



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
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Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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Parashat Vayikra

Everyone Has Someone Close to Him Who Helps Him

Our *parasha* begins (1:1), "And Hashem called (*vayikra*) to Moshe saying, (2) "Speak to the Jewish people and say to them, 'a man (*adam*) who will offer from you (*mikem*) an offering to Hashem, from the domesticated animal (*ha'beheima*), cattle, and sheep you will sacrifice your offering.'" Later (2:9) the *parasha* states, "The Kohen should lift its memorial portion from the meal offering and burn it on the Altar – a fire offering, a satisfying aroma to Hashem." In 2:11 it states, "Every meal offering that you offer to Hashem should not be made from leaven (*chametz*); for all leavening agent and honey you should not burn as a fire to Hashem."

Questions:

1) Our Sages teach that the *alef* of the word *vayikra* was made small by Moshe. Therefore there was ink that remained. They teach that Moshe wiped the ink on his face, and it caused his face to be radiant. What is the explanation for this? Does a small amount of ink cause the face to shine? 2) Why does the *pasuk* say **adam (man)** who will offer?" The word **ish (an individual)** would seem to be more appropriate. 3) Why does the *pasuk* state **mikem (from you)**? This seems to be superfluous. 4) The commentators ask why the Torah only permitted *korbanot* from domesticated animals (*beheimot*) and birds, but not from undomesticated animals (*chayot*). 5) The aforementioned *pesukim* cite various different *korbanot* that individuals bring. There are those who bring offerings from cattle, those who bring from sheep, birds, fine flour and the like. Yet regarding all of them, the *pasuk* concludes that they are a satisfying aroma to Hashem. How is it possible that the Torah equates someone who brings a calf, which costs several thousand *shekalim*, to one who brings a *korban* that costs a *shekel* or two? 6) The Torah furthermore writes that it is forbidden to bring a *korban* from *chametz* or honey. In the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon (Seder Ma'amadot)* it states that Bar Kappara said that if a *kortov* (small measurement) of honey would have been placed into the offering, no individual would have been able to stand before its pleasant fragrance. If so, sacrificing honey would seem to be an honor for the *Shechina* and not the opposite? 7) We must also understand the connection between honey and *chametz*. Why does the Torah place them together and state about both that they are undesirable?

Man's Perspective

Let us begin by saying that when man brings a *korban* to Hashem or prays, he innately feels that he is benefitting Hashem by performing His Will. Even if he does not actually feel this way, he nevertheless thinks that he has appeased Hashem with this *korban* by atoning for his sins. However, the Torah and our Sages teach us that this perspective is erred. Man must ingrain in himself that he is only benefitting himself by bringing a *korban* or praying. Furthermore, what is primary is not the *korban* or the prayer that he prays to Hashem. Rather, Hashem desires his heart. The main thing is **how** the individual brings the *korban* or prays. How does he feel inside? What are his intentions? This is because the entire essence of the *korban* and prayer is the submissiveness of his heart, as we will explain.

The Purpose of a *Korban* is to Arouse Humility and Repentance

According to this, we can explain the essence of a *korban*, which enables us to achieve atonement and please Hashem. After all, does Hashem have any use for the *korban*? Since He does not, how does it help an individual to bring a *korban*; how does it atone for his sins? This is as the *Navi* stated (*Yeshayahu* 1:11), "Why do I need your many offerings? Says Hashem. I am satiated with elevation offerings ..." Well known are the words of the Ramban (1:9) who teaches that the purpose of a *korban* is to evoke man's regret over his sins, i.e., being led after his desires and urges in contrast to the Will of Hashem. This is the reason that a sacrificial offering is called a "*korban*," which implies drawing closer [*le'hitkarev*] to Hashem. By doing so, the *korban* brings satisfaction to Hashem. All of this is hinted to in the word "*mikem*, from you." A *korban* must be "from you," from your very essence. In other words, the intention of the *korban* is *not* the animal that is being offered; rather, the primary intention is in what is concealed *behind* the *korban* – you. A *korban* represents relinquishing one's desires which



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led him to sin, for the sake of benefitting his Divine service. Similarly, he must take the negative character traits which are part of his personality, such as arrogance for example, which is the root of all negative traits, and he must offer them to Hashem, by utilizing them only to perform His Will. This is the meaning of "mikem, from you." Similarly wrote the *Kli Yakar*, "There are those who say, 'A man when he offers from you (*mikem*)' – from his very body. He does so by fasting and with a broken spirit. This is a *korban* for Hashem ..."

