

LIVING WITH THE PARSHAH 5780,

PARSHAS VAYIKRA

By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

It is far too early to learn lessons from the coronavirus crisis with which we are all coping. We hope and daven that it will end very soon with *refuos* and *yeshuos* for all. However, since we are starting a new Chumash and learning Parshas Vayikra this Shabbos, I could not help sharing a profound and appropriate thought from Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv zt"l (Sefer *Divrei Agadah*). He quotes the pesukim (5:2-3) which say the word *vene'elam* "He forgot" twice. The Gemara (Shavuos 14b) teaches that this posuk refers to two types of forgetfulness. One refers to a person who forgot that something was *tamei* – defiled – and the other relates to a person who forgot that he was in the Bais Hamikdash. Now in each case the person has to offer a korban, but, Rav Elyashiv asks, how could anyone not realize that he was in the Bais Hamikdash? Surely we know that anyone entering the Bais Hamikdash had to make many preparations. Then, upon entering one was greeted by a wave of kedushah – sanctity – which was overwhelming. The sights and the sounds – the kohanim offering sacrifices and the Levi'im singing – were so replete with kedushah that one felt that he had entered into another dimension of the universe. How could he forget where he was?

The answer, says the *Gadol Hador*, is *hergel* – we become jaded, accustomed and slowly even unaware. Rav Chaim writes often in his *Sichos Mussar* of the enemy called habit or rote. We become acclimated to the extraordinary and it slowly transforms into the ordinary. Rav Elyashiv concludes by reminding us of the famous passage (Tehillim 27) "*shivti b'veis Hashem...u'levakeir be'heichalo* – One thing I asked of Hashem...that I dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of my life... and to visit His sanctuary." If Dovid Hamelech wants to "dwell" in Hashem's house, why does he need to visit? The answer is that Dovid was afraid of *hergel*. He didn't want to lose the freshness and the excitement of that holy place so he asked that he also constantly feel like a visitor. I am reminded of the well-known parable of the child who grew up during the 40 years in the desert. He grows old enough to help retrieve the manna which fell from heaven every day. His father remarks casually to the child that we should be grateful for this wonderful miracle, but the five year old is not impressed. He responds innocently, "I don't see anything miraculous; doesn't it just come down every day?" As Rav Chaim proves to us from numerous sources, it is a human malady which affects the best of us.

As I began, I am not deriving lessons or attempting to explain the unknowable. But this much I know. We have all felt a tremendous yearning for our Shuls and Minyanim. We all miss davening *b'tzibur*, hearing *Borchu* and answering *amein yehei shmei Rabbah*. That is surely a good thing. We should try to make sure that, as Rav Elyashiv adjures us, we don't ever forget that *Bais Haknesses*, *Bais Hamedrash* and davening with a minyan are all gifts from Hashem, to be cherished forevermore. We should extend this gratitude as well toward our loved ones. So many people have l"v lost loved ones and many are still in a state of danger. Let's appreciate everyone we have, do chesed for all and never ever take any of Hashem's blessings for granted. We just recently learned in Daf Yomi that on Shabbos we say . This essentially means that Shabbos itself brings *refuos* and *yeshuos* even without our crying out. May this be the Shabbos iyH.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS