



GOD DESIGNED MAN TO START LIFE AS A CHILD.
GOD DESIRES MAN TO EXPERIENCE PARENTS.
ALL GOD'S WORKS REFLECT HIS SUPREME WISDOM.
WHAT WISDOM IS SEEN IN OUR CREATION AS INFANTS?

Discussed in this week's article: "Honoring Parents"

ESTD
1997

JewishTimes

*Dedicated to Scriptural and Rabbinic Verification
of Authentic Jewish Beliefs and Practices*

Volume II, No. 25...March 21, 2003

WWW.MESORA.ORG/JEWISHTIMES.HTML

Download and Print Free

IN THIS ISSUE:

MAIMONIDES: HONORING PARENTS & LOVING GOD,	1,2,3,4
PARSHAS TZAV	1,4,5,6,7
MOHAMMED THE FALSE PROPHET - ISLAM THE FALSE RELIGION	8

SUGGESTED READINGS: SEE THESE AND OTHER ARTICLES AT OUR SITE

Maimonides' 13 PRINCIPLES
THE BASIC FOUNDATIONS WHICH ALL JEWS MUST KNOW AS TRUE. WE URGE YOU TO READ THEM:
www.mesora.org/13principles.html

God's Existence: Belief or Proof?
www.mesora.org/belieforproof.html

God's Land Without God?
AN OPEN LETTER TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY:
www.mesora.org/openletter/openletter2.html

Parshas Tzav

RABBI BERNARD FOX

"Command Ahron and his children. This is the law of the Olah. The Olah should remain on the hearth of the altar the entire night, until the morning. And the fire of the altar should remain ignited upon it." (VaYikra 6:2)

The Olah sacrifice is completely burned upon the altar. The Kohanim and the owners do not receive a portion for their own consumption. The Olah is offered during the day. This requires that the slaughter and the performance of all other aspects of the service take place

(continued on page 4)

MAIMONIDES

Honoring Parents & Loving GOD

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

When studying Maimonides' laws concerning honoring and fearing parents, many questions arise. I will list the questions and then offer my explanations. I wish to note that this paper veers from typical articles. We normally discuss philosophy, and do not submerge too much into the structures of Halacha - Jewish law. This paper will offer a look into the Halachik system, while still developing philosophical points.

In Mamrim 6:1, Maimonides writes, "Honoring one's father and mother is a 'Great Positive Command', as is fearing them." In Yesodei HaTorah, 2:1, defining the law of fearing God, Maimonides simply writes, "This honored and feared God, it is a command to love and fear Him." No mention of the term "positive" command, or of the term "great". Why is the language of a "Great Positive Command" reserved exclusively for parents - absent in connection with the command of our fear of God? In Hilchos Mamrim, we note that Maimonides classifies cursing, and honoring/fearing parents in separate chapters, as they are two distinct



commands: Taking an independent stance on the derivation of cursing, Maimonides says cursing parents is learned from "Don't curse the deaf", and honoring, from the unanimously accepted "Honor thy father and thy mother". The Scriptural obligation to honor refers specifically to "father" and "mother" by name. Not so the institution of cursing - the punishment alone specifies parents: "His father and mother did he curse, his blood is on him", but the warning is generic, "Don't curse the deaf". ("Mother" and "father" are

not specified, and are subsumed under "deaf", referring to lower ranking Jews, i.e., not judges or princes.) This questions is strengthened by the following verse, (Lev. 22:27) "Judges you shall not curse and a prince among your people you shall not accurse." If judges and princes are specified by name, what prevented the Torah from clearly warning against cursing one's "father" and "mother"? (Also, What is so severe about cursing parents, that one is stoned for its violation?)

(continued on next page)

MAIMONIDES

Honoring Parents & Loving GOD

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

(continued from page 1)

In Mamrim 5:4 and again in 5:8, it is highly interesting is that Maimonides includes the Talmudic phrase "Onesh shamanu, azhara minayin." ("The punishment we learned, but from where is the warning?") Maimonides could have simply written the final derivation, without including this Talmudic phraseology. But more startling is that this phrase is never used throughout his entire Mishneh Torah except in these two occurrences: Once regarding cursing parents, and the other...regarding smiting parents. I feel a priceless gem is waiting to be discovered here.

Laws concerning the cursing of one's parents precedes the laws of honoring them, the reverse of what one might intuit. Cursing is certainly a violation of honor, but the lack of honor does not qualify as cursing. So why does Maimonides codify laws of cursing before the category of honor - which can contain it? Maimonides gives purposeful sequence in his codifications. What is his reasoning? Mamrim 6:2: Maimonides revisits cursing parents, stating that both the curser and the reviler are equally stoned. The reviler here is one who reviles God. This is proved in Hilchos Sanhedrin, 15:10, where all those stoned are 18 in number. There, Maimonides lists a Migadafe, one who reviles God. Revisiting the curser in the laws of honor seems out of place, as he already concluded the chapter on cursing. Why the reappearance?

