



Adapted from the sefer שבת במוצאי שבת a collection of maamarim on
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Vayikra 5762

In our parsha, we find that a poor person can bring birds for his קרבן עולה. In describing the process of this korban, the Torah says, "ושיסע אותו בכנפיו, לא יבדיל, והקטיר אותו הכהן המזבחה על העצים על האש, עולה הוא ריח ניחוח לה." Rashi brings Chazal's explanation that in the korban olah of birds, even the feathers are burnt. "אין לך הדיוט שמריח ריח של נשרפי ואין נפשו קצה. (No normal person smells burning feathers without being disgusted. Why did the Torah command us to burn them? So that the מזבח would be satisfied and beautified by the korban of a poor man.)"

How could Chazal say that the מזבח would be מהודר, beautified, by the nauseating smell of burning feathers? We must realize that they are teaching us a deep, fundamental principal of Judaism. When Chazal use the term "הדר", they are not referring to physical beauty that people perceive with the eyes in their head. They use the term "הדר" to describe spiritual beauty.

The Torah calls the esrog, פרי עץ הדר. The beauty of the esrog is spiritual. When we look at an esrog, we don't find it more beautiful than other fruits. In fact, to the physical eye, there are many fruits more beautiful than the esrog. The beauty described by the Torah is based on the unique spiritual properties of the esrog.

The Chasam Sofer zt"l applied this principal to a halachic question about the kashrus of esrogim. Sometimes, after the esrog is held by many people performing the mitzva of Arba Minim, its peel is mottled by brown stains. What is the status of the esrog? Can it still be called פרי עץ הדר?



[1]
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The Chasam Sofer paskened, "... as to the stains and spots that result from the sweat of people's hands, it seems to me that the esrog remains **הדר**, since those stains came from utilizing the esrog for the mitzva. That is the glory and beauty of the esrog!

The Chasam Sofer supports his opinion with the Gemara in Maseches Pesachim that states, "It is glorious for the kohanim to walk up to their knees in blood." (at the time of korban pesach). Even though human eyes see no beauty in a stained esrog or the bloody feet of the Kohanim, spiritual eyes see those same items as incredibly beautiful. This spiritual beauty, that results from performing Hashem's will, outshines any physical beauty.

In Megilas Esther we find that Achashveirosh showed off **"עושר כבוד מלכותו"**. In the Gemara (מגילה י"ב:), R. Yossi bar Chanina explains that he wore the clothes of the kohanim, described in the Torah as **לכבוד ולתפארת**. Rashi specifies that Achashveirosh wore the clothes of the Kohen Gadol that he brought from Yerushalayim.

Acharonim ask, "Where did Rashi find evidence that these were the clothes of the Kohen Gadol? Even the clothes of the regular kohanim are described as **לכבוד ולתפארת**."

The Imrei Emes reveals the depth of Rashi's comment. The clothes of the regular kohanim were made of simple white cloth. Rashi understood that the disgusting, unclean eyes of Achashveirosh would see no beauty or honor in those clothes. Only the gold and jewels of **כהן גדול**, would meet his definition of **כבוד ותפארת**.

If we would ask people in our generation to design uniforms for the regular kohanim they would never come up with the plain white clothing mandated by the Torah. They would design expensive, flashy clothes of the finest materials, that would impress anyone who saw them. Once again, we must realize that the Torah introduces us to an elevated world of beauty that results from fulfilling Hashem's will.



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We can now understand Rashi's comment about the smell of burning feathers. He said אין לך הדיוט שמריח ריח רע של כנפיים נשרפות ואין נפשו קצה עליו. A הדיוט in this context refers to someone uninitiated in the world of the Torah's wisdom. He hasn't developed the spiritual sense of smell that would appreciate the beautiful fragrance generated by this poor man's korban. The poor man's joy in seeing his korban received by the מזבח, imbues every aspect of the korban, even the burning feathers, with the spiritual beauty called הידור.

I heard a wonderful story from the chossid R. Dovid Moshe Spiegel z"l. He said that once, in the Beis Medrash of my ancestor the holy Rebbe of Rhizin zt"l, a poor man pushed his way in and sat in the chair of the Rebbe! The man's clothes were ripped, filthy and exuded a very unpleasant odor. The chasidim wanted to remove him to a far corner of the Beis Medrash. One of the most respected chasidim, R' Yaakov Yosef Halperin of Berditchov, asked them, "Do you believe, as I do, that the table of the Rebbe is the equivalent of the מזבח החיצון in the Beis Hamikdash?" They all proclaimed their agreement. "If so", said R' Yaakov Yosef, "We should treat the Rebbe's table as the מזבח that atoned for B'nei Yisroel. Didn't we learn that when a poor man brings his korban, the smell of burning feathers beautifies the מזבח?"

Just then, the Rebbe came out of his room and asked what the commotion was about. They told him what happened and R' Yaakov Yosef's response. Upon hearing this account, the Rebbe raised his holy eyes and told R' Yaakov Yosef, "In the merit of your words, you will be my mechutan". So it was, that R' Yaakov Yosef's son, R' Dovid, married the Rebbe's daughter.

I would like to share two special incidents that I saw with my own eyes. One Pesach, when my grandfather, zy"l lived in Shaarei Chesed, he brought a guest named R' Meshulam to the seder. R' Meshulam was an old man who had no family. No one knew where he came from or what he did in his life. My grandfather honored R' Meshulam, and placed him in the seat next to his at the head of the table.



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The seder night was one of the few times that my grandfather revealed a fraction of his true stature. He wore the kipa of his ancestor R. Zusha of Anipoli zy”a, and reclined on special pillows that he inherited from his ancestors, the tzadikim of the Chernobyl dynasty. Sitting at the head of the table, he looked like a מלאך ה' צבאות.

In the middle of the seder, R. Meshulam felt unwell, and suddenly vomited all that he had eaten. Understandably, everyone near him jumped up and moved away. My grandfather immediately helped R. Meshulam take off his soiled garment. He then commented that he felt very hot. He took off the new bekeshes that he wore under his kittel, and put it on R. Meshulam. He clearly didn't care that his new Yom Tov clothes would get stained or smell bad. In his eyes, a garment that helped a Jew feel better was truly beautiful.

There was another Jew, a survivor who lost everything and everyone in the war, who found his way to my grandfather's house. He would come by at all hours of the night or day. One Leil Haseder, my grandfather noticed that we had seated this man at the end of the table near the children. He insisted that the guest should sit next to him at the head of the table. After Yom Tov, my grandfather assembled the family and reminded us how important it was to be sensitive to the kavod of a guest. He asked us how we could embarrass a fellow Jew in that way.

When one of the children said that it was because of the man's unpleasant smell, my grandfather responded with uncharacteristic sharpness. “Chas V'shalom! A Jew smells good!”. He understood the true value of every Jewish soul, and paid no attention to the odors that others noticed.

The parsha should strengthen us to stop pursuing the worthless, empty, foreign beauty that has infiltrated our communities. We must follow in the ways of our forefathers, finding beauty in mitzvos, and in comforting the poor and needy. If we do this, Hashem will receive our own קרבן עני, and quickly bring גאולתנו ופדות נפשנו במהרה בימנו אמן.



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