-d will he perform *avodah* that is to be *l’reiaich nichoach* to Him. 🕯

Based on the commentary of Rav Shmshon Raphael Hirsch zt”l on Chumash, with permission from the publisher.



wonder WORLD

SWALLOW PRIDE



What bird is known for its acrobatics?

Hashem gave the swallow unique gifts. It has a streamlined body and broad wings with pointed tips, which make it highly aerodynamic and allow it to change directions swiftly to adeptly capture flying prey. Swallows are known for graceful and agile flight patterns, and impressive swooping and circular maneuvers as they chase and catch insects midair. Many swallows migrate thousands of miles each year, navigating using landmarks, celestial cues, and even the Earth’s magnetic field. Some fly from places as far apart as Alaska and Argentina. Swallows in the U.K. fly 6000 miles south to Africa. These incredible journeys show the swallow’s extraordinary skills, making them one of the great *niflaos haborei*. 🕯

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