

Parshat Ki-Tissa, 2012, 5772
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This week my message comes from the Haftarah, Melachim Aleph, 18:1-39

This Haftarah reveals to us HaShem's great love for our people and our inseparable relationship with Him. The setting opens after three years of severe famine and drought HaShem instructed Eliyahu HaNavi to appear before the Jewish King Achav. This wicked leader together with his idolatrous Queen Izzevel was gravely at fault for the Jewish people's decline and the famine that followed. Eliyahu faithfully fulfills his mission and, at the risk of his life, challenged Achav and his idolatrous prophets to a crucial show-down on Mount Carmel. Eliyahu, the only known true surviving prophet of G-d represented HaShem while the other prophets represented their false deities. Each would attempt to offer a Korban without using any fire and whoever received a response from above would be proven the real prophet. After several futile attempts by the false prophets, Eliyahu ridicules them saying, "Why don't you pray louder, perhaps your god is sleeping!" Finally, towards evening, Eliyahu steps up, drenches his bull in a ditch of water, prepares the wood, cuts up the bull and places it on the wood.

As the sun was about to set, Eliyahu cries out and says, "HaShem, G-d of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yisrael, today it will become known that You G-d are with Israel and I am Your servant, and at Your word have I done all these things. Answer me, HaShem, answer me-and the people know that you are HaShem, the G-d, and You will turn their heart back."

A fire of HaShem descended and consumed the Olah offering. The entire people saw and fell on their faces and said, "HaShem-He is the G-d! HaShem-He is the G-d"

A very beautiful, dramatic and famous story. Anyone going on a tour to Israel will probably have a guide that will take them up to the top of Mount Carmel, which is part of the city of Chaifa {Haifa}, and there retell this incredible story. But let us now examine the story from a practical and halachic perspective. This Korban Olah which Eliyahu brought on Mt Carmel was a serious violation of a Torah prohibition. At a time when Beit HaMikdash was standing it was prohibited, by punishment of Kareit, to bring Korbanot out of the Mikdash area [She'chutei Chutz]. So how was Eliyahu permitted to bring a Korban on the Carmel? The Gemara Yevamot [90b] deals with this issue and concludes that a Navi, who has proven himself, may take the liberty of making a "temporary change- Ho'Ra'at Sha'a" in a biblical command- if circumstances require it. The Gemara basis this on the pasuk in Devarim [18:15] "A prophet from your midst, from your brethren, like me, shall HaShem, your G-d establish for you-**to him shall you listen**", so Gemara implies, even if this prophet tells you to violate a Mitzvah [temporarily-as the circumstances dictate]- you MUST listen to him.

We now have a Heter [permission] for what Eliyahu did. But why did Eliyahu have to resort to this Heter, why could he not have conducted this event in the Mikdash area?

Here is the lesson of the day. Jews in the northern kingdom {Carmel area} whom he was addressing, felt that HaShem had forsaken them, that He was the G-d of Jews only in Yerushalayim and that He was primarily concerned only with the Jews in the Mikdash area. Eliyahu deflected this false notion and proved that G-d loves His people wherever they are in

those days and in all times. Jews may be scattered all around the globe, but His love and kindness extends to each and every one of us. G-d may not always approve of thing we do, He may punish us with famine and drought but His love for us will never diminish-guaranteed!.
“For the mountains may be moved and the hills may falter, but My kindness shall not be removed from you.” [Yeshayahu 54;10]. Eliyahu had to make his point away from Yerushalayim and the Carmel was chosen. But Eliyahu brings his message to every Jew at a Brit Milah and to every individual home at the Seder of Pesach.