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maskil Le'David

Different Approaches in Serving Hashem

"It was on the eighth day, Moshe summoned Ahron and his sons" (Vayikra 9:1).

There are two main approaches to serving Hashem. One is to serve Him with joy and serenity, finding delight in His service while being satisfied with one's lot. The second and more significant approach is serving Hashem through suffering, pain, and privation. It is evident that the second way is superior to the first, for serving Hashem despite enduring poverty and hardship demonstrates one's great love for Him. One is prepared to sacrifice for Hashem's sake and rise above one's challenges to perform Hashem's will. These two approaches are intertwined in the following discussion:

Chazal tell us (*Yalkut Shimoni Shemini* 9): "The word **ויהי** indicates that on that day Hashem rejoiced in the heavens, as [He rejoiced] on the day Heaven and Earth were created. Regarding the creation of the world it says, **ויהי ערב ויהי בוקר** – And there was evening and there was morning,' and here it says, **ויהי ביום השמיני** – It was on the eighth day."

For seven days, Bnei Yisrael had gathered at the entrance to the Ohel Mo'ed while Moshe Rabbeinu performed the entire service. The eighth day was the first day that Ahron Hakohen offered the sacrifices, and this is the reason the rejoicing was so great. But suddenly something terrible happened: At the height of the celebration, the attribute of justice struck two of Ahron's holy and pure sons "and they died before Hashem" (*Vayikra* 10:2). At that point Moshe said to Ahron: "Of this did Hashem speak, saying: 'I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me'" (*ibid.* 3). Rashi explains, "Moshe said to Ahron: 'Ahron my brother, I knew that the House would be sanctified through the acquaintances of Hashem, and I thought it would come about through me or you. Now I see they are greater than both of us.'"

We need to understand why specifically now, at the height of Am Yisrael's rejoicing, Hashem chose to mete out such a difficult punishment to Ahron's sons. Could Hashem not have punished them at a different time? Hashem wanted to teach Am Yisrael that there are two ways of serving Him. One can serve Hashem through joy and exultation, just like Ahron Hakohen who began offering the sacrifices with a joy so enormous – even the Upper Worlds joined

in the jubilation. But it is also possible to serve Hashem at a time of suffering. Hashem demonstrated this idea by transforming the celebration to one of grief and sorrow.

It could happen, may we be spared, that a person finds himself going through a terrible challenge. An example of this is Ahron Hakohen who lost two holy sons at the height of the holy celebration. To rise above the challenge and continue his *avodat* Hashem despite his enormous grief certainly demanded superhuman strength and sacrifice. This was indeed Ahron Hakohen's reaction. He immediately regained his composure and continued offering the sacrifices that were part of the holy service, as if nothing had happened. On the words "And Ahron was silent" (*Vayikra* 10:3), Rashi writes that in reward for Ahron's silent acceptance of the Divine decree, he was honored by having the command in the following verses addressed to him exclusively.

This is proof that Ahron Hakohen returned to his previous state of joy and continued performing the service with a joyful heart, even though his two sons were lying dead before him. Prophecy only rests on one who is in a state of joy, as it says (*Melachim* II, 3:15), "It happened as the musician played, the hand of Hashem came upon Him." Had Ahron been grieving, Hashem would not have appeared to him. This kind of *avodat* Hashem is the superior type. A person who continues serving Hashem even when "All Your breakers and Your waves have swept over me," merits being considered close to Hashem, as it says, "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me." Despite their challenges and suffering, tzaddikim continue to remain faithful to Hashem's Torah and His commandments.

If one who serves Hashem in times of tranquility is considered as if he is performing the service in the Mishkan, one who serves Hashem when faced with numerous challenges is considered as if he is serving Hashem in the Holy of Holies. As Chazal say, (*Avot d'Rabbi Natan* 3), "One [mitzvah performed] in pain is better than one hundred [mitzvot performed] without pain."

