

P'SHAT

**Lev. 3:1** If his offering is a sacrifice of well-being— If he offers of the herd, whether a male or a female, he shall bring before the LORD one without blemish. <sup>2</sup> He shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall dash the blood against all sides of the altar. <sup>3</sup> He shall then present from the sacrifice of well-being, as an offering by fire to the LORD, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is about the entrails; <sup>4</sup> the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, that is at the loins; and the protuberance on the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. <sup>5</sup> Aaron's sons shall turn these into smoke on the altar, with the burnt offering which is upon the wood that is on the fire, as an offering by fire, of pleasing odor to the LORD.

Lev. 3:1 וְאִם-זָבַח שְׁלָמִים קָרְבָּנוֹ אִם מִן-הַבָּקָר הוּא מִקְרִיב אִם-זָכָר אִם-נְקֵבָה תָּמִים יִקְרִיבֵנוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: <sup>2</sup> וְסָמַךְ יָדוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁ קָרְבָּנוֹ וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ פֶתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַזָּרְקוּ בְּנֵי אֹהֶלן הַפְּהִיגִים אֶת-הַדָּם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: <sup>3</sup> וְהִקְרִיב מִזְבֵּחַ הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה אֶת-הַחֹלֶב הַמְכֻסָּה אֶת-הַקָּרֶב וְאֵת כָּל-הַחֹלֶב אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַקָּרֶב: <sup>4</sup> וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי הַכְּלִיֹּת וְאֶת-הַחֹלֶב אֲשֶׁר עֲלֵהֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַכְּסָלִים וְאֶת-הַיִּתְרֹת עַל-הַכֶּבֶד עַל-הַכְּלִיֹּת יְסִירָנָה: <sup>5</sup> וְהִקְטִירוּ אֹתוֹ בְּנֵי-אֹהֶלן הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עַל-הָעֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַעֲצִים אֲשֶׁר עַל-הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: פ

**KEY KOSHI:** Why offer a “sacrifice of well-being”? What might a modern “well-being” ritual look like and feel like today?

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַיִךְ וַעֲנֵנוּ לְעִסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.  
 Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu laasok b'divrei Torah.  
 Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

## REMEZ

**RASHI on *Sh'lamim*:** Rather, "peace offerings"—for they spread peace throughout the world.

**RASHBAM:** More accurately, this is "a sacrifice of fulfillment."

**IBN EZRA:** The name *sh'lamim* may be connected to their being offered to ensure well-being, *shalom*, to those who offer them, or it may allude to the fact that they are offered by a soul that is *shelemah*, "complete," or not lacking due to sin.

**TAMARA COHN ESKENAZI:** The offering of *sh'lamim*, translated here as "sacrifice of well-being," resembles the burnt offering but with one main difference: only a portion of it "turns into smoke." The largest part of the sacrifice is distributed between priests and offerers, thus providing food for the Israelites...The means that when the Israelites brought sacrifices, some offerings were solely for God, as it were, and some to be eaten by community members. This practice turns the eating of meat into a sacred act (17:1-7) and reflects the concern for taking life for human consumption; the sacrifice has nothing to do with atonement. As Jacob Milgrom observes, this ritual allowed the Israelites to acknowledge the miracles of their lives and express gratitude for them.

**RABBI HARVEY FIELDS:** The word *korban*, or "sacrifice," literally means "draw near" and reveals the purpose of the Temple offerings. They were means to unite the worshiper with God. By offering sacrifices, a person said thanks to God or sought forgiveness for sins. The drama and beauty of the sacrificial service, along with the music, prayers, and strong odors of incense, created an atmosphere of awe. In presenting a sacrifice, one was giving something important of oneself to God. For the ancients, the smoke of a burning sacrifice on the altar was proof of a person's love and reverence for God and for God's commandments.

**RABBI BERNARD BAMBERGER on "Sacrifice – A Misleading Connotation in English":** Today the word "sacrifice" means an act of self-deprivation. We give up something of value for the sake of a greater value: we may sacrifice a vacation to make more money, or sacrifice luxuries in order to educate our children, or sacrifice life for nation or faith. Such a sacrifice is deemed regrettable, even though necessary; if we could attain the larger end without the sacrifice we should do so. Prudence therefore counsels us to make a sacrifice only after careful deliberation and to sacrifice no more than is needed to attain our goal.

