

DIVREI TORAH FROM INTERNET
ON PARSHAS VAYIKRAH - 5756

B'S'D' The first word of the Book of Vayikra/Leviticus is "Vayikra" (And he called). It is written in the Torah with a small Aleph. The Aleph is the letter that represents the will, the ego. It is the first letter of the word for "I" - `Ani'. When a person sees himself as being very small, like that small Aleph, then he makes room for the Divine Presence to dwell in him. His head is not swollen with the cotton-candy of self-regard. Moshe Rabbeinu was the humblest of all men. Moshe made of himself so little that he was barely in this world at all. He, as no man before or since, saw that there is only one Aleph in all of creation - only one Number One - Hashem. Moshe made his own Aleph - his ego - so small, that he merited that the Torah was given via him. To Moshe, Hashem 'called' - "Vayikra..." (Based on Reb Bunim of P'schishe)

PLEASE WAIT HERE

"Vayikra..." (1:1) The word "Vayikra" implies that Hashem called to Moshe with affection, just as the angels call to one another. Hashem called, and Moshe came. But when Bilam, the Midianite prophet, wanted to curse the Jewish People, the Torah says that Hashem went to him. If Moshe went to Hashem, surely all the more so Bilam should have gone to Hashem. So why did Hashem go to Bilam? The answer is that when you receive an important guest, he is ushered into the sitting-room, but when the garbage man comes to the door, you go out to him so that your home doesn't smell like a trash-can!

CLOSENESS

"When a man from among you will bring a korban..." (1:2)
Closeness and distance are not necessarily measured in meters or miles, for people can be close even when they are on different sides of the world, and they can be distant even though they may be sitting next to each other on a bus or living in the same house. Closeness is spiritual; part of the internal life.

We have no word in the English language to express the meaning of the korbanos which were brought in the Beis Hamikdash. The word `sacrifice' implies that I am giving something up that is of value to me so that the other person will benefit. Obviously, Hashem cannot benefit from `sacrifices', for He lacks nothing. `Sacrifice' also implies having to do without something of value. In point of fact, what we gain from the `sacrifice' is infinitely more valuable than the `sacrifice'. The word `offering' is also inaccurate: The idea of an `offering' is that it appeases the one to whom it is brought. It's like `buying someone off.' A kind of bribery. The reason that we have a problem translating the word `korban' into English, is that our ideas of `sacrifices' and `offerings' derive from pagan cultures. Indeed, in those cultures, the word `sacrifice' and `offering' were apt and accurate.

The root of the word korban is the same as the word `closeness'. It is used exclusively in relation to Man's relationship with Hashem. When a person brought a korban, he wanted to bring himself close to G-d. Being close to Hashem is the only real `good' that exists. All other `goods' are pale imitations, like worthless forgeries, compared to the real Good of being close to G-d. In the halls of Heaven, the problems of life solve themselves. Happiness is a barometer which rises and falls corresponding to one's closeness to G-d. In the minds of those who have refined themselves, even suffering can become exalted to happiness when one is near to Hashem.

Today when we no longer have the closeness to Hashem that korbanos gave us,

we still have its substitute - prayer. When we pour out our hearts in prayer, when we offer ourselves up to Hashem, we bring close both ourselves, and the world with us, to our Father in Heaven

(Based on Rabbi S. R. Hirsch, Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin)

For back issues and questions e-mail me at cshulman@paulweiss.com

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Subject: Torah Weekly - Vayikra

* TORAH WEEKLY *

The Book of Vayikra (Leviticus) which we start reading this week, is also known as Toras Kohanim -- the Laws of the Priests. It deals largely with the korbanos (offerings) that are brought in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings are called "Olot", burnt offerings. The animal is brought to the entrance of the Mishkan. Regarding cattle, the one who brought the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the Kohen sprinkles its blood on the Altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the Altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of these are burned on the altar, and the remainder is eaten by the Kohanim. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the Altar and part eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats. The Torah prohibits eating blood or "Cheilev" (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins -- committed by the Kohen Gadol, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen -- are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the "questionable guilt" offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.

Commentaries
Number One

An Eye to Eternity

"But you did not call to Me, O Yaakov, for you grew weary of Me, Yisrael." (43:22)

"Shver zu zein a Yid" runs an old Yiddish expression - "It's difficult to be a Jew." If you set your sights low and focus only on this world and its tribulations, you will certainly find it shver to be a Jew. But if you raise your gaze and focus on eternity, you will realize you have been given the greatest gift there is. The opportunity to be close to G-d. Someone who truly wants to do the will of Hashem doesn't understand the meaning of weariness. To him, the 'yoke' of Torah and mitzvos is a crown of solid gold overlaid with pearls placed on the head of a king, which, while weighty, is none the less dear and extremely desirable. However, when a person's motives for doing mitzvos are not altruistic, rather he performs them for ulterior motives, or he does mitzvos out of mere habit, then the gravity of Torah and mitzvos weighs like a heavy burden around his neck. Thus, he becomes wearied and exhausted extremely quickly. If "you grew weary of Me, Yisrael", it is a sure sign that "You did not call to Me, O Yaakov"...

(Based on Mayana shel Torah)

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

"Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ravfrand@torah.org, " ravfrand@torah.org"

"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Vayikra -
G-d Speaks to the Jewish Prophets by the "Heat of the Day"

The Medrash on this week's Parsha states as follows: Rav Yehuda says, G-d appears to the nations of the world only at night, at a time when people are separated from one another, as we find "The L-rd appeared to Avimelech in a dream at night...", "And the L-rd came to Bilaam at night..." However, in regard to Jewish prophets we find that He comes during the day, as it is written regarding Avrohom, "And he sat at the gate of the tent, in the heat of the day..."

What significance is there in the fact that G-d only appears to the Gentile prophets at night? The answer is that there is a very basic difference between Judaism and other religions. I do not claim to be an expert in Catholic theology, but it is quite well known that the reason why the Catholic Church insists that its priests and nuns remain celibate is because the Catholic religion has a tremendous problem with the blending of the physical and the spiritual. As a result, they believe that the people who are "truly close to G-d", i.e. -- the priests and the nuns -- cannot be involved or associated with the physical side of life. Therefore, they should not have wives or husbands, because this would take away from their devotion to G-d.

As Jews, we believe that there does not have to be a dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual. The 'tachelis' 'end-goal', in fact, of a Jew is to sanctify the physical. A person can live a physical life that is permeated with 'kedusha' 'the spirit of holiness'. A person's eating, his business dealings, and even his marital relations with his wife can be conducted on a holy and spiritual level.

This is what the Medrash is telling us. G-d says that when He appears to the nations of the world, He only appears "at night" -- when people are normally isolated from one another. When can a Gentile have association with spirituality? Only when he is disassociated from the rest of mankind -- at night. But a Jew can have a relationship with G-d "in the heat of the day." This is what Judaism is all about -- living as a human being in all aspects of existence, but doing so in

such a way that the physical becomes holy and all ones actions are for the sake of Heaven.

The Kotzker Rebbe once said that immediately after receiving the Torah, the Jews were given the command "Return to your tents." The Talmud interprets this as a command to return to your marital relations with your wives (which were suspended for 3 days prior to the giving of the Torah). The Kotzker explained this very point. Now that we have received the Torah, that we know what Torah is all about, it is time to return to our tents and to apply the spiritual principles of the Torah to our everyday lives.

Levites Make A Positive Choice to Serve in Beis HaMikdash

The Medrash on the verse "The rest of the meal offering shall belong to Aharon and his sons..." ?VaYikra 2:3X connects this pasuk with a verse in Psalms ?Tehillim 17:14X. The Medrash interprets the verse in Psalms as follows "There are mighty people, who took their portion from Your hand". The Medrash identifies these mighty people who took their portion from G-d's hand as the Tribe of Levi. This tribe was so strong, the Medrash says, that they declined to take their portion in the Land of Israel, but took their portion instead directly from G-d.

The Ateres Mordechai, by Rav Mordechai Rogov, zt"l, offers a beautiful interpretation of this Medrash, which teaches us a great moral lesson for our time. The Ateres Mordechai says that a person could perhaps think that Leviim, who were historically employed in the Beis HaMikdash and who were the teachers of the children of the Jewish people, were a tribe of 'nebechs'. Yaakov Avinu had 12 sons. Thank G-d, eleven of them were successful and talented children; one was a 'lelech'. So what does one do with a son who is unfortunately a little 'shleimish'? He stays in the Beis HaMikdash; he becomes a teacher; he becomes a Rebbe.

There is an expression in the secular world 'Those who can, do, those who can't, teach'. This means that one who has any brain in his head and any head on his shoulder will go out and be a doctor or a lawyer or an accountant or computer analyst -- something important! At least work for the government! But, nebech, if you can't do anything else, then, and only then, you teach.

The Medrash tells us that this was far from the case. Do not think for a minute that the Tribe of Levi were a bunch of nebechs. The Tribe of Levi was mighty. They were talented and capable and they could have done anything. They could have had the job of Zevulun or Naftali or any other tribe. But they were mighty. They made a conscious deliberate decision not to take a portion in the Land. They gave up the transitory and temporal world for the sake of a lasting world which is 'chay v'kayam'.

