

MAR 20 2010

5 Nisan 5770

Parshat Vayikra

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## Animal Sacrifices: A New Approach

Have you ever felt strange when you read about animal sacrifices in the Torah?

Each year we open Vayikra, a book that has dozens of chapters about the rituals of Korbanot (sacrifices) that are very foreign to us in 2010. Slaughtering cows, sprinkling blood, and burning fats? To worship Hashem? Is this Judaism? What happened to loving my neighbor and resting on the Sabbath?

But the truth is, animal sacrifice touches upon a very deep and profound part of human psychology.

The Rambam in his *Guide for the Perplexed* wonders how G-d could have command us to worship through such a despised and archaic way as Korbanot? He answers that animal sacrifice is indeed *not* the ideal way to worship. Meditative prayer is. Korbanot were only prescribed as a concession to human nature.

G-d does not meddle with human nature, and human nature pushes man to sacrifice animals and do idolatrous behaviors, so G-d 'had to', so to speak, allow man to certain do actions and He direct them towards Him.

So many questions can be asked on this approach. Didn't G-d make humans with this nature? And if this nature developed in humans over time and G-d doesn't want to meddle with it, do Korbanot have to be so elaborate? We have hundreds of rituals to fulfill! And why is the Beit HaMikdash so beautiful if it is just a sanitized Temple of slaughter? There's no lofty, spiritual side to Korbanot? I think we need to take a step back here for one second.

The Rambam's *Guide* is a quite a curious book. In its introduction, Rambam writes that the secrets of the Torah are hidden and cannot be revealed openly to everyone at every time. When someone goes through the proper training of his intellect and imagination, he sees little glimpses of the secrets like little flashes of lightening illuminating a dark night. The Rambam says that he is going to conceal ideas in his book, put ideas in random places and, in the style of our Sages, contradict himself. This means that he's not doing what you think he's doing when you read his words. He's not simply writing an elaborate rational-based commentary on the Torah to reveal the reasons of Mitzvot to you.

My question to you is: why should we take anything he says in the book itself at face value? The answer is that we shouldn't. Do I know the secrets of the Torah that the Rambam is concealing? I'm not sure. But when I read this Rambam, it made me think of something.

I think that human beings even in our generations can become entangled in Korbanot and idolatry, as silly as it sounds. Think about

it: how did idol worship and Korbanot to foreign gods start? It all began with moving away from Hashem. Once people started to forget G-d they began to use their imagination to ascribe godliness to physical objects and tangible concepts (i.e. fertility, power). After a while, it's only human nature that the Evil Inclination tries to get his demonic talons on things to cause death and destruction in the world. Imagination + death – Hashem = idols and sacrifice! Wow that wasn't so hard to go from one G-d to idols and sacrifice!

Just think about it: all around the world people do Korbanot. Korbanot really *are* part of our nature, it's just how we deal with that nature. Do we use our imagination to plan the future and invent new useful? Or do we use it to plan bad and do things that hurt us?

Korbanot are a mechanism to keep the inner imagination of Man at bay. Korbanot keep our Evil Inclination away from our imagination so we don't develop infantile and destructive thoughts.

That is the thought that popped into my head when I read this passage from the *Guide*. Is it what he meant? I'm not sure. Is it what I thought of after seeing his words? Yes. But perhaps that's Rambam's goal with the *Guide*.

**Rabbi Ian Bailey**

*Knesset Israel Torah Center,  
Sacramento, CA*

## KASHRUT NOTICE!!

OU Kosher Pre Pesach  
Webcast on Tuesday,  
March 23 - 2:30 PM

With Rabbi Yisroel Belsky  
and Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Focusing on: Selling Chometz, Chometz  
after Pesach, Seder and Haggadah.

