

שלח, as with all the פרשיות in במדבר, is multi-factorial, multi-tasking. There are so many different ענינים that are woven together. הקדוש ברוך הוא, in His master planning, arranged them in exactly the right order. One famous example is what we recently had, סוטה and נזיר, two seemingly disparate topics that the חכמים in their genius understood why they were placed next to each other.

Here in the middle of שלח with all of the נעבעך, sad news, because we flunked on our mission of sending the spies, the מרגלים, to ארץ ישראל. So that's finished. What does Hashem say next? (15:2) דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל אֶרֶץ מוֹשְׁבֵיתֵכֶם אֲשֶׁר אָנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם. That is remarkable. בני ישראל were just told that they're all going to die in the מדבר, and only the next generation would go ארץ ישראל. Yet now Hashem proceeds to give them all the הלכות about entering ארץ ישראל. It's a tremendous הבטחה that we are indeed going to get ארץ ישראל.

However, I'd like to discuss one particular pasuk which R' Chaim discusses at great length and, I think is very meaningful, it's also הלכה למעשה. Pasuk ד' says וְהִקְרִיב הַמִּקְרִיב קָרְבָּנוֹ לֵה'. The pasuk is a little bit hard to understand. It should have said וְהִקְרִיב קָרְבָּנוֹ לֵה'. We had the same phraseology in parshas נשא, by the נשיאים, where it says וְהִי הַמִּקְרִיב בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן. The מפרשים say, הַקָּרִיב - Who did he bring? He brought himself. That's what a קרבן really is. We're bringing ourselves, but we don't believe in human sacrifice, so we bring a קרבן to take our place. The word קרבן is universally translated as sacrifice, which is a mistranslation. The correct translation for קרבן is an offering.

There was once a young man sitting in כולל, he was learning מסכת זבחים. He could not understand a word of it. He learned נשים, he learned נזיקין, but the concept of קדשים and קרבנות escaped him. He could not wrap his mind around the הלכות of the קרבנות, no matter how much effort he invested, these סוגיות were really beyond his ken.

One day, a particularly frustrating attempt to grasp the meaning of the גמרא occurred, he sat in an empty בית מדרש and he started to cry. He started to daven, "Hashem, please give me the ability to understand the גמרא." Unknown to him, the בית מדרש was not empty. (All these stories always happen, somebody was listening in. That's how we get the story.) There was an older חכם sitting in the back doing his own learning. When he heard the crying, he approached the young man and he said, 'What is your problem? Can I help you?' The אברך admitted that he was crying because he could not understand this particular סוגיא that he was learning. The scholar invited him to accompany him to his chassidish Rebbe, a famous leader, and ask for a ברכה. The Rebbe, when told of what was happening, was impressed by the אברך's desire to learn תורה. He turned to the אברך and said, "Because you cried out of frustration that you couldn't understand your learning, you will be spared from shedding tears over פרנסה, over your children's שידוכים, and over health issues." The אברך thanked the Rebbe for his ברכה, but reminded him he didn't come for a ברכה. He came to understand what the סוגיא was talking about! The Rebbe responded with a deeper insight. He said that the גמרא teaches us that there's a word that corresponds to each of the משנה, we say it every מוצאי שבת in ויתן לך. The word for קדשים is חכמה, wisdom. The Rebbe told him "When you say the ברכה of אתה חונן in שמונה עשרה, when you say חֲכֵמָה בִּינָה וְדַעַת, you should ask the הקדוש ברוך הוא and concentrate, have כוונה, that Hashem should give you the חכמה to understand these קדשים in סוגיות."

The young man thanked the Rebbe and hurried over to R' Yitzchok Zilberstein to tell him the whole story. R' Yitzchok Zilberstein heard this, and he said, "That's nice. Why are you telling this to me?" The אברך said, "I have a problem. I daven nusach Ashkenaz, I don't say חֲכֵמָה בִּינָה וְדַעַת. I say דַּעַת בִּינָה וְהַשְׁכֵּל. The word חכמה is not in my version of the ברכה. What do I do? I don't want to change the נוסח I daven I in." R' Yitzchok Zilberstein told him that the רוקח writes that the ברכה of אתה חונן has 17 words, which correspond, to the 17 times that the root חכמה appears in various forms in the תורה. Even though you don't actually say the word חכמה, concentrate on the entire ברכה, on each of the words that represents one of the



forms נוסח in the תורה. The אברך wasn't satisfied. He wanted to know if he could change his נוסח and follow the Rebbe's instructions exactly. R' Zilberstein took his קשיא to R' Chaim, who gave him a phenomenal response. "תבנו מאתד דעה בינה והשפיל תכמה בינה ודעת: Tell the אברך that he may say this formula: הלכות about changing one's נוסח is only if you change it entirely. If you add an alternate נוסח while you say the original formula, that is allowed.

This is the שכר that you get for really wanting to learn. If you really want to learn, Hashem will send you all of the help that you need. As R' Oelbaum has said many times, any שכר we get in עולם הזה is only to help us do מצות. The real שכר is in עולם הבא. The entire world is not worth even one אמן. All the trillions and quadrillions of dollars in this world don't equal even a single אמן. So why do we ask for all the good things in this world, תכמה בינה ודעת, and all the other things we daven for? The answer is, as he said so wonderfully, is that we want these things to make it easier for us to sit and learn. We want air conditioning in the בית מדרש, not because air conditioning is our goal, but because it helps us stay focused on learning. That's what we're asking for. The good things we ask for are means to an end. In that זכות, may our efforts to learn be crowned with success.

