



Yearbooks and Newsletters

3-19-2016

Touro Torah Volume 1 Issue 3

Lander College for Women

Follow this and additional works at: https://touro scholar.touro.edu/archives_books



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lander College for Women. (2016). Touro Torah Volume 1 Issue 3. Retrieved from https://touro scholar.touro.edu/archives_books/239

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by Touro Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Yearbooks and Newsletters by an authorized administrator of Touro Scholar. For more information, please contact touro.scholar@touro.edu.

TOURO TORAH

• Lander College for Women • Divrei Torah Newsletter • Parshas Vayikra •

Volume 1 • Issue 3

March 19, 2016

Inside This Issue

What is your true intention?

Spring Ahead:
Perspectives on the
Korban Olah

Megillat Esther: Game
Plan for Confronting
Challenges

What is your true intention?

By Sara Trombka

Many people get a little hesitant when we start *Sefer Vayikra*. Up until this point, we have read about many exciting events, such as Creation, the *Mabul*, the lives of the *Avot*, *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, and *Matan Torah*, that are interesting and relevant to our daily life. Now begins the laws of *korbanot*. At first glance, they seem quite difficult to relate to. However, the *Yalkut Shim'oni* teaches us: "*Nevu'ah shenitzrikhah l'dorot nikhtavah, u-nevu'ah shelo nitzrikhah le-dorot lo' nickhtavah*". The only prophecies that are written down are the ones relevant for future generations; the prophecies that are only applicable for that time are not written down. We know that everything in the Torah has a purpose and a lesson. Even though *korbanot* may seem irrelevant today, we must try to look for their deeper meaning in order to find out how, indeed, they can relate to us.

In the beginning of *Vayikra*, Hashem tells Moshe, "*Adam ki yakriv mikem korban*," "a person, from among you, when he offers a *korban*..." It is interesting to look at the word choice the *Torah* uses. In general, when talking about a person, the *Torah* will use the word "*ish*," not "*adam*." The *Kli Yakar* notes that the use of the word "*adam*" is a reference to '*Adam Harishon*'.

Kayin and *Hevel*, *Adam*'s sons, each made a crucial mistake when offering their *korbanot* to Hashem. As we know, *Kayin* offered "*mi-pri ha'adamah*" the worst of his produce, rather than giving Hashem from the best. However, *Hevel* did offer "*mi-bekhorot tzono' u-me-chelvehem*," "from the firstborn of his sheep and from their fat." But, the *Kli Yakar* writes that *Hevel* only brought his *korban* as a result of *Kayin* bringing his *korban*. *Hevel* was jealous. He did not intend to offer anything to Hashem, but did so only to "one-up" his brother.

The *Gemara* in *Shabbos* 28b tells us that when '*Adam Harishon*' brought his first *korban*, he was still the only person in the world. Without a doubt, his intention in bringing the *korban* was genuinely to serve Hashem. He was not doing it out of jealousy or to make himself greater than someone else.

This is exactly why the *Torah* uses the word "*adam*." When serving Hashem, we must be careful to remember before Whom we are standing and make sure we are serving Him with the right intentions. The mistakes of *Kayin* and *Hevel* remind us to focus on how we do our '*avodas Hashem*'. It is important to stay far away from each fault. We must be cautious to fulfill *mitzvot le-shem Shamayim* and not try to be better than the person next to us.

" When serving Hashem,
we must be careful to
remember before Whom
we are standing and make
sure we are serving Him
with the right intentions. "

-Sara Trombka

Spring Ahead: Perspectives on the Korban Olah

By Reena Evans

Take a look out the window. Yes, now. Or better yet, open it. The energy of spring comes rushing in. The natural world on the verge of blossoming brings to mind the timeless words of *Shir ha-Shirim* (2:11-12),

“כִּי־הִנֵּה הִסְתִּי עֶבֶר הַגֶּשֶׁם חֲלָף הַלֵּךְ לוֹ: הַנִּצְּנִים נִרְאוּ בְּאַרְץ עֵת הַזִּמְרִיר הַגִּיעַ.”

Rashi comments that the coming spring is the *ge'ulah* from *Mitzrayim*; the blossoms about to bloom are *Moshe* and *Aharon*, and the song is the upcoming *shiras hayam*. Spring is representative of a time of spiritual striving and rejuvenation. We feel the push to accelerate our spiritual growth as the pace of the year speeds up; *Purim* is almost here, and hot on its heels is *Pesach*, the amazing spiritual power of *seder* night, *sefirah*, and *Shavu'ous*. As we begin this period of time, how appropriate is it that we begin *Sefer Vayikra*, which opens with the various *korbanos*. The emphasis of the *korbanos* is on “rejuvenating life” (R' Hirsch).

There is so much depth behind each and every detail of the *korbanos*. In only the first few *pesuqim* of *Sefer Vayikra*, R' Hirsch explains how every detail of the *korban 'olah* represents every aspect of our lives in terms of spiritual striving. R' Hirsch disagrees with the common translation of “*olah*” as a “burnt-offering”. No other *korban* is named for its sacrificial procedure. *Korbanos* are named for the motivation in bringing them and the purpose they accomplish. For example, a *korban chatas* is brought for atonement, a *korban todah* is brought to give thanks for a miraculous event. ‘*Olah* comes from the root of elevation. One brings a *korban 'olah* “out of the consciousness that greater progress toward goodness and godliness is necessary and is able to be made”.

