

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ז"ל and Tzvi Daniel ben David ז"ל Ainsworth
Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

הקהל Hakhel

Mitzvah of Hakhel

Regarding Hakhel, Sefer Hachinuch writes that *after the destruction of the Holy Temple, the Mitzvah of Hakhel was nullified* (Mitzvah 612). Which raises the question, why wasn't a memorial Mitzvah instituted in its place, as was done in the place of other commandments that were no longer applicable after the destruction of the Holy Temple?

This is because although many important details of the Hakhel ceremony are not actionable in exile, the actual Mitzvah of Hakhel, to *gather the people, the men, the women, and the children... to learn and to fear G-d* (Vayeilech 31:12) can be accomplishable today. Therefore, there is no need for a memorial, for the obligation of Hakhel itself stands as it did in the times of the Temple.

Adapted from Toras Menachem 5748 Vol. 1, pp. 366-370

סיפור חסידי Once Upon a Chasid

By Yanki Tauber
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The Miniature Giant

And He called to Moses (Vayikra 1:1)

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch entered cheder on the day after Yom Kippur of 5553 – 1792, 11 days after his third birthday. The child's grandfather, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, instructed Reb Avraham the melamed to begin the first lesson with the opening verses of the Book of Vayikra.

Following the lesson, little Mendel asked: "Why is the word 'vayikra' written with a little Aleph?"

For a long while Rabbi Schneur Zalman sat in a deep meditative trance. Then he explained:

"In the Torah scroll, there are three sizes of letters: regular letters, oversized letters, and miniature letters. The opening word of Vayikra is written in the Torah scroll with a miniature 'Aleph,' as a testimony to the humility of Moses.

"In the first verse of the Book of Chronicles, the name of the first man, Adam, is written with an oversized Aleph. Adam was aware of his greatness. All too aware. He was, after all, the flawless 'original' human being, 'the work of G-d's hands.' His inflated ego and self-assurance were what led to his downfall.

"But humility does not mean that one underestimates himself. To do so would result in an unforgivable waste of the resources and talents one has been granted. Moses knew who he was. He knew that he was the only human being capable of grasping the all-embracing wisdom of G-d in its entirety and teaching it to Israel. He knew that it was through him that the Almighty chose to communicate with mortal man. Nonetheless he was humble. The notion that any of this ought to bolster his ego would have been ludicrous to him; on the contrary, his recognition of his gifts only served to feed his humility. 'Had any

other man been given what has been granted me,' Moses would have said, 'he most certainly would have accomplished far more than I.'

"This is the true definition of humility," concluded the Rebbe. "And so the Torah states: 'And the man Moses was the most humble man upon the face of the earth.'"

A Certain kind of 'Great'

No offering which you shall bring to G-d shall be made with leaven... shall be offered up before G-d... (Vayikra 2:17).

Why is leaven so utterly rejected? Because it inflates itself..

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe

G-d says of the conceited one: "I and he cannot dwell in the same world."

Talmud, Erchin 15b

On Passover of 1865, Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch, then a child of four, was present at the seder of his grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel. An incident that occurred that night stuck in the child's mind.

At the beginning of the seder there is a procedure called yachatz ("divide") in which the middle of the three seder matzohs is broken in two. The greater half is set aside for the afikoman, and the smaller half remains on the seder plate and is eaten following the reciting of the haggadah.

One of the participants at Rabbi Menachem Mendel's seder was comparing his two matzoh-halves, trying to figure out which was the larger piece. Remarkably Rabbi Menachem Mendel: "A 'great one' who needs to be measured, is smaller than the 'small one' he is measuring himself against..."

"From that moment on," related Rabbi Sholom DovBer, "I developed a feeling of contempt toward this sort of 'greatness.'"

אור תורה
Ohr Torah

Translated by: **Yechiel Krisch**
Adapted from the teachings of the **Mezritcher Maggid**

The Power of Mincha

When the prophet Eliyahu beseeched G-d, the Talmud states that he was only answered at the time of the afternoon prayer. But this is puzzling, given that the afternoon is mystically associated with Divine stringency. Why wasn't he answered at a time of Divine mercy?

We can understand this by examining the pauper's voluntary offering, which consists of a pigeon or turtledove, burnt on the altar with its feathers (Vayikra 1:17). Even the superficial part of this sacrifice—the pungent burning feathers (see Rashi *ad loc.*)—are beloved by G-d. For it is the spiritually "poor" who sin and then elevate sin by transforming it into a Mitzvah through repentance.

Similarly, G-d cherishes any Mitzvah that transforms negativity (sin, stringency) into positivity, and, by extension, this means that G-d's love for us is at times derived from negativity that was transformed.

This is why Eliyahu's afternoon prayer, uttered during a time of divine stringency, was so effective. The prophet seized a moment of negativity to pray, transforming stringency into kindness and mercy—an act so cherished by G-d that it resulted in an answer from on high.

