
THE WEISS EDITION

אמור

Emor



Slave Rights

Self-Sacrifice with a Capital "S"

The Ultimate Kiddush Hashem

Sheepish Bread

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

תנצב"ה

אמור

Emor

כב:י-יא | 22:10-11

וְכָל זֶר לֹא יֵאָכֵל קֹדֶשׁ... וְכִהֵן בִּי יִקְנֶה
נַפֶּשׁ קָנִין בְּסִפּוֹ הוּא יֵאָכֵל בּוֹ.

No non-Kohen may eat the holy things... But if a Kohen acquires a person as a monetary acquisition, he [the slave] may eat of it.

Slave Rights

The Sages teach that one may not derive benefit from this world without first reciting a *berachah*—a blessing acknowledging G-d as the world’s creator and owner. They compared partaking of this world without a *berachah* to the prohibition of deriving personal benefit from *hekdesh*, objects dedicated to the Temple.¹

But how does the recitation of a *berachah* render benefit from G-d’s world permissible? Does the *berachah* cause G-d to relinquish His ownership of the universe?

1. Berachos 35a.

Though the *berachah* does not change the ownership of the item over which it was recited, it does change the status of the individual reciting it. And in their new reality, they may partake even from that which belongs to G-d alone.

For example, the Torah prohibits non-Kohanim from eating *terumah*, the share of agricultural produce that we give to the Kohanim. An exception to this rule, however, is a Kohen's servant, of whom the Torah says, "If a Kohen acquires a person as a monetary acquisition, he may eat of it." Similarly, there are select portions of the sacrificial meat that are off-limits to anyone other than a Kohen, yet a Kohen's servants may partake of them.²

We can likewise explain the significance of reciting a *berachah*. The text of the *berachah* affirms our acceptance of G-d as "*Elokeinu Melech ha'olam*, our L-rd, King of the universe." The *berachah* declares G-d's mastery of the entire universe, including the individual. Therefore, just as the servants of a Kohen may partake of foods that are ordinarily exclusive to their owner, so may those who recite a *berachah* enjoy the goodness of the world that is exclusively owned by G-d.

-*Sefer Hasichos 5751, vol. 2, p. 847*

2. See Talmud, Zevachim 55a.

 כב:לב | 22:32

וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

I shall be sanctified amidst the children of Israel.

Self-Sacrifice with a Capital “S”

The Torah’s directive that we should cause G-d to be sanctified teaches us the obligation of *mesiras nefesh*, meaning that in certain situations we must sacrifice our lives in order not to disobey G-d’s commands. When a Jew exhibits his commitment to G-d to the point that he is willing to surrender his life for Him, his devotion causes G-d to be revered and sanctified.

Now, from the verse in Tehillim “He declares *His* words to Yaakov, *His* rules and *His* ordinances to Yisrael,”³ the Midrash understands that “All that G-d instructs the Jewish people to do, He Himself fulfills as well.”⁴ Accordingly, if G-d commands the Jewish people to sacrifice their lives for the fulfillment of a mitzvah, it must be that G-d, too, observes this commandment!

Where do we see this? In the mitzvah of examining a woman who is a *sotah*, a woman accused of immoral behavior, who is prohibited to her husband until she is proven innocent. In order to restore their marriage, the Torah provides a process in which a portion of the Torah, containing several mentions of G-d’s name, is erased into water for the *sotah* to drink. The water will affect her negatively only if she is guilty. If it has no adverse effects on her, we consider her innocent and she may return to her husband.

3. 147:19.

4. Shemos Rabbah 30:9.

It can thus be said that G-d too sacrifices Himself,⁵ as it were, for the fulfillment of a mitzvah. In the words of the Talmud, “G-d declares: My Name, written in sanctity, shall be blotted out in water in order to make peace between a man and his wife!”⁶

—*Sefer Hasichos 5749, vol. 1, p. 290, fn. 68*

5. Since “G-d is One and His name is One” (Zechariah 14:9).

6. Shabbos 116a.

 כב:לב | 22:32

וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

I shall be sanctified amidst the children of Israel.

The Ultimate Kiddush Hashem

The Torah’s directive that “G-d shall be sanctified” teaches us the obligation of *mesiras nefesh*—to sacrifice our very lives for our faith (primarily, to choose death rather than transgressing the cardinal sins of idolatry, adultery or murder). When a Jew demonstrates his willingness to sacrifice his life in order not to abandon his faith, his devotion to G-d leads to G-d’s being revered and sanctified.

