

בס"ז

# THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

# Parshas Vayikroh

9 Adar II, 5782 – March 12, 2022

Compiled from the works of  
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**Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos**  
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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi  
Parshas Vayikroh**

Likkutei Sichos Volume 32, Pages 1 – 6

**Rashi in His Own Words**

ויקרא א', ט': וקרבו וקרעו ורתץ במים והקטיר הפקן את-הפל' המזבחה עלה אשה רים-ניחום לה:  
רש"י ד"ה ניחוח: נחת רוח לפני, שאמרתי ונעשה רצוני:

**Vayikroh 1:9:** And its innards and its legs, he shall wash with water. Then, the Kohen shall cause all animals to (go up in) smoke on the altar, as a burnt offering, a fire offering, (with) a pleasing fragrance to the Lord.

**Rashi Heading - pleasing:** (This word stems from the same root as the expression ,נחת רוח, "contentment." G-d says: "(This sacrifice) is a pleasure for Me, for I said, and My will was fulfilled!"

**Synopsis**

This week's Torah portion is also the beginning of the third book of the Torah, Vayikroh, which deals primarily with sacrificial law. Regarding many sacrifices taught here, including the first, the Torah says they were<sup>1</sup> "a pleasing fragrance to Hashem." Rashi cites the word "pleasing" and explains, "(This sacrifice) is a pleasure to me, for I said, and My will was fulfilled." Likewise, we find earlier<sup>2</sup> regarding the rams brought during the seven-day inauguration of the altar that the Torah says "a pleasing fragrance to Hashem." There, Rashi cites the words "a pleasing fragrance" and also explains, "(This sacrifice) is a pleasure to me, for I said, and My will was fulfilled."

After the Great Flood, we find a similar expression regarding Noach's offerings to Hashem. When he and his family left the ark, the Torah tells us<sup>3</sup> that Noach built an altar where he offered burnt offerings. Immediately after that, the Torah says, "And the Lord smelled the pleasant aroma." There Rashi does not mention anything about the fragrance pleasing Hashem.

However, we can explain that differently. When Noach left the ark and saw Hashem saved him and his family, he felt pleasure and gratitude, and he offered sacrifices as an expression of this. When the Torah says that the aroma was pleasant, it means that Noach found it pleasing.

However, this poses a question. Why should sacrifices arouse a feeling of "pleasure to Hashem" more than other Mitzvos? That is what Rashi is explaining here – the fact that the offerings listed here are

1. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 1:9.  
2. Parshas Tetzaveh, Shemos 29:18.  
3. Parshas Noach, Bereishis 8:20 – 21.

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"a pleasure to me, for I said, and My will was fulfilled." The fulfillment of this Mitzvah is different than any other. Even Mitzvos, termed "Chukim," meaning that they have no rational reason, are different from sacrifices. Chukim train us to accept the yoke of G-d's kingship over us. Sacrifices, on the other hand, "seem" to benefit Hashem. We refer to them as "His food." We perform this service purely for Him, without deriving any benefit ourselves. That is what is meant by, "I said, and My will was fulfilled." The fact is that G-d is non-corporeal and derives no benefit whatsoever from sacrifices. Therefore, Rashi explains that He "enjoys" them (so to speak) because they fulfill His will.

### **Rashi's Explanation**

This week's Torah portion is also the beginning of the third book of the Torah, Vayikroh. The end of the previous book, which we just concluded, discussed the building of the Sanctuary. For the most part, this book discusses the services they performed within the Sanctuary. Since a large part of the Temple service was offering sacrifices, a large percentage of this book deals with sacrificial laws.

Regarding many of the sacrifices discussed in the Torah, including the very first sacrifice mentioned in this week's portion, the Torah tells us that they are<sup>4</sup> "a pleasing fragrance to Hashem." Rashi cites the word "pleasing" and explains, "(This sacrifice) is a pleasure to me, for I said, and My will was fulfilled." We find the same earlier regarding the rams offered during the seven-day inauguration of the altar, and the Torah says that they provided<sup>5</sup> "a pleasing fragrance to Hashem." There, Rashi cites the words "a pleasing fragrance" and also explains, "(This sacrifice) is a pleasure to me, for I said, and My will was fulfilled."

