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Vayikro

ויקרא

In this week's Parashah, we begin to learn the laws of the Korbanot / sacrificial offerings. **R' Moshe ben Maimon z"l** (Rambam; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) writes that the Korbanot are among the Chukim / decrees whose reasons we cannot comprehend. **R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv z"l** (1910-2012; Yerushalayim) asks: The Gemara (Yoma 67b) teaches that the term "Chukim" applies to Mitzvot that gentiles mock because they seem irrational—for example, the prohibition against wearing Sha'atnez / a mixture of wool and linen. How can this term refer to Korbanot when gentiles themselves brought such offerings? Indeed, Adam, Kayin, Hevel, and Noach brought Korbanot! And, when Moshe Rabbeinu told Pharaoh that Bnei Yisrael would travel into the desert to bring Korbanot, Pharaoh did not mock this idea! R' Elyashiv explains: It is a natural human instinct to give gifts that express our gratitude, even when we know that the recipient has no need for our gift. That is why we bring a Korban Todah / thanksgiving offering. We read in Shir Ha'shirim (2:14), "For your voice is sweet and your countenance is pleasing." Midrash Rabbah comments: "For your voice is sweet" refers to the songs of the Levi'im in the Bet Hamikdash; "and your countenance is pleasing" refers to the Korbanot. The Midrash is teaching, writes R' Elyashiv, that just as the song of the Levi'im is merely an expression of our thanksgiving, but it gives Hashem nothing, so it is with the Korbanot. Because it is a natural instinct, Adam, Noach, and their gentile descendants also brought thanksgiving offerings, just as we bring a Korban Todah and, in the

absence of the Bet Hamikdash, recite Birkat Ha'gamel. However, writes R' Elyashiv, a new aspect was added to the Korbanot when the Torah was given: the idea that we are offering an animal in place of ourselves, and that Hashem views that as if we have offered ourselves. That aspect of a sacrificial offering is unique to the Jewish People and is certainly a Chok, something that we cannot explain rationally. (Divrei Aggadah)

Pure purity

"ויקרא אל משה - אמר רב אסי: מפני מה מתחילין לתינוקות בתורת כהנים, ואין מתחילין בבראשית? אמר הקב"ה: הואיל והתינוקות טהורים והקרבת טהורים, יבואו טהורים ויתעסקו בטהורים. [ויקרא רבה ד', ג]."

ויקרא אל-משה וידבר ה' אליו מאהל מועד לאמר

"He called to Moshe, and Hashem spoke to him from the Ohel Mo'ed / Tent of Meeting, saying." (1:1) At the end of last week's Parashah, we read (Shmot 40:35), "Moshe could not enter the Ohel Mo'ed, for the cloud rested upon it, and the glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan/Tabernacle." **R' Shlomo Kluger z"l** (1785-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) asks: What was the purpose of placing the cloud over the Mishkan preventing Moshe from entering, only to then call Moshe into the cloud? If Hashem had not blocked entry into the Mishkan with a cloud, He would not have needed to invite Moshe inside! R' Kluger explains: Hashem did this because Moshe felt bad that he had not donated anything to the Mishkan. By blocking entry to the Mishkan and then allowing only Moshe inside, Hashem demonstrated how beloved Moshe was to Him. This explains, also, why our verse notes that Hashem spoke to Moshe "from the Ohel Mo'ed." Hashem spoke to Moshe because of Moshe's feelings about the Ohel Mo'ed. (Chochmat Ha'Torah: Vayikra p.84) **R' Chaim Vital z"l** (Tzefat and Damascus; 1542-1620) writes: This verse illustrates our Sages' teaching that Hashem elevates a person who humbles himself. We read at the end of last week's parashah, "Moshe could not enter the Ohel Mo'ed, for the cloud rested upon it, and the glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan." This does not mean that Moshe Rabbeinu was physically unable to enter the

לכבוד האי גברא וב"ב הרוצים בעילום שמו
על הסיוע שמושיטים לי בעין יפה
להמשיך את הגליון עוד הפעם בשנה זו
שיהיה לזכותם ולזכות כל משפחתם
הקב"ה יברך אותם בכל מילי דמיטב
מיט יידישע נחת בעושר ואושר ואריכות
ימים בבריאות בזה ובבא עבגצב"ב

Ohel Mo'ed; after all, he had stood on Har Sinai in the presence of Hashem's Glory. Rather, he humbled himself and did not enter "Hashem's house" until he was invited, as our verse says, "He called to Moshe." And what does our verse say next? "Hashem spoke to him from the Ohel Mo'ed, saying." Hashem told him: the purpose of this structure is to be a Tent of Meeting in which to speak to you. (Etz Ha'da'at Tov)