Rashi makes a point of mentioning, however, based on the Midrash,⁷ that “a person who surrenders his life [for the sanctification of G-d’s name] must do so with complete willingness to die. Because if a person surrenders himself to die but is hoping for a miracle, a miracle will not be performed for him.” This implies that the martyr’s innermost intentions and true willingness to die are integral to the sanctification of G-d’s name.

This is because, in Rashi’s view, although our greatest act of sanctifying G-d is to willingly sacrifice of our lives for our faith, yet when a Jew dies a martyr it is not *G-d’s* best publicity. On the contrary, when a Jew is harmed because of his religious beliefs, people deride the Torah and question G-d’s existence.⁸ The greatest possible glorification of G-d’s name

7. Toras Kohanim, Vayikra 22:32.

8. See Tehillim 79:10: “Why should the nations say, ‘Where is their G-d?’”

in this world is therefore when G-d miraculously *saves* those who surrender their lives for Him.

This ultimate sanctification of G-d's name is obviously beyond human effort and can be brought only about by G-d Himself, but it is subject to human interference—"if a person surrenders himself to die but is hoping for a miracle, a miracle is *not* performed for him." Rashi therefore cautions that when surrendering your life to sanctify G-d's name, you must do so with complete willingness to die in order *not to interfere* with the greatest sanctification of G-d's name, which only He can bring about—a miraculous deliverance from the threat to your life.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 27, pp. 167-175, fn. 36

 כג:כ | 23:20

וְהִנִּיף הַכֹּהֵן אֹתָם עַל לֶחֶם הַבִּקֻּרִים
 תְּנוּפָה לְפָנֵי ה' עַל שְׁנֵי כְבָשִׂים.

The Kohen shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits for a wave-offering before G-d, with the two lambs.

Sheepish Bread

The *shtei halechem* is a wheat-flour offering brought in the Beis Hamikdash on the holiday of Shavuot. Two loaves of bread made from the new crop of wheat, together with two sheep, are “waved” by the Kohanim. The sheep are offered as sacrifices, and the loaves are eaten by the Kohanim. After this, wheat from the new crop may be used in all other flour offerings too.

The bread of the *shtei halechem* is a metaphor for the study of Torah. Just as bread, the staple of human sustenance, becomes absorbed into the body’s flesh and blood, G-d’s wisdom is *absorbed* into man’s mind and soul through intensive Torah study and comprehension.⁹ The offering of sheep—a naturally weak and submissive animal—along with the bread symbolizes that our study of the Torah must be permeated with humility and *kabbalas ol* (complete submission to G-d’s will), and acknowledgment that the Torah’s inherent G-dliness transcends our limited human understanding.

These two elements of Torah study, and the need to combine them, are also hinted at in the two loaves themselves.

9. See Tanya, chapter 5.

According to the Zohar, the two loaves of bread represent the Written Torah and the Oral Torah.¹⁰ The study of the Oral Torah is primarily an exercise of comprehension: one who reads the Oral Torah without understanding its meaning, has not fulfilled the mitzvah of Torah study. In contrast, since many parts of the Written Torah are inherently cryptic, a person who simply *reads* the words of Written Torah, even if he does not understand what he is reading, is observing the mitzvah of Torah study. As a result, the Divine origin of the Torah—and its transcendence of human understanding—is sensed more in the Written Torah than in the Oral Torah.

The symbolic unification of *both* parts of the Torah in the *shtei halechem* reminds us that we must infuse our understanding of the sound logic, typically found in the Oral Torah, with a submission to the Divinity of the Torah, akin to the humility that characterizes our reading of the Written Torah's cryptic words.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 32, p. 137*

10. 1:260a.

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת אלימלך
ב"ר משה הלוי ע"ה
שטערן
נלב"ע ביום ח"י אייר ה'תשנ"ט

ולעילוי נשמת
זוגתו מרת נעמי
בת ר' יעקב הכהן ע"ה
נלב"ע ביום ח' אייר ה'תשנ"ט

תנצב"ה

•

נדפס ע"י בנם
הרה"ת יעקב הלוי וזוגתו מרת יהודית שיחיו שטערן

אשת חיל מי ימצא ורחוק מפנינים מכרה

לעילוי נשמת
אמנו היקרה
מרת בת-שבע ב"ר משה חיים ע"ה
ראטענשטרייך
נלב"ע ביום כ"א אייר ה'תשס"ד

תנצב"ה

.

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה

גיטלר, קראסניאנסקי, ראטענשטרייך שיחיו
בקשר עם יום היארצייט הכ"ב



THE LIGHTPOINTS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE
THROUGH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT of

Rabbi Moshe Aaron Tzvi and Mrs. Ruty Weiss