

GROWING APPRECIATION

by Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

"If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving-offering..." (7:12)

The Midrash relates that in the World to Come, the only type of sacrifice which will still be functioning will be the Korban Todah, the thanksgiving offering.¹ What is unique about the Korban Todah that allows it to function in the World to Come? Furthermore, why will all of the other sacrifices be invalidated in the future?

The Midrash teaches us that all of the sacrifices are brought in order to atone for sins, with the exception being the Korban Todah which is brought to thank Hashem for some miraculous event that has transpired.² All of the other sacrifices are brought to repair a relationship damaged by sin. In the World to Come, sin will not exist, and therefore, those sacrifices will have no purpose.

The Hebrew word "todah" - "thanks" is associated with the word "modeh" - "acknowledgment of obligation". When a person expresses his appreciation for something that has been done for him, he is acknowledging the good and hopes for the opportunity to reciprocate, as is said in the vernacular "much obliged". Therefore, showing appreciation is the manner in which a person expresses that he wants the relationship to endure and flourish.

The Ramchal explains that the World to Come has no limit; "Man will continue to derive pleasure from his earned perfection for all eternity."³ In This World, growth is attained through avoidance of and repentance from sin. However, in the World to Come, sin is not an option. Therefore, growth can only be attained by expressing our gratitude for the reward that we receive from Hashem. This makes the Korban Todah most appropriate for the World to Come.

1. Rabbah 9:7 2. Ibid 3. Derech Hashem 1:3

No Free Meal

"Command Aharon and his sons"(6:2)

Chazal are sensitive to the fact that all of the offerings which were commanded to Bnei Yisroel were introduced with either the word "rnt" - "amarta", which means "say" or "rcs" - "daber", "speak".

However, in the commandment to the Kohanim, the Torah uses the more emphatic term "um" - "tzav", "command". Chazal explain that since the Kohanim incur financial loss in their performance of the service, an exhortation is necessary.¹

The commentaries offer various explanations for what the monetary loss was, to which Chazal is referring. The Ramban explains that the loss incurred was in the inaugural meal offering which every Kohain was required to bring and finance on his own when he was appointed to perform the service for the first time.²

What must be explained is why the meal offering would require a special exhortation being that the expense incurred by it was minimal. When a person is granted a special honor, for example, being the guest of honor at a dinner, billing him for the dinner would be perceived as a slap in the face. Similarly, requesting a Kohain to pay for his inaugural offering after granting him the honor of representing Bnei Yisroel in the Beis Hamikdash, might be met with resistance. Therefore, the cost of the offering is inconsequential. It is the notion of being charged which creates resistance, and subsequently, there is a need for a special exhortation.

1. Rashi 6:2 2. Ramban introduction to Parshas Tzav

Holy Cow

"...and they shall take to you a completely red cow..."(19:2)

Prior to Pesach we read four special parshios. The third of the "Four Parshios" is Parshas Parah which discusses the procedure involved in the burning of the Parah Adumah - Red Heifer. The purpose of reading this passage before Nisan is to remind all those who have been defiled through contact with the dead, to purify themselves in order to be permitted to offer the Pesach sacrifice in its proper time.¹ The passage selected is from Parshas Chukas in Sefer Bamidbar. The Talmud refers to the Parah Adumah as a "chatas" - a sin offering.² Rashi explains that the Parah Adumah atoned for the sin of the Golden Calf.³ What must be explained is why the Parah Adumah is not listed in Sefer Vayikra together with the other sacrifices.

Our Sages find within the verses that discuss the Parah Adumah allusions to the receiving and study of the Torah. For example, the Talmud explains the verse "Adam ki yamus be'ohel" - "A man who will die in a tent" as a reference to the study of Torah, the "ohel" - tent being the house of study. The Torah is teaching us the great extent to which a person must exert himself in order that his learning be retained.⁴ Another example of such an allusion is where the Midrash relates that when Moshe

went up to receive the Torah, he found Hashem reviewing the laws of the Parah Adumah.⁵ What is the connection between receiving and studying the Torah and the Parah Adumah?

The Talmud teaches us that Adam was created with an immortal existence. However, once he sinned, death descended and man's stay in This World became temporal. Since Torah is the vehicle by which one connects to Hashem, and Hashem is eternal, when Bnei Yisroel received the Torah they were able to ascend to the level of Adam prior to his sin. Consequently, due to Bnei Yisroel's connection to Torah, death was removed from This World. When they committed the sin of the Golden Calf, Bnei Yisroel rejected this relationship, thereby forfeiting their exalted level.⁶ As a punishment, Hashem decreed to destroy Bnei Yisroel not only on an individual basis, killing particular sinners, but on a corporate level as well, uprooting the entire entity of Klal Yisroel. Moshe interceded on behalf of Bnei Yisroel and saved them from imminent doom.⁷ The bringing of the Parah Adumah served to repair the damage caused by the sin of the Golden Calf.⁸ However, death still remained; what then, was accomplished by the bringing of the Parah Adumah?

The Parah Adumah served to restore the eternality of Bnei Yisroel on a communal or corporate level. Although death was still applicable to the individual, the entity of Bnei Yisroel was guaranteed its eternal existence. This concept can be illustrated by the following halacha: If the owner of a sin offering dies prior to bringing it as a sacrifice, the animal can no longer be used for that purpose. The Talmud explains that this only applies to the sin offering of an individual, while a communal sin offering remains valid even if members of the community die, for "On the communal level there is no death."⁹

The manner in which the Parah Adumah reinstates Bnei Yisroel's eternality is by connecting us back to the Tree of Life, the Torah. Therefore, the passage containing Parah Adumah alludes to the importance of Torah study. Whereas Sefer Vayikra focuses primarily on the obligations of the individual, Sefer Bamidbar focuses on the function of Bnei Yisroel on a corporate level. The development of the army, the census, the manner in which Bnei Yisroel camped and traveled are but a few examples of the functions of Bnei Yisroel on a communal level found in Sefer Bamidbar. Therefore, the Parah Adumah, which reinstates the eternality of Bnei Yisroel on a corporate level, is recorded in Sefer Bamidbar. This also explains why the Korban Tamid is found in Parshas Pinchas in Sefer Bamidbar;10 it too is solely a communal sacrifice.

Just as the human body is constantly replacing its cells while a person's existence remains unchanged, the generations of Bnei Yisroel replace one another while the identity and essence of Bnei Yisroel always remain constant.

1.Megillah 29b, See Mishna Berura 685:1 2.Bamidbar 19:9, See Chullin 11a 3.Ibid 19:2 4.Rashi cites the Chazal that the mother should come and clean up for her son. 4.Berachos 43b 5.Bamidbar Rabbah 19:2 6.Avodah Zarah 5a 7.Berachos 32a 8.Rashi Bamidbar 19:2 9.Horios 6a 10.28:1