What is the proof that they were happy with their decision? A doctor usually wants his son to go into medicine. A businessman wants his son to take over the business. If one is pleased with what he is doing, he wants his son to follow in his footsteps. But one who is not pleased with what he is doing, chas v'sholom, does not want his child to continue in his profession. "I had it rough, I couldn't go to school. But you? You're going to have something decent in life."

The Medrash is telling us that the Tribe of Levi was not a cop-out. They didn't do what they did because they had no other choice. It was because they made a positive decision and were attracted to the spirituality of the job for themselves and for their children.

This is what the Tribe of Levi chose. They did not chose it because they had nothing else to do. They chose it because they knew which profession had true value.

Elementary School Teachers are the new Tribe of Levi

Today, we have a new generation of Leviim. These are our Rebbeim and Teachers. I particularly refer to the teachers of elementary school years. Teachers in primary grades get very little respect. Here are people that could have become the same lawyer or accountant or computer analyst, but they chose to educate our children. They chose to stay and provide a new spirit to a new generation of children, to stay and spend 6-8 hours a day with little kids. We all know that this is no simple task.

They are the new Tribe of Levi. It is not because they could not do anything else. These are people who voluntarily chose "Not to take a portion in the Land". We all know that it is a crying shame that our educators receive sub-standard wages.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky once said that both the president and the janitor have keys to the bank. The way to tell which one is the president and which one is the janitor is to look at their paychecks. The money lets us know (HaDamim Modi'im). We pay for that which we consider important. If, because of our many sins, we cannot show our appreciation to the educators of the generation through their paychecks, at least we should give recognition and appreciation and show our gratitude without limit to these people who have, on a daily basis, devoted their lives to experience the hardships of elementary school education, thereby passing up the transitory world and acquiring a world that is Chai v'Kayam'.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@scn.org

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DRASHA VAYIKRA -- THE PEOPLE'S PROPHET

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VaYikra means "and He called." The Torah tells us that Moshe was called by Hashem from the Tent of the Meeting -- the Ohel Moed. It refers to a direct calling in which Moshe was specifically summoned and spoken to. The last letter in the word vayikra is an Aleph. In the Torah scroll, the last letter of the word vayikra, the aleph, is written very small. The Baal HaTurim notes that Moshe actually wanted to delete the letter aleph. He wanted the word to read vayikor -- which is a word that implies an inconsequential meeting. In fact when Hashem appeared to the gentile prophet Bilaam, the man who openly attempted to cast a curse upon the Jews, Hashem characterizes the encounter with the term vayikor. Moshe attempted to put himself, the Master of all Prophets, in the same category as the evil prophet Bilaam.

It is troubling that Moshe would find this a place for unfounded modesty. The Torah has no place for false humility. In fact, there is delightful story about a brilliant Rabbi who was subpoenaed as a character witness for his student. After being sworn in, the attorney questioned the Rabbi's credentials. "Is it true that you are a great Talmudic scholar?"

"Absolutely," came the firm reply. "I am one of the top five Talmudic scholars in the land!"

"How well do you know Jewish Law?"

Again the Rabbi answered assuredly. "People send me questions from all over the world."

At this juncture the Judge could not contain himself. He interrupted the attorney and turned to the Rabbi. "Doesn't your religion encourage humility?"

The Rabbi looked at his feet in sincere humility. "Absolutely your Honor, but I am under oath."

How could Moshe want to claim that Hashem only appeared to him inconsequentially when in fact the revelation Moshe received was the highest level of any prophecy? Didn't Moshe recognize the level that he attained?

The last decade of his life, my grandfather, HaGaon Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, would visit Toronto, the city in which he was once chief Rabbi, annually. He was once in the Clanton Park Synagogue and stopped into a small celebration which was hosted by a simple Jew named Yankel. Yankel had just completed a Talmudic Tractate. Reb Yaakov wanted to congratulate the young man and took a seat. All of a sudden the Gabai, referring to the celebrant, announced. "and now our good friend Reb Yankel will say the Hadran, the closing paragraph and thus finish the Tractate."

Rav Yaakov, not realizing that the Gabbai was referring to a man almost 50 years his junior, stood up and apologetically objected; "I did not do the learning, I should not render the closing ceremony."

Though he was the oldest and one of the most revered sages of our generation, Rav Yaakov, in his immense humility, still responded when he thought he heard himself addressed as Reb Yankel, a name affectionately used for a younger, unscholarly man.

Moshe understood that his level of prophecy was heightened, but not in his own right. As far as Moshe was concerned, his revelation should have been on a minor level -- equal to that of a Bilaam.

He was not recording an untruth when attempting to diminish his own stature.

He understood that a leader is only as great as the nation he leads. The next verse immediately explains the true reason for Moshe's ability to have a truly lofty level of vision: "speak to the people of Israel." Rashi aptly comments, "it is in their merit that I appear to you." Moshe's great humility came from true understanding that there is a symbiotic relationship between leaders and followers. A great leader makes a great nation, but that great nation makes the leader even greater. Good Shabbos!

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In honor of our children Sam & Rebecca by Arnold & Elaine Rotenberg
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"Mordecai Kornfeld <kornfeld@netmedia.co.il>" "Intriguing glimpses into the

The Weekly Internet P * A * R * A * S * H * A - P * A * G * E
by Mordecai Kornfeld kornfeld@netmedia.co.il

This week's Parasha-Page is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather,

after whom I am named, Mordecai ben Elimelech Shmuel Kornfeld, who died in the Holocaust. Hashem Yenakem Damo.

*** Would you like to dedicate a future issue of Parasha-Page and help support its global (literally!) dissemination of Torah? If so, please let me know. Contributions of any amount are also appreciated. Help spread Torah, using the farthest reaching medium in all of history!

Parashat Vayikra, 5756

LESSONS LEARNED FROM A LESSENER LETTER

Hashem called ("Vayikra") to Moshe. Hashem spoke to him from the Ohel Moed [= the Mishkan, or Tabernacle], and asked him to say to the Jewish people the following....

(Vayikra 1:1)

At the beginning of the book of Vayikra, Hashem speaks to Moshe, calling him to enter the Ohel Moed for the first time. According to the Mesorah [= traditional rendering of the Scriptures] some letters of the Torah are written larger or smaller than others (see Parasha-Page, Shemini 5755, section IV). One of the most famous examples of such anomalies is the letter Aleph at the end of the word Vayikra at the beginning of this week's Parasha. This Aleph is written about half its normal size.

Traditionally, just as the words -- and even the letters -- of the Torah are meant to teach us the Divine Will, so too, we can learn from the way that the letters of the Torah appear in the Torah. Every aspect of the Torah is Divinely inspired. What understanding can we glean from the miniaturization of the Aleph of Vayikra? Numerous answers to this question have been suggested throughout the ages. Let us examine some of the answers that have been recorded.

II

Why is the "Aleph" of the word "Vayikra" traditionally written smaller than the other letters of the Sefer Torah? In order to show that although Hashem Himself called to Moshe, and although He showed Moshe tremendous respect by constantly speaking to him, even so, Moshe constantly "lessened" himself before Hashem and before the Bnai Yisrael.

(The Tosafists, in Pane'ach Raza to Vayikra 1:1 -- see also Tosafot HaRosh ibid.)

The Torah means to hint at Moshe's characteristic modesty by spelling the word "Vayikra" with a small Aleph. Why did the Torah hint at Moshe's modesty in this particular word? Apparently, Moshe's expressed great modesty at this point. In what way was Moshe's modesty expressed in this instance?

Raza D'Meir (a commentary on the Pane'ach Raza) offers a suggestion based on a Midrash. The Midrash tells us:

Lower yourself below your place until you are requested to rise to your proper status, rather than rising before you are called, lest you be told to lower yourself.... We find that Moshe.... at the Ohel Moed, stood at the side until Hashem said to him, "Why do you continue to lower yourself? It is your turn to rise now!"

(Vayikra Rabba 1:5)

According to this Midrash, the reason Hashem had to *call* to Moshe was that Moshe humbly waited to be called before entering the Ohel Moed. It is therefore appropriate for the Torah to hint at Moshe's unrelenting modesty through one of the letters of the word "Vayikra" (= Hashem *called*).

We may add to this that, as we have shown on other occasions (Parasha-Page Chayei Sarah 5756), when tradition dictates the variant spelling of a word in the Torah, both the *word* and the *letter* that as

changed have lessons to teach us. In the example of Vayikra, we have explained why a part of the *word* Vayikra was written in miniature. It remains to be explained, however, why specifically the Aleph of Vayikra was minimized. Perhaps Aleph, the letter in the Hebrew alphabet with the lowest numerical value, holds a connotation of humility. Minimizing it therefore symbolizes the epitome of humility, and as the verse states, "Moshe was more humble than any man who ever lived." (Bemidbar 12:3)

II

Rav Yaakov ba'al HaTurim [= author of the Tur, ~15th cent. Spain] offers another explanation for the small Aleph.

