



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

The Aroma of Change

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

A vast portion of Sefer Vayikra discusses the laws pertaining to *korbanos* (offerings). Beginning in Chapter 1 Verse 9 and then many times thereafter, the Torah describes a *korban* as a "*reyach nichoach la'Hashem* – a pleasant aroma to G-d." This description is difficult to understand. Is G-d really interested in the pleasant smell emitted by the *korban*? What is it about the aroma that makes the *korban* desirable?

Rav Eliezer Ashkenazi (Ma'asei Hashem – Bereishis 27) explains that the *reyach nichoach* is not referring to the aroma of the *korban* itself, but rather, the *korban* is the *reyach nichoach* of the actions and thoughts of the one bringing the *korban*. The word "*reyach*" does not only refer to a scent but can refer to anything that one senses in advance of its arrival (see Iyov 39:25). One who brings an offering should not think that the offering alone can achieve atonement for a person without a change in attitude and action; rather the offering is a *reyach* – an indication or an aroma of what is to come. When the offering is accompanied by sincere intentions of *teshuvah* (repentance), then it is a "pleasant aroma to G-d" insofar as it signals the positive changes that are forthcoming.

Tefillah (prayer) is also connected to *reyach*. The Talmud (Megillah 12b) teaches that Mordechai is referred to as the son of Yair, the son of Shimei, and the son of Kish to allude to how he "enlightened [*heir*] the eyes of all of the Jewish people with his prayers, was the son whom G-d heard [*shama*] his prayers, and because he knocked [*hikish*] on the gates of mercy and they were opened to him." The Vilna Gaon wonders why the Sages focused all three interpretations of his name on the subject of *tefillah*. They surely could have found other areas where Mordechai excelled.

He explains that the Talmud elsewhere (Chullin 139b) connects the name Mordechai to one of the spices of the *ketores* (incense) which is called, in Aramaic, *Mara Dachya*. What is the connection between Mordechai and a pleasant-smelling spice? The answer is that a prayer is like an offering before G-d; it too is a "*reyach nichoach*." Mordechai is compared to an aromatic spice because of his excellence in the area of *tefillah*. It is for this reason that the Sages interpreted all the parts of his name in relation to his ability to pray.

Just as with animal offerings where the key factor for its acceptance and desirability before G-d is the anticipated change in the person themselves, the same is true with *tefillah*. *Tefillah* should not merely be exercise for our lips, but rather should serve as a catalyst for strengthening our connection to G-d and our faith in Him. In that way, our *tefillah* will be a *reyach nichoach* – a pleasant aroma signaling the spiritual growth we are about to achieve. With this in mind, we pray that just as Mordechai knocked on the gates of mercy and they were opened for him, so too, our prayers should be accepted as a *reyach nichoach* so G-d will open the gates of mercy for us.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

So it shall be that when he will sin and become guilty, he shall return the robbed item that he robbed... (5, 23)

One is not punished with lashing for stealing an item because the offense can be corrected with the positive command of "returning a stolen item." (Talmud Chullin 141a)

According to this, why is any negative prohibition punishable if the offense can be corrected with the positive command to do Teshuva?

Parsha Riddle

How many times a year do we read Parshas Zachor?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Where is the machatzis hashekel hinted to in Sefer Bereishis?

Answer: Chayei Sarah 24:22, where Eliezer gave Rivka jewelry weighing a beka, the same weight as a half-shekel.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayikra*, the Torah sets forth the rules of the sin-offerings brought by four categories of sinners: "the anointed Kohen" (the High Priest – 4:3), "the entire assembly of Israel" (v. 13), "a ruler" (the king – v. 22), and "an individual person from among the people of the land" (v. 27). In the first, second, and fourth case, the Torah uses the word "*im*" – "if," but in the third, the Torah states "**When** a ruler sins." The Sforno and the Netziv explain it is common for a ruler to sin – i.e., prosperity and power corrupt.

The provocative implication of this exegesis is that the wealthy are more likely to be sinful than those of more modest means. Other sources in our tradition, however, suggest the opposite, that the rich are more likely to be virtuous. The Talmud states:

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi would honor the wealthy, and Rabbi Akiva would likewise honor the wealthy, in accordance with Rava bar Mari's interpretation of the verse: "May he be enthroned before G-d forever; appoint mercy and truth, that they may preserve him" (Psalms 61:8). When may he be enthroned before G-d forever? When he appoints [*man*] mercy and truth that they may preserve him. Rava bar Mari explains the word *man* as referring to portions of food and interprets the verse as follows: If one provides food to others, he deserves to be enthroned before G-d, to be shown honor and respect. Consequently, it is proper to honor the wealthy who bestow such kindnesses. (*Eruvin* 86a)

This passage seems to be asserting that the rich are presumptively virtuous, since they have the means to help others (and are apparently presumed to actually do so). Elsewhere, the Talmud asserts that the popular attitude (which it may not necessarily be endorsing) is that prosperity is an indicator of righteousness, and indigence an indicator of sinfulness:

The **debtor sees in the creditor fulfillment** of the verse: "**The integrity of the upright shall guide them**" (Proverbs 11:3). He believes that G-d blesses the creditor with wealth to lend because he is an upright person. The **creditor sees in the debtor fulfillment** of the end of that verse: "**But the perverseness of the faithless shall destroy them**" (Proverbs 11:3). The creditor believes that G-d made the debtor poor because he is a deceitful person. (*Bava Metzia* 35a)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am for thirteen.
2. But this year, I'm for eleven.
3. I am a queenly day.
4. I make people hungry

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am not eaten.
2. I am consumed.
3. No action causes me.
4. I am the first.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Pomegranates (I am a 613 reminder, I am a bell alternate, I was worn, I am eaten.)

#2 Arba Turim (I am for the Choshen, I am the model for the Shulchan Aruch, I am for Rabbeinu Yaakov Ben Asher, I am four.)

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Purim morning following the 8:15am Shacharis (approx. 10:00am) at SEHC, 10900 Lockwood Dr.

For men and boys

Men: Learn on your own or attend a shiur by Rabbi Bulman
Boys: Learn with your father or a Kollel Rabbi

Separate raffles for kids and adults! Refreshments!