

DARCHAI NOAM - דרכי נועם

“Its ways are ways of pleasantness”

(Mishlei 3:17)

Tzav (Vayikra 6:1-8:36)
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How can the Parasha help us grow this week?

Tzav – Making sacrifices

In this week's Parsha of Tzav we continue learning the laws of the korbanot.

The word 'korban' is usually translated as 'sacrifice'. This word may have a negative connotation. We take something that belongs to us and we give it away. In the context of this week's Parsha, we take an animal that belongs to us and we offer it to Hashem.

However, Rav Samson Raphael Hirsh¹ explains that the word 'korban' comes from the shoresh (root) of 'karev', which means to come close. Thus, when we offer a korban, we are actually coming close to Hashem and gaining a relationship with Him.

Let's try to attain a deeper understanding of the concept of 'korbanot' by exploring two different approaches.

First approach: Kayin and Hevel – demonstrating our emunah

Rabbi Akiva Tatz explains that to really understand the essence of a concept, we need to look at the first time that it appears in the Torah². Korbanot are first mentioned in the Torah in the story of Kayin and Hevel (Cain and Abel) in Parshat Breishit.³ Kayin was a farmer and he had the idea to offer some of his crops as a gift to Hashem. Hevel copied his older brother Kayin. However, Hevel was a shepherd and he chose the *best* of his flock to offer to Hashem. Hashem only accepted Hevel's offering and He rejected Cain's offering.

Let's try to imagine what Kayin and Hevel were thinking. Although Kayin wanted to make an offering to Hashem as a demonstration of his gratitude, he didn't want to give up anything too valuable. In contrast, Hevel understood that everything that he had came from Hashem anyway. He may also have understood that Hashem knows when we could give more and when we don't give to our full capacity.

By offering the best of his flock, Hevel was able to demonstrate his extremely high level of emuna in a physical manner. He gave the best of his flock because he believed that:

- if the animal that Hevel was offering was something that he needed, Hashem would replace it; and
- if the animal was not replaced then Hevel did not need it and wasn't meant to have it.

Second approach: the Ramban's view – building our relationship

In his commentary to the Torah, the Ramban draws a number of parallels between the revelation at Har Sinai and the Mishkan. For example, both on Har Sinai and in the Mishkan, there was a thick cloud which prevented Moshe from entering at first until Hashem called Moshe and allowed him to enter.

The Ramban explains the meaning behind these parallels:

- Har Sinai signified the start of the communication between Hashem and the Jewish people and the beginning of their relationship.

¹ 1808-1888, German Rabbi, best known as the founder of the Torah im Derech Eretz school of Orthodox Judaism. His commentary often focuses on a grammatical analysis of the Hebrew words.

² This a common theme in Rabbi Tatz's oral shiurim and writings.

³ Parashat Breishit, Breishit 4:3-5. The Midrash tells us that the first korban in the history of the world was actually offered by Adam, however it is not mentioned explicitly in the Torah.

- The Mishkan was a re-creation of that experience, allowing Bnei Yisrael to maintain a daily relationship with Hashem.

The Ramban explains that the theme of Sefer Shemot is redemption. This Sefer tells the story of Bnei Yisrael's physical redemption from Mitzrayim in order to serve Hashem. The book of Shemot ends when we have a complete redemption, both physical and spiritual. The spiritual redemption was the revelation at Har Sinai and then the building of the Mishkan that allowed Bnei Yisrael to maintain that relationship on a permanent basis. The book of Vayikra contains instructions regarding the korbanot. Thus, this Sefer teaches us how to use the Mishkan to maintain that relationship with Hashem - by bringing korbanot.

Both translations of 'korban' (i.e. 'sacrifice' and 'drawing close') are helpful in understanding the deeper significance of korbanot. Sacrifices represent offering something that is of value to us in order to draw close to Hashem and strengthen our relationship with Him.

These ideas are also relevant to our relationships with other people. We make sacrifices for each other and those sacrifices help to strengthen our relationships. However, as we see in the story of Kayin and Hevel, a token offering may not be sufficient. The recipient of our sacrifice can often sense when we have not offered from 'the best of our flock'.

Often, we do not offer up the 'best of our flock' for fear that we will not have enough left for ourselves. This fear is essentially a manifestation of a lack of emuna – a lack of faith that Hashem, will provide us with exactly what we need. Just like Hevel acted on his faith, we too should strive to give 100% of whatever is required in each moment. This would reflect our faith that we will be gifted in turn from Hashem with exactly what we need. It can also demonstrate our emunah that Hashem purposely sent us this particular situation and He knows that we can do our best.

Consider the following scenario:

Robert had a long and stressful week at the office. He finally found an hour to himself and he was looking forward to sitting in his favourite armchair and catching up on some reading. Just as he got comfortable, his daughter Shoshana came in to ask for help with her homework. Robert was clearly upset at this disturbance. Subconsciously, he was worried that he wouldn't get another chance to relax later. However, he reluctantly put his book away and gave Shoshana some help. However, he did not offer to review each section properly to make sure that she really understood. Shoshana could tell that her father would rather be doing something else.

Shoshana received some help that she needed but she didn't receive it all, and she knew it. Thus, she felt let down and not as lovingly connected to her father as she could have been. She also missed out on the emotional connection that this interaction could have brought. By rushing through his explanation of the homework, Robert was denying Shoshana the 'best of his flock'. She left feeling unsatisfied. Though Robert did sacrifice his time for his daughter, he did not do it with a complete heart, thus missing the opportunity to come closer to his daughter and to strengthen their relationship. He gave her a token sacrifice but not the 'best of his flock'. And his daughter could tell.

Let's try something this week:

1. When we have an opportunity to help someone, we can remind ourselves that this is an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with them.
2. Once we have decided to help someone, we should try to do it with a full heart and give them our maximum effort, in order to maximise the opportunity to draw close to them.
3. If we can't find it within ourselves to help them with a full heart, help them anyway. Hopefully they will accept our sacrifice and we can do better next time!

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Ledder

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About Darchai Noam

Darchai Noam is available online at www.darchai-noam.com and www.parshasheets.com. You can access this week's edition of Darchai Noam, archived back issues of Darchai Noam and other divrei Torah.

The pasuk in Mishlei (3:17) describes the Torah as follows: "Its ways are ways of pleasantness (Darchai Noam) and all its paths are peace". The Torah is our guidebook for life. It is packed full of good advice as to how we should live our lives.

The aim of the Darchai Noam weekly email is to examine an idea from the weekly parashah, usually relating to good middot (character traits). It will focus particularly on treating each other with respect and how to interact with each other in a more peaceful and pleasant manner. It will also suggest some practical tips for implementing these ideas in our daily lives.

By learning together each week, and making an effort to regularly put the ideas into practice, with Hashem's help we can all gradually improve our character traits and our observance of 'v'ahavta l're'echa kamocho' – loving one's fellow as oneself.

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