He called to Moshe, and Hashem spoke to him from Ohel Moaid saying. (1:1) The Medrash says Moshe was upset - he said everyone brought their donations towards the building of the Mishkan and I didn't bring anything Hashem said to him speaking to you is more loved by Me than anything Hashem didn't call anyone but Moshe as the Pasuk says He called to Moshe. So why didn't Moshe give to the building of the Mishkan? The most important part of the giving to the Mishkan was from each person as his heart would give. A person has possessions and decides with his heart to give to Hashem. He gives of his own to the Mishkan. Moshe was different. His entire life was for Hashem. Everything he owned was for Hashem. He didn't consider anything as his own. Therefore the concept of giving to Hashem didn't exist and he couldn't give to the building of the Mishkan. (Rabbi Abraham Kramer, brother of the Gr"a)

He called to Moshe, and Hashem spoke to him from Ohel Moaid saying. (1:1) The Medrash that lists the various names that Moshe had says and concludes and there were ten Hashem said to Moshe from all the names that you have, I will only call you by the one that Basyah the daughter of Paro gave you as it says and she called his name Moshe. And He called to Moshe. Why was the name Moshe so great? If we look at some of the other names and their explanations, we find many names

that have greater meaning than Moshe. For instance the Medrash says that one of the names was Yered. Why Yered? Because he brought down the Torah from the heavens or that he caused the Shechinah to come down to earth. The name Moshe symbolized even more. The name represented the dedication and devotion of Paro's daughter to save Moshe. She saved him, risking her own life by disobeying the king's orders to kill all the Jewish boys. Hashem called him by the name Moshe to show that the greatness of Moshe was symbolized by this dedication and devotion. (Rabbi Chaim Smulevitz)

Give way to the poor

“ואם מן העוף עולה קרבנו לך והקריב מן התורים או מן בני היונה את קרבנו” - אגריפס המלך בקש להקריב ביום אחד אלף עולות. שלח ואמר לכהן הגדול: אל יקריב אדם היום חוץ ממני. בא עני אחד ובידו שני תורים, ואמר לכהן: הקרב את אלו, אמר לו: המלך צוני ואמר לי: “אל יקריב אדם היום חוץ ממני”. אמר לו: אדוני כהן גדול, ארבעה אני צד בכל יום, ואני מקריב שנים ומתפרנס משנים, אם אי אתה מקריב, אתה חותר את פרנסתי. נטלם והקריבם. נראה לו אגריפס בחלום: קרבנו של עני קדמך. שלח ואמר לכהן גדול: לא כך צויתך: “אל יקריב אדם היום חוץ ממני!” אמר לו: אדוני המלך, בא עני אחד ובידו שני תורים, ואמר לי: הקרב את אלו. אמרת לי: המלך צוני: “אל יקריב אדם היום חוץ ממני”. אמר: ארבעה אני צד בכל יום, ואני מקריב שנים ומתפרנס משנים, אם אין אתה מקריבם, אתה חותר את פרנסתי - לא היה לי להקריב! אמר לו המלך: יפה עשית כל מה שעשית.

[ויקרא רבה ג, ה']

דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אלהם אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה' מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם

“When a man brings an offering to Hashem from among you . . .”

(1:2) **R' Yosef Yitzchak**

Schneerson z"l (1880-1950;

Lubavitcher Rebbe) writes: If the Torah's intention is merely to teach the laws of the sacrifices, the verse should have said, “When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem . . .,” i.e., with the phrase “among you” placed earlier. Why does the verse say, “When a man brings an offering to Hashem from among you”? [Rabbi Shlomo Katz of Hamaayan notes: Many popular Chumashim do, in fact, translate our verse as if “among you” is placed earlier, but that is not a literal translation.] The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains: The word “Korban” shares a

root with the word that means “close.” The Torah is teaching: When you want to bring a Korban, to come close, to Hashem, it is within you to do so. It is up to you to offer your talents, abilities, and feelings in the service of Hashem. (Ma'amar Bati Le'gani)

“Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them, ‘When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem — from animals, from the cattle or from the flock shall you bring your offering.’” (1:2) Among four-legged animals, only the cow, sheep and goat families are fit for sacrificial offerings. Why were these species chosen? **R' Yitzchak Abarbanel z"l**

(1437-1508; Portugal, Spain and Italy) offers several explanations: (1) By their natures, temperaments, and diets, these are the finest of all four-legged animals.

(2) These are the most widely-available of all animals. [The two preceding explanations are offered by R' Abarbanel in the name of R' Levi ben Gershon z"l (Ralbag; 1288-1344; Provence, France)].