Moshe wanted to write "Vayikar" in the Torah (which is spelled the same as "Vayikra," but lacks the concluding Aleph), the word used to describe the manner in which Hashem appeared to the gentile prophet Bilaam (Bemidbar 23:4). Moshe meant to say that Hashem appeared to him only by happenstance ("Kara Mikreh" -- see Rashi, Vayikra 1:1). However, Hashem insisted that he write the "Aleph" (making it "Vayikra"). Moshe wrote it, but made it smaller than usual [-that was his compromise].

(Ba'al HaTurim loc. cit. -- see also the words of his father, the Rosh, ibid., which apparently serve as a source for the words of the Ba'al HaTurim.)

It is clear, according to Ba'al HaTurim, why specifically the Aleph was minimized. The letter Aleph defines the difference between Vayikra and Vayikar. We may add, that it is not by chance that it is the letter Aleph that makes Vayikar into Vayikra. As we once pointed out (see Parasha-Page, Chayei Sarah 5756, section II), the letter Aleph hints at Hashem, the "Aluf" [= chief] of the world. It is the degree to which the Divine Presence of Hashem rests upon the prophet that makes Vayikar into Vayikra.

III

According to the two approaches that we have seen so far (Pane'ach Raza; Ba'al HaTurim), we learn from the small Aleph the extent of Moshe's modesty. Earlier, Midrashic sources, however, seem to learn from the small Aleph Moshe's shortcomings.

The Aleph of Vayikra is small... to denote the difference between the way Hashem calls the angels and the way Hashem called Moshe.

(Midrash Otivot Ketanot, -- which is attributed to Rebbi Akiva, of Mishnaic fame)

The Midrash tells us that the Aleph of Vayikra is smaller than usual in order to show that a man of flesh and blood cannot possibly witness the presence of Hashem to the same extent as the angels.

In a similar vein, the Midrash HaZohar learns from the small Aleph that Hashem didn't reveal Himself to Moshe in His full glory. Why was that? Because He appeared to Moshe only in the Mishkan (as opposed to the Holy Temple) and in a foreign land (as opposed to in Eretz Yisrael). (Zohar 1:239a)

Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai, in "Chomat Anach," quotes a similar explanation from the school of the great Kabbalist of Safed (~1500), Rav Yitzchak Luria, the Arizal. The Arizal cites a Gemara (Rosh Hashana 21a) that tells us there are 50 "gates to understanding" [= levels of appreciating G-d's truth] in the world -- and Moshe attained all but one of them. This is the meaning of the small Aleph. Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, has a numerical value of one. One, -- that is, one gate to understanding -- was still lacking in Moshe.

These Kabbalistic approaches would seem to clearly contrast the first two approaches (Pane'ach Raza; Ba'al HaTurim). While the first two explanations used the small Aleph to underline Moshe's humility, the approaches of the Kabbalists seem to learn from the small Aleph Moshe's shortcomings as a prophet. A friend of mine, however, Harav Arye Leib

Reich of Jerusalem, suggested another understanding of the Kabbalistic approach which actually complements the words of the Pane'ach Raza and Ba'al HaTurim.

IV

If Moshe did not "open" one of the 50 gates to understanding, why should the Aleph be minimized? It ought to be left out altogether! (See Chomat Anach, *ibid.*)

The Divrei Yechezkel (Rav Yechezkel of Shinov) suggests a novel explanation for the Gemara in Rosh Hashana that discusses the 50 gates to understanding, which may be used to answer this question. An oft-quoted phrase of the ancients goes, "Who is a wise man? One who knows that he really knows nothing!" This is certainly true of the 50th gate to understanding Hashem. It is inconceivable for a man of flesh and blood to conceptualize the being of his Creator. Man acquires the greatest appreciation he can have for his Creator, when he fully understands the reason that His ways are unimaginably distant from our comprehension. *This* is the 50th gate to understanding. And this, too, was "revealed -- in its full enigma -- to Moshe. The Gemara should be read, says Rav Yechezkel of Shinov, "There are 50 gates to understanding in the world, and *all* of them -- without exception -- were revealed to Moshe. Even the 50th gate, which represents the lack of understanding, or the realization that one really *cannot* understand the Creator, was attained by Moshe. Because Moshe lacked it -- he truly attained it." In short, not understanding Hashem *is* the ultimate level of understanding.

We may apply the same thought, said Rav Reich, to the small Aleph of Vayikra. As we saw in the first two explanations, the small Aleph demonstrates Moshe's humility. It shows that Moshe did not consider himself properly prepared to receive the Divine Word. Moshe understood that he really did *not* fully appreciate how man can relate to the Divine Presence. He felt that he completely lacked the 50th level of understanding. And that, actually, is the greatest proof that he *did* acquire the highest level of understanding humanly possible. This is why the Aleph -- representing Hashem, or the 50th gate to understanding, as Chomat Anach pointed out -- *is* written in the word Vayikra. It was specifically *because* Moshe felt that the Aleph should be left out, that the Aleph was indeed written. The minimized Aleph thus speaks for itself, testifying to the fact that Moshe had reached the ultimate in spiritual heights!

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Torah Studies

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by Rabbi Dr. Jonath an Sacks

Chief Rabbi of Great Britain

Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion

The Sidra of Vayikra is about sacrifice: The offerings that were made in the Sanctuary, and the procedure that surrounded them. What does it mean to us today, when there is no Temple?

Two Temples were destroyed. But many millions were not, and could not be. These are the temples which every Jew possesses within himself, the holy place of the soul where his worship of G-d takes place.

Judaism is invulnerable, because it has as many Sanctuaries as there are Jews.

But what is the service of this inner sanctum? The answer lies in this week's Sidra, where every instruction has a double significance:

Firstly, to guide the priests in their service, and secondly, to guide us in ours. The private Sanctuary of the present is a precise counterpart of the public Sanctuary of the past.

The Rebbe takes us through the act of sacrifice, translating the priestly procedure into terms of immediate bearing on our spiritual life. It is a classic example of the power of Chassidut to transform our understanding of "neglected" parts of the Torah into exact and striking pictures of the path of religious experience.

"AN OFFERING OF YOU"

At the beginning of the Sidra of Vayikra (the Sidra about the sacrifices), the Torah says, "If any man brings an offering of you to the L-rd."

At first glance we would suppose that the phrase "of you" refers to "any man," thus: "If any man of you brings an offering. . . ." But the order of words in the Torah rules this out. The Torah is precise in every detail. An apparently misplaced word has great significance. The sentence must read, "If any man brings an offering of you . . .," and the implication is that the sacrifice must be of yourself. What does this mean?

This well-known Chassidic interpretation understands the phrase to be a commentary on the whole nature of sacrifice.

When G-d commanded the Israelites to build Him a Sanctuary. He said: "And they shall make Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell in them." It was not simply in it that He would dwell, but in every Jew. Each Jew had, as it were, a Sanctuary within himself. And every act, every facet of the physical Sanctuary, had its counterpart in the sanctuary of the soul.

So there is an inward act of sacrifice in the life of the Jew that precisely mirrors the outward act that took place in the Sanctuary.

Even that outward act - though it involved the sacrifice of a physical animal - was essentially a spiritual one. This is why it needed the participation of the priests (kohanim) and the accompaniment of the songs of the Levites.

The Zohar says that "the Cohanim in their silent service and their desire drew (G-d's presence) downwards and the Levites in their songs and praises drew (man's soul and his sacrifice) upwards." The physical sacrifice was thus a spiritual encounter.

So, indeed more so, is the inward act of sacrifice. And this is the meaning of "If any man brings an offering of you. . . ." "Offering" in Hebrew means "drawing near." And when a Jew wishes to draw near to G-d he must make a sacrifice to G-d of his very self. The offering must be "of you." It is the "you" that is the sacrifice.

The Animal

The sentence continues: ". . . You shall bring your offering from the cattle, the herd and the flock."

Thus there are two sacrifices in the sanctuary of the soul. The first is "of you," of yourself, your "G-dly soul." The second is "from the cattle," from the "animal soul" which constitutes all physical desires, all instincts which a man has in virtue of having a body and being part of the natural world. It is this second offering which is the ultimate aim of sacrifice: The sanctification and redirection of the "animal" in man.

That this is the aim is suggested in the verse itself, and what follows.

The offering "of you" is described as being made "to the L-rd." But in the next verse it says that the offering "of the herd" shall be "before the L-rd," meaning that it will reach a higher level than "the L-rd," the four-lettered name of G-d.

It is written, "There is much increase by the strength of the ox."

When the animal in man is harnessed in the service of G-d it has the power to take him closer to G-d than his G-dly soul alone could reach.

Bringing the "you," the G-dly soul, as a sacrifice brings man only "to the L-rd," to the level signified by the four-lettered name. This is in itself a supernatural experience, but not yet an experience of G-d as He is in Himself, beyond time and change.

Whereas the sanctification of the "animal soul" brings an experience of G-d in His absolute transcendence: "When the 'other side' (the natural instincts) is subdued, the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, is revealed throughout all worlds."

The Search

When an animal was to be sacrificed on the altar, the first thing that had to be done was to see that it was whole, perfect, without blemish. Only then could it be offered. So it is in the "drawing near" of man. The "animal" within himself must be without blemish before it can be sacrificed. The first step is self-examination. He must search the recesses of his soul for faults - rifts in the unity of his being. And having found them, he must set them right.

