



from the juxtaposition of the pesukim beginning with the words “וסמך” and “ושחט”. This juxtaposition teaches us not only that the shechitah must immediately follow the semichah, but also that the owner of the korban, who forcefully leans on the animal, should slaughter it, as well.

This fact is also pointed out by the Gra in his commentary Eliyahu Rabbah on the Mishnayot. The Mishnah (Keilim 1, 8) states: “עזרת הכהנים מקודשת ממנה [מעזרת ישראל], שאין ישראל נכנסים” — **the area designated for the kohanim possesses a greater sanctity than the area designated for Yisrael; a member of Yisrael may only enter that area when prescribed to do so—to perform semichah, shechitah or tenufah (ritual waving).** Concerning this Mishnah, here is the Gra’s comment: “סמיכה ותנופה הוא בבעלים דוקא, ושחיטה” — **the acts of semichah and tenufah may only be performed by the owners; it is a mitzvah for the owners to perform the shechitah.**

We find an even greater and surprising chiddush in the Zohar hakadosh (Nasso 124a). Not only is it permissible for a non-kohen to perform the shechitah, but it is actually prohibited for the kohen to slaughter the korban—so as not to damage his inherent attribute of chesed. In other words, a kohen embodies the attribute of chesed. If he slaughters the korban, which is an act of justice (din), he is thereby harming his innate quality of chesed.

Hence, it is incumbent upon us to explain the practical significance of the following: (1) why did HKB”H command the sinner to lean with his hands on the head of the korban specifically? (2) Why must the sinner himself perform the act of shechitah immediately after performing semichah? (3) What is the conceptual meaning of the statement in the Zohar hakadosh that the kohen is prohibited from slaughtering the korban so as not to harm his innate element of chesed?

### Leaning on the Head of the Korban to Atone for the Fact that the Brain Did not Control the Heart

I would like to propose my own explanation based on a wonderful introduction from the Eretz Tzvi, authored by the great Rabbi of Kozhiglov (beginning of Shoftim), presented in the name of his teacher and Rav, the great author of the Avnei Neizer, zy”a. He addresses our blessed sages’ statement in the Midrash (D.R. 4, 2): “הסייף והספר ירדו כרוכים מן השמים, אמר להם אם תעשו מה” — **שכתוב בספר הזה, אתם ניצולים מן הסייף הזה, ואם לא תעשו אתם נהרגים בסייף**

**“the sword and the book came down from heaven bound together. He said to them: if you observe what is written in this book, you will be spared from this sword; if you do not, you will be killed by this sword.**

He explains with his hallowed words a vital concept concerning man’s actions and service in this world. A person must apply the wisdom located in the brain to determine which actions are good--and therefore are worth doing--and which are bad, and are therefore inappropriate. Having made this determination in his brain, he must send the message to his heart; the brain’s intelligence must influence the desire of the heart; so that its will and desire affect the bodily limbs that perform a person’s actions. In this manner, a person will perform only good deeds and refrain from the performance of negative, undesirable deeds. The author of the Tanya explains at length in Likutei Amarim (Chapter 16) that man was created so that he would always strive to empower the brain over the heart.

Yet, the yetzer hara, who attempts to ensnare a person, is compared to a sword. The sword kills a person by separating and dividing the head from the heart and the rest of the body. Similarly, the yetzer hara kills a person spiritually by separating the brain from the heart, preventing the intelligent brain from enlightening the heart and its desires with its wisdom. Consequently, the remaining limbs of the body and the limbs that perform external actions are not guided to act in accordance with Torah precepts. The remedy, of course, is that one should strive to attain Torah-knowledge with the intelligence in one’s brain. With the light of Torah in his brain, he will be able to apply his intellect to control the will of the heart and, thus, the limbs of action.

This, then, is the meaning of the Midrash: **“the sword and the book came down from heaven bound together. He said to them: if you observe what is written in this book”**—by engaging in Torah-study to know what is permissible and what is not; **“you will be spared from this sword”**—because the yetzer will not be able to prevent the brain from influencing the desire in the heart; **“if you do not”**—however, if you fail to engage in Torah-study; **“you will be killed by this sword”**—the yetzer will intercede and create a disconnect between the intelligence in one’s brain and the desire in one’s heart; that is tantamount to a spiritual death.

In this manner, the Avnei Neizer interprets the statement in the Gemara (A.Z. 17b): “אי סייפא לא ספרא, ואי ספרא לא סייפא”-- the

sword and the book are mutually exclusive. In other words, a person who lives by the sword and kills, does not occupy himself with the book—the study of Torah. Conversely, one who studies Torah does not live by the sword. This then is the allusion: “אי” —if it is apparent that a person’s heart is disconnected from his brain and that he is controlled by his yetzer, this is a clear-cut sign that: “לאו ספרא”—that he did not engage in proper Torah study. “זאי ספרא”—on the other hand, if one engages in proper Torah study, he is guaranteed: “לא סייפא”—the yetzer will be powerless to act as a sword disconnecting the brain in the head from the body; instead, the brain will continue to use its wisdom and intellect to illuminate and guide the heart. This is the gist of his explanation.