(3) These three animals allude to the merits of the three Patriarchs. About Avraham we read (Bereishit 18:7—when Avraham “fed” the three angels), “Avraham ran to the cattle, took a calf, tender and good . . .”

About Yitzchak we read (Bereishit 22:13), “Avraham went and took the ram and offered it up as an offering instead of his son [Yitzchak].” Finally, about Yaakov we read (Bereishit 27:9), “Go now to the flock and fetch me from there two choice young kids of the goats.”

(4) The Jewish People are compared to these three species in many verses, including: “For Yisrael has strayed like a wayward cow” (Hoshea 4:16); “Yisrael is like scattered sheep” (Yirmiyah 50:17); and “I will put an end to the pride of the mighty / ‘Azim’ [same spelling as ‘Izim’ / goats]” (Yechezkel 7:24). When we offer animals of these three species, Hashem views it as if we have sacrificed ourselves to Him. (Peirush Al Ha'Torah: Hakdamah L'Vayikra)

When a person from among you will bring an offering to Hashem.

(1:2) Rashi comments When he will bring - this topic discusses voluntary offerings. We find many Mitzvos

which are not obligatory but rather voluntary. Donating to the building of the Mishkan - a person making himself into a Nazir - bringing a Korban. Many other Mitzvos have no set amounts. What is the purpose of these Mitzvos? If they are part of serving Hashem, why are they not obligatory. If they are not part of serving Hashem - so why do them at all? There is a Mitzvah to love Hashem. Is it possible to fulfill this Mitzvah? Can one be commanded to have special feelings? Either you have them or you don't. And if it is not possible to fulfill this Mitzvah, why did Hashem give it to us? It is by doing extra in service to Hashem - these optional Mitzvos and fulfilling other Mitzvos with extra diligence - learning extra - being extra careful in one's davening - giving extra Tzdukah etc that brings one to the special feelings of and fulfilling the Mitzvah of loving Hashem. (Rabbi Kanievsky, the Steipler)

Forgiveness

ונפש כי תחטא ושמעיה קול אלה והוא עד או ראה או ידע, אם לא יגיד ונשא עונו” - תניא: כיצד מאיימים על העדים בדיני נפשות? ואומרים להם: שמה תאמרו מאומד ומשמועה, הו יודעים שדמו דם זרעו תלויים בכס עד סוף כל הדורות! ושמה תאמרו: מה לנו ולכל הצרה הזאת? הלא כבר נאמר “אם לא יגיד ונשא עונו”.

[סנהדרין ל"ז, ב].

ושחט את בן הבקר לפני ה' והקריבו בני אהרן הכהנים את הדם וזרקו את הדם על המזבח סביב אשר פתח אהל מועד

And he shall slaughter the bull

before G-d (1:5) Parshas Vayikra

introduces us to the korbanos (sacrificial offerings) that were offered in the Mishkan. The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 479) points out that although the sacrifices were offered by Kohanim, the Torah repeatedly refers to Aharon's children offering the various korbanos. Since Aharon was still alive at this time, why does the Torah discuss his offspring serving in the Mishkan, but not Aharon himself? **Rav Yonason Eibeshutz** (Divrei Yehonason, Parshas Tzav) cites a pasuk (verse) in Amos (5:25) that asks, “Did you bring sacrifices and meal-offerings to Me in the wilderness?” The midrash says that the only korban that was offered in the desert was the daily korban tamid (continual-offering), which was a korban olah (elevation-offering). Individual

sacrifices such as the korban chatas (sin-offering), korban asham (guilt-offering), korban shelamim (peace-offering), and korban mincha (meal-offering) were not brought by the Jewish people during their 40-year sojourn in the wilderness. Rav Yonason suggests that the Torah alludes to this phenomenon by referring to Aharon's progeny in its discussion in Parshas Vayikra of the korban mincha, korban shelamim, and korban chatas. Because Aharon died in the desert and did not merit entering Eretz Yisroel, he was never involved in offering these sacrifices. In contrast, Parshas Tzav begins with Hashem commanding Moshe regarding the korban tamid, the sole offering in which Aharon personally participated, so the instructions are addressed not only to his children, but to Aharon himself as well. (Parsha Potpourri Rabbi Ozer Alport)

And he shall slaughter the bull before G-d (1:5) As explained in the Gemara (Chulin 30), "And he shall slaughter" implies drawing or pulling. The act of slaughtering (according to Torah law) "draws" the animal or bird upward, rendering it capable of being elevated from the realm of the animal kingdom to the realm of man, when it is ingested and transformed into the blood and flesh of the person who partakes of it. The animal soul of man must likewise be "slaughtered," by drawing and elevating it upward until it is subsumed in the holiness of the G-dly soul. (Likutei Sichos)

