



Ways to become sanctified in the service of Hashem

"This is the law for the elevation-offering, for the meal-offering, and for the sin-offering, and for the guilt-offering" (Vayikra 7:37)

The Ben Ish Chai writes that this pasuk alludes to the general service of Hashem. The numerical value of the first word "Zot – This" (408) is equal to the sum of "Tzom – fast" (which has the numerical value of 136), "Kol – voice of Torah" (136), and "Mamon – money for charity" (136 – total of 408), and all three can substitute for korbanot. This is because when one fasts, he sacrifices of his fat and blood. When he raises his voice in the study of Torah, it is considered as if he sacrificed an Olah – elevation-offering, as Rava explains (Menachot 110a). Likewise, it is stated "Let our lips substitute for bulls," and also, "You shall forgive all iniquity and teach us [the] good [way]," and there is no other meaning for "good" other than the Torah. Likewise, charity substitutes for korbanot, as our Sages said: Performing charity is more exalted than bringing all the korbanot, as it is stated, "Performing charity and justice is preferred by G-d to a sacrifice."

Similarly, Daniel told Nevuchadnezar, "With charity you will remove your sin" (Daniel 4:24). Thus it is stated "zot HaTorah – This is the law," signifying "tzom – fast," "kol – voice," and "mammon – money," whose numerical value equals that of "zot – this" (which equals the sum total of 408), since through these the Torah is upheld, and they are considered as a korban "for the elevation-offering, for the meal-offering, and for the sin-offering," etc. They atone for our sins during the time when our Beit Hamikdash is destroyed in place of korbanot. All this is a manifestation of Hashem's great mercy upon His people.

One can also see further in that source that in the merit of these three things both Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David will come, as they also equal the numerical value of the word "Mashichim," and through this we will merit the Redemption, and in their merit the sin of Adam will be corrected, and also through them the letters "hey, vav, aleph" (which spell "hu – he"), which are currently missing from the Name and His Throne, as it is stated "Ki yad al kes Ka – For there is a hand on the throne of the Eternal" (Shemot 17:16) will be completed. These are the words of the Ben Ish Chai.

I would like to add to the words of the Ben Ish Chai, zya"ta, that it is stated regarding the korbanot of Yom Kippur (Vayikra 16:3), "B'zot yavo Aharon el hakodesh befar ben bakar k'chatat – With this shall Aaron enter the Holy: with a young bull for a sin offering." "B'zot – with this" has the same numerical value as "kadosh – holy" (the sum total of 410). We may assume that if "zot – this" has the same numerical value as "kol – voice, tzom – fast, mammon – money" and "b'zot – with this" has the same numerical value as "kadosh – holy," it implies that it is proper to sanctify oneself with these things, and since the generation is so distorted, it is imperative to become more and more elevated to be "kadosh – sanctified."

Certainly, Am Yisrael are sanctified and pure, and there is no one who does not want to be holy, but they simply do not know how to achieve sanctity. This is as we state each day "And the holy ones praise You every day"; the siddur "Eitz Yosef" explains that this refers to Am Yisrael. Thus, this pasuk suggests that we become sanctified through these three things; we will explain the three things as follows.

"B'tzom – by fasting" means that while eating, a person can abstain from his favorite portion and leave over a bit. This abstention is discussed in the sefer "Iggeret Hate-shuvah" of Rabbeinu Yonah in the name of the Rava"l, that one who wishes to become sanctified and practice abstention without harming their bodies, should abstain from finishing his meal entirely and should leave over a bit. One can read this in detail in the sefer. In this way a person can sanctify himself through food at all times.

"B'mammon – with money" a person can sanctify himself in a practical way, such as a Gabbai, who deals with the needs of the people and raises money for Torah institutions. According to the Maran, the "Chazon Ish" it is permissible to take a percentage for himself of what he collects. Even if he tells the donors that the entire sum is allocated for the institution, it is not considered dishonest, but nevertheless, one who wants to behave in a more exalted manner should only take what he absolutely needs for his livelihood and the rest he should give for the institutions. This is an example of "Sanctify yourself with that which is permitted to you" through money.

"B'kol – through voice" signifies the study of Torah. One should sanctify himself by learning during his free time so that he should not waste a single moment of studying Torah, chalila, and he should utilize every minute, as is told about the Admor of Gur, zya"ta, that he finished the entire Shas during the minutes while waiting for his meals to be served.

