

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

SAV

Haftarah: Yirmiyahu 7:21-8:3, 9:22-23
MARCH 25-26, 2016 16 ADAR II 5776

**DEDICATIONS: By Stuart Benson - in memory of his mother, Rhoda Benson,
Rachel Bat Eliyahu z"l, 19 Adar II.**

Mazal Tov to Allison and Jesse Sutton on the Birth of a baby boy

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Editors Notes

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**From: Dave Steinberg
Mission Chair, Norpac Mission to Washington**

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Editors Notes Saying Thank You

Last week, we began the book of Vayikra which we call Torat Kohanim as Vayikra or Leviticus details the sacrifices brought in the Tabernacle and later on in the Bet HaMikdash in Jerusalem. Last week, the opening portion listed all the sacrifices that an individual might bring with one exception. The exception is added in this weeks portion of Sav. It is the Korban Todah or the [Thanksgiving offering. Rashi commenting on the verse explains that a thanksgiving offering is brought by "someone who experienced a personal miracle". The examples brought by Rashi are later codified as the four individuals obligated to thank Hashem through a Korban Todah. These are people who recovered from illness; were freed from prison; crossed the ocean; or traversed the desert.

The Vilna Gaon points out that when the children of Israel came out of Egypt they were saved from these same four dangers. Hashem took us out of Egypt which is compared to a prison. We were then brought through the desert and crossed through the sea. And as the midrash explains when we arrived at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, those were sick among us were healed. Perhaps these four types of redemptions play a role in the repetition of the number four during the Seder on Passover.

Today we obviously have no Bet HaMikdash and we cannot fulfill our obligation of thanking Hashem for saving us from these dangers by bringing a Korban Todah. Instead the rabbis instituted the blessing of Gomer. Typically we go up to the Torah in the presence of a minyan and we recite the blessing, "Ha'gomer lechayavim tovot shegemalani kol tuv. Blessed are You Hashem, King of the Universe, who bestows good things upon the "guilty", who has bestowed every goodness upon me". The translation of Chayavim as guilty follows the understanding that we are alluding to the fact that Hashem bestows kindness upon us even though we are not worthy of it.

Rabbi Abittan would remind us that the Korban Todah was unique in many ways. We were required

to eat it on the same day on which it was offered. In this short span of time, a large amount of food had to be consumed. For in addition to the actual animal offering (which was either a bull, a calf, a ram, a sheep or a goat), 30 loaves of unleavened bread and 10 loaves of leavened bread were offered and consumed.

How in the world could the person bringing the offering eat all that food before the night faded away? That's when friends, family and kohanim come in handy. The rabbi would explain that the thanksgiving offering was to be celebrated by sharing one's appreciation and joy with others. He might invite people he met on the road or those who came across in Jerusalem. They would ask what the occasion was and he would go into detail recounting the miracle he experienced and how happy he felt in being saved by G-d.

The rabbi would suggest that any time someone had an obligation to say Gomel, he also make a seudah being it lunch on Shabbat, seuda shelishi or even breakfast and recount his story and his appreciation. I know that for some of us who regularly travel by plane, Gomel can become a twice weekly blessing at times. Still though, it must be a moment that we stop and reflect and appreciate and share that appreciation with others.

Rabbi Abittan would suggest that the person truly grateful for Hashem's deliverance, the necessity to share with others the exhilarating feelings of thankfulness, appreciation and closeness to Hashem and awe at His greatness is instinctive and spontaneous. The Korban Todah allowed us express our gratitude in the company of friends and family and the fact that we are without the Mikdash should not diminish this aspect.

Depending upon when you read this, you will either be looking forward to your Purim Seudah, you may be eating the Purim meal or Purim may be a memory in the rear view window and you are looking forward to the Passover Seders. I believe that this idea as articulated by the Rabbi should be expressed at each meal and gathering. Not only in enumerating the endless list of coincidences which hid the miracles of Purim or recounting the on Passover the exodus from Egypt. We must retell our own stories, our own Exodus and our miracles and those of our fathers and grandfathers before us. As that generation which links us to a world we never knew wanes, we must redouble our efforts.

