



# The Path To Follow

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## GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

### The Reward for Controlling One's Words

It is written, "If you seek her like silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the L-RD" (Proverbs 2:4-5). We know that everyone would rather have a steady income, even if he earns little, than random gains, even if they are large. How much more does this apply here, for it constitutes both a steady income and a large gain! In fact we can receive a reward for this mitzvah by not joining people who are engaged in an improper conversation, whether this occurs while we are sitting at home, in synagogue, in the Beit Midrash, or outside. As the Sages say, "When a person avoids a sin, he is rewarded as if he had fulfilled a mitzvah." Generally speaking, we can receive a reward for this mitzvah from the time we get up until the time we go to sleep. We don't have to exhaust ourselves for this mitzvah, the reward of which is great, because for each instant that we remain silent, we merit a tremendous hidden light, as the Sages have said.

- Shmirat HaLashon

## THE DILIGENT STUDY OF TORAH PROCURES ATONEMENT (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

It is written, "When a man offers among you an offering to the L-RD, you shall bring your offering of the cattle, of the herd, and of the flock" (Leviticus 1:2). We need to understand why the verse states, "When a man offers among you." It would seem that the reverse should have been written, namely: "When a man among you offers." We can refer to what Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra says on this issue.

We also need to explain a statement that appears in the Midrash: "Why do young children begin studying with the book of Leviticus? It is because all the sacrifices appear in it, and because up to that point they are pure and do not know the taste of sin. Therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, said that they begin with the study of the sacrifices: Let those who are pure come and study the sacrifices that are pure. I will account it to them as if they had offered sacrifices before Me. Although the Temple was destroyed and there are no longer sacrifices, without young children to read the order of the sacrifices, the world could not endure" (Tanhuma 96:14).

This is very surprising! It follows that it is precisely when young children study the order of the sacrifices that Scripture considers them to have actually brought a sacrifice. This is difficult to reconcile with the following Gemara: "Abraham said to the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Master of the universe...this is very well for the time when the Temple will be standing, but in the time when there will be no Temple, what will befall them?' He replied to him, 'I have already fixed for them the order of the sacrifices. Whenever they will read the section dealing with them, I will reckon it as if they were bringing Me an offering, and I will forgive all their iniquities'" (Megillah 31b). Another Gemara follows along the same line: "Whoever studies Torah is as if he were offering a burnt-offering, a meal-offering, a sin-offering, and a guilt-offering. ... Whoever studies the laws of the sin-offering is as if he were offering a sin-offering, and whoever studies the laws of the guilt-offering is as if he were offering a guilt-offering" (Menachot 110a). It follows that it is not only the Torah study of young children that is so important as to be regarded as offering sacrifices. Even the Torah study of adults, when they study the order of the sacrifices, is regarded as if they had offered sacrifices. We may explain this according to a statement of our Sages: "One should never abstain from the Beth Midrash and from Torah, even in the hour of death, for it is said, 'This is the Torah, when a man dies in a tent' [Numbers 19:14]: Even at the hour of death, one should be engaged in Torah. Resh Lakish said: The words of the Torah can endure only with one who kills himself for it" (Shabbat 83b). The Maharal in his Chiddushei Aggadot asks how the Torah, being spiritual, can sustain man, who is material. These two things are opposites! Hence it is not fitting for a person's Torah understanding to endure unless he kills himself for the Torah and annuls his own body and physicality for it. As such his body will no longer be considered as an obstacle to Torah, and in such a person the Torah – which is spiritual – can endure. This is not the case for someone who attributes intrinsic importance to the body.

It seems difficult to understand how a person can annul his own body and physicality while studying Torah. After all,

he is a physical being. How can matter ignore matter? The answer is that when a person devotes himself to the diligent study of Torah, he annuls his body and leaves room for the words of the Torah to enter his heart. What kind of devotion are we speaking of? As our Sages have said, "With all your soul [Deuteronomy 6:5] – even if He takes your soul" (Berachot 54a). This means that when a person is studying Torah, he must have the impression that all his work is finished. Even if he is busy all day long with his affairs and his work, he must set aside some time to study Torah, a time during which he will pay attention to nothing else. He must especially not bring his mundane concerns with him into the Beit Midrash.