How nicely this can be applied to a statement from our blessed sages in the Gemarah (Succah 49a): “מאי דכתיב פיה פתחה בחכמה ותורת חסד על לשונה, וכי יש תורה של חסד ויש תורה שאינה של חסד, אלא תורה לשמה זו היא תורה של חסד, שלא לשמה זו היא תורה שאינה של חסד, איכא דאמרי תורה ללמדה זו היא תורה של חסד, שלא ללמדה זו היא תורה שאינה של חסד—the passuk in Mishlei employs the expression “**Toras chesed**”—literally “Torah of kindness.” The Gemarah questions the meaning and significance of this phrase. The first opinion defines “**Toras chesed**” as Torah that is pure in purpose; a second opinion suggests that this term refers to Torah that is passed on to others.

Let us suggest that a person who successfully illuminates his heart with the light of Torah from his brain demonstrates “**Toras chesed**.” He is passing on his Torah-knowledge to others—in this case, to his heart. Yet, if his Torah-knowledge remains isolated in his brain, and he fails to transmit it so that it will subjugate the yetzer hara in his heart, this is clearly not “**Toras chesed**”—since it is not being passed on to others.

We can also suggest that this is why Torah she’b’chtav begins with the letter “bet” of “בראשית” and concludes with the letter “lamed” of “ישראל”. Together these two letters form the word “לב”, meaning heart. This conveys the message that the purpose of engaging in Torah-study is not for it to remain in a person’s head. Rather, it is meant to descend to influence the heart, in keeping with the concept of “**Toras chesed**”—it is to be taught and passed on to others. Let us also explain why this allusion is based on the last letter of the Torah appearing before the first letter of the Torah to form the word “לב”. When one reaches the end of the Torah—the letter “lamed--one must start over again—with the letter “bet.” It is not sufficient to learn Torah only once. It must be learned and reviewed over and over again—as stated

in Pirkei Avot (5, 22): “הפוך בה והפוך בה דכולה בה”—delve into it over and over again, for it contains everything.

### Leaning on the Head of the Animal Serves as an Admission that the Brain Did Not Control the Heart

We can now comprehend why the sinner must lean with his hands on the head of the korban and confess his wrongdoings. In this manner, he demonstrates that he recognizes that his failures are the result of not utilizing his head and brain like a human being but rather like an animal. For, an animal lacks the wisdom, understanding and knowledge to place the brain in its head in charge of the desires and cravings in its heart. An animal’s entire behavior is controlled solely by the urges in its heart. Such is the way of reshaim, as explained in the Midrash (B.R. 34, 10):

“הרשעים הן ברשות לבם, (תהלים יד-א) אמר נבל בלבו, (בראשית כז-מא) ויאמר עשו בלבו, (מלכים א יב-כו) ויאמר ירבעם בלבו, (אסתר ו-ו) ויאמר המן בלבו, אבל הצדיקים לבם ברשותם, (שמואל א א-יג) וחנה היא מדברת על לבה, The Midrash (שם כז-א) ויאמר דוד אל לבו, (דניאל א-ח) וישם דניאל על לבו.” It states that the wicked are controlled by their hearts. It cites as examples pesukim related to Naval, Eisav, Yeravam and Haman. In contrast, tzaddikim control their hearts. As proof, the Midrash cites pesukim related to Chana, David and Daniel.

Let us add to this notion, the commentary of the Kli Yakar in this week’s parsha (Vayikra 1, 3). He addresses the reason why the olah and the chatas are slaughtered on the north side of the azarah. Both of these korbanos are brought in the aftermath of a transgression. Transgressions stem from the heart. As we learned, reshaim are controlled by their hearts, which is located on the left side. When oriented toward the east, the north corresponds to one’s left. Consequently, these korbanos are slaughtered on the north side; the shelamim, however, which are accepted without any preceding transgression, may be slaughtered anywhere in the azarah.

