

דרכים בפרשה פנחס

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יידר ה' אל משה לאמר. צו את בני ישראל ואמרת אלהם את קרבני לחמי

The Midrash Pliya (Midrash Pliya 67), quoted in the introduction to Ein Yaakov, records a remarkable machlokes about which pasuk in the Torah is most all-encompassing.

Ben Zoma suggests Shema Yisroel. Ben Nanas counters with v'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha. Shimon ben Pazi, though, offers something entirely different: **“את הכבש אחד תעשה בבקר ואת הכבש השני תעשה בין הערבים”**—the Korban Tamid.

Ben Zoma's choice of Shema seems clear: it expresses the essence of bein adam laMakom, the ultimate declaration of kabbalas ol Malchus Shamayim. Ben Nanas may be focusing on bein adam lachaveiro—after all, v'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha is called by Chazal a klal gadol baTorah. These two pesukim appear to represent the foundational principles of our relationship with Hashem and our fellow man.

Then comes Shimon ben Pazi—and his answer is astonishing. The most all-encompassing pasuk in the Torah, he says, is the mitzvah of bringing a korban every morning and evening?

It has been suggested that he's not rejecting the importance of Shema or V'ahavta. Rather, he's identifying a danger that applies to both. The Korban Tamid was brought every single day. The great challenge was to not let it become stale. Shimon ben Pazi is highlighting the avodah of constancy, of avoiding rote, of bringing freshness and enthusiasm even to the familiar. The pasuk of Tamid isn't limited to one category of mitzvos—it teaches us how to approach them all.

Based on Rashi, there is a beautiful, Chassidische pshat of the background to the *korban tamid* which perhaps will offer us a much deeper answer.

But Rashi adds another layer, quoting the Sifri: **צו את בני ישראל. מה אמור למעלה? יפקד ה', אמר לו הקב"ה עד שאתה מצוני על בני, צוה את בני עלי, משל לבת מלך שהיתה נפטרת מן העולם והיתה מפקדת בעלה על בניה וכו' כדאיתא בספרי.**

And Rashi brings a mashal: a princess is dying and leaves instructions for her husband to care for her children. The husband replies: “And who will care for me?” So Hashem says: **“את הכבש אחד תעשה בבקר”**. Make sure they bring Me My daily bread.

The mashal is startling. Moshe is asking Hashem to ensure Klal Yisroel won't be left without leadership. And Hashem responds, “What about Me?”

Even more curious: Rashi's mashal differs from the Sifri. **משל למה הדבר דומה? למלך שהיתה אשתו נפטרת מן העולם, והיתה מפקדתו על בניה**. The Sifri compares it to a king whose wife is dying. She urges him to care for her children. But Rashi shifts it—the dying one is a princess, and it's her husband she addresses. Why?

Because when a king loses his queen, the kingdom carries on. The kitchen still runs, the system still functions. But when a regular husband loses his wife, it's different. The loss is personal. His world is now his children. If they forget him, he has nothing. Similarly, as Moshe is about to die, Hashem tells Moshe that He needs His children—therefore, make sure His children, Klal Yisroel, also remember Him. So Rashi changed the mashal in order for us to be able to relate to it. Rashi wants us to feel the mashal. It's not theoretical. It's real.

But then what do we do with the Sifri? How can Hashem be in “need”? He's infinite, perfect, lacking nothing. And here Chazal reveal something astonishing. Hashem created the world to have a relationship with us. He chose to want something. He chose to need something. Not because He is lacking—but because He loves. And love, when it is absolute, creates its own need. The Mishnah in Avos says: **כל אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר, בטל... דבר, בטלה אהבה**. But Hashem's love for us is not dependent—it is eternal. So too, the need that comes from that love is unshakable.

Hashem doesn't love us because He needs us. He needs us because He loves us.

So when we brought the korbanos—or when we daven a regular Mincha on a regular weekday—we are responding to a “need” that Hashem, so to speak, created. That's His request to us: **“את הכבש אחד תעשה בבקר...”**

Now we return to the Midrash. Moshe, in his final moments, pleads with Hashem for Klal Yisroel. Hashem responds: “They will need someone—but I also need them.”

Children need their parents. But parents also need their children.

And that's what Shimon ben Pazi was really saying. This pasuk—of the daily korban—is the most all-encompassing because it reminds us that Hashem wants us, desires us, waits for us. We matter. We are part of His plan. We are significant—not just to the world, but to Hashem Himself.

That is not just the essence of Torah—it might be the most important truth we'll ever hear.

מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,