In closing, I am deeply grateful to Artscroll for putting out this past week a new book titled Nouri. The book details the life of my "uncle" Nouri Dayan. Nouri was

my dad's first cousin, but after his mother, my great aunt Shefiha, was murdered in Damascus in 1919, Nouri came with my great-grandmother Farha to America and was eventually raised in my Grandmother Esther's house as a sibling of my father. The book begins by recounting – much of which is in my dad's words, my great grandfather Joseph's journeys from Baghdad to Bombay, from Damascus to Algeria, from Lyon to San Francisco and eventually settling in New York. One joins my grandfather Reuben in American University and his escape through Beirut's Harbor. We sit with the two of them at the World's Fair and hear the rat tat tat of the silver they are chasing. We come to Brooklyn and experience the beginnings of the community, the building of Ahi Ezer and the foundations which support us to this day. The book is a source of the stories we must tell over and the histories we need to be thankful for. It gives reason to invite others to join for a meal and to tell them how appreciative we are; for the passage of our ancestors across the sea, across the desert and being saved from impossible situations. A written Psalm of Thanks.

Not because of the 'occupation' Boaz Bismuth

On Nov. 14, a day after the appalling terrorist attacks in Paris, French President Francois Hollande declared that France was at war. It was precisely the last thing that the citizens of France in particular, and Europe in general, wanted to hear. Hollande also announced a state of emergency in the country following the attacks, which were likely planned in terrorist states like Syria, Iraq and Belgium.

Even before trying to understand why, the people of France, along with their European compatriots, wanted to know how long their daily lives would be disrupted. A war on terror you say? Come on, we live in Europe, not the Middle East. "When Europe opens its mouth," former French President Francois Mitterrand once famously quipped, "it is only to yawn." Thus, when living in a state of denial, the results are sure to follow. Welcome to "Brusselistan!"

How symbolic that the two horrific bombings in Brussels, which claimed the lives of at least 30 people, occurred at the airport and the "Europe" metro station, adjacent to European Union headquarters. These were not random targets chosen by the Islamic State group, which perhaps wants to show us that the capital of Europe is now a capital of terror. It is the best place from which to send a menacing message to the "infidel crusaders who have more dark days ahead." And in some type

of sick competition, it is also a message to al-Qaida: We too know how to carry out coordinated attacks.

For anyone who forgot, last Friday the Belgians breathed a collective sigh of relief. Salah Abdeslam, one of the Paris terrorists, was captured in Molenbeek, a suburb of Brussels that has morphed into a "made-in-Belgium" jihadist breeding ground under the nose of the authorities. Residents of Molenbeek are Belgian born and educated, and receive social welfare benefits; and in retrospect, unofficially of course, also assume a license to kill other Belgians. The reason? Jihad. Not the occupation, not a sense of despair, not George W. Bush -- jihad. After Iraq and Syria, they are thinking to themselves in ISIS, why not expand the caliphate to Belgium as well?

The manhunt for Abdeslam took four months. A petty criminal, who in the name of Islam became an arch-terrorist. It was clear to everyone that his associates - those who helped him carry out his attack, escape and hide -- were still walking around free. It was only logical to expect more attacks. We can even assume that after Abdeslam was caught, they realized the need to carry out their pre-planned attacks quickly, as he would likely divulge information during his interrogation. Apparently, however, the Belgian security forces were busy patting themselves on the back instead of interrogating him properly.

And while the lawyers and court were busy discussing the terms of Abdeslam's extradition to France, his pals were setting the wheels in motion for their coordinated bombings.

I lived in Europe for many years. And for many years the Europeans didn't want to listen to a word about terror. There was always a reason: It was either terror against Jews, or America, or against the imperialists. Other times it was because of the war in Algeria or the war in Iraq. The Kurds, awkwardly, were always rather forgotten.

The Europeans always found an excuse for the acts of terror on their soil. For whatever reason, it made them feel better. And when the excuses run out there is always the ultimate go-to, responsible for all the acts of terror on the continent: the Zionist occupation and oppression of the Palestinians. After all, everyone knows that Abdeslam couldn't sleep at night because of the "bitter fate" of his brethren in Gaza. Really, enough is enough already! Can the pundits in Israel please stop spewing this nonsense at every turn?

The enemy is already within

But please, ladies and gentlemen, don't stress the Europeans out with talk of war. Don't stress them out with Islamic terror. Incidentally, try not to stress U.S. President Barack Obama out either. It is too romantic and pleasant living in denial, in a world where everyone loves everyone and there are no wars; and where Muslim immigrants from Iraq and Syria integrate seamlessly without dangerous jihadist infiltrators among them.

