

That state arrives with Moshiach, brought on by the arousal from below – the tithing of animals, the ten soul-powers, “and My commandments you will keep.” It is our actions, performing the mitzvos in response to a recognition of G-dliness, that transforms the world, gives G-dliness itself a permanent home here in the physical realm.

This explains why the coming of Moshiach depends on each and every one of us, our personal activity and Divine service.

(Based on *Likkutei Sichos* 17:332-339)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
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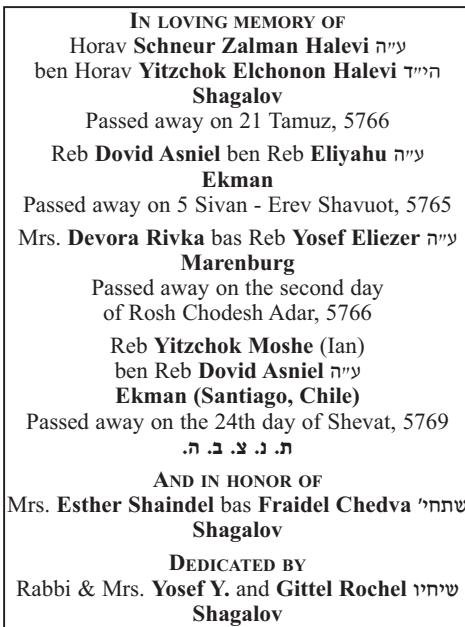
Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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of holiness – such as the birth of a first-born animal – forces us to recognize the presence of holiness and thus be elevated. Both our awareness and our daily activities become more spiritually oriented, more attuned to the G-dliness innate to the world. This is an obvious prelude to the times of Moshiach, when such awareness will be fully manifest.

The second type of spiritual service, that of tithing the animals, represents man's own efforts to elevate himself, an arousal from below. In this way we take the initiative to refine our natures, to transform the animal within us into a vehicle for holiness. Through our mitzvos, we make the world a dwelling place for G-d.

The beginning of the Torah portion reflects this dichotomy. It begins as follows: "If in My statutes you will walk, and My commandments you will keep." Statutes (*Chukim*) are Divinely ordained mitzvos, without an apparent reason. Walking indicates continual motion – an unlimited movement. Such a Divine service has infinite potential. Being motivated to fulfill the Torah's commands from Above arouses a desire to be elevated. Nevertheless, this "walking," this unlimited arousal, is missing something.

Whatever elevation occurs as a result has no permanence. Even the greatest self-sacrifice, aroused from Above, does not permanently transform the individual. For the rest of the soul-powers to be affected, the person must act. The Divine soul comes into the body so that man here below, with his animal soul, becomes a vehicle for G-dliness. Thus, there must be as well an arousal from below, the service of "My commandments you will keep." By using one's own soul-powers – the tenth, the animal, to perform the mitzvos, one becomes a vessel for keeping and maintaining the unlimited revelation of G-dliness. This revelation until now has been apparent only occasionally and temporarily. Yet the ideal is for this arousal from Above – the first-born, *Chochmah*, "If in My statutes you will walk" – to be visible openly to one and all.

sacrifices." This corresponds to tithing animals. Here, man's actions – his counting – determines the holiness of the animal. He must sacrifice – labor and struggle – to bring his inner animal, the animal nature, closer to G-dliness. It requires effort and exertion to refine and sensitize our desires and inclinations, thus elevating ourselves.

At a deeper level, the sacrifice of the first-born refers to man's first spiritual attribute. This attribute, *Chochmah* or Wisdom, differs from all others. All other spiritual attributes develop within man; as such, one must work to reveal them. *Chochmah*, coming from above, is an inheritance to every Jew. The first spiritual attribute does not depend on our actions, but expresses the essence of the soul, its innate connection with G-dliness. Therefore, it is the source of a Jew's self-sacrifice, his willingness to dedicate his entire being to sanctifying G-d's Name and making the world a dwelling place for G-dliness.

