

G-d's Relevance TO EXISTENCE

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YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Emor

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

The High Priest as Model of Original Man

1. A *Kohen* is not permitted to contaminate to the dead unless it is one of the 7 closest relatives: father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, wife.
2. The High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*) is not permitted to contaminate – even to the 7 closest relatives.
3. *Seforno*: The function of the Priest in addition to officiating is to be the disseminator of *Torah*.
4. *Prophet Malachi*: The lips of the *Kohen* are the keepers of the faith. *Torah* should be sought from his mouth.
5. If the *Kohen* would contaminate to others other than his family, his reverence and esteem would be diminished.
6. G-d's Presence in the *Mishkan* was the original intent of creation that G-d should be on the terrestrial with man.
7. Before the sin of Adam there was no death – a derivative of the evil contained within the fruit.
8. The sin of the fruit putrified existence, causing the terrestrial to no longer be the location for G-d's Presence.
9. The *Mishkan* was the location for G-d's presence to dwell.
10. The High Priest was a reinstatement of Adam before the sin – he had no context of spiritual impurity.
11. The High Priest, the equivalent of Adam before the sin, can not contaminate even to the 7 closest relatives.

The Proprietary Imprint of One's Life

1. *Midrash*: A heavenly voice will sprout from the mountain top saying "Who has done for G-d should come and take his rightful reward."
2. "Who has praised G-d before he was endowed with a soul, who has circumcised his child before he was given a son."
3. "Who has brought to me a sacrifice before I gave him an animal, the ox, sheep and goat."
4. A Positive Commandment: Install a court comprised of ordained judges & law enforcers in every community.
5. Man was endowed with the power of choice to be deserving or culpable for his choices.
6. Exercising one's full choice takes place in concealment – understanding the consequence of transgression.
7. The *Torah* does not want the range of choice for the Jew to be either devoutly righteous or to be a predator animal.
8. The extent of one's choice is to infuse one's action with a special intent for the sake of the *mitzvah*.
9. When we serve G-d at whatever level, one must be cognizant that it is all G-d given to be utilized for a specific purpose.

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Why Choose The Domesticated Species For Sacrifice?

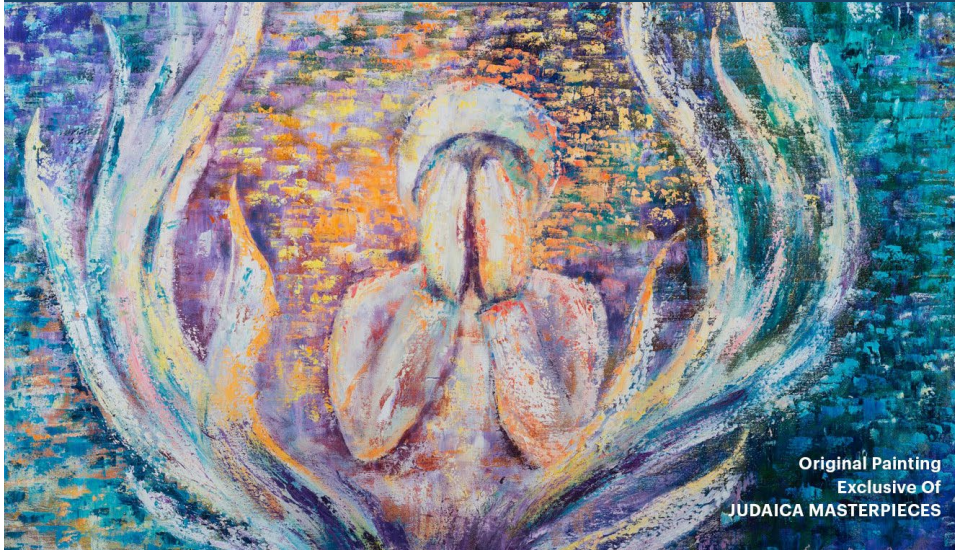
1. The only species that qualify for sacrifices are the ox, sheep, and goat.
2. Although there are ten kosher species only the domesticated qualify.
3. *Midrash*: G-d said, "I don't want to burden you to scale mountains and search out fields to seek out these species."
4. Only the species raised on your feed bag and under your jurisdiction qualify.
5. *Chazal*: One's pain for a *mitzvah* (sacrifice) determines the degree of one's reward.
6. Psalms: *Mitzvos* were given to sanctify and purify the Jew.
7. The positive and negative Commandments correspond and parallel the spiritual component of the Jew.
8. Pain, as determinant of reward, is only true within the context of the prescribed *Mitzvos*.
9. Applied elsewhere it is only an exercise in futility.