The search must be sincere, not done out of a mechanical sense of duty. For his whole spiritual integrity depends on it. Once he realizes what is at stake, he will not cover his faults in self-deception, or leave them to fester, uncured.

THE PRESSURE OF THE PAST

When a man begins this process of self-searching in earnest, it can often happen that even though he is not currently guilty of any sin, there rise to the surface of his memory all the failings and indiscretions of his past, even of his childhood, until he can say, "My sin is continually before me." They persist because they have not been completely set right.

Had they been rectified by his subsequent service they would have been effaced, and replaced by great enthusiasm in Divine Service. For when a man has been through the "dry land of the shadow of death" which comes upon him in the moment of separation from G-d through sin, his desire to be reunited with G-d flares into the fervor of "repentance through great love" which turns "intentional sins into merits."

But this self-examination tells him that it is not so with him.

His sins remain as sins in his memory. He has not passed through the transforming fire of love. Sin breeds sin in its chain, and even now he sometimes feels the pressure of wayward desires.

It is not as if his repentance for the past needs only a final touch to complete it, but rather as if it never succeeded in breaking down the barrier between himself and G-d that his past acts had created. But this may give him pause. He is coming in front of G-d in an act of sacrifice, of "drawing near" with all his being, to be drawn into the Divine fire which is to carry him upwards to the essence of G-d.

And he may say: What am I to be worthy of the act? I am imperfect. I am full of faults. The thing is beyond me!

The previous Lubavitcher Rebbe answered: the sacrifice is not only of "you"; it depends on "you." It is within the scope of every Jew, whatever his present and whatever his past. So that every Jew has the right to ask himself, "When will my acts be like the acts of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?"

THE FIRE

Once the animal has been examined, and found to be without blemish, it must be killed. That is, one does not destroy its body, merely takes away its life. Then it is offered on the altar, where it is consumed (in some cases, only the fat, in others the whole animal) by fire sent from above by G-d.

This is the procedure for physical sacrifices in the Sanctuary, and

it applies also to the inward sacrifice within the Jewish personality.

After one has set right the faults or blemishes in one's way of life, the "animal" must be killed. The life must be taken from one's instinctual, physical drives. Their energy must be redirected.

The "body," that is, the physical acts, remain. But their motive is now wholly spiritual, to give strength to the life of Divine Service.

Thus in the Talmud, Rava said: "Wine and odorous spices made me wise." To do this is to arrive at the stage of "In all your ways, know Him," where every act is for the sake of holiness, until every act becomes itself holy. This is the case, for example, on Shabbat when eating and drinking are not simply a means to the sanctification of the day, but are themselves commanded as part of that sanctity; physical wool in Tzitzit; physical leather in Tefillin; and so can every act be sanctified to this degree.

Then comes the moment of "drawing near." The body, the "animal soul" are drawn into the fire of the soul, the fire that is the love of G-d: "Its flames are flames of fire, the flame of G-d."

The love that the Rabbis say is like "the fire of heaven" turns the animal force into molten energy that is reshaped as love of G-d.

"And you shall love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart." The Rabbis asked, what is "with all your heart?" And they answered, "with your two inclinations." When the power and passion of natural man is harnessed to the love of G-d of spiritual man, the fire within the Jew merges with the answering fire of heaven, and man and G-d "draw near."

(Source: Likkutei Sichot, Vol. I, pp. 205-208)

"Menachem Leibtag <ml@etzion.org.il>" " Chumash shiur...
PARSHAT HASHAVUA SEFER VAYIKRA / INTRODUCTION
by Menachem Leibtag

Is Sefer Vayikra boring? Unfortunately, most students would answer yes. Most teachers are 'saved' by Parshat Kdoshim.

In the following shiurim, we will demonstrate that learning Sefer Vayikra can actually be quite exciting. As usual, our approach will entail examining the Sefer's structure in order to find its deeper meaning.

[Note: to clarify the two possible uses of the word 'parsha' we use the following convention:

- * Parsha - with a capital 'P' - refers to Parshat Ha'Shavuah.
- * parsha - with a small 'p' refers to the basic unit of Chumash. A 'parsha' (sort of a paragraph) in Chumash is delineated by either a wide space in the middle of a line ("parsha stumah") or a wide space until the end of a line ("parsha ptucha").]

THE STRUCTURE OF VAYIKRA - CHRONOLOGICAL OR THEMATIC

To better appreciate Sefer Vayikra it is important to understand its structure.

In contrast with the other books of Chumash, Sefer Vayikra is organized THEMATICALLY rather than chronologically. Let's explain:

All the other books of Chumash are 'narrative based', i.e. they present an ongoing story which follows chronological order. Each "sefer" (book) opens with a certain story that continues throughout. Of course, each sefer also includes many mitzvot, however, the mitzvot are presented as an integral part of the ongoing narrative.

For example, Sefer Breishit begins with the story of Creation and continues in chronological order with the story of

the 'bchira' of Avraham Avinu etc.. The few mitzvot found in Sefer Breishit (e.g. 9:1-7, 32:32) are presented as an integral part of that ongoing story.

Likewise, Sefer Shmot begins with the story of the Exodus and the subsequent journey of Bnei Yisrael to Har Sinai. The numerous mitzvot included in Sefer Shmot (e.g. the Dibrot, Parshat Mishpatim, etc.) are presented as an integral part of the ongoing narrative. [Parshiot Trumah-Tzaveh may be an exception, as discussed in the shiur on Trumah, but in any case, those mitzvot must be recorded in order to understand Vayakhel-Pkudei which is definitely a narrative.]

In these books, if a certain parsha is not in its chronological order, it is the exception rather than the norm.

Sefer Vayikra is radically different! It is a book of MITZVOT. It does not begin with a story that continues throughout the sefer, rather, it is comprised of a collection of mitzvot organized by TOPIC. Therefore, the progression of the mitzvot in Sefer Vayikra is dictated by their thematic connection, and not by the chronological order in which they were originally given to Moshe Rabeinu.

[Chazal's reference to Sefer Vayikra as "Torat Kohanim" (the laws for those who officiate in the Mikdash) reflects this understanding.]

Each set of mitzvot is introduced by a short sentence explaining that God commanded these laws to Moshe (e.g. "va'y'daber Hashem el Moshe lay'mor.."); or to Moshe AND Aharon (e.g. 11:1, 13:1). Sometimes, the opening phrase may also tell us WHERE these mitzvot were given: two classic examples-

1) In the Ohel Moed - The first pasuk of Vayikra (1:1);

2) On Har Sinai - the first pasuk of Parshat Bhar (25:1).

See also 7:37-38, 16:1, 26:46, and 27:34.

[Precisely when and where the other 'parshiot' recorded in Vayikra were given is a "machloket rishonim" (a dispute among commentators)/ See 25:1 Rashi, Ramban, Ibn Ezra, & Chizkuni.]

In summary, because Sefer Vayikra is a book of mitzvot, there is no reason why its parshiot must follow the chronological order in which they were originally given. Instead, the sefer progresses thematically, regardless of when or where each mitzvah was actually commanded.

For example, it is not surprising that the Sefer opens with mitzvot that were given from the Ohel Moed (chapters 1->5, see 1:1), and continues immediately afterward with mitzvot that were given on Har Sinai (chapter 6->7, see 7:37-38), BEFORE the Mishkan was built. Because the first topic of Sefer Vayikra is korbanot, all of these mitzvot together comprise the unit that details the laws of korbanot. [See shiur or Parshat Tzav.]

Similarly, the final chapters of Sefer Vayikra (25->27) were given to Moshe on Har Sinai (see 25:1, 26:46, 27:34), BEFORE the Mishkan was built, while parshiot in the middle of the sefer, such as laws of Yom Kippur (16:1), were given AFTER the Mishkan was constructed!

Sefer Vayikra, however, does contain two narratives:

- (1) The seven day dedication ceremony of the Mishkan followed by the special korbanot of the 'eighth day', and the death of Nadav and Avihu on that day (8:1-10:20).
- (2) The short story of the "m'kallel" who cursed God and was stoned (24:10-23).

These narratives in Sefer Vayikra are the EXCEPTION rather than the norm. In our shiurim, therefore, we must explain why

they are included, EVEN THOUGH they actually 'belong' elsewhere. For example, the story of the dedication of the Mishkan was already detailed in the last chapter of Sefer Shmot. Hence, the story of the seven day "miluim" ceremony actually 'belongs' in Shmot 40:15, while the events of the 'eighth day' could have been recorded after Shmot 40:34!

In our shiurim, we will show that these narratives must be included in Sefer Vayikra BECAUSE of their thematic connection to the mitzvot being discussed.

THE THEME OF SEFER VAYIKRA

Based on this introduction, our study of Sefer Vayikra must focus on the theme of its mitzvot and the logic of its progression. We must ask ourselves, for example:

Why does the sefer begin with the laws of korbanot?

Why are the korbanot explained twice (Vayikra AND Tzav)?