ושחט אתו על ירך המזבח צפנה לפני ה' וזרקו בני אהרן הכהנים את דמו על המזבח סביב
He shall slaughter it at the side of the Mizbayach, on the north before Hashem. (1:11) The Midrash says at the time that Avraham bound Yitzchak on the Mizbayach, Hashem said that Benai Yisroel should sacrifice two sheep every day, one in the morning and one at night and why because when Benai Yisroel sacrifice the Korban Tamid on the Mizbayach and read the Pasuk on the north before Hashem, Hashem remembers the Akadas Yitzchak. What is the connection between the ram of Yitzchak and the slaughtering of a Korban in the north side of the Mizbayach? In addition, why does the Midrash mention the ram of Yitzchak and not the Akadas Yitzchak itself? The original procedure was to

slaughter a Korban on the Mizbayach as we see by Akadas Yitzchak. Avraham placed Yitzchak on the Mizbayach and was about to slaughter him. When Avraham was told not to slaughter Yitzchak and was shown the ram to sacrifice in his stead, Avraham was supposed to remove Yitzchak from the Mizbayach and put the ram on the Mizbayach. Avraham was afraid that if he removes Yitzchak, place the ram on the Mizbayach and then the slaughtering goes bad, Avraham would then have to put Yitzchak on the Mizbayach a second time. Otherwise he would lose the opportunity to follow Mitzvas Hashem. So Avraham left Yitzchak on the Mizbayach and slaughtered the ram on the side. When Benai Yisroel slaughter a Korban on the north side of the Mizbayach and say this Pasuk - on the north before Hashem then the ram of Yitzchak is remembered. Not the Akadas Yitzchak, but rather the extra dedication of Avraham that even after Hashem told him not to slaughter Yitzchak - he left him on the Mizbayach in case he had to slaughter him. This extra dedication is remembered when we slaughter an animal on the north side of the Mizbayach. (Rabbi Yehoshua Laib Diskin)

He shall kill it on the side of the altar, northward, before G-d (1:11) The person bringing the offering must be willing to sacrifice his own wants and desires for a higher cause. The offering is only a symbol of our willingness for self-sacrifice. This is alluded to in the Hebrew word for "north," which is related to the word meaning "hidden." Even our hidden thoughts and feelings must be dedicated to G-dliness. (Chidushei Harim)

והקרב והכרעים ירחץ במים והקריב הכהן את הכל והקטיר המזבחה עלה הוא אשה ריח ניחח לה'

And the Kohan shall cause it all to go up in smoke on the Mizbayach. (1:13) The Midrash says that the word 'all' comes to include the horns of the animal. On a Korban Olah, the entire animal, including its horns, is burnt on the Mizbayach. In Pirkai D'rav Elliezer it says that by Akadas Yitzchak, when Avraham substituted the ram on the Mizbayach

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for his son Yitzchak - Avraham burnt the entire animal except for the horns. If the ram was a Korban Olah why did Avraham not burn the horns. In Parshas Vayaro, Rashi explains what the Pasuk means that Avraham sacrificed the ram instead of his son. as Avraham sacrificed the ram - as he did one Avodah after another- he would daven to Hashem and say it should be before you as if this was being done to my son as if my son was slaughtered as if his blood was thrown on the Mizbayach as if my son was skinned as if he was burned and became ashes. Man does not have horns. There is no human equivalent to an animal's horns.

Avraham sacrificed the ram instead of his son. There would be no purpose in putting the horns on the Mizbayach because Avraham could not say 'let it be as if I put my son's horns on the Mizbayach'. Therefore he did not put the horns on the Mizbyach. (Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Morgenstern of Pilov)

Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi (Rom) (circa 5210-5286; 1450-1526) studies the Rashi commentary on Chumash with any depth. For the ROM's major work is a commentary on Rashi. He is also mentioned in the commentary of "Sifsei Chachomim" which is printed in many editions of the Chumash. Rabbi Eliyahu was born in Constantinople (Turkey), approximately in the year 5210 (1450), i.e., over 500 years ago. He died there at the age of about 75 years. Rabbi Eliyahu was a disciple of **Rabbi Eliyahu HaLevi**, and he studied also under **Rabbi Judah of Padua** (Italy) Before he became the Chief Rabbi of his native city, he headed a great Yeshiva. He attracted many students, whom he taught the Talmud and the Codes of Jewish Law. Certain pupils he also taught mathematics algebra and astronomy, in which he was proficient, for these sciences are useful aids in the understanding of certain laws of the Torah. At that time, the Chief Rabbi of Constantinople was the famed **Rabbi Moshe Kapsali**, who was well known for his great scholarship and piety. Although Rabbi Moshe lived very modestly, fasted a great deal, and despised all personal comfort, he conducted his office of the Chief Rabbinate with authority. He was the official Jewish representative at the Court of the Sultan, and he was responsible for the collection of the taxes which the Jews had to pay the Sultan. Rabbi Moshe placed the main burden of the taxes on the wealthy members of the community. He also made them support the various Torah and charitable institutions of the community. As a result, he had many enemies among the wealthier members, some of whom tried to have him removed from his position. They complained about him to the great Sage of the age, **Rabbi Joseph Kolon** (Maharik), who was the Rabbi of Manitoba, but whose authority was recognized by Jews everywhere. Rabbi Joseph Kolon, apparently misled by false witnesses, wrote a letter to the leaders of the Jewish community of Constantinople, instructing them not to

recognize their Chief Rabbi any longer, but to choose another Rabbi in his place. A bitter controversy arose between Rabbi Moshe Kapsali and Rabbi Joseph Kolon, in which a great many prominent Rabbis were involved, taking one side or the other. Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi felt that the saintly Rabbi Moshe had been wronged, and he wanted to come out in his defense, although he knew that if the Chief Rabbi were deposed, he (Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi) would be the logical choice as his successor. However, Rabbi Eliyahu's teacher, **Rabbi Judah Mintz**, wrote him a letter, strictly forbidding him to interfere, and he could do nothing but obey. In due course, the Maharik realized that he had made a mistake, and that his suspicions were without foundation, based on false testimony of interested parties. He therefore sent his son **Rabbi Peretz** (for he was too old to go himself) to Constantinople and convey to the saintly Rabbi Moshe his regrets and humble apology, and to ask for the latter's forgiveness. Rabbi Moshe forgave his erstwhile adversary with all his heart. When Rabbi Moshe Kapsali died, in the year 5254 (1494), Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi was chosen to succeed him as Chief Rabbi of Constantinople and of all Turkish Jewry. He occupied this exalted position until his death. Like his predecessor, Rabbi Eliyahu was the official Jewish representative at the Court of the Sultan. In his capacity as Chacham-Bashi (Chief Rabbi), Rabbi Eliyahu was a member of the Supreme Council, as were also the Mufti (the spiritual leader of the Muslims) and the Greek Patriarch, the leader of the Christians. This government position was abolished, however, after the death of Rabbi Eliyahu, at the request of the Jews themselves, especially Rabbi Eliyahu's son-in-law, **Rabbi Meshulem**. At that time many of the Karaites desired to come closer to Judaism. For hundreds of years the Karaites had been a separate sect, believing only in the Written Law (T'NaCh) but not the Oral Law (Talmud, etc.). Many of them had fought bitterly against their own people, in an effort to "justify" their beliefs. They formed their own communities, their own houses of worship, and their own religious way of life. At first, Rabbi Eliyahu, like most other Rabbis before him, would have nothing to do with them, since they had excluded themselves from the community of the Jewish people. Later, however, when

he saw that some Karaites truly and sincerely wished to return to the fold, he was friendly to them and tried to help them come back. The main work of Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi, as already mentioned, was his commentary on Rashi, entitled *Sefer haMizrachi*. It contains deep insights into Rashi's commentary on the Torah, and explanations of all difficult passages in Rashi. In this way he also removes many objections raised by **Ramban** in regard to Rashi's explanation of some passages of the Torah. This work was published soon after the author's death, by his son **Rabbi Israel**, in Venice, in the year 5286 (1526). Other works by Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi included *Responsa* (Shaloth uTeshuvot), published in two parts (Constantinople, 1546, and Venice, 1647, respectively). He also wrote treatises on mathematics and astronomy. His major work, the *Sefer haMizrachi*, became very popular. Various scholars wrote commentaries on it. A digest of it appears in many editions of the Chumash, alongside Rashi's commentary. Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi was regarded as one of the greatest Rabbis and scholars of his time. The Jewish community in Constantinople was one of the largest and most important in those days, especially after the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain (in 1492), when it became a haven of refuge for many prominent Spanish and Portuguese Jews. Rabbi Eliyahu did his utmost to help these refugees. Moreover, Jews who had been forced to declare their acceptance of the Christian religion, but remained Jews at heart, were able openly to return to the faith of their fathers in Constantinople, and other cities of the Sultan, where the Jews enjoyed a goodly measure of freedom. (Rabbi Nissan Mindel - Chabad.org)

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