Parable of the Dubno Maggid

The Dubno Maggid drew an amazing parable to this idea: There was a very wealthy merchant who had many servants and employees in many lands, who bought and sold as he requested. One time, two of the employees purchased diamonds at a very high price - a million rubel. Unbeknownst to them, thieves followed them to their place of lodging. The employees were not careful, and they were lax in guarding the diamonds. As a result, all of the diamonds were stolen. They did not know what to do and how they would tell their employer. They decided to go before him and plead. They would say that there is nothing they could do to rectify their error; even if they would work their entire lives, they would be unable to return the large sum that was stolen. They were therefore turning to him with a desperate plea for forgiveness. From then on, they would be willing to work with tremendous self-sacrifice and caution, so that the employer would succeed in his business dealings. The wealthy man listened to what they had to say. He was convinced of their sincerity and that they truly regretted their negligence. Since they were distinguished employees, he decided to continue employing them. However, he did not want them to forget the damage they had caused; this would ensure that they would be more careful next time. He therefore required them to repay a small portion of the loss – ten thousand rubels. Understandably, even this amount, despite the fact that it paled in comparison to the amount that they lost, was still beyond their ability to repay. He therefore stipulated with them that each week they would repay him ten rubel. They were obviously overjoyed over his request and over his willingness to forgo their deed. Indeed, every week they managed to give him ten rubel. Yet once, one of the workers was unable to obtain ten rubel; he barely managed to obtain five. However, that week, his co-worker brought twenty rubel to pay two weeks' worth of debts. Both of them went to repay the money. The worker with twenty rubel approached with haughtiness and joy over succeeding to repay twenty rubels. However, his unfortunate co-worker, approached with distress and fear. How could it be that he only has five rubels? He went to his employer and begged for forgiveness, explaining that he had not managed to obtain the required sum. Yet the employer received him happily saying, "It is perfectly fine. I am happy that you at least brought five rubels." The employer's wife had been present there, and when she left, she contemplated the fact that he did not seem happy when he received the first employee, despite the fact that he brought twenty rubels. Yet the other fellow was received warmly, despite the fact that he only brought five rubels. She therefore asked her husband for an explanation. The wealthy man responded, "Even if he were to repay me fifty rubels, it would still be nothing in comparison to the damage that they caused me. Am I truly appeased by the fact that they give me ten or twenty rubels? My main desire is that they always remember the damage they caused and that they regret their deeds. This way, they will guard merchandise with the epitome of cautiousness in the future. The one who brought twenty rubels thinks that he deserves a reward. He approached me haughtily as if he has repaid his debt with this money. The truth, however, is that his money is nothing in comparison to his damage. I want him to feel shame and regret, and instead, he feels arrogance. Therefore, the one who gave me five rubels, but with a broken heart – he finds favor in my eyes, and I see that he will be a loyal and dedicated worker." The Dubno Maggid explained that the same thing applies between man and Hashem. Man brings a *korban* or goes to the *beit ha'knesset*, and he thinks that by doing so he is benefitting Hashem. However, man must feel how indebted he is to Hashem because of all that he has received from Him. It should cause him to approach Hashem with a broken heart and with supplications. Since we do not have a *Beit Hamikdash* in present times, our Sages teach (*Berachot* 55) that there are three things which lengthen man's life: 1 – lengthening one's prayers, 2- lengthening one's meals [by doing so, the impoverished come to his table, and he feeds them] 3 – lengthening the time that he relieves himself [this ensures his health]. By lengthening his



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prayers, he demonstrates his submissiveness before Hashem, and that he is not benefitting Hashem with his prayers.