Furthermore, in that very same halacha, he includes the law that one's fear and love of both parents must be equal. How are these two statements related, that Maimonides groups them in one halacha?

Mamrim 6:7: Maimonides describes the the extent of one's required parental fear, "Even if one was wearing precious garments, sitting at the head in front of the congregation, and his father and mother came and tore his garments, hit him on the head, and spat in front of him; Do not shame them, but be silent, and fear and tremble from the King, King of all kings, that commanded you in this. Because if a flesh and blood king commanded on you a matter more painful than this, you would not be able to refuse the matter. Certainly (the command) of the One Who spoke and the world came into being as is His will." Do we not have to perform all commands with such diligence and care? What is this emphasis, and the mention of "the One Who spoke and the world came into being"?

Maimonides records the Talmud's words from Kiddushin 30b, "The Torah equated honoring (one's) father and mother to honoring God." Does the honor of parents "equated" to God's honor refer to commonalities, or is some other meaning of "equated" required? The Talmud then says, "Three partners are involved in the creation of man; God, the father and the mother. When man honors his father and mother, God says, I consider it as



though I dwell between them, and he (the child) honors Me'." For what purpose does the Talmud record this philosophy? Furthermore, if there is an equation, why do we find Maimonides subsuming the laws of cursing and honoring parents in his chapters on Hilchos Mamrim, Laws of Rebellion? If it is equated to the honor and fear of God, shouldn't he have grouped these laws together with Yesodei HaTorah?

Following the Talmud's license to introduce philosophy into this area, I wish to broaden our appreciation of these commands with one further question: We find the Ten Commandments are split into two sections: The first five deal with man's relationship with God, the second deal with man's relationship with his fellow man. The one problem is that "Honoring Parents" is included not in the second five, but in the first five dealing with our relationship with God. This appears out of place.

What aspect of Honoring Parents qualifies it for inclusion in the laws relating to God - not man, and what is the Talmud driving at with its philosophy in Kiddushin? The Talmud wishes man to trace back the cause of his very existence, and contemplate the greater objective of honoring parents. The Talmud feels such reflection is essential to fulfilling this command.

Man is not created today as was Adam, fully grown. Man enters the world as a dependent infant. He grows through various processes;

losing and regaining his teeth, acne, becoming more full of hair, adolescence, and old age. Why? Is this just accidental? Of course not. This is part of God's design. To cover each stage would be too lengthy. The one stage to which we should direct ourselves is childhood, and in particular, our dependency on parents.

A child learns from early on, the concept of "authority". Parents are taller, stronger, more capable, they punish us, and they nurture us. They are the source of our good and evil. We turn to them for all our fears and desires. In short, God designed mankind in a manner where he must learn the concept of an 'authority figure'. Had man not been born, but created as Adam, complete, tall, and independent, with all the knowledge needed to survive, he would have no need for parents, and he would forfeit the lesson of authority. But it is vital that this lesson be learned, as it is essential for the greatest objective: Love of God. It is only through our state as feeble and dependent infants, that the role of authority may be successfully permeated into our being. We require some semblance of authority to be expressed with relation to God. Without learning what authority is in our youth, we cannot approach our fear and love of God. Once we accept the Creator's authority, we may then excel to a true appreciation of His majesty based on the knowledge we are fortunate enough to acquire during the rest of our lives.

The Rash writes that fear and honor of parents surpasses that of God, based on, "Honor God with your wealth". Wealth determines our level of honoring God, while honoring parents is not limited by wealth. Regardless of monetary considerations, we must honor our parents. Perhaps based on our reasoning, we can understand the Rash. In order to arrive at honor of God, honoring parents is of vital importance. There is no exemption. Not even monetary considerations.

"The Torah equated honoring one's father and mother to honoring God." The equation is that fear and honor of God commences with our initial fear and honor of our parents.

(continued on next page)

MAIMONIDES

Honoring Parents & Loving GOD

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

(continued from page 2)

For this reason, in the Ten Commandments, the command to fear and honor parents is rightfully placed in the section dealing with our approach to God, not our fellow man. When the Talmud, cited by Maimonides, equated fear and honor of parents to that of God, the equation is not one of commonality. It is an equation of dependency. The fear of God depends on man's inculcation of parental fear and honor.

The Talmud embedded philosophy into their halachic discourse on these laws to engender our deeper appreciation, and thus, performance. We learn that our very existence is due to God, and our parents. An appreciation of our very biological existence must be highlighted, and redirected to God, but this only commences with parental fear and honor. The Talmud discusses our creation - our existence - that which we treasure over all else. The Talmud's philosophical discussion of three partners is truly halachic. Our goal in parental honor and fear aims at God's honor and fear. It is not an ends in itself. The Talmud is underlining the significant element of the command to fear and honor parents: God is central to this command. The focus is the Creator. This now explains why Maimonides gives a lengthy description of the measure of our tolerance, even through great humiliation. Our goal is the recognition and love of the "One Who spoke and the world

came into being". It makes sense that in Mamrim, Maimonides records the phrase "The One Who spoke and the world came into being", and he does so again in the primary command of love of God in Yesodei HaTorah. There too he records "The One Who spoke and the world came into being." The connection is clear.

It now follows why honor and fear of parents is subsumed under Laws of Rebellion, and why cursing precedes honor and fear. Honor and fear of parents targets a goal far greater than human honor. Maimonides commences this section outlining the authority of the court system. This is the main heading under which honoring parents plays a role. The goal is a respect of Bes Din, the law, but ultimately, the love of God.

In hilchos Mamrim, why is cursing placed before honor? It is cursing - not honor - that forms the violation of authority. Secondary is honoring parents, as this merely supports the primary protection against rebellion. Why does Maimonides later revisit cursing in his laws pertaining to honor? Here, (Mamrim 6:2), cursing is not mentioned for its own sake. Cursing is mentioned only to equate the punishment of cursing, with one who is a Migadafe - one who reviles God. Maimonides places cursing here to display the severity of the lack of man's honor for his father. Just as in the first halacha of the chapter on "Cursing", Maimonides



Sanhedrin:

All Jewish law was ruled by a precise system of laws based on a hierarchy of members' intelligence.

describes the obligation, and in the second halacha, the punishment, here too in the laws of "Honor and Fear" Maimonides follows this formulation: The first halacha describes the obligation, and in the second halacha Maimonides outlines - by association - the severity for lack of honor. He mentions cursing, even though he already concluded it in the previous chapter, to teach that honor/fear is a derivative of the broader category of cursing. The punishment of stoning for both a Migadafe and one who curses parents is identical, as the corruption is equal. This is placed in the laws of honor/fear to teach that the lack of honor/fear shares a corruption that is punishable with stoning. Once he equates the punishment of cursing to reviling, he further clarifies in that very halacha that this applies equally to

both parents.

With this explanation, we can explain the generic warnings applied to both cursing and smiting parents - in contrast to judges and princes who are explicitly stated in the Scriptural prohibitions. Perhaps by the Torah specifying judges and princes, and not specifying father and mother, we are directed to the concept that rebellion against the system (judges and princes) maintains prominence over rebellion against parents. Cursing judges and princes appears in the Torah, but not cursing our father and mother. The parent is rightfully obscured by the proper focus on the authorities of the Torah system. Judges and princes are those most closely associated with the Torah's principles and commandments. The Torah must never share the limelight - not even with our parents. This

(continued on next page)

MAIMONIDES

Honoring Parents & Loving GOD

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

(continued from page 3)

explains why Maimonides quotes the phraseology of "onesh shamanu, azhara minayun" in only two places in his entire Mishne Torah. Although the Talmud concluded the Torah's source for cursing parents - "lo sikalale charashe" - nonetheless, Maimonides wishes to express that there is not explicit prohibition of "father" and "mother" by quoting the Talmudic "onesh shamanu, azhara minayun". His reiteration of the entire Talmudic question and answer is central to our understanding that the primary prohibition of rebellion does not find its goal in parents, but in judges and princes - the central characters of our Torah system. (Talmud Sanhedrin 66a states regarding judges and princes, "gidulasam garma law-hem", their elevated status causes their distinction.)

There is a balance to be struck regarding our relationship to our parents: We must fear and honor them, but not give them central importance. Thus, they are not specified in the Scriptural prohibition of cursing. Cursing is the primary institution protecting against rebellion, therefore, properly codified prior to laws of honor and fear.

How does one love God? As we stated, Maimonides does not refer to it as a "positive" or "great" command. Perhaps because a 'command' has a formulated ma-aseh, a precise, tailored act as its required performance. But this cannot apply to the love of God. Maimonides states, "And what is

the path to His love and His fear?" Note that he says "path". Meaning, a full process is required for the fulfillment of this command - not a discreet, technical act. Maimonides describes this "path" as two-staged; 1) Man must behold God's wisdom, that "there is no measure nor end", 2) Man must contrast himself to God, seeing what a lowly creation man is, standing before One of perfect knowledge." Maimonides then quotes King David (Psalms 8:4-5), "When I see Your heavens, the works of Your fingers..., what is man that You should be mindful of him...?" Clearly, a formulation is seen, and derived from King David's words: 1) Knowledge must be acquired, and 2) the self must be viewed as little. Perhaps King David's two-part formulation echoes the two stages in man's approach to loving God. There is the ultimate goal of appreciating God's wisdom, "When I see Your heavens, the works of Your fingers", and this, later in life, supplants the initial attachment to God based on a personal, authoritative view. The abandonment of this initial view is expressed by, "what is man that You should be mindful of him." After seeing the marvels of the world and God's endless wisdom, King David abandons his view of life where the self was a concern. Love of God is impossible without much understanding, as he says at the end of that halacha, "I will explain these great categories from the acts of the Master of the world, in order that

