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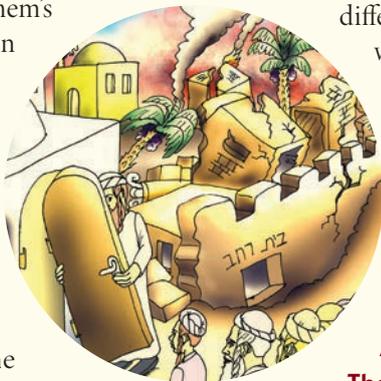


SEMICHA IS FORBIDDEN ON YOM TOV...?!

The Gemara in Sota (14a) says: "The Torah begins with gemilus chasadim, acts of kindness, and ends with gemilus chasadim"; it begins with the incident of Hashem clothing Adam and Chava after they sinned, and ends with the incident of Hashem burying Moshe Rabeinu. The commentaries explain that the beginning and end reflect all that is in between. But, what kindness do we find here in Chumash Vayikra?

The Purpose of Semicha...

Just like the Torah speaks of Hashem's kindness in the beginning and end of the Torah, so to, in Chumash Vayikra also teaches us of Hashem's kindness. When a man leans on the *korban's* head in order to do *semicha*, it ought to bring him to study Hashem's kindness, to thank Him for his own head and his soul that resides in it. Also, he has to study all the organs of his body, and the *korban's* body is meant to be to him as a reflection of his own body.



It also is meant to bring a person to be grateful for all the benefits he has from animals, and when he leans on it, it is like him declaring that Hashem is giving us through this animal – meat, milk and dairy products to eat; leather and wool for garments [which is a continuation of Hashem's kindness of clothing Adam and Chava]; and the skin is also used for *sifrei Torah*, *tefillin* and *mezuzos*.

The Wisdom the Kohen Guards...

"כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת" – the Kohen taught the person the knowledge he should have in mind when he leans on the *korban*,

that he has to rely and depend only on Hashem. Therefore the Torah says "יקריב" "אתו לרצנו לפני ה'". Meaning, the sacrifice has to be offered with "his will – his soul" depending and relying only on Hashem.

The Kohen taught not to make the Egyptians' mistake, who relied on the beast, because of the benefits they saw they gain from it, and therefore made it a god. Other nations considered the sun as their god, because they saw the benefits they have from it; that it lights up the world and ripens the crops. Others considered the angels to be their god, but we are different from all the nations, we have the *beracha* of "ויצור" "אור – thanking Hashem for His kindness of the sun and the angels, which all of them only He Himself created in order to serve His creatures.

Atoning for Bad Thoughts...

One who has this in mind when leaning *semicha*; "וְנִרְצָה לוֹ לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו" – "It shall be accepted to atone for him". The Gemara explains: "When one leans on the animal, he is atoned for *hirhur halev* – thoughts of the heart". Hashem counts only good thoughts as if were done, but bad thought aren't counted by Hashem as if they were done, (Kidushin 39b), so why does a person need atonement for them? Rather, the atonement is for this that he has a healthy mind and does not use it to study and think about Hashem's kindness and thank Him for it.

To Feel Like an Alef...

The Kohen also taught, that the mitzvah of *semicha* ought to bring a person to humble

MY STORY!

A Personal Purim Miracle...

Hi, my name is Mordechai; I live on a *moshav* and employ some Arab workers that help me with the farming. Every day I stay in shul after *shacharis* and learn a *blatt Gemara* before heading off to my day of work.

That day, a few days before Purim, I was learning the Gemara about Chazal's decree that forbid us to enjoy bread, oil, wine and cooked food that come from gentiles; in order to separate ourselves from them and their bad ways. As I closed my Gemara and left to work, I mulled over the lesson I had just learnt, wondering if I was doing wrong by employing Arab workers in my field.

The workers gathered in the field for another day of work, when suddenly one of them approached me and whispered in my ear to be aware; Ahmed had come to work equipped with a knife, and he was planning to kill me...

