

## **Harnessing Evil (Vayikra)**

***I have discovered that all human evil comes from this, man's being unable to sit still in a room. -Blaise Pascal***

In an episode of the original Star Trek television series, there is a transporter mishap, that splits Captain Kirk into two beings ("The Enemy Within, Season 1, Episode 5). One version of Kirk is passive, gentle and good. The other is aggressive, passionate and bad. Perhaps one of their best and most powerful episodes, it demonstrated how man cannot live without his 'evil' traits.

To my great surprise, Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Prague, the Kli Yakar (1550-1619), says the same thing.

This week's Torah reading deals with the laws of the sacrifices that were brought in the Tabernacle (and later, in the Temple in Jerusalem). It lists two items that are forbidden with sacrifices:

***No leaven, nor any honey, shall you bring as an offering. -Leviticus 2:11***

Curiously, there are two exceptions to the above commandment.

Leaven is brought as the sacrifice of the "two loaves" on the holiday of Shavuot, when we commemorate the giving of the Torah. Honey (in its original form as dates) is brought as part of the First Fruit offering.

The Kli Yakar explains that leaven represents the evil inclination and honey represents the desire for the physical and pleasurable. He claims that we need both, but just the minimum for survival, while anything beyond the minimum is harmful.

He quotes the Midrash (Bereishit Rabba 9:9):

***"If not for the evil inclination, man would not wed, nor build a house, and the world would be desolate."***

Hence the need to rein in and harness our evil and natural inclinations for good and positive purposes.

May we control our desires as opposed to the other way around.

Shabbat Shalom and Purim Sameach,

Ben-Tzion

*Dedication*

*To the memory of Daniel Perez hy”d. May his family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.*