there be an opening to understand and love Hashem." To "understand", and only then, to "love Hashem". The command is only fulfilled through a process of understanding, where one eventuates naturally at his love for God, and where the self loses prominence. This being so, Maimonides does not refer to the command as "great", as he does with honoring parents. In connection with parents, since there are discreet acts targeting the greatest goal of the love of God, Maimonides uses the term "great", as there is a singular act which is for its "great" purpose. But here, the actual love of God is the "result" of a lengthy process. No one action brings about the result, so there is no one act to label "great". The ma-aseh cannot be great, when it is in fact, a culmination of a process that is man's objective. There is no single "positive" act, and therefore, no label of "great".

Maimonides teaches that one's fear and honor of his rabbi must surpass that of his father, (and thus of his mother, as she too must honor the father). Maimonides quotes Chazal who state that fear of one's rabbi must equate to the fear of God. Maimonides says further - each based on Scripture - that one who differs with his rabbi, argues on him, shouts at him, or places him under suspicion, is as one who did so with God. This does not apply to parents, as they only gave us physical life, whereas our rabbis gave us eternal life. ▣

Parshas Tzav

RABBI BERNARD FOX

(continued from page 1)

before nightfall. The same law applies to all other sacrifices. Our pasuk deals with this last requirement. Assume a sacrifice is brought to the Mishkan. All parts of the sacrificial service are performed up to the placement of the offering upon the altar. Suddenly, night falls. Our pasuk explains that if all other aspects of the service have been performed during the day, the offering may be placed upon the altar at night. According to this explanation, the pasuk does not consist of a command. It is permitting the placement of sacrifices upon the altar at night.

Rabbaynu Yitzchak Karo offers an alternate explanation of the pasuk. He maintains that the pasuk is communicating an obligation. The Olah sacrifice must burn on the altar through the night. Probably, this is not obligatory for all Olah sacrifices. It is likely that this requirement applies to the last Olah of the day. This was the Olah offered as the daily afternoon Tamid offering. Why must an Olah burn upon the altar during the night? The answer requires an understanding of the purpose of the Olah. The commentaries differ on this issue. Rabbaynu Yitzchak Karo maintains that the Olah was brought in order to atone for inappropriate thoughts. He further explains that these thoughts are more frequent during the night. The Olah burned during the night to atone for these contemplations. Rabbaynu Yitzchak Karo seems to maintain that the night is associated with instinctual fantasy. It is easy to reject nighttime reveries as alien to our real personality. Rabbaynu Yitzchak Karo suggests that through these thoughts we can view our inner self. We may not be able to completely control these thoughts. However, we must recognize that these fantasies stem from the material element of our nature. Our responsibility is to work toward uprooting these fantasies and to move towards a more spiritual existence.

"And the Kohen should wear linen vestments and linen pants he should wear upon his flesh. And he should lift the ashes of the Olah consumed by the fire from the altar and place them near the altar." (VaYikra 6:3)

(continued on next page)

Parshas Tzav 5761

RABBI BERNARD FOX

(continued from previous page)



Each morning a portion of the ashes was removed from the altar and placed near the altar. This is a positive command. It is an element of the service in the Mishcan and is only performed by a Kohen. The Kohanim wear special garments when performing the avodah – the service – in the Mishcan or Bait HaMikdash. These vestments consist of four garments. The Kohen is required to wear these garments when removing the ashes. Maimonides explains that the garments worn during this service are not exactly the same as those worn during other elements of the avodah. The vestments worn for the removal of the ashes are of slightly lesser quality. Maimonides explains the reason for this requirement. It is inappropriate that garments used for the removal of the ashes be worn when performing the more elevated aspects of the service. He expresses this concept with a parable. A servant would not serve a meal in the same clothing worn when cooking the food. This explanation presents a problem. Based upon Maimonides reasoning, it is appropriate for the Kohen removing the ashes to put on fresh garments after this service. However, Maimonides does not seem to provide the reason

the garments worn for removal of the ashes must be of lesser quality! In order to answer this question we must more carefully consider the function of the garments worn by the Kohen.