I quickly contacted the border police from my area. I was afraid that until they arrived it would be too late, I felt utterly hopeless, as I offered a heartfelt prayer to Hashem to have mercy on me and save my life. As

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himself to feel like an animal, which therefore the first word in Chumash Vayikra that discusses the *korbanos*, has a small *alef*; because meaning and shape of the letter *alef* is a bull (שֵׁנֶר אֶלְפִיד "רַעֲשָׁתָרַת צֹאֲנֵד" (רַעֲשָׁתָרַת צֹאֲנֵד)). It teaches that a man has to feel himself as small as this *alef*, and as humble as the animal that he's bringing for a *korban*. This way his sins are atoned for and he merits salvation, as it says "אָדָם וְבַהֲמָה תוֹשִׁיעַ ה'" – "Man and animal You preserve, O Hashem" (Psalms 36:7), Rav Yehuda says in the name of Rav: These are people who are clever in terms of their intellect, like people, and despite their intelligence they conduct themselves humbly, like an animal" (Chulin 5b).

The letter *alef* in the word *vayikra* is small; in order to demonstrate Moshe's humility, but more so it is in order that *klal Yisrael* learn from his humility and the humility that is learnt from *Toras hakorbanos*. So, because here the lesson is meant especially for *klal Yisrael* the *alef* is small, however by Avraham Avinu, although he also was very humble as it says "וְאֵנֹכִי עָפָר וָאֵפֶר", "And I am like dust and ashes" – there is no small *alef* since there it is not a commandment directed to *klal Yisrael*.

### What is Silence...?

The Gemara in Beitza (20b) tells about one of Hillel's disciples who wanted to lean on his *korban* on Yom Tov, and one of Shamai's disciples approached him and said "מָה זֶה כְּמִיבָה" – why are you

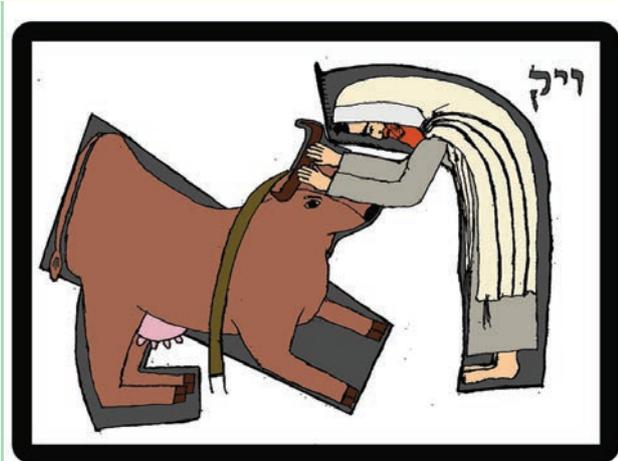
doing *semicha* on Yom Tov [which is forbidden according to Shamai]. "מָה זֶה שְׁתִּיקָה", replied Hillel's disciple – the purpose of *semicha* is to acquire humility, which is one of the main purposes of a *korban*, [the Jewish nation are called after the name of Yehuda, about whom Yaakov said, "כָּרַע שָׁכַב בְּאָרִי" – he crouches and bends down in front of Hashem and his fellow men to make them feel greater than him, and all Jews are meant to go in Yehuda's footsteps]; so if you are also interested in acquiring humility, then learn "What is silence!" – the first step to become humble is to learn to be silent, to be like Hillel who would bend himself down and sit in front of Shamai as one of his disciples, silently accepting his opinions (Shabbos 15a).

What is a person's occupation in this world? Asks the Gemara in Chulin (89a); to render himself as a mute, for the world exists only because of those who restrain themselves during a quarrel. Hillel held that since Yom Tov is a day that we are obligated to rejoice on, and "אֵין שְׂמִיחָה אֶלָּא בְּבֶשֶׂר" – one cannot truly rejoice unless he acquires humility, which is learnt when eating the *korban's* meat.

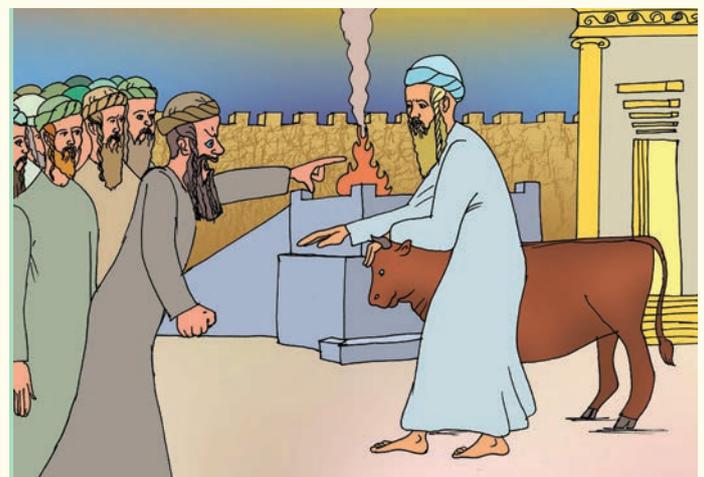
### The Purpose of Shechita...