We can now understand the words of the Midrash that we started with. Let us first cite a statement made by the Ramban: "Since man's deeds are accomplished through thought, speech, and deed, G-d therefore commanded that when man sins and brings an offering, he should lay his hands upon it in contrast to the deed. He should confess his sin verbally in contrast to his speech, and he should burn the innards and kidneys in fire because they are the instruments of thought and desire in a human being. He should burn the legs, since they correspond to the hands and feet of a person, which do all his work. He should sprinkle the blood upon the altar, which is analogous to the blood of his body. ... A person must realize that he has sinned against his G-d with his body and his soul, and that his blood should really be spilled and his body burned, were it not for the lovingkindness of the Creator, Who took from him a substitute and a ransom, namely this offering, so that its blood should be in place of his blood, its life in place of his life" (Ramban on Leviticus 1:9).

The comparison of Torah study to a sacrifice resides in the fact that sacrifices only procure atonement when accompanied by devotion. The same applies for the study of Torah, which replaces sacrifices: It can only procure atonement when accompanied by devotion. Hence the Sages said that the world cannot endure if young children do not study the laws of sacrifices, thereby teaching us that a person cannot procure atonement through the study of Torah unless he studies it like a child, who has no business worries on his mind. When a child is engaged in something, he is not distracted for even an instant. The Sages did not mean that only the Torah study of young children atones for sin, since the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the order of the sacrifices from the time of Abraham for each Jew. The Sages mention young children only to teach us that a person must resemble a child when learning Torah. Hence it is written, "When a man offers among you" (Leviticus 1:2), thereby teaching us that even when there is no Temple, a person has the ability to be forgiven. How? By devoting himself to Hashem, by giving his soul to what Hashem desires when he studies Torah, just as he devotes himself to what he desires and to earning a living. In that case, it is as if he has offered himself as a sacrifice to Hashem for his entire life. Concerning such a person, the Sages have said: "Even in the hour of death, one should be engaged in Torah," for by studying the Torah with devotion, it is as if he has died for the Torah during his entire life. As our Sages have said, "With all your soul [Deuteronomy 6:5] – even if He takes your soul," and we also read: "Because for Your sake we are killed all

# MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

## This is the Law of the Guilt-offering

**Regarding the verse, “This is the law of the guilt-offering” (Leviticus 7:1), Rabbi Yitzchak said: “Whoever studies the laws of the guilt-offering is as if he were offering a guilt-offering” (Menachot 110a).**

Rabbeinu Bechaye wrote (Leviticus 7:33), “We cannot say that this means he can content himself on just listening attentively to the parsha, without reflecting upon the meaning of its difficult verses.” Rashi also wrote (tractate Menachot), “Whoever studies the laws of the guilt-offering, such as tractate Kodashim, which deals with the Halachot of the sacrifices.”

The Rambam has already made this criticism: “It is fitting to occupy oneself with the sacrifices and to study its laws, without saying: ‘We no longer need these things in our time,’ as most people say” (Rambam, Commentary on the Mishnah, end of tractate Menachot). He was followed by the Smag, Rabbi Moshe of Coucy, who said: “There are people who say, ‘What do we have to do with the mitzvot of Seder Kodashim, which are no longer relevant?’ We must not say this, for the mitzvot were commanded by the Master of the universe, and we must know their principles, even if they do not apply now. In fact it is with regards to all the mitzvot that we received the commandment, ‘You shall teach them’” (Introduction to the Smag, Part II). Before the Rambam began commenting on the Mishnah in Seder Kodashim, he wanted to speak of the different sacrifices in a general way. He apologized by saying, “What led me to do this is that, even if we can clearly see the different parts from the verses of the Torah, it is impossible to give new explanations or clarifications, since our many sins have caused the sacrifices to cease, and people no longer pay much attention to them. Nobody has a clear grasp of them, even people who study them, because there are no actions on which to establish a set pattern. Nobody asks questions, explains, or does research in this area, the result being that a great scholar is equal to the most ordinary person in this regard. Most students know nothing about the sacrifices, or even what numerous verses say about them.”