The Significance Of The Juxtaposition Of The Festivals To Shabbos

1. The Festivals and holidays are juxtaposed to the *Shabbos*.
2. *Rashi*: One who desecrates the holiday is considered as he desecrated the *Shabbos*.
3. One who observes the holiday is valued as though he observed the *Shabbos*.
4. Observing the *Shabbos* is a testament that G-d created the world.
5. *Gemara*: The Sanctity of the *Shabbos* has been in place since the beginning of creation.
6. The Festivals and holidays are sanctified by the *Sanhedrin*.
7. The blessing of the Festivals and holidays: G-d sanctifies the Jewish people who sanctify time.
8. The sanctity of time is derived from the sanctity of the Jew.
9. The basis for all sanctity is G-d's association with the location or people.
10. The sanctity of *Shabbos*: G-d's entering into existence every 7th day.
11. The Jew's sanctity: G-d taking them as His holy people.
12. The basis for all sanctity: G-d's level of association in each context.
13. The sanctity of the Festivals and *Shabbos* are same sourced; one who desecrates the holiday is considered as desecrating the *Shabbos*.

Weekly Video: In The Presence Of G-d In An Imperfect State

Weekly Torah Commentaries Series: Emor



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G-d's Relevance TO EXISTENCE

What is Expected of G-d's Holy People

"Hashem spoke to Moshe saying – Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem your G-d."

"You shall distinguish between the clean animal and the unclean...and you shall not render your souls abominable through such animals...You shall be holy for Me, for I Hashem am holy."

Rashi: If a person ritually slaughters a kosher species and he has only completed half of the process (because the majority is required), the status of the meat is the equivalent a non-kosher species. Not only must the animal be kosher, but it also needs to be ritually slaughtered in a manner that is prescribed by the *Torah*.

There are two verses, one at the beginning of the Portion and one at the end in which G-d commands the Jewish people to be holy because He is Holy. It seems to be redundant and superfluous. What is the *Torah* communicating to us?

At the beginning of the Portion when it states, "You shall be holy," G-d is not commanding the Jew to not violate the *Torah*, but rather He is instructing the Jew to sanctify himself in order to be worthy of having an intimate relationship with Him.

Ramban: The Jew should sanctify himself by refraining from partaking of "what is permitted to him." One should not indulge in the material, although it may be permitted. By weaning oneself from the material, one assumes a greater likeness to G-d Who has no relevance to the material. This person is qualified to have an intimate and advanced relationship with G-d.

In contrast, the closing verse of the Portion "You shall be holy" comes after an extensive delineation of forbidden relationships and the separation between the "clean and unclean" species. Not only do rodents and un-kosher species abominate the Jew, but also the kosher species that are not ritually slaughtered in a proper manner undermine the spirituality of the Jew. This verse is communicating to us not to violate the *Torah* at a basic level if we want to have a minimal relationship with G-d.

The Jew in his essence is innately holy; however, if he should partake of forbidden species, he abominates himself, and he becomes disqualified from having a relationship with G-d.

“The *tzaddik* eats only to satiate his soul.” (Proverbs) He is the one who removes himself from what is permitted. Because of his state of spirituality, he receives additional Divine Assistance to give him clarity which protects him from transgression. “G-d protects the feet of the devoutly righteous.”

“Hashem said to Moshe, say to the *Kohanim*...”

Midrash: “The statements of G-d are pure.” (Psalms) G-d endowed the Jewish people with *mitzvos* to allow them to advance their innate holiness.

If a piece of coal is placed under great pressure for a prolonged period of time, it will develop into a diamond; however, a piece of coal in its current state could never be formed into a diamond.

The Jew in his essence is innately holy. However, he needs to perfect and advance his spirituality. He was given the *mitzvos* to achieve that purpose. We say in the blessing that precedes the performance of a *mitzvah*, “He has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us...”

Something that is innately holy can be perfected and advanced. However, if it becomes contaminated and unclean, then it no longer has relevance to spiritual advancement (unless it is purged of its impurity through repentance.)

