



Wembley Synagogue

ויקרא

Insights from the commentators into the Sedra of Vayikra 5768

What's the Sidra about?

1st & 2nd & 3rd Aliyot: The instructions for offering an "Oleh" - burnt offering is detailed. This offering could be brought from a bull, or male sheep or goat. The less expensive "Oleh", using a Turtle Dove or common dove, is described. The Mincha, an offering made from baked, fried, or deep fried matzah type crackers is detailed.

4th Aliya: The Korban Shlomim - the peace offering, brought from male or female cattle, sheep, and goats is described.

5th Aliya: This aliya describes this Korban Chatat - the sin offering. Three unique sin offerings are described: When the High Priest sinned or if the King sinned or if the entire nation sinned because of a wrong ruling by the Sanhedrin - High Court. Note: A Korban Chatat could only be offered if the sin was unintentional.

6th & 7th Aliyot: The Korban Chatat of a commoner is detailed, as well as the specifics of the Korban Asham - the guilt offering. This Korban was offered in instances where intentional wrong doing was implicated; such as not fulfilling an assumed oath, or doing something questionable without first ascertaining the law. Additionally, a type of Asham was offered in instances of dishonesty and swearing falsely. (Source: Rav Aron Tendler)

ויקרא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה - Hashem Called (1:1)

The letter aleph in the word Vayikra is written slightly smaller than full size. In order to understand the significance of this anomaly we must bear in mind that, aside from being the first letter of the aleph bet, the word aleph is also a verb denoting to learn, to teach, as in הַחֲרֵשׁ וְאֶלְמַדְךָ חֵכְמָה - "Be quiet, and I will teach you wisdom." (Job 33:33) The small aleph thus conveys the message that if we want to gain knowledge we must make ourselves small i.e. humble ourselves. Moshe Rabbeinu exemplifies this lesson. He was privileged to be called by Hashem because he humbled himself, shunning the pride and glory of leadership. (Source: Yalkut)

אָדָם בְּרִי־יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם קָרְבָן לַיהוָה - When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem . . ." (1:2)

Rashi comments: "Why is the term 'adam' employed here for 'man' [rather than the more common 'ish'י] To teach: Just as the first man ('Adam Harishon') did not offer sacrifices from anything acquired by theft - since everything was his - so you, too, shall not offer anything acquired by theft." R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler in his Michtav M'Eliyahu observes that Rashi's comment (which is derived from Midrash Rabbah) has a deeper message than the purely halachic statement: "A stolen animal is invalid for a sacrifice." He writes: One who brings an animal sacrifice is supposed to picture that he is offering himself to G-d. The animal merely stands in the place of the person who brings it. Who is capable of doing this? Only a person who is, in R' Dessler's lexicon, a "giver." While every person must both give and take during his lifetime, some people are inherently "givers" - even when they take, it is only in order to give. Most people, though, are inherently "takers" - even when they give, it is only in order to take. A "taker" cannot bring a proper sacrifice, because he does not really give. He certainly is incapable of giving of himself, as a sacrifice requires. Moreover, even if a person is a "giver" in practice, but in his heart he is a "taker", his offering is not complete. Therefore Rashi tells us: What characterised Adam? Not only did he not steal, for everything was his, but even the thought of taking was unknown to him. Only such a person, Rashi teaches, can offer a proper sacrifice. (Source: Michtav M'Eliyahu)

נִפְשׁ בְּרִיתְהֶמָּא בְּשִׁגְגָה מִכָּל מִצְוֹת ה' - *A soul that will sin unintentionally against any of the laws of G-d. . ." (4:2)* Because we are unable to bring korbanot chatat (sin offerings) when the Bet Hamikdash is not standing, R' Moshe Isserles ("Rema") writes that if a person has unintentionally sinned in such a manner that he is obligated to bring a korban chatat, he should give a certain sum of money to charity in place of the offering. The Mishnah Berurah adds that such a person should also read a section of the Torah which describes the korban chatat. (Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 334:26; Mishnah Berurah, ibid. para.80)

R' Yosef Chaim of Baghdad once was asked: Does donating a sum of money to charity (or reading the Torah portion which describes the chatat) replace the sin offering, or does the unintentional sinner remain obligated to bring a korban chatat at such time as the Bet Hamikdash is rebuilt? He answered that the unintentional sinner indeed remains obligated to bring a sin offering when the opportunity arises, and he proved the correctness of his view by citing the following Talmudic sources: The Gemara Shabbat 12b relates that one Shabbat, R' Yishmael ben Elisha became so engrossed in his learning that he unwittingly tilted the lamp in front of him to improve the flow of the oil to the wick. Realising what he had done, he wrote in his notebook: "I, Yishmael ben Elisha, am obligated to bring a sin offering upon the rebuilding of the Temple."

וְכָל־קָרְבַּן מִנְחָתְךָ בַּמִּלְּחָה וְלֹא תִשְׁבִּית מִלַּח בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעַל מִנְחָתְךָ עַל כָּל־קָרְבָנְךָ תִּקְרִיב מִלַּח

And on every korban mincha you should place salt, so that you do not destroy the salt of Hashem's covenant (2:13)

Rashi on this verse explains that at the time of creation, when Hashem created the sky, and separated the waters, the waters that were left underneath the sky on this world, came to Him with a grievance. They reasoned that the waters that were above the sky were close to Hashem, while they had to remain on this world, far away from Hashem. In order to appease the water, Hashem promised them that they too would merit reaching the world above, as on every korban that Bnei Yisrael would bring; they would pour salt, which comes from the sea. As such, we are warned that we must pour salt on the korbanot, in order not to break the treaty that Hashem had made with the water. The commentators ask a question on this Rashi. If Hashem was trying to placate the waters, why did He promise to have salt, which is merely a derivative of the water put on the korbanot, as opposed to having the water itself poured on the korbanot?

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky z'l offers an answer to this question. Rashi in Massechet Ketubot discusses the process of removing sea salt from water. Rashi writes that they used to dig ditches, into which the sea water would flow. When the sun came out, the water would evaporate, and the salt would be left behind. The salt remains even lower than the water, as the water can evaporate, and raise itself to the heavens, whereas the salt always stays behind on the bottom. In promising that the salt would always be placed on the korbanot, Hashem was explaining to the water that it is not necessary to be in the heavens, right next to the Throne of Glory in order to achieve great heights. Even the salt, which is doomed to remain on this Earth forever, can be placed on the korbanot, and thus achieve great heights. The purpose of putting the salt on the korbanot was not to placate the water, but rather to show the water that it is not necessary to be in the heavens in order to attain greatness.(Source: "Moreinu" written by Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky)

שבת שלום!
Shabbat Shalom!



Shabbat starts 5.49pm



Shabbat ends: 6.52pm

לע"נ ר' מרדכי צבי ב"ר חיאל משה וולפסון ז"ל

The *Insights into the Sedra* sheet is edited by Chazan Anthony Wolfson

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