Since self-sacrifice is innate, a Jew's essence, his holiness is manifest throughout history. Similarly, the first born remains sanctified even now.

The sacrifice of the tenth, on the other hand, refers to the other spiritual attributes. These ten soul-powers depend on man's activity. They require effort to be fully developed and expressed. Thus, changing conditions affect our ability to express or develop them completely. When the Temple stood, and G-dliness was openly revealed, the ten soul-powers could be fully activated. The offering of the tenth animal represents complete dedication of the ten soul-powers. Now, in the time of exile, when G-dliness is concealed, the ten soul-powers are likewise limited in their expression. Hence, the tenth animal cannot be made holy. We will not have that ability again until the times of Moshiach.

This helps us understand the connection between the beginning of the Torah portion and the end. From the beginning of Vayikra we learn that the sacrifice of the first born animal, which is always holy and always in force, indicates an arousal from Above. The presence

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by
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Bechukosai

FROM ABOVE TO BELOW TO ABOVE

The last Torah portion of Vayikra, like the first, speaks of sacrifices. Here, the discussion centers on the first-born animal, which represents an arousal from Above, and the tithing of the tenth animal, which represents an arousal from below. Both are a necessary part of the process of transforming the world, preparing it for the times of Moshiach.

The inner connection between sections of the Torah can teach us much about our own connection with Redemption. This is logical, since the ultimate purpose and fulfillment of Torah is Moshiach. The Jewish people alone were given the Torah and it is our Divine mission to bring Moshiach, the era of Redemption when the whole world will be filled with knowledge of G-dliness. Indeed, the very question this raises, why our mitzvos are necessary to bring Moshiach, is addressed in the structure of Vayikra.

There is a well-known principle that the “end is linked to the beginning, and the beginning is attached to the end.” The portion of *Bechukosai* is the last portion of Vayikra, or *Leviticus* as it’s called in English. Thus, we should find a special connection between the end and the beginning both of the portion and of the book of Vayikra as a whole. As with every aspect of Torah, this connection reveals an important lesson in our Divine service of preparing the world for Moshiach.

There is an obvious connection between the beginning of Vayikra as a whole and its conclusion in the portion of *Bechukosai*. Both speak of sacrifices. Of course, there’s an immediate, superficial connection, since with the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Temple,

we will again be able to offer sacrifices. However, there is a deeper lesson, one that tells us how to get there.

Vayikra begins with the instruction, “A person, when he will bring from you a sacrifice to G-d.” The book concludes with the laws of two sacrifices, the first-born animal and tithing of animals.

These two offerings, discussed last, illustrate general concepts indicated at the beginning of Vayikra. It is well-known that sacrifices epitomize and symbolize the nature of man’s Divine service. There are two types of Divine service, illustrated by these two offerings. One is a response to an arousal from Above. Recognition of holiness compels us to act according to the Divine Will. This is the service of the first-born, automatically sanctified from the moment of birth. Its holiness comes with it, so to speak, given from Above. No human action makes it holy.

The other type of service is an arousal from below. Man takes the initiative to fulfill G-d’s commands, bringing G-dliness into the world. This is the service of tithing animals. The dedication, and thus holiness, of the tenth animal depends completely on human action.

The very beginning of Vayikra alludes to these two types of service. Vayikra begins, “Adam, when he will sacrifice from you.” In Jewish mysticism, the form of man reflects the structure of the spiritual worlds. “Adam” thus refers not just to a person, but to the Supernal Man or *Adam HaElyon*. This human-structured spirituality is the first and highest manifestation of G-dliness, forming and influencing every aspect of creation.

Thus, “Adam, when he will sacrifice from you,” indicates that *Adam HaElyon*, the highest level of G-dliness within creation, arouses a person to sacrifice, or draw closer, to G-d. This parallels the sacrifice of the first-born animal: the holiness is already there, forcing us to recognize its presence. That recognition arouses a desire to be elevated, to become closer to G-dliness.

Next the Torah states, “From the animal you will bring your