

# STOLEN OFFERINGS

*by Shlomo Katz*

## **Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz**

### **Vayikra:**

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#### Today's Learning:

Nedarim 7:2-3

Orach Chaim 405:3-5

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Gittin 52

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Sanhedrin 43

With this week's parashah, we begin to learn the laws of the korbanot / sacrificial offerings. We read (1:2): "When adam / a man among you brings an offering to Hashem . . ." Why does the Torah refer to the person bringing the sacrifice as "adam," and not by the more common word for man, "ish"? Rashi explains: Just as Adam, the first man, did not bring a sacrifice from that which was stolen (for everything belonged to him), so you should not bring a sacrifice that was stolen.

R' Yaakov Yehuda Tennenbaum z"l ("Nadorozhiner Rebbe"; died 1885) gives Rashi's words a deeper explanation: When a person enters the service of Hashem, he must give of his own unique powers. A person must meditate regarding his own nature, and not simply mimic what he sees his friend doing. One who copies his friend's mode of serving Hashem is called a "thief." Similarly, young men who mimic their teachers or rebbes are "thieves."

This is what Rashi means when he says that Adam did not bring an offering from theft, for everything

was his. Adam had no one to mimic. You, too, says Rashi, should not bring an offering from theft. (Quoted in Otzrot Tzaddikei U'geonei Ha'dorot)

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*"He called to Moshe, and Hashem spoke to him from the Ohel Mo'ed / Tent of Meeting, laimor / to say:" (1:1)*

The gemara (Yoma 4b) teaches: "Why did Hashem call to Moshe before speaking to him? To teach good manners, i.e., to teach that one should not speak to his friend before he has gotten his attention. Why does the verse say, 'To say'? R' Menasya Rabbah answered: From where do we know that when one tells something to another, the second person may not repeat it until the first person tells him, 'Go repeat it'? Because it is written, 'Hashem spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, laimor / \_to say\_'."

R' Shaul of Amsterdam z"l (1717-1790) asks: Is this the first time that the Torah uses the word "laamor"? Why was this lesson not derived from one of the dozens of earlier verses in the Torah that used the same word? Also, how do we learn good manners (that one should not speak to his friend before he has gotten his attention) from this verse? True, it was Hashem's desire in this case to call to Moshe before speaking to Him, but where is there any indication that it is good manners to act in this way all the time?

R' Shaul answers: In Tractate Chagigah (2a), we learn that the sages of Bet Hillel require the animal brought for the "chagigah" (a certain yom tov offering) to be worth at least two silver coins, and the animal brought for the "re'iyah" (another yom tov offering), at least one silver coin. Why must the chagigah be worth more than the re'iyah? The gemara explains that the chagigah belonged to the class of offerings called "shelamim," a type of offering which was brought even before Moshe came down from Har Sinai, while the re'iyah belonged to the class of offerings called "olah," a type of offering which did not exist before Moshe came down from Har Sinai. Therefore, the chagigah has greater importance.

The gemara then challenges this explanation: Does not the Torah record (Shmot 24:5) that Bnei Yisrael \_did\_ sacrifice olot (plural of "olah") before the giving of the Torah? Based on this, the gemara clarifies its previous statement to say that \_except\_ for the daily tamid sacrifice (which was an olah), no olah was offered before the Torah was given.

The gemara continues by recording a question as to whether Moshe was taught the entire Torah at Har Sinai and he only divulged the details to Bnei Yisrael over the course of the 40 years in the desert, or whether Moshe himself was only taught the details of the Torah over a 40-year period. Says the Talmudic sage Abaye: If we say that the olah that was brought before Moshe came down from Har Sinai was a "tamid," it necessarily follows that Moshe was taught the entire Torah, with all its details, at Har Sinai. Why? Because how could the tamid sacrifice have been brought before Moshe knew the detailed laws of how to bring it?!

It turns out then, writes R' Shaul of Amsterdam, that Moshe knew the laws of the sacrifices, the subject of our parashah, ever since he was on Har Sinai, but he kept those laws a secret. Why then are the laws repeated to Moshe in our parashah? It is this redundancy that allows us to learn good manners, for otherwise, there would have been no reason to have these verses at all. (Binyan Ariel: Chedrei Torah)

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### Thirty Days Before Pesach

One is obligated to drink four cups of wine on the night of Pesach, corresponding to the four expressions of redemption, as it is written (Shmot 6:6), "Therefore, say to Bnei Yisrael: 'I am Hashem, and [1] I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt; [2] I shall rescue you from their service; [3] I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments; [and 4] I shall take you to Me as a people and I shall be a G-d to you'." (Talmud Yerushalmi: Pesachim 10:1)