That is not what the ancients meant by sacrifice. To them it was a religious rite, most often a joyous one. The offering was as large and choice as the worshiper could afford to make it. It was always a sacrifice *to* some deity or power, not—as in our usage—a sacrifice *for* some end. The sacrifice might indeed be offered in the hope of obtaining a favor, of warding off disaster, or of achieving purification from ritual defilement or sin. But just as often, perhaps more often, it was an expression of reverence and thanksgiving.

## **DRASH**

### **To Be a Jew Is To Give Thanks — By Definition**

**By Rabbi Geoffrey A. Mitelman**

If we really know how to look for them, we can find an awful lot of things to be thankful for — even those things that may drive us nuts at the time. Perhaps that is why the Talmud (Menahot 43b) commands us to say one hundred blessings, one hundred things to be thankful for, every day. Now, that may sound like a lot of blessings to say, but if the assignment was, “come up with one hundred things to complain about every day,” my guess is that we could all do that in about three and a half minutes.

The truth is, how we view the world affects how we act in the world...

Robert Emmons, a professor at UC Davis and author of the book *Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier* poses a simple question — when you think about a time that you felt grateful, what other feelings do you associate with this state?

...Emmons wondered what exact consequence an “attitude of gratitude” actually had. So he designed an experiment. He randomly assigned people into three groups, the “blessings” group, the “hassles” group and the control group. Every day for three weeks, the people in the “blessings” group were to write down five things they were thankful for. Not even a hundred — just five. On contrast, every day for three weeks, the people in the “hassles” group were to write down five things that annoyed them. The control group just listed “things that had happened,” without accentuating the positive or the negative...

At the beginning and end of the study, each person rated not only their level of happiness and satisfaction in life, but also factors related to their mental and even physical well-being. As you’d expect, after the three weeks, the people in the “blessings” group felt better about their lives in general. The surprise was just how much better.

The group that was told to “find blessings in life” were a full 25 percent happier than the other participants. Not only that, the people who looked for things to be thankful for also reported fewer physical symptoms, exercised more regularly, and had higher states of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness and energy.

In other words, the people who focused on their blessings weren’t just “giving thanks for their health” — by giving thanks, they actually improved their health! Simply because they were looking for the blessings in their lives, because they were actively trying to find things to be grateful for, they ended up creating their own blessings. And what was even more striking was those who felt like they were blessed were significantly more likely to have helped someone else with a personal problem or offered emotional support. So the blessings they found in their own lives they were then transformed and used to help others...

## Voices

*Psalm 50*

Debbie Perlman

You are the Open Door  
That beckons me in;  
Peeking around the door frame,  
I begin to enter into Your glory.

You move me forward, O Eternal,  
To step beyond self-made boundaries;  
Lift my foot over the threshold  
That I might abide with You.

In the house of the Eternal,  
I found my questions;  
Waiting to be posed,  
They filled me with wonder.

Through the doorway of the Eternal  
Come jumbled sounds and mingled scents;  
Warm sunlight falls across my lap:  
All this, all this, Your creation.

Sit with me, Eternal Teacher,  
Encourage my seeking;  
As I fill my hours with Your *mitzvot*,  
So shall I be filled.

Then send me through Your door  
Stretching up to honor Your Name,  
Sharing out this wonder,  
Enriching myself in the giving.

*A Mother's Morning Prayer*

Hava Pincas-Cohen

(transl. Jules Harlow and Rochelle Furstenberg)

At this time as I stand cooking oatmeal,  
Remove all sorts of alien thoughts from me  
And when I touch the baby's back and take his  
temperature

May all sorts of problems disappear,  
May they not confuse my thoughts.  
And give me the strength to scrub my face  
So that each one of my children  
Can see his face in mine  
As in a mirror washed for a festival.

And the darkness sunk within  
My face—cover it with light  
So that I don't lose my patience, and I won't be  
hoarse

From coarse, insistent screaming.  
May I not experience weakness  
Before the unknowable  
And may it never end, even for a moment,  
The touch of flesh upon flesh, my children's  
and mine.

Give me so much of Your love  
That I can stand at the door and hand it out  
With the simplicity of someone slicing bread  
And smearing butter every morning.  
Renew the sweet offering of boiling milk  
bubbling over  
and the smell of coffee hovering above  
The thanksgiving sacrifice and the daily sacrifice  
That I never learned how to give.