I once went together with my family to visit my esteemed master, Harav Chaim Shmuel Lopian, zt"l. He seemed to be very weak and in terrible pain. I asked him, "Why does Rabbeinu not go to the doctor?" This was his answer: "You should know that the holy Torah is the best medicine, for when I sit by my Gemara and delve into its depths, I forget all my pains; love of Torah consumes my being and that is all I feel." This is a tangible example of serving Hashem through suffering and travail. Harav Lopian did not succumb to his physical ailments. Instead, he toiled and labored in Torah with all his strength, serving Hashem in a superior way.

28 Nissan 5785
26 April 2025

1109

Shemini

Shabbat Mevarchin



Hilula

28 Nissan
Rabbi Shabtai Horowitz,
author of *Vavai Ha'amudim*

29 Nissan
Rabbi Mordechai Shalom
Yosef Friedman of Sadigura

30 Nissan
The Mekubal Rabbi Chaim
Vital, zy"ta

1 Iyar
Rabbi Masoud Hakohen,
author of *Pirchei Kehuna*

2 Iyar
Rabbi Shmuel of
Nikolsburg

3 Iyar
Rabbi Aryeh Leib Tzintz,
author of *Meloh Ha'omer*

4 Iyar
Rabbi Yosef Te'umim,
author of *Pri Megadim*





WORDS OF THE SAGES

The Internal Commotion is What Disturbs

Every Jewish soul naturally longs for and is drawn to the sweet taste of closeness to Hashem and His mitzvot. When observing elderly people who are far-removed from religion, one is able to identify who was once religious.

Just as one who has never tasted chocolate in his life can never comprehend its taste, so too one who has never sampled the taste of Torah and mitzvot will not understand its sweetness. But one who has been exposed to its taste, even if it was at a young age, can never forget it. The yearning and pull for this gratifying matter that fills the soul with happiness and satisfaction remains part of him. Even if he has distanced himself, one can make out a thread of pain that accompanies him; his soul has not come to terms with the situation.

But do not fear, with G-d's help, he will return. The opening exists; he just needs to find it.

There is no Jew who does not possess a spark of holiness. Even the most distant Jew has moments of longing and yearning to belong to the eternal truth.

Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi Aryeh shechter, *zt"l* told over: "I was invited to speak at a seminar which took place in a hotel in Ashkelon. When I arrived there, I noticed a police car parked outside. What had happened? One of the neighbors had complained that too much noise was coming from the basement of the hotel and it was disturbing his sleep.

"I understood that this was a deliberate act of harassment. Every night boisterous events and decadent parties took place in this basement, nevertheless these gatherings did not present any problem for this neighbor. Yet the seminar disturbed him!

"I promised the police that we will take care to keep the noise level down, but they kept returning until finally they showed up together with the neighbor. What did he have to say for himself? 'Believe me, I am sympathetic to religion, but you should know that if you continue making a noise and disturbing my sleep, I will take revenge on you.'

"I approached the neighbor and in a friendly gesture placed my arm around him and took him aside. I looked into his eyes and said: 'Tell me the truth: is it correct that what is preventing you from falling asleep is the image of your grandfather who was a religious Jew? Be honest with me. Deep inside don't you wish you could be here at the seminar together with the other participants who are being exposed to the light? It is not the noise that is disturbing you, rather the fact that they are meriting to hear words of Torah. It hurts you that you are not part of this; jealousy is driving you. Am I right?'

"I saw his eyes starting to brim with tears. He admitted that indeed in his heart of hearts something was pulling him to participate in the seminar.

"Of course he cancelled his complaint and sent the police away.

"With this incident, I had another proof for the Arachim staff that there are no wicked people in Am Yisrael. All those who try to block our steps, do it out of pain, jealousy, frustration, bitterness, and resentment, and not from true hate. It hurts them to see others having a close relationship with Hashem while they themselves are so far away. It is hard for them to admit this truth. If they could, they would join immediately."



