

Torah sweets

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EMOR – HOW WE CAN MAKE MIRACLES HAPPEN NOWADAYS

Rabbi Berel Wein, ZT”L, tells the story of a cadet at West Point who asked why the Six-Day War was not part of the curriculum. The high-ranking teacher silenced the questioner and demanded that he speak to him following the class. The soldier approached the general and again wondered why Israel’s victory in the Six-Day War wasn’t studied. The teacher explained that the Six-Day War is not studied because at West Point, they study strategy and tactics, not miracles.

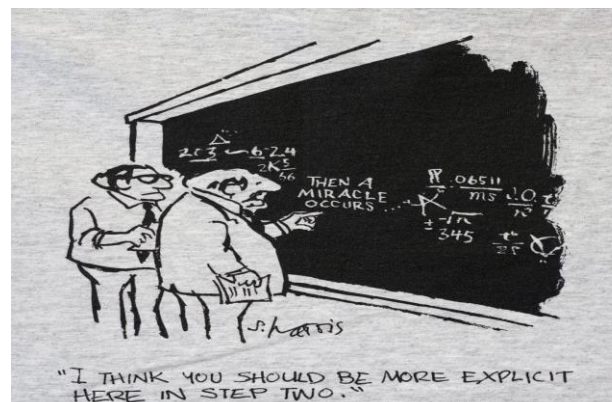
Indeed, one Israeli Prime Minister discussed the strategy the Jewish nation uses before going into combat against our enemies: “We don’t hope for miracles; we rely on them.” When we look at the number of attempts by terrorists to harm us versus the actual success rate, we should be truly astounded. The question becomes: how can we merit miracles not only on a national scale but also in our day-to-day lives? Rashi (in our Parsha) gives us the cheat code.

In Parshas Emor, the Torah says that there is an obligation to sanctify the name of Hashem, as the Pasuk (Vayikra 22:32): “**You shall not profane My holy name, that I may be sanctified amidst the Jewish people.**” Rashi (ibid.) explains the nitty-gritty of what the positive manifestation of sanctification looks like: “Abandon yourself to being moser nefesh (sacrifice) and sanctify My Name! When offering oneself, one should offer himself with the firm determination to die if necessary, for he who abandons himself on condition that Hashem will not exact the sacrifice and that a miracle will happen to save him will have no miracle made for him; for thus we find in the case of Chananyah, Mishael, and Azariah that they did not offer themselves for martyrdom expecting a miracle.” In other words, one sacrifices oneself with the hope of being miraculously saved, will not be saved like Haran, who went into the fiery furnace with the expectation that he would be saved (spoiler alert: he was not). This seems a little counterintuitive: you want it, so you don’t get it, but if you don’t want it, you will get it. How do we make sense of this?

Rabbi Yisroel Besser quotes Rav Chaim ben Betzalel of Friedberg (the Maharal’s brother, in the Sefer Hachaim) explained that a tzaddik has the power to make decrees, give brachos, and in a certain way, to perform nissim (miracles). He is more powerful than nature because he makes decisions that go against his nature. (“I may want to say Lashon Harah, but I am to control my impulse and refrain,” or “I don’t want to give Tzedakah, but I will break myself and donate”). As such, tzaddikim live with creating nissim within themselves, so it follows that they get the power to make/affect Nissim in the world.

The greatest example in the history of the Jewish people is *Krias Yam Suf* (Splitting of the Red Sea). We read (Tehillim 114:3) “*Hayom Ro’oh Vayonos - the sea saw, and it fled.*” The Midrash on Tehilim (Shochar Tov, 114:3) addresses the issue of what the sea “saw” that triggered it to split. One of its well-known responses is that it saw the casket of Yosef entering the sea. The Midrash continues, “*Hashem commanded that it should flee because of the one who fled - namely, Yosef, who fled from the overtures of Potiphar’s wife, as it is stated (Bereishis 39:12), ‘Vayonos Vayetze Hachutzah - he fled and went outside.’*” Yosef is known as the epitome of a Tzaddik, which he became in one moment when he completely overcame his nature and owned it.

