


CHABAD

 RESEARCH UNIT

שבת..... *for Friday night* קדש

Friday 19 March 2010 - 4 Nisan 5770
 Sedra Vayikra




CONNECTIONS

LIFE IS A MEDLEY OF CONNECTIONS: WITH OTHER PEOPLE, WITH OUR OWN INNER SELF, and with G-d. These connections all interlink, and they are the central theme of Jewish life and teaching, in its many aspects: practical laws, such as caring for others, and having Mezuzot on one's doors; the observance of Shabbat and festive days; the study of beautiful Torah teachings, and of course, prayer.

These pathways help us connect with other people, with our inner selves and with G-d. Yet at the heart of all of them is something which is a strong memory and a hope, but not yet a tangible reality. Have you guessed? Yes, the Temple in Jerusalem. The service in the Temple (first built by Solomon in 1000 BCE) and, even earlier in our history, in the Sanctuary built by Moses, is the main theme of the Sedra¹ this week.

The function of the Temple is to help a person achieve and maintain a connection with G-d. How does it do this? Well, just going to the Temple is itself a spiritual experience. People today visiting the Western Wall in Jerusalem are often deeply moved. This is the last remaining portion of the outer wall of the Temple, and it reminds us of the long stream of the history of our people. Yet the Western Wall also reminds us of the Temple itself, of the point of connection with G-d for the Jewish people and all humanity,



Dedicated by Mrs Tzipora Sufrin װװ , to the memory and merit of her father k"z ihætk rgcus hfsrn װ װ v j "vrv

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In Temple times, we would purify ourselves in special ways, including immersing in a Mikveh, a ritual pool. Then we would enter the Temple precincts. There would be a hushed feeling, for there we would sense an atmosphere of holiness. We would see the Priests, who carry out the Temple service. We would hear the music played by the Levites.

The Sedra describes part of this service: the exact way one brings an Offering. In Hebrew, an Offering is called a Korban. This word means 'drawing near'. When we bring an Offering, we are coming near to G-d, connecting with the Divine.

How does the Offering have this effect? The Sages tell us each of us combines very different qualities: we have a holy aspect, called the Divine Soul, and we also have a rather more difficult aspect, called the Animal Soul. The Divine Soul draws us towards the Torah and the spiritual domain, while the Animal Soul attracts us towards more basic and earthly aspects of life. Sometimes it leads us into forbidden areas, and we are filled with regret.

The Offering in the Temple expresses the connection of our Animal aspect with G-d. When we bring an Animal Offering, we are saying to G-d: "I want my Animal Soul to be bonded with You, G-d. I want my Animal Soul to be transformed into something higher". G-d ordains that the service in the Temple achieves this. The Priests bring the Offering to the Altar, and the Levites play beautiful music. Something inside us is transformed. The Animal aspect has been joined with the Divine².

Now, it is no longer just an Animal. It has become more spiritual, indeed holy. Its powerful energy becomes a force for good, redeeming any errors of the past. We feel re-connected with G-d, and more in touch with our own inner selves. This opens the door to more harmonious connections with other people as well.

A visit to the Temple helps strengthen all our connections. It will have this power both for Jew and Gentile. When the Messiah comes, the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem will be the most popular place to visit in the whole wide world.

1. Leviticus chapters 1-5. 2. See the discourse *Bati LeGani* by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, ch.2.

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SEDRA VAYIKRA

CRAZY BULL

Michael's class had just finished putting on a Model Matzah Bakery for the rest of the school. It had been a great success, everybody made Matzas and had lots of fun. Plus there had been no accidents with the oven.

Now it was time to clean up the room which they had used for the Bakery. The problem was, that it looked as if Michael and his friend Sam had gone crazy. They were running around the room, and jumping over rubbish bins, sword fighting with the rolling pins. This was all while everybody else was cleaning up.

"Yeeeha!" screamed Sam, as he charged towards Michael with a spatula from the oven. "He he! You can't get me" shouted Michael back. It went on and on, they were getting on everyone's nerves.

"Stop it!" shouted Steve, but it didn't help.

It looked as if Michael and Sam had a bit too much sugar that day, a bit too much energy. Till finally Mr Benson walked into the room to see how things were progressing with the clean up.

"Michael! Sam!" exclaimed Mr Benson "You seem to be running around a little too excitedly. What's up?" They stopped running and walked over to their teacher. "Well, we are sort of, a little hyper", said Sam. "Okay" said Mr

Benson, “and what should we do about that? Any ideas?”

“Yes” said Michael cheekily, “we will continue sword-fighting until the winner prevails, and then the loser will naturally calm down”.

“I am not so sure that will work” said Mr Benson.

“I have an idea” continued Mr Benson. “In the Sedra this week, it tells us that in the Sanctuary, which later became the Temple, they would bring Offerings. These offerings included bulls, sheep and goats, among other things such as flour, olive oil and wine. Now do you know what this signifies for a person?”

“No” Sam and Michael answered together. On this, at least, they agreed.

“It means that you might have a fierce bull inside you, and that bull you have to sacrifice to G-d” continued Mr. Benson.

“Well, I don’t think I have a bull inside me, I never go Moo” said Michael, still speaking in a hyper way to his teacher.

“That’s true” said Mr. Benson, “but you might have a animal instinct inside of you, for example now, you two boys are running around like two wild bulls” said Mr. Benson. He had a smile on his face, so it didn’t sound as if he were telling them off.

“Alright” said Sam “we do have an animal inside us, so now how do we offer it to G-d?”

“Well, if you are bouncing with energy, then maybe see if you tough guys could carry that oven outside and put it in the van?” said Mr Benson.

“Sounds like a great idea” said Michael. “Let’s see if I am a strong ox!” said Sam, and they went to go and drag the big oven into the van, using their energy for something good, offering it to G-d.

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