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust
penned by Moreinu
v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David
Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

Wealth that Leads to Happiness

During one of my travels to America, an extremely affluent individual came to me to ask for a blessing. I asked him, "Do you put on tefillin? What about Shabbat observance?"

"I do not even have time to think about it," he answered straightforwardly. "From morning until night I am taken up with commerce and business matters." I did not give up and entreated him, "Behave intelligently — with five minutes of laying tefillin every morning, you are purchasing an eternal deal and acquiring your true world. In this way at least you will have some connection with your Creator, for you should know that all the abundance and blessings you possess come from Him. It is a great shame that you do not have even the slightest relationship with Him."

The wealthy man heard me out and then left. A while later I met him once again, accompanied by his wife. I asked how he was doing and he answered that some time ago he had suddenly lost his wealth, and he was left with almost nothing. But in the same breath he added, "I wish to thank the Rav, *shlita*, since right after our last meeting, I started laying tefillin every single day. The Rav's words of rebuke seeped into my heart and made an impression on me, and through being particular to fulfill this mitzvah of tefillin, I merited adding other mitzvot. Baruch Hashem, today I and my family have become religious, and I have fixed times for Torah study every day. So I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Rav for opening my eyes and paving the way for my *teshuva*."

His wife who was listening added, "It is true that at the moment we do not possess much in the way of material wealth, but we have an abundance of spiritual wealth. This is a wealth that brings in its wake happiness and inner satisfaction. Observing Torah and mitzvot has filled our hearts with genuine joy. Despite the wealth we once enjoyed, we were never as happy as we are today."

This is the story exactly as I heard it. Every word shouts out the clear message that true gratification comes from investing one's foremost energy and toil in *avodat Hashem*, learning Torah, and fulfilling the mitzvot. It is this alone that affords us true happiness in life. It is a life that endures, for besides affording us enormous reward which awaits us in the Next World, we merit enjoying the fruits of our mitzvot in this world too.

I would like to add that this wealthy person did not utter even one complaint about his material situation. He could have held grievances, G-d forbid, against Hashem, for instead of experiencing even more success in his business affairs as a "reward" for setting aside time to pray, lay tefillin, and observe Shabbat, he actually lost his fortune.

This obviously stems from the fact that once he merited contrasting the flavor of a material lifestyle to one full of spirituality, he actually tasted its sweetness, as it says (*Tehillim* 34:9), "Taste and see that Hashem is good."



FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David
Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

At Home Yes, Outside Not!

Sometimes when people ask me for blessings, I ask them if they are particular about observing *kashrut*. I often get this incomprehensible answer: "At home we are careful, but outside the house we are not particular." And this leaves me wondering: How can a person commit such a coarse lie with his soul? His insides are full of abominations, yet he comes to ask for a blessing and wants Hashem's blessing to rest on him. How can such a thing be?! After offering my words of rebuke, they often understand the extent of their hypocrisy and mend their ways.

This kind of hypocritical lifestyle is synonymous with doubt. Instead of cleaving in a complete, decisive, and clear fashion to the path of Torah and mitzvot, one's opinions are not steadfast. If someone guards his money when at home, but outside in the street he is careless about where he leaves his wallet, we would certainly consider this to be foolish behavior. So too, if one is "particular" about guarding the purity of his soul in his home, but outside he causes his soul utter destruction, his actions are irrational. This could be the reason why permitted and forbidden foods are mentioned in the same *parsha* that talks about Hashem's Shechina resting in the Mishkan. Forbidden foods defile our body and soul. Eating only permitted foods ensures the purity of one's soul, and this is how we merit the Shechina resting inside us just as it rested in the Mishkan.

This is especially important today — during the period of *ikvata d'Meshicha*, when Mashiach is on our doorstep. Pleasures and excess are in abundant supply, and a person is no longer satisfied with little. On the contrary, the more the better.

