

This week, we continue the book of the Torah devoted to the laws of *Korbanot* / sacrificial offerings. Based on verses in our *Parashah* such as, “This is the Torah of the *Olah* / burnt-offering” (*Vayikra* 6:2); “This is the Torah of the *Minchah* / meal-offering” (6:7); and similar verses, the *Gemara* (*Menachot* 110a) derives that: “If one studies the Torah section dealing with the *Korban Olah* or the *Korban Minchah* or another *Korban*, the Torah views it as if he brought that offering.” [Until here from the *Gemara*]

Rabbeinu Bachya ben Asher z”l (Spain; 1255-1340) writes: Our Sages refer to one who examines the meaning of the verses, who searches for what they are hinting and conveying. In that way, the “eyes of his mind” will be enlightened, and they will grasp wonders in the verses discussing the sacrificial offerings. That, in turn, will inspire one to try harder to observe the Torah and *Mitzvot*, and his sins will be forgiven as if he brought a *Korban*. The *Gemara* cannot be referring to someone who just reads the verses superficially without looking into their meaning.

Rabbeinu Bachya continues: This is the meaning, as well, of statements such as (*Berachot* 4b), “One who recites ‘*Tehilah Le’David*’ every day is guaranteed a portion in the World-to-Come.” [This refers to “*Ashrei*,” which we recite thrice daily because of this *Gemara*.] The idea is that if one reflects on the meaning of the verses, he will recognize G-d’s wonders and will strengthen his own *Emunah* and his own Divine service; then he will merit *Olam Ha’ba*. (*Rabbeinu Bachya Al Ha’Torah*)

Shabbat Ha’gadol

“Behold! I am sending you Eliyahu the prophet, before the great and awesome day of Hashem.” (*Malachi* 3:23 – *Haftarah* for *Shabbat Ha’gadol*)

R’ Avraham Yoffen z”l (1887-1970; *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Novardok Yeshiva in Bialystok, Poland; New York and Yerushalayim) writes: This verse reminds us of Moshe Rabbeinu’s announcement to *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt that they would be redeemed. The fact that our Sages enacted reading this on the *Shabbat* before *Pesach* teaches us that, in this month of redemption, we not only must remind ourselves anew of the Exodus from Egypt, we also must prepare ourselves for the future redemption. The roots of the future redemption are found within the Exodus, as the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 91b) observes in connection with the verse (*Shmot* 15:1), “Then Moshe and *Bnei Yisrael* will sing.” The *Gemara* notes: The verse does not say, “sang,” as would have been appropriate for an event that occurred long ago at the *Yam Suf*, but rather, “will sing.” This is an allusion in the Torah to the future *Techiyat Ha’meitim* / Resurrection of the Dead. [Until here from the *Gemara*]

Therefore, continues R’ Yoffen, it is incumbent upon us, as we busy ourselves with remembering the Exodus, to also examine our present state and determine whether we are preparing ourselves for the Redemption. We must ask ourselves whether we have fulfilled (*Shmot* 12:21), “Draw forth and buy for yourselves a sheep for your families, and slaughter the *Pesach*-offering,” according to the interpretation of the *Midrash Mechilta*: “Draw yourselves away from false gods and cling to *Mitzvot*.”

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“What is left over from the flesh of the feast-offering on the third day shall be burned in the fire.” (7:17)

The *Peshat* of this verse commands us to burn the leftovers of a *Korban* once the time allotted by the Torah for eating it has expired.

R' Menachem Mendel Stern z"l (rabbi of Sighet, Hungary; died 1834) interprets the verse allegorically: We are taught that, on *Shabbat*, one may “repair” the weekdays that preceded it. We also are taught that the “light” of the previous *Shabbat* lasts through the third day of the week, whereas the “light” of the coming *Shabbat* begins to appear on the fourth day of the week. Therefore, says our verse, be sure that whatever is left over from the previous week that needs to be repaired is eradicated by the “third day,” *i.e.*, the third day of the new week.