Supercommentaries, particularly the Sefer Hamizrachi<sup>6</sup>, explain that Rashi's purpose here is to negate the possibility of explaining "a pleasing fragrance to Hashem," as meaning that the pleasant odor of the sacrifice caused Hashem to relax (as so to speak). This might be similar to the idea of a person settling down to rest with pleasant-smelling spices. Rashi explains that it is impossible to make such a statement regarding Hashem. Rather G-d's pleasure (so to speak) came from the fact that we fulfilled His will.

However, we cannot say that Rashi needs to tell us that the Torah does not mean that Hashem rested due to smelling the pleasant fragrance. If Rashi wanted to teach us that, he would have said so when

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4. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 1:9.

5. Parshas Tetzaveh, Shemos 29:18.

6. Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi (1455 – 1525 or 26) was a great Talmudist and Halachic codifier who was born in Constantinople. He is perhaps best known for his supercommentary to Rashi.

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the Torah used that expression the first time. After the great flood, upon Noach and his family leaving the ark, the Torah tells us<sup>7</sup> that Noach built an altar upon which he offered burnt offerings. Immediately after that, the Torah said to us that "the Lord smelled the pleasant aroma." There Rashi does not comment on these words at all.

Additionally, it would seem that regarding Noach, there is all the more reason for Rashi to tell us that "the pleasing aroma" did not "relax" Hashem. There it says explicitly that the Lord *smelled* the pleasant aroma. However, while describing later sacrifices offered in the Tabernacle, the Torah makes no such statement.

It seems that we can distinguish between "the pleasing fragrance to Hashem" in our Torah portion and "the pleasant aroma" stated regarding Noach's sacrifices. With Noach, we can explain that the Torah is not saying that the fragrance pleased Hashem; instead, it is saying that the fragrance pleased Noach, i.e., he was pleased by the aroma of the sacrifices. However, in our portion where it states outright that the scent was pleasing to Hashem, Rashi needs to explain that Hashem's pleasure was because we fulfilled His will.

### **Difficulties in Understanding Rashi**

We cannot say that because Noach's sacrifices pleased himself, and the sacrifices offered later pleased Hashem is the difference between the two. We know that Rashi always cites the words from the verse he explains. We also know that he is precise; he quotes those words he explains, no more and no less. If Rashi was primarily concerned with explaining why it says "a pleasing fragrance to Hashem," why does he only cite the word "pleasing?"

On the contrary, regarding Noach, it says that "the Lord smelled the pleasant aroma." In other words, it would seem that Hashem found the aroma pleasant! We cannot possibly say that the scent of a burnt offering is pleasing to a person, as the smell of meat and bones burning is not at all pleasant. How can we say that Noach found it pleasant?

There is a more general question that we need to ask about sacrifices. What is the reason for this Mitzvah? Many other commentaries discuss this, but Rashi does not seem to mention it at all. As a rule, indeed, Rashi does not offer reasons for Mitzvos. However, here it concerns Peshat. There seems to be absolutely no purpose or reason for a sacrifice. One burns either all or part of an animal on an altar. The burned part is of no use to the person bringing the offering and is certainly of no benefit to Hashem!

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7. Parshas Noach, Bereishis 8:20 – 21.

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Hashem, being non-corporeal, neither "eats" nor "enjoys" the sacrifices. Why should we perform this service?

As we have said many times, Rashi is extremely precise with his language. Why does Rashi say, "for I said, and My will was performed?" One would think that he should have said, "for I commanded, and you carried out my will."

### The Explanation

From the above, we see that Rashi is telling us that it was not the physical aroma of the sacrifice that was pleasant. Therefore, we can understand the pleasure which came from the sacrifices brought by Noach. Hence Rashi does not need to explain anything.