The Allusion in the Word "Adam"

This explains why the Torah stated *adam* and not *ish*. This teaches that to offer a *korban*, an individual must be similar to Adam HaRishon, who possessed no haughtiness. There was no one in existence for Adam to compare himself to and to display arrogance towards. In other words, man must show humility when bringing a *korban*. This is as David HaMelech stated in *Tehillim* (51:18), "For You do not want a sacrifice, or else I would give it; a burnt offering, you do not want; (19) The sacrifices of Hashem is a broken spirit; a broken and humbled heart, You will not despise G-d."

Why Did Moshe Rabbeinu's Face Shine Because of the Small Alef?

Now we can understand why Moshe's face radiated after he put the ink left over from the small *alef* on his face. In his humility, Moshe wanted only that the word *vayikar* [ויקר] be written, as it was written when Hashem spoke to Bilam, and not *vayikra* [ויקרא]. However, Hashem required him to write *vayikra*, but allowed Moshe to write it with a small *alef*. By doing so, Moshe merited an illuminate face. This is specifically hinted to here, because the Torah is discussing the *korbanot*, whose primary aspect was submissiveness and humility.

Why Leaven and Honey Were Disqualified

Now we can also understand why the Torah forbade offering leaven and honey, despite the fact that Bar Kappara said that if a *kortov* (small measurement) of honey would have been placed into the offering, no individual would have been able to stand before its pleasant fragrance. Leaven swells and therefore prevents man from seeing how it truly looks. Honey as well, causes an exaggerated fragrance, which exceeds the item's natural scent. Therefore, these qualities cause an effect which is not in accordance with the truth, but rather imaginary. It is similar to the arrogant individual who raises himself higher than what he truly is. This is disgusting in the eyes of Hashem. On the contrary, humility and a broken heart are what Hashem covets.

Why Are Undomesticated Animals Not Used for Korbanot?

According to this, we can also explain why the Torah only allows *korbanot* to be brought from *beheimot*, domesticated animals such as cattle and sheep. These animals are humble, as they do not devour other animals; they eat grass instead. *Chayot*, however are cruel and devour other animals. They are therefore unfit to be *korbanot*, which are intended to make the heart and man's urges submissive. Since the entire purpose of the *korban* is to humble man's heart, the measure of a *korban* is not based on how expensive an animal it is. Rather, even a bird-offering can bring Hashem satisfaction like a *korban* of cattle. What is primary is that the goal has been reached – the one who brings the offering draws closer to Hashem.

Prayer is in Place of Korbanot

In present times, when the *Beit Hamikdash* has been destroyed due to our sins and we do not have a *kohen* performing the *avoda*, nor a *levi* singing on his platform, prayer has been established in place of the *korbanot* [see *Hoshea* 14:2-3, *Rashi*, *Radak* *ibid.*]. This is as explicitly stated in *Masechet Berachot* (26b) that the *tefilot* were enacted to correspond to the sacrificial offerings. In the name of Rebbi Yehoshua ben Levi it is taught that the reason the *Chachamim* ruled that the *Shacharit* prayer cannot be recited past midday, is because the morning *tamid* offering was only offered until that time. Rebbi Yehuda rules that the *Shacharit* prayer can be recited until the fourth hour of the day, because his view is that the morning *tamid* offering was permitted to be offered only until that time. He furthermore teaches that the reason the *Chachamim* ruled that the *Mincha* prayer was only permitted to be recited until nightfall is because the afternoon *tamid* offering was offered until that time. The Gemara continues to state that the *Arvit* and *Musaf* prayers were also enacted to correspond to the sacrifices offered at that time. The *Shulchan Aruch* (98:4) also writes that prayer was enacted in place of the *korbanot*. He writes that one must therefore be careful that his prayer resembles a *korban*; it must be offered with the proper intentions and one should not think about anything else at that time. Improper thoughts could disqualify a *korban*. The *Shulchan Aruch* cites various other examples of similarities between prayers and *korbanot*.



