

Getting Closer

By: Yosef Vogel

In this day and age when we all seem to be so busy and the pace of life is increasingly gathering speed, we sometimes reflect on the quality of our relationship with those that we love and we realize that we have neglected the area in our life that gives us its meaning and purpose.

The question we ask ourselves is how do we improve this most important area in our lives in the context of the time constraints within which we operate. How do we enhance the quality of our relationships and become closer to the people we love and for whom we care so much.

In this week's Torah portion we are introduced to a powerful word that is loaded with meaning, that lies at the core of man's relationship with G-d. At the centre of activity which dominated the services at the tabernacle - whose purpose was to be a meeting place for man and G-d - we find the ritual of the sacrifices. The word for "sacrifice" in Hebrew also means "getting closer" and it is with this twin meaning in mind that the Torah teaches us a most profound insight into relationships.

As human beings we are motivated by self preservation. Indeed all our behaviour is guided by this most basic human instinct, whether we are conscious of this or not.

In order to overcome our selfish tendencies and genuinely become closer to the people we love, we have to make sacrifices. It is not the easy way, it is - the Torah believes - the only way.

We can do so much for people, yet we sometimes feel frustrated at the lack of any reciprocation. Our relationships seem to be a one way street. We ask ourselves, why do people not respond to the love we show them.

The answer lies in understanding this simple truth. There are two sides to the same coin. One is called "sacrifice", the other is called "getting close". Just as the powerful force of gravity pulls all physical matter towards earth, so do acts of kindness imbued with sacrifice draw us closer to our loved ones. And to the degree that we make sacrifices, we become closer. It is not we do for our loved ones that counts, it is the degree of sacrifice we are willing to make. There is no other way.

15 March

Vayikra

Shabbat Begins: 5:50 pm

Shabbat Ends: 6:53 pm