These vestments are very carefully and beautifully designed. Maimonides explains that the Kohen is dressed in these garments and only then may he perform the service in the Temple. This seems to imply that these special vestments are required to glorify the avodah. Through wearing these special vestments, the Kohen demonstrates the sanctity of the service. Now it is possible to understand Maimonides' position. How do the garments glorify the avodah? They are reserved exclusively for the service. This exclusive designation is essential to their function. If these vestments are worn casually and at other times, their special status will be lost. They can no longer demonstrate honor for the avodah. Similarly, it is not appropriate to allow these garments to be worn for the removal of the ashes. This detracts from the elevated status of the vestments. Nonetheless, the removal of the ashes is part of the daily service. The removal also requires that the Kohen wear his special garments. How can these two considerations be reconciled? Maimonides responds that the Kohen wears a set of the special vestments when removing the ashes. However, these are not of the same quality as the garments worn at other times. Now the problem has been solved. The Kohen wears the appropriate garments. Yet, the vestments worn at other times retain their exclusive designation.

"And if the flesh of the Shelamim sacrifice will be eaten on the third day, it will not be accepted. It will not be accounted for the one who offered it. It will be disgusting. And the one who eats from it will bear his sin." (VaYikra 7:18)

The Shelamim sacrifice is shared between three "parties." A portion is burned on the altar. A portion is given to the Kohanim. The rest is awarded to the person bringing the sacrifice. The consumption of the sacrifice is a mitzvah. The Kohanim and the owner participate, through consumption of the sacrifice, in this mitzvah. No portion of the sacrifice may remain unused. Rabbeynu Avraham ibn Ezra offers an interesting explanation for this law. A portion of the sacrifice was offered on the altar. This portion was part of a larger whole – the entire animal. The offering of the "part" sanctifies the "whole" from which it is derived. Any failure to respect the sanctity of the remaining portion, is a failure to respect the portion offered. Therefore, all parts of the Shelamim must be consumed. No portion can be discarded.

Ibn Ezra applies this reasoning to another area of halacha. The Holy Temple and its altar may be constructed of stones. The Torah specifies that only whole stones may be used. Ibn Ezra explains that practical considerations underlie this law. The inclusion of a portion of a stone in the Temple would have sanctified the entire stone. Any portion not used in the Temple would have required special treatment. It would be impossible to assure that these fragments received this treatment. To avoid this problem, only whole stones were used. No leftover remained.

"And all blood you should not consume in all of you dwelling places, whether of an animal or a fowl." (VaYikra 7:26)

Rashi comments that this pasuk intends to teach an important lesson regarding the prohibition of consuming blood. This prohibition is not related to the land of Israel. The consumption of blood is prohibited both in the land of Israel and in exile. It is a personal prohibition. It applies regardless of location. Why does the Torah need to teach this law? Most commandments are not related to the land of Israel. Why might one connect and limit this prohibition to the land of Israel? The Talmud explains in Tractate Kiddushin that the prohibition of consuming blood is discussed by the Torah in the context of the obligation of offering sacrifices. Sacrifices cannot be offered in exile. Therefore, one might imagine that the prohibition of consuming blood is also limited to the land of Israel. What is the connection between the consumption of blood and sacrifices? As the Talmud recognized, the prohibition of consuming blood is mentioned in the section of the Torah that discusses sacrifices. The blood of the animal plays a central role in sacrificial process. It is sprinkled on the altar. This is integral to the atonement process. The Torah implies that the consumption of blood involves an inappropriate use of this element of the animal. The blood can only be "consumed" by the altar. It may not be consumed by the individual. Consuming blood is a misappropriation of this substance. The connection between this prohibition and sacrifices can now be appreciated. In exile sacrifices cannot be offered. Therefore one might conclude that consuming blood does not involve a misappropriation. The Torah needs to tell us that this is not the case. Even in a place that sacrifices cannot be offered the blood is prohibited. ■

Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Ma'aseh HaKorbanot, 4:1-2. Rabbaynu Yitzchak Karo, Toldot Yitzchak, Commentary on Sefer VaYikra 6:2. Rabbaynu Yitzchak Karo, Toldot Yitzchak, Commentary on Sefer VaYikra 6:2. Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Temidim U'Musafim 2:10. Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Sefer HaMitzvot, Mitzvat Aseh 33. Rabbaynu Avraham ibn Ezra, Commentary on Sefer VaYikra, 7:18. Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer VaYikra 7:26. Mesechet Kiddushin 37b.

Parshas Tzav 5762

RABBI BERNARD FOX

"This is the offering of Ahron and his sons that they should offer on the day that any one of them is anointed. It is one tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a daily Mincha offering. One half is offered in the morning and one half is offered in the afternoon." (VaYikra 6:13)

This passage describes a special Mincha offering brought by Ahron and his descendants. This sacrifice is brought every day by the Kohen Gadol. One half is offered at the beginning of the day. The other half is offered at the end of the day. An additional obligation is derived from this passage. Every Kohen begins his service in the Beit HaMikdash by offering a Mincha. This is the Kohen's initiation into service. The midrash discusses the significance of these Mincha offerings. The midrash comments that this offering is described by Shimshon in a riddle, "It is a food from one that eats". In order to begin to understand these comments, we need some background.