This *hashkafic* aspect of the motivation for bringing an ‘*olah* melds very well with the halachic requirement for a *korban 'oleh*, as defined by the *gemara* in *Yoma* 36a,

“אֵין עוֹלָה בִּאֵה אֱלֹא עַל עֲשֵׂה, וְעַל לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה שְׁנֵיתָק לַעֲשֵׂה.”

An ‘*olah* is required to atone for failing to perform a positive commandment, or for transgressing a negative commandment for which one can perform a positive restitution. (continued on page 3...)

“ Spring is representative of a time of spiritual striving and rejuvenation. ”

-Reena Evans

(...continued from page 2) It is the *korban* of "striving to rise higher". What are (or should) our lives be about if not to constantly striving to reach new levels in our '*avodas Hashem*'?

R' Hirsch continues and illuminates the specifications of the '*olah*'. One choice of *korban olah* is בקר, cattle. One may offer a בקר because he comes to a "consciousness of slackness in doing our duty and the resolution to give greater devotion of actively carrying out our obligations". This recognition stems from "the position in the world to which G-d has allotted us", our task to actively be a part of *HaKodesh Barukh Hu*'s plan and service. One may also offer צאן, sheep, which symbolizes a rededication to *mitzvos* because of the acknowledgement of the tremendous "debt we owe to the Shepherd of our lives". It must be זכר because everyone must exhibit qualities of strength and independence (typically associated with the masculine) in spiritual growth. It must be תמים, complete, because "The Sanctuary of His Torah demands the full complete life with nothing missing". At this Providential conjunction of the beginning of the rejuvenation of the natural world and the *parsha* of the *korban* of spiritual elevation, let us absorb the messages of this *korban* we are not *zokheh* to fulfill in actuality by recognizing the important role *Hashem* gives us as *mitzvah*-observant Jews, *hakaras hatov* to *Hashem*, and applying our complete strength and dedication to His *Torah* and *mitzvos*. You can close the window now if the just budding spring breeze is too chilly for you.

“What are (or should)
our lives be about
if not to constantly
striving to reach
new levels in our
'*avodas Hashem*'?”

-Reena Evans

Megillat Esther: Game Plan for Confronting Challenges

By Elisheva Friedman

"*Refuah lifnei ha-makkah*," the principle that G-d prepares the healing before He introduces the plague, is a concept that enables us to make sense of many of the events of *Megillat Esther*. It depicts one aspect of the merciful way that G-d runs the world. Before G-d introduces any new type of suffering into the world, He first puts into the world the possibility for its cure.

How does this play out in the *Megillah*? The beginning of the third chapter describes *Haman*'s promotion and the beginning of the tragic events. But before that, the first two chapters relate the events leading to *Esther*'s inauguration and the story of *Mordechai* saving the king's life. We see that G-d had put into place the tools that would eventually bring the salvation. *Mordechai* himself tells *Esther* that perhaps the reason she became queen is so that she can go plead to *Achashverosh* on behalf of (continued on page 4...)

(...continued from page 3) the Jewish people.

The *Malbim* adds to this idea and says that it is not that G-d set up the potential for the eventual salvation, but rather G-d brought the punishment **only** for the sake of the redemption. This is unique to the way G-d interacts with Jews. On the other hand, when G-d brings suffering on the nations it is actually for the sake of punishing them. This is the explanation of the verse "all of the diseases that I have put on Egypt, I will not put on you, for I am *Hashem*, your healer (*Shemot* 15:26)." Here G-d is saying that He brought these diseases on the Egyptians as a punishment, but He will never bring disease on the Jews as punishment. Rather, suffering is only brought on the Jewish people as a motive for *teshuvah*.

This is clearly stated in *Devarim* 4 as the purpose of exile. There, *Moshe* is warning the nation what will occur when the nation corrupts its ways and serves idols. He informs the people that they will be scattered amongst the nations and forced to serve fake gods. He finishes by telling them that, "in your distress and when all of these things find you in the end of days, you will return to *Hashem*, your G-d, and you will listen to His voice (*Devarim* 4:30)." This shows that all of the suffering mentioned is only imposed by G-d in order to culminate in the people's reconnection to Him. This idea is reiterated again in *Devarim* 30:1 when *Moshe* says, "it will be when all of these blessings and curses that I gave before you come upon you that you will return to your heart, in the midst of the nations that G-d has thrust you." Thus, the ultimate goal of exile and all other punishment that the Jews suffer is to return to G-d.

"Before G-d introduces any new type of suffering into the world, He first puts into the world the possibility for its cure."
-Elisheva Friedman

Furthermore, this idea can be applied to all pain. Suffering is an opportunity to return to G-d. Rav Pincus, in his *sefer*, *She'arim Be-tefillah*, expresses that it is important for each individual to understand that he is constantly in a state of misfortune. People never know what will occur in this world or the next, and this forces them to turn to G-d for His help and mercy. This is made even more clear with *Ramban's* opinion that one is only obligated from the *Torah* to *daven* at a time of adversity (page 26-31).

As we approach *Purim* in a year that has seen so much national hardship, we can remember the message of the *Megillah* that *Hashem* always sends the *refuah* before the *makkah* and our suffering can be a vehicle for returning to Him.

~Touro Torah~

Faculty Advisor

Dr. S. Weissman

Staff

Sarah Lederer

Leah Meth

Contributors

Sara Trombka

Reena Evans

Elisheva Friedman