Rashi tells us that someone who sacrifices himself expecting to be miraculously saved is not really/fully sacrificing himself and won’t merit to be saved. This kind of person is not breaking himself. On the other hand, since one’s most natural desire is to live, if he is giving that up for Hashem and what He wants, one earns himself a miraculous salvation. Let’s remember these amazing benefits the next time we are struggling to against our nature.



HAFTARAH HONEYCOMBS BY RABBI MOSHE KLEIN
EMOR – THE REAL IMPACT OF TORAH ON US

Our Haftarah speaks about the Kohanim and their tasks (*Yechezkel 44:15-17*): “...the Kohanim, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of My sanctuary when the Children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to serve Me. They shall approach My Table they shall be clothed with linen garments.” They will be the ones who won’t be able to drink wine (ibid. 44:21), marry a widow, or wed a divorcee (ibid. 44:22). Then, it comes to the Pasuk (44:24) which states that “they will keep My Chukim and be mekadesh (sanctify) My Shabbos.”

Rav Tzadok (in the Pri Tzaddik) wonders how this instruction is any different than the one given to all the Jews to sanctify Shabbos. Rav Tzadok quotes the **Metzudas Dovid** who writes that the Kohanim will bring Karbonos (sacrificial offerings), through which they will sanctify Shabbos. Rav Tzadok proves from the Gemara (*Zevachim 71a*) that bringing Karbonos doesn’t sanctify Shabbos. Rather, it works the other way around - Shabbos elevates the Karbonos.

Rav Tzadok brings two answers. One answer (brought from the **Mechilta** and **Rashi** in *Mishpatim*) is as follows. The Torah (*Shemos 34:21*) tells us “*Work six days and stop on the seventh.*” Rashi explains this Pasuk is referring to *Shemittah*, as there was an assumption that on *Shemittah* there was no need to keep Shabbos. The *Mechilta* explains that since the whole point of Shabbos is to serve Hashem through Torah and Avodah (service), the whole *Shemittah* does that too, so it’s like a whole year of Shabbos and Shabbos itself is obsolete.

Therefore, the Pasuk tells us that even during *Shemittah* we must keep Shabbos. This could also be why we would think the Kohanim - whose entire work is learning and serving Hashem - won’t need to keep Shabbos (which has the same theme). This is why the Kohanim are given a specific command to sanctify Shabbos. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 2) →

SHALOM BAYIS AND THE PARSHA BY RABBI YITZ GREENFIELD
EMOR – WORD TRANSFORMATION

At the end of this week's parsha, the Torah tells us about the man who blasphemed (Vayikra 24:11): *"The son of the Israelite woman pronounced the name and blasphemed - so they brought him to Moshe; the name of his mother was Shelomis bas Divri, of the tribe of Dan."* **Rashi** wonders why the Pasuk tells us the name of his mother and the name of his grandfather? He answers that her name, Shelomis bas Divri, tells us about her, as she would chatter with whomever she met, asking them about their welfare. This habit got her into trouble as she caught the eye of a Mitzri man (see Rashi, Shemos 2:11). The name Shelomis is related to the word Shalom - the greeting "peace" and Divri is related to Devarim - words. By recording her name, the Torah is subtly telling us about her character. Her son used his words in the wrong way, just as his mother used her words in the wrong way.

We can take this lesson to heart by thinking about how we are using our words. Words are powerful - they can bring us closer to our spouse, or they can create distance between our spouse and us. It is part of being human to take things for granted, and taking our power of speech for granted is something we are all guilty of. If we use our words to greet our spouse lovingly, if we share with our spouse something we admire about them, if we give a compliment to our spouse, these are all things that will deepen our marital bond. When our spouse asks us how our day was, we can start out positively and use our words to create positive vibes. No matter what went "wrong", there are the things that went "right" every day. Focusing on the negative is natural human behavior, but we can choose to focus on the positive.

There is so much positive in our lives: we woke up today, we can use our faculties to serve Hashem, we have indoor plumbing, we have heat and AC in our homes, we have a family, we are not alone, and we have people who care about us and want to hear about our day. It's up to us to use our words to create a deeper bond with our spouse. Together, we can use our words to build instead of to tear down. If we make a mistake, we can use our words to apologize and restart. Each day brings a new opportunity to connect with our spouse through our words. It takes effort to change speech patterns, especially if they are already a bad habit, but the dividends are worth it. May Hashem bless our efforts with success and light up our homes with the light of Shalom Bayis!

