

life

LESSONS

LIKE A SNAKEBITE

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l* was a brilliant *posek* with expertise in every area of *halacha* whose every interaction was conducted with the utmost sensitivity. For most of his life, Rav Shlomo Zalman suffered from a rare nerve disease. When it would flare up, he described it as the feeling of a snakebite in his face. The pain was excruciating. It would completely overtake him and he would nearly collapse.

Rabbi Yerachmiel Fried, *rosh kollel* and the author of *sefarim* based on Rav Shlomo Zalman's *psakim*, used to drive Rav Shlomo Zalman home from yeshivah every Tuesday. Once, on the way home, Rabbi Fried told Rav Shlomo Zalman that he had a *shailah* which was *pikuach nefesh*. At that moment, Rav Shlomo Zalman was struck by an attack of this disease.

Immediately, Rabbi Fried offered to take the *rosh yeshivah* home. Rav Shlomo Zalman refused. Instead, he said that Rabbi Fried should pull over and wait out the attack.

Rabbi Fried persisted, but Rav Shlomo Zalman said, "You said it is *pikuach nefesh*. We can't go home; I have to answer the *shailah*."

Rabbi Fried pulled over to the side of the road. Rav Shlomo Zalman waited until the pain had diminished somewhat, and then said weakly, "OK—ask the *shailah*."

What we know about Rav Shlomo Zalman's *gadlus* in Torah is just the tip of the iceberg.

Courtesy of Agudas Yisroel of America



gem

OF THE WEEK

COMING CLOSE

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

Korban. No word in Western language adequately conveys the concept of the Hebrew word. A common translation is "offering," or "sacrifice," with a connotation of destruction and loss—a connotation that is foreign, and antithetical to the Hebrew concept of a *korban*.

Even the meaning in the sense of "offering" without "sacrifice" does not correspond to *korban* in its full sense. The idea of an offering implies a prior request on the part of the recipient; the purpose of the offering is to satisfy his needs. There is no distinction between an offering and a gift.

The concept of a *korban*, however, is far removed from this. It is never to be understood as a gift. The word is found solely in the context of man's relationship with Hashem, and can only be understood on the basis of the meaning of the root word, *karav*. The meaning of *karav*, in its literal sense, is to draw close. The purpose and the result of *hakrava* is positive, the forming of a relationship with someone. The opposite—destruction and loss—should not be ascribed to it.

continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER

BIRKAS HAMAZON:
SHABBOS REST



On Shabbos, we insert an extra paragraph, *Retzei*, in the middle of the *bracha* of *Racheim*—not because we need more consolation on Shabbos, but because Shabbos should be connected with the memory of Yerushalayim. According to the Midrash, the word *v'hachalitzeinu* has four meanings: to save, to give rest, to take of, and to arm. Here, it indicates that Klal Yisrael will be saved through *shemiras Shabbos*, will achieve restfulness, and will return girded with strength to Eretz Yisrael. To us, Shabbos means rest and regeneration. It grants relaxation to the spirit, and gives the body and soul a chance to recover and repair.

Adapted from World of Prayer by Rabbi Elie Munk

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HERE TO STAY

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

When I read the Megillah on Purim, I am always inspired by one of the final *pesukim*: “These days of Purim will never pass away from among the Jews, and their remembrance will never cease from their children.” These words were written about 2,400 years ago.

When we ponder everything that has transpired in the two millennia since then, we cannot help but find encouragement. During that time, empires have risen and fallen, wars have been fought, natural catastrophes have occurred, and the world has changed beyond recognition hundreds of times. The Jewish people have undergone one trauma after the next, wherever they have been dispersed around the globe—pogroms, Crusades, Inquisition, evil decrees, slander, Cossacks, Haman and Hitler. The list goes on and on. Blood libels, expulsions...and now Hamas.

Every Jewish community has its unique story, its Golden Age and its times of distress. Living, as Chazal expressed, like “one lamb surrounded by seventy wolves,” certainly gives rise to the expectation of annihilation. After all, “not just one has stood up against us to destroy us, but in each and every generation...but Hakadosh Baruch Hu saves us from their hand.”

Rav Yaakov Emden writes that there is no greater miracle in all of human history than the survival of the Jewish people through our two millennia of exile. Could any human living 2,400 years ago have predicted with such confidence that “these days of Purim will never pass away...and their remembrance will never cease”? Surely not! But Mordechai and Esther had *ruach hakodesh*. And they told us that Purim is forever.

So when you hear the Shehecheyanu, or even eat a hamentash, you are experiencing the miracle of eternal existence that was promised to our people.

May this Purim bring the final *geulah* and *yeshua* to all of Klal Yisrael. 🕯

From this definition, it follows that a *korban* serves to meet the needs of the *makriv*, not the One to Whom the *korban* is brought. The will of the *makriv* is that something of his should come to a closer relationship with Hashem. This is the very essence of a *korban*: it is designed to bring about *hakrava*. *Kirvas Elokim*, seeking Hashem’s nearness, is, for a Jew, the sole good (Tehillim 73:28).

In the Sanctuary, man understands that closeness to Hashem is the sole criterion for shaping his outlook on life and evaluating his happiness: *Ad avo el mikdashei Kel, avina l’acharisam* (ibid. 73:17). There, he sees clearly that his spiritual and material happiness flourishes only through closeness to Hashem and His Law, his ultimate calling. There, he learns that the only way to attain *kirvas Elokim* is through total dedication to the illuminating, life-giving fire of the Torah.

There, life’s riddles are solved. There, one’s happiness is determined by the measure of his closeness to Hashem. There, body and spirit yearn for Hashem and to know Him (73:26). There, distance from Hashem brings ruin (73:27). There, good is found only in closeness to Hashem; *kirvas Elokim li tov*. Hence, “happiness” loses its appeal if found far from Hashem; near Him, suffering is sweetened and even transformed into good.

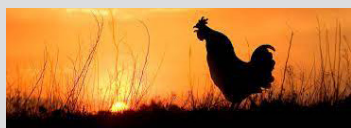
The essence of an offering is not killing, but rebirth and renewal of existence. Spiritual and moral awakening, entering into a life more noble and pure, renewing strength for life from the never-failing source of Hashem’s love—that is the Jewish concept of an offering. 🕯

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



wonder WORLD

ALARM CLOCK



How do roosters know when to crow?

Roosters have a circadian rhythm, an internal biological clock with an awareness of the day’s rhythm. They need to be regularly exposed to sunlight in order to maintain that awareness. Approximately two hours before sunrise, the rooster gets up to crow. The crowing is not just about greeting the morning, but about marking its territory. In a chicken yard, the head rooster always crows first, followed by his lower-level friends. While roosters are famous for crowing before sunrise, they can also crow at any time to react or communicate. Interestingly, when a rooster opens its beak, part of its ear canal closes to cover its eardrum, insuring that it does not go deaf from the sound of its own call!

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