Email your questions to:

[safrane@ou.org](mailto:safrane@ou.org)

View the webcast at:

[http://www.ou.org/ouradio/kosher\\_webcast](http://www.ou.org/ouradio/kosher_webcast)



## JDC's HAITI & CHILEAN EARTHQUAKE DONATIONS

With your help, the Orthodox Union will continue to work with our partners, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the William J. Clinton Foundation, and others, to bring life saving assistance to those in Haiti & Chile.

To make a donation by mail, kindly send a check to the Orthodox Union at 11 Broadway, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10004. Checks should be made out to "Orthodox Union Haiti Relief Fund" or "Orthodox Union Chile Relief Fund."

## RESPONDING TO EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS AMONG THOSE IN THE DIVORCE PROCESS, OU JOB BOARD TO PRESENT 'FROM BREAKUP TO BREAKTHROUGH' ON WEB AND IN PERSON, MARCH 23

People going through a divorce often have job problems as well. To accommodate their needs at such a stressful time, the **Orthodox Union Job Board** will present a free workshop, "From Breakup to Breakthrough," to be held **Tuesday, March 23, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** at OU Headquarters in New York and everywhere on the web at [www.oujobs.org](http://www.oujobs.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS @ OU WEST COAST

*Check our website for Convention  
lectures & panel discussions*

➤ **Annual Manny Stern, z"l,  
Synagogue Leadership Seminar  
Sunday, April 18, 5pm**

with **Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn**

"Storm-winds: Program Ideas That Will  
Blow Your Mind"

"On Fire: Sparking Immediate Shul Growth"  
for OU Shul Rabbis/Presidents/Board  
Members/Exec & Youth Directors  
& Yeshivot Personnel, too

*A program from OU-West Coast  
Community & Synagogue Services*

**Hold-the-Date**

**Tuesday, May 4, 2010**

**Tefilla Enrichment Initiative**

*A one-evening seminar featuring speakers  
who will inspire and encourage us to achieve  
meaningful tefila experiences.*

*This program will take place  
at B'nai David-Judea.*

*Watch for more details.*

➤ **OU Annual Awards Banquet  
Tuesday, June 22**

Honoring

**David & Debbie Schultz  
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## OU SYNAGOGUES AROUND THE REGION

### **Beverly Hills: Cong. Beth Jacob** (310) 278-1911

- **SUNs APR 18-JUN 20, 10am-12pm:** MaTan's Mother-Daughter Bat Mitzvah program with Rebbetzin Jordana Topp. Call to register.

### **Beverly Hills: Young Israel of North B.H.:** (310) 276-7650

- **Shabbat APR 9-10:** RZLA w/Rabbi Yosef & Dr. Rivka Blau, Solly Sacks
  - **Shabbat APR 17:** AIPAC w/ LA Director Catherine Schneider
  - **Shabbat APR 24:** Guest, Hon. Israel Con Gen'l Yakov Dayan
- Calabasas Shul: (818) 591-7485

### **Canada-Calgary: House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel** (403) 259-3230

- **WEDS JUNE 2:** Annual Dinner & Installation of Rabbi Yisroel Miller
- Canada-Edmonton: Beth Israel (780) 488-2840

Canada-Vancouver: Schara Tzedek (604) 736-7607

Denver, CO : **BMH-BJ Cong** (303) 388-4203

Denver, CO: **EDOS** (303) 322-7943

Irvine, CA: Beth Jacob (949) 786-5230

LA: Adas Torah (310) 203-9659 [www.adastorah.com](http://www.adastorah.com)

LA: Aish Hatorah (310) 278-8672 x 305 or [tsullivan@aishla.com](mailto:tsullivan@aishla.com)

LA: **B'nai David-Judea** (310)-276-9269 or [amram@bnaidavid.com](mailto:amram@bnaidavid.com)

- **SUN JUNE 6:** Annual Tribute Dinner

LA: Etz Jacob (323) 938-2619

LA: **Mogen David Cong.** (310) 556-5609

- **SUN APR 11, 9am:** Annual Yom Hashoah Program/Breakfast--Holocaust Remembrance Day with survivor Sol Berger

