
THE WEISS EDITION

ויקרא
Vayikra



The Pure

The Selfless Fuel of Sacrifice

The Best and Finest

What Do You Crave?

Light
points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

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ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

תנצב"ה

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ת צבי ב"ר

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתו שיחיו

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וזוגתו מרת שרה חנה שיחיו ראט

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ת אפרים שאלתיאל

ב"ר יחיאל מיכל ע"ה

האגער

נלב"ע ביום ג' ניסן ה'תשע"א

תנצב"ה

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתו שיחיו

ויקרא *Vayikra*

מפני מה מתחילין לתינוקות בתורת כהנים, ואין מתחילין
בבראשית? אלא שהתינוקות טהורין והקרבנות טהורין,
יבואו טהורין ויתעסקו בטהורין (ויקרא רבה ז, ג)

*Why do schoolchildren begin their learning with Toras
Kohanim (the Book of Vayikra) and not with Bereishis?
Since the children are pure and the sacrifices are pure,
let the pure come and deal with the pure. (Vayikra
Rabbah 7:3)*

The Pure

Even before Jewish children are old enough to understand what it means to observe the Torah, their first studies of Jewish texts begin, according to age-old tradition, with the book of Vayikra. According to the Midrash, this is because Vayikra teaches the laws of sacrifices, and “since the children are pure and the sacrifices are pure, let the pure come and deal with the pure.”

Remarkably, the only reference in the Torah to sacrifices being “pure” is with regard to those offered by Noah after

the Flood: “Noach built an altar to G-d, and he took from all the pure animals and from all the pure fowl, and brought up burnt offerings on the altar.”¹ The pure animals referred to there are the kosher animals, “which are destined to be pure for Israel.”²

Noach’s sacrifices predated not only G-d’s command to the Jewish people “to distinguish between the impure and the pure”³ and observe a kosher diet, but also the era of the patriarchs, of whom our Sages say, “They observed the entire Torah even before it was given.”⁴ Thus, by referring to the sacrifices as “the pure,” the Midrash alludes to the potential of the sacrifices to reveal G-d’s essential love for the Jewish people, a bond that “predates” and transcends even the attachment we develop by observing His Torah.

Accordingly, we can understand the tradition to introduce children to Torah study with the book of Vayikra. Children begin their school years long before they are of the age of responsibility to observe the Torah and mitzvos. Moreover, at that age they are too young even to digest the idea of obligation, or to be trained for the duties that they will have upon reaching the age of majority. Their early reading of the Torah therefore symbolizes a Jew’s inherent connection to G-d and His Torah, a connection that transcends even the actual observance and study of the Torah and its laws. Since the sacrifices likewise reflect this pure and inviolable relationship with G-d, it is most appropriate that “the pure come and deal with the pure.”

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 22, pp. 1-6*

1. Bereishis 8:20.

2. Rashi, Bereishis 7:2.

3. Vayikra 11:47.

4. Kiddushin 82a.

 2:1 | א:ב

וְנִפֶּשׂ בִּי תִקְרִיב קָרְבַּן מִנְחָה

And if one offers an offering of a minchah...

The Selfless Fuel of Sacrifice

The word *minchah* means “a grain offering,” which makes the phrase *korban minchah*—“a grain offering offering”—seem redundant. The Midrash therefore interprets the additional word *korban* to allude to another genre of offerings that a person may donate and offer upon the altar,⁵ namely stand-alone offerings of oil, wine, incense or wood, which are typically components of a (larger) *korban*, but which may also be offered individually.

The Midrash’s view that wood is among the components of a sacrifice is somewhat puzzling. After all, the purpose of the wood is simply to fuel the altar’s fire. Why does the Midrash regard it as part of the sacrifice?

In a certain sense, however, the wood accompanying the sacrifice represents the underlying theme of all sacrifices, even more so than the sacrifices’ other components.

Ramban⁶ explains that the objective of the sacrifices is to arouse the individual to offer himself—his inner qualities and character—to G-d. The animal he burns on the altar substitutes for him physically, but a spiritual offering is still expected of him.

In particular, each sacrifice draws attention to a unique aspect of the person’s character that he must channel in the

5. See *Toras Kohanim* ad loc.

6. Ramban, *Vayikra* 1:9.

service of G-d. Common to all sacrifices, however, is the underlying readiness to offer yourself—ultimately, your entire being—to G-d.

This self-sacrifice required for every offering is represented by the one component that all the sacrifices have in common: the wood used to fuel the fire. And for good reason, because the firewood is the epitome of selflessness and abnegation.

Unlike the other components of the sacrifice, burning the firewood is not said to arouse “a pleasing fragrance for G-d.”⁷ Nevertheless, it is entirely burned and consumed in order to facilitate the arousal of that Divine delight—the credit for which will ultimately be attributed to “someone else.”

