



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ח ניסן תשע"ז – ויקרא – 1st April 2017 - Volume 9 - Issue 35

News This Week

Cleaning Reminder

All members are responsible for cleaning their boxes. Please ensure this is done by Sunday evening, 2nd April.

AGM

The biennial agm takes place after pesach. All members have been emailed details of the meeting. If you have not received the email, please notify Avi Stern via office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk.

Fortunate Is The Generation Whose Leaders Goof... And Then Admit It

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

In this week's parsha, we learn about the laws concerning the situation "When a ruler sins (asher nasi yechtah), and commits one from among all the commandments of Hashem that may not be done – unintentionally – and becomes guilty." [Vayikra 4:22]

Rashi comments on the peculiar expression "asher nasi yechtah" which literally means "THAT the prince sinned." The more common usage throughout the parsha is "v'im" (AND IF). Rashi explains that the word "asher" comes from the same root as "ashrei" (meaning fortunate) as if to say "Fortunate is the generation whose ruler sets his heart to bring an atonement for his unintentional sin." There are a variety of comments recorded by later commentaries on the intent of this statement by Rashi.

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin in his sefer Oznayim L'Torah suggests that aveiyros [sins] come about as a result of new initiatives. A person will normally not commit an averah when he sticks to the straight and narrow, merely repeating that which has been done in the past without attempting new approaches or enactments. Innovation and change sometimes leads to inadvertent mistakes. The pasuk [verse] is praising the Nasi [leader] who is willing to change and to try something new. Even though such boldness can sometimes lead to inadvertent error, the generation is fortunate to have a leader who is at least willing to try.

Rav Dovid Feinstein provides a different insight, which I believe may be closer to the simple interpretation (p'shat) of the pasuk. People in power are normally not inclined to admit that they did something wrong. A person in power is normally afraid of criticism and second guessing by his opponents. He is very leery to publicly admit, "Guess what? I goofed!"

How many times have we heard the President of the United States – any President of the United States – admit, "I have made a mistake." The few times when a president does admit to a mistake, he gets lambasted by the press and all his political adversaries. Rare is the public leader who is prepared to stand up in front of his nation and admit to having made a mistake. Happy is the generation that has a leader who is not ashamed to admit that he erred. Fortunate are those led by one secure enough to admit that he is not perfect.

Rav Shimon Schwab explains the very same lesson in explanation of

a very perplexing Gemara [Chagiga 14a]. The Gemara states that the prophet Yeshaya cursed the Jewish people with 18 different curses but his mind was not put at ease until he foretold the ultimate indignation: "The youngster will domineer over the elder and the base over the respectable" (lo niskarera da'ato ad) [Yeshaya 3:5].

What is the meaning of this Gemara? Did Yeshaya the prophet hate the Jewish people so much that he said, "I'm going to really give it to them and I won't rest until I give them the ultimate punishment"? Obviously not! That is not the role of a prophet. The role of a prophet is not to beat up the people or to indict them.

Rav Schwab explained that this Gemara is teaching the very same lesson as the pasuk quoted above from Parshas Vayikra as elaborated by Rashi. This final 'curse' actually includes a positive and optimistic message. When the children will point out the foibles of the elders – and perhaps the children were out of line for having such brazenness – but when their criticism will prompt the elders to respond, take stock, and admit that they in fact did make some errors, that is positive. That is in fact what appeased the mind of the prophet Yeshaya. In spite of the fact that the criticism was perhaps not offered with the proper derech erez (manners and protocol), but the leaders were big enough that they could take the criticism and react with corrective action. That is the hallmark of a fortunate generation. It was this good fortune of the Jewish people that put the Prophet's mind at ease.

Elevation in Affliction

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

To the merely casual student, korbanos represent a collection of details overwhelming in abundance, and short on inspiring understanding. One korban stands out as different. Olas ha-of, a bird offered as a wholly burnt offering, makes matters even worse! Its details are not just different from comparable korbanos, they seem to run in an entirely reverse direction.

An animal olah requires shechitah, or the neat, clean death of the animal through the use of a sharp blade. Bird offerings require

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת ויקרא

Mincha	6.45pm
Candle Lighting	6.53 - 7.10pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.57am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	7.30
Rov's Shiur (Hilchos Pesach)	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	8.35pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues /Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.35pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

melikah, a process of pinching the head with a fingernail in a way that would render a non-sacrificial bird forbidden as neveilah. On the other hand, melikah can only be done by a kohen, while the shechitah of an offering is kosher even if performed by a commoner.

Animal offerings come in many varieties. Bird offerings are restricted to olah and chatas. Animal offerings are brought sometimes for individuals and sometimes for the community. Bird offerings are never brought for the community. Animal and bird korbanos are sacrificed at different locations within the Temple's courtyard. The blood of animals is decorously received in a vessel, and a small amount thrown at or dabbed on the altar with a finger. The blood of the bird olah is pressed out on the side of the altar. Parts of the animal that are offered atop the altar are discarded in the case of the bird.

Even more flagrant is the reversal of procedures regarding the altar. The blood of an animal olah is directed below the red line that separates the upper and lower regions of the altar, while that of the animal chatas is directed above. The positions flip for birds: the blood of the olah goes above the line, and the chatas below.

The key to unraveling all the confusion is in understanding that different species symbolize different roles and positions in life. The olah and chatas themes (i.e. elevation and addressing shortcomings) impact differently upon these different roles.

