

# MESHECH CHOCHMAH

## Parshas Tzav

### Inner and Outer Korbanos

וְכֹל חֲטָאתֵי אֲשֶׁר יִבָּא מִדָּמָהּ אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד... לֹא תֹאכַל בְּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרֹף

*Any sin-offering from which blood has been brought to the Tent of Meeting... shall not be eaten, it shall be burned in fire. (6:23)*

According to R 'Yose Haglili, this pasuk is expressing the halachah regarding all "inner" *chatas* (sin) offerings, i.e., those whose blood is sprinkled inside the Mishkan itself, as opposed to the "outer" *chatas* offerings, whose blood is sprinkled on the mizbeyach in the courtyard. The pasuk states that all such inner *chatas* offerings are forbidden for consumption, rather, they must be entirely burned.<sup>1</sup>

#### Two Types of Sin

The Meshech Chochmah explains that the division of the place where the blood is sprinkled depends on the nature of the wrongdoing, and is based on the correspondence between the aspects of the Mishkan and the make-up of a human being:

- ▶ The inside of the Mishkan corresponds to the inner faculties of the person, e.g. his mental faculties.
- ▶ The outer parts of the Mishkan correspond to the person's physical drives and activities.

Therefore:

- ▶ A regular *chatas*, which is brought to atone for an unintentional sin, where the wrongdoing is in the domain of a physical act, has its blood sprinkled on the outer mizbeyach, in the Courtyard.
- ▶ A *chatas* which atones for either a willful transgression or an erroneous judgment on the part of the Sanhedrin, where the wrongdoing is in the domain of the intellect, has its blood sprinkled inside the Mishkan.

<sup>1</sup> See Zevachim 82a.

## CONSUMED BY MAN OR BY FIRE?

Awareness of this distinction brings us to the question of what happens with the remainder of the chatas offering. The outer chatas is consumed by the kohanim, since the physical forces it represents are not meant to be rejected completely, but rather, to be enlisted in the service of Hashem. As the Gemara<sup>2</sup> comments on the pasuk in Mishlei,<sup>3</sup> “בְּכָל דְרָכָיךָ דַּעְהוּ” – In all your ways know Him” – even in matters of sin; i.e., even with the physical tendencies which can potentially lead a person to sin, one should “know Hashem” and enlist them toward elevated purposes.

In contrast, the objectionable intellectual tendencies have no place whatsoever in Torah living, hence, the inner chatas which comes to atone for such wrongdoings is not consumed, but rather is burned outside the camp.

The Meshech Chochmah concludes that the basis for his comments comes from the presentation of this halachah by R’ Shlomo Ibn Gabirol in his work known as “The Azharos.” He writes:

ולא יאכל פנימיות בזדון ובתרמית

*And one shall not eat of the inner (chatas offerings, which come through) intentional sin and deceit.*

In mentioning the types of sin which require an inner *chatas* as part of the prohibition against consuming it, Ibn Gabirol is indicating that that it is the nature of these sins which is responsible for the prohibition to partake of them, even as part of the mitzvah of consuming meat of korbanos.

## — Chatzi Shiur ~ Not Doing (Forbidden) Things in Halves —

כָּל חֵלֶב שׁוֹר וְכִשְׂב וְעֵז לֹא תֹאכְלוּ

*Any fat of oxen, sheep or goats you shall not eat (7:23)*

### TOSAFOS’ QUESTION: TWO TEACHINGS FOR A HALF-MEASURE?

Although one does not incur a punishment<sup>4</sup> for eating something forbidden by the Torah unless he eats a *kezayis* (olive-volume) of that food, nevertheless, even less than that amount, known as *chatzi shiur* (a half measure) is also forbidden from the Torah. The source for this prohibition, as expounded by the Toras Kohanim to our our pasuk, are the words “כָּל חֵלֶב” – any fat” which are expounded to mean “any amount of *chelev* (fat),” i.e. even less than a *kezayis*.