HAFTARAH HONEYCOMBS BY RABBI KLEIN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Rav Tzadok gives another insight. The Pasuk (in V'zos Haberacha and ibid. 44:23) tells us that the Kohanim and Levi'im must teach Klal Yisrael, bringing Hashem into people's hearts. What is going on in the Beis Hamikdash is creating this da'as, this connection, between Hashem and people that goes from logic in the head all the way down to the heart. A person who knows that their father is their father, it's beyond logic - it just goes to the core being of the individual. On Motzei Shabbos, we have a special Tefillah - *"Atah Honantanu - You taught us to know Torah."* Shabbos and Yom Tov are very special. The Yerushalmi (Shabbos 15:3) writes that these holy days were given to learn Torah. It's not just because we are off from work and have spare time. The reason, says Rav Tzadok, is that our hearts are open. We're receptive that now we could hear Torah and it could be engraved in our hearts. If we could apply that experience and bring it into the rest of the week, it would be transformative.

Let's give a *maschal* (parable). If somebody needed to take medicine, they could take a pill, but if they needed the medicine to go straight to the heart, they would take it through IV or inject it right near the heart itself. In Ata Honantanu, we ask Hashem to allow the Torah that we learned on Shabbos to be able to spill over the rest of the week. Because of their amazing connection with Hashem, the Kohanim and Levi'im have a task to make sure that Yiddishkeit gets permeated into every fiber of our being. They are being Mekadesh our entire existence through Shabbos. They take the aspect of Shabbos Kodesh, the ability for one's soul to be completely connected to themselves, and elevate it.

The attribute that we have on Shabbos, and we daven for the rest of the week, they always have. The takeaway from here is that we must understand that there is a tremendous effect when we learn Torah on Shabbos instead of wasting time. Let's realize that this level of learning is something so special, grand, and powerful - it's like a spiritual medicine that cuts straight to the core and spiritually lifts us and our upcoming week into the stratosphere.

DELICIOUS DVAR BY RABBI DOVID ORLOFSKY
EMOR – TIME = OPPORTUNITY



Whenever we see multiple ideas in a Parsha, we everything in it fits in thematically. This Parsha has many laws about Kohanim, discussing the idea of how they must maintain their kedusha. There are laws about terumah, a *ba'al mum*, and the laws of who a Kohen Gadol is (or is not) allowed to marry. Then, suddenly there is a discussion about the *Moadim* (Festivals). In Parshas Ki Sisa, Mishpatim, and Re'eh, we discuss the Three Festivals. In Emor, we also discuss Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Sefiras Haomer - all in chronological order. The question is, what is discussion doing in this Parsha?

The **Ramban** (in his introduction to Vayikra) says that everything that is in Vayikra - Toras Kohanim - has something to do with Kedusha and the Karbonos. There are special Karbonos brought on every Yom Tov, but there is another idea that might fit here. We find that on Yom Kippur there are ten yuchsin (levels) culminating with a Yisroel, Levi, Kohen, and Kohen Gadol. The first Perek of Keilim discusses ten holy places: Israel, walled cities, Yerushalayim, and it keeps going until it reaches the Holy of Holies. In time, there are also ten levels. For example, during the Ten Days of Repentance, culminating in Yom Kippur.

So, it comes out that the holiest person (Kohen Gadol) goes into the holiest place (Kodesh Hakedoshim) on the holiest day (Yom Kippur). This teaches us that there is Kedusha in place, in time, and in people. Therefore, we must understand that when we discuss the Kohanim, there is a higher level of Kedusha in people, there is also kedusha in time. Not every day is the same. The calendar is a roadmap. Just like when one arrives in Eretz Yisrael, one seeks to find their way to the Har Habayis and the holiest place, so too, in time there is a concept of Kedusha. The Jews did not build a Mishkan on Shabbos, because Shabbos is a Mishkan in time. We can sanctify time and that's why the very first Mitzvah given to the Jewish people was Rosh Chodesh.

The Gemara (Pesachim 6b) writes that thirty days before a Yom Tov, one must learn the Halachos on the upcoming holidays, as many people in Israel learn the laws of Pesach at the Purim meal. Time and place are opportunities, as are people. We must look at the Parsha about Yamim Tovim and understand that just like the Beis Hamikdash was called the Ohel Mo'ed, the holidays are called the Moadim. They are a destination - an appointed time and place and it's an opportunity for us to find holiness that is inherent in time. As we go into Shabbos, the first day listed in the Moadim, we should take advantage of that Kedusha.