Perhaps, despite everything, Tuesday's bomb blasts in Brussels can snap the continent out of its daydream. The horrors afflicted on Brussels were due to the laxness of the Belgian security forces and the government's blindness. And their failures came at a heavy price. How many more attacks are needed, how many more casualties, for the other foot to drop and the realization that we are not just at war, but a third world war between the enlightened world and forces of darkness. Between those who would drag us back to the seventh century, or worse, bring the seventh century to our doorstep.

We should not fault the European citizen. Europe, steered by the powers that be, is no longer built to fight wars. Its governments have downsized their military and intelligence budgets significantly. As for Europe's large, sensitive Muslim populations, their sensibilities must not be offended at all costs, even if it requires turning a blind eye. How painful indeed when the illusion of an entire continent blows up in its face. Perhaps it would be better for Europe to keep its eyes shut, or, alternatively, conclude yet again that the "reason" for their ills is none other than the "Palestinian problem."

Europe wanted to believe that those watershed years of 732, 1529 or 1638 -- when the Muslims threatened to conquer the continent -- belonged to the past. Europe, doesn't understand that the situation today is much worse. Then, as we know, the Muslim invader was blocked by walls. Today, the enemy doesn't even need to invade. He is already there, at home; he only needs to prepare a homemade bomb and step into the street. He also sees no army standing in his way.

Were we to go back in time to March 25, 1957 -- when the Treaty of Rome was signed and the EU was essentially created -- and tell the Europeans that 59 years later Britain would issue a travel warning to Belgium, we can assume we would be institutionalized. But "Belgistan" is already something else entirely. It is truly dangerous to go there. If the slumber continues and Europe loses this fight, our grandchildren will be learning the continents of North

and South America, Africa, Asia and "Europstan." And I can already see some pundit explaining to the viewers how the Jews are responsible. What, you didn't know? This is all happening because the Palestinians are being oppressed. It's all good, just as long as there is a reason not to go to war.

Summary of the Perasha Sav

1st Aliya: Additional instructions regarding the Olah - ascent offering, and the Mincha - meal offering are detailed.

2nd Aliya: The special meal offering of the Kohain Gadol and the special inaugural meal offering of the regular Kohain is described. This was the same offering in both cases; however, the Kohain Gadol brought his offering every day while the regular Kohain did so only on the day of his inauguration into the service of the Bais Hamikdash. Additional laws of the sin offering, and the guilt offering are detailed.

3rd Aliya: Additional laws of the peace offering are detailed along with those portions of the offering that must be shared with the Kohain.

4th, 5th, 6th, & 7th Aliyot: The remainder of the Parsha describes the first seven days of the inaugural process for Aharon and his four sons. Moshe functioned as the Kohain Gadol to officiate over the inaugural process, and Aharon and his sons were forbidden to leave the Mishkan the entire time

FROM THE JERSEY SHORE NEWSLETTER

“The innards and the legs, he washed with water, and Moshe sacrificed the entire animal on the altar.” (Vayikra 8:21)

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin zt”l (quoted in Torah Ladaat) points out that we can derive an important lesson from Moshe Rabenu’s conduct, that one must be willing to perform even unpleasant tasks for the sake of a misvah. Many people are anxious to perform misvot only as long as they are not required to roll up their sleeves and do any “dirty work.” However, once such a situation arises, they avoid assisting because they consider it beneath their dignity. By contrast, we see that Moshe Rabenu was not satisfied with merely sacrificing the animal and delegating the unpleasant task of cleaning the innards to another person. He even did that part of the preparations by himself.

Similarly we see many instances in which gedolim did even the most mundane tasks for the sake of a misvah. The Gemara relates how certain emoraim (Rabbis mentioned in the Gemara) insisted on performing the most menial jobs – singeing the

hairs of an animal, salting fish – for the sake of Shabbat (Kidushin 41a).

A story is told how after a deep snow, the Hafess Hayim zt”l would make a path in the snow leading to the Bet Midrash so that his students would not be inconvenienced. Rabbi Reuven Semah

“The Kohen shall wear his linen tunic...and he shall remove the ash” (Vayikra 6:3)

The Kohen who did the service of separating the ashes from the altar would first change his clothing, and then remove the ashes outside the camp. This second part of the service seems to be a menial task, and as such, he was not supposed to do it with his regular garments. Yet it seems that it was the same Kohen who would take out the ashes, just that he had different clothing for this less glamorous task.