Why does the sefer abruptly switch topics in the middle of Acharei Mot? [See 18:-5 / from the Mishkan to "arayot"]

Why is Parshat Kdoshim included?

Why does it conclude with the laws of "shmita and yovel"?

The primary topic of first half of Sefer Vayikra (chapters 1->17) is clearly the laws relating to the function of the Mishkan (e.g. korbanot, who can enter, etc.). This is quite logical, for once the Mishkan has been constructed, as detailed at the conclusion of Sefer Shmot, the laws which govern its daily function must be explained. The second half of Vayikra (chapters 18->27) appears to be a more random collection of mitzvot. In the shiurim on those Parshiot, we will explain (i"yh) their common theme as well as their connection to the first half of the Sefer.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SEFER VAYIKRA

Recall our discussion of the theme of Chumash thus far: According to Sefer Breishit, God intended that the offspring of the forefathers ("zera") will become a great nation that will represent Him in the Promised Land ("aretz"). In Sefer Shmot, God began to fulfill His covenant with the Avot, giving them at Har Sinai the basic laws that establish this special nation. Towards the end of Sefer Shmot, the events surrounding "chet ha'Egel" raised a serious question as to whether this special relationship was possible. The return of the "shchina" to the newly constructed Mishkan, at the center of the camp, indicated that this relationship could continue. Now, Sefer Vayikra must explain the consequences of the presence of the "shchina" in the Mishkan.

From this perspective, Sefer Vayikra serves as the climax of Breishit and Shmot for it defines the technicalities of how Am Yisrael can develop its special relationship with God. Thus, Sefer Vayikra touches on the very nature of man's relationship with God, at both the individual and national level.

OVERVIEW

The return of the shchina to the Ohel Moed, the finale of Sefer Shmot, made it possible for Bnei Yisrael to encounter God in a manner similar to their encounter at Har Sinai. Therefore, Sefer Vayikra contains the specific laws that detail and regulate this encounter.

The first topic of the Sefer is 'korbanot': the primary function of the Mishkan and a vehicle that facilitates the perfection of man's relationship with God. After detailing what

transpired during the dedication ceremony of the Mishkan, including the death of Nadav and Avihu, Sefer Vayikra continues with laws that govern proper entry into the Mishkan, e.g. the type of "tumah" (spiritual uncleanness,) and the procedures necessary for "tahara" (spiritual purification) to facilitate re-entry.

The climax of the first section of Sefer Vayikra is the special 'avoda' performed by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, when he is allowed entry into the Kodesh K'doshim. The second half of the sefer relates to various mitzvot, some relating to other aspects of the Mishkan, and others relating to "kedusha" in general, e.g. "kdoshim ti'hi'yu", "kdushat ha'moadim", "kdushat ha'aterz", etc. In the subsequent shiurim, as we further crystallize the exact theme of Sefer Vayikra, these topics and concepts will be explained in further detail.

Iy"h, the shiur on Parshat Vayikra will be sent out by Thursday evening.
b'hatzlacha, menachem

"Menachem Leibtag <ml@etzion.org.il Chumash shiur...
PARSHAT HASHAVUA
PARSHAT VAYIKRA
by Menachem Leibtag

Despite our daily prayers asking God to speedily rebuild His Temple, we often find trouble identifying with the concept of "korbanot". To modern man, the very idea of 'animal sacrifice' is repulsive; its rites, pagan. This week, we examine the presentation of the korbanot in Parshat Vayikra in search of their Biblical significance. Although our study may not make "korbanot" any more 'attractive', their significance will be better understood.

INTRODUCTION

Why does Sefer Vayikra begin with the laws of korbanot? Recall that Sefer Shmot concluded with the construction of the Mishkan and the dwelling of the "shchina" in it. Now that the 'equipment' has been set up, the 'instruction manual' - Sefer Vayikra - will explain how to use it!

Korbanot are the primary activity that takes place in the Mishkan. Therefore, it is not by chance that Parshat Vayikra - the laws of korbanot - is the very first commandment which God gives Moshe Rabeinu from the Ohel Moed, and the opening Parsha of Sefer Vayikra. [See last week's shiur on Pkuday for a more complete explanation.]

What is a "korban"?

A 'SACRIFICE' OR 'VEHICLE'

The popular translation of "korban" - sacrifice - can be misleading. Today, when we use the word sacrifice, it usually implies giving up something for nothing in return. However, when one brings a korban, he is not just throwing away an animal. The "shoresh" (root) of the word 'korban' is k.r.v., "karov" - to come close. A korban brings the individual CLOSER to God. The animal itself is simply a VEHICLE through which this process is facilitated.

Therefore, korbanot are not merely a technical ritual, they promote the primary PURPOSE of the Mishkan, i.e they serve to enhance man's relationship with God.

To better understand how korbanot achieve this purpose, we must first analyze the structure of the Parsha. [As usual, a careful 'technical' analysis will help us uncover thematic significance.]

We begin our analysis by charting an outline of the entire Parsha. The outline will help us discern the relationship between the various categories of korbanot and their internal order. [Note : Yesterday, we sent out questions for preparation. The following outline 'answers' the first five questions. If you 'didn't do your homework', I suggest that you study the outline carefully before continuing.]

** PARSHAT VAYIKRA - OUTLINE **

GENERAL TITLE: THE KORBAN YACHID [the korban of an individual]

I. KORBAN N'DAVA - A VOLUNTARY OFFERING (chapters 1->3)

A. Olah (the entire korban is burnt on the mizbayach)

1. "bakar" - from cattle
2. "tzon" - from sheep

3. "oa'f" - from fowl

B. Mincha (a flour offering)

1. "solet" - plain flour /with oil and 'I'vonah"
2. "ma'feh tanur" - baked in the oven
3. "al machvat" - on a griddle
4. "marcheshet" - on a pan + misc. general laws
5. "bikurim" - from the first harvest...

C. Shlamim (a peace offering / part is eaten by the owners)

1. "bakar" - from cattle
2. "tzon" - from sheep
3. "ayz" - from goats

[Make note where the phrase: "ishe ray'ach nichoach I'Hashem" was repeated in this section (I).]

f[The "dibur" that began in 1:1 ends here.]

II. KORBAN CHOVAH - A MANDATORY OFFERING (chapters 4->5)

A. CHATAT (4:1 -> 5:13)

1. FOR A GENERAL TRANSGRESSION (organized by person)

- a. "par Kohen mashiach" (High Priest) - a bull
- b. "par he'elem davar" (bet-din) - a bull
- c. "seir Nasi" (a prince) - a male goat
- d. "nefesh" - regular person: a female goat or female lamb

2. FOR CERTAIN SPECIFIC TRANSGRESSIONS ("oleh v'yored")

- A. a rich person - a female goat or lamb
- B. a poor person - two birds
- C. a very poor person - a plain flour offering

f[The "dibur" which began in 4:1 ends here.]

B. ASHAM (5:14 -> 5:26) - animal is always an "ayil" (ram)

1. "asham me'yilot" - taking from Temple property
2. "asham ta'lu'ee" - unsure if he sinned

[Note that another "dibur" begins here!!!]

3. "asham g'zeilot" - STEALING from one's neighbor

[Make note where the phrase: "v'chi'per alav ha'Kohen, v'nislach lo" was repeated in this section (II).]

[At this point Parshat Vayikra ends, Parshat Tzav begins.]

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THE HEADER

From the outline, we see that Parshat Vayikra deals exclusively with the various korbanot which the "yachid" (an individual) can bring, presenting them in a very structured

manner. Hence, we have titled our outline - the "korban yachid". Actually, this title is nothing more than the translation of the 'opening sentence' of the Parsha (1:2):

"ADAM ki yakriv" - ANY PERSON who may bring a KORBAN to God..."

Now we will briefly explain the logic of overall and internal structure of the Parsha.

TWO SECTIONS : N'DAVA & CHOVA

Parshat Vayikra contains TWO distinct sections: The first section, "korban n'dava", describes the various korbanot which the individual CAN bring, should he so desire. The second section, "korban chova", describes the korbanot which the individual MUST bring, should he transgress certain mitzvot.

[Note that this distinction is supported by the beginning of new "dibur" in 4:1. A new "dibur" usually indicates either a new topic or category.]

Why this order? Should not the compulsory precede the optional?

Parshat Vayikra begins with the more ideal situation. The 'korban ndava', which symbolizes one's aspiration to IMPROVE his relationship with God. Afterward comes the 'korban chova', which AMENDS that relationship, should it be tainted by a transgression. [Later in the shiur, we will find additional significance to this order.]

INTERNAL ORDER

This distinction between ""n'dava" and "chova" explains why the internal order of each section is different.

When one offers a "korban n'dava", he can first CHOOSE the TYPE of korban he wishes to offer and then the specific animal. Therefore, this section is organized by 'TYPE'.

One can choose from a menu of three categories: "olah", "mincha", or "shlamim". Under each category, one has several options, e.g. cattle, sheep, or fowl etc.

In contrast, the individual offers a "korban chova" only if a certain EVENT takes place, i.e. if he sins. Therefore, this section is organized by EVENT.