This weekly column draws from Rabbeinu Bachya's introduction to each Parsha, linking it to a verse in Mishlei, and offering practical insights and takeaways.

"Sefasayim Yishak Meishiv Devarim Nichochim - he who gives the right answer is like giving a kiss on the lips." (Mishlei 24:26)

The Simple Meaning

There are people who speak with such truth and clarity that everyone cannot help but bend their ears to listen. If their words are not accepted by all, then at the very least they are respected. (One such person that comes to mind personally is someone who we lost in the last year - **Rav Moshe Hauer, Z"TL**, who always spoke with very strong and balanced clarity across a variety of topics and issues). Shlomo HaMelech is indicating that the message is so attunedly imparted to the listener that it is as if they were transmitted directly from the speaker, mouth to mouth, so to speak.

The Deeper Dimension

Rabbeinu Bachye has a more Kabbalistic approach, where the Pasuk is referring to deep Torah wisdom. In Shir Hashirim, Shlomo writes "*Yeshakeini MiNeshikos Pihu*", a borrowed expression couching Divine wisdom in the physical description of Hashem's lips (kavyachol). When a human being is so connected to this deep wisdom, he can "kiss Hashem".

This conjures up the concept of Mias Neshika, an experience only reserved for the greatest humans of history. Moshe and Aharon are mentioned clearly in the Torah. Miriam and the Avos learned through Limudim. They all were able to connect to Hashem with no interruption, nothing occluding the transmission. Usually, to remove a Neshama from the Guf is a painful process, but for them, it only needed to be drawn out effortlessly.

Connecting to the Parsha

Another remarkable person who died this way was Rabi Yehudah Hanasi. The Gemara (Kesubos 104) describes how he thrust his 10 fingers heavenward and declared "*Hashem, You are aware that I have toiled with all my ten fingers and have not even used the smallest one to indulge in the pleasures of this world. May it be Your will that my "rest" will be one of undisturbed tranquility.*" A Bas Kol responded "*Yavo Shalom Yanuach Al Mishkavo*". The Yerushalmi (Brachos 3:1) states that R'Yannai declared that "Kehuna is suspended" on that day, meaning Kohanim could be involved in Rebbi's Levaya. Since it was an abnormal "death," there was no Tumas Meis. This is a contrast to the opening Din of our Parsha, which warns Kohanim not to be in contact with a dead body.

Takeaway: When words are rooted in deep truth, they don't just communicate clearly - they reflect a direct connection to something higher.

Self-reflective questions: How can I deepen my connection to Torah so that my words carry more weight and authenticity?

There was a growing Jewish community in Manchester, New Jersey, that wanted to build a mikvah, but the township was giving them an incredibly difficult time. Seeing that there may have been some antisemitism at play and that it would likely never get approved, they decided the only choice they had left was to secretly build a mikvah in the shul's basement. However, this was very risky, and one complaint from the neighbors could ruin everything. They had to go to each person's house, explain the situation, and make sure that he or she was on board before proceeding. They knocked on the first door, and when they saw who opened it, they thought they had made a huge mistake.

The man on the other side was 6'6", built like a football player, covered from head to toe with tattoos, and had a massive chain and a long white beard. The tall man greeted them warmly, welcoming them into his house and even offering them a beer (which they declined). When they finished explaining the situation, the tall man said, "Let me ask one question: Would **Rabbi (Shlomo) Gissinger** approve of your plan?" The men were shocked by this question. They answered, "Yes, he would." "Then..." exclaimed the tall man, "it's done!" "What?" asked the men. "I'm on the township board, and everyone answers to me. You don't have to worry about doing anything secretly. I'll take care of the approval, and it should be done in a week. If Rabbi Gissinger would approve it, then it's fine by me."

