

Parshas Vayikra

In this week's parsha, Moshe tells the Jews about all the sacrifices one may bring to the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash. This parsha begins the third of the five books of Torah.

Although the Parsha details the technical aspects of the Korbanos and their measurements, the critical point is the second verse about which the Chassidic masters pour much thought, and that is the concept of sacrifice of a person to Hashem. The interpretation of a sacrifice is precisely what they try to uncover, in what a personal sacrifice as a Jew means, especially after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash where we aren't necessarily giving the same kind of physical sacrifice as we would have in the times of the Beis Hamikdash, with an animal and a specific measurement of flour or other ingredient.

Personal sacrifice- is the method by which one can commit oneself to Hashem with oneself and one's physical belongings. Further, there is an animal within each one of us that can be "sacrificed" to Hashem, which would mean taking the physical nourishment and turning it to be used for Avodas Hashem. This means that in our realm, Mitzvos are completed physically. Our fuel and experience living within the physical realm drive our animal soul and our ability to live, breathe and eat. However, remaining within that level is not the practice of a Jew. Everything we are doing in this world is for the service of deriving spirituality from our physical experiences. Our physical acts define

these but should be our existence's core focus. For example, working to have a career for the career's sake is one level of remaining in the physical realm. Still, working to have a job to be a better Jew, that is turning the physical pursuit to becoming spiritual and G-dly.

This Parsha also precedes Pesach, the holiday that defines the pursuit from a physical realm to a holy and spiritual one. This means that when the Jews were enslaved, they were defined and confined by their captors, and they became enmeshed within that society, that salvation could only come from Hashem, who could turn their status as slaves to freemen in one fell swoop. Unlike other holidays, this holiday is specifically defined by the physical journey of the Jews, which has a spiritual message.

Since today, which follows the eras of redemption, two temples, and our era of the final exile, the method with which we can become free is service to Hashem, unlike the Pesach journey, which also precedes the giving of the Torah, the guide for how we can live in this realm and the method to live. Their journey took place in the blink of an eye, and ours has been a long, drawn-out exile and process at its final stages.

We derive from this Parsha; even though we cannot physically offer a sacrifice in the Temple, we can give a sacrifice from ourselves and turn our animalistic soul toward the G-dly soul and, through that process journey, experience our redemption.

Good Shabbos