Thus it is truly the firewood alone that meets the definition of *korban*, a sacrifice.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 22, pp. 7-13

7. Vayikra 1:9.

 3:16 | ג:טז

כָּל חֵלֶב לַיהוָה

All fat is to G-d.

The Best and Finest

When an animal is offered as a sacrifice, its premium fats—the choicest parts of its flesh—are burned on the altar. The Rambam interprets this as a universal principle:

The same applies to everything done for the sake of G-d—it must be of the finest and best. When one builds a house of prayer, it should be finer than his private dwelling. When he feeds the hungry, he should give them the best and sweetest from his table. When he clothes the naked, he should give him the finest of his garments. When consecrating an object to the Temple, he should give the finest of his possessions. And so it is written, “All the fat is to G-d.”⁸

The Talmud teaches a similar principle, yet from a different source in the Torah, and with an entirely different set of examples:

“This is my G-d, and I will beautify Him.”⁹ This means, beautify yourself before G-d in mitzvos. Make before Him a beautiful *sukkah*, a beautiful *lulav*, a beautiful *shofar*, beautiful *tzitzis* and a beautiful Torah scroll.¹⁰

While the Talmud speaks of beautifying *your* observance, the Rambam implies that by bringing an offering of superior

8. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Issurei Mizbeiach 7:11.

9. Shemos 15:2.

10. Talmud, Shabbos 133b.

quality, you enhance the value and effectiveness of the sacrifice itself.

The Talmud's principle is therefore applicable regardless of the status conferred on the object through its use in the performance of a mitzvah. The *sukkah*, *lulav*, *shofar*, *tzitzis* and Torah scroll are not "given" to G-d; they remain in your personal possession. Yet by performing G-d's commands in a beautiful manner, you bring additional splendor to G-d, whom you are serving.

The Rambam, however, speaks only of instances comparable to sacrifices, such as donations to the Beis Hamikdash or gifts to the poor, in which you are parting with the object itself and offering it to G-d. The emphasis is therefore on the object being consecrated. When "all the fat is to G-d"—i.e., your gifts are the choicest and finest possible—then not only is *your observance* beautiful, but the offering *itself* is more complete.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 27, pp. 10-14

 5:17 | זי:ה

וְלֹא יָדַע וְאִשָּׁם וְנִשְׂא עוֹנוֹ

But he does not know; he is guilty and shall bear his transgression.

What Do You Crave?

Why does the Torah require a person to offer a sacrifice to atone for a sin he committed unknowingly, and in fact even if he is unsure that he transgressed at all?

Chassidus explains that even when one sins unintentionally, the very occurrence of the transgression is indicative of an internal spiritual weakness, for it is a person's subconscious attraction to the prohibited that causes him to sin even *inadvertently*.¹¹ He is therefore guilty for the choices he made in the past that developed this inner desire to transgress, which then manifests itself in actual—albeit inadvertent—wrongdoing. Conversely, regarding the righteous, Mishlei tells us, “No corruption shall *chance upon* the righteous.”¹² The righteous person craves only G-dliness; he will therefore not stumble upon sin even unintentionally.

This explains why the Talmud's classic example of doubtful transgression regards a piece of animal fat. For example, Rashi explains the circumstances that warrant the sacrificing of a “pending guilt-offering”:

A piece of prohibited animal fat and a piece of permissible animal fat lay before someone, and, thinking that either was

11. See Tanya, Iggeres Hakodesh, Epistle 28.

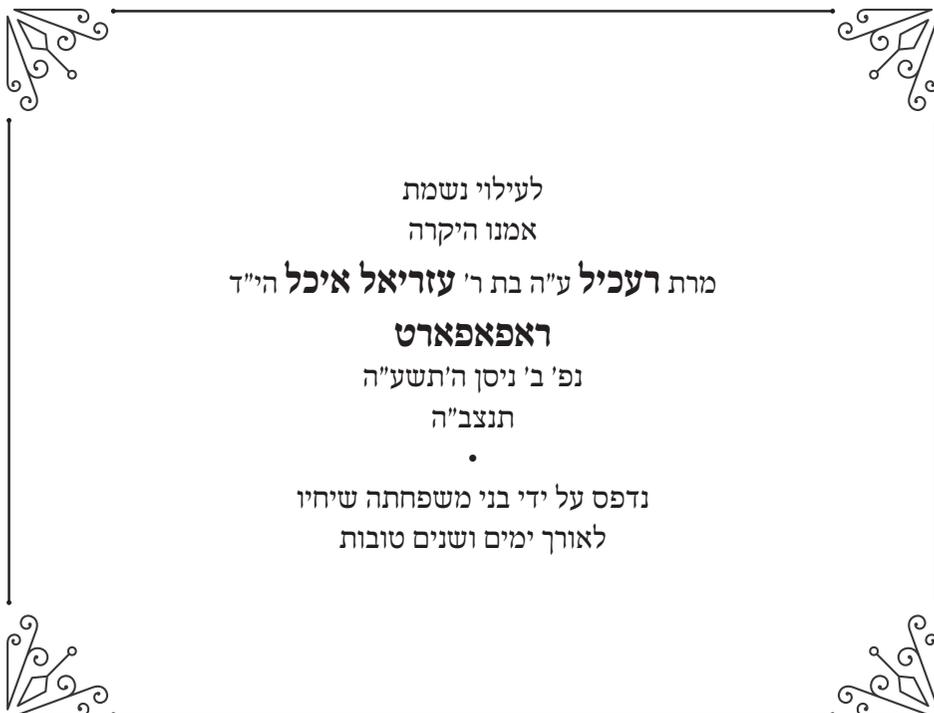
12. Mishlei 12:21.