---

2 Berachos 63a.

3 3:6.

4 E.g. *malkos* (lashes).

This *drashah* is cited by the Gemara in *Maseches Yoma*,<sup>5</sup> where it also mentions a basis for the prohibition of *chatzi shiur* based on *sevara* (reasoning). The *sevara* invokes the concept of “חזי לאיצטרופי – fit to combine,” and states as follows: Since a half-measure of a forbidden food is fit to combine with another half measure to equal a full measure that incurs punishment, it stands to reason that the half-measure itself should be forbidden.

Tosafos<sup>6</sup> to raise a simple question:

Generally speaking, whenever there is a reason based on logic, a teaching from the pasuk to that effect is considered unnecessary and hence, redundant. This being the case, why do we need the *drashah* of “כָּל חֵלֶב” to prohibit *chatzi shiur* when it is already covered by the reasoning of “fit to combine” as expressed by the Gemara?

### “FIT TO COMBINE” – UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT

The Meshech Chochmah responds to Tosafos’ question by stating that although the idea of *chatzi shiur* generally can be explained by the reasoning of “fit to combine,” a special *drashah* was required for the case of *chelev* specifically. In order to understand why this is so, he prefaces by analyzing the concept of “fit to combine” itself. The basis of this idea is that although a half-measure carries no punishment, it is inconceivable that it is actually permitted by the Torah. The very fact that consuming a *shiur* of this food would incur liability indicates that the food itself is *inherently objectionable*, for otherwise, why would increasing the amount consumed make it a punishable offense? It should be the equivalent of consuming two half-measures of permitted food! It is only *with regard to punishment* that we consider the amount consumed, for that reflects *the severity of the person’s transgression*.<sup>7</sup> In other words:

- ▶ While the **punishment** for eating forbidden foods may be dependent on the **quantity** consumed,
- ▶ the **prohibited nature** of that food itself is a function of an objectionable **quality** within that food – in any amount.

### WHY IS CHELEV FORBIDDEN?

Having thus understood the idea of “fit to combine” as the logical basis for the idea of *chatzi shiur*, we now proceed to consider Tosafos’ question as to why a special *drashah* from our pasuk was needed for *chatzi shiur* of *chelev*. The answer, says Meshech Chochmah, lies in the way the Torah presents the punishment for this prohibition. Pasuk 25 states:

כִּי כָל אֲכַל חֵלֶב מִן הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיב מִמֶּנָּה אִשָּׁה לְה' וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הָאֹכֶלֶת מֵעַמּוּיָהּ

*For anyone who eats the fat of (the species of) an animal from which one may bring a fire-offering to Hashem, the soul that eats will be cut off from its people.*

5 74a.

6 Ibid. s.v. *keyvan*.

7 The Meshech Chochmah adds that, in this respect, it is no different from the idea that if a person were to eat two *kezayis*'s of the same forbidden food he would incur two sets of *malkos* (in a case where he was warned by witnesses regarding each *kezayis*).

The Torah appears to be stating that the objectionable nature of eating *chelev* lies in the fact that it is something which is eligible to be offered on the *mizbeyach*. In other words, the prohibition stems not from the *repugnant* nature of *chelev*, but, on the contrary, from its *exalted* nature as something which should be offered to Hashem.

What does this have to do with *chatzi shiur*?

The halachah states that any item offered on the *mizbeyach* requires a minimum of a *kezayis* in order to fulfill the mitzvah.<sup>8</sup> This being the case, the general reasoning of “fit to combine” would not apply, for we could reason that since the essential problem with *chelev* is that it should be offered on the *mizbeyach*, not consumed by people, an amount less than which could be offered on the *mizbeyach* (a *kezayis*) should be permitted! It is for this reason we need a special *drashah* to prohibit a *chatzi shiur* of *chelev*, to teach us that even less than an amount that could actually be offered on the *mizbeyach* nonetheless partakes of the objectionable quality diverting it for human consumption.

---

8 See Menachos 26b.