Therefore, "The living should take it to heart," and certainly anyone who wishes to merit greeting Mashiach must remove any doubts from his heart and cleave to Hashem's path without turning to the right or left. When there are no doubts, the heart sings with joy at the chance to perform mitzvot. This is how we become suitable receptacles to receive Mashiach, whose name can be re-written to spell שמח — rejoice. May we merit his arrival speedily in our days, Amen.



PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

Honoring One's Parents is Clarified Through One's children

"A fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed them" (*Vayikra* 10:2).

Chazal bring several reasons for the death of Ahron's sons, among them the fact that they did not marry, they entered the Mishkan intoxicated, and they passed laws in the presence of their Rav.

The *sefer Torat Moshe* tells us that these three reasons are all intertwined: It is hard for a person to behave with true *derech erez* until he has children of his own. Only once his honor may be slighted by his children and students does he reach an understanding of how to be truly meticulous with the honor of his own parents and teachers.

So Ahron's sons, who did not yet have children since they did not marry, did not fully appreciate how to accord honor to their masters and parents, and in particular — how to revere G-d. This is why they were lax and passed laws in front of their master, and their honor of Heaven fell short when they entered the Mikdash in a lighthearted fashion, after they had drunk wine.

Atonement for Selling Yosef

"Take a he-goat for a sin-offering" (*Vayikra* 9:3).

Chazal tell us in *Torat Kohanim* that the he-goat offering was an atonement for selling Yosef Hatzaddik.

The question is, if selling Yosef was such a great sin, how come Bnei Yisrael deserved to have miracles performed for them when they left Egypt?

The *Meshech Chochma* answers that the brothers had a way of excusing their deed by claiming that Yosef should have rebuked them himself, rather than speaking negatively about them to their father Yaakov. Therefore, during all those years their sin was not held against them.

But now, once they killed Chur because he reproved them for wanting to create the Golden Calf, this excuse was no longer valid. Their very own deeds proved they were unable to accept rebuke. Accordingly, the accusation of selling Yosef was now awakened and held against them. Therefore, they were required to bring a he-goat as a sin-offering to atone for this sin.

Learning Torah Raises Man Above Animals

"This is the law of the animal, the bird" (*Vayikra* 11:46).

It says in the name of Rebbi (*Pesachim* 49b), "An ignoramus (ignorant in the ways of the Torah) is forbidden to eat meat as it says, 'This is the law of the animal, the bird.' One who occupies himself with Torah is permitted to eat meat from animals and birds, while one who does not engage in Torah is forbidden to eat from their meat."

What is the connection between an ignoramus, learning Torah, and eating meat?

Rabbi Mordechai Abadi, *zt"l*, in his *sefer Viku'ach Naim* explains that in essence man and animals are equal, as it says, "Man has no superiority over the beast" (*Kohelet* 3:19). The only advantage man has over animals is his power of speech. Therefore, it is likely that the Torah only permits the slaughtering and eating of animals when man utilizes his superiority over animals, meaning he uses his power of speech to study Torah.

However, an ignoramus, who does not study Torah or keep mitzvot, is worse than an animal and therefore has no permission to eat meat.

a NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Kosher Food



The Unique Qualities of Kosher Food

One of the most well-researched topics is that of developing man's potential for acquiring knowledge and his capacity for personal growth. Thousands of articles have been written, tens of thousands of researchers are engaged in the subject non-stop, thousands of books have been published, and hundreds of recommendations have been proposed, rejected, and presented once again. There is an entire industry occupied with the subject, researching the influence of food, dietary supplements, sleep, exercise, and more. They all focus on one goal: improving the function of the human mind, expanding its learning potential and functioning with the highest degree of attention and concentration.

An amazing revelation appears in our *parsha*, in which the Creator of the world reveals a victorious formula which promises that sought-after attainment of maximizing and enhancing our potential.

