

Parshas Vayikra

This week's Parsha begins the third Chumash or the Torah. This is where the Torah begins the laws of sacrifices, with varying times, such as for atonement or for holidays. In the calendar, with the beginning of the month of Nisan, there are those with the tradition to read from the "Nesiim," that is, the offerings that the princes brought in honour of the establishment and inauguration of the Mishkan, as it aligns with the month of Nisan, when the inauguration took place. Ending Shemos, which ends around the time of Yom Kippur, regarding the completion of the donations given by everyone for the building of the Mishkan. The Mishkan itself was established 7 months later in the month of Nisan. The month of Nisan is known as the month of redemption (because Pesach, i.e., redemption from Egypt, took place in the month; the Jewish nation was birthed, and it is the new year for the 'counting' of the months). What we say with the Nesiim is their offerings, which basically repeat the same thing for each one of them. It would seem, then, that sacrifices are integral and significant in Judaism, yet, in our time, that is in exile, we don't have physical sacrifices any longer. Especially, since the Parsha ends, and the sign of the Parsha is the word to "know Hashem", that is, through sacrifice one can come to know Hashem. The key takeaway then, is that even in exile, we have a path to "sacrifice" that is, we have a unique

ability to serve Hashem within our confines by giving to Hashem. How do we do that? First, by reading about the sacrifices (i.e., in Davening); second, by acting in a way that pushes ourselves even when there is reason to stop. This means that we go above and beyond to get a Mitzvah done, much as we put in the effort to get a perfect animal and then offer it on the Altar.

What we can do today is to give from ourselves, in every way, on the material side of our lives, in order to ensure we have a connection to Hashem. In addition to the work we do within our own Mitzvos. That is, every Mitzva begins and ends with our action, which takes a part of ourselves and gives it toward the service of Hashem. This Parsha then outlines the first service: the physical animal; today, it is everything else in our actions. With this, we will do a little more to bring Mashiach.

Good Shabbos