Thus we see the importance of utilizing every moment to study Torah, as Chazal state (Eiruvin 44a): "Hurry on and eat, hurry on and drink, since the world from which we must depart is like a wedding feast." There is a parable given to this of one who bought a lottery ticket and chose all the numbers which he thought stood a good chance, but he forgot to write the number six, which he felt would be the winning number. Only after the booth closed, he suddenly remembered and ran to tell the attendant that he should add the number six on his ticket, but he was told that it was too late to add a number since the booth was closed and it was already time to draw the winning number. They drew the lot and it turned out to be exactly the number which he had forgotten to complete. He turned to the lottery management and argued and screamed and shouted that he wanted to write the number, but because of circumstances beyond his control, he did not write it, since he had forgotten. He argued more, but was told that it was too late and there was nothing to be done about it.

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14 – Rabbi Avraham Yaffin Rosh Yeshiva
of Novardok

15 – Yitzchak Avinu, a"h

16 – Levi ben Yaakov Avinu



Walking in their Ways

*Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
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Being Awarded Heavenly Assistance

We should be aware that if we try to observe the mitzvot and go in Hashem's ways and listen to Him, we are assured to gain Heavenly assistance in all our ways and success in all in our endeavors, and we will never stumble in error.

Once when I was in Mexico, a very well-to-do man approached me. He wanted to consult with me about a complicated business deal because he had a dilemma about where to invest his money and when the best time was to do so. Since I did not have time, and I had to fly back to France, I asked him to leave his statements with me, and when I would get to France, I would study them and then I would be able to advise him.

I placed these important documents, which showed records of huge sums, in my personal bag, although I knew that there was a danger if the custom officials at the airport would discover them in my bag, since then I would probably be arrested and would be interrogated about the nature of the business.

When I arrived at the airport in France, the custom official asked me if I had on me anything that had to be declared in customs. When I said no, the custom official asked what the purpose of my trip was to Mexico. I explained to him that I traveled for the purpose of strengthening religion in the Jewish community of Mexico. "I am a Rabbi, not a businessman, and I have nothing to do with business"... is what I declared. But, for some reason, the official did not leave me alone

and asked me to open my personal bag to see what was in it. Thus, the documents that the wealthy businessman had given me were discovered, and they contained records of huge sums of money!

I was filled with anxiety, because I knew that they would open a case against me to investigate the meaning of these documents found in my bag. Seeing this, I raised my eyes to Heaven in a silent prayer to Hashem to save me from the trouble that I got into.

A few minutes later, which seemed to me like eternity, suddenly the officer informed me that I was free to continue on my way, and he returned to me the documents in his hand...

This is a story of Divine Providence. It is one of many examples of Divine Providence that accompany me at all times, through which I see clearly and tangibly how Hashem assists me. A great *siyata diShemaya* accompanies me at every turn in my life, because of the merit that I bring to the public. Hashem sees how much I try to draw His children closer to Torah and mitzvot, which requires much self-sacrifice. This is my entire goal in life – to sanctify Heaven in this world and spread the light of Torah to the people. Therefore, Hashem assists me in supernatural ways, as Chazal state (Makkot 10b) "One is allowed to follow the road he wishes to pursue." Furthermore, they state (Shabbat 104a), "If one comes to cleanse himself, he is helped."

May it be Hashem's will that we succeed to study Torah and teach it and observe it and perform all its laws, Amen!

The Haftarah

"And then the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasant to the Lord" (Malachi 3)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah tells how Hashem will send us Eliyahu Hanavi to herald the Redemption, and this is similar to the topic of "Shabbat Hagadol" in which Hashem sent Moshe to herald the Redemption from Egypt.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

One may be Cautious

Although to accept lashon hara (which is to believe that the slander is true) is forbidden from the Torah, nevertheless, Chazal say that one may be cautious. This implies that one may only accept what he heard as a suspicion alone, in order to protect himself that he should not be harmed. (Chafetz Chaim)



Words of Our Sages

Thanking Hashem for My Health

"If he is bringing it as a thanksgiving offering"
(Vayikra 7:12)

The perek of Tehillim that is recited today as a substitute for the Korban Todah (offering of thanksgiving) is the perek "A song for a thanksgiving offering. Praise to the L-rd, all the earth."

A Jew once turned to the Maran, the gaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, shlita, and asked him about the words "Praise to the L-rd, all the earth," why do all the people of the world have to thank and praise Hashem, since only four categories of people bring a korban Todah (the four categories are alluded to in the word "Chaim"). The four categories are those that crossed the ocean, those that crossed a desert, those that were sick and got cured and those who were released from prison. These four categories of people thank Hashem for the tremendous miracle done for them.

