

# PERSONAL ACCEPTANCE

*by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner*

This week we celebrate the holiday of Shavuot--the time when the word of Hashem resonated throughout the creation with the giving of the Torah at Sinai. The Navi [Prophets] describes the power of Hashem's words of Torah: "As the rain and snow descend from the heaven and will not return there, until they have watered the earth and caused it to give birth and sprout, producing seeds to be planted and food to be eaten, so too My words that emanate from My mouth, will not return to Me unfulfilled but will accomplish what I desire and bring success to where I have sent it. [Y'shayahu 56:10-11] "

It would seem obvious that Hashem's words would, so to speak, emanate from His mouth. If so, the Chofetz Chaim asks, what is the passuk [verse] stressing by pointing this out to us?

He explains in the following way. The Talmud [Avodah Zarah 8A] teaches that Adom Harishon [Adam, the first man] brought specifically the very first ox, the one created by Hashem, as a sacrifice. In the words of the passuk it was the ox whose 'horns preceded its hooves.' As the entire world was created in a mature, adult state, this full-grown ox rose from the earth and as such, came out with its horns before its hooves.

Why did Adom want to bring that specific ox for the sacrifice?

The first creation, that which came solely from the hand of Hashem, was on a much higher level of power and spirituality than the later creations. Just as Adom was a spiritual giant compared to us, so too the entire world, as it was fashioned by the Hand of Hashem, was on a much higher plane. Adom, therefore, wanted to offer to Hashem the greatest offering possible. He chose that ox for his sacrifice.

We live in a world that is far, far removed from the state that Hashem created it. The grains that compose the food we eat are thousands of generations removed from that first kernel created by the Hand of Hashem. They weren't created solely by the word of Hashem yet, they accomplish their purpose of feeding mankind. Their power has certainly been diminished as they moved step by step further from those words of Hashem which brought that species into existence, yet they fulfill their mission.

As we live so far from the point of creation, there remains only one remnant from that time past. One remnant of the direct word of Hashem which is not an echo reverberating through time but rather is the word itself, preserved in its full power and holiness with perfect authenticity.

That of course is the Torah, the word of Hashem that, as the Chofetz Chaim pointed out in the passuk, emanated directly from His mouth.

With this the full impact of the passuk becomes apparent. The rain and snow accomplish their objective of supplying a growth environment for the seeds. Those seeds, in turn, so far removed from the original word of Hashem, nevertheless accomplish their objective of supplying food for the world. If so, the word of Hashem that emanated directly from His mouth--the Torah as we have it today--will certainly have its powerful effect and accomplish its objective.

What is that effect?

If one takes the hide of a kosher animal, processes it into parchment and writes upon it the words of the Torah, that parchment undergoes an incredible transformation. It has attained a level of holiness. Should one witness it falling onto the floor, one must fast a certain amount of days. It has been transformed.

If that is the effect that the words of Torah have on the hide of a dead animal, imagine the piercing effect that it has when written in the heart and soul of a living person. It will not return without accomplishing its objective and having such an effect. It will transform a person as long as he's willing to allow Hashem and His words to enter.

The original Shavuot was the time when we as a nation accepted the Torah. Subsequently, each Shavuot is the time for each individual to have his personal acceptance of the Torah. The words from Hashem's mouth haven't changed. They are available to us in their full power and intensity. Our mission is to open our hearts and souls and allow them to transform us.

Wishing you a meaningful Shavuot and a good Shabbos,

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