Shimshon challenged the Pelishtim to solve a riddle. He claimed that there was "a food derived from something that eats. It is sweet and comes from something mighty." It was the Pelishtim's job to unravel the riddle. The substance referred to in the riddle was honey that Shimshon discovered in an unusual place. This honey came from a beehive inside of the carcass of a lion. This honey was aptly described by the riddle. Honey is a food. It was found in the carcass of an animal that preys and consumes other animals. Honey is sweet. This honey was found in the carcass of a mighty animal. The midrash is suggesting that the first part of Shimshon's riddle also describes the Mincha offerings specified by our passage. This Mincha is a food. It is consumed. It comes from the Kohen. Generally, the Kohen eats a portion of an offering. Therefore, the Mincha can be described as a food derived from one who eats. Apparently, the midrash intends to communicate some significant message about the Mincha. However, the specific meaning of these comments is enigmatic.



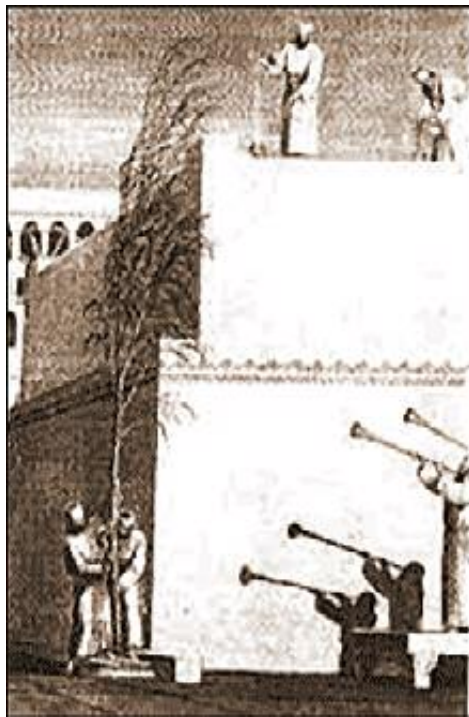
A hint to the message of the midrash can be derived by more carefully considering the nature of these Mincha offerings. Every Kohen must offer a Mincha before entering into further service in the Mikdash. The Kohen Gadol must offer a Mincha on a daily basis. Maimonides treats the Kohen Gadol's sacrifice as a component of the daily service of the Mikdash. This suggests that some basic message is communicated by this offering. What is this message? In a very general sense, offerings brought in the Temple serve two purposes. First, they are a form of Divine service. Second, the Kohanim receive a

portion from the altar of the Almighty. These offerings provide sustenance to Kohanim. These two functions are not of equal importance. The offerings primarily are a form of service to Hashem. The sustenance received by the Kohanim is of secondary significance. However, it is possible for a casual observer to misinterpret the relative significance of these two purposes. One could conclude that the offerings primarily provide support for the Kohanim and that the element of Divine service is secondary. The Mincha offerings of the Kohen Gadol and Kohanim address this potential misinterpretation. If the offerings are primarily designed to support the Kohanim, there is no reason for the Kohen to offer a portion of his material sustenance on the altar. Everyday the Kohen Gadol brings a Mincha. The one who eats from the offerings brings an offering. This demonstrates that the offerings are not designed to provide material support for the Kohanim. The offerings are Divine service. The Kohen Gadol, like other members of Bnai Yisrael, participates in this form of worship. Similarly, every Kohen begins his service by offering a Mincha.

It seems that the Kohen must begin his service with an acknowledgment. He brings his own offering before dealing with the offerings of the nation. In this manner the Kohen acknowledges that these offerings are not designed for his benefit. He, too, must offer a Mincha! This is because these offerings are Divine service and apply equally to the Kohen and the rest of Bnai Yisrael. □

Parshas Tzav 5762

RABBI BERNARD FOX



"Speak to Bnai Yisrael and say, "Do not eat any fat in an ox, sheep or goat". (VaYikra 7:23)

The Torah prohibits eating certain fats from animals. These are the fats that are those offered on the altar. Our passage indicates that even a small portion of the fat may not be consumed. In order to understand the significance of this restriction, some background is required. The Torah prohibits consuming various substances. For example, the fats discussed in our pasuk are prohibited. Meat cooked with milk may not be consumed. Certain species of animals

are prohibited. In general, the punishment for willful violation of these prohibitions is lashes. However, lashes are only administered if a minimum amount of the substance has been eaten. Generally, in order to liable to receive lashes an olive size portion must be consumed. This raises an interesting question. According to the Torah, is it permitted to consume less than an olive size amount of these forbidden substances?