If so, the man asked, why do all the other people on earth have to give thanksgiving if they did not experience a special miracle of salvation?

The answer is simple, replied Rabbi Chaim, shlita – and will be better understood by the following story:

Following the morning services in one of the synagogues in Bnei Brak, a congregant spread a tablecloth on a table and distributed wine and cakes to all the people there. When he was asked what the occasion was, he answered that yesterday he crossed the street and was hit by a car but came away unscathed. For this miracle, he wanted to give thanks and praise Hashem and he wanted to share his joy with his fellow congregants.

The next day another man came to the Beit Hakeneset and also like his predecessor, spread a tablecloth and offered refreshments to the congregants.

What happened to you? They asked him. Did a car hit you too?

No! The man replied. I am grateful and would like to thank Hashem that it is already twenty years that I am crossing the same street, yet I was never hit by a car...

This also explains our question, concluded Rabbi Chaim. A person who got cured from his illness or was released from jail and recites "A song for a thanksgiving offering," is perfectly normal. However "all the earth" – all other people of the earth – also have to praise Hashem and thank Him that they did not get sick, nor were they put in prison.



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

Chazal promised us (Tanchuma 96:7), that one who answers Amen in this world, merits answering Amen in the World to Come. This signifies that by saying Amen and subjugating oneself to seek the truth, even though he does not understand it fully, he merits in the Future to be drawn to places that are above his level.

This is the faith about which it is stated (Makkot 24a) "But it is Habakuk who came and based them all on one [principle], as it is said, But the righteous shall live by his faith." This means: Even if he is already a tzaddik, through his faith; that he constantly strives to subordinate himself more and more to his Creator, this gives lasting existence to his service of Hashem that he achieved up till now. For what gives lasting existence to all good deeds is submission and self-effacement and thus his service of Hashem will be lasting. (Sefat Emet Ki Tavo 5638)

Rectifying in Lofty Spheres

Rabbeinu, Rabbi Yaakov Abuchatzera, zy"l, explained in his sefer "Aleph Binah" the verse in Tehillim, "B'Hashem tithallal nafshi yishme'u anavim v'yismachu – My soul boasts of the Lord; may the humble hear and rejoice" (Tehillim 34:3) in the following way: "B'Hashem tithallal nafshi" – when one praises Hashem by saying Kaddish, "yishme'u anavim v'yismachu" – the ones who answer, hear ["anavim" can be read as "onim" which means answer] and they rejoice by their response of Amen.

There is another allusion to this in Tehillim that is brought in the sefer "Ollelot Yehudah", "A thousand will be stationed at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not approach you" (Tehillim 91:7). We know that a person should answer 90 times Amen every day, and four times Kaddish, and this is alluded to in the pasuk: "Mitzidcha" has the letters "tzaddi," which refers to the merit of the 90 Amens, and the letter "dalet," which refers to the four times one answers Kaddish, and in this merit no harm will befall him.

There is no end to His praise!

In the same vein:

King David divided Tehillim into five books corresponding to the Five Books of the Torah. We make mention of this in the prayer that we recite after Tehillim.

The Tosafot in Kiddushin (33a) note that all the sefarim, except for the fifth sefer – the last, ends with the word Amen:

The first sefer ends with the pasuk: "Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel from all times past and to all times to come. Amen and amen." (41:14)

The second sefer ends with the pasuk: "And blessed is His glorious name forever, and His glory will fill the entire earth. Amen and amen. The prayers of David the son of Yishai are completed." (72:19-20)

The third sefer ends with the pasuk: "Blessed is the L-rd forever. Amen and Amen." (89:43)

The fourth book ends with the pasuk: "Blessed be the L-rd G-d of Israel from world to world, and all the people shall say, "Amen." Halleluyah!" (106:48)

Why doesn't the fifth sefer end with the word Amen?

Rabbi Shlomo Algazi explains ("Gufei Halachot") that the word Amen signifies the final end. If King David had ended Tehillim with Amen, it would have seemed as if the praises of Hashem had ended. The other four sefarim of Tehillim, King David ended with Amen, since there are yet other sefarim after them in which King David continues to praise and glorify Hashem, which proves that the Amen at the end of the verse does not signify the end of Hashem's praises, but only the end of that sefer.