The bovine offerings symbolize the vigorous servant of G-d, just as these animals are work animals. Sheep symbolize trust in Divine guidance, much as flocks are cared for by their shepherds. Birds play a very different – and a decidedly undomesticated role – in Tanach. They are described as unsettled, drifting. They are pursued by hunters who lay in waiting for them, and leave snares with which to trap them. Their life is troubled and precarious. They represent life on the brink of despair.

It makes perfect sense, then, that the bird offerings are attached to the poor (who lead more precarious lives) and to those overcome with spiritual (metzora) or physical (zav, yoledes) affliction. The community – whose public face does not admit to crushing poverty – never brings a bird offering. The sense of affliction brought to mind by the bird is also incompatible with the role of the shelamim, which is supposed to represent undisturbed happiness. Also, the requirements that an offering be male (symbolizing strength and virility) and free of blemish do not attach to bird offerings.

The striking differences in the way bird and animal offerings are treated are consistent with the different roles they symbolize. The shechitah of an animal is elegant and refined in comparison to the much more violent pinching of the neck during melikah. The bird's body is then torn asunder, rather than neatly butchered. Its very entrails are removed and thrown away; the blood, representing the life-force, is not simply drained but squeezed out of it.

Taken together, the details of the bird-offering speak symbolically to a person living with suffering. He or she approaches the south side of the mizbe'ach – the side (closest to the menorah, and therefore the side) of enlightenment, unlike the animal offerings brought in the north, the side of material concerns. The owner of the offering seeks both insight into his condition, and elevation. He presents himself to the kohen as a fragile, hapless dove. What he encounters is not visually pretty, but full of meaning for him. He is instructed that enduring oppression can also be a form of serving Hashem. Indeed, the life that has had all its vitality forcibly pressed out of it also has a place atop the altar – not just the one exhibiting the strength and willingness symbolized by the animal offerings. The oppressed, the suffering who do not lose sight of their goal of bringing themselves closer to G-d also contribute to keeping strong the fires of Hashem's Presence. Where some would find only victimhood, the bird-offering allows the suffering to find nobility and purpose.

We can now easily understand the curious inversion of the locations

on the altar to which the blood is applied, and the methods by which it is applied. In an animal korban, the blood of the olah is directed below the dividing line, while that of the chatas goes above. An olah is conventionally brought by someone feeling a lack of elevation. He is plagued by sluggish, lethargic spirituality, and wants to be energized. The animal olah bids him to move energetically (hence the blood is thrown, the most energetic form of blood application) urging him to move from where he is upwards, with vigor. He finds himself in an unsatisfactorily low state; he needs to rouse himself from it with alacrity.

A chatas, on the other hand, is the result of some transgression, usually by precipitous, unthinking action without sufficient focus and thought. The blood of the animal chatas directs him to inaction. It is placed, not thrown, on the upper part of the altar, urging him to remain in place with whatever spiritual elevation he has achieved. It instructs him to not lose sight of the higher ideals, and to stay put rather than run after the desires of the heart.

The modus operandi for the suffering personality is indeed reversed. Whatever spiritual gifts he possessed prior to his troubles, he must keep intact. It is in his inaction – not the energetic action of the ordinary person – that he has his greatest opportunity for utilizing his straits for elevation. The blood of the bird-olah is not thrown, and not even placed with a finger. Rather, it is squeezed and pressed on the upper part of the mizbe'ach, telling its owner that he must summon up much energy to keep himself on a high plane without backsliding.

The sins of such a person, on the other hand, are often part of a feeling of despair, which can lead him to discard his values and take up improper activities, feeling that no good will come of his life in any event. We must impress upon him the importance of not acting in such ways, of not being swept away in a moment of weakness. He must pull himself out of the listlessness of his mood by some sort of action. The blood of his offering is sprinkled. Like the throwing of the blood of the animal olah, the sprinkling of the blood of the bird chatas implies action, movement rather than staying put. It directs him to look up, away from his passivity, back on track of forever aiming higher.

Korbanos From Within

Benjamin Rose (Shortvort.com)

The posuk says(1:2) "Adam Ki Yakriv Mikem Korban L'Hashem", the pasuk calls a person's korban "A Korban to Hashem". The end of the pasuk says, "Min HaBiheima... Takrivu Es Korbanchem", referring to the Korban as "your Korban". Is it Hashem's Korban or is it yours?

The Tallilei Oros answers with the Shach who says that before bringing a korban a person must sacrifice himself to Hashem. Only then will the act of slaughtering and burning the animal be Michaper. If a person does not sacrifice himself then this ritual of animal slaughter is devoid of all meaning .

With this idea, he says we can explain this Pasuk. The first part says, "Adam Ki Yakriv Mikem" a person who sacrifices from within. That is a Korban L'Hashem. However continues the pasuk, "Min HaBiheima" if he is only sacrificing the animal then it is the persons own korban and not for Hashem.

How can we learn from this, after all we don't do korbanos today so whats the use for us?

Today we have tefillah, which ChaZal instituted to replace the korbanos. ChaZal gave us a set text which we have to "offer up" the same way as we offered up animals. So using this lesson we see clearly that Hashem wants us to daven with a pure heart from within! "Odom Ki Yakriv Mikem" a person (should) sacrifice from within, However "Min HaBiheima" if he is only sacrificing the animal - in the case of davening, saying the words - then it is the persons own korban and not for Hashem.

If a person does not sacrifice himself (daven with kavona) then his davening is devoid of all meaning.