Very excited, the men thanked him profusely but were bursting with curiosity. They asked him, "How did you know Rabbi Gissinger?" The tall man responded, "Years ago, my wife and I were struggling to have children. One of my Jewish friends suggested that I go to Rav Gissinger. I told him that I'm not Jewish, but he responded that Rav Gissinger cares about everyone and helps people from all walks of life. So, that's exactly what I did. We saw him, and he guided us through the process. Thankfully, we now have a big family, all thanks to him." The men left having learned two powerful lessons. First, the power of making a Kiddush Hashem, and the way of our gedolim is to genuinely care about all people, no matter where they come from. Second, we shouldn't judge people based on how they look.

Comment: In this week's Parsha, Emor, we are commanded not to make a Chillul Hashem/Desecration of Hashem's Name (Vayikra 22:32). In the Gemara, we learn how the great Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai would make a Kiddush Hashem: whenever he went through the marketplace, he was the first person to greet everyone - Jew and non-Jew alike - with a warm greeting. Such is the way of the Torah. In the lovely words of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, "The supreme religious challenge is to see G-d's image in one who is not in our image."

MILK'N'HONEY FROM JERUSALEM BY RABBI JONATHAN TAUB **EMOR – WHY WAIT UNTIL NIGHTFALL**

Why wait until nightfall? In the laws of purity and impurity of the Kohanim, we learn that one who touches any of the above shall be unclean until the evening. (We are talking about somebody, for example, who touches an unclean small animal and he shall not eat any sacred offering unless he's immersed in a mikvah). He then becomes richly clean at sunset, and he can eat the sacred offerings, which are his portion. The question is, why is it that if he has immersed in a mikvah, he needs to wait until sunset? The **Avnei Nezer**, in the name of his father, **Rabbi Zev Nachum of Biala**, explains that we find that our Rabbis say that the time of the obligation for reading the Shema is linked to the time of eating sacrifices. In fact, we do not learn explicitly that the time for Krias Shema is at nightfall. We actually say the time is, "until when can you eat sacrifices?"

The reason that, although the Kohen has immersed in a Mikvah, he needs to wait until nightfall is that, before nightfall, since it's the same day, there are still effects of the impurity of the previous day. Only when there's a new night and a new day has started does he change his essence. He becomes a new man who is completely pure. According to this, the Pasuk which actually says, "*and afterwards he can eat from the sacrifices*" (v'acher yochal min hakodoshim) could be read as, and another person can eat (v'acher yochal min hakodoshim). He is now a totally different person. Since we learn the laws of reading Shema from sacrifices, it would follow that a person who reads Krias Shema in the morning accepts upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven for the entire day until nightfall. Then he becomes like a new man, and he must accept upon himself that yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven once again. He is now a new person with a new obligation. May we utilize the opportunities of each new day!

CHAPTER 4 – HOW TO ACQUIRE THE WORLD TO COME

Every chapter in Pirkei Avos starts by telling us that every Jew has some membership rights in Olam Haba. In the fourth Perek, one's mindset towards this world is laid out. The Mishna (Avos 4:17) tells us *"That this world is compared to a prozdor (vestibule/lobby)."* Our mission is to prepare ourselves in this hall, so that we are prepared to enter the palace – Olam Haba.

As a young man, I had the opportunity to spend a Shabbos with **Mr. Avi Shulman, ZT"l**, who wrote many books and was a master teacher. Once, he was consulting an entire family for many hours, and for the last session, Mr. Shulman wanted his wife to be there, as well. Out of nowhere, the man asked Mr. Shulman, "You helped us so much with our goals in this world. What is your goal in life?" Without batting an eyelash, Mr. Shulman answered: "My goal is to get into Olam Haba (World to Come). We are all so busy with our bank accounts in this world, but this world is just a hallway before Olam Haba."

We must invest all our energies to get a good seat in Olam Haba and not to (G-d Forbid) lose our portion there. Yes, we have automatic membership, but it's not guaranteed if we make the wrong choices and take the wrong turns in the hallway. While we are here, we have to be very careful to maximize our portion. If someone goes to the ballpark with a ticket but all he can get is a spot in the bleachers, he won't enjoy it as much as he would if he got the box seats.

The question is, how do we get to Olam Haba, this indescribable and unimaginable place? The way we get there is by following the Torah. Every possible scenario and situation is in the Torah, as another Mishnah (Avos 5:22) writes, *"Turn it over repeatedly, for it contains everything."* Hashem gave us a beautiful world, and He gave us the instruction book – the Torah. The same way that one would not install a new appliance without first reading the instruction manual, one should not expect to be successful in life without delving into the Torah for guidance.

