

# ויקרא

## VAYIKRA

21 March 2015 • 1 Nisan 5775

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### Journeys with the Prophets: Part 22

## The Book of Shmuel (Samuel 1) Chapter 3

by Rabbi Dr Moshe Freedman, New West End United Synagogue

**Summary:** During the night, Shmuel heard a voice calling out his name. He thought Eli wanted something, so he ran to attend him. Yet the voice was not Eli's. This happened a second and third time, after which Eli understood that it was G-d calling to Shmuel and instructed him to respond. G-d relayed a prophecy to Shmuel which described the downfall of Eli and his family.

**A Deeper Look:** Eli had two sons, Chofni and Pinchas, who were responsible for carrying out the offerings in the Mishkan (Tabernacle). Yet they abused their position of authority by misappropriating more than their fair share of the sacrificial meat (Shmuel I 2:12-17) and indulging in promiscuity (ibid 2:22).

There is a Torah command to rebuke those who are breaking Jewish law (Vayikra 19:17). Even though Eli was a righteous man, he was punished for not admonishing his sons in a fitting manner (Shmuel I 3:13). While this responsibility is restricted to certain individuals and circumstances, Eli was certainly in a position to reprimand his sons.

Yet there appears to be an inconsistency, as

the previous chapter stated that Eli had indeed rebuked them (ibid. 2:23-25). Rabbi David Kimche (d. 1235) explains that Eli initially had the authority to stop them but waited too long for his words to be effective. Had he rebuked them at the time that their behaviour was first reported, he could have inspired them to repent.



Rabbi Avraham Sorotzkin (in his commentary *Rinat Yitzchak*) explains that Eli did not want to embarrass his sons in public. When

a person sins in private, he should be admonished in private, but if the sin is public one must admonish him in public.

This was a grave mistake on Eli's part, due to the very public desecration of G-d's name (chillul Hashem) that his sons had caused. Their behaviour had brought the religious establishment into disrepute. Nothing short of public castigation would suffice to limit the damage.

This tragedy would not only leave the young prophet Shmuel to take charge of the Mishkan and lead the Jewish people. An ominous war with the Philistines was also brewing, threatening to jeopardise the people and their Land.

# A Fan of the Almighty

by Rabbi Joseph Kaye

University Jewish Chaplaincy, Associate Chaplain  
for university students on the South Coast

As a Manchester United fan, I have a sin to confess. I am in debt to their local rivals Manchester City. You are probably thinking that I have committed a serious offence. How could I stoop so low?

A few years ago, even though I am a United fan, I went to watch Manchester City play in the Champions League. While I was there, I had a paradigm shift. I felt I was watching a group of adult men running around in pyjamas, chasing a football. I asked myself a question: if these same people were playing in a park, would I spend my time and money to watch them?

In all honesty, I would not. What is it that draws thousands of people to part with their hard earned cash to watch their team play?

We perhaps feel a need to cling to a force greater than ourselves, for example a football team, a singer or a celebrity. We really would love to be in their shoes, but usually we cannot. So we take the second best option. We give them our time, money and energy to be connected to them, to become their fans. By doing so, we feel that we are growing and contributing to our life and society through following their 'growth and contribution'.

It is easy to live other people's lives, to become their fans. Some elements of contemporary society do not encourage people to feel good about themselves. We can be spectators to other people playing the game of life, instead of playing our own game.

This week's sidrah (Vayikra) is all about becoming a fan of the Almighty, through the Temple offerings. What is the message of the offerings?

Rabbi Shimson Rafael Hirsch (d. 1888) explains the words of the verse "and they [man] will bring down" (Bereishit 1:25) to mean that man must 'bring the Heavens down' to earth. We need to make our world as spiritual as possible.

The best way to do this is to use the physical world for meaningful purposes. The offerings display this concept. We take an offering that is totally physical and we offer it in the

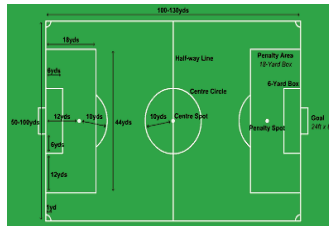
holiest place in the world. That is why it has a "pleasant smell for G-d" (e.g. Vayikra 1:13) – we are using His world in the right way. The Almighty is totally meaningful. So the more meaning we experience in our lives, the more we become

like the Almighty. That makes you a fan.

Why become a fan of the Almighty?

Two people can experience the same thing and come out of that experience completely differently. It depends upon the meaning that they attach to the experience. The ultimate truth and reality in this world is the Almighty. The greater our connection to Him, the more our lives shift from a form of illusion to reality. We start to see and experience life like Him and make better decisions. So by becoming a fan of the Almighty, you are the one who gains – you get to play your own game of life.

If we want to become fans of the greatest force in life, then we need to experience more pleasure by bringing more meaning into our lives through the guide that the Almighty gave us, the Torah. That is a central message behind the offerings. Make His reality our reality, become like Him and join the Almighty's fan club.



There have been many highlights during the 70 days for 70 years project. These include the emotional launch in London with survivor Lily Ebert, who inspired us with her cry of 'Am Yisrael Chai' and the numerous initiatives of thousands of people who took to Facebook and Twitter to let us know how they were being touched by the project. However, the memory that stands out for me so far is the words of Holocaust survivor and former Chief Rabbi of Israel Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, at the project launch in Jerusalem

He spoke passionately about the project and made a powerful statement at the end of his address which can be summarised as follows: "We have to honour the past, because we have to promise the future exactly like we hope will emerge from the festival that ends the 70 days – Pesach – which is a celebration not only of emerging from slavery to freedom but also from death to life". (If you have not seen his speech, it is on the 70 days for 70 years YouTube channel.)

Soon it will be Seder night. We will sit around our table and hear the four questions that we have been asking for millennia. As Jews we have always asked questions. Some have been mundane, others central to our existence and survival. Today we can ask another one – what have we achieved with this project? This answer is self-evident. We have undertaken the monumental task of learning in memory of another Jew, thus reclaiming a 'number' assigned to a Jew by

the Nazis and replacing it with that person's name.

In some ways this follows Rabbi Lau's idea perfectly, of moving from 'death to life'. Obviously we cannot bring the dead back to life. However, by living what they lived and died for, and learning in their memory, as we are doing for 70 days, we have in some way made their memory live on in us.

There is a custom to make a *siyum*, a celebratory meal, upon the completion of a set portion of Jewish learning.

Most commonly a *siyum* is made

upon finishing a tractate of Talmud. We recite two Aramaic words after completing the tractate, '*Hadran alich*', meaning 'we shall return to you'. This is a powerful message – as soon as a Jew finishes their learning, they vow to return to their learning, to continue the journey, to capitalise upon the momentum already achieved.

In connection to the 70 days project, there is also a global message – we here in the UK will soon be finishing our 70 days; but across Europe and South Africa they are just beginning. When they finish, Australia and New Zealand will begin. When they finish, parts of the USA and Canada will start. The learning and the remembrance will continue throughout 2015.

Thank you for taking part in this monumental project, which has truly remembered the past. I hope and pray that it has also helped to build the future, the Jewish future, our future.



**70 Days  
for 70 Years**

Remember the past to build the future

## Margarine and Misconceptions: Part 3

by Rabbi Yehuda Spitz, KLBD

Previous articles detailed the Rabbinic enactment of *Marit Ayin*. This is a general Rabbinic enactment which prohibits taking actions which are permitted according to the letter of the Law, but nevertheless give onlookers the impression of doing something halachically forbidden.

However, we saw an important exception to this rule, first legislated by Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshutz (d. 1764). Any time that the questionable object (or action) becomes commonplace, *Marit Ayin* no longer applies, as suspicion will no longer be aroused. This basis for being lenient in cases of *Marit Ayin* has been widely accepted by contemporary Rabbinic authorities as well. They have debated exactly how common the item/action has to be in order to be entitled to this exemption.

There was a famous dispute recorded in the 19th century, between Rabbi Baruch Eckfeld (d. 1891) and Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Ya'akov Gottlieb (d.1867) regarding some novel egg-based pareve desserts served at a wedding, which looked remarkably dairy-like. Although both Rabbis agreed with Rabbi Eibeshutz's approach, they disagreed as to whether such desserts were considered

common enough in their day to negate the rule of *Marit Ayin*.

Today, popular and familiar daily staples such as margarine, soy products, non-dairy creamers, parev ice creams and whipped desserts are commonplace. Therefore, the vast majority of Rabbinic authorities rule that there is no longer a *Marit Ayin* issue with these products at all. In this day and age, who would suspect an observant Jew of eating milk or ice cream after eating meat, instead of assuming that the pareve alternative is being used?

Although other authorities maintain that it is still preferable to exercise caution, since the dairy versions are more common, and that therefore one should ideally keep the container or wrapper on the table at the time of eating, nevertheless they essentially agree to this principle. This explains why nowadays many do not even think twice about "buttering" their sandwich with margarine or enjoying a coffee with non-dairy "milk", even after a meaty meal.

Although the creator of margarine never got to see its widespread fame, we enjoy it at will, with full culinary and halachic rein.



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