This enables us to appreciate why the owner of the korban, who leans on the korban, is the one that should immediately slaughter the korban--after performing the ritual of semichah. We have learned from the Ramban, the incredible reason why the korban serves to atone for the sinner:

“כי בעבור שמעשי בני אדם נגמרים במחשבה ובדבור ובמעשה, צוה השם כי כאשר יחטא יביא קרבן ויסמוך ידיו עליו כנגד המעשה, ויתודה בפיו כנגד הדיבור, וישרוף באש הקרב והכליות שהם כלי המחשבה והתאוה, והכרעים כנגד ידיו ורגליו של אדם העושים כל מלאכתו, וזרוק הדם על המזבח כנגד דמו בנפשו, כדי שיחשוב

אדם בעשותו כל אלה, כי חטא לאלקיו בגופו ובנפשו, וראוי לו שישפך דמו וישרף גופו, לולא חסד הבורא שלקח ממנו תמורה, וכפר הקרבן שיהא דמו תחת דמו נפש תחת נפש, וראשי אברי הקרבן כנגד ראשי אבריו.”

A person’s actions result from a combination of thought, speech and deed. Hence, when he commits an act of transgression, G-d commands him to follow a protocol accounting for each of these components. Bringing the korban and leaning on it with his hands corresponds to the deed. Verbally confessing corresponds to the speech. Burning the various parts in the fire corresponds to the thought. The blood is sprinkled on the mizbeiach representing his life-force. By following this protocol, a person should have in mind that he sinned to his G-d with his body and soul; therefore, it is only fitting that his blood should be spilled and his physical body should be incinerated. It is only by the grace and benevolence of the Creator that a substitute was accepted in his place—atonement for the acts of his blood, soul and limbs.

A pleasant allusion to this idea can be found in the Divrei Yechezkel, authored by the great Rabbi of Shiniva, zy”a, regarding the passuk: “אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה” —**when a person from among you will bring a korban to Hashem.** The word “מכם” is an acronym for מִדָּה כְּנֶגֶד מִדָּה—measure for measure. This alludes to the lesson learned from the Ramban. The sinner must have in mind that everything that is being done to the animal serving as the korban should rightfully have been done to him—measure for measure. It is only because HKB”H had mercy on him that he was allowed to bring an animal korban as his substitute.

It is precisely for this reason that after the sinner—who behaved like an animal by not empowering his brain over his heart—confesses over the head of the korban, that he himself must slaughter the animal. He must separate the head from the heart and the rest of the body, recognizing that he deserved to be punished in this manner—measure for measure. He deserved this punishment for not exemplifying the “ספרא”—the holy book—but rather the “סייף”—the sword. Rather than having his brain reign over his heart, he separated and disconnected the brain from the heart. Nonetheless, HKB”H had mercy on him, allowing him to bring a korban as a substitute to atone for him.

### Service of Hashem according to the Format of מל”ך

Taking the high road, let us endeavor to explain the position posited by the Zohar hakadosh—that a kohen is prohibited from slaughtering the korban so as not to damage his innate trait of chesed. We have learned in the Gemara (A.Z. 4b) that the wicked

Bilam possessed the ability to discern the precise moment of HKB”H’s wrath. The passuk states (Tehillim 30, 6): “כי רגע באפו חיים—**for but a moment His anger endures; life results from His favor.** Utilizing this unique ability, he would curse somebody at that precise moment and the curse would be effective. Yet, during the period of time that Bilam wished to curse Yisrael, HKB”H withheld His wrath—preventing this wicked man from cursing them.

Tosafot raise an obvious question. According to the Gemara (ibid.), the moment of HKB”H’s wrath is: “רגע כמימריה”—it lasts the amount of time it takes to utter the three letter word “רגע”—re’ga. So, what curse could he have uttered against Yisrael in such a short amount of time? Tosafot answer: “ויש לומר היה אומר—**he could have uttered the word “כל” —ka’lem—meaning “annihilate them”;** however, HKB”H rearranged the letters, so that he uttered the word “מל”ך—me’lech (meaning king), instead.

The great Rabbi Yisrael of Rozhin, zy”a, explains Tosafot’s meaning. We shall expand on his wonderful explanation based on a concept of the Arizal’s. There are three parts of the neshamah, referred to as: “**nefesh,**” “**ruach**” and “**neshamah.**” Each has its specific location in the human body. The most spiritual part, the “neshamah,” resides in the brain in a person’s head; the “ruach” resides in the heart; the “nefesh,” the lowest of them all, resides in the liver. A fantastic explanation of this concept is presented by the Shela hakadosh. When these three parts of the soul enter the body, they reside in the מוח (brain), לב (heart) and כבד (liver) respectively—symbolized by the word מל”ך. The “nefesh,” located in the liver, is the vital, natural force that nourishes the limbs of the body. The “ruach” in the heart is the will; it rallies the bodily forces according to its will. The “neshamah” in the brain is the intellectual thought that guides them all.

Before the heart wishes to do something, the thought arises in the brain to perform that particular act. After arriving at the mental decision to perform an act, the thought is transformed into the heart’s will—the “ruach.” Rashi (Yechezkel 1, 12) explains that “ruach” is the will to act.