The Gemara in Chulin (85b) says, Moshe was commanded about slaughtering the windpipe and the esophagus – most of one by a bird, and most of two by an animal. Rabbi Yehuda says that

## THE SWEETNESS OF SEMICHA...



Hashem called Moshe to command him about the mitzvah of offering *korbanos* and about *semicha*. Moshe who was like the letter *reish* – he is bent down before Hashem as the bent *reish*, and therefore was "רֹבֵן נָשָׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל", leader of the Jewish nation. Moshe felt humble when he did *semicha*, and bent down as an animal to lean on the *korban* – which resembles the letter *alef*; in shape and in meaning, as it says "שֵׁנֶר אֶלְפִיד" – "the offspring of your cattle". Therefore "ויקרא" is written with a small *alef*, because he felt himself as humble as an animal, and unworthy of being called by Hashem regularly.



The Torah begins and ends with *gemilus chasidim*, which is an example for all that is in-between. *Chumash Vayikra* is also full of Hashem's kindness; Hashem constantly grants us health and life, and these kindnesses are recognized when a *korban* is offered. When a man leans on his sacrifice's head, he learns to appreciate the health of his head and the rest of the body, and this fills him with humility and modesty.

Therefore, when one of Hillel's disciples was about to lean on his *korban* on Yom Tov, and one of

also the veins must be cut. When slaughtering, the *Kohen* would demonstrate to the owner; the kindness of the breaths that go through the windpipe to the lungs, and that the lungs have five lobes that cool the heart that it shouldn't overheat. The *Kohen* then blew the lungs up and if it had a little hole in it, it was *tereifa*, because we cannot learn from it to appreciate and thank Hashem for our lives and breaths.

The slaughtering of the esophagus reminded us of Hashem's great kindness, that the food goes through it into the body being digested in the stomach and the intestines, all with tremendous wisdom. And Rabbi Yehuda adds that we have to study and thank Hashem for the great kindness of the blood that flows through the arteries and veins from the heart to the brain and the rest of the body, and back to the heart.

### "He Shall Cut it Into Pieces"...

Then the *Kohen* would divide all the animal's organ, demonstrating to the person offering the *korban* Hashem's kindness in each one of them; when separated the head he taught the kindness of the brain that has in it billion of cells that control the body; about the eyes that can see the beauty of the creation in all its colors, from near and far; the nose which is right above the mouth, with two holes guarding the mouth, to make sure that whatever goes in the mouth is fresh and not spoiled, and

the sense of smell adds to the enjoyment of eating.

The kindness of the ears that we can hear; the mouth, with teeth to chew the food, tongue with the sense of taste that kneads the food together with the sweet saliva. As said in Midrash Tanchuma (Chukas 1), "*The human face has many springs, yet they do not mingle with one another. The water of the eyes are salty; the waters of the ears are oily; the waters of the nose are putrid; the waters of the mouth are sweet.*"

