



From the desk of
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עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Vayikra

HAMELECH

Why Sacrifice?

This week's parashah speaks about *korbanot*. What are *korbanot*? Sacrificial offerings. One of the three pillars of the world is taking animals and offering them as sacrifices. Unfortunately, this type of service has not been practiced for nearly two thousand years, so practically speaking, we are unfamiliar with the concept. Some of us hesitate and shudder at the thought of taking an innocent animal and slaughtering it as a sacrifice. We may wonder: what is the point?

I am not talking about animal right's activists or idealistic vegetarians. I am talking about people who have no problem with the idea of eating meat and using animal hides for all sorts of purposes. Still, since observant Jews have not been sacrificing animals for so many years, the idea seems foreign. What does Hashem really get out of it?

Who? Me?

In fact, in the *haftarah* for Parashat Tzav (which is not read so often) we find, Yirmiyah Hanavi reprimanding the Jewish People, in the name of Hashem, saying: I did not tell your forefathers, nor did I command them, on the day that I took them out of Mitzrayim, regarding matters of the burnt offering or the peace offering. So what did I command them about? I said: Listen to My Voice and I shall be for you the Almighty and you will be for Me a People. And you are to follow the

entire path which I command you; that way, it will be good for you. (7:22-28)

Yirmiyahu seems to be down-playing the significance of *korbanot*. We must conclude that the main thing is not the *korban* itself but what lies behind it.

Ramban (Vayikra 1:9) reveals to us some of the ideas behind a *korban*. He points out that a person in this world is responsible for his thoughts, words and deeds. When he does not use those three the right way, he must rectify that. A *korban* can help him do that. How so? He puts his hand upon the animal's head; the hands symbolize one's actions and deeds. Then he confesses his sin with words. Finally, the animal's internal organs are burnt upon the altar, specifically the intestines and the kidneys. The kidneys represent the thought processes while the intestines represent desire for physical pleasure. The blood is also applied to the altar, and the blood is the very soul of a person.

While all of this happening to the animal, the one bringing the *korban* is to understand that due to his sin, all of this was really supposed to happen to him! But Hashem, in His Kindness and Compassion, accepts an animal substitute. The idea is not just to bring the *korban* and go along on your merry way; it is to think deeply about what is happening; how it really should have been your very own blood and guts on the altar. These thoughts should bring one to humility and repentance.



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Korban of Today

Rashi (Bava Metzia 114b) teaches that Seder Kodoshim is just as applicable today as any other *halacha*. This is because learning about *korbanot* is akin to bringing them. Why? Because the main thing is not the actual bringing of the *korban*, but its impact upon the person's behavior and attitude. If learning about *korbanot* can bring a person to humility and repentance, than the desired result has been achieved.

Dovid Hamelech sincerely desired to build the *Beit Hamikdash* and bring *korbanot*. Hashem told him, "You should just know that one day of your Torah learning is worth more to Me than a thousand *korbanot* which your son, Shlomo, will offer up to Me!"

This is because Dovid Hamelech's Torah study was done with *mesirut nefesh*. He put his soul and his all into it.

Stop Short

Some people think that piety is achieved through self-inflicting pain. *Mesilat Yesharim* (Chap. 18) points out that self-inflicted pain was never an end unto itself, nor was it even a means. It only was an accessory to true piety. In our times that people are generally not as physically strong as they used to be, our spiritual leaders discourage fasting and other forms of pain and denial. However, in their stead, there is a type of denial which they deem beneficial, even more advantageous than fasting. That is, withdrawing from extra pleasure. For example, if you are

eating something enjoyable and tasty, do not finish it off down to the last bit; leave over a drop. That bit which you did not consume is like a *korban*! You offered not only an animal, but yourself! That self-control is akin to an offering.

The Ra'avad's Fast

Ra'avad says it like this: The best way to keep the *yetzer horah* under control is to refrain from overindulgence. Enjoy pleasant fragrances and hot showers, but keep food intake to a minimum. Eat healthily and well-spiced, but not too much. Never eat your fill. It's fine and even advisable to stop eating even when that little voice inside of you says, "More!"

The "source" for this approach really goes all the way back to the Talmud (*Gittin* 70a). The Gemara says: When you really enjoy a meal, put your hand down (and stop eating). Two things are thereby accomplished. First of all, eating too much is simply not healthy. Second, the soul is strengthened by this exercise in self-control.

The example given here is food intake, but one should see how to curb his desires in other areas as well. Don't fast because that will make you weak. You won't be able to think straight. You'll make mistakes. You won't be able to learn Torah and do *mitzvot* properly. Better you should eat, but while you are eating, before the last bite, stop! That is a greater expression of love for Hashem than fasting once a week.

Many other great Sages bring this idea of the Raavad or say it in their own words, including



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Sefer Chasidim, Menorat HaMeor, Chid"u, Shla"u, Ben Ish Hai.

Nachshon's Double Korban

In the beginning of Nissan 2449, the twelve *Nesi'im* (tribal leaders) brought *korbanot* for the inauguration of the *mishkan*. Each *Nasi* took a turn, one a day. On the first day, Nachshon ben Aminadav, the *Nasi* of Yehudah, brought his *korban*. On the subsequent days, the other *nesi'im* brought their *korbanot*. Besides for each new name and name of Shevet, each rendition is identical, except for Nachshon's. For one, he is not identified as *Nasi*. Additionally, the word "*korban*" appears twice. Not only that, but the second time it appears, it is preceded by the letter "vov" indicating that one *korban* was brought already, although the details of which were not delineated. What is the reason for these differences?

Nachshon was the first *Nasi* to bring. This was a great honor. He could have become conceited. But he did not even feel that he deserved to be a *Nasi*, so his title is deleted. This self-sacrifice was his first sacrifice! Then, in addition, he brought the *korban* of animals and flour etc.

Two Coins Per Name

On Erev Yom Kippur, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev accepted names for Tefilla if accompanied by two coins. As the day went by, the piles of coins and papers with names grew. Shortly before the fast began, a woman came running in, out of breath. She placed two coins

on the table, together with a note with her name and the name of her son.

Reb Levi Yitzchak said, "Each name needs two coins."

She said, "I've been busy all day trying to come with two coins. Now what should I do?"

"Pick which name I should daven for."

"Daven for my son."

Reb Levi Yitzchak turned his eyes Heavenward and said, "If this woman will sacrifice herself for the sake of her son, please have compassion upon us like a father for his children."

This is but one example of how selflessness is today's *korban*.

Korbanot Today

We do not have a *Beit Hamikdash*, nor *korbanot*. What are our *korbanot*? a) Stopping in the middle of eating something yummy. b) Hearing others insult us and remaining silent. c) Thinking of saying something and then deciding that it is not necessary to say it. d) Sitting and learning Torah, even if we're hungry and thirsty and tired; putting in effort to understand what the Gemara is saying. e) Living according to Halachah, even when it involves curbing our desires.

May we merit to see the building of the *Beit Hamikdash* and the bringing of *Korbanot* speedily in our days.

Shabbat Shalom Umevorach,
Mordechai Malka