The lesson we can learn is that in the eyes of Hashem, any service, however menial it seems to be, is important and is given over to the same Kohen who does the regular sacrifices. In a king’s palace, we will have a cook, waiters, busboys, cleaning help, etc. - each with a higher or lower level job. In the service of Hashem, any time we serve him, we are doing HIS WILL. Therefore, the same Kohen will do all aspects since they are all ways to serve Hashem. We should remember this whenever we do misvot which may not seem so glamorous! Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

A SENSE OF GRATITUDE

“If he shall offer the Thanksgiving Offering.” (Vayikra 7:12)

In Parashat Sav we read about the Korban Todah – Thanksgiving offering – through which those who had experienced a personal salvation would offer their thanks to Hashem.

The quality of recognizing that one received an act of kindness and saying thank you is not limited to verbal thanks; one’s gratitude should change the way that he relates to that person from then onwards.

The most extraordinary example of this lesson is found in the Torah as the Jews were leaving Egypt. Rashi writes that the Jewish People left Egypt carrying weapons. If so, asks the Hatam Sofer, why did Hashem have to perform such a great miracle by drowning the Egyptians in the sea – Hashem could have commanded them to fight the Egyptians and though a miracle ensure their victory?

The Hatam Sofer answers that the Jewish People were not permitted to fight Egypt directly because they had a duty of gratitude to the country which had hosted Ya’akov and his family when Yosef brought them down to Egypt. The Hatam Sofer bases this principle on the Gemara’s

words: "Into the well from which you drank, do not throw stones."

This incredible statement from the Hatam Sofer means that despite decades of slavery, where an entire nation was abused, tortured and forced to work to an unthinkable degree, and whose young children were systematically thrown into the Nile River, nevertheless, the Jewish people were bound to a level of gratitude for something that benefited their grandparents and great-grandparents.

From here we see just how far our sense of gratitude should take us, towards people, and even more so, towards Hashem. (Short Vort)

NO REST IS BEST

An important step towards self-improvement is taking spiritual inventory on a regular basis. We must do a certified statement of our spiritual balance sheet, taking credits and debits into account. The great of the Mussar movement suggest a daily accounting of our behavior.

There is a danger, however, to be aware of and avoid: complacency. When you evaluate your spiritual level and see that the days and months of study and personality improvement have turned you into someone who is a much better person than you were two or three years ago, you may feel smug satisfaction and perhaps even a touch of ga'avah (haughtiness). The feeling that you have done enough is a self-defeating tactic introduced by your yesser hara, who cannot tolerate all the progress you have made. He will go so far as to praise your progress in order to derail your spiritual freight train from speeding down the track to perfection.

When you feel good about your overall progress in Torah observance and personality improvement, keep in mind that your progress is certainly commendable, but there is still much more to do. Kill that complacency before it grows too large to overcome. This change in attitude will keep you growing until you reach the sky! (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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The Special Joy of Purim

The Gemara tells in Masechet Shabbat that at the time of the Purim miracle, the Jews reaffirmed their acceptance of the Torah. The first time our nation announced their acceptance of the Torah, of course, was at Mount Sinai, when the Torah was first given. The Gemara tells that at that time, the Jews accepted the Torah against their will, as G-d suspended the mountain over them and threatened to kill them if they did not accept it. At the time of the Purim

miracle, they accepted it anew, only this time without any coercion.

How might we explain this reaffirmation of Kabbalat Ha'Torah? What is the significance of the Jews' reacceptance of the Torah at time of the Purim story?

The Mishna famously teaches in Pirkeh Abot (4:2), "Misva Goreret Misva" – one Misva leads to another. If a person performs a Misva, he is naturally led to perform another. As the Mishna proceeds to teach, the reward for one Misva is another Misva.

The question arises as to how to reconcile the Mishna's teaching with empirical evidence. Is it really true that one Misva leads to another? Don't we all know, unfortunately, people who were very committed to Torah learning and Misva observance and have since become nonobservant? Haven't we seen people try taking on Misvot but then give it up? And can we ourselves honestly say that every time we perform a Misva we are naturally drawn to performing another?

