



A MOMENT OF DEDICATION

THE CENTRE OF THE LIFE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE IS THE SANCTUARY. In the time of Moses this was built at Mount Sinai and was transported through the desert. When the Jewish people camped, the Sanctuary was set up. Later it was built in more solid form as the Temple in Jerusalem. However, the First Temple and later the Second were both destroyed. Only the West Wall of the Temple Mount remains, visited by Jews from all over the world.

We await the rebuilding of the Temple, which will take place with the coming of the Messiah. Yet we are also aware that there is another Sanctuary, which we ourselves can build. This is the inner Sanctuary within the life of each individual.

This week's Sedra¹ and the next describe some aspects of the service in the Sanctuary built by Moses. The goal is to incorporate the equivalent of these in our personal lives. Through this, just as the *Shechinah*, the Divine Presence, dwelt in the Temple, so too it will dwell in our hearts and our homes.

One of the main functions of the Temple was the bringing of offerings. The most important of these was called the 'Continual Offering'. It was brought in two parts: a lamb in the morning, the first of all offerings to be brought each day; and a lamb in the afternoon, concluding the Temple service. With the

lamb was brought a small quantity of wine, olive-oil, flour and salt.

What do we learn from this Continual Offering? That in order to be dedicated to G-d, and to have the Divine Presence dwelling in our lives - we do not have to burn everything we possess on the Altar! In quantity, G-d does not make a great demand: just a small part of each aspect of our possessions, expressed by the lamb, the wine, olive-oil, flour and salt: animal, vegetable, and mineral. The cost of this itself was shared by the entire Jewish people.

However, in quality there is a greater demand: the offering should be brought with the whole heart, with spirit and joy, and with dependable *constancy*. Then our daily offering draws the Divine Presence into our heart and into our home.

How can we express this Continual Offering? On one level, through the morning and afternoon prayers, which correspond to the morning and afternoon Continual Offering. Yet there is also another step. This is, in a very personal and private way, by regularly dedicating our first waking moment to G-d. We do this by reciting a little prayer as soon as we awake: *Modeh Ani*. "I thank You, everlasting King, for returning my soul..." It is found in every Prayerbook.

This pure moment of dedication at the very beginning of the day has the effect of drawing holiness into every aspect of our lives. Like the Continual Offering in the Temple it also has the power to bring atonement, putting right our various spiritual errors. People are not perfect. Yet through a daily moment of dedication, with the force of a continual offering, we re-connect with our Creator. We resolve to dedicate our energy and joy to things which are pure and wholesome. In response to our offering, G-d gives us blessing....

The ultimate blessing will be the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, when again we will bring the Continual Offering to G-d².

1. Leviticus chapters 1-5. 2. Based on the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 3, pp.939-942.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

SPONSORED BY DR REUVEN JOEL



53

SEDRA VAYIKRA

THE JOURNEY

"Where am I?" Ben looked around rubbing his eyes as he saw throngs of people milling about. "What are they all doing?" he wondered. Up the hill he could see a large white structure from which there seemed to be a pillar of smoke going up in a straight line and all the people around him seemed to be wearing flowing robes. He noticed at the corners of the robes fringes of Tzitzit with deep blue threads.

"Wow! This looks like the Temple!" he thought as he pinched himself to check that he was not dreaming. "Ouch!!!... I am not dreaming".

Ben had somehow managed to land himself back in time to the days of the Temple and was in the Holy Land of Israel on the Temple Mount itself.

"Thank G-d I listened to all those Sedra classes," he thought to himself "because now I at least know some of the Hebrew words".

"Um... um... shalom!" he tried to start a conversation with one of the people standing near him.

At first the man laughed at his strange accent, not realizing that the boy addressing him had just landed from two thousand years ahead in time, and that he owned a mobile phone that could call Australia any time!

However, after a while, they ended up having a very pleasant conversation. The man told him all about the daily sacrifices they bring in the Temple, described in the Torah. All they had to bring twice a day, on behalf of the entire Jewish people, was just one sheep and a little flour and wine, which was really very little, said the man, if you thought about how many sheep the one street he lived on would go through each week.

Ben thought about it, and agreed with him. It made him think of eating lamb at home. "You know," said the man, "you can learn a very important lesson from this."

Ben thought about it, but could not guess. "Please tell me," he said.

"G-d doesn't need massive gifts from us in order for us to show that we are serving Him. All G-d wants from us is a small amount of dedication, and a lot of heart, and then you are fine. "

Ben smiled at the man, and the man smiled back. Behind him was the clear blue Jerusalem sky, and the beautiful Temple... Some moments later Ben woke up to the soft voice of his mother. "Ben, time for breakfast and school!"

Ben smiled and said the Hebrew prayer "Modeh Ani", thanking G-d for giving him back his soul. The thought passed through Ben's mind, that with these words he was dedicating himself to G-d, as if he too were bringing an offering in the Temple.

He washed his hands from the cup and bowl by his bed, and jumped out of bed. "Ben," said his mother, looking amused, "you look very cheerful today!"

"I am, Mummy. I am!"

***Torah teachings are holy –
please treat this page with care***