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Service of the Heart

That being the case, we can understand that the primary aspect of prayer is a humble heart and repentance and not the actual reading from the *siddur*. This is why *tefila* is referred to as "service of the heart." This is as our Sages teach in *Masechet Ta'anit* 2a. The *pasuk* states (*Devarim* 11), "To love Hashem, your G-d, and to serve Him with all of your heart." On this *pasuk*, our Sages ask, "Which is the service that is in the heart – this is prayer" [This is similarly stated in the *Yerushalmi Berachot* 4:1 and *Mechilta de'Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai* 23:25]. This is how the Rambam rules (*Hilchot Tefila ve'Nesiat Kapayim* 1:1) that it is a positive commandment to pray every day, as the *pasuk* states, "And you should serve Hashem, your G-d." The Sages received that this service refers to prayer, as the *pasuk* states, "And you should serve Hashem with all of your heart." The Sages said that service of the heart refers to prayer. The Rambam continues that the number of prayers that one prays over the course of a day is not a Torah requirement, nor is the text of the prayer, nor the time of prayer. **We see from here** that the essence of prayer is in the heart and not what one reads from the *siddur*. Therefore each individual is required to perform a spiritual accounting before he prays. He must think about what he wishes to accomplish with his prayer and how he will stand before Hashem. For everything is revealed before Him, as the *pasuk* states, "And the hidden things are for Hashem, our G-d." The *Rishonim* furthermore ask that if there is a decree against an individual, Heaven forbid, how can he request Hashem to annul it? Hashem is not a human being, who changes his mind. Therefore it must be that praying to annul a decree and to act kindly with him is dependent upon standing before Hashem with a broken heart and humility. He must plead with Hashem and repent. By doing so, he transforms himself into a different person against whom this decree was never issued.

All the Gates are Opened Before One Who Prays from the Depths of His Heart

The *Zohar Chadash* (*Rut* 34a) quotes the *pasuk*, "Hashem is close to all those who call to Him, to all those who call Him sincerely." The *Zohar* states that Hashem wants man's heart, and both prayer and *korbanot* are dependent on man's heart. When man brings a *korban* for a sin he committed, he must confess, and this is what is primary. If he calls out to Hashem sincerely, his prayer and *korban* will be accepted.

Everyone Has Someone Close to Him Who Helps Him

When R' Yaakov David Weintraub *zt"l* was still a young married man, the Rebbe of Alexander *zt"l* told him, "There is someone close to you, who will give you anything you lack." R' Weintraub did not understand his intention. The Rebbe explained, "Does the *pasuk* not state, 'Hashem is close to all those who call to Him, to all those who call Him sincerely?' Who calls out to Hashem with more sincerity than you?"

Words of Mussar

We have learned that prayers are in place of the *korbanot*. The secret behind this is that the essence of prayer is for an individual to feel humbled over his sins. Only such a humble heart will be accepted by Hashem. However, if an individual stands in prayer with a feeling that he is benefitting Hashem, there is no chance that his prayer will be accepted. Therefore, a part of preparing to pray is to contemplate before whom he stands, what he wishes to ask, and in which merit he wishes to request this. Then his prayer will be accepted. We should add that the main theme of a *korban* and of prayer is sacrificing one's ego, and subjugating it to perform the Will of Hashem. This is the Torah's intention when stating, "a man (*adam*) who will offer from you (*mikem*) an offering to Hashem." In other words, he must sacrifice "from you," from himself – his lusts and desires – to do the Will of Hashem; "From the domesticated animal (*ha'beheima*)" – from the animalistic urges that simmer inside him; "From the cattle (*bakar*)" – this alludes to his requirement to wake up in the morning (*boker*) and to sacrifice his extra sleep for the sake of performing Hashem's Will. Then everything ascends as a satisfying aroma before Hashem.

Shabbat Shalom

Rav Mordechai Malka



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