



Sanctity Versus Power (Vayikra)

By Rabbi Ben Tzion Spitz



We thought, because we had power, we had wisdom. -

Stephen Vincent Benet

The beginning of the Book of Leviticus details a variety of sacrifices that are brought by different people for different sins. Two individuals are singled out in the list of sinners and they are prescribed different sacrifices. One personality is the Kohen Gadol (the High Priest); the other is the King.

The Meshech Chochma on Leviticus 4:21 analyses the differences between these two personalities. The Kohen Gadol is the most sacred role in Israel. He and only he is the one with the task, the burden and the great honor of entering the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. He represents the holiest person, in the holiest place at the holiest time in a unique annual communion with God, that when successful, conveys forgiveness to the entire people of Israel. In Biblical times, the Kohen Gadol also wore the Urim Ve'tumim, the special breastplate with the twelve precious stones that enabled a very specific but powerful communication between God and the leadership of Israel. The bottom line is that the Kohen Gadol represented the pinnacle of sanctity and closeness to God. Because of this closeness, any sin that the Kohen Gadol committed, even if it was inadvertent, would be considered by the public as purposeful. The King, on the other hand, was considered all too human. Because of his excess power, it was presumed that he would err more than your average citizen. That is why he was given additional strictures above those of non-Kings, such as the prohibition of accumulating too much wealth, too many horses or too many wives, and his need to carry a Torah scroll on him at all times. The people, knowing well the King's likelihood to blunder and to show poor judgment, would know that any sins of his are indeed mistakes and they would be more careful not to imitate such mistakes.

The Meshech Chochma adds that this is the reason why we don't appoint Kohens as Kings (a reminder of the ultimately catastrophic Hasmonean monarchy – the combination of Kohens and kingship ended in disaster). The Kohen who is meant to be more attuned to divine service will turn away from God because of the royal power he gets. His arrogance will remove his fear of God. And if this Kohen King sins, the people may follow his example, considering him a holy man.

On the other hand, the Meshech Chochma continues, the people likewise can affect their king. When the people sin, the king can very likely be influenced by them and follow in their ways. The converse is likewise true: if the people are good and follow God, the king will be strengthened and encouraged to do the same. May we never confuse holiness with power.

Challenging But Not Crazy

by Shmuel Sackett



I received an email from a friend yesterday. He wanted to know how I'm doing and simply asked, "Hey, Shmuel, how are you and the family during these crazy times?" That simple, innocent question started me thinking and here's what I concluded: These are not "crazy" times... they are "challenging" times. Let me explain. Hashem is not crazy and everything He does has a purpose and a plan. Most times, we

have no idea what that plan is and it actually makes no sense to us, but one thing I can swear to; **it's not crazy**. Hashem challenges us, He pushes us to our limits, He tests us in various ways and all for a reason we don't know... and probably will *never* know. To many of us, the challenges seem too great to bear and the tests are impossible to pass but I learned something many years ago that keeps me going each and every day: **Hashem does not give a person a test he/she cannot pass**. As difficult as it may be, if Hashem put you in a certain situation, He feels you can use it to rise to greatness!

Believe me that I am not blind and I see the difficulties that many people are having from this worldwide plague. Thousands of people have died and tens of thousands are sick. Many good people have lost their jobs and will experience serious financial difficulties. Weddings and other happy, family events have been cancelled and panic, anxiety, tension and stress are weighing very

heavily on millions of people across the globe. This is exactly why I call it a “challenge” because - for some unknown reason – our Father in Heaven feels we need to be pushed to our limits.

Dearest friends; now is not the time to crawl into a corner and be depressed. We need to stand up and attempt to understand what Hashem wants from us. I am not the one who has the answers but I am certain that we need to overcome our initial reaction of worry and fear to understand the current reality... and use it to serve our King in the greatest way possible.

