

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Vayikroh

9 Adar II, 5779 – March 16, 2019

Compiled from the works of

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The Lubavitcher Rebbe

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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Vayikroh**

Likkutei Sichos Volume 17, Pages 9 – 16

Rashi in His Own Words

ויקרא א' - ב': דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה' מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם:
רש"י ד"ה אדם כי יקריב מכם: כשיקריב, בקרבנות נדבה דבר הענין:

Vayikroh 1:2: Speak to the Jewish Nation and say to them, "When a man from among you brings a sacrifice to the Lord from animals, from cattle or from the flock you shall bring your sacrifice.

Rashi Heading – When a man from among you brings a sacrifice: *when* he brings. Voluntary sacrifices¹ are the concept which is under discussion.

Synopsis

This week's Torah portion, Vayikroh, begins by teaching us details regarding the various sacrifices which were brought in the Tabernacle (and later in the Temple). Rashi explains that the first sacrifices which the Torah discusses are free-will offerings; it discusses obligatory sacrifices later. Rashi derives this from the fact that the Torah starts off by saying "*when* a man among you brings a sacrifice." The word "when" implies that he was not obligated to do so.

Rashi demonstrates that this is the case, based on the wording of the verse. However, the beginning student still cannot understand *why* this is so. One would think that the Torah would introduce the laws of sacrifices with those which obligatory. We have noted many times that Rashi explains everything which is not understood according to Peshat. The fact that he does not explain this means one of two things. It is possible that in reality this is not a difficulty. If it *is* difficult to understand, Rashi must have explained it earlier.

The answer to this question will become clear after posing yet another question. Why does the Torah begin the laws of sacrifices with individual offerings? One would think that the Torah should have first taught about communal offerings; those that are brought on behalf of the entire Jewish Nation. We find that the Torah begins with offerings which are for individuals rather than the entire community, and optional rather than obligatory. Why is this so?

The Torah is preparing us for the grand day of the actual inauguration of the Tabernacle. Everything was in place. The Kohanim and the Levi'im were ready. The Jews were ready. G-d's presence rested on the Mishkan – Tabernacle. It was unlikely for there to be a need to bring obligatory offerings, which were most often brought for sins. The Divine revelation which all Jews witnessed at the Tabernacle caused it to be unlikely that anyone

1. The Torah is not dealing with an obligatory sacrifice. Had that been the case, the verse would have said, "a man from among you *will* bring a sacrifice." From the fact that the Torah says "*when* a man from among you brings ..." Rashi concludes that he *decides* to bring an offering, i.e. that we are dealing with a voluntary offering.

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would sin. However, each individual Jew who had donated so generously for the construction of the Sanctuary was prepared to be generous in bringing voluntary sacrifices.

Rashi's Explanation

This week's Torah portion, Vayikroh, is the beginning of the third book of the Torah. We concluded the second book, Shemos, last week. There we learned of the Jew's servitude in Egypt. We read how Hashem miraculously freed the Jews in order to give them the Torah seven weeks later. The book concluded with G-d's command to build a Sanctuary for Him in the wilderness. The Torah taught all of the details regarding each part of this Tabernacle and the Divine service which was to be performed there. It is at this point that our current book continues with the same theme. It teaches us of the many sacrifices and offerings which were to be brought in the Sanctuary which we discussed earlier.

After telling us that Hashem called to Moshe, the Torah tells us that He told Moshe² to "Speak to the Jewish Nation and say to them, 'When a man from among you brings a sacrifice to the Lord; from animals, from cattle or from the flock you shall bring your sacrifice.'" Rashi cites the words "when a man from among you brings a sacrifice," and explains that "voluntary sacrifices is the concept which is under discussion." In other words, Rashi makes it clear that the Torah begins teaching the laws of voluntary offerings.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

While we see from Rashi that the Torah begins this book³ with the laws of voluntary sacrifices, *why* the Torah does so is not clear. It would seem logical for the Torah to have begun teaching sacrificial law with obligatory sacrifices. In fact, this question would bother a beginning student. We have stated many times that in his commentary Rashi answers every question which might bother a beginner. When we come across an apparent difficulty which Rashi does not explain, there are one of two possibilities. Either, the truth is that the *difficulty* does not pose a question at all. The other is that Rashi answered it earlier⁴. We need to understand which of the two is true in our case.

The Explanation

In order to answer this question, we must first explain the answer to a different question. This Torah portion (continuing into the beginning of next week's portion) does discuss voluntary sacrifices. However, in addition to that it limits itself to discussing only individual offerings, rather than those which are brought on behalf of the entire Jewish community. One would think that the laws of the sacrifices should begin with those

2. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 1:2.

3. The Book of Vayikroh is often referred to by the Sages as Toras Kohanim, meaning the laws regarding priestly matters. That is because this book is primarily dedicated to sacrificial law.

4. As stated in the text this point has been discussed many times. For example, see Likkutei Sichos Volume 16, Page 458 in the footnotes.

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which are brought on behalf of all Jews. This should be followed by offerings which individuals are required to bring. Following that it would seem logical to discuss both those offerings which individuals bring, and those which are brought as a donation.

During the days of preparation for actually using the Tabernacle Moshe himself served as Kohen Gadol – High Priest. Even on the final day of the inauguration, when the Sanctuary was finally put into service, Moshe continued to serve as High Priest⁵. Moshe had learned all of these laws directly from G-d. He knew how to offer the required communal offerings. The Jewish people, however, were anxious to begin using the Mishkan. The majority of obligatory offerings are brought in order to atone for sins. It would be difficult to fathom that during such an auspicious time as the dedication of the Sanctuary there would be a need for any individual to bring such an offering. This certainly could not have been the case on the eighth and final day when the Tabernacle was erected to serve its true purpose. At that time the Shechinah, Hashem's presence rested upon the Mishkan⁶! This served as "testimony for the Jews that Hashem had forgiven them for the sin of the golden calf⁷." At this point, the Jews who had donated so generously for the building of the Tabernacle were anxious to finally donate offerings with the same generosity.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

There is a deeper reason as well that the Torah begins teaching us the details of sacrifices (for the most part) by telling us the laws of optional offerings. Why does it begin by teaching us the law of one who *donates* a sacrifice, rather than one who is obligated to do so?