When the *Torah* states, “You shall be holy” by not partaking in the forbidden, it is forewarning the Jew not to abominate his innate holiness. If the Jew would not possess an innate holiness, the context of abomination would not have relevance to him.

“If the leprous lesion comes upon the skin of his flesh.”

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: The leprous lesion that comes upon the Jew is a reflection of the impurity that he possesses. However, it has no relevance to his essence; rather it is a consequence of his misbehavior. This is why the *Torah* states, “The skin of his flesh.” However, the non-Jew, whose essence is impure, has no relevance to the laws of leprosy for this very reason.

The Jew must maintain his spiritual profile by not abominating it. In addition, there is a positive

commandment to advance his spirituality by weaning himself from the material. When he separates himself from that which is permitted to him, it allows him to establish a greater commonality with G-d, resulting in an intimate relationship with Him.

G-d Provides for One’s Inner Conflicts

“When an ox or sheep or a goat is born...” These are the only three species that qualify to be brought as an offering.

Midrash: “My nation, what did I do to you? I want you to attest to the fact that I did not make you weary by burdening you with My *mitzvos*...” (*Micha*)

Reb Yehudah b’Reb Shimon said, G-d said to the Jewish people, ‘I have given you ten species. Three of the species are under your jurisdiction and seven of them are not. The ox, sheep, and goat are domesticated and are easily available to you. The other seven are undomesticated species.... I did not want to inconvenience you by asking you to ascend the mountains or to exhaust yourselves by traversing the fields in order to bring them before Me as a sacrifice. Rather, I chose the species that grow and develop in your domain and are nurtured with your feedbag.’

Gemara: *Elazar Ben Dordaya* frequented every brothel in the world. He had heard that there was a woman in a far off land with whom he wanted to engage. He took a purse of gold and crossed seven seas in order to fulfill his desire. When he came to the woman, she told him something that evoked in him a realization that caused him to repent. He internalized the depth to which he had fallen, which caused his soul to depart due to his degree of remorse. He thus died in a state of repentance.

Maharsha: In *Shema* we state, “You must love G-d will all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your resources...” One must love G-d to such a degree that his entire heart is dedicated to Him. One must be willing to give his life and all of his material possessions for the sake of G-d.

In contrast, *Elazar Ben Dordaya* dedicated himself to the same degree in order to fulfill his desire, which was the antithesis of loving G-d. He was consumed with desire, thus his heart was dedicated. He traveled seven seas, placing his life in danger, demonstrating his willingness to give his life for his desire. He took a purse of gold to facilitate his desire, which demonstrated

that he was willing to part with the material, regardless of the amount, in order to fulfill his desire.

We see from this that man is willing to go to all extremes in order to fulfill his self-interests. However, regarding the service of G-d, Who is his Benefactor, it is not easily accomplished. Despite this, the *Torah* obligates one to demonstrate his love for G-d in every aspect of his life.

Although G-d obligates the Jew to serve Him, He wants to make that service as effortless as possible, so that one will not be discouraged by the inertia of his being that is part of the human make up. G-d permitted ten species of animals for the consumption of the Jewish people. However, the only three that are qualified to be brought as offerings are all domesticated. They are under the jurisdiction of the Jew. One does not need to be burdened to travel into the mountains or be inconvenienced in order to bring an offering to G-d. The species that have been nurtured by one's own feedbag are the species that qualify for a sacrifice.

The *Torah* tells us that the building of the *Mishkan* required great amounts of precious metals and material wealth to complete.

Midrash: The Jewish people in Egypt became wealthy on a number of occasions. The first instance was during the plague of blood. The second was through the borrowing of the precious personal effects of their Egyptian masters. This was the fulfillment of the promise that G-d had made to *Avraham* at the Covenant between the Parts. In addition, after the Sea had closed upon the Egyptian army, their remains and chariots that were bedecked in jewels and gold washed up upon the shore, and the Jewish people once again gathered the spoils that were even greater than what they had taken out of Egypt. Each Jew took out minimally either ten or forty (two opinions) pack animals laden with the wealth of Egypt.

Despite the fact that the Jewish people were endowed with enormous wealth, the *Torah* states regarding the building of the *Mishkan*, "G-d said, 'Take for Me a Portion...'"

The reason the *Torah* uses the term "take" rather than "give" regarding the building of the *Mishkan* is because the Jewish people needed to understand that by giving to the *Mishkan*, they were in fact the beneficiaries. Thus, they were taking for themselves by giving.