The Creator of the word reveals that kosher nutrition is the key! This is the magical formula for success in our studies! Food that is held up to a meticulous standard of *kashrut* bolsters, fortifies, and improves our learning potential. Food that is, heaven forbid, not kosher spreads poison in a person's soul, contaminates his capacity to comprehend, stops up his mind and prevents it from developing.

This diet, as Rabbi Asher Kovalsky writes, is the magic formula — ancient and guaranteed with the signature of the finest Scientist in the world. He is aware of all the food products in the world, He is the One who created all the different supplements, so undoubtedly He is the Number One World Expert on nutrition. Only the Creator of the world is aware of the results of the studies that will take the scientific world many more years to uncover, if at all.

He has gifted us with a Heavenly formula for favorable nutrition that leads to improving the quality of our lives.

All those who are familiar with Jewish history know that it is saturated with thousands of stories of Jews who bravely sacrificed their lives for the sake of adhering to *kashrut*, even to the extent of starving themselves for lengthy periods of times, under substandard conditions. This is because non-kosher food, in any situation and under any circumstance, has a destructive influence on the soul. Its harmful influence is destructive and defiling to the extent that they obliterate the positive capacity of the Jewish mind.

On the other hand, the positive effect of kosher food not only has an impact on the person who consumes it, it is absorbed in his blood and passed on to all future generations. The food he eats secures his children, too, with a pure and holy soul. The *Reishit Chochma* quotes the Ramban, "If a person separates himself from forbidden foods, he will merit holy and pure sons!" Plain and simple: any Jewish person who is particular about the *kashrut* of his food is promised by the Ramban that he will merit holy and pure children — the aspiration of every Jewish father and mother!

How worthwhile for us to take this message to heart; to understand that *kashrut* of food is not only a matter of personal preference. It has a dramatic influence on our physical health and comprehension abilities and a direct influence on the success and growth of our children.

These common excuses are bound to arise: "It's out the house ... What could be wrong with this food ... I saw so and so eating this ...," and other variations that justify and defend our behavior. They quieten our conscience for the moment, but if the food is not one hundred percent kosher, the damage it causes is immediate and long term, much more profound than the momentary pleasure of eating the food.

We will quote the famous words of the Gemara (*Yoma* 39a): "It was taught in the yeshiva of Rabbi Yishmael: Sins block up (מטמטמת) a person's heart, as it says, '... do not contaminate yourselves through them lest you become contaminated through them.' Do not read 'lest you become contaminated' (וּנְטַמְטַמְתָּ), rather 'lest you become blocked up' (וּנְטַמְטַמְתָּ). Rashi explains the meaning of מטמטמת — seals and stops up from all wisdom.

Gifted Children

Harav Rafael Barlazon is quoted in an article printed by the Yated Ne'eman (*Shemini* 5771): "Over the course of many years, one of our generation's famous educators encountered an amazing fact. This is what he explained to us (I am taking full responsibility for its veracity): **'Children who come from homes that are stringent about the *kashrut* of their food, are more talented!'**"

Since he serves as supervisor for many *chadarim* around the country, he encounters children from all different sectors and communities. From a statistical viewpoint, we are talking about a fascinating fact which he reiterates with undisclosed excitement: "I repeat. I have examined this factor over many years, and it has proven itself in an unequivocal way. Children who come from homes that are particular about re-tithing the food, have an open mind to learn Torah and excellent absorption skills."

This educator disclosed this fact without going into the reasons why this should be so; he simply made a simple calculation and discerned the distinct results. Over the years, he discussed this concept with great talmidei chachamim, among them Hagaon Rabbi Yosef Shalom Zilberman, *zt"l*, and they explained the spiritual factors which stand behind this amazing fact.



"Contemplate and see that Hashem is good"

Exciting update: With *siyata diShmaya*, the *shiurim* of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Chananya Pinto *shlit"a*, are now available in Hebrew, English, French and Spanish

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