R' Eliezer Lew z"l (1758-1837; rabbi of several towns in Poland) asks: Why are there four expressions of redemption, and not some other number? He explains:

Our ancestors' exile in Egypt ended in stages. First, our Sages teach that the ten plagues began twelve months before the Exodus. Most likely, writes R' Lew, Bnei Yisrael's enslavement became lighter as soon as the plagues started. Second, the gemara (Rosh Hashanah 11b) states that our ancestors ceased their slave labor entirely on the Rosh Hashanah before the Exodus, six full months before they left Egypt. Third, our ancestors left Egypt on the 15th of Nissan. Finally, the Torah was given seven weeks later, and this completed the physical and spiritual redemption.

This phased redemption paralleled, in reverse order, the way the enslavement began. Originally, Bnei Yisrael were an independent people. Later, they became guests in Egypt. Later still, Bnei Yisrael were enslaved by the Egyptians. Finally, additional forms of persecution were heaped on top of Bnei Yisrael's slave status. When the redemption came, first the persecution ended, then the slavery ended, then Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, and finally they received the Torah.

These are the four stages to which the four expressions of redemption allude:

1. "I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt" -- from the persecution;
2. "I shall rescue you from their service" -- from slavery;
3. "I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments" -- from the Land of Egypt;
4. "I shall take you to Me as a people and I shall be a G-d to you" - by giving you the Torah.  
(Haggadah Shel Pesach Shemmen Rokeach)

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*"Then he [Yaakov] descended to Egypt - compelled by the word." (The Pesach Haggadah)*

What words compelled Yaakov to descend to Egypt? R' Shalom Eliezer Halberstam of Ratzfert z"l hy"d (son of R' Chaim of Sanz; died 1944) explains:

When Lavan accused Yaakov of stealing his idols, Yaakov responded (Bereishit 31:32), "With whomever you find your gods, he shall not live." The verse continues: "Yaakov did not know that Rachel had stolen them."

In effect, Yaakov inadvertently caused Rachel's premature death. And, the halachah is that one who kills unintentionally must undergo exile. Thus, Yaakov was compelled \_by his own words\_ to descend to Egypt. (Quoted in Otzrot Tzaddikei U'geonei Ha'dorot)

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## **Introductions . . .**

This week, we conclude the introduction to Migdal David, Sefer Emunah, by R' David Ha'kochavi z"l (ca. 1260 - 1330). In the first part of the introduction, R' David described two types of tzaddikim: one who studies Talmud and halachah night and day and does not investigate G-d's existence or the reasons behind the mitzvot, and one who does engage in such investigation alongside his study of halachah. The author continues:

Now that we have brought the views of these two groups -- each one of which brings correct arguments in its favor, and all of whose words are the words of the Living G-d -- we must complete the task and clarify which path is preferable, or whether they are equally good. We would say as follows: According to the first group [which studies only Talmud and halachah], studying other branches of wisdom must be considered a waste of time, and, therefore, forbidden. . . But this contradicts many statements of the Talmudic Sages. For example, the Talmud (Sukkah 28a) refers to the debates of the Sages Abaye and Rava, the very heart of the Talmud, as "a small matter," while it refers to the description of the "Merkavah" / "Heavenly Chariot" as "a great matter." This discipline, the Merkavah, is the study of G-d's true existence, to the extent that man is capable of knowing it. Clearly, the Sages did not call the Merkavah "a great matter" because of its difficulty, but rather because of its importance. . .

Now that we have seen that our Sages' words praise and elevate man's investigation regarding G-d's existence, we cannot avoid trying to understand and know the greatness of this group, i.e., the group that investigates, over the other group [that does not investigate]. [This greatness] has three aspects: . . .

Second: One who is wholesome and upright, who fears G-d and shuns evil -- the first person we described -- he beholds the sweetness of Hashem and dwells in His sanctuary. Greater than him, however, is the wise man who has attained an understanding of Torah and mitzvot and knowledge of G-d through investigation, for he is "trusted in all of G-d's house" and sees

the face of the King at any time.

Third: Even if we assume that the reward of the two groups is equal in the World of the Souls, in this life, however, the one who investigates is greater, for he has the ammunition to save himself from [spiritual] enemies . . . He is not troubled by history and its sorrows, for he knows that our understanding of [what events are ultimately] good or bad is merely imaginary. . .

[Editor's Note: Most readers will recognize that the views expressed above were controversial in their own time, and are not widely accepted today either. The question of how one should allocate his Torah-study time is a halachic question regarding which one should consult his personal mentor.]

*Sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Moshe Cohen in memory of his father, R' Chaim ben R' Zvi Hakohen a"h*

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