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By the Hakham
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5782 פֶּרֶשֶׁת וַיִּקְרָא – שַׁבַּת זְכוֹר

Wayyiqra: Why Add Salt to the Offerings?

"On all your sacrifices you shall offer salt" (Wayyiqra 2:13). What is the purpose of adding salt to the sacrifices?

We must understand what the purpose in bringing sacrifices is. Clearly, G-d does not need sacrifices. What G-d desires is the contrition of one's heart and the regret and understanding of the wrong that one committed. The offering should awaken in the person who is bringing it, the desire to repent and keep away from transgression.

Even the highest quality foods taste bland when they are cooked without salt. It is the pinch of salt that the master chef adds, that brings out the true flavor of the meat or vegetables that one is eating. It says in Barukh Ta'am that this is the reason why when one brings a sacrifice one must add salt. It teaches us that just like food is lacking in taste when it is without salt, so too bringing a sacrifice without the appropriate intent defeats the purpose of why it was brought in the first place.

(See Barukh Ta'am,
Parashath Wayyiqra)



מדרש בן איש חי
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

Why Is Zakhor Read Before Purim and Not on Purim Itself?

We mentioned previously that every miracle that occurs sees a reawakening every year. The reawakening does not occur on the specific day, but starts from the Shabbath before it. That is why "Zakhor" is read on the Shabbath before Purim and not kept till Purim itself. For that reason, the study of Torah on Shabbath Zakhor, as well as Teshubah (repentance), is of extreme importance on Shabbath Zakhor, and helps awaken the Geullah (redemption).

Any bad happening that befalls the Jewish people, no matter how serious it is, its salvation can take place at the blink of an eye. It all depends on the extent of their belief and faith in G-d, and how broken hearted they are. If their hearts are contrite and their faith in G-d is complete, without additional dependence on other physical or natural elements, then G-d answers them as soon as they call Him.

If we also rely on external natural elements and do not call out to Him from the depths of our hearts, then either the salvation is delayed, or it is not complete and includes some degree of suffering, Heaven forbid. That is why it is extremely important to study Torah and concentrate on repentance on Shabbath Zakhor.

(See Dabar Be'Itto [H"R, Sasson Mordekhai Moshe], Derush on Zachor/Purim. Ben Ish Hai, Derush Beh Leshabbath Zakhor)

For the 'Ilui Neshamah of
Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h.
עֵקֶב אֱלֹהֵי עַבְדָּאֵלֵלָה פֶּרְגִי חַיִּים בֶּן רַחֵל, ע"ה

Why Were the Miracles Not Open and Wondrous?

Why did G-d cause the salvation in Purim to happen in a natural way and not as an open miracle as happened in Egypt or with Sanherib (Sennacherib)?

Had the miracle been open and wondrous, the nations of the world, specifically the enemies of the Jewish people, would say that miracles do not happen on a regular basis. The reason it happened at that time was because there were prophets and righteous people then. It was in their merit that the miracles took place. Nowadays, there are no prophets, and there aren't individuals who are on such a high spiritual level. Therefore, miracles would not occur for the Jewish people nowadays.

That is why G-d caused the salvation to happen in a natural way, in accordance with the norms of nature. Nature exists all the time, and does not depend on the merits of individuals. The enemies of the Jewish people must be concerned, therefore, that the Jewish nation's protection is not dependent on the merits of specific individuals, but is there all the time.

(See Ben Ish Hayil, Derush Geemal, Zakhor)

Can You Put All Mishlovaḥ Manoth Foods in One Container?

We mentioned previously that the two foods that you send to a friend as Mishlovaḥ Manoth on Purim have to be in separate containers or wrapped individually, but should not be presented in one container.

The question is, what if somebody, on Purim, sends a friend two kinds of food, but because he didn't have two separate containers, put them both in the same container and gave it to his friend. Has he fulfilled the Miswah of Mishlovaḥ Manoth on Purim or does it appear, since they are in only one container, that he has only given them one food?

The answer in Torah Lishmah is as follows. As long as both items of food are in one container, they are considered to be one type of food, so the one who is giving must remove one of them and put it in a separate container in order to fulfill the Miswah of Mishlovaḥ Manoth on Purim.

(See Ben Ish Hai, Shana Aleph, Parashath Teṣawweh, Oth Teth Zahn)

Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"h

Meghillath Esther: Is It Just a Novel?

The whole story of Purim is about revealing what is hidden. Indeed, the words "Meghillath Esther" actually mean revealing that which is hidden. Therefore, if a person chooses to close their eyes and not see the depth, holiness, and greatness of Meghilath Esther, to them it is just a novel.

Today, G-d's presence is hidden from us. We don't see great miracles like the splitting of the sea, like the מן (Manna) falling from heaven. However, it is crucial to understand that Hashem is watching over us every second, even if we do not see open miracles.

There is a Pasuq (verse) that states that G-d מציץ מן החרכים (peeks at us through the cracks). Imagine a person who wants to view the outside world, and slightly opens his blinds. He can see everything that is going on outside, while people outside cannot see him. So too it is with G-d, He is watching us all the time, even though we cannot see Him. We might think He is not there, but He is there.

This is the lesson of Purim. Although things may seem hidden from us, and even though we may not see G-d's miracles as openly as they were in the time of the Torah, if we open our hearts and our eyes, we will see how Hashem is watching over us and guiding us every step of the way.