The “ruach” in the heart is then transformed into the forces of the “nefesh”—located in the liver—to complete the act that originated with the brain’s initial mental decision. In this manner, they function as a single unit. The “nefesh” receives from the will of the “ruach”; the will only acts in accordance with the brain’s intellectual decision; thus, the action is determined by the brain’s decision.

We see, therefore, that it is man's purpose in this world to serve Hashem from the top proceeding downward—according to the format of מל"ד—symbolizing the following sequence: "mo'ach," "lev" "ka'ved" (brain, heart, liver). In summary, the intellectual brain evaluates the options and determines a proper course of action. Next, it exerts its influence on the heart, in order to arouse the desire to act in accordance with the precepts of the Torah. Lastly, the heart exerts its will on the limbs of the body—to perform the act and make the thought a reality. A person who acts and functions according to this scheme is guaranteed to be a loyal servant of the Almighty.

This, then, was Bilam's evil intent. He malevolently wished to curse Yisrael by uttering "כלם". This three-letter word symbolizes the reverse order of the proper method of serving Hashem. According to this sequence, the service begins below and proceeds upward from the "kaved" to the "lev" to the "moach." First, the animalistic soul that streams through the blood of the liver ("kaved") craves all sorts of material things; next, it influences the desire in the heart ("lev"), arousing materialistic tendencies; subsequently, the heart imposes its will on the brain ("mo'ach"). The brain becomes subservient to the heart and becomes occupied searching for ways to satisfy its heart's desire. Tosafot's answer is now clear: "הקב"ה הפכו ואמר מלך כדכתיב ותרועת מלך בו"—HKB"H reversed the order of the word uttered by Bilam. HKB"H made sure that he uttered מל"ד, symbolizing the ideal method of serving Hashem—where the influence begins above in the brain and works its way downward, and not the other way around.

### Kohen Levi Yisrael Correspond to Neshamah Ruach Nefesh

Additionally, let us introduce another idea from the writings of the Shela hakadosh. He writes that the secret nature of the hierarchy of "nefesh," "ruach" and "neshamah" are reflected in the hierarchy of Yisrael, Levi and Kohen. The source for this idea comes from the Tikunei Zohar (140b): "נפש רוח נשמה, כהן לוי וישראל, כהן איהו נשמה". In other words, the "neshamah" represents the kohen; the "ruach" represents the levi; the "nefesh" represents the Yisrael.

Following the framework established above, since the kohen represents the "neshamah," it is his job to influence the levi, representing the "ruach." The levi, in turn, must influence the

Yisrael, representing the "nefesh" in the liver. This process can be insinuated from the passuk (Malachi 2, 7): "כי שפתי כהן ישמרו" —דעת ותורה יבקשו מפיהו כי מלאך ה' צבאות הוא" —**for the lips of the kohen should safeguard knowledge, and people should seek Torah from his mouth; for he is an agent of Hashem, Master of Legions.** Just as the light of Torah in the brain illuminates the heart, and the heart then illuminates the remaining parts of the body; so, too, the kohen—representing the "neshamah" in the brain—must teach Torah to all of Yisrael.

Thus, we can suggest that this is why all three participate in the service of the korbanos (Yoma 53a): "כהנים בעבודתם ולוים" —"כהנים בעבודתם וישראל בדוכנם"—**kohanim in their "avodah" (sacrificial service), leviim upon their platform and Yisrael at their station.** As we have already explained, the purpose of offering the korban is to remedy the sinner's spiritual flaw; he failed to serve Hashem properly. The "neshamah" in his brain did not control the "ruach" in his heart; as a consequence, the "ruach" failed to guide the "nefesh" in his liver. As explained, these three correspond to the Kohen, Levi and Yisrael.

We have now been sufficiently enlightened to understand the position of the Zohar hakadosh. The kohen is prohibited from sacrificing the korban so as not to harm his innate characteristic of chesed. For, the kohen's sacred task—representing the "neshamah" in the brain—is to connect the head with the heart—insuring that the brain exerts its influence on the heart. As explained above, when the "neshamah" in the brain illuminates the "ruach" in the heart, this exemplifies "**Toras chesed**"—Torah that is shared with others. For, the "neshamah" in the brain passes on its Torah to the "ruach" in the heart, and the heart passes it on to the rest of the limbs.

It is for precisely this reason that if the kohen slaughters the korban—separating the head from the heart—that he damages the attribute of chesed. For, this act represents the exact opposite of "**Toras chesed**"—connecting with the "ruach" in the heart. Therefore, specifically the owners that sinned are obligated to lean forcefully with their hands on the head of the korban in order to confess that they failed to connect the head with the heart. Afterwards, they themselves should slaughter the korban and contemplate: I deserved to have this done to me for severing the connection between my head and my heart.

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