The Ba'al Shem Tob, among others, answered by explaining the Mishna as referring only to those Misvot which one performs with joy and enthusiasm. If a person feels excited over the privilege of serving our King, then this excitement will propel him to perform even more Misvot. If a famous and distinguished person asked us for even a small favor, such as bringing him a cup of coffee, we would assuredly rush with great excitement to fulfill his wish. This is the mindset with which we should be approaching all Misvot, even the seemingly "small" and "minor" obligations that we have to the Almighty. If the Creator of the universe is asking to do even a small "favor," shouldn't we feel excited? Indeed, this Mishna in Abot begins by exhorting us to show as much care and attention to "small" Misvot as we do to "larger" Misvot. And if we approach all Misvot with this kind of enthusiasm, then "Misva Goreret Misva" – each Misva we perform with joy and excitement will lead us to another Misva.

The reason why Misvot do not always inspire us to perform additional Misvot is because we too often perform them by rote, or even begrudgingly. We have a tendency to perform Misvot simply because we have to, or because this is what is expected, but without sincere feeling and joy. And thus they do not have the effect of "Misva Goreret Misva."

It has been suggested that this is the Gemara's intent in telling us about the Jews' reaffirmation of their acceptance of the Torah at the time of the Purim story. The Gemara says, "Hadar Kibluha Bi'yemeh

Ahashverosh," which is commonly understood to mean, "They accepted it again during the time of Ahashverosh." However, this phrase can also be interpreted to mean that the Jews accepted the Torah in a manner that had the effect of "Hadar" – repeating their Misva performance. At the time of the Purim miracle, they accepted the Torah out of joy and with enthusiasm, and this ensured that every Misva would lead to another. This is the significance of the Jews' reacceptance of the Torah in the wake of this miracle.

The special joy of Purim is the joy of Misvot, the joy of recognizing that the Almighty wants us, and only us, to serve Him. The more we feel this sense of privilege, and the more excitement we experience when we observe the Misvot, the more we will experience the process of "Misva Goreret Misva," the process of continued growth and ongoing, lifelong advancement in our service of Hashem

**VICTOR BIBI
SOD HAPARASHA**

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Rabbi Wein

The parsha deals initially with the concept of an eternal flame or light that would continually be present on the holy altar in the Mishkan/Tabernacle. This is not the sole instance in the Torah where this concept of an eternal flame, fire or light is discussed. The great golden candelabra in the Mishkan/Tabernacle was also to have one light that was to be deemed an eternal light that was never to be extinguished. Millennia later, our synagogues commemorate this concept of an eternal light in the holy house of prayer with the presence of a ner tamid fixture over the holy ark of the Torah scrolls.

The question arises as to the symbolism and meaning of this eternal fire. Who and what does it represent and what is its message to our society and world. The simple explanation of the eternity of this flame is that it symbolizes God's constant and unending presence in our lives and in the national life of the Jewish people. He is always present even if He is unseen, unrecognized and even purposely ignored by His creatures.

The eternal fire reflects the eternity of the Creator, the eternity of Torah and of the people of Israel. In a world where little today is held to be lasting let alone eternal, the reminder of an eternal flame is necessary and vital. There have been myriad temporary gods that have bedeviled humankind over the ages. The

entire pantheon of paganism was built upon differing and constantly changing gods. Only Israel had the vision of a universal, unchanging and eternal God.

But, perhaps there is an even more cogent message from the eternal flame to us. Many times in life we make sacrifices in order to achieve ends that we desire. This is certainly true in the material sphere of our lives. Long hours and great exertion are the norm of our workday lives. Not always are our sacrifices rewarded with social, professional or monetary success and achievement.

We tend then to view them - our efforts and sacrifices - as being in vain and a wasted effort. However we may feel about those material spheres of our lives, this does not hold true for our spiritual efforts and pursuits. No effort, even if it appears to us to be unsuccessful and even inconsequential, is wasted. The spirit remains eternal.

The rabbis in Avot taught us that according to the effort so is the reward. There are a number of interpretations of this cryptic phrase. One meaning is that the effort will be rewarded even if the goal of that effort has not yet been achieved. For effort on behalf of spiritual matters – charity, Torah study, the welfare of the Jewish people, etc. – is blessed with an eternal quality that survives because it becomes part of our eternal soul. The sacrifices made on behalf of our souls live on as part of our Godly nature, the eternal flame that the Creator has placed within us all.

**Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks
Understanding Sacrifice**

One of the most difficult elements of the Torah and the way of life it prescribes is the phenomenon of animal sacrifices – for obvious reasons. First, Jews and Judaism have survived without them for almost two thousand years. Second, virtually all the prophets were critical of them, not least Jeremiah in this week's haftarah.[1] None of the prophets sought to abolish sacrifices, but they were severely critical of those who offered them while at the same time oppressing or exploiting their fellow human beings. What disturbed them – what disturbed God in whose name they spoke – was that evidently some people thought of sacrifices as a kind of bribe: if we make a generous enough gift to God then He may overlook our crimes and misdemeanours. This is an idea radically incompatible with Judaism.

Then again, along with monarchy, sacrifices were among the least distinctive features of Judaism in ancient times. Every ancient religion in those days, every cult and sect, had its altars and sacrifices.

Finally, it remains remarkable how simply and smoothly the sages were able to construct substitutes for sacrifice, three in particular: prayer, study and tzedakah. Prayer, particularly Shacharit, Mincha and Musaf, took the place of the regular offerings. One who studies the laws of sacrifice is as if he had brought a sacrifice. And one who gives to charity brings, as it were, a financial sacrifice, acknowledging that all we have we owe to God.

So, though we pray daily for the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of sacrifices, the principle of sacrifice itself remains hard to understand. Many theories have been advanced by anthropologists, psychologists and Bible scholars as to what the sacrifices represented, but most are based on the questionable assumption that sacrifice is essentially the same act across cultures. This is poor scholarship. Always seek to understand a practice in terms of the distinctive beliefs of the culture in which it takes place. What could sacrifice possibly mean in a religion in which God is the creator and owner of all?

What, then, was sacrifice in Judaism and why does it remain important, at least as an idea, even today? The simplest answer – though it does not explain the details of the different kinds of offering – is this: We love what we are willing to make sacrifices for. That is why, when they were a nation of farmers and shepherds, the Israelites demonstrated their love of God by bringing Him a symbolic gift of their flocks and herds, their grain and fruit; that is, their livelihood. To love is to thank. To love is to want to bring an offering to the Beloved. To love is to give.[2] Sacrifice is the choreography of love.

This is true in many aspects of life. A happily married couple is constantly making sacrifices for one another. Parents make huge sacrifices for their children. People drawn to a calling – to heal the sick, or care for the poor, or fight for justice for the weak against the strong – often sacrifice remunerative careers for the sake of their ideals. In ages of patriotism, people make sacrifices for their country. In strong communities people make sacrifices for one another when someone is in distress or needs help. Sacrifice is the superglue of relationship. It bonds us to one another.

That is why, in the biblical age, sacrifices were so important – not as they were in other faiths but precisely because at the beating heart of Judaism is love: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” In other faiths the driving motive behind sacrifice was fear: fear of the anger and power of the gods. In

Judaism it was love.

We see this in the Hebrew word for sacrifice itself: the noun *korban*, and the verb *lehakriv*, which mean, “to come, or bring close”. The name of God invariably used in connection with the sacrifices is *Hashem*, God in his aspect of love and compassion, never *Elokim*, God as justice and distance. The word *Elokim* occurs only five times in the whole of the book of *Vayikra*, and always in the context of other nations. The word *Hashem* appears 209 times. And as we saw last week, the very name of the book, *Vayikra*, means to summon in love. Where there is love, there is sacrifice.

Once we realise this we begin to understand how deeply relevant the concept of sacrifice is in the twenty-first century. The major institutions of the modern world – the liberal democratic state and the free-market economy – were predicated on the model of the rational actor, that is, one who acts to maximise the benefits to him- or herself.

Hobbes’ account of the social contract was that it is in the interests of each of us to hand over some of our rights to a central power charged with ensuring the rule of law and the defence of the realm. Adam Smith’s insight into the market economy was that if we each act to maximise our own advantage, the result is the growth of the common-wealth. Modern politics and economics were built on the foundation of the rational pursuit of self-interest.

There was nothing wrong with this. It was done for the highest of motives. It was an attempt to create peace in a Europe that had for centuries been ravaged by war. The democratic state and the market economy were serious attempts to harness the power of self-interest to combat the destructive passions that led to violence.[3] The fact that politics and economics were based on self-interest did not negate the possibility that families and communities were sustained by altruism. It was a good system, not a bad one.