In the EVENT of a general transgression, he MUST bring a "chatat". [His social and financial status determines the specific animal.] In the EVENT of a more specific transgression, as detailed in chapter 5, one MUST bring either a "chatat oleh v'yored" or an "asham".

DETAILS OF THE KORBAN N'DAVA

Once a person decides to bring a voluntary offering, he must not only know WHAT animal to bring, he must also know HOW to bring it. This is why the Parsha instructs the owner HOW he must offer his korban. For example:

Before offering the "korban", the owner must first perform "smichah", i.e. leaning his full weight on the animal (1:4). "Smicha" transfers the owners identity ("zey'hut") to the animal as if he himself is now being offered (see Ramban). One could suggest that this presentation of the animal - as a REPLACEMENT for the owner himself - comes from the paradigm of the AKEYDA. At the Akeyda, Avraham offered a ram as an "OLAH" in place of his son ("tachat bno"/ see Breishit 22:13).

From "olah", we learn the law of "smicha" for all other korbanot.

The Parsha continues by detailing other procedures which follow "smicha"; some which can be performed by owner, others which can be performed ONLY by the Kohen. Even though the owner himself does not perform these procedures, they are detailed in

Parshat Vayikra, for the kohen functions as the "shaliach" (emissary) of the owner.

DETAILS OF THE KORBAN CHOVA

The "chatat kavuah" (the fixed chatat/ 4:1-35), the first category of "korban chova", atones for the transgression of "any of God's mitzvot" (4:2). [Chazal explain that this includes any sin "b'shogeg" (unknowingly) whose punishment would have been "ka'ret" had the sin been committed "b'mayzid" (intentionally)].

The specific animal for this "chatat" is determined by the person's social status. The Kohen Gadol, members of the Sanhedrin, and certain political leaders, bring a different animal than the layman (see outline).

The second type of "chatat", better known as the "oleh v'yored" (5:1-13), atones for certain specific transgressions (see 5:1-4). In these cases, the specific korban is determined by the financial status of the transgressor.

[It is interesting to note that this korban is actually a "chatat" (5:6,10,13) even though the act is referred to as "asham" (5:5). This distinction is clear from the fact that this korban is the same type of animal as the regular "chatat" - a female goat or sheep. Note also where the new "dibur" begins!]

Details of the "asham" are discussed in the Further Iyun section. SIGNIFICANCE / RE-ENACTING HAR SINAI

The deeper meaning of these korbanot, and their connection to Ma'amad Har Sinai, can be found by exploring the source of the two key phrases repeated in Parshat Vayikra:

- 1) "ishe rayach nichoach l'Hashem"
- 2) "v'chi'per a'lav ha'Kohen... v'nislach lo".

(1) BACK TO MA'AMAD HAR SINAI

In our outline, we noted that each category of the "korban n'dava" contains the phrase "ishe ray'ach ni'choach l'Hashem" (a fragrant offering to God). It is always found in the final pasuk of each type of "olah" and "shlamim" (see 1:9,13,17; 3:5,11,16!).

This very same phrase is used to describe the "olat tamid": "OLAT TAMID ha'asu'ya b'HAR SINAI, l'ray'ach ni'choach ishe l'Hashem" (Bamidbar 29:6)

An almost identical pasuk is found at the conclusion of Parshat Tzaveh, before the Torah summarizes the purpose of the Mishkan:

"... OLAT TAMID, ha'asu'ya b'HAR SINAI, l'RAYACH NICHACH ishe l'Hashem..." (Shmot 29:41 / see 29:38-46)

[The "olat tamid" is the daily communal korban offered at the beginning and at the conclusion of the Temple service.]

Are OLAT TAMID, RAY'ACH NI'CHOACH, and HAR SINAI connected?

Was there a "korban olah" offered at Har Sinai?

There sure was!

During the covenantal ceremony at Har Sinai, when Bnei Yisrael proclaimed "na'aseh v'nishma", Bnei Yisrael offered both "olat" AND "shlamim" (see Shmot 24:3-11). The "olat tamid" brought daily in the Mishkan re-enacts that event; it perpetuates Ma'amad Har Sinai!

Furthermore, this ceremony at Har Sinai is the FIRST time in Chumash that we find a "korban shlamim"!

"Shlamim" are unique in the fact that they are eaten by the owner. When one offers a "shlamim", it is as though he partakes in a joint feast with God. In certain aspects, it reflects an even CLOSER relationship with God ["ahava"] than the "olah" ["yirah"].

A "shlamim" is also called a "zevach" (Vayikra 3:1, see also 7:11). The word "zevach" relates to feast, usually made when two parties join together and make a covenant. After a covenantal agreement between two parties, a common feast usually follows the ceremony (e.g. state dinners, weddings etc.). [For example, at the end of Parshat Vayetze, the Torah refers to the feast made by Lavan and Yaakov, after they make an COVENANT ("brit"), as a "zevach" (see Br. 31:44-54).]

One could suggest that offering an "olah" or "shlamim" constitutes a re-affirmation of the covenant of "na'aseh v'nishma" - the very basis of our relationship with God - the covenant which brings us CLOSER to Him.

Thus, the "olah" and "shlamim" create a "ray'ach nichoach", and re-enact the atmosphere created by the ceremonial feast at Har Sinai. Just as the nation confirms its commitment to "brit Sinai" by offering the daily "olat tamid", an individual can confirm his personal acceptance of "brit Sinai" by offering the "korban n'dava".

(2) BACK TO CHET HA'EGEL

In contrast to the 'refrain' of "ishe ray'ach nichoach" concluding each 'korban ndava', each 'korban chova' concludes with the phrase "v'chi'per a'lav ha'Kohen... v'nislach lo".

Once again, we find a striking parallel to the events that took place at Har Sinai.

Recall our explanation that Aharon's actions at Chet ha'Egel were an act of good intention which led to disastrous results. With the "shchina" present, any transgression, even UNINTENTIONAL, can invoke immediate punishment. However, God's attributes of Mercy, the essence of the "second luchot", allow man a 'second chance' - to prove to God that he is indeed sincere and will be 'more careful' next time.

Moshe Rabeinu, when he ascends Har Sinai to seek repentance for Chet ha'Egel, tells the people:

"Atem CHA'TATEM CHA'TA'AH g'dolah [You have transgressed a terrible sin], maybe - ACHAPRAH b'ad CHA'TATCHEM [I can bring atonement for your sins] (Shmot 32:30, Read also 32:31 -33!)

Later, when Moshe actually receives the thirteen "midot ha'rachamim" on Har Sinai with the second "luchot" (34:-9), he requests atonement for Chet ha'Egel:

"... v'SALACHTA l'avoneinu ul'CHA'TOTEINU..." (34:9)

The key phrase repeated with every "korban chova" - "v'chipper a'lav... v'nislach lo" - relates to this precedent at Har Sinai, when Moshe requests forgiveness for Chet ha'Egel. Thus, the "korban chova" provides the vehicle, by which the individual can ask forgiveness for an unintentional sin, and beseech God to enact his "midot ha'rachamim".

RAMBAN / RASHI

Recall the controversy between Rashi and Ramban as to whether Trumah-Tzaveh was given before or after Chet ha'Egel. [See shiur on Parshat Trumah.]

Ramban emphasizes the Mishkan's function as a perpetuation of Ma'amad Har Sinai. This function is highlighted in the "korban n'dava" - "ishe rayach nichoach l'Hashem".

Rashi explains that the details of the Mishkan reflect its function as an atonement for Chet ha'Egel. This function is highlighted in the "korban chova" - "v'chipper alav m'chatato... v'nislach lo".

T'FILAH K'NEGED KORBANOT

In absence of the Temple, Chazal consider "t'fila" (prayer)

as a 'substitute' for korbanot. Like korbanot, t'fila serves as a vehicle through which man can develop his relationship with God.

As such, what we have learned about korbanot has meaning even today. Individual t'fila should embody BOTH aspects of the "korban yachid": N'DAVA and CHOVA. T'fila should primarily reflect one's aspiration to come closer to God. On the other hand, if one has sinned, T'fila becomes an avenue through which one can amend the tainted relationship.

Finally, t'fila, just as the korbanot of the Mishkan, should be considered as more than just the fulfillment of personal aspiration or obligation. Like the "midot ha'rachamim", t'fila should be considered a unique privilege for God's special nation who accepted the Torah at Har Sinai. Being a privilege, it should be treated as such.

shabbat shalom
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. ASHAM G'ZEILOT (a mini-shiur)

The last category, "korban asham", atones for three general categories of specific sins.

5:14-16 accidental use of 'hekdesheh' - known as "Asham me'ilot";
5:17-19 Unsure if he sinned at all - known as "Asham ta'lui";
5:20-26 Several cases for which one brings an "Asham Vadai".

Even though all three cases require the transgressor to offer an "asham", the final parsha (5:20-26) begins with a new "dibur"! This indicates that there is something unique about this final group. In this group, the transgression is committed "b'MAYZID" (intentionally) and against one's NEIGHBOR, while in the previous cases of "asham", the sin is committed "b'SHOGEG" (unknowingly) and against GOD.