The Talmud explains that according to Rav Yochanan, it is prohibited. Rav Yochanan derives this prohibition from our passage. The passage prohibits eating any portion of forbidden fats. This prohibition also applies to other forbidden substances. In short, lashes are administered for consuming an olives size amount of the prohibited substance. However, eating less – a chatzi shiur (half the size)– of the substance is also prohibited by the Torah. Maimonides accepts the opinion of Rav Yochanan. He explains that the Torah prohibits eating any amount of a forbidden substances. There are other prohibitions in the Torah in which quantity is critical. One of these prohibitions is the mitzvah forbidding theft. Maimonides explains that one who steals the value of a perutah (a miniscule quantity) or more violates the mitzvah restricting theft. He is obligated to return the object. Maimonides explains that the Torah also forbids stealing less than a perutah. In other words, stealing a perutah or more creates an obligation to return the object. Stealing less than this amount does not engender this obligation. Nonetheless, this minimal theft is prohibited.

Why is it prohibited to steal less than a perutah? The most obvious answer is that this an expression of the prohibition explained by Rav Yochanan. Just as it is prohibited to eat a chatzi shiur of forbidden fat, it is prohibited to steal less than a perutah. This is the explanation offered

by Magid Mishne. However, a careful analysis of Maimonides' comments suggests that the prohibition of chatzi shiur is not applicable to stealing. Maimonides categorizes stealing less than a perutah with a number of other similar practices. He explains that the Torah forbids us to steal in jest. The Torah prohibits stealing with the intent to return the object. All of these activities are forbidden because a person should not become accustomed to these behaviors. Apparently, Maimonides intends to apply this reason to all cases in the category. This includes stealing less than a perutah. In other words, Maimonides seems to maintain that stealing less than a perutah is not included in the general prohibition of chatzi shiur. Instead, this practice is restricted to prevent the behavior from becoming ingrained. Apparently, the prohibition against stealing includes two components. The primary component is a prohibition against an act of outright theft. This primary prohibition is violated when a person steals a perutah or more. The second component is a secondary prohibition. This prohibition forbids behavior akin to stealing. These behaviors include stealing less than a perutah, stealing in jest, and stealing with the intention to return the object. In these cases the action is not a act of outright theft. However, the behavior is regarded as akin to thievery.

If this analysis of Maimonides' statement is correct we must ask a question. Why does the general prohibition of chatzi shiur not extend to stealing less than a perutah? There are a number of possible reasons. Let us consider one possible explanation. As explained above, one does not receive lashes for eating a forbidden substance unless an olive size quantity is consumed. This suggests that the identity of the object as a forbidden substance only exists in an object of the specified size. In simple terms, less than an olive size of forbidden fat does not have the identity, in halacha, of forbidden fat. Why is eating a chatzi shiur also forbidden? The chatzi shiur is regarded as a part of the larger object. Therefore, when one eats a chatzi shiur of forbidden fat, halacha regards the activity as eating a part of the larger entity which constitutes a forbidden substance. The chatzi shiur is not, in itself, a forbidden substance. However, halacha regards the chatzi shiur as part of a larger object which constitutes the forbidden substance. According to this interpretation, the prohibition of chatzi shiur cannot be applied to stealing. Stealing does not involve a forbidden entity. Stealing is not prohibited because the stolen object is an innately forbidden substance. One cannot violate the ownership rights of another individual. Theft violates these rights. The value of a perutah does not endow an object with the identity of a forbidden substance. Therefore, less than a perutah cannot be regarded as part of a larger forbidden entity. In other words, the prohibition of chatzi shiur presupposes the existence of a forbidden substance. The chatzi shiur is regarded as a part of this larger whole. Theft does not involve a forbidden substance. Therefore, the general prohibition of chatzi shiur cannot apply. □

Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Tamidim U'Musafim 3:18. Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Klee Mikdash 5:16. Midrash Rabba, Sefer VaYikra8:2. See Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Shemitah VeYovel 13:12. Mesechet Yoma 74a. Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Ma'achalot Asurot 14:2. Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Genevayah 1:1-2.

MOHAMMED THE FALSE PROPHET

Islam the False Religion

RIVKA OLENICK

"A prophet will the Lord, thy God raise unto thee, a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren." Deuteronomy 18:15

The false prophet, the navi sheker, the "madman" Mohammed, as the Rambam calls him, convinced his followers of Islam that there are several verses in our scriptures that allude to his being a prophet. The Rambam states: "These arguments have been rehearsed so often that they have become nauseating. It is not enough to declare that they are altogether feeble; to cite as proofs these verses is ridiculous and absurd in the extreme. Neither the untutored multitude nor the apostates themselves who delude others with them believe in them or entertain any illusion about them. Their purpose in citing these verses is to win favor in the eyes of the Gentiles by demonstrating that they believe the statement of the Koran that Mohammed was mentioned in the Torah. The Muslims themselves put no faith in their arguments, they neither accept nor cite them, because they are manifestly so falacious."