### The Wonders of the Kidneys...

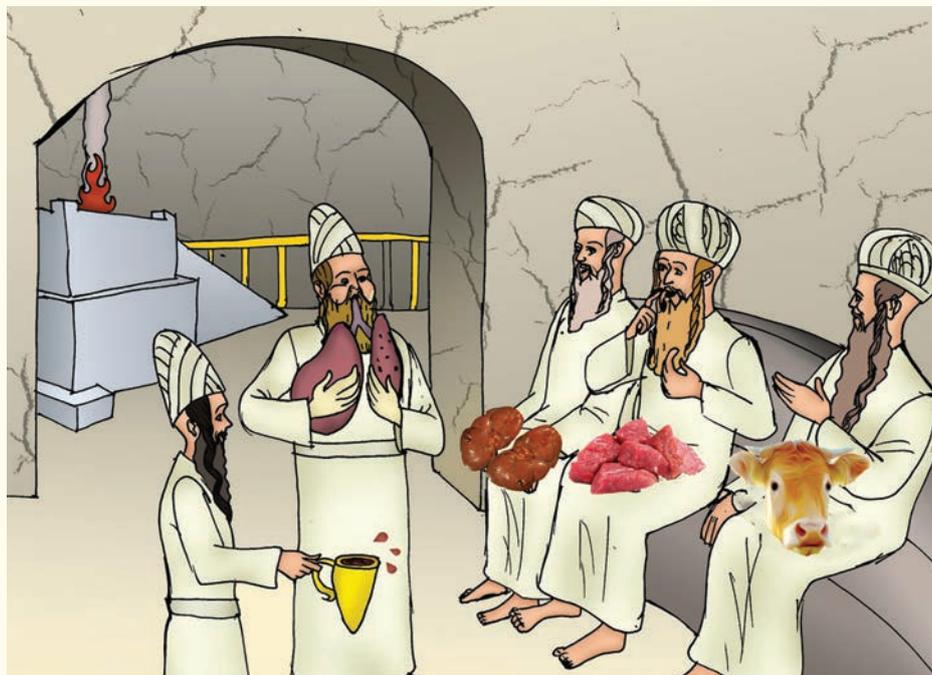
"וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי הַכְּלָיִת וְאֵת הַחֵלֶב... וְאֵת הַיִּתְרֹת עַל הַכֶּבֶד עַל הַכְּלָיִת" "סִינְיָה"; The *Kohen* would lift the sacrifice's kidneys and liver, explaining to the one offering it the great kindness, the benefits we have from those organs; that each kidney has over a million nephrons – filters that cleanse the blood. The two holes in *yesod hamizbe'ach* where the *korban's* blood is drained to the depths, resemble the kidneys that filter the blood and drain the waste of the food out of the body, explained the *Kohen*. And the liver is the bank of the blood; it creates blood cells and destroys bad chemicals and germs in the body.

### Hillel's Chesed to His Own Body...

"וְקָרְבוֹ וְקָרָב" – "*The innards and legs he shall wash with water*" – "עֵיוֹ יִרְחֵץ בַּמַּיִם"; of course they have to be washed, they are very

Shamai's disciple approached him and rebuked him that *semicha* is forbidden (on Yom Tov) according to Shamai. Hillel's disciple replied, that the whole purpose of *semi-cha* is to make a person humble, so, on Yom Tov which is *zeman simchaseinu*, and there is a mitzvah to offer a *korban shelamim*, to rejoice with its meat – then, certainly we ought to lean on the *korban*, because only with humility a man can truly rejoice before Hashem.

The Torah commands that the *Kohanim* divide each of the sacrifice's organs separately: the head – to demonstrate to the owner [of the *korban*], the kindnesses in his head; his eyes, ears, nose, mouth etc. Then the kidneys and liver. Then the *Kohen* blew the lungs up, to make sure



it has no hole which makes it *treifa*; in order to demonstrate the kindness of the owner's healthy lungs, that he has a sweet life and can breathe healthily.

That is "וּמִבְשָׂרִי אֲחֻזָּה אֱלוֹהִי" – from the meat of my *korban*, that I will

eat together with the *Kohen* in the *Beis Hamikdash*; I will study and appreciate Hashem's kindnesses in my body, and I will thank Him for them, as it says "וְכָל קִרְבֵי אֵת" "שֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ" – "*All my innards praise His holy Name*".

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I davened, I also promised that I will fire all my Arab workers, and employ Jews to take their place.

Just then I heard footsteps, I looked up to see Ahmed walking straight towards me. My heart skipped a beat. He began making conversation with me and I quickly ran behind him, giving him a strong kick that sent him straight to the ground causing the knife to fall out of his pocket. I quickly grabbed the knife and led him to the outskirts of the farm, bumping into the police officers that had just arrived in the nick of time.

The officers checked him and saw that he was an illegal worker and had no permit to be in this area, and so they took him straight back to Gaza where he belonged... Less than two weeks later I found out that Ahmed had been murdered in Gaza, by his Arab friends...

I thank Hashem for the great miracle that he performed with me, including the message to stay away from non-Jews, so that we will be protected from them in body and soul...

\*Names and details have been changed in order to protect the privacy of the writer.

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filthy, so why did the Torah have to tell us that? The Torah wants to teach the *Kohen* that he has to show the person, Hashem's kindness in these organs; that he can sit and bend down easily with no pain. And also to teach of the kindness that we have water to wash off any filth and dirt, which is a great mitzvah. As we see also that **וַיִּקְרַב מֹשֶׁה אֶת אֶהֱרֹן וְאֶת בָּנָיו וַיִּרְחֹץ אֹתָם בַּמַּיִם** – *"Moshe brought Aharon and his sons forward and he immersed them in water"* in order to study Hashem's kindness of the water.

