



In memory of Yitzchak Dovid ben Shmuel Yosef Lesorgen z"l

## Rule over Yourself

“**W**hat time is it, Abba?”

“Ten to eight. Chaim.”

“I have ten minutes till school begins. I can eat another slice of bread, rush through *bircas ha'mazone*, run to school, and be two minutes late, just before they lock the gate.”

“My dear Chaim, you did that yesterday, and you were sorry. The rushing ruined your concentration in class. You also rushed the day before, and every day last week. After each time you regretted it and said that you would never rush again.”

“You’re right, Abba. I have a bad habit. How can I stop myself?”

“Chaim, the parashas ha’shavuah deals with this very subject. It begins with the word *Vayikra*. Hashem called to Moshe. The Medrash Rabba explains that Moshe Rabbeinu would not enter the Holy of Holies unless he was called by Hashem.”

“Really, Abba?”

“**Y**ou sound surprised, Chaim. The Medrash expresses a similar thought. Moshe was the ‘father of wisdom,’ the ‘father of the prophets,’ he took Yisrael out of Mitzraim. His hands directed miracles in Mitzraim, and the awesome ‘Kriyas Yam Suf’. He rose up to the Heavens and brought the Torah down to earth. With all of his greatness, he still did not enter on his own. He waited until he was called.”

“Amazing.”

“Yes, Chaim. The Medrash itself concludes from this, that Moshe Rabbeinu had *daas*.”

“I always thought that *daas* means knowledge.”

“True. However Rav Yerucham Levovitz zt”l goes a bit deeper. He cites the Mesillas Yesharim, in showing that *zehirus* (watchfulness) and *daas* share the same basic *middah* (character trait).”

“What is that, Abba?”

“The ability to rule over one’s self. One who has *daas* contemplates his ways, decides what the correct path is, and then follows it. He thinks about what he is doing, and does not mechanically follow bad habits. Someone with *daas* puts his knowledge into practice. He uses it to control himself.”

“I see, Abba. I really can break this bad habit of rushing late to school. I just have to put my mind to it.”

“That’s the spirit, Chaim. You are a real *ben daas*.”

*Kinderlach* . . .

*You are in control. You can break bad habits. Just use your head. Think about what you want to work on. Do you pray too quickly without kavannah (concentration)? Here is the solution. Hold yourself back. Slow down. Word by word. Think about what you are saying and to Whom you are speaking. Your kavannah will improve in no time. Are you always late going to sleep? Think about how tired you are in the morning, and how your day drags on. Wouldn't you like to be full of energy? Hold yourself back. Go to bed early. You can do it. Rule over yourself.*



## Pleasing Aroma

“**W**hat is that smell, Avi?”

“Something is burning and it sure smells bad, Chaim.”

“Over there. A fire is burning.”

The two boys run over to the brush and find a bird burning up in the fire.

“That’s the smell, Avi. Now I am really puzzled.”

“Why, Chaim?”

“Have you read this week’s parasha? The Torah mentions many *korbonos* (sacrifices) that were burned on the Mizbeach. They gave off a *rayach nichoach* (pleasing aroma). Among them are birds. Rashi (Vayikra 1:17) points out that the smell of burning bird feathers is not very pleasing.”

“That’s true, Chaim. We have experienced that ourselves. What is the Torah teaching us?”

“The ‘aroma’ that was pleasing to Hashem was the pure *kavannah* (intention) in the heart of the one who brought the sacrifice. Everything depended on his heart.”

“That is beautiful, Chaim. A pure heart was the way to please Hashem. That

*Avodah* (service) of sacrificing the *korbonos* was one of the three pillars on which the world stood.”

“Do you mean the Mishna in Pirkei Avos, Avi? ‘On three things the world stands: on *Torah*, on *Avodah*, and on *Gemilus Chasodim* (acts of loving kindness)’ (1:2)?”

“Yes, Chaim. However nowadays, we have no Beis HaMikdash. We have no *korbonos*. How does the world stand?”

“Rav Leib Chasman zt”l refers to the Gemora (Taanis 2a). Our prayers take the place of the *korbonos*. Just as the main feature of the *korbon* was the *kavannah* of the heart, so too, the essence of *tefillah* (prayer) is the *kavannah* of the heart.”

“What you are saying Chaim, is that the world stands on our *tefillos*.”

“Yes, Avi. Let’s make that pillar very strong.”

*Kinderlach* . . .

*The entire auditorium was filled with thousands of people. All stood waiting silently to hear the words of the man at the podium. He cleared his throat and began to speak. Kinderlach, that speaker is you. Rav Chasman explains that when you stand before Hashem in tefillah, the*

*Heavenly hosts stand waiting to accept your prayers. Their arms are open to receive your holy offering. What korbon will you bring them? What are your thoughts during tefillah? “I’m hungry. I forgot my bus card. I have a great idea for a new game to play during break time.” Kinderlach, think about the words that you are saying. Think that you are standing before Hashem. Have good kavannah. Give your korbon a rayach nichoach.*

### Parasha Questions

- Can a *korbon olah* be brought against the will of the owner? (Rashi 1:3)
- Where did the fire on the *mizbeach* come from? (Rashi 1:7)
- Which birds were kosher for a *korbon olah*? (1:14)
- Which types of *korbonos mincha* are mentioned in the parasha? (2:1,4,5,7,12,14)
- Is a *korbon shlamim* a male or female animal? (3:1)
- What animal does a *Kohen Hamoshiach* bring for a *chattos*? (4:3)
- What is done with the remains of the *par he'elem davar*? (4:21)
- What is the reason for bringing a *korbon chattos*? (4:27-28)
- Which is greater - the reward for a mitzvah, or the punishment for an *aveyra*? (Rashi 5:17)
- What is the monetary punishment for swearing falsely to gain money? (5:24)