Mohammed claimed that Deuteronomy 18:15 specifically refers to him. He said that it was he who God arose as "a prophet from the midst of thee." Of course, he himself nor anyone else ever found one word in the scriptures that proved that Mohammed arose as a prophet. Yet, he and his blind followers accuse us of manipulating the text of the Torah. They ignorantly claim that we purposely removed every trace of the name of Mohammed from it. However it was they that would not accept the main precepts of the Torah, out of defiance to the Revelation at Sinai. So in great desperation they created a book that horrendously warps and taints our scriptures and undermines Moses as the greatest Prophet. After all this they attempted to legitimize the Koran as a book of truth.

Isn't it amazing that exactly what they accuse us of - "altering" the Torah text - is exactly what they altered when they made up this "imitation" and called it the Koran. What they believe is so obviously false, yet the world is convinced that this is a book of truth only because of the vast numbers who read it, and not because it contains any real truth. The Rambam says: "Therefore, all the nations instigated by envy and impiety rose up against us, and all the kings of the earth motivated by injustice and enmity applied themselves to persecute us." There arose a new sect, which combined the two methods of conquest and controversy, into one, because it believed that this procedure would be more effective in wiping out every trace of the Jewish nation and religion. They claimed to prophecy and found a new faith, Islam, contrary to the Divine religion and to contend that it was equally God given. Thereby it hoped to raise doubts and create confusion, since one is opposed to the other and both supposedly emanate from a Divine source, which would lead to the destruction of both religions. For such a remarkable plan contrived by a man who is envious and querulous. He will strive to kill his enemy and to save his own life, but when he finds it impossible to attain his objective, he will devise a scheme whereby they both will be slain." He slays them both because he really knows that he cannot destroy God, but he cannot tolerate God's Divine word and so out of his own insanity he kills those who represent God and kills himself believing he will enter paradise.



The Torah states that the prophet that will arrive "from the midst of thee" is a person that will keep the Torah in tact as it was given to us by Moses from God. The Ninth Principle of our Thirteen Principles of Faith states: "I believe with perfect faith that the Torah will not be changed, and that there will never be another Torah given by God." As it says: "Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." Deuteronomy 13:1.

"A prophet will the Lord thy God raise unto thee, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren." Islam took this sentence completely out of context and made inferences. All the statements before and after must be understood so that the meaning and purpose of the statements is known. The sentence quoted above was taken from a paragraph in Deuteronomy that specifically warns the Jewish people about the prohibitions of soothsaying, astrology, divination, sorcery, etc. The Gentiles believe they can manipulate and use these practices in order to predict and/or prevent future events. They even depend on using these methods, rather than seeking truth. Judaism adamantly opposes such practices. The Torah commands us many times that we are not allowed to use these means. All future

events that the Jewish people will learn of will be predicted by a Prophet and will all come true and that we would never have to resort to astrology or any other means in order to know truths. We rely on the truths spoken by our Prophets who will not give us any new laws or any new additions to the Torah.

"...of thy brethren" means that the Prophet will be one of us, meaning the descendants of Jacob, not Esau or Ishmael. "But My covenant will I establish with Isaac whom Sarah will bear unto thee at this set time in the next year." "But God said: Not so, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac. With him will I keep My covenant for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him." Genesis 17: 19 and 21. "It is, my co-religionists, one of the fundamental articles of the faith of Israel, that the future redeemer of our people will spring only from the stock of Solomon son of David. He will gather

our nation, assemble our exiles, redeem us from our degradation, propagate the true religion, and exterminate his opponents, as it is clearly stated in Scripture, "I see him but not now, I behold him but not high, there shall step forth a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel. And shall smite through the corners of Moab, and break down all the sons of Seth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also, even his enemies, shall be a possession, while Israel doeth valiantly." Numbers 24:17-18

"If any heretics rise up to corrupt the people, they will undermine the faith of the young folks and they will not find a savior. Beware of them and know that in our opinion, it is permitted to slay them, for they repudiate the statement in the prophecy of Moses who commanded us to act."

"According to the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which the shall tell thee thou shalt do." Deuteronomy 17:11.

"They assert in wicked defiance that they believe most firmly in the prophecy of Moses, as the Arabs and Byzantines say yet they destroy and nullify his law and kill the adherents thereof. Whoever joins them is just like his seducer." The Rambam from Letter to Yemen. □