LA: **Young Israel of Century City:** (310) 273-6954

- **Shabbat Hagadol MAR 26-27:** S-I-R Rabbi Mark Dratch

LA: Young Israel of Hancock Park: (323) 931-4030

LA: **Yeshiva of LA (YOLA)** 310-203-3197 [yeshivarabbi@juno.com](mailto:yeshivarabbi@juno.com)

- **MINCHA/MAARIV:** SUN-THURS, 15 minutes before Shkiah;  
**LATE MAARIV:** SUN-THUR 10pm. M-TH am/pm: adults/students chavrusas

Laguna Woods, CA: Beth Torah (949) 587-1967 (a retirement community)

La Jolla: **Adat Yeshurun** (858) 535-1196

- **SUN JUNE 6:** Banquet Gala

Las Vegas, NV: Shaarei Tefila (702) 384-3565 (Mikva 384-3317)

Oakland, CA: Beth Jacob (510) 482-1147

Palm Springs, CA: The Desert Synagogue (760) 327-4848

Palo Alto, CA: **Emek Beracha** (650) 857-1800 (Mikva 493-5555)

- **MAY 9:** Annual Dinner. Guest speaker Hadassah Lieberman

Phoenix, AZ: Beth Joseph (602) 277-8858

Portland, OR: Kesser Israel (503) 222-1239

Sacramento, CA: Keneset Israel Torah Center (916) 481-1159

San Diego, CA: Cong. Beth Jacob (619) 287-9890

San Diego, CA: Kehillat Ahavat Yisrael-KAY (858) 633-0181

San Francisco, CA: Adath Israel (415) 564-5665

Seattle: Bikur Cholim Machzikay Hadath (206) 721-0970

Seattle: Ezra Bessaro (206) 722-5500

Seattle: **Sephardic Bikur Holim** (206) 723-3028

- **Shabbat Hagadol Luncheon, MAR 27**

Valley Village, CA: **Shaarey Zedek Cong.** (818) 763-0560

- **MON APR 12:** Annual Banquet honoring Perla & Herman Muhlstein

- **SUN APR 25, 10am-5pm:** Israel & Jewish Culture Day Fair

Venice, Pacific Jewish Center-The Shul on the Beach:(310)392-8749

Washington-Mercer Island: Shevet Achim (206) 275-1539

Woodland Hills: **Beit HaMidrash** (818) 999-2059 (5850 Fallbrook Ave.)

- **SUNs @ 6:15pm:** Pre-Mincha-Shiur-Baba Kama w/Rabbi Yaakov Rechnittz

West LA: **Westwood Kehilla** (310) 441-5288x30 [director@kehilla.org](mailto:director@kehilla.org)

- **Shabbat MAR 19-20:** S-I-R Rabbi Menachem Nissel

## NCSY-JSU-YACHAD ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS



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Start planning your summer, check out our amazing summer programs @ A

Want to help run a chesed project? call Solly at 310-557-6582

**SUN APR 18<sup>th</sup> @ UCLA: NCSY's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Basketball Tournament\***

Sign your team up today by calling 310 229-9000 ext. 226

\*Sponsorship opportunities available.

**MAY 29-31:** Spring Regional

**CITY NCSY:** Call Solly @ 310-557-6582 or [Shess@westcoastncsy.com](mailto:Shess@westcoastncsy.com)

**DNL--MONs 7-8pm:** @ Pizza World 365 S. Fairfax Ave.

**Latte&Learning-TUEs 7:30pm:**@CB&T-233 S. Beverly Dr. w/R' Josh Horwitz

**JR. NCSY:** (6-8 grade) Call Josh 310-694-2976 or [ncsyjosh@gmail.com](mailto:ncsyjosh@gmail.com)

... **NCSY Bar/Bat Mitzvah** tutoring available. **Talmud Torah** classes.

