



## **KORBANOT, CORONA, BEDIDUT, BADAD, AND HITBODIDUT**

This week we begin reading the book of Vayikra which starts off with the korbanot. Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch explains that the word Korban comes from the root KRV - to come near. The purpose of bringing a korban is to bring us nearer to Hashem, and to elevate ourselves. Another topic dealt with in depth later on in Vayikra is all the different types of afflictions of tzaarat, usually translated as leprosy.

Since we hear about the Corona pandemic all the time now, I was intrigued to delve deeper into the topic of tzaarat with its similarities to see what we could apply to our situation.

The mezora dresses and acts like a mourner (13:45) his clothing must have a tear in it, he goes without a haircut. This way people will know to avoid him which will influence him to grieve and repent what he has done to bring these punishments on

himself. He had to pull his collar and scarf over his lips and his cloak over his head and was forbidden to greet people. He called out "Ta'me, Ta'me - contaminated, contaminated", warning people to stay away from him.

Our sages teach that tzaarat is a punishment for sins of bloodshed, false oaths, sexual immorality, pride, robbery, and selfishness. They also point out that the person with this affliction is called a mezora which could be read as a contraction Motzi Ra - one who spreads slander (Arachin 15b). Tzaarat seems to be God's way to educate those who have hurt others. Hashem rebukes such anti social behavior of slandering others by isolating the mezora from society so he can heal himself through repentance and learn to feel the hurt of others and start to care for them more.

He must dwell in isolation, in quarantine - BADAD. We are all too familiar with this word now.

We who are also forced to live alone these days away from the rest of society, should learn from the lesson of the mezora. We should make the most of this time to grow closer to God, to our families and communities. Even if we may not be in the same geographical location with family and

neighbors because of Corona, we can still call and show we care about them. We can make an effort to improve our communication with those closest to us, and of course to work on our communication with God. Many people don't have to rush off to work right now - so we can spend time improving our davening. Klal Yisrael, and the whole world, needs all of our prayers now.

I actually took this Corona pandemic as an opportunity to learn more about Rav Nachman's concept of hitbodedut, going to a solitude place to talk to God. I am no expert, I will share my basic understanding, and recommend to all of us to learn more about these topics during this time when we are by ourselves in quarantines. It's a good time to try out his suggestions to improve our davening and get closer to God.

Rav Nachman says that hitbodedut is a time to be together with God. Even in silence - there's no need to talk. Just standing in front of God, with the desire to get closer to Him, and be able to talk with Him, is part of the process. Even if at first one is not able to speak wholeheartedly with God, when He sees the person's true desire and efforts to try to get close to God, He will help him and create for Him "a new mouth" - He will send

him the words.

Rav Nachman talks about the difficulty to have kavana-concentration, during davening, especially when one doesn't understand the words. He encourages people to speak to God in their mother tongue. In this more natural way, one can truly spill one's heart with simple emunah - trust in God. The brain won't be able to interfere in this type of prayer process. Also, the mekatrigim know when to do their work to disturb someone praying the standard prayers, but they have a harder time to disrupt personal prayers coming from the heart because they don't know what to expect.

When the tzaarat affliction finally disappears, the mezora goes through a lengthy purification process. On the 8th day of that process the Cohen brings an asham - guilt offering, and places its blood on the right ear lobe, right thumb, and right big toe of the mezora undergoing purification (14:2-20). Rav Hirsch explains that the blood was placed on these three body parts - because the metzora must improve himself in these three areas; ear lobe, represents the mind, the thumb represents deeds and big toe represents effort- moving forward. May we all use our time in bidud to

move forward in all these areas.

**IF THE METZORA IS POOR**, then on the day of his purification he brings the poor man's korban, one sheep as an asham, accompanied by a mincha - an offering made from best grade wheat meal mixed with oil (14:21). So I decided to include a recipe with flour. Since on Purim we got a beer called "Corona" that led me to include a beer pancake recipe. The beer makes these pancakes tender and fluffy. These are great for when you run out of milk but still want pancakes (with everyone buying out the stores, who knows if there will be shortages of milk with this corona). It's also a great way to finish more chametz before Pesach.

## **BEER PANCAKES**

1 cup sifted flour

¼ cup sugar

¾ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp cinnamon ( optional)

½ tsp vanilla (optional)

1 egg, beaten

1 cup beer

2 tbsp. oil

In a large bowl, mix the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Pour in the egg, beer and oil; stir with a whisk just until blended - a few lumps are okay. Heat a frying pan over medium heat. Coat with vegetable oil or cooking spray. Spoon about 1/4 cup of batter onto the hot surface for each pancake. When bubbles appear on top of the pancakes, flip, and cook until browned on the other side. Serve with honey, syrup, butter or your favorite jam.