– Chukei HaKorbanot

## A Pearl From the Rav: Taste and See

This week’s parsha begins with the term vayikra (“and he called”). We may break this term into vai and kra, vai having the same numerical value as tov (counting the word itself). Now the word tov (“good”) refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written: “Taste and see that the L-RD is tov [good]” (Psalms 34:9). The word kra has the same numerical value (counting the word itself) as krav (drawing closer), teaching us that a person draws closer to his Creator through the study of Torah. Similarly, the word tov designates the Torah (Berachot 5a). The study of Torah is alluded to in the word vai, telling us that even if studying the Torah is difficult for a person (vai means “woe”), he must still study it, even if he experiences poverty or hardship, and even if he is old or sick. As the Rambam wrote, “Every Jew has the duty to study Torah, be he rich or poor, in good health or sick, young or so old that he no longer has any strength, and even if he is so poor that he is forced to beg. Even if he has a wife and children, he must set aside time to study Torah day and night, as it is written: ‘You shall meditate on it day and night’ [Joshua 1:8]” (Hilchot Talmud Torah 1:8).

## Who Has a Prior Claim on Me?

**It is written, “Of the herd and of the flock” (Leviticus 1:2).**

Why are these animals chosen for making sacrifices? It is in order not to burden the Children of Israel. The prophet said, “My people, what have I

done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me!” (Micah 6:3). Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Rabbi Shimon, “The Holy One, blessed be He, said: ‘I have put at your disposal ten clean animals. Three are in your domain and seven are not in your domain. I did not trouble you to run among the mountains to fetch a sacrifice from those that are not in your domain. I only ordered you to bring from those that are reared in your own manger’” (Bamidbar Rabba 21:16).

On the verse, “Who has a prior claim on Me, that I should repay him?” (Job 41:3), the Sages have said something similar: “Rabbi Jeremiah the son of Rabbi Eleazar observed: In the future a Heavenly voice will shout from the top of the mountains and say, ‘Whoever has made something with G-d, let him come and receive his reward.’ ... The Holy Spirit says, ‘Who has a prior claim on Me, that I should repay him?’ This means: Who offered Me praise before I gave him breath? Who performed circumcision in My Name before I gave him a male child? ... Who made tzitzit for My sake before I gave him a tallit? Who set apart pe’ah for My sake before I gave him a field?” (Vayikra Rabba 27:2).

The lesson that emerges from these two teachings is that one who offers something should not boast of it, for he is offering what was given to him and thereby saves his own soul. The Holy One, blessed be He, does not burden a person by asking him to offer something that is not at his disposition, nor is a person required to offer something that Hashem has not given him.

– The Chafetz Chaim

## According to a One’s Means

**It is written, “If his means are insufficient for two turtledoves” (Leviticus 5:11).**

The Torah shows compassion for a poor person and ensures that he can also obtain atonement for his sins. Even if he does not have the means to bring a lamb or two turtledoves, he can bring the sacrifice of the poor with the strict minimum. The Sages have explicitly said that if a rich person brings the sacrifice of a poor person, he has not fulfilled his duty. Now the tzeddakah that we are responsible for giving in our time, when the Temple no longer stands, replaces the sacrifices of former times. That being the case, the rich cannot fulfill their obligation by giving a donation that the poor must make. Instead, the rich must give according to their means. There are poor people who give a small amount and thereby fulfill their obligation to give, and there are rich people who give thousands of times more, but have still not fulfilled their obligation, for we must give to Hashem in proportion to the blessing that He has given to us. Thus if the poor must give a tenth of what they have, the rich must do the same.

