Points to Ponder

Vayikra 5780

**וַיִּקְרָ֖א אֶל־משֶׁ֑ה He called to Moshe (1:1)** - In his introduction to Vayikra, **Ramban** identifies the structure of the Sefer from Korban to Tumah to Arayos to Korban to Shabbos and Yom Tov and the flow therein. **Rav Nisson Alpert ztl** noted that this is the beauty of Torah. Namely, one topic flows naturally into the next. The purpose for all of this is that through the Torah there is a constant flow to be close to the Shechina.

**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 Shlita** 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.

**רֵֽיחַ־נִיח֖וֹחַ Reiach nichoach (1:9) - Rashi** explains that the message here is that you have performed Hashem’s will which brought Him pleasure**. Rav Wolbe ztl** notes that there are 4 types of Mitzvos -- some are time based, others apply all the time. A third group are based on opportunity (think Hashavas Aveida). The 4th group are the Mitzvos that man himself realizes that he needs to perform. It is up to him to know that he owes a Korban and when he is willing to understand that he has an obligation to Hashem, Hashem appreciates that.

**כִּ֤י כָל־שְׂאֹר֙ וְכָל־דְּבַ֔שׁ לֹֽא־תַקְטִ֧ירוּ מִמֶּ֛נּוּ Because all sourdough and honey you shall not use to serve to Hashem (2:11)** - Why? **Rav Yehuda Tzedaka ztl** explains that sourdough is reminiscent of the sourness of people while honey is reminiscent of the sweetness we show people. A person cannot be either all sour or all sweet when representing himself.

**נֶ֗פֶשׁ כִּי־תֶֽחֱטָ֤א בִשְׁגָגָה֙ When a soul sins unintentionally (4:2)** - If the sin is unintentional, why is there a need to atone? The person didn’t mean to sin**? Rav Moshe Soloveitchik ztl of Zurich** compared the situation to a person who was carrying cheap glass, it is expected that from time to time he might break some by accident. The opposite is true for the person carrying expensive crystal -- there extra care is taken NOT to have slippage and breakage. When a person sees Mitzvos as cheap glass, s/he needs to atone for that alone -- which allowed the sin to happen unintentionally.

**אִ֣ם הַכֹּהֵ֧ן הַמָּשִׁ֛יחַ יֶֽחֱטָ֖א לְאַשְׁמַ֣ת הָעָ֑ם If the annointed Kohein sins to the guilt of the nation (4:3)** - **Rashi** notes that when the Kohein Gadol sins, it is the guilt of the nation because they depend on him to atone on their behalf. **Ksav Sofer** adds that in general it is understood that one who brings Zechus to the masses should not have sin happen through him. Hence, the Kohein Gadol should not be ABLE to sin. The only exception is if the people aren’t letting him represent them -- due to their own level of sin, hence the guilt is to them too.

**וְאֶת־הַשֵּׁנִ֛י יַֽעֲשֶׂ֥ה עֹלָ֖ה And the second one he should make an Olah according to the law (5:10)** - The Talmud (Chullin 22a) explains that that second bird is brought as an Olah only during the day, as learned from the rules of the Chatas Beheima. The Gemara questions why this lesson needed to be derived from the Chatas Beheima if, as a Korban, the Olah bird needs to be done by day. The **Rashba** even emended the text and removed the lesson. But **Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk** suggested that the comparison is clear: Part of the atonement in the Chatas Beheima is the offering of the Eimurim on the Mizbeiach. This is done at night. By a bird Korban, the Eimurim are replaced by the Olas Ha’Of in this korban. Hence, it was possible for one to think that this could be done at night and for that the Gemara’s question and answer do indeed make sense. **Rav Schachter Shlita** told us that after offering this interpretation, the Or Sameiach dreamed that in Shomayim the Rashba himself came and used this explanation and the Or Sameiach as a proof that people still existed who sought and found truth in Torah.

**Haftara: וְאֶתְּנָ֚ה לַחֵ֙רֶם֙ יַֽעֲקֹ֔ב וְיִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל לְגִדּוּפִֽים And I give Yaakov over for destruction and Yisrael for revilement (Yeshaya 43:28) - Rav Shimon Schwab ztl** noted that once the aura of Kedusha is removed from the leaders, the enemies of the Jewish people do not hesitate to attack and vilify us. He cited the example of the initiation of the boycott against Jewish businesses that began in Germany on Shabbos April 1, 1933 which was a Shabbos but the Germans thought that this would not matter since Shabbos was the busiest day of the shopping week. Rav Schwab recalled that this Haftara was read that Shabbos and recalled remarking that  if a Jew is willing to be Michallel Shabbos, the greater shame was not the boycott but rather the swift punishment that came about as a result.