The world has many issues and challenges, and it is the people who don't follow the Torah that pollute it. All one needs is to continue working on themselves; if one messes up – which we all do – the key is to do teshuvah (repent) and continue progressing. One should take some time every night before bed, checking in with one's goals by making a Cheshbon Hanefesh (a spiritual accounting). This is the perfect time to examine our day, where we went wrong, and how we could have done better. This is how we keep our Olam Haba intact. By following the 613 Mitzvos and redirecting ourselves, we can be assured of receiving a beautiful portion in the World to Come, B'Ezras Hashem.

**SUGAR RUSH ON THE 613 MITZVOS BY RABBI ELI REIT
MITZVAH # 209 – RESPECTING TORAH SCHOLARS**

We are required to respect Torah scholars. This includes standing up for them as the Pasuk (Vayikra 32:72) says, *"You shall stand up in front of a scholar and beautify a scholar"*. By way of comparison, in the army, soldiers are required to salute those who are of a higher rank than themselves. This requirement takes precedence over respect for parents. It is forbidden for a student to disagree with his Torah teacher unless the teacher gives him permission. Arguing against a teacher or suspecting him is considered rebelling against Hashem.



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The Gemara, (Yevamos 62b) relates that Rabi Akiva had 24 thousand students who perished during the period between Pesach and Shavuos, since they did not show respect to one another. The Maharsha (ibid.) explains that they spoke lashon hora about one another; this is what the Gemara means when it says they did not respect each other. They died from the disease of askara, which is associated with diphtheria. This is a disease that starts in the throat and continues down to the heart. It is *middah keneged middah* for evil speech spoken with the mouth.

The Midrash Rabbah (Koheles 11:6) tells that one of the reasons why the disciples of Rabi Akiva were punished is that they withheld from sharing their Torah knowledge with one another, which is a great sin. Anyone who knows a chiddush in Torah is obligated to share it with his friends, as G-d Almighty does not grant Torah knowledge to a person to keep it to himself, but rather to share it with other people as well. The **Maharal** (Sefer Derech, Chayim Mesechta - Avos 6:6) underscores this point on the topic of "Lomaid Al Menas Lelamed," which is one of the 48 methods for how the Torah is acquired. The Torah was given not only to learn, but to teach and share with others, as well. Just as Hashem gave the Torah at Har Sinai to Moshe to teach to Klal Yisroel, so too, any individual who has Torah knowledge must share it with others.

This is a central component of the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah. The Mitzvah is not only to learn, but to teach, spread, and share with others, thereby increasing Torah knowledge in the world. This does not just refer to a Rebbi who has students to teach, but to anyone who has a Dvar Torah - he should share it with his family and friends. It behooves us to remember these lessons of Lag Ba'omer as we celebrate, and as we prepare ourselves for the great day of Kabbalas HaTorah on Shavuos.

We are told, Derech Eretz Kadma LaTorah - proper character is the prerequisite to the Torah. If people do not act properly or are disrespectful, then they are not the ones that Hashem chooses to transmit the Torah to the next generation, even if they are quite knowledgeable. One must always share his knowledge in Torah with others and not be hesitant to share. We must always share our novel Torah thoughts and brilliance with others. To merit having a proper Kabbalas HaTorah on Shavuos, we must perfect our Middos during this time as a prerequisite, in addition to enhancing our learning and teaching.

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MIRIAM GEULAH BAS LEAH*

SUGARY SAYING BY RABBI MENACHEM LOMNER

Don't do things that make others think that you aren't doing Hashem's will"

The Mitzvah of kiddush Hashem is written in this week's parsha (Vayikra 22:32). We know the Mitzvah includes giving up our lives if someone challenges us to go against Hashem in one of the three big Mitzvos. Also, in this week's parsha (ibid. 22:27) is the Mitzvah to not bring an animal as a korban before it is eight days old. The **Baal Haturim** explains that one might think that if this person is shechting it on the first day, he must be trying to bring it as an offering to the heavens and earth. Each of the seven days corresponds to something that Hashem created. We must not make anyone think that we are serving anyone or anything else, other than Hashem Himself.