But there’s one more point I want to stress. As stated above, I learned that Hashem never gives a person a test they can’t pass but a few years ago I studied an even deeper concept in the world of Chassidut. The holy teachings of Chassidut state quite clearly that Hashem sends a person into this world to accomplish a task and then gives that person the tools they need to reach their goal to get the job done. In other words, someone may be wealthy because they need money to accomplish their Divine mission while another may be poor because he/she needs poverty to do their job. One may have health, another has sickness etc... – not because Hashem is “crazy” - but because each person needs a different set of tools to accomplish their *specific* task. This is why you give a carpenter a hammer while to an artist you give a paint brush.

Based on these deeper teachings of Chassidut, Hashem feels that – exactly now – we need to have this “tool”. Some people will emerge unscathed, others will become unemployed while others will be sick. Why? I don’t know... except for one thing: **Hashem is giving us this so that we can use it to achieve our purpose and fulfill our mission.**

Therefore, please stand strong. Open your eyes and try your best to understand what message Hashem is sending you. He has faith in you, trusts you and knows you can pass the test and overcome the challenge. Use this to “rise to the occasion” and become a loyal servant in Hashem’s palace. Be full of joy – yes, real “simcha” – especially now during these challenging days. Even though I am not a Kohen, I give you a bracha – and ask for one from you – that you pass the test, accomplish your Heavenly mission and become stronger than ever in serving the One and Only G-d in Heaven. May these days strengthen us, our communities and the State of Israel. **Am Yisrael Chai!**

When I’m Prime Minister, We Will Offer The Korban Pesach by Moshe Feiglin

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Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them: **“Draw out and take lambs according to your families and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall observe this matter for an ordinance for you and your sons forever”** (Exodus 12). Soon, with G-d’s help, we will establish Jewish leadership for Israel. Please be forewarned that when that happens, our familiar, comfortable Pesach holiday will be radically changed. We will have to forget about the Pesach seder with the extended family at the home of the family balabusta. Instead, we will be face to face

with the Korban Pesach at the Temple Mount.

For those who have forgotten, the Korban Pesach is a positive commandment, equal in importance to the mitzvah of brit milah. The mitzvah of circumcision is a personal covenant between a Jew and his Father in Heaven. The Pesach offering is a national covenant between the Jewish nation and its Father in Heaven. These two commandments forged the Jewish people as the unique nation of the Creator – both as individuals and as a collective. Today, a Jewish policeman stands at the entrance to the Temple Mount and explains to the Jews that they are prohibited from praying there. A request to bring a sacrificial lamb is out of the question. When we will finally establish Jewish leadership for Israel, though, the same policeman will stand at the entrance to the Temple Mount and cheerfully explain what you need to know, ensuring that you are well-versed in the Jewish laws that must be observed during your momentous visit.

In truth, it is not the policeman who blocks our entrance to the Temple Mount. It is observant Jews whose Torah and faith are still in exile. They feel more comfortable when our covenant with G-d remains exclusively in the realm of the individual. It’s great to be religious in your home and “Israeli” in public. The people who subscribe to this mode of living will go to great lengths to avoid being a complete Jew in the complete Land of Israel – both in private and in public. In other words, at some level, all of us have a little policeman in our hearts, blocking the entrance to the Temple Mount. That is why we have a full-sized, flesh and blood policeman at its gates.

When we establish Jewish leadership for Israel, all of this will be distant memory. The prime minister and his cabinet will ascend to the Temple Mount with their sacrificial lambs. The entire national mentality will change, and there will be no more lame excuses for not bringing the Korban Pesach.

Instead of sitting in the comfort of our living rooms and chewing on matzah that symbolizes the Korban Pesach, we will joyously sit in the streets and alleys surrounding the Temple Mount, eating our roasted sacrificial lamb. The international uproar will be deafening. How will we be able to conduct “peace” negotiations when the entire Jewish nation is at the Temple Mount with their Pesach offerings? And who will protect us from Iran? And what will the US do? And how will Russia react? And what about the European Union? What will we explain?

“And you shall say: It is the sacrifice of G-d’s Passover, for He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses.”

Happy Festival of Freedom.