– The Chafetz Chaim

## By What Merit?

**It is written, “He called to Moses, and the L-RD spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying...” (Leviticus 1:1).**

Moses merited this call and the word of Hashem for three reasons. The first was on account of his character, which was not influenced by the time or place in which he lived. The second was due to the great sanctity of the place, which spread its influence upon him. The third was the Children of Israel, to whom he had been sent as a prophet, as the Sages have said: “It is because of you that He spoke with me.” Thus it is written: (1) “He called to Moses, and the L-RD spoke to him” – he merited it on account of himself; (2) “from the Tent of Meeting” – he merited it due to the sanctity of the place; and (3) “saying” – he merited it on account of the Children of Israel, to whom these words were addressed.

– Divrei Torah

## The Small Aleph

The small aleph used in the term vayikra (Leviticus 1:1) tells us by allusion that the study of Torah can only endure with a person who makes himself small and acts with humility. The aleph points to the study of Torah, which only endures with one who is “small,” meaning small in his own eyes. As mentioned in Yalkut Shimoni, this is why Moses merited his call (“He called to Moses”), for he was humble and fled from honor, saying: “I am not a man of words” (Exodus 4:10).

## True Humility

Commenting on the small aleph in the term vayikra, Rabbi Bunim of Peshischa said that Moses was not impressed in any way by the great things he had acquired and learned. Instead he remained small in his own eyes, like a simple man who stands on a high roof. It never occurred to him that he should boast about being at a high level, for he knew perfectly well that he was not standing tall, but instead was standing on a roof. Likewise Moses fully understood his own elevated level, but he always believed that these qualities did not belong to him in any way, and that it was the Holy One, blessed be He, Who gave them to him. Hence he did not enter the Tent of Meeting until he was called.

## The Word Came to Him

Our Sages have said, “One who pursues honor, honor flees from him. One who flees from honor, honor pursues him” (Midrash Tanhuma). Since Moses was humble and fled from honor, honor pursued him and Hashem summoned him into the Tent of Meeting.

We may be justified in asking why a person who flees from honor ends up having honor pursue him. If he does not want it, then why should he be burdened with it?

The Sefat Emet Zatzal explains that “one who flees from honor” is truly a person who takes the honor given to him and directs it to Hashem, who is the only true King of glory. Such a person reflects upon and realizes the fact that this honor is not really addressed to him, but to the qualities that Hashem gave him. Therefore it is not to him that such honor belongs, but to Hashem.

This is why “one who flees from honor, honor pursues him.” Since he has the power to elevate honor and restore it to its source, this honor wants him to continue perfecting it.

## Overview of the Parsha

The book of Genesis describes events from Creation until the appearance of the Patriarchs, from whom the Jewish people would emerge. The book of Exodus describes the formation of Hashem’s people as they leave Egypt, the giving of the Torah, and the construction of the Sanctuary. The book of Leviticus begins with Israel drawing closer to the sanctity of Hashem by means of the offerings, followed by warnings against impurity and how all life belongs to Hashem.

Parsha Vayikra begins with a description of the offerings made in the Sanctuary, which connect life to Hashem by means of burnt-offerings (which are entirely dedicated to Hashem), meal-offerings (which come from the food of the giver), and peace-offerings (which enables a person to participate, as it were, with Hashem). There are also offerings that rectify a lack of closeness to Hashem, as well as sin-offerings to atone for sin and offerings of a higher or lower value to atone for lighter sins, in function to the giver’s financial means. Guilt-offerings atone for acts that simply result in sin.

# REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

## Wiping Out the Memory of Amalek

Before Abraham arose, the world was a wasteland. It was as if the light of the world had been extinguished, as if it had been immersed in the depths of the abyss and evil. Abraham came and rekindled the spark. After him, his descendants blew upon the glowing embers and a fire ignited that provided light and heat. The Children of Israel emerged from Egypt to the accompaniment of great miracles and the revelation of the Shechinah. All the Children of Israel knew, the Egyptians knew, all the peoples of the earth knew that Hashem is unique, that there is none besides Him. The entire universe awaited the great revelation, when Hashem would descend upon Mount Sinai and speak with man face to face. Human pride would disappear, and in that day Hashem alone would be elevated and all idols would completely disappear. The Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to His people by choosing them as His emissaries to all the other peoples, in order to elevate the nations and light the way for them. All the Children of Israel were ready to make the nations yield to the Creator, as would be the case at the end of days. Yet here came an evildoer who jumped into the boiling water that everyone was afraid of. Although he burned himself, he also cooled the water a little. What did the whole world say at that point? War continued, and they only yielded for a time. The rectification of the whole world was once again postponed to the distant future, to the time of the end. As for the Children of Israel, who would have imagined that any nation would still raise the sword against them after all they had seen? Yet here was Amalek! He attacked the weakest among them, filling them with fear and sowing doubts into the hearts of the strong. Earlier, as the Children of Israel had been standing before Mount Sinai, something was already missing in the perfection of their hearts, and this minor flaw now developed into a grave incident. The tikkun of Israel and the return of the nations to their initial state was therefore postponed to a later time. And now, more than three thousand years later, Mashiach has still not arrived and the world is on the verge of the abyss, all due to the bite of that serpent, the wicked Amalek, may his memory be wiped out!

– Sefer HaToda’ah

# ESHET HAYIL

## The Daughter of the King

Daughters of Israel, hear my voice. It is specifically to you that the verse, “The daughter of the king is all glorious within” (Psalms 45:14) is addressed. You are the daughters of the King, and your glory is to remain within the home. The King of the universe desires your closeness, and you will receive greatness above that of the world if you yearn to follow the ways of Hashem. In fact where modesty reigns, a spirit of holiness will also reign, as was the case in the Sanctuary. Hence the Sages have said that it is forbidden to pray in a valley, and Rashi explains that since it is a place that is open to all, sanctity cannot be found there. It only reigns in a concealed place, and the more discreet a person is, the more that G-d’s spirit will rest upon him. Therefore seven days before Yom Kippur, the High Priest lived alone, and when the priests were inaugurated, they were told not to go out for seven days, so that G-d’s spirit could rest upon them. This is because impurity cannot attach itself to a concealed place, which is not the case for a public place.

– Ya’arot Devash



## YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

### Rabbi Chaim Kapusi

Rabbi Chaim Kapusi lived during the time of Rabbi Betzalel Ashkenazi, the author of Shita Me-kubetzet, and he served as a dayan. He was called “Ba’al HaNess” because of a miracle that he experienced. Rabbi Chaim once rendered a verdict in favor of one party, a decision that aroused tremendous opposition. He lost his eyesight shortly afterwards, and his opponents accused him of taking a bribe, as the verse states: “A bribe blinds the eyes of the wise” (Deuteronomy 16:19).

Upon hearing these accusations, he arose in the synagogue and proclaimed before the entire congregation that if the words of his opponents were true, he would remain blind for the rest of his life. However if these allegations were false, then his eyesight would be immediately restored. A miracle then occurred, for he regained his sight! Thus all his opponents were silenced.

The Chida describes this amazing story, adding that he saw Rabbi Chaim Kapusi’s signature when he was blind, and it was difficult to make out the letters. However after his eyesight was restored, his writing was clear and legible. In memory of this miracle, he signed his name as “Hashem Nissi Chaim Kapusi.” The residents of Cairo greatly respected him, and his synagogue in Cairo remained standing for a long time, being called “Beit Knesset Rabbi Chaim Ba’al HaNess.” His grave also served as a place where oaths were taken, and everyone knew that a person who made a false oath by his grave would be punished, as the Chida states.

After this miracle, Rabbi Chaim Kapusi wrote a commentary on the Torah entitled Beor Chaim. It is mentioned in the responsa of the Maharit Tzahalon (par. 129), which begins by citing Rabbi Chaim Kapusi’s response to a dayan who erred in a ruling. He said, “Heaven is my witness that I made a great effort to escape this doubt.... But what could I do, for we must fear no man.... I fear the awesome and almighty G-d, and I quickly present my opinion.... The words of one who is small in Torah, Chaim Kapusi.”

