

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT VAYIKRA

The Power of an Adam

The Parsha of Vayikra begins, "And He called to Moshe, and He spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, to say, Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them, adam, a man (or woman) from among you that will bring an offering to Hashem, from animals..."

There are many questions that can be asked on these verses; this article will touch on a few.

This is the beginning of the laws of sacrificial offerings to Hashem. Rashi tells us that before every time Hashem spoke to Moshe, He first called him as a sign that He cherished him. However, it is only mentioned that He called him here by the laws of offerings. Why?

According to the Midrash, this was the first time that Moshe was called to the Tent of Meeting since it was first put up and the glory of Hashem filled it. Perhaps that is why it mentions that Hashem called him

because it was the first time. But this brings up the question: Why were the first laws taught from the Tent of Meeting the laws of offerings?

Being that these are the first, we must conclude that it is most important. Even the Talmud calls the book of Vayikra, the book that focuses on the laws of offerings, "Hachamur Sheb'sforim," the most important of the books. Also, since it is the third

book of the five books of the Torah, the middle of the Torah, shows of its great significance.

More questions. The first word of the first verse, "Vayikra, and he called," is written in the Torah with a small Alef. What is the significance of this?

The second verse says, "adam, a man from among you that will bring an offering." Why doesn't it just say, "If you bring an offering?" We would certainly know that

it is referring to a person. What is the significance of saying that it is an "adam" who is bringing it?

The Zohar says, "We, Israel, have the merit that Hashem calls us adam, as it says, 'adam, a man from among you that will bring.' What is the reason He calls us adam? Because it is written 'And you who are attached to Hashem your G-d...' Now we can understand why our verse specifically says "adam," because it is the adam part of us, our attachment to Hashem, that makes it possible for us to bring sacrificial offerings, as will be explained.

The Midrash says that the reason Hashem commanded the Jewish people to bring offerings is because they are attached to Him. This is the meaning of the verse, "Just as a belt is attached to the hips of a person, so have I caused the entire house of Israel and the entire house of Judah to cling to Me."

Although they both speak of attachment to Hashem, they are talking about two different kinds of attachment. The Midrash is talking about an attachment like a belt, that although it is attached, it is not truly one with you. This is called the attachment of vessels. Something could completely fill the vessel, but it's not truly attached. The Zohar on the other hand, speaks of an essential attachment, in which we are one with Hashem. This is called the attachment of lights, where the source of light and the light coming from it are one.

They are referring to different aspects of sacrificial offerings. The Midrash is referring to the sacrifice itself, which is brought to sustain the world, as the Talmud Yerushalmi says on the verse, "To plant the heavens and to establish the earth, this refers to the sacrifices." And the Korban Haeda explains, "Because, through the sacrifices, the rules (of the nature) of the world are sustained." But what gives us the ability to bring offerings that will sustain existence? It is the fact that we are essentially one with Hashem and therefore, higher than the world. Because we are higher than the world, we can have an effect on its existence.

How does bringing a sacrificial offering sustain the

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world? In Kabbalistic teaching, the whole world is divided into four biological kingdoms. There is domem, inanimate objects, like rocks, sand and water. Tzomeach, vegetation. Chai, living creatures. And medaber, people who have conversation. In sacrificial offerings, all were represented. The inanimate object was the salt that accompanied every offering. Vegetation was the wood that burned on the altar, where it was offered. Also, offerings were generally accompanied by wine libations, cakes made of flour, and sometimes oil, all of which are from vegetation. The living creature was the animal that was offered. And then there was the person who brought the offering. By all parts of the world being represented in the offering and raised to Hashem, the whole world is energized.

It is specifically the adam part of us that is one with Hashem. There are four names for man in Hebrew: adam, ish, enosh, and gever. Adam is the highest name; it is the G-dly part of us, as it says, "And Hashem created the adam in His image..." It is the part of us that is one with Hashem and therefore higher than existence; hence it can affect existence. This is why the verse specifically says "adam," because it is the adam part of us that could bring a sacrifice and sustain the world.

This differentiation between lights and vessels is found by the Torah and mitzvahs as well. Doing mitzvahs attaches us to Hashem like vessels and the study of Torah, like lights. Prayer is a mitzvah (the daily prayers were established in the place of the actual sacrifices); they sustain existence. But it is the study of Torah that gives us the ability to bring prayers that can affect the world.

Now we can understand why the first transmission from Hashem to Moshe via the Tent of Meeting was the teaching of the sacrificial offerings. The main purpose of the Tent of Meeting was the transmission of the Torah, and the main purpose of the Torah is brought about through the sacrifices. The purpose of Torah is to affect the world around us, making it into a home for Hashem. And sacrifices do this in two ways. First, the offering itself - taking a mundane animal and by offering it up to Hashem, it becomes holy. That is how we make the world into a home for Hashem, by taking the mundane physical world and turning it into a holy place. The second way is as mentioned above, through the sacrifices we affect the whole world.

Although the Torah is Hashem's wisdom, and it seems almost sacrilegious to suggest that it has anything to do with this mundane physical world, that is only true about the Torah itself. But when you consider the source of the Torah, Hashem's infinite essence, that has no bounds, not even that it can't be connected to the physical world, and that He desires to have a dwelling in this lowly limited physical world, and that this is the true essence of the Torah as well, then every mundane

physical part of existence becomes significant and essentially connected with the Torah.

How do we draw Hashem's unlimited essence into the world? In other words, how is it possible for us to be an adam, reveal our essential oneness with Hashem's essence and affect the world in the way of sacrificial offerings? It is only through selflessness and humility, by us being naught, that we allow Hashem's unlimited essence to come through. This is learned from the first word of the parsha, "Vayikra, and He called." Why doesn't it say, "And Hashem called?" It just says, "And He called," we know that it is Hashem Who is calling Moshe; why does it avoid calling Him by His Name? Because here His infinite essence, beyond any name and beyond any description, called to Moshe.

Why was he able to draw this great level of G-dliness into the world? Because of his selflessness and humility, which is symbolized by the small Aleph in the word Vayikra.

We all have a little bit of Moshe in us, and that comes with the ability to be selfless and humble. If we tap into that, we too, can draw Hashem's unlimited essence into the world and make the mundane holy.

Through our collective effort, we will make this world into a home for Hashem's unlimited essence and usher in the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon. The time has come.

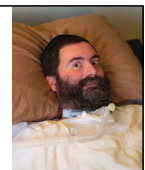
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I just came across your video titled "I Matter" on Instagram. It was so inspiring! You are the most amazing person I've come across to date! Wishing you continued success in your goals! A freilichen Purim & thank you for being you!"

- Sarah C, Lakewood

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Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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