Points to Ponder

Vayikra/Zachor 5779

**וַיִּקְרָ֖א אֶל־משֶׁ֑ה He called to Moshe (1:1) – Rashi** notes that the call was to Moshe and not Aharon. Why would the section  of the Torah most applicable to Aharon need to be given to Moshe first? **Rav Chaim Rosenthal (L’Sitcha Elyon)** explains that just like in the Pesach Seder where Moshe’s name is not mentioned in order to protect one from thinking that Moshe’s involvement in the exodus would cloud the importance of recognizing that it came from Hashem, Aharon is also obscured here lest one think that the Korbanos rules came from a source other than divine.

**אָדָ֗ם כִּי־יַקְרִ֥יב מִכֶּ֛ם When a man shall offer a Korban (1:2) – Rashi** comments that the use of the word Adam here reminds us that just as Adam did not bring a Korban from things that were stolen so too, we should not. However, Adam owned everything. Theft was an impossibility for him. What is the comparison in that case? The **Chofetz Chaim** explains that one needs to constantly be on the alert that there is not even a chance at theft within his stuff. Just as Adam was sure whatever he had was not stolen so too, we need to be sure of the same.

**וְאִם־מִנְחָ֥ה עַל־הַמַּֽחֲבַ֖ת And if the Mincha shall be on a pan (2:5) – Rashi** comments that the making of the Mincha is hard and because of the narrowness, the fire burns the oil.  In the Shabbos Zemiros we compare keeping Shabbos to this type of a Mincha. Why? **Rav Eliyahu Lopian ztl.** explains that in the same way that there is a depth Mincha and a shallow baked one, and both are accepted by Hashem – Shabbos has a similar feature. Some experience Shabbos with a strong energy and Hislahavus. Others keep Shabbos without any spirit whatsoever. All are accepted by Hashem.

**כִּ֤י כָל־שְׂאֹר֙ וְכָל־דְּבַ֔שׁ לֹֽא־תַקְטִ֧ירוּ All sourdough and honey cannot be offered as a Korban (2:11)** – Why are these forbidden in a Mincha offering? The Gemara notes that these ingredients are similar and symbolic of the Yetzer HaRa. How? Why? **Rav Avraham Rivlin Shlita** explains that sourdough causes things to puff  up in Gaava. When things are puffed up, they are not accepted by Hashem. Honey makes things that are bad for you seem sweet. Similarly, the Yetzer HaRa takes sin and makes it look righteous and sweet.

**אֶת־פְּנֵ֖י פָּרֹ֥כֶת הַקֹּֽדֶשׁ: He shall sprinkle the blood on the Paroches (4:6)** – When it comes to the sprinkling on the Paroches, the term “Paroches HaKodesh” appears in regard to the Par Kohein  Moshiach but in connection to the Par Helem Davar it does not use the word “Kodesh”. Why? The Talmud (Zevachim 41b) explains that when a Kohein sins but the majority do not, it does not hurt the Kedusha of the Mikdash. When the majority sins, it has bad effects on the Kedusha of the place**.   Rav Yechezkel Levenstein ztl**. points out how seriously we need to preserve the Kodesh within us. For if we contribute to the failings of the masses, we will be guilty of ruining the Kodesh of the nation together and that is something we need to avoid.

**אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָשִׂ֖יא יֶֽחֱטָ֑א That a Nasi shall sin (4:22) – Rashi** comments that the word Asher comes from the word “Ashrei” and is there to teach us that a generation whose leaders admit to their shortcomings is one to be praised. **The Lubavitcher Rebbe ztl.** wondered why the same is not said about the Kohein Moshiach earlier (4:3)? He answers that the ideal praise would be he who leads without any sin whatsoever. That would be most pronounced in the Nasi whose job it was to lead the people and to keep them from sin. When a generation can see the failed leadership of its leaders (as opposed to its Kohanim) and the leader’s willingness to atone for inadvertent sins despite the publicity and humbling that comes along with such awareness, the people pray that they should never come to that situation again. THAT is a praiseworthy generation.

**כֶּֽסֶף־שְׁקָלִ֥ים בְּשֶֽׁקֶל־הַקֹּ֖דֶשׁ לְאָשָֽׁם: With a value of silver shekels (5:15)** – It is interesting that while a Korban Chatas which is brought by the person who intentionally sins does not have a minimum price tag, the price of an Asham Talui is a minimum of 2 shekels. It could potentially turn out that the one who knows he sins could pay less than the one who is unsure. How does this make sense? The **Rema** in Hil. Yom Kippur explains that when someone knows that he sinned, he needs to merely engage the process of Teshuva to atone. The Torah does not need to restrict him to focus. However, when it come to the Asham Talui, the person is not sure and might not perform the process of Teshuva properly. Hence the Torah gave him more specific guidelines**. Rav Schachter Shlita** would remind us that when it comes to sin, we also tend to whitewash our sins and that disbelief sometimes leads us to be less than thorough in the Teshuva process. Knowing our responsibilities helps our sincerity and our awareness of what is needed from us in the process of Teshuva.

**זָכ֕וֹר Zachor – Rav Belsky ztl.** reminisced about how **Rav Pam ztl**. 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.

**Haftarah: הֲקִימֹ֖תִי אֶת־דְּבַ֥ר I have fulfilled the will of Hashem (Shmuel I:15:13)** – Did Shaul think he could lie to Shmuel? **Rav Eitan Shandrofi Shlita (of Merkaz HaRav)** explains that Shaul believed he fulfilled Hashem’s will by killing out Amalek and the Chemla he demonstrated was really what he thought Hashem WOULD want from him for a short night. However, he erred because Hashem expects us to fulfill his will each and every day without delay.