Points to Ponder

Vayikra/Zachor 5784

**וַיִּקְרָ֖א אֶל־משֶׁ֑ה And he called to Moshe (1:1)** – The Midrash comments that whenever we have a Talmid Chacham who lacks Daas, a carcass (Neveila) is better than he. The Midrash proves this point from Moshe who did not enter Ohel Moed until he was called. But why the comparison to Neveilah? **Rav Aharon Kotler**  explained that if one does not act with Derech Eretz in his Torah study, then a Nevailah is better than he because through the process of Korbanos we learn how Hashem loves us. If a person is not consistent internally with the shell of Torah he holds – then he is but an empty vessel – a dead container for what should possess life.

**אָדָ֗ם כִּי־יַקְרִ֥יב מִכֶּ֛ם Adam (1:2)** – The Midrash likens he who brings a Korban to Adam HaRishon (Vayikra Rabba 2:7). **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah**  questioned why the comparison was to Adam and not to Jewish personalities. He explained that when the Mishkan was established, there was a revelation of Maamad Har Sinai which returned the world to its pre-Sin days at the time of creation. The world of the Korban begins with Adam at the time of the creation of the world and we hope for the return to that status each time we mention *V’Arva L’Hashem Minchas Yehuda V’Yirushalayim K’Yimei Olam.*

**אֲשֶׁר־פֶּ֖תַח אֹ֥הֶל מוֹעֵֽד And they will slaughter at the door to the Ohel Moed (1:5)-** Why was it important to highlight the doors to the Mishkan? What is the relevance? **Rav Betzalel Rudinsky**  opined that the doors symbolize the takeaway of the Korban experience. When one realizes the purpose and power of being close to Hashem and interacting with Him in the Mikdash, the person becomes aware of primary purposes in life and it permeates his entire existence.

**כָּל־הַמִּנְחָ֗ה Korban Mincha (2:11-13)** – On the one hand we are not allowed to allow this to become Chametz and cannot allow sourdough on the Mizbeiach but at the same time, it needs to be salted. Why? **Rav Gifter**  explained that Honey and sourdough are added ingredients salt merely brings out the flavor from that which is already there. Judaism also, doesn’t allow for new ingredients but to flavor the present? That’s ideal.

**וְאִם־זֶ֥בַח שְׁלָמִ֖ים קָרְבָּנ֑וֹ If his offering is a feast peace offering (3:1)-** The **Steipler**  wonders what the purpose of a Shelamim is? After all, if a Korban is for someone’s wellbeing what is accomplished by having an optional one? Utilizing the writing of the Mesillas Yesharim (Chap 8), the Steipler suggests that when one is not into zerius internally, s/he should express it externally and it can serve to awaken the fervor to help him improve. Similarly, when one does not feel Ahavas Hashem fully, then by donating a voluntary Korban one will be able to awaken inner feelings of love for Hashem and desire to serve him. **Rav Pam**  adds that the lesson is quite strong for us today. Any Jew can improve his Ahavas Hashem by voluntarily taking upon himself some improvement of a Mitzva. The taking on of the voluntary aspect will inspire the continuity.

**אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָשִׂ֖יא יֶֽחֱטָ֑א When a Nasi sins (4:22) – Rashi** notes that the generation is to be praised when it has a leadership that desires to admit its flaw in order to achieve Kappara. **Rav Schachter**  would often add to us that the generation that sets its standards on doing right rather than being seen as flawless is a generation whose leaders are not afraid to admit when they are wrong. The Ben Ish Chai notes that the words Asher Nasi Yechta have as their abbreviation the word “Ani” – if the Nasi is all about “Ani” he runs the risk of sin.

**וְאִם־לֹא֩ תַשִּׂ֨יג יָד֜וֹ  If he cannot afford 2 doves or 2 turtledoves then he brings the korban…(5:11) - Sefer HaChinuch** learns that the reason for the differences in the Korban here is a message that one should live within his or her means. **Mishneh L’Melech** wonders where he got the idea from specifically here. **Rav Shimon Schwab**  explained that the Chatas Olah V’Yored comes not with 2 levels as by Metzora and Yoledes but rather with a third additional level of poverty. The reason is that poverty often makes one cheat and steal from others when one seeks his needs and cannot achieve them.

Zachor - **Zachor – Rav Belsky**  reminisced about how **Rav Pam**  would remind people to remember ***MAASEH (and not Mechiyas)*** Amalek. The reason for the difference, he explained, is that the Mitzva of Mechiyas Amalek is something that arouses passion and hatred which do not foster the sense of closeness to Hashem that is necessary for the fulfillment of one’s Avodas Hashem. It is just an arousing of hatred which has no release. The Mitzva must be understood differently – it is a mitzvah to remember our own weaknesses – when we are vulnerable due to our weak spots in our nation or due to our weariness and lack of Yiras Shomayim. If we turn the Mitzva on ourselves we will successfully prepare for it and will be ready to handle it.

Haftara for Zachor

**וַיַּחְמֹל֩ שָׁא֨וּל  Shaul took pity (Shmuel Alef 15:9)** - The **Midrash** at the beginning of Parshas Emor notes that Moshe asked Hashem why the first king of Am Yisrael was destined to die in the manner that he did. Hashem answered “Why are you complaining to me? — Instead, you should speak to the Kohanim who he (Saul) killed (in the priestly city of Nov), for they are prosecuting him.” “That”, the Medrash concludes, “is why it says ‘Speak to the Kohanim.'” the Possukim specifically note that Shaul was removed as king for not destroying Amalek. Why does the midrash suggest otherwise? **Rav Yisoschar Frand quoted the Reishe Rav (HaDrash V’HaIyun)** who explained that Shaul’s primary sin was his refusal to kill all of Amalek. But, had it been for that sin alone,  he could have excused himself by saying, “I am a compassionate person. I could not bring myself to kill innocent men, women, and children.” That would have been a human emotion, which is understandable. Sometimes a person may have trouble controlling his emotions. However, the refutation of such an argument was the incident with Nov, the city of priests, where Saul was not compassionate. He wiped out an entire city of Jewish priests. Nov remained as a prosecutor pointing to the evidence. “No, Saul, you are not a compassionate individual.”