However, G-d only wanted the participation of those who would give the necessary materials out of the

generosity of their heart. If the Jewish people had such an immeasurable amount of wealth, why was it necessary for G-d to establish the prerequisite of one needing to give with the generosity of his heart?

It was clear beyond a doubt that the wealth that the Jewish people possessed was unrelated to their own capability and acumen; it was purely a gift from G-d. However, the natural tendency of a human is to become possessive of what comes into his domain. One does not easily part with what he owns. Therefore, it was necessary for G-d to set the precondition that the only material that qualified for the building of the *Mishkan* was if it was given out of the generosity of his heart.

Gemara: After G-d promised *Avraham* that his descendants would inherit the Land of Israel and be as numerous as the stars in the heavens, he was concerned that ultimately they would sin and G-d would destroy them as He had done with the generation of the Great Flood. In order to dispel his concern, G-d told *Avraham* that his children would be able to atone by bringing sacrifices so that they should continue to be worthy of His blessing.

Although the Jewish people were given a mechanism of atonement, G-d was concerned that the bringing of the sacrifices may be too onerous. Therefore, G-d said that only the domestic species that are easily accessible to the Jewish people qualify to be brought as sacrifices.

We see that when G-d brings obligation upon the Jewish people, it is in a context that should be the least burdensome to them.

Chazal: One should not be confident in himself (regarding his state of spirituality) until the moment of his death. This is because one's natural tendencies cause conflicts of interest that continuously interfere with one's spiritual growth and advancement.

Gemara: In order to overcome all spiritual handicaps, the machinations of the evil inclination, G-d gave the Jewish people the *Torah* as an antidote. "I created the evil inclination and the *Torah* as its antidote." As King Solomon writes in Proverbs, "*Neir mitzvah v'Torah ohr* (the mitzvah is the equivalent of the material to ignite the light and the *Torah* itself is the illuminator)."

The Subtleties of the Torah

"When an ox or sheep or a goat is born..."

Midrash: "You (*hein*) are the equivalent of nothing, but your actions are from your declaration. An abomination He chose among you..." (*Yeshaya*) The term '*hein*' is derived from the Greek language, which means 'one.' G-d says 'You are one of a kind to Me.' And the nations of the world are considered nothing to Me. As it states, "All the nations are nothing opposite G-d."

Reb Levy says, All the good, pleasant, and special deeds that G-d will perform on behalf of the Jewish people in the future is only due to one special declaration that that they had made at Sinai, which was '*Naase v'Nishma* – We will do and we will listen.'

What is the meaning of 'an abomination He chose among you?' From the species of the abomination which was cast in gold (the Golden Calf), you shall bring before Me a sacrifice, and through that I will choose you from among the nations.

The species that is referred to as an "abomination" in the verse is the 'ox' – "When an ox or sheep or a goat is born." Why did G-d mention the ox (calf) to be the first species that qualifies as a sacrifice?

Reb Levy explains this with an allegory. A rumor had spread throughout the kingdom that a certain matronly woman had committed adultery with one of the ministers of the king. The king investigated the claim and discovered that it was unfounded. He wished to publicly vindicate his minister. In order to do this, the king hosted a banquet for all of his subjects to attend, and placed the minister (the accused adulterer) at the head of the table next to himself. Those who attended the banquet, witnessing the honor accorded to the minister by the king, immediately understood that the accusation was unfounded and the minister was truly innocent.

Similarly, the nations of the world claim, 'the Jewish people are idolaters because they worshiped the Golden Calf.' G-d investigated the matter and discovered that the Jewish people were innocent. He therefore chose the ox (calf) to be mentioned as the first of the species that qualifies as a sacrifice.

The *Torah* proves that the Jewish people were not actually the ones who initiated and worshipped the Golden Calf, as it states, "They had said, 'This is your god - Israel.'"

If the Jewish people had initiated the golden calf and accepted it as their deity, the verse should have stated, 'This is our god- Israel.' This indicates that the Golden

Calf was initiated and worshipped by the rabble (the nations that had left Egypt along with the Jewish people).

Therefore the ox is listed as the first of the species to qualify as a sacrifice in order to declare to the world that the Jewish people are innocent of idolatry and thus vindicated from the sin of idolatry.

