

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

PARSHAS
VAYIKRA

בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
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אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

LOUDER THAN WORDS

In *Parshas Vayikra* we encounter what is perhaps the predominant function of the *Mishkan*, which is the bringing of *korbonos*. Besides the standard *korbonos* that were brought daily, the people of *Klal Yisrael* brought all manner of *korbonos*, for every different type of situation. Whether to say thank you, for forgiveness, or for specific *aveiros*, there was a *korbon* for every circumstance.

All this leads to the question - what is the purpose of *korbonos*? Does Hashem really need us to bring animals for Him? How do *korbonos* bring us closer to Hashem?

The Ramban¹ (Reb Moshe ben Nachman, 1194–1270) explains that we are affected by the actions that we take, the words that we say, and the thoughts that we think. These three categories serve to change the type of person that we are. Therefore, if someone does an *aveirah* and wants to do *teshuvah*, the best way to do so is to do something real, something concrete. Thinking about the sin is one thing, but seeing an example of what could happen to one who sins is another. By bringing a *korbon*, we are showing how terrible we feel - how we think that we should be the ones to be chastised.

When a person is thankful to Hashem, thinking how wonderful Hashem is one thing. But again, 'giving' Hashem something as a way of thank you makes our happiness and thankfulness much more real.

The truth is, it's not only *korbonos* that affect the way we think and feel. All of our actions, whether they are positive or negative, can change and influence us. If we push ourselves to do things that are uplifting, even when we are not in the mood, our very personalities will change, and we will become better people. Conversely, if we choose to hurt others and the like, over time we will become cruel and bitter people.

We often think that our actions are the results of our thoughts and feelings, and many times that is indeed true. However, it is important to be aware that our actions also *affect* our thoughts and feelings, and by being mindful of our actions, we can truly change the person who we are.

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

The idea that our actions affect our inner emotions and thoughts is a powerful tool to use in our *avodas Hashem*. There are times where we may not feel like doing something, or we feel like doing something that we know we shouldn't. In fact, there are times where we may feel stuck - this is the way that I am, and that's that!

It will take work, but if we push ourselves to act a certain way, we will change. Much like exercise, if we keep working at something, there is no doubt that we'll become stronger, and that which we thought was so difficult is now so easy.

However, like exercise, one should be careful in how fast they push themselves. If one attempts to do too much too soon, not only will they not grow, but they may end up hurting themselves in the long run.

Like in all areas of self-growth, it is essential that one know oneself, where they stand in *avodas Hashem*, and how much they can push themselves. As one grows, they will find that they can push themselves further and further up the ladder of *avodas Hashem*.

1 *Vayikra* 1:9 s.v. עולה לשם

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(Amongst his myriad hidden and revealed studies) we observed that he would study *Sifrei Mussar* several times each day. - *Ma'aseh Rav* (record of personal halachic practices of the Vilna Gaon), *Hilchos Tefilla*, Chap. 60

PRACTICE MAKES PERCEPTION

Dov Katzowitz* felt that he was no different than the next fellow. "We all have our faults, and I have mine," he would say. Though he learned in yeshiva, and generally kept *halachah*, there was one area that he simply could not break through - Dov had a terrible time getting up for *Shacharis*. *Davening* wasn't particularly early, but that didn't stop Dov from hitting the snooze button until he had missed *minyan*. It came to a point where Dov just felt that he was not capable of getting up on time, no matter what trick or alarm he tried.

Time moved on, Dov married and had his first child. Suddenly, the differences between night and day became less distinct, as Dov found himself awake at all hours of the night. His son started sleeping through the night as he grew older, but Dov still found himself waking up in the six o'clock hour to the sound of crying. "Once I'm up," thought Dov, "I might as well go to *Shacharis* instead of going back to sleep."

Dov's daily routine had him waking up every morning, taking care of his son, and then leaving to *Shacharis*. One day, a bleary-eyed Dov woke up to find that his house was silent. His son was sleeping! "Finally, he's old enough to sleep through the night," Dov thought. "I can turn over and go back to sleep!" Dov started to close his eyes, but he just couldn't shake the feeling that *Shacharis* was fast approaching. How could he sleep through *davening*?

Taking a deep breath, Dov got out of bed, dressed, and went to *Shacharis* like he did every day. He returned home to his smiling wife, who immediately understood what had occurred. "What can I say?" said Dov, with a smile. "I honestly thought that I just could not get out of bed! Looks like it took some habituation, and my entire attitude changed. Who would have thought!?"

"I honestly thought that I just could not get out of bed! Looks like it took some habituation, and my entire attitude changed. Who would have thought!?"

**Based on a true story, name has been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- It is very difficult to immediately have all the proper thoughts behind one's actions. Therefore, one should not be discouraged when one's actions feel insincere, as long as they are trying to grow.¹
- If when asking Hashem for forgiveness one does not feel remorseful, they should at least use a sad tone.²
- A person should learn Torah, even if he is doing it for his own honor. Over time, he will end up learning Torah for the sake of the Torah.³

1 *Ruach Chaim* on *Avos* 1:13 s.v. נגיד שמא

2 *Mishnah Berurah* 119:4

3 *Shulchan Aruch*, *Y"D* 246:20, *Shach* *ibid.* note 19