



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS NCSY ISRAEL



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CHANNELING OUR INNER FORCES

This week we read Parashat Vayikra, the opening of the third book of the Torah. In this parashah, Hashem calls to Moshe and teaches him the laws of the korbanot brought in the Mishkan.

Among these laws is the prohibition against eating certain fats and any blood from the animals. The Torah states (Vayikra 3:16-17):

“וְהִקְטִירָם הַכֹּהֵן הַמַּזְבֵּחַ לַחֵם אֵשׁה לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לְלִחְלֵב לָהּ. חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בְּכֹל מוֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם לְלִחְלֵב וְכֹל־דָּם לֹא תֹאכְלוּ”

“The Kohen shall turn them into smoke on the altar as food, an offering by fire of pleasing aroma. All fat is for Hashem. This is an eternal statute throughout your generations, in all your dwellings: you shall not eat any fat or any blood.”

The Rashbam comments that even when it came to animals that were not offered on the mizbeach as a korban, and none of the fat or

blood of those animals was destined for the mizbeach, it is still forbidden to eat them.

What is the significance of the Torah’s prohibition against eating the animal’s fat and blood?

Rabbi Yamin Goldsmith offers a powerful insight. He draws a parallel between the blood and fats of the korban and the “blood” and “fat” within the human being. Blood is active and constantly flowing. Fat, by contrast, is heavy, slow, and resistant.

In our avodat Hashem, both qualities are essential, but only when directed properly.

When it comes to positive mitzvot, we must be like blood: alive, energetic, and quick to run toward opportunities to do good. But when faced with negative actions or temptations, we must be like fat: slow, resistant, and unwilling to move. That “laziness” can save us from sin.

The Torah teaches us that blood and fat are powerful forces. Our task is not to eliminate these traits, but to elevate and control them, channeling each one at the right time and in the right way.



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THE WHISPER OF VAYIKRA

In this week’s parsha, Vayikra, Hashem teaches Moshe the avodah of the Mishkan. In contrast to the thunder and revelation in Sefer Shemot-particularly in Parashot Yitro, Mishpatim, and Ki Tisa-Vayikra opens with a whisper: “וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה”.

Mefarshim explain that this softer form of speech reflects both the halachot being taught and the nature of the daily avodah. Rashi derives this from the small aleph, stating that it hints to humility. The Meshech Chochmah says the change in speech comes to show the separation between public revelation and private avodah, teaching that holiness is found in the quiet, repetitive, disciplined acts that build inner kedushah.

Sinai was about Hashem revealing Himself to the nation, but the Mishkan is about us learning how to bring ourselves closer to Hashem through personal effort.

The Sforno points out that this call was direct and only to Moshe. It wasn't meant to impress a crowd, it was personal. That itself is a message: real growth happens when no one else is watching.

In our lives, we experience our own "Sinai moments," but we must recognize that most of our avodat Hashem is done quietly, how we speak, how we act when no one is looking, and how we perform mitzvot as individuals.

Vayikra shows that real holiness isn't loud or dramatic; it is found in the quiet things we do every day. Vayikra challenges us to pay attention to those small moments, because that's how we build a real connection with Hashem. ■

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