If the Jewish people did not in fact participate in the sin of the Golden Calf, then why were they held culpable to be liable for destruction?

Eitz Yosef: Since the Jewish people at Sinai remained silent and did not protest this abomination and allowed G-d's Name to be desecrated, they are held culpable as if they had initiated the Golden Calf.

Maharal of Prague: One of the decrees that the Greeks issued against the Jewish people was that every Jewish home should display the horn of an ox (*keren*) and write upon it, "We do not have a share in the G-d of Israel." The basis for this decree was that since the Greeks believed that the Jewish people worshipped the Golden Calf at Sinai when they were taken as G-d's people, it is clear that they never had a relationship with G-d.

Chazal: The Sinai event is the equivalent of the wedding canopy (*chupah*) under which G-d had taken the Jewish people to be His bride. However, because the Jewish people engaged in idolatry immediately after receiving the *Torah*, *Chazal* tell us that it is the equivalent of the bride committing adultery while still under the *chupah*.

If a marriage deteriorates after many years, one could say that the basis for the infidelity was because of the issues that existed between the couple. However, if the bride commits adultery under the *chupah*, it is an indication that there was never a relationship between the two individuals.

The Greeks therefore wanted the Jewish people to acknowledge to themselves and to the world that they never had a relationship with G-d, because they worshipped idolatry immediately after being taken as G-d's people.

Rav Yaakov I. Ruderman zt"l: The only nation that accepted the *Torah* unequivocally was the Jewish people. When G-d offered the *Torah* to each of the nations of the world they asked, "What is written in it?" G-d responded by mentioning one of the Ten

Commandments. Each nation rejected the *Torah* because the Commandment that was mentioned to them was contrary to their essence and way of life.

When G-d offered the *Torah* to the Edomites, the descendants of *Esav*, G-d said, "The *Torah* states, 'Thou shall not murder.'"

They responded by saying, "We cannot accept it because our grandfather blessed us by saying, 'By your sword you shall live.'"

Rav Ruderman zt"l: Every civilization adheres and accepts the fundamentals that are stated in the Ten Commandments. If so, why was this the basis for them to reject the *Torah*?

It is true that the moral and ethical code of the Ten Commandment is accepted by all civilized societies because they understand "murder" to mean the taking of one's physical life. However, within the context of the *Torah*, there are many subtleties that are the equivalent of murder.

For example, if one embarrasses his fellow in a public setting and causes his face to turn multiple colors, it is the equivalent of taking his life. If one undermines another's livelihood, it is the equivalent of murdering him.

Regarding idolatry, it is not only the actual worshiping of the idol but anything that may be construed or perceived as idol worship is also considered to be a violation.

Gemara: If water flows through the mouth of idolatrous cherubs and one is dying of thirst, one is not permitted to drink the water from the mouth of the cherub because it appears that he is worshiping the idol by kissing it, although the individual is not actually doing so.

These subcategories of the Ten Commandments could not be accepted by the nations of the world. The Jewish people were held liable for the sin of the Golden Calf because they had remained silent when such an abomination and desecration of G-d's Name had taken place in their midst.

When the nations of the world became aware that the Jewish people were condemned for the Golden Calf, they believed that they had actually worshipped the calf, which was an act of idolatry. Based on this perception, they understood that the Jewish people never had a relationship with G-d from the very outset. Their perception was based on their misperception of liability.

To be held liable for the subtleties that are communicated by the *Torah* regarding idolatry was something incomprehensible to them. This was the basis for the decree of the Greeks against the Jewish people, to display the horn of an ox bearing the inscription, "We have no share in the G-d of Israel."

The Significance of the Mitzvah of a Tzaddik

"When an ox or sheep or a goat is born..."

Midrash: "Your righteousness is like the mountains of G-d and Your judgment is as unfathomable as the depths of the water." (Psalms)

What is "like the mountains of G-d" referring to? It is referring to the *tzaddikim* (devoutly righteous) who are the equivalents of mountains. Just as grass is able to grow upon the mountains, so too are the righteous able to generate good deeds. Just as the vegetation upon the mountains brings forth fruits that are beneficial, so too are the actions of the *tzaddikim* beneficial to themselves and to others. Just as the mountains suppress the depths of the waters to not rise and inundate the world, so too do the good deeds suppress tragedy from coming upon the world.

