

HOW MUCH ARE WE WILLING TO SACRIFICE?

It seems that today, everyone is “hectic.” With all of the new advances of the digital age, the pace of life is constantly increasing, leaving little room to invest in the things that matter most. However, there are moments when we are sometimes able to take a step back to reflect on some of the more meaningful goings on in our lives and to take stock of the status quo.

One of the areas of our lives which propel us to take up this opportunity is the relationships we hold dear. When we are step back from the rigorous pace of life and reflect on the quality of the relationships we share with those we love, we essentially take a good look in the mirror and see who we really are. And when we do this, we realise how much we have neglected to invest in the relationships with the people in our lives, which ultimately is the party of our lives that offers us the greatest sense of purpose and meaning.

We ask ourselves how we can improve in this, especially in the context of the serious 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 comes packed with meaning and belies the very core of man’s relationship with G-d. At the centre of the activity which dominates the services in the tabernacle we find the ritual of the sacrifices. The word for “sacrifice” in Hebrew can also be translated as “getting closer” and it is with this dual meaning 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 very basic human instinct, whether we are conscious of it or not, it is the case.

In order to overcome our selfish tendencies and genuinely come closer to the people we love, we are required to make sacrifices. This is no easy task, but the Torah believes it is the only way to move beyond ourselves and to begin to genuinely connect with others, so that our motivation is no longer for selfish purposes only, but it begins to contain altruistic components which allow us to break forth from the shackles of the rat race, to reflect the G-dly spark that lies deep inside.

We can do so much for people, yet sometimes we 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 the understanding of 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 too, the acts of kindness we do which are imbued with sacrifice draw us closer to our loved ones. And to the degree that we make sacrifices, are we able to reap the rewards of our efforts and become closer to our loved ones. It is not what we do for our loved ones that count, but rather the degree of sacrifice we are willing to make for them which determines the nature of the relationships we enjoy.

May we all be blessed to always hold close to us the relationships which matter most and also have the strength to be loyal to them in every decision we make. The long term benefits are exponential.

Warm regards,
Yosef Vogel

7th March – **Vayikra**

Shabbat Begins: 5:36 pm
Shabbat Ends: 6:40 pm