Rabbeinu Yom Tov Tashalon wrote about him with reverential fear: “The truth is that I possess four measures of love for the complete scholar, our teacher Chaim...but I possess ten measures of love that bind me to the King of the universe, Who sanctified us by His mitzvot and commanded us to exercise justice and truth.... I therefore believe that the complete scholar Rabbi Chaim Kapusi has erred here.”

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

### Do Not be Overly Righteous

*It is written, “Samuel said to Saul: ‘The L-RD sent me to anoint you’ ” (I Samuel 15:1).*

Concerning the verse, “He strove in the valley” (v.5), the Sages said that Saul made a logical inference from the heifer whose neck is broken in the valley. He reasoned, “If the Torah decreed that a heifer should have its neck broken in the valley on account of a single life, then how much more for many lives!” In fact the reason why the neck of a heifer is broken in a valley that is not sown is because that which does not bear fruit should atone for the murder of a man who bore fruit. From Haman as well, fruits emerged that taught Torah in Bnei Brak. Hence Saul believed that it was forbidden to kill them, which is why “he strove in the valley,” not in a chariot. He was alluding to the fact that this is how the heifer is killed, in a valley, meaning that just as the valley does not bear fruit, one who has killed a man is the reason why he will no longer bear fruit, which may have been good fruit. Hence a Heavenly voice said to him, “Do not be overly righteous.”

Saul also said, “If people have sinned, what have the cattle done, and if the adults have sinned, what have the little ones done?” A Heavenly voice came forth and said: “Do not be overly righteous.” When Saul said to Doeg, “Slay the priests” (I Samuel 22:18), a Heavenly voice went out and said: “Do not be overly wicked.” Doeg said to him, “If for a bull and a lamb the Torah said, ‘Do not kill it and her young in one day’ [Leviticus 22:28], should a young man, an old man, and a child be killed on the same day?”

– Me’am Loez

## A TRUE STORY

### Receiving What is Destined for You

Two people were having a discussion, one saying that success depends on a person’s diligence and the effort that he puts into his work. The other believed that success depends solely on Heaven, for if the Holy One, blessed be He, wants to give something good to a person, this good will pursue him and say, “Take me.” However if it is G-d’s will to not give a person something good, he can exert all the effort in the world and be as enthusiastic as possible about getting it, but he will only be able to take what G-d has destined for him.

One fine day, these two people were sitting under a massive apple tree in the middle of an orchard. The tree had many branches that were tangled together, and at its top they could see a large apple that looked juicy and delicious, for the sun was shining on it. The person who believed that success depends on a person’s efforts rushed to climb to the top of the tree and bring back this exceptional fruit to eat it. However the climb was very difficult, for the tree was large and its branches were twisted and tangled together. Nevertheless, he exerted a great effort to reach the top. He then plucked the apple and began to descend with it in his hand. When he arrived near the middle of the tree, he stopped and called out to the one seated below: “You can clearly see with you own eyes that I was right when I said that success depends on a person’s efforts! Look how I quickly climbed to the top of the tree. And yes, I succeeded in getting the apple, and I’ll enjoy eating it too! Since you were too lazy to even move, you won’t even get to taste it!”

As soon as he had finished speaking, the apple fell from his hands and landed in the lap of his friend below. His friend grabbed it, recited the blessing borei pri ha-etz, and gladly ate it. As for the one who had plucked it, he remained motionless and mute with shock in the middle of the tree. After eating the apple, the one below exclaimed, “You now see that I was right when I said that success is in G-d’s hands, for what good were your efforts? On the contrary, you tired yourself out for me – you plucked the apple for me – and it was from your own hand that I received it.” We must conclude from this story that before the will of the Holy One, blessed be He, neither wisdom, nor intelligence, nor trickery will work, for a person can in no way touch what is destined for his fellowman. When a person reflects upon cases such as this, he will have complete faith in G-d regarding everything he does. He will experience good in this world and in the World to Come, for he will never be tempted to steal, flatter, or commit other sins, since almost the entire Torah depends on this principle. Open your eyes and see if you are listening to your soul. Check to see that it is pure!