What is this kindness? The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabba* 34:3) says on the *pasuk*, **נִגְמַל נִפְשׁוֹ, אִישׁ חֶסֶד** – *"A man of kindness brings good upon himself"* – that is referring to Hillel who when he departed from his students, was asked by them where he was going. He replied, *"I'm going to fulfil a mitzvah."* *"Which mitzvah?"* they wanted to know. *"To bathe in the bath house"*, was his answer. *"Is that a mitzvah?!"* they wondered. *"Yes,"* replied Hillel, *"Just like the one appointed over the statues of the king, gets sustenance and furthermore, he is considered to be in a high position in the kingdom; I, who was created in Hashem's image and form, how much more so!..."* Which mitzvah did Hillel fulfil? Appreciating Hashem's kindness in creating him in His image, and therefore he washed Hashem's image with water, in order to remind himself of the kindness that the body consists mostly of water.

**Good Smell of Burning Fats...**

The Torah says about the *korban* **אִשָּׁה** *"A satisfying aroma to Hashem"*; what good aroma does burning flesh produce?! The *ketores* had a good fragrance, but how can we call the burning fats' aroma, good? What was so satisfying to Hashem about it?

Rather, Hashem was satisfied when the fats were offered along with the rest of the animal's body; and the one offering them thanked Hashem for all those organs that are healthy in his own body. That is the good smell that Hashem enjoyed, even though the smell of the flesh being burnt isn't pleasant. And so to, when a person works hard to do something in the honor of Hashem, and he sweats and an unpleas-

ant smell comes from his, Hashem enjoys it – **נִחַח רִיחַ הוּא לִפְנֵי שְׂאֵמֶרְתִּי וְנִעֲשָׂה רִצּוֹנִי**, *"It is a satisfying aroma before Me, that I said and My will was executed."*

**Korban Shelamim Brings Peace...**

*Korban Shelamim* brings peace to the world (Rashi) – it brings a person to *sheleimus*, perfection by him studying all the wonders of his body, Hashem's kindness of every organ; he learned to appreciate the blood flowing in his body, when seeing the sacrifice's blood being poured on the four corners of the *mizbe'ach*. And when he ate the *shelamim*, he appreciated the kindness that he could eat and satiate himself, and he praised Hashem for this kindness he had ever since he was born. **עַל כָּל קֶרְבַּנְךָ תִּקְרִיב מֶלַח** – *"Every offering has to be salted"*; this reminded him also to thank Hashem for the salt, which add much to the taste of our food.

**How Does Krias Shema Relate to Terumah???**

**מֵאִמְתֵּי קוֹרִין אֶת שְׁמַע בְּעֶרְבִית? מִשְׁעָה שֶׁהָ – בְּהַנִּים וְנִנְסִים לֶאֱכַל בְּתֵרוֹמָתָן** *"From when may one recite Shema in the evening? From the time when the Kohanim go in to eat their terumah"*. What is the connection between the two?! The Gemara in *Pesachim* (59b) says, *"The Kohanim eat and the owner is atoned for"*; when the owner sees the *Kohanim* eating their *terumah*, and he studies and appreciates Hashem's kindness of the whole digestion system; this brings him to great love of Hashem, and then he recites *Shema* with much concentration. **בְּכֶל לֵבְבְךָ** – for the blood that flows from the heart, which is compared to the *mizbe'ach*. **וּבְכֶל נִפְשְׁךָ** – for the breaths that go through the windpipe, which he observed during the *shechita*. **וּבְכֶל מֵאֲדָרְךָ** [which refers to one's money] – therefore he brought *shekalim* for the *Beis Hamikdash* together with the *korban*.

That is the meaning of the *pasuk* **וַיִּבְטְשֵׁנִי** *"And I see Hashem from my flesh"*; when I will see how the *Kohen* eats my *korban's* meat, I will learn to study Hashem's kindness in my own flesh and body; because of the *da'as Hashem* that the *Kohen* will teach me, as the *pasuk* says **כִּי שִׁפְתֵי כֹהֵן יִשְׁמְרוּ דַעַת וְתוֹרָה וּבְקִשּׁוֹ מִפִּיהוּ**.