

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 5 Nissan 5767. We omit Av HaRachamim. Tonight after Maariv we say Kiddush Levanah.

TORAH DIALOGUE (p. 410 Hz) (p. 605 S) (p. 371 Hi)
VAYIKRA ויקרא

1. All creatures emanate from God and have no independent existence of their own. True, man has freedom of choice and his intellect puts great achievements within his reach. But all of this is possible only because God gives him the power to do so. Man could not function or even exist without God. In this sense, his existence is not even equivalent to that of a puppet controlled by its puppeteer. The goal of Creation is for man to acknowledge this basic fact; to recognize and proclaim that everything exists because of God and nothing can survive without Him. There are many ways for God's glory to be revealed and recognized. He manifests Himself as merciful, judgmental, life-giving, and so on. But the highest recognition of all is for man to know the Oneness of God, meaning that there is nothing aside from Him. An offering is a demonstration of this concept. It says that its owner is surrendering his possessions to their Source. Theoretically, one might have expected him to be ready to give even his very life in acknowledgement of God's sovereignty, but that is not His will. God wants man to live, to grow, to thrive, to serve—and God ordains the offerings as man's way to recognize His Oneness. (Maharal.)

2. The first recorded machloket is on the topic of semichah—the obligation of the owner of a sacrifice to place his hands on top of the sacrifice prior to the slaughtering. In this week's parsha the Torah relates *"and he shall place his hands on top of the olah and it will be accepted for him as atonement"* (1:4). We find a fascinating Tosefta (Chagiga 2) with regard to semichah:

Until the argument regarding semichah [in the time of the zugot] there was never an unresolved argument [concerning the halachah]... Rav Yossi said: 'If one needed to know a certain halachah, he would then proceed to ask the Beit Din in his own town. If they did not know, he would then go to the Beit Din in Yerushalayim and if they would not know... to the Beit Din HaGadol which sat next to the Holy Temple. From there, the halachah went forth to the rest of the land of Israel... Eventually, there proliferated among the Houses of Hillel and Shamai disciples who were not adequately trained in the law, and consequently sowed the seeds of dispute in Israel.'

The Tosefta makes clear that semichah was the first unresolved halachic dispute. But in fact was it? There are many other disputes among tanaiim. Why is semichah the subject of dispute amongst five different pairs of zugot? We do not find any other Mishnah where five pairs argue.

3. May a non-Jew bring a sacrifice?

4. *"No meal-offering which you shall bring to Hashem shall be made with leaven, for you shall not turn into smoke any leaven or any honey as an offering made by fire to Hashem"* (2:11). People have certain physical desires to indulge in all of the luxuries which this world has to offer, but, like honey, in excess they are harmful. Leaven represents the Yetzer Hara in that just as it causes dough to rise, so does the Yetzer Hara fool a person to raise his ego to believe that his will is worthy and valued to being considered, even above the will of Hashem. Chazal cite (Brachot 17a), however, that every man can claim to Hashem, "It is clearly my will to fulfill Your commands, but the leaven of the dough (my Yetzer Hara) prevents me from being successful." Nevertheless, these two elements—physical desires and human ego—are quite necessary for man to exist in this world. Without desire, a person would not eat and continue to survive, and he would be unable even to perform the service of Hashem. Without the Yetzer Hara, a person would not have the drive to get married to establish a household. Although these human instincts do serve a purpose in this world, clearly involvement in Torah and in Mitzvot is the only true essence of our existence, and it is through their performance that we fulfill our role in providing a pleasant aroma for Hashem in our lives. Our verse can be read with this insight. *"Neither leaven nor honey shall be offered in the fire upon the altar for Hashem"*—for neither human desire nor human physical drives, in and of themselves, are elements which exhibit the fulfillment of Torah. Yet, they are necessary foundations for the accomplishment of other Mitzvot. *"Let them be brought as an offering of first fruits"* for they do serve a purpose as a means to bring a person closer to and capable of performing other Mitzvot. (Kli Yakar.)

5. The Rama (Orach Chaim 167:5) writes that it is a Mitzvah to bring salt to the table before cutting the bread at the beginning of the meal because the table is compared to an altar, and the eating is compared to a sacrifice, and it is written, *"On all your sacrifices you shall offer salt."* The salt protects the people from misfortunes. The Mishna Berura explains that now that the Beit HaMikdash is destroyed, a person's table is likened to the altar (through which he receives atonement) since he

invites needy guests and recites Divrei Torah at the table. The eating is as meritorious as a sacrifice since one gains strength from the food to properly serve Hashem. The salt protects from misfortune, because, according to the Midrash, when Jews are sitting around a table waiting for everyone to wash his hands before the meal, the Satan attempts to have them punished since they are not actively participating in a Mitzvah. However, the covenant that was made with the salt (Brit Melach) protects them.

6. *“And if his means do not suffice for two turtledoves or two pigeons, he shall bring as his offering for that of which he is guilty, a tenth of an Ephah of choice flour for a sin offering; he shall not add oil to it or lay frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering”* (5:11). The Rambam (Hilchot Ma’ase HaKorbanot 12:6,7) explains that any meal offering offered upon the altar required oil and frankincense. One exception was the sinner’s meal offering. The reason for this command is that oil connotes excellence and greatness, for if one mixes it with any other liquid, it floats above the other substance. In addition a good oil is very valuable. It was therefore used to anoint someone into the exalted position of a king or a Kohen Gadol. For this reason it is not proper to put any of it into the meal-offering of a sinner, who must show humility and concern for that which has occurred to him. Moreover, it is out of compassion for an impoverished man not to trouble him excessively to bring oil, for Hashem will not overburden a human being. It is for this reason also that Hashem required only a little flour from him, since it is impossible that any man, even one in the utmost poverty, would not have a bit of flour. This, too, was the reason for the omission of the frankincense. (HaChinuch.)

HAFTORAH (p. 424 Hz) (p. 625 S) (p. 868 Hi)
ISAIAH ישעיהו

“As I will pour water on the thirsty” (44:3). Just as I will pour water on a thirsty place, so will I pour My holy spirit, i.e. divine inspiration or the spirit of salvation on your seed. (Ibn Ezra.) Redak and Abarbanel equate this prophecy with that of Joel (3:1): *“And it shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters and your elders shall prophesy...”* During the exile, the Jewish people are likened to the thirsty soil and the dry land. They thirst for the spiritual and for the material, for the restoration of prophecy and for God’s salvation. The prophet calls these “the spirit and the blessing.” The prophet assures his generation that future generations will indeed experience the restoration

of prophecy and will be redeemed and returned to their land.

SHABBAT HALACHAH

COOKING

I repeat a section dealing with returning a pot to the stove since I have received several inquiries recently on this point. Generally, a pot containing food, which has been removed from the fire, should not be put back unless the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (a) At the time when the pot was removed there was an intention to put it back.
- (b) The pot continues to be held in the hand until replaced, although, while being held, it may be placed on the table or any other dry place except the floor.
- (c) The fire on which the pot is replaced is covered by a material, such as asbestos (or a blech), on which one is not accustomed to cook during the week, but which is only used to leave pots on in order to stop them from growing cold. [A glass top stove does not require a blech, but the controls must be covered.]
- (d) The food in the pot is fully cooked. (If the contents include chicken bones which after being well cooked become soft and edible, one should take care that they too have been fully cooked and are fit to eat.)
- (e) The food has not completely cooled off and is still slightly warm.

There is no way to permit taking cold soup or gravy and placing it back on the fire for the Shabbat afternoon meal.