One can infer from the words of the *Midrash* that it is only the deeds of the *tzaddik* that avert tragedy from coming about. If two individuals, a *tzaddik* and an ordinary person, performed the same *mitzvah*, the effect is not the same. Because of the profundity of the action of the *tzaddik*, it will quell the prosecution of *Satan* and will allow the Attribute of Mercy to be in effect. The same deed performed by an ordinary person will not have that effect.

Chazal: Why does the *Torah* juxtapose the passing of the sons of *Aaron* to the service of *Yom Kippur*? It is to teach us that just as *Yom Kippur* atones, so too does the passing of the *tzaddik* atone for the sins of the generation.

If one lives a life of sin and does not adhere to the dictates of the *Torah*, will the passing of the *tzaddik* bring him atonement? It is clear that this is not the case.

The world is continuously in a state of judgment. Existence is able to continue only because the Attribute of Mercy tempers the record of mankind. The death of the *tzaddik* suppresses the Attribute of Justice so that humanity will not be prosecuted which would lead to the destruction of existence. Each individual however, must contend with his own spiritual accounting for which he will be held liable.

The actions of the *tzaddik* are able to silence the prosecution of *Satan* and thus allow the Attribute of Mercy to suppress the Attribute of Justice. The deeds of the *tzaddik* have such profound value not only because of the quality of the action as a result of the intent and selfless dedication to G-d that is infused in it, but rather it is also due to the *tzaddik's* dimension of being.

Rabbeinu Yonah: If one lives his life dedicated to G-d, he assumes the status of a consecrated vessel. Thus, his *mitzvah* deed has extraordinary value. In contrast, an ordinary individual, whose life was not invested for the service of G-d, his being is classified as mundane and thus the *mitzvah* is emanating from something that is physical.

The Cost Factor of Clarity

“...When you bring the Thanks Offering (*Korban Todah*)...”

Gemara: When one survives an extraordinary event, one must appreciate the fact that he is only alive because G-d willed it to be so. In these instances one must bring the Thanks Offering.

Mishna: If one returns safely after traversing the desert, or from sailing the high seas, or is released from prison, or recovers from a serious illness, or after a woman gives birth, one is obligated to bring a Thanks Offering.

At the end of time all sacrifices will be nullified except for the Thanks Offering. It is because the giving of thanks to G-d will not come to an end. “...G-d is good in His Kindness forever.”

King David writes in Psalms, “...I will pay Thanks (in plural).” A person brings the Thanks Offering as well as expressing his thanks to G-d.

Maharal: One gives thanks when he understands and appreciates that the only reason he is the beneficiary of a kindness is because it comes from a particular source. The giving of thanks is an acknowledgement of the kindness of the benefactor. If however, he attributes his safe return or recovery to a statistic or “good fortune”, he will not offer thanks.

At the end of time, because everything will be seen within the context of absolute clarity, the source of all existence will be evident. It is because of this clarity that all mankind will recognize and acknowledge that they are continuous recipients of G-d's Beneficence. There will be nothing to distort the reality of that fact.

Therefore, the Thanks Offering will not be nullified at the end of time because one will truly recognize then that he must give thanks to G-d for every aspect of his being.

The Thanks Offering is a meal offering that is comprised of forty loaves of bread, ten of them being leavened. In addition, an animal is brought as a sacrifice. All other meal offerings need to be unleavened. If there was any intermingling of leavening, it was invalidated.

A leavened product is seen in a negative context, regarding something of sanctity, because it represents many aspects of the evil inclination. It is tastier, which connotes lust and desire. During the processing of a leavened product it expands and rises, which represents arrogance and haughtiness. Therefore, it is not accepted as a meal offering. If this is so, why does the Thanks Offering contain loaves of bread that are leavened?

Additionally, if the basis for the Thanks Offering is acknowledging G-d's kindness, which one can only come upon if one possesses humility, then why does the Thanks Offering contain something that represents the characteristic which causes the denial of truth?

For one to acknowledge that the only reason that he survived a particular situation is because of G-d's Kindness is not a simple matter. By nature, every person possesses an evil inclination. Therefore, every individual has a resistance to recognize the truth and attribute his life to G-d's Kindness. If one acknowledges this fact, it creates indebtedness to G-d. If one acknowledges the truth of his situation, despite the struggle to deny it, and he brings the Thanks Offering, it is considered a great accomplishment.



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