Even that, notes R' Stern, is not the ideal. Preferably, says the preceding verse, “it must be eaten on the day he offered his feast-offering.” If one has something to repair or fix – *i.e.*, a need to repent – he should do so on the very same day that he sinned. *(Derech Emunah)*

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R' Yoffen continues: The *Haftarah* speaks of a general malaise in the Jewish People’s service of G-d; for example (3:13), “You said, ‘Serving *Elokim* is useless, and what did we gain from keeping His charge or from walking submissively before *Hashem*, Master of Legions?’” The prophet speaks of a world where it appears that dishonesty does pay, where successful people take advantage of widows and orphans without consequence to themselves; a world that advances in all areas of science, leading it to deny the existence of higher values.

In such an age, one might think that the quality of our *Mitzvot* does not matter; as long as we are going through the motions of performing *Mitzvot*, G-d is pleased. To counter this view, writes R' Yoffen, the prophet says (3:18), “Then you will return and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves *Elokim* and one who does not serve Him.” The *Gemara* (*Chagigah* 9b) teaches that “one who serves *Elokim*” refers to a person who reviews his learning 101 times, while “one who does not serve Him” refers to a person who reviews his learning “only” 100 times. Each additional bit of effort that is put into a *Mitzvah* is noticed by *Hashem* and makes a difference. *Hashem* values every single good deed, even a single good word, and, on the other hand, the depth of G-d’s judgment for any laxity in serving Him is great. No detail is ignored!

(Ha'mussar Ve'ha'da'at: Shmot/Vayikra p.143)

“This is the Torah of the *Olah-offering*; it is the *Olah-offering*...” (6:2)

[As noted on the front page, the *Gemara* (*Menachot* 110a) derives from this verse and similar verses that: “If one studies the Torah section dealing with the *Korban Olah* or the *Korban Minchah* or another *Korban*, the Torah views it as if he brought that offering.”]

R' Moshe Cheifetz z"l (Italy; 1664-1711) writes: Studying a *Korban's* laws cannot fully substitute for offering that *Korban*, because, even if one fulfills his obligation to *Hashem* thereby, the *Kohanim* are nevertheless deprived of their share, *i.e.*, the meat they would have received from each offering were the *Bet Ha'mikdash* standing. Thus, the only offering that can be replaced fully by studying is the *Olah*, which is burnt entirely on the altar and not eaten by the *Kohanim*. That is why our verse adds: “it is the *Olah-offering*,” – the Torah of the *Olah-offering* is like the offering itself.

(Melech Machshevet)

“If he shall offer it for a *Todah* / thanksgiving-offering...” (7:12)

Rashi z"l writes: This refers to one who brings an offering on account of a matter that requires thanksgiving, *i.e.*, on account of a miraculous deliverance that he experienced, specifically: one who made a sea-voyage, one who traveled in the wilderness, one who was in prison, or one who was sick and was healed. [Until here from *Rashi*]

R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson z"l (1902-1994; *Lubavitcher Rebbe*) asks: *Rashi's* stated goal is to explain the *Peshat* / “simple meaning” of the verses. If so, what forced *Rashi* to interpret our verse as referring to someone who experienced a miracle? Maybe anyone who needs to thank *Hashem* should bring a *Todah* offering!

He explains: If the obligation to bring a *Todah* offering applied to everyone who needs to thank *Hashem*, every Jew would have to bring a *Todah* offering every single day, for G-d performs kindnesses for every person at every moment. It is not plausible, however, that the Torah is demanding that we bring a *Todah* offering every day. Therefore, *Rashi* had to interpret the verse differently.

Still, why did *Rashi* limit the obligation to bring a *Todah* offering to one who experiences specific miracles? The *Lubavitcher Rebbe* explains: Moshe Rabbeinu was speaking to the Generation of the Desert, which saw miracles every day, including the *Mahn*, the Clouds of Glory, and the Well of Miriam. If all miracles required a *Todah* offering, they would have needed to bring a *Todah* every day, and that, too, is not plausible.

(Be'urei Ha'Chumash)