

Lessons from the Chassidische Parsha

The teachings of the Alter Rebbe in Torah Ohr and Likkutei Torah

The spiritual Avodah of Sacrifices

ד"ה אדם כי יקריב מכם וכו'

פרשת ויקרא
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Sefer Vayikro opens with the different types of sacrifices which were offered in the Beis Hamikdosh. For a large part of our history, sacrifices stood at the centre of our relationship and service of Hashem.

Since the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh, we have not had the ability to bring Korbonos. Yet the Torah is eternal. Every Mitzvah has relevance and meaning at all times, for every one of us. Some Mitzvos we can still observe in their literal sense, but others, like the Korbonos, must be observed on a deeper level, spiritual level.

This week's Chassidische Parsha presents an explanation of the inner message and Avodah of Korbonos, based on the Posuk;

דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן
לה' מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם

"When a man will bring from you a sacrifice to Hashem from the animals; from oxen or sheep you shall bring your sacrifices."

The Alter Rebbe points out a number of nuances in this verse. The first part of the Posuk אדם כי יקריב מכם is in singular form. It is also written in the third person, "when a man will bring". In contrast, the conclusion of the Posuk changes to plural form תקריבו את קרבנכם. It is also written in the second person, "you shall bring your sacrifices."

Further, the word מכם seems out of place. The verse should have read יקריב מכם, "When a man from you will bring" rather than אדם כי יקריב מכם "When a man will bring from you".

The 'Adam' in the Posuk does not refer to earthly man. It refers to the Supernal Man, the image of Man on the Divine Throne in the vision of Yechezkel. Whilst Hashem has no form or body, Supernal Man refers to a revelation of G-dliness via the divine Sefiros which mirror the form of a body (Chessed being the right hand, Gevurah the left hand etc.)

The opening of the verse אדם כי יקריב מכם can be read as "when a Man will draw close from you." It is written in singular form and in the third person, because it is describing how a revelation from this 'Adam' comes down to draw our hearts closer to Him. In Kabbalistic literature this is described as an אתערותא דלעילא, an awakening that is initiated from Above.

These are the moments of inspiration which we experience from time-to-time; where with no effort or preparation of our own, we feel a spiritual awakening and a desire to connect.

Chassidus discusses the two souls that exist within us; the G-dly Soul and the Animalistic Soul. The spiritual revelation from Above only reaches מכם - part of you. The G-dly Soul is receptive to this revelation, but the Animalistic Soul remains completely unchanged from the experience.

Since this awakening comes from outside of ourselves, without any effort to transform to become vessels to internalize G-dliness, the

inspiration is fleeting, leaving us the same coarse beings as we were before, as though the inspiration never took place at all.

How do we harness these moments of G-dly inspiration, to internalise them and make them a part of our lives?

This is the subject of the second part of the verse "From the animals... you shall bring your sacrifices". These words are written in second person and plural form, because they address what we should be doing as individuals upon experiencing the inspiration that comes from the "Adam" above to draw us closer.

The inspiration serves merely as the stimulus to wake us up. It must be translated immediately into Avodah - an awakening from below. The Avodah is to offer up our inner animal as a sacrifice to Hashem. Chassidus relates the word Avodah to עבוד עורות, the tanning of leather, which takes coarse, animal skins and softens and processes them until they become fitting to be clothing for man.

We do this initially through *Iskafya*, pushing away and subduing the desires of our Animalistic Souls. The higher Avodah is *Is'hapcha*, when we are able to transform our animalistic emotions to be vessels for G-dliness themselves.

The Posuk delineates different types of animals, which reflect the different types of Animalistic Souls. Some Animalistic Souls rage with anger like a goring ox. Others are docile like a sheep, not presenting with anger, but with desire for materialism. Each person has their unique Animalistic Soul and corresponding Avodah.

Unlike the fleeting inspiration, this Avodah will be lasting, because it is through our own efforts and engages both parts of our being in an inner way.

The Alter Rebbe explains that we experience this every year on Pesach. The Exodus was a top-down experience, an awakening from Above. Even though the Jewish people were in the depths of impurity, Hashem Himself descended into Egypt to redeem them, showering and overwhelming them with the Divine revelation.

But coming from Above, this revelation only awakened the G-dly soul. Their Animalistic side remained coarse and unchanged. This is why the Jewish people had to flee Mitzrayim, because their inner Mitzrayim of the Animalistic Soul was still in its full strength.

And so immediately after the Exodus, the Jewish people had to embark on process of inner change, to refine their Animalistic side. This is the Avodah of the 49 days of Sefiras Haomer.

This awakening from below arouses an even greater revelation; the Giving of the Torah on Shavuos. Unlike the awakening from Above of the Exodus, this revelation comes after and through our efforts. As such, not only is it lasting, but it is loftier; emanating from the level of לא אדם (lit. 'not a man') - the essence of G-dliness that transcends the limited G-dly light of the image of Man (אדם).