



# GROWTH

## At The

# SHABBAT TABLE

## PARSHAT VAYIKRA

### Loyalty Rewards

The pasuk in this week's parsha says: "If one's offspring to Hashem is a burnt-offering of fowl, he shall bring his offering from turtledoves or from young doves" (Lev. 1:14).

These are the only two types of birds that may be offered: turtledoves and young doves. The Ramban explains that this choice is not random, of course; these birds were chosen for specific qualities that mirror the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people.

Turtledoves are the only species of fowl that are monogamous. Whereas most birds do not have any concept of loyalty to their mates, turtledoves are so loyal that if one partner dies or is captured, the partner that is left will remain alone for the rest of its life! The same is true for Klal Yisrael. They cling to Hashem only and don't forsake Him in favor of other gods. In contrast, mature doves are quite quarrelsome. They get into fights and split from their mates.

The young doves, however, do not have a mate to remain connected to, but they have another quality that bespeaks loyalty: they are loyal to the nest in which they hatched. While other birds tend to abandon their nests if a human has touched them, a young dove never abandons its nest. Klal Yisrael, too, is loyal to its "nest," sticking with Hashem and His Torah despite extreme pressure from non-Jews to go astray.

Since these two species excel in the quality of loyalty, Hashem designated them as the only birds worthy of being brought as a korban, which increases the connection between a Jew and Hashem.

R' Yissachar Frand takes this idea one step further.

Loyalty is often misunderstood as something passive – simply not leaving, not changing, not walking away. But the lesson of the turtledove and the young dove teaches us that loyalty is something much deeper. It is not just about where you are; it is about what you carry with you.

A person can physically leave the bet midrash, the yeshivah, or even a moment of inspiration – but the question is whether that place ever leaves him. Does the way he learned still shape how he thinks? Do the values he absorbed still guide his decisions? Does the connection he once felt still live within him? True loyalty is not defined by proximity, but by permanence.

The young dove teaches us that even when you leave the nest, you never abandon it. You remain connected to it in a way that continues to define you. That is what creates a life of consistency, of identity, and of purpose. When a person remains loyal to his spiritual roots, he doesn't just remember where he came from – he brings it into everything he becomes.

By (my dear friend) Yehuda Oppenheimer

### Give Your All

A king once invited his people to bring him gifts. The wealthy arrived with gold, silver, and precious jewels – each gift more impressive than the last. At the end stood a poor man, holding a simple loaf of bread. Compared to everything else, it seemed insignificant.

But when he presented it, the king accepted it with great care and said, "This is the most precious gift of all."

The people were confused. The king explained: "The others gave from what they had. But this man gave everything he had."

"When a person offers a meal-offering to Hashem, his offering shall be one of fine flour; he shall pour oil upon it and place frankincense upon it" (Lev. 2:1).

Rashi famously notes that only when it comes to a minchah offering do we find the person offering the korban described as "nefesh," a soul. Rashi explains that a minchah was brought by a person who was so poor that he could not even afford two small birds for a korban. All he could muster was some flour for a minchah. Hashem tells such a person, "I consider it as though you have sacrificed your soul to Me, because you have given Me all that you can afford."

The U.S. Army's recruitment slogan was once: "Be all that you can be." If we had to come up with a recruitment slogan for a Jew's life as Hashem's soldier, it would be "Give all that you can give."

Hashem is not measuring the size of what we give; He measures the sincerity behind it.

There are moments in life when we feel that what we are doing is small – that our learning is limited, our mitzvot are imperfect, our efforts fall short.

But in those very moments, when it is difficult, when it takes effort just to show up – that is when what we are doing may matter the most.

Because when a person gives all that he can give, even if it is only "five minutes," he is not just giving time. He is giving himself.

And that is something of immeasurable value.

Based on R' Yissachar Frand, By (my dear friend) Yehuda Oppenheimer