Treasures

*Based on the teachings of
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For the Sake of Heaven

"Command Aaron and his sons, saying" (Vayikra 6:2)

Rashi explains that the word "command" expresses urging on, for the immediate moment, and for future generations. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said, "Scripture must especially urge in a situation where there is a loss of money." We need to clarify, why did they need to be urged? Certainly they will do what Hashem commands without procrastination and delay, especially since kohanim are swift. Moreover, Onkelos says that "tzav – command" denotes that it was an actual commandment; if so, certainly they would not procrastinate.

It seems to me that the Torah wants to teach the nation as a whole, and the Kohanim specifically, that they should perform the Torah and mitzvot for the sake of Heaven. Even though they may have personal interests, they should strive to act for the sake of Heaven alone. As we know, the more personal pleasure one has, the more difficult it is to act for the sake of Heaven. Therefore, if the Torah issues a warning regarding the Olah-offering which is entirely for Hashem, in order to urge them that nevertheless, it should be for the sake of Heaven, then how much more so regarding the other mitzvot through which one does derive enjoyment from them.

This signifies that a person should perform all his actions and deeds for Hashem alone and not for other interests or personal gains. He should intend to do everything for the sake of Heaven, which is the eternal truth and desired purpose. One who conducts himself in this way will find it easier to serve Hashem, since the focus of all his functions is for one elevated purpose. Thus he will not feel the hardship in accepting upon himself the yoke of mitzvot, and in this way he will acquire the trait of alacrity, which comes from his devotion in the service of Hashem.

I remember once when I prayed at the yeshiva and everyone was about to pray the Amidah, but one member of the congregation continued sitting in his place indifferently... he simply was too lazy to stand up for the prayers. Someone next to him asked him a question, and the man, in his confusion, forgot that he was in the middle of prayers and was forbidden from answering, and he answered him. But then immediately he realized his mistake and stopped talking and was very sorry about it. From this we see that a man who is lazy, his laziness leads to sin. If he would have acted with alacrity and gotten up to pray the Amidah, he would not have erred.

The trait of alacrity is important for every person, and especially a "ben Torah," since if he errs, it is considered an intentional transgression. Why? Since he should have made more of an effort in his study of Torah, and since he was lax, his misinterpretations are considered intentional. Therefore, it is imperative for one to acquire the trait of alacrity in general, and especially so Torah scholars; to perform one's actions with devotion for the sake of Heaven. This is not only true concerning the Olah-offering, and the like, in which one does not have personal interests, but concerning all the mitzvot, even those that we do personally gain from, we should do them too for Hashem alone.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



The Chafetz Chaim says: Life is like a postcard. Usually, when a person writes a postcard to his friend, he writes slowly, with large handwriting, writing only a few lines. However, if he wishes to write more and more, since the postcard has only a limited amount of space, he crowds many words together in order to gain another line and insert another sentence... "I still have so much to write!"...

"This illustrates a person's life. The years of youth pass peacefully and calmly, while precious time is wasted, and one does not appreciate the value of time until it is too late!"



Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

Blessed Are You, Rabbi Makhluf

Many people would frequent the house of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, seeking advice in different matters regarding the religious community of Mogador. Among those who came to his house one day was Rabbi Makhluf Loyb (also known as Rav Lissa). He was summoned to Rabbi Chaim's house on an urgent matter. The incident took place late at night. Rabbi Makhluf knew how to reach Rabbi Chaim's study by the telltale candle that burned in his room. Upon entering the study, he saw two men.

One was Rabbi Chaim, his face aflame, shining with a brilliant light. The other was an unfamiliar figure, who resembled an angel. Rabbi Makhluf felt his knees buckling under, and terror gripped him. He turned on his heels and fled.

The next morning, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol met Rabbi Makhluf and told him, "Blessed are you,

Rabbi Makhluf, that you merited seeing the countenance of Eliyahu Hanavi, of blessed memory."

Rabbi Makhluf was astonished, but his heart pounded with the fear that perhaps he would be punished for gazing at the countenance of Eliyahu Hanavi. He beseeched Rabbi Chaim to pray for him that he should not die before his time.

Rabbi Chaim promised to do so. He begged mercy from Hashem that Rabbi Makhluf should not die young. His prayers were accepted on High, and Rabbi Makhluf lived a long life, passing away at the ripe old age of 110.

This incident was recorded by Rabbi Makhluf himself in the siddur from which he prayed. His sons and grandsons, who were close to the Pinto family, publicized the story (Mekor Hachaim).