Now, however, after several centuries, the idea of love-as-sacrifice has grown thin in many areas of life. We see this specifically in relationships. Throughout the West, fewer people are getting married, they are getting married later, and almost half of marriages end in divorce. Throughout Europe, indigenous populations are in decline. To have a stable population, a country must have an average birth rate of 2.1 children per female. In 2015 the average birth-rate throughout the European Union was 1.55. In Spain it was 1.27. Germany has the lowest birth-rate of any country in the world.[4] That is why the

population of Europe is today rendered stable only on the basis of unprecedented rates of immigration.

Lose the concept of sacrifice within a society, and sooner or later marriage falters, parenthood declines, and the society slowly ages and dies. My late predecessor, Lord Jakobovits, had a lovely way of putting this. The Talmud says that when a man divorces his first wife, "the altar sheds tears" (Gittin 90b). What is the connection between the altar and a marriage? Both, he said, are about sacrifices. Marriages fail when the partners are unwilling to make sacrifices for one another.

Jews and Judaism survived despite the many sacrifices people had to make for it. In the eleventh century Judah Halevi expressed something closer to awe at the fact that Jews stayed Jewish despite the fact that "with a word lightly spoken" they could have converted to the majority faith and lived a life of relative ease (Kuzari 4:23) Equally possible though is that Judaism survived because of those sacrifices. Where people make sacrifices for their ideals, the ideals stay strong. Sacrifice is an expression of love.

Not all sacrifice is holy. Today's suicide bombers sacrifice their lives and those of their victims in a way I have argued (in Not In God's Name) is sacrilege. Indeed the very existence of animal sacrifice in the Torah may have been a way of preventing people from offering human sacrifice in the form of violence and war. But the principle of sacrifice remains. It is the gift we bring to what and whom we love.

[1] Jeremiah 7:22, "When I freed your fathers from the land of Egypt, I did not speak with them or command them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifice" – a remarkable statement. See Rashi and Radak ad loc., and especially Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed, III: 32.

[2] The verb "to love" – a-h-v – is related to the verbs h-v-h, h-v-v and y-h-v, all of which have the sense of giving, bringing, or offering.

[3] The classic text is A. O. Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests, Princeton University Press, 1977.

[4] The Observer, 23 August 2015.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"To waive it as a wave-offering before Hashem." (7:30)

Said Rabbi Jochanan : He waives it forth and back to Him that owns the four winds, and he heaves it up and down to Him that owns the heavens and the earth. (Succah 37B). Thus the Mitzvah of T'nufah is intended, among other purposes, to demonstrate that the meat which men enjoy is a miracle of kindness which can be bestowed solely by the Master of the winds and the owner of heaven and earth.

The cattle and sheep produce meat from the grass and the water which they ingest, and this in itself is a marvel of bottomless profundity, never to be equaled by any human contrivance. But the grass is a stupendous miracle in itself, for it is derived from the carbon-dioxide which composes but 3 parts in 10,000 of the air. The plant would quickly exhaust all the carbon-dioxide which is near it, and the plant would then perish. But the wondrous movement of the air (the 4 winds) provides a constant stream of additional carbon-dioxide, and " The world could not exist without the winds" (Taanit 3B).

An essential component, the sunlight, is also supplied by the Master of the heavens: and from 93 million miles away the light hastens at 186,000 miles per second at the bidding of its Master. The rain which nourishes the plant is derived from the bitter sea-water, which the sun evaporates and distills into pure water which nourishes the vegetation. The winds that convey the clouds of water-vapor over the continents, the sun that raises the pure water-vapor from the seas, the gravity which causes the condensed drops to fall, the miracle of soil in its ability to produce food, and many other infinitely cunning contrivances of which only the Master of the Winds and the owner of heaven and earth are capable.

All are testimonials to the endless Wisdom and Kindliness of their Creator. For this purpose the Mitzvah of T'nufah comes, to declare that the meat of the cattle and the flock, as well as all food, should be utilized by men in order to gain the chief achievement of Life:

The Awareness of The Creator's Wisdom and Kindliness - **Quoted from "A Kingdom of Cohanim" by Rabbi Avigdor Miller ZT'L**

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