The main point of an offering is not the sacrifice itself. It is not the animal, the grain or the wine which are brought together with the animal. Rather it is the intent and thought which goes into the offering. This is in keeping with the words of the Sages⁸, that "regardless of whether one gives much or little (it is equally pleasing to Hashem), provided that he directs his heart to Heaven." The same is true of mandatory sacrifices which are brought in order to atone for sin. The atonement is brought about more as a result of the thought that goes into the sacrifice than the actual animal and that which accompanies it. The Ramban writes⁹ that the one bringing the offering must consider that "he has sinned to G-d with both his body and his soul. If not for Hashem's kindness, it would be fitting that *the individual's* blood be sprinkled on the altar, and that *his* body be offered." We clearly see that the power of a sacrifice to atone is derived from the person's feelings and thoughts, not solely from the fact that he brought an offering.

5. See Rashi's comments to Parshas Pekudei, Shemos 40:29. After that point Aharon took over and served in his appointed position.

6. Parshas Pekudei, Shemos 40:34.

7. See Rashi's comments at the beginning of the Torah portion of Pekudei.

8. See the end of Talmud Menochos. See also Rashi's comments to our Parshah, Vayikroh 1:17 and 2:1.

9. See his commentary to our Parshah, Vayikroh 1:9. Other commentaries also offer the same explanation.

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In fact, the root of the Hebrew word for a sacrifice, "Korbon – קרבן," is related to the word "Kiruv – קירוב," which means drawing close. The idea of a sacrifice is to draw one's abilities and senses closer to Hashem¹⁰.

Based on the above, we are left with what appears to be a difficulty. The Torah gives us countless details about the physical requirements for sacrifices and all that accompany them. However, it seems to skip over the most important aspect of a sacrifice. It hardly tells us a word about the intentions and thoughts which must accompany each offering! The Torah seems to offer only one word in this regard; it tells us that the sacrifice must be brought "willingly"¹¹.

It is in order to teach us this all-important factor that the Torah begins the laws of sacrifices by telling us of free-will offerings. It first tells us of those offerings which are brought from the generosity of one's *heart*. It does so in order to let us know that the heart is the introduction to all of the sacrifices.

That also explains why Rashi writes that "voluntary sacrifices are the *concept* being discussed here." Why does Rashi use the term concept? Why does he not say something to the effect of "the Torah is discussing voluntary sacrifices here?" It is in order to teach us that the *entire concept* of sacrifices is that they be voluntary, meaning given with a full heart. The primary factor of each and every sacrifice is the generosity and intention of the heart.

To go into this in somewhat more depth, the good will and the heart of each and every Jew is a given. Because each Jew has a Divine soul which is a veritable part of Hashem¹², he wants to come closer (Korbon - קרבן) to G-d from the depths of his soul. This is true even when superficially it does not appear to be the case.

That is the reason that the Torah contains no command to offer a sacrifice with the proper intention of one's heart. Rashi is simply stating a fact. "A voluntary sacrifice is the concept which is under discussion." No matter what sort of sacrifice it may be, the fact of the matter is that its essence is *voluntary*. It is brought from the depth of a Jew's heart. Granted, it is more *obviously* from one's full heart if it is a voluntary offering. However, any offering comes from the depths of a Jew's heart.

That is also the reason that the Torah uses the word "man" when referring to the Jewish people. The Torah begins the discussion of sacrifices by saying that "When a *man* from among you brings a sacrifice to the Lord." The Hebrew word for man (which the Torah uses here) is "Adam - אדם." This is related to the verse¹³ "I will liken myself (אדמה) which is related to אדם to the 'Most High', i.e. Hashem" The Divine soul of a Jew, which as previously mentioned is a part of Hashem, is likened to the "Supernal Man."

10. See Sefer Habahir, Chapter 46. See also Zohar Section III, Page 5, a. This is also found in Sheloh Tractate Taanis, Page 211, Side b, and in Pri Eitz Chaim, The Gate of Tefillah Chapter 5.

11. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 1:3.

12. See Tanya, the beginning of Chapter 2.

13. Yeshaya 14:14.

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Hence, we begin the third book of the Torah with the knowledge that each Jew is a part of Hashem. The true will of each and every Jew is to do what G-d wants. Any appearance to the contrary, is simply because he was coerced by his evil inclination.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Vayikroh, 5732 and 5733)

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR FATHER

Mr. **Sholom Moshe** ben Reb **Shlomo Meir** Hacoheh ע"ה **Cohen**

Passed away on Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 13 Shevat, 5779

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

DEDICATED BY HIS FAMILY שׂיחיו

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER

Mrs. **Chana** bas Reb **Shmuel** ע"ה **Mendelsohn**

Passed away on 7 Adar II, 5752

May Her Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY שׂיחיו

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

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לעילוי נשמת

ר' שלום משה בן ר' שלמה מאיר הכהן ע"ה כהן

נפטר ש"ק פ' בשלח, י"ג שבט, ה'תשע"ט

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתו שיחיו

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לעילוי נשמת

מרת חנה בת ר' שמואל ע"ה מענדלסאהן

נפטרה ז' אדר שני, ה'תשנ"ב

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