permissible, he ate one. He was later informed that one of those pieces was prohibited fat. As he doesn't know whether the one that he had eaten was indeed the prohibited one, he brings a "pending guilt-offering."¹³

Fat represents lusciousness and pleasure. Accordingly, the doubt whether one has indulged in forbidden fat or not is essentially the question that lies behind every possibility of unintentional sin: have you been drawn to lust the prohibited, or do you delight exclusively in the holy and permissible?

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 3, pp. 944-946*

13. Rashi, Vayikra 5:17.



לעילוי נשמת

אמנו היקרה

מרת **רעכיל** ע"ה בת ר' **עזריאל איכל** הי"ד

ראפאפארט

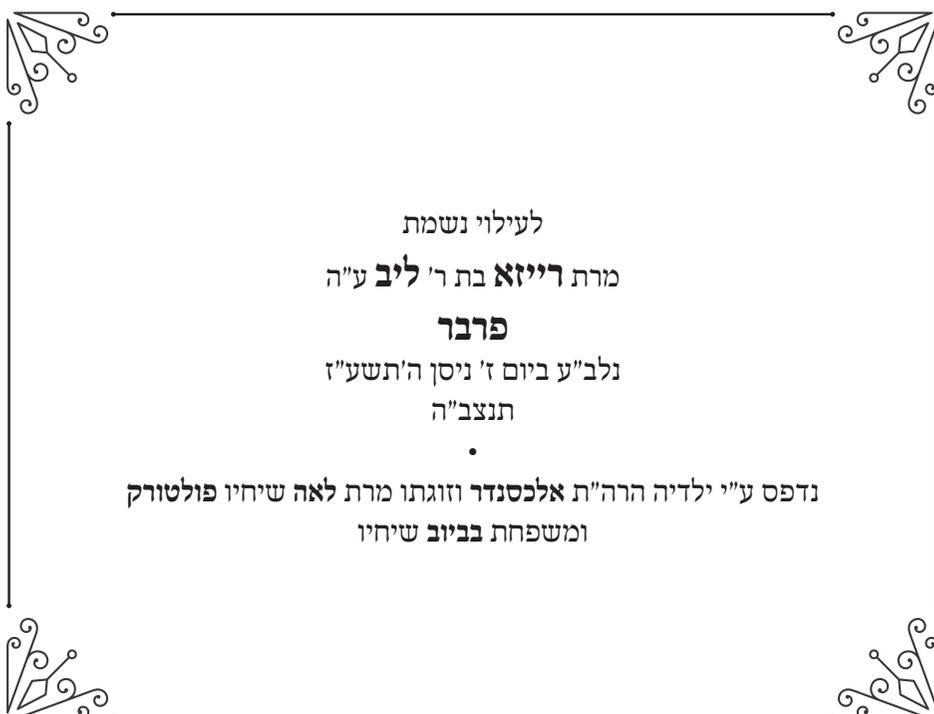
נפ' ב' ניסן ה'תשע"ה

תנצב"ה

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נדפס על ידי בני משפחתה שיחיו

לאורך ימים ושנים טובות



לעילוי נשמת

מרת **רייזא** בת ר' **ליב** ע"ה

פרבר

גלב"ע ביום ז' ניסן ה'תשע"ז

תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י ילדיה הרה"ת **אלכסנדר** וזוגתו מרת **לאה** שיחיו **פולטורק**

ומשפחת **בביוב** שיחיו

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת יעקב מנחם מענדל הכהן
ב"ר רפאל משה ע"ה
שפערלין
נלב"ע ד' ניסן ה'תש"נ
תנצב"ה



THE LIGHTPOINTS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE
THROUGH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT of
Rabbi Moshe Aaron Tzvi and Mrs. Ruty Weiss