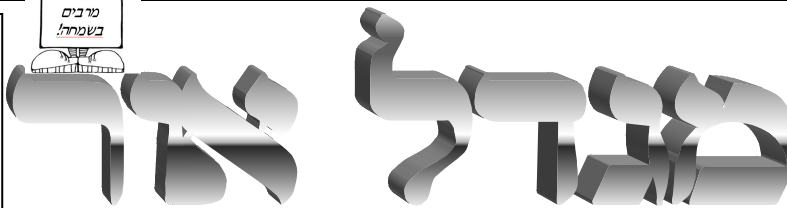




לע"נ ליבא בת ר' ישראל ניסן ע"ה ורבקה בריין בת החבר ר' אלעזר ע"ה
 ויבדלח"ט לזכות רפואה שלימה למרים בת רחל
 ברכה טובה בת ח' סערל ויצחק אייזק בן לאה

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This week's issue sponsored by Rabbi Jonah Gewirtz Shlit"a of Silver Spring, MD in honor of the recent 17th Anniversary of his children Esther Toby and Jonathan Gewirtz. 17 is "טוב." May you and your children be zoche to reach "טוב מאד, מאד"

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:43 - הדלקת נרות
- 7:01 - שקיעה
- 9:26 - זק"ש מ"א
- 10:06 - זק"ש גר"א
- 11:06 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 7:03 - שקיעה
- 7:44* - צאת הכוכבים
- 8:15 - צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Did You Know?

This year, Taanis Esther is on Thursday since we generally do not fast on Friday or Shabbos as it would be a denigration of the holy day.

It is not really a commemoration of the fast that the Jews held in the times of Mordechai and Esther as that was three days and nights, and even children and animals fasted.

One reason is that we know Yom Kippur is like Purim and just as Yom Kippur has a synthesis of fasting and a mitzvah to eat before it, v'nahapoch hu, Purim has a fast followed by a mitzvah to feast.

On Yom Kippur we are atoning for Adam's eating from the Aitz HaDaas and on Purim we atone for eating from Achashveirosh's feast. We do this by refraining from eating, and also eating appropriately.

R' Yosef Caro z"l, however, in the Magid Maisharim, relates that the angel told him a reason to fast on Taanis Esther was as a preventative measure against sinning on Purim.

Since we are enjoined to drink to excess and revel, things we generally do not do, it is quite easy to come to sin. The fast helps purify us and also damages the ability of the Satan to prosecute and be allowed to tempt us on that day.

Judaism is about taking the middle road, about balancing our physical and spiritual. Since we will be greatly involved in the physical on Purim, we limit it in advance, to maintain balance.

Thought of the week:
Mistakes are nearly always forgivable if one has the courage to admit them.

"זאת תורת האשם קדש קדשים הוא." (ויקרא ז:א)

"And this is the law of the guilt-offering, it is holy of holies." (Leviticus 7:1)

Though the Olah, Mincha, and Chatas offerings were also considered holy of holies, leaving just the Korban Shelamim to be Kodshim Kalim, a lighter level of holiness, the Asham offering is the most directly stated to be kodesh kodashim, the holy of the holies.

The Chatas, the offering brought upon doing an unintentional sin, is openly called kodesh kodashim in its verse, but there is also a diversionary tactic in that it mentions where the sacrifice was to be slaughtered. It was to be prepared in the same place as the Olah, the burnt offering, so onlookers would not know that it was to atone for a specific sin. Though it is very holy, there is a certain level of privacy and secrecy to it.

The Asham, however, was brought when someone did an intentional sin. It was holy of holies, says Rashi, quoting the Toras Kohanim, and it could not be switched out for another animal. This is interesting, but what has it got to do with being forthright about its holy status?

Looking at the offerings, we might assume that the Olah, the burnt offering that one brought out of inspiration and purity, would be the greatest korban. The Chatas, brought because of unintentional sin, could still be of the holiest caliber because the person who brought it intended to do the right thing but due to an unfortunate accident, he sinned. The Asham, though, should be tainted. The man who brought it was a sinner, who knew what he was doing, and yet he transgressed. That should be a lower level of holiness, shouldn't it?

We might think so but it is quite the contrary. One who sins but is brave enough to admit he has done wrong is doing one of the holiest things possible. He is not hiding behind accidents; he is not flaunting his great personal standards. What he is doing is declaring the greatness of HaShem by saying, "Though it is embarrassing, I am willing to go through whatever I must to come closer to G-d." Just as he comes out and declares it, so does the Torah declare that despite our opinions of the fellow, he is at the pinnacle of holiness.

Rashi's point that it could not be switched for another animal is appropriate because, as we are explaining, the reason it was so holy was because all the pretenses were laid aside and the smokescreens were gone. There was no explanation or justification for the sin, just atonement.

When the Jews repented in Shushan, they didn't try to explain away their participation in the king's feast, claiming they needed to do it for political reasons. Instead, they acknowledged that the true king was HaShem, and they were casting aside any barriers to that relationship and placing themselves in His hands. He responded by providing a complete salvation and then some. Not only were they freed from subservience to Haman, but they rose to prominence.

Purim is a time of great opportunity. Only the Kohain Gadol went into the Kodesh Kadoshim on Yom Kippur. On Purim, each of us gets that opportunity to commune with HaShem not only to ask for our desires, but just to bask in the radiance of His closeness. Let's drink it in.

A man came to his Rabbi distraught. His business had taken a turn for the worse, he wasn't happy, and he constantly felt things were going wrong around him. "Tell me," said the Rabbi, when you were a child and had a fight with your best friend, what would your father tell you?"

"Well, he would remind me that we were good friends and that if my friend did something wrong to me there was surely some reason or impetus for it. He would ask me to be patient and give my friend the benefit of the doubt, as we would likely be friendly again very soon. But Rabbi, I'm grown-up now, this isn't about toy soldiers, this is about real life."

"That is true," replied the Rabbi, "but G-d has been your friend longer than anyone. Doesn't He deserve the same treatment?"