

Thought of the Week

The parsha of Vayikra concerns itself with the topic of kodshim - animal sacrifices which constituted the core service of the kohanim/priests and the people of Israel in the Mishkan/Tabernacle and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. Much ink has flowed and much human genius has been expended to attempt to explain and rationalize the nature of this type of service and why, somehow, it should be found as being pleasing in the eyes of the L-rd.

Regarding the sacrifices of animals on the altar by Abel and Noach in the book of Bereshith, we see that their offerings were received with Divine favor. But the entire issue, as to how killing an animal somehow might expiate a human sin and bring forgiveness to that, is mysterious, especially from the perspective of current Western values. It would be foolish to deal with this issue as far greater people than me have been reticent to go there. Suffice it to say that we must treat this area of kodshim as being on a plane and level of beyond human understanding and appreciation.

But just as in the physical world there are so many things that work and we cannot explain why they should work, so too in this spiritual realm of kodshim we have to accept that animal sacrifices somehow do accomplish their Torah purpose - even though we are unable to understand why this should be true. Judaism is a faith of rational thought and moral values. But, it is also a faith of mystery and other-world spirituality. It is this combination of wisdom and truth that make Judaism so unique.

The Torah presupposes human error and sin to be a constant. Even the most righteous person is not truly free of sin. Yet, Judaism does not foster any idea of "original sin." It believes that we are born with noble souls and enter this world unsullied. Nevertheless, it also recognizes human nature - and that it can become cruel, violent, lustful and sinful even from an early age.

The Torah, of necessity, must provide a mechanism to cleanse one's soul once more if the person has sinned. This mechanism is kodshim/animal sacrifices. With the absence of the Temple that mechanism has morphed into prayer, good deeds, and true repentance for wrongs committed. The goal is the same - to reintroduce into our lives a sense of holiness and higher purpose. It teaches us that we can right wrongs and repair broken hopes and hearts.

The details of kodshim as written in the Torah and, as expounded and expanded in the Mishna and Talmud, are like the mysterious formulae and equations used by physicists and chemistry professors that are unintelligible to the ordinary man on the street but nevertheless work and accomplish their stated functions and goals. We have to find our way without the Temple being present, without these formulae and equations to help us to cleanse ourselves. The Torah has provided us with an alternate route to arrive at that goal. We should constantly exploit these opportunities - prayer, good deeds and honest repentance and improvement. Then our lips will truly replace the kodshim that we no longer have.

Adapted from <http://www.rabbiwein.com/Weekly-Parsha/2011/03/523.html> by Rabbi Wein.

בס"ד

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Parshas Vayikra

פרשת ויקרא

Stone Chumash page 544; Haftarah, page 1165.

March 11-12, 2011

ו' אדר ב' תשע"א



Shabbos Schedule



Candle lighting:	5:45pm
Mincha - Friday:	5:45pm
Parsha Chaburah by Richie Fine:	7:55am
Rabbi's Mishlei Shiur:	8:15am
Shacharis:	8:45am
Sof Zman Krias Shema:	9:14am
Kiddush is sponsored by Susan and Sid Laytin in memory of Sid's sister, Yaska Sima bas Meir, Joan Blumberg, z"l.	
Mincha:	5:30pm
Shalosh Seudos is community sponsored.	
Medical Halacha Shiur given by Dr Daniel Eisenberg.	
Maariv:	6:49pm

Daylight Savings Time Begins Saturday night!

Weekday Davening Times

Shacharis:	Sunday:	8:00am
	Monday:	6:40am
	Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday:	6:50am
Mincha/Maariv:	Sunday through Wednesday:	6:55pm
Mincha and Candle Lighting	Friday:	6:52pm

Taanis Esther is this Thursday

Fast Begins 5:57am, Shacharis 6:20am
Mincha 6:40pm, Fast Ends 7:54pm

Weekday Shiurim

Daily Mussar Shiur:	15 minutes before Shacharis
Mishna Brura:	Mon and Wed after Maariv
Melachim Aleph Shiur:	Monday at 8pm
Halacha Shiur:	Tuesday at 8:30pm.
Women's Gesher HaChaim Shiur:	Thursday at 9:30am at 8 Concord Circle.
Nefesh HaChaim:	Thursday at 10:10pm

Check with Dr Daniel Eisenberg to confirm.

Chevra Mishnayos

The Chevra Mishnayos is learning Seder Nashim. See shul bulletin board to sign up or email eisenber@pol.net with your name and the masechta (and chapters) you intend to learn.

Purim Party

Mark your calendar! YIML Annual Purim Party - Wednesday, March 16th - 5:30 PM. Details to follow...

Matanos L'evyonim

Money for Matanos L'evyonim can be given to Rabbi Steinberg. Checks should be made to "YIML Rabbi's Discretionary Fund."



- Mazel Tov to Dr. Jimmy and Sharon Strong on the birth of their first grandson!
- Mazel Tov to Penny Pugach on her engagement to Moshe Parilis. The community is invited to the Vort this Sunday, March 13th, 3 - 6pm at the Pugach residence: 507 Heartwood Road, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003.
- Mazel Tov to Ben and Amanda Zussman on the birth of a baby boy. Mazel Tov also to the proud grandparents, Mel and Debra Zussman, and Moshe and Ariella Sternberg. The Shalom Zachor will be be"H Friday night at 20 Montgomery Avenue, Unit C, beginning at 8:45 pm.
- Mazel Tov to Rabbi Uri and Sarah Leah Greenspan on the birth of a boy! The Shalom Zachor will be at the Greenspan residence: 25 Union Ave. starting at 9:00 PM

Pirchei and Bnos

Pirchei and Bnos will meet from 3:30 to 4:30pm at LMS. For information, contact Meira Friedman at 610-617-9529 or Rabbi Ari Silver at 610-6686-6833 or SilverDollar@verizon.net.

Sefer Maaseh Rokem

We are pleased to announce that Rabbi Steinberg's new sefer is now available!

The content of this Hebrew sefer is based on shiurim given by Rabbi Steinberg at YIML over the last few years - some originally delivered as ongoing series and others as special lectures on Shabbosos and Yomim Tovim, etc. There is a section on the laws of tzedaka, another on the laws of damages (nizkei mammon), and another section containing miscellaneous halachic and aggadic insights, and some Rabbinic correspondences.

The sefer is available for purchase at YIML. Thank you to all who placed dedications!