When Noach left the ark and saw Hashem saved him and his family, he felt pleasure and gratitude. That was why he offered sacrifices, as an expression of thanks to G-d. "As in water, face answers to face, so is the heart of a man to a man."<sup>8</sup> Noach expressed his love and pleasure toward Hashem for saving himself and his family, which was reflected by Hashem finding the aroma of the sacrifices he brought "pleasant."

We still have a question regarding the sacrifices that were (and will be) brought in the Bais Hamikdosh. Why should sacrifices arouse a feeling of "pleasure" to G-d more than other Mitzvos? That is what Rashi is explaining here. The sacrifices listed here are "a pleasure to me, for I said, and My will was fulfilled. The fulfillment of this Mitzvah is different than that of any other. The only real reason for bringing sacrifices is because G-d said so. Hashem derives (as so to speak) pleasure from the fact that we do something which seems senseless. We burn an animal. Neither Hashem nor we derive any benefit from this act. Despite this, we fulfill Hashem's will. This is a source of pleasure for Him.

The only remaining difficulty is that we have an entire classification of Mitzvos called "Chukim – Statutes." Rashi explains<sup>9</sup> that these Mitzvos have no reason according to human understanding. Why should this category of Mitzvos be any different than sacrifices? The Ramban<sup>10</sup> writes that Chukim do have reasons, albeit ones that we cannot comprehend. However, in his commentary of the Torah, Rashi makes it patently clear that Chukim have no rational explanation whatsoever. According to Rashi, why should sacrifices be any different than Chukim?

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8. Mishlei 27:19.

9. Parshas Beshalach, Shemos 15:26, Parshas Toldos, Bereishis 26:5, Parshas Acharei, Vayikroh 18:4, Parshas Kedoshim, Vayikroh 19:19 and Parshas Chukas, Bamidbar 19:2.

10. Rabbi Moshe, the son of Nachman (1194 – 1270). He was a great Sephardic rabbi, philosopher, kabbalist, and Biblical commentator.

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The explanation is that even according to Rashi, Chukim do have a purpose. Their purpose is to help us accustom ourselves to being subjected to the yoke of G-d's kingship. On the other hand, sacrifices "seem" to "benefit" Hashem, and the Torah refers to them as G-d's "food." By seeing to it that this service is performed and not viewing a sacrifice as a commandment but rather as something "that we are doing for Him" (so to speak), we generate great pleasure Above.

*(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Vayikroh and Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5742, and Shabbos Parshas Shelach 5728)*

**I hope you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.**

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**DEDICATED IN HONOR OF  
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE**

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**IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

**Dr. Mindel Rivka (Muriel) bas Reb Menachem Mendel Shlomo ע"ה  
Stitt**

Passed away on Shabbat Parshat Lech Lecha, 10 Mar-Cheshvan, 5782  
**May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life**

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**DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY שיהיו**

\* \* \*

**IN HONOR OF**

The Soldiers of "Tzivos Hashem"

**Chaim and Aiden Oded שיהיו**

**Morris**

May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride  
to their family and a Torah light to their community

\*

**DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS**

**Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיהיו**

**Morris**

\* \* \*

**IN HONOR OF**

**Mrs. Esther שתחי' Sharabani**

May she go from strength to strength  
in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

\*

**DEDICATED BY HER SON**

**Mr. Gershon (Geri) שי' Bentov**

## מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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### לעילוי נשמת

מרת מינדל רבקה בת ר' מנחם מענדל שלמה ע"ה

### סתית

נפטרה ש"ק פרשת לך לך, יו"ד מר-חשון תשפ"ב

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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### נדבת בני משפחתה שיחיו

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### לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם"

חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו

### מאריס

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### נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו

### מאריס

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### לזכות

מרת אסתר שתחי' שרבני

לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות עד ביאת גואל צדק  
ומתוך בריאות הנכונה ולשנת ברכה והצלחה בגו"ר