It would be hypocritical for one who sins INTENTIONALLY against God to bring a korban. The "korban chova" is intended for a person who is striving to come closer to God, but has inadvertently sinned. It teaches him to be more careful! Why should the Torah allow one who sins intentionally against God the opportunity to cover his guilt? The Mishkan is an environment where man develops spiritual perfection; not self-deception.

Why then should a korban "asham" be available for one who sinned INTENTIONALLY?

This group, known as an "asham g'zeilot", deals with cases when one steals from his neighbor, and swears falsely that he didn't. Before he can offer the "asham", the transgressor must first repay his neighbor and add a penalty.

Why should a korban be necessary at all? His neighbor was repaid and even received a penalty. Why should God be involved?

The standard explanation is that the sin against God relates to the fact that the transgressor lied under oath. This undoubtedly is the primary reason, however, why is his korban an ASHAM? All other cases of swearing falsely fall under the category of "CHATAT oleh v'yored" (see 5:4)!

A textual parallel points to a more significant answer.

The parsha "asham g'zeilot" opens as follows:

"Adam KI TI'MOL MA'AL b'HASHEM - v'k'ichesh b'AMITO"

[Should a person transgress - "b'me'iy'la" - against GOD, and lie to his NEIGHBOR...etc.] (5:21).

This pasuk defines the transgression against one's NEIGHBOR as "me'ilah b'HASHEM" [taking away something that belongs to

God! This very same phrase was used when describing the first case - "asham me'ilot", i.e. when a person unintentionally steals from "hekdesch" (Temple property / see 5:14-16):

"Nefesh KI TI'MOL MA'AL b'HASHEM - v'chata b'shgaga..."

This textual parallel thematically equates these two types of "asham": unintentionally stealing from "hekdesch"; and intentionally stealing from your neighbor. [Note that both require the return of the principal and "chomesh"].

The Torah treats stealing from a fellow man with stealing from God! From this parallel, the Torah teaches us that unethical behavior towards one's neighbor taints one's relationship with God.

B. Even though "korban mincha" is not mentioned at Har Sinai, it could be considered as subcategory of "olah" for the poor person who can not afford to bring an animal. Note that the "olat oa'f" is connected to "korban mincha" by a 'parsha stumah'. The "olat oa'f" is also for one who can not afford to offer a sheep.

C. The two basic levels of "kedushat korban" explain why the "olah" precedes the "shlamim". The greater the portion offered on the mizbayach, the higher the level of "kedusha":

1) Kodshei Kodshim - the highest level of "kedusha":

OLAH: cattle, sheep, and fowl

The entire "korban olah" is burnt on the MIZBAYACH.

MINCHA: the five various ways to present the fine flour.

The "kmitzah" (a handful) is burnt on the MIZBAYACH;

The "noteret" (what is left over) is eaten by the KOHEN.

2) Kodshim Kalim - a lower level "kedusha"

SHLAMIM: cattle, sheep, and goats.

The fat surrounding the inner organs go on the MIZBAYACH.

The "chazeh v'shok" (breast and thigh) go to the KOHEN.

The remainder of the meat can be eaten by the OWNER.

D. It is difficult to pinpoint the precise difference between the nature of the sin that requires a "chatat" and the nature of the sin which requires an "asham". It seems that "asham" causes a person to be more aware of his surrounding and actions.

For example, if one is not sure whether or not he sinned, his korban ("asham ta'lu'i) is more expensive than had he known precisely what his sin was! The Torah requires that one must be constantly aware of his actions.

"Bircas Hatorah <bircas@jer1.co.il>Weekly Words of Torah from Bircas H...

Parshas VaYikra

Selected, translated and arranged by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz

"And when a man from among you brings a sacrifice ..." (1,2)

The Chasam Sofer points out that the word 'micem' - from among you - seems to be superfluous.

He explains in the light of the commentary of Rash"i that the opening word of our possuk, 'Adam' - a man, can also be understood as referring to Adam, the first man. Just as Adam never brought any sacrifice which was stolen, as the whole world belonged to him, so we too are forbidden to bring a stolen animal as a sacrifice.

The possuk is hinting that if a person wants to fulfill a mitzvah as Adam did,

totally free of any admixture of anything stolen, he must bring it literally from himself, - 'mikem' - from his own body. It must be a mitzvah which is

performed with his own body, for in this there is certainly nothing stolen.

"If his sacrifice is a burnt offering, he shall bring it from the cattle, a male, unblemished" (1,3)

The Tiferes Yehonasan (Eibeshitz) explains that the root of the word bakkar - cattle - also has a verb form which means investigate, and that is what this

possuk is intimating. For a person who brings a sacrifice has to examine and investigate HaShem's exalted attributes, and he must crave to understand the ways of HaShem, as it is impossible to come to the ultimate Truth without them. Thus the Torah uses the word bakkar - cattle, to refer to this investigation.

"And he shall slaughter it on the north side of the alter, before HaShem" (1,11) The Chidushei HaRi"m observes that the essence of bringing a sacrifice is that the person should have the desire to offer himself as an offering to HaShem. This aspiration is sublimated to the offering of the animal.

This is hinted in our possuk: "he shall slaughter it" this refers to the sheep or goat which the possuk is detailing; but it must be tsafona (literally northwards, but the same root also means internal or hidden) - his heart must be directed towards HaShem.

Project Genesis <genesis@j51.com>" Project Genesis LifeLine <... PG LifeLine - Vayikra

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D'var Torah and News from Project Genesis - learn@torah.org - www.torah.org
Volume III, Number 25 - Parshas Vayikra

Please pray for the speedy healing of Esther Miriam bat Aliza Geula, Sarit bat Esther, Sara Shifra bat Devorah, Yitzchak ben Tziviva, Netanel ben Chaya, Devorah Esther bat Miriam, Shulamit Ariella bat Sara Imeinu, Reuvain ben Fayga, Laibel ben Chaya, and Tzvi Yehuda ben Chaya Esther.

Mazel Tov to our subscriber David Marne (and his wife) on the birth of a boy, Yonah (Halevi), on Wednesday morning (2 a.m.)!

"... and the priest shall offer it in its entirety upon the altar, an elevation-offering, by fire, for a 'pleasing scent' to G-d." ?1:9X

The Chidushei HaRim offers an understanding of the sacrifice as a 'pleasing scent' to G-d. He explains that a "Reyach," or scent, is something that is recognized or detected far away. Thus anything that one can sense or feel from far off is called a "Reyach."

A sacrifice must serve as a messenger of good, meaning that through the sacrifice one can immediately sense that good deeds will be done henceforth by the one giving the offering. This, says the Chidushei HaRim, is the main purpose of a sacrifice - that repentance bring the person to better actions in the future. Without that, HaShem, blessed be He, has already said, "Why do I need all your sacrifices?" ?Isaiah IX It is the early indication of future deeds that makes a sacrifice a "pleasing scent."

Today, our prayers serve in place of sacrifices. These too must bring us to repentance and prod us to do better actions in the future. Every one of us (save angels and those who have never been to synagogue) has gone to synagogue and said the words, but has not really gained from the experience. "Dry ritual" is not sufficient! Every prayer is an opportunity for growth,

one that will indicate "good deeds to follow." Let's not miss that opportunity!

THANK YOU: You "made the match!" We received pledges totaling over \$5000, and have now also received a matching contribution of \$5000 for our Internet server. We hope to have our new server and site on-line within the next few months; see further lifeline messages for details...

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Good Shabbos, Rabbi Yaakov Menken

"Dovid Green <dmgreen@skynet.net>" "Dvar Torah <dvar Torah@torah.org>" Parshas VaYikra

The very first word in this week's parsha is unusual. The letter "aleph" at the end of the word "VaYikra" is written smaller than the rest of the letters in the word. This is the prescribed way for the Torah to be written, and it has been done so since the very first Torah scroll. What is the reason for this, and how does it apply to us?

When Moshe was writing this word for the first time, he did not want to write the "aleph" at all. He wanted the word to read "VaYikar" and He (G-d) chanced upon Moshe, so as not to imply that G-d specially called Moshe. That would imply that Moshe was very special. Moshe wanted to avoid that. However, G-d told Moshe that he should write the "aleph". Still, instead of writing it the same size, he would write it smaller to imply that he really wasn't worthy of the great honor that G-d should call to him.

In another place the Torah praises Moshe saying: "and the man Moshe is exceedingly humble, more than any (other) man. Didn't Moshe also write this? Didn't Moshe also know that he was the only one with whom G-d had such a relationship? How could Moshe be humble knowing all too well that he was so special?

The answer is as follows. One can be very great comparatively speaking, and still be falling way short of one's potential. One who is humble does not view himself in comparison to others, rather in terms of how he is living up to his own potential. In terms of that, Moshe did not feel that he was more worthy than others.

Humility is considered the most elevated of good character traits. Through humility one can control anger, tolerate pain, and find the good in others.

A story is told of a man who came to his teacher with a question. "Our sages tell us" said the man, "that he who runs away from honor, honor runs after him." "I am constantly running away from honor, and it never runs after me." "I suspect that when you are running away you are looking back to see if honor is truly running after you." "There is no bigger pursuer of honor than that." replied the teacher.