**YACHAD:** Call Perri @323-228-4191. Ongoing activities.

## B'NEI AKIVA OF LA ANNOUNCEMENTS

➔ **Office:** 310-248-2450 [bneiakivaLA@gmail.com](mailto:bneiakivaLA@gmail.com)

➔ **MON Evening APRIL 19: Annual Community-wide Yom HaZikaron & Yom Haatzmaut Ceremony**

*Upcoming Events:*

Chevyra Bet (9th-12th grade) NY Shabbaton; Israeli Day Parade - New York



## OU COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

▶ **ONGOING: OU'S WOMEN'S TORAH NETWORK (WTN)**

Classes with Geri Wiener – *Spring Sessions coming up!*

➔ **MONs-Valley** (private home):

➔ **WEDs-City** (OU Hdqtrs):

▶ **AIPAC POLICY CONFERENCE-WASHINGTON DC-MAR 21-23**

▶ **Yom Haatzmaut-MONDAY EVENING-APR 19, BNEI AKIVA**

▶ **Yom Haatzmaut-APR 19, 7pm, presented by Consulate General of Israel & Saban Theater – Hold-the-Date**

## ISRAEL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD

### **Israel's top 10 airport security technologies**

No-one understands security like the Israelis, that's why some of the world's best new innovative airport security technologies are being developed in Israel. We bring you a list of "Israel's top 10| technologies.

### **Smoking linked to lower IQ's**

It's perfectly simple - the heavier the smoker, the lower his IQ - a straightforward Israeli study finds that it's the people with lower IQs who tend to smoke.

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In the Congo even moderate burns can mean death. That's why an Israeli foundation has flown over a Congolese surgeon, and is now training him how to treat severe burns.

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Amobee hopes to enable content creators to survive today's free Internet culture by providing their output in exchange for embedded advertising. Is this Google's next acquisition?

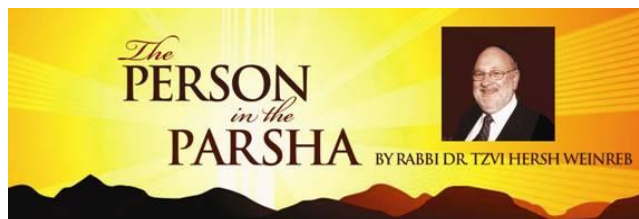
### **Big brother IS watching**

An Israeli startup has developed a potentially game-changing surveillance camera that can both monitor a panoramic field and zoom in on details.

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They've been growing for hundreds of years and have many stories to tell, now the Jewish National Fund is working hard to ensure that Israel's oldest trees will continue to thrive for the benefit of generations to come.

[www.Israel21c.org](http://www.Israel21c.org)



## Parshat Vayikrah

March 20, 2010 – 5 Nisan 5770

To read more articles and essays by Rabbi Weinreb, visit his blog at [www.ou.org/rabbi\\_weinreb](http://www.ou.org/rabbi_weinreb)

### " Courtesy and Confidentiality"

"There is no such thing as privacy anymore."

"There are no secrets anymore."

These are two complaints that are heard frequently nowadays.

We live in a world of cell phones and e-mails, blogs, Facebook and Twitter. We have no privacy, for almost anyone can reach us wherever we are, whatever we happen to be doing, at all times of the day. And we can have no secrets, because anyone who knows anything about us can spread it to the entire world in a matter of seconds.

How often have I sat down for a moment of private time, for study or contemplation, or just to "chill out", only to have the silence disrupted by some total stranger who managed to obtain my cell phone number? How many dozens of e-mails and blogs fill up the space of my inbox with communications that, at best, are of no interest to me and often are offensive and obnoxious?

We once felt entitled to privacy and courtesy, but they no longer seem achievable.

Often, we write a confidential note to a trusted friend, sharing a message that we would rather others not know, only to discover that the note is now circulating in cyberspace, accessible to literally everyone. Sometimes, it is the friend's betrayal that has made our secret public. Often, it is simply misjudgment or carelessness on his part. But more frequently, it is an unwanted error, a mistaken pressing of "send" instead of "delete".