Prophecy Like Moshe

“And He called to Moshe, and G-d spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, to say (leimor)” (Vayikra 1:1).

The word *leimor*, “to say,” usually indicates that the message should be repeated to others, but in this case, the Torah continues, “*Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them*” (v. 2). So, what does *leimor* indicate?

Moshe was the greatest prophet that ever existed. The visions of all other prophets were murky in comparison to the bright clarity of Moshe’s vision. The word *Leimor* is informing us that G-d is destined to speak to all Jews just as He spoke to Moshe, as it is stated regarding the future era, “*And G-d’s glory will be revealed, and all flesh together will see that G-d’s mouth has spoken*” (Yeshayah 40:5).

Vayikra Rabbah with commentary of Yefei To’ar HaAruch

A Leader Who Prevents Sins

The Verse:

In a discussion about the circumstances when a sin-offering is brought, the Torah states:

“*If a leader [of Israel] sins and unintentionally commits one of all the commandments of G-d, which may not be committed, incurring guilt*” (Vayikra 4:22).

The Rashi:

Rashi notes the unusual opening of the verse, אֲשֶׁר נָשִׂיא יִקָּטֵא, instead of the more conventional “אם—if.”

If the leader [of Israel] sins: אֲשֶׁר (asher) is an expression reminiscent of the word אֲשֶׁרִי, “fortunate is...,” as if to say: “Fortunate is the generation whose leader ‘takes it to heart’ and gives attention to bringing an atonement offering for his unintentional sins—and how much more will he experience remorse for the sins he has committed willfully!”

The Questions:

- 1) Why does Rashi offer a Midrashic interpretation of the word “*asher*,” and not render the word in its literal sense as other commentators do, that the word means “when [a leader]...”?
- 2) Even if Rashi prefers to render the word in its

Midrashic sense as “fortunate,” why does he assume that it is the “generation” that is fortunate and not the leader himself?

The Explanation:

The word “*asher*” implies a continuation from a previous discussion. In the section prior, the Torah detailed a scenario where the Sanhedrin made a mistaken conclusion which led the community to commit an unwitting transgression. The congregation must bring a sacrifice, “it is a sin offering for the congregation” (Vayikra 4:13-21). But if the congregation is innocent, and the sin was committed only because of the court’s error, how does the congregation feel at fault? How do they develop the sensitivity to profess a sin that they were blameless in?

The Torah therefore begins our discussion by saying, “If a leader [of Israel] sins,” with the language of *asher* which alludes to the idea of “fortunate.” Because the leader admits to his unintentional sins, this heightens the nation’s sensitivity to their spiritual state and allows them to assume responsibility even for a sin committed at the advice of the courts.

Furthermore, the language of “fortunate is the generation” alludes to a state where a person or

community does not sin at all. When the leader, whose task is mainly to care for his people's material needs, displays spiritual sensitivity by "giving attention to bringing an atonement offering for his unintentional sins," this makes a lasting impression on his people, encouraging them to be scrupulous in their behavior so they avoid even unintentional sins.

This is in contrast to the scenario with which the chapter begins—the unintentional sins of the anointed Kohen: "If the anointed kohen sins, bringing guilt to the people, then he shall bring for his sin which he has committed" (*Ibid*, 4:3). Rashi commented on that verse that when "the kohen sins," it "brings guilt to the people," because the people are "dependent on the kohen to atone for them and pray for them." Thus, there is a deep connection between the kohen and the people as well—when the kohen seeks atonement, this also encourages the people to seek atonement. The difference, however, is that the kohen's entire task is to provide atonement for the people, so when they see him engaging in repentance, it arouses them to do the same. The

leader, however, as mentioned earlier, inspires the people to refrain from sin entirely.

The Deeper Dimension:

Kohanim are thematically related to kindness and love—they arouse the people to the love of G-d. The king and leader inspire fear of G-d in the people. Love is an emotion that is centered around the self, while fear is an emotion that vacates the self. Therefore, from "the kohen," from a Divine service based only on love, there can result "guilt of the people," inadvertent sins. But from "the leader," a divine service based on awe of G-d, there results a "fortunate generation" who are not susceptible to even inadvertent sins.

The Lesson:

The leader of the individual is his mind. The leader "taking it to heart" means that the mind is in control of the emotions. This is the foundation of avoiding even inadvertent sin, when the mind is always in control.

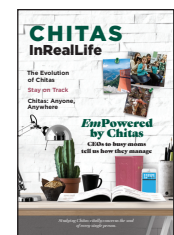
Likkutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 34ff.

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

Shabbos Chitas / Rambam Guide

Book	Section
Chumash – Rashi*	Vayikra, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapters 18 – 22
Tanya*	Likkutei Amarim Chapter 38. עמ' 98 - פרק לח. והנה... עד עמ' נ- כל חי.
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Positive Mitzvah #248
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer Shoftim – Hilchos Mamrim, Chapter 5
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer Mishpatim – Hilchos Nachalos Chapters 6 – 8

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