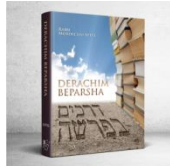


דרכים
בפרשה
תצוה

R' Mordechai Appel,
an alumnus of Telz
Yeshiva, is the
author of
DERACHIM
BEPARSHA.



וזה הדבר אשר תעשה להם לקדש אתם לכהן
לי לקח פר אחד בן בקר ואילם שנים תמימם

And this is the thing that you shall do for them to sanctify them to serve Me [as Kohanim]: take one young bull and two rams, perfect ones (29:1)

Rashi comments that the purpose of this *korban* was to act as a *kaparah*/atonement for the golden calf, which was a bull (Midrash Tanchuma 10). Later on, in Parshas Shemini, however, (Vayikra 9:2), the Torah tells us: ויאמר אל אהרן קח לך עגל בן בקר לחטאת — And he said to Aharon, “Take for yourself a calf for a sin offering.” Rashi explains (ad loc.) that the purpose of this *korban* was meant for the very same reason, i.e. to atone for Aharon’s role in the golden calf. If Aharon already had his *kaparah* (in our *parshah*), why was he required to bring yet another *korban* later on?

The Maharil Diskin offers an answer that there was in fact a need for two separate *korbanos*. The first ones that are mentioned here were brought as a communal *korban* from communal funds. This served as a general *kaparah* for all of the Kohanim, as they were now preparing to for their new role in the *Mishkan*. The *pasuk* in Shemini refers to the private *korban* of Aharon HaKohen, meant to atone for the role that he personally played in the *eigel hazahav*. Although it was true that his motivation was purely to stop it from happening — entirely *l’sheim shomayim* — however, as an active participant, he still needed a *kaparah*.

The wording of the *pasuk* seems to suggest this difference as well: over here, it says “לקח”, to take; but in Parshas Shemini, Moshe personalizes it by saying “קח לך”, take for yourself.

On a practical level, there is a tremendous lesson that can be learned from here. In life, there are those that are happy to be “*yotzeh*” with everyone else — and perhaps at times this may even be the right approach. But for the most part, the Torah is teaching us that we must learn to look at ourselves in a personal sense as well — never being satisfied with just “going with the flow”, and always seeking self-improvement. Yes, the matter may have been addressed, but have I done my own part?

If we dig deeper into these *korbanos*, we can find another great lesson. The *Sifra* comments that the purpose of the second *korban* was to be offered as a gift to the *Satan*. The *Malbim* explains this based on a well-known principle that the severity of an *aveirah* is dependent upon the level of the sinner. For a great person, even the most minor *aveirah* will have a most drastic effect, necessitating *teshuvah* on the highest level. Conversely, a person of a lesser stature committing the same sin may be dealt with far less severely.

In Parshas Shemini, Moshe was telling Aharon that now that he had been elevated to a much higher position, his *teshuvah* (that we learned about in our *parshah*) was no longer enough. Now, the Satan would try and prosecute him again based on his new exalted level. Of course the original *korban* was accepted by Hashem, but the Satan would still try and cause problems. (It is for this reason that the *korban shelamim*, or peace offering, was left out in Parshas Shemini, because peace had already been made between Aharon and Hashem. But for this new level, there was still room to look back and improve another level of the past.)

With the realization that in life we must always strive for growth, we can never be content with our past achievements. It has been said over about the Chozeh of Lublin that he used to do *teshuvah* daily for his previous day’s service of Hashem. “On my new level, I now realize that yesterday’s *avodah* was not enough”.

We must seek continued growth. It cannot be that our commitment to *davening* and the *kavanah* that we have today is no more than when yesterday’s, or even that of ten years ago for that matter. Have we advanced in our learning? Do we approach *chesed* with the same juvenile approach as when we were younger? Do we still perceive concepts in *emunah* the same way it was taught to us in second grade?

A great 18th century British poet once wrote: “Nothing wilts faster than laurels that have been rested upon.” If we continuously demand more from ourselves, we will be *zoche* to reach greater levels and once-inconceivable new heights. Hashem never asks of us to be Moshe or Aharon, but He does ask that we reach our own unique potential, and in order to get there we must never stop climbing!

מרדכי אפפכל, Good Shabbos,