We once expected confidentiality and discretion, but they too no longer seem possible.

Our contemporary society has lost what once was among its primary values. "A man's home is his castle" once meant that decent citizens respected the "fences" around another individual's personal space and would not casually trespass those boundaries.

The value of trusting in the discretion of another, once a cornerstone of human interaction, is now in danger of being relegated, along with other once-cherished values, to the oblivion of "old-fashionedness".

The right to privacy and the ability to assume confidentiality are universal human values. It is important to know that they are primary Jewish values as well. Sources for these values in our tradition include this week's Torah portion, *Vayikra*.

This might come as a surprise to you, dear reader, because you know that this week's portion is the introduction to *Leviticus*, the biblical book which focuses upon sacrifices and Temple ritual. This week's portion especially seems limited to the comprehensive and complex details of sacrificial offerings. Where is there even a hint of these contemporary concerns, courtesy and confidentiality?

Chapter one, verses one and two, say it all, albeit between the lines:

"The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying: 'Speak to the Israelite people and say to them...'"

The rabbis of the Talmud saw in these simple and direct phrases two subtle messages.

First of all, the Lord called to Moses first and then spoke to him. He didn't surprise Moses. He didn't intrude on Moses' privacy and autonomy.

First, He called to him. He knocked on Moses' door, as it were, ringing the bell first, asking to be invited in. No unwanted intrusion, even from the Lord Almighty, to his favorite prophet!

This observation is made by the rabbis in the Talmudic tractate *Yoma*. In a less well-known Talmudic source, the Tractate *Derech Eretz*, the rabbis find that the Almighty's courteous concern for the privacy of his lowly creatures did not begin with Moses. It goes back to the way He treated the very first man, Adam. Genesis chapter three, verse nine: "The Lord God called to Adam and said to him: 'Where are you?'" Here too, even when the Lord wishes to rebuke Adam, He first "calls to him", signaling the uncomfortable conversation which is about to ensue.

God respects Adam's privacy, and He doesn't just "barge in" on Moses. Surely a lesson in human values.

The rabbis on the same page in Tractate *Yoma* find another message in the deceptively simple opening verses of our *Parsha*...saying: 'Speak to the people and say to them...' From the redundancy here, "say", and "speak", and "say", the rabbis derive the lesson that when someone tells you something, you are forbidden to share it with another unless you are given explicit permission to do so.

Moses was not permitted to re-tell even the divine message that he heard until God Himself told him that it was okay to "say it over".

The medieval Rabbi Moses of Coucy actually enumerates this admonition for utter confidentiality as one of the prohibitions comprising the 613 commandments of the Torah.

As I have reflected upon these specific teachings over the years of my personal *Parsha* study, I have come away with several conclusions: Firstly, there is much that is implicit in the Torah; much that lies beneath the surface. The long and complicated ritual laws that confront us as we read this week's *Parsha* are contained in a context that teaches us more than the surface lessons. Our Rabbis of old were particularly expert at digging out these unexpected but precious nuggets.

Secondly, these nuggets are often of astounding relevance for our contemporary condition. What can be more relevant than a reminder about the values of courtesy and confidentiality?

Finally, these lessons are not merely abstract teachings or bits of wisdom for us to ruminate upon as we relax in our armchairs. Rather, they are calls to arms. They are challenges.

It is difficult indeed to combat the value system that is foisted upon us by the technology which pervades the world in which we now live. Very difficult. But very necessary. If we lazily submit to the pernicious influence of modern convenience, we risk the ultimate loss of our very humanity.

A culture devoid of courtesy can turn into a culture of callousness and cruelty. A world where one cannot trust his confidante is a world where authentic friendship is impossible.

Troubling thoughts? Yes, indeed. But they are thoughts which we ignore at our own peril.

How fortunate are we that these thoughts are available to us, subtly embedded in the opening verses of this week's Torah portion!