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"kollel@mcs.com" haftorah@torah.org"
Haftorah for Vayikra

MESSAGE FROM THE HAFTORAH: PARSHAS VAYIKRA
Yeshaya 43:21 Rabbi Dovid Siegel, Kollel Toras Chesed of Skokie, IL.

This week's haftorah displays Hashem's unbelievable compassion for the Jewish people. The prophet Yeshaya begins by characterizing the Jewish people as the nation created to sing the praises of Hashem. Yeshaya continues and says in the name of Hashem, (43:22) "And you didn't even include Me for you were too tired for My service." The Yalkut Shimoni (as loc) explains this

passage to refer to our inappropriate attitude towards the service of Hashem.

Chazal (our Sages) say that one exerts enormous energies throughout the day

in pursuit of self advancement and yet he is unwilling to exert even minimal energy for the sake of Hashem. One returns home after a long tiresome day at work and neglects attending davening with the "valid" excuse that he's too tired. Hashem says that I wasn't even included in your plans. Energies were available for everything besides My service, the purpose for which you were created.

The prophet continues to reprimand the Jewish people, and says, "You did not bring Me your sheep for burnt offerings and you didn't honor Me with your sacrifices. I didn't overwork you with a meal offering and didn't exhaust you with frankincense spice." Chazal (ibid) elaborated on this passage and explained that all Hashem ever demanded from the Jewish people on a daily basis was the Tamid sacrifice consisting of two sheep. In fact, even the easiest of all offerings, the meal offering was not an obligation but rather a special opportunity to serve Hashem if one so desired. And yet the Jewish people refused to participate in these services. The Radak (ad loc) notes that in the days of King Achaz there were altars in every corner of Yerushalayim for the purpose of idolatry. But the Bais Hamikdash doors were intentionally closed and Hashem was totally excluded from the Jewish services. The Jews were just too tired to serve Hashem although energy was available for every other form of service.

The prophet suddenly shifts gears and begins to address the Jewish people with love and affection. He says, (42:1) "And listen now, My servant Yaakov whom I chose as Yisroel...for as I pour water on the thirsty and flowing waters on the dry land so will I pour My spirit on your children and My blessing on your offspring." Radak (ad loc) explains that the prophet is now speaking to the Jewish people in Babylonia. They had already suffered severe pains of exile and rejection by Hashem and had now reconsidered their previous ways. They thirsted to drink from the long lost waters of prophecy which had ended many years before. Hashem told them that they would once again merit the word of Hashem. Although they had turned their back to Hashem and totally rejected His service Hashem did not forsake His people. The Jewish people would always remain His chosen nation and Hashem would patiently await their return. Our eternal relationship with Hashem can never be severed or even affected and when the proper moment will arrive Hashem will reestablish direct contact with His beloved people. Even words of prophecy coming directly from Hashem will become a daily experience. Hashem's love for His people extends all bounds. Even after all we have done against Hashem He remains right there waiting for us.

Yeshaya concludes and says (44:22) "As the wind blows away the clouds so will I erase your rebellious acts and unintentional sins, return to me for I have redeemed you." The Malbim (ad loc) shares with us a beautiful insight

and explains that as far as Hashem is concerned our redemption already happened. From His perspective everything has been set in motion; all that remains is for us to repent and return. May we merit in this month, the month

of redemption, the fulfillment of these beautiful visions.

"Seth Ness <ness@aecom.yu.edu>"" Yeshiva University's weekly devar Tor...

Enayim L'Torah

Parshat Vayikra

Publication of Student Organization of Yeshiva University

False Oaths: Resolution and Expiation

by Rabbi Shalom Carmy

The penalty of a false sh'vuat haeidut, swearing falsely by pleading ignorance of testimony, differs from other transgressions requiring chat'at oleh v'yoreid sacrifices, the sin offering engendered by sh'vuat haeidut applies even when the transgression was meizid (deliberate). However, violating a sh'vuat bituy, by uttering a false oath about the past or failing to fulfill an oath regarding the future, requires a sacrifice only when the offense is shogeig (unintentional). An offering atones for sins. Thus, it seems that sh'vuat haeidut is treated more leniently than sh'vuat bituy. Why? Would we not expect sh'cuat haeidut, which not only uses God's Name improperly, but also harms one's fellow man, depriving him of testimony in support of his case, to be a more severe sin than sh'vuat bituy, which does not cause damage to others?

The Chinuch emphasizes that the Torah regards sh'vuat haeidut as a grave sin, and offers two explanations for the leniency accorded the offender:

Reporting one's testimony requires observation and attention, and lax witnesses are unlikely to expend the effort to straighten out their recollection: the negligence is deliberate, but characterized by a vagueness that blurs the line between intentional deception and guilty befuddlement. Second, some people feel that swearing falsely about testimony does not actually harm the victim, as they are not directly embezzling from him. For these reasons, the Torah enables the sinner to atone for his oath by bringing a chat'at oleh v'yoreid sacrifice even in the meizid case.

Later in the parasha, we learn that sh'vuat hapikadon, swearing falsely that one is not in possession of another's property, can also be atoned for, even in the meizid case, by bringing an asham sacrifice, in addition to the monetary penalties.

Upon first reflection, sh'vuat hapikadon is a more severe transgression than sh'vuat haeidut. The sinner is directly connected to the act of theft, and cannot feign indifference to the consequences of his malfeasance. If this is indeed the case, what are the implications for our previous analysis?

The answer depends, in part, on the status of the asham. The RaMBa"N explains that the term asham is derived from sh'mama (desolation). Moreover, he observes that the cost of most ashamot, including that of sh'vuat hapikadon, is set at stei s'laim, the greater expense denotes a greater gravity in the offense. The RaMBa"N's equation of asham with desolation fits, in my opinion, the nature of the sins for which the more costly asham is

prescribed. All entail the forcible violation of person and/or property. Crimes of violence undermine the very existence of society. Therefore, they are appropriately described as desolating the world, and require a more substantial atonement.

The RaLBa"G, however, regards the asham as a less weighty sacrifice than the chat'at. The former (in the case of the asham taluy) is offered when it is not certain if the unintentional offense that would obligate one to offer the chat'at has occurred. Furthermore, the chat'at is offered for unintentional offenses where the intentional transgression would constitute a capital crime. Thus, the chat'at is the more efficacious offering. Sh'vuat hapikadon can be expiated by the asham because the motivation for swearing falsely to deny a debt is nothing but simple avarice. Sh'vuat haeidut, too, concerns money, but it requires the greater atonement of the chat'at because the sinner cannot excuse his action as the product of his greed. However, one cannot bring any sacrifice for atonement in a case of deliberate transgression of sh'vuat bituy. Normally one undertakes sh'vuat bituy as part of his service to God, and for this reason the Torah permits expiation through sacrifice only when the transgression is unintentional; the meizid, however, requires corporal punishment. The RaLBa"G's position is consistent with his general view that the Torah is primarily directed to man's spiritual perfection, and that unresolved social grievances interfere with concentration on the higher goal. Thus, the Torah allows man to atone with a sacrifice in all cases of sh'vuat haeidut and sh'vuat hapikadon in order to attain closure in these matters.

The RaMBa"N's view, based on the etymology of the word asham, is clearly supported by that sacrifice's relative cost. The RaLBa"G's approach coheres well with the fact that sacrifices atone for the meizid only with respect to transgressions that primarily offend against other human beings. [Lack of space prevents us from explaining how the RaMBa"N justifies the role of asham taluy, but see also Rabbeinu Yona, beginning of Berachot, and RaM"A Orach Chayim 603.] Is it possible to formulate an analysis that combines the apparently conflicting insights of the RaMBa"N and the RaLBa"G?

The key to our synthesis is the RaLBa"G's fear that unresolved injustice prevents the individual from attaining spiritual fulfillment. The urgency of achieving resolution, according to the RaLBa"G, is at the root of two leniencies: prescribing the asham, which is the "inferior" sacrifice, and providing atonement for meizid as well. The RaMBa"N, who insists on the weightiness of the asham, must nevertheless concede that expiation is possible for meizid in the cases of sh'vuat haeidut and sh'vuat hapikadon, among others.

To incorporate both outlooks within the same theory we must add one thesis: resolution of the crisis brought about by oppression and violence requires expiation that is (1) visible and (2) substantial. Leaving the sinner's punishment to Heaven is inadequate, because unseen expiation does not restore the social balance that has been violated. The Torah therefore provides the opportunity, within the compulsory framework of sacrifices, for the public resolution of the offense against God and against one's neighbor. In a sense this is a leniency, insofar as the prescribed offering (combined with whatever monetary penalties pertain) closes the books on the transgression, as it were. At the same time, in line with the RaMBa"N's remarks, the penalty for sh'vuat hapikadon must be substantial: the extenuations given by the

Chinuch in the case of sh'vuat haeidut do not apply. The asham serves to resolve the conflict and resentment precisely because it is expensive and thus substantial enough to convey the gravity of the offense and the solemnity of the atonement.
(My thanks to Rabbi Yitzchak Blau, Dovid Gottlieb and especially Rabbi David Horowitz who offered helpful comments on my initial formulation of these ideas.)

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