
א ביסל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

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ויקרא

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The Hidden Meaning Behind a Single Word

By Moshe Garland

We see many instances throughout the תורה when ה' speaks to משה. These dialogues constitute much of the תורה. The vast majority of the time, the פסוק simply says "ויאמר". However, in this week's פרשה, פרשת ויקרא, we see something different. The first פסוק in this weeks פרשה says "וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֵלָיו מֵאֵתֵל מוֹעֵד" - "And He called to Moshe, and God spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting saying." This seems odd. Why doesn't the תורה just say "ה' spoke to משה from the Tent of Meeting"? The commentators give several answers to this question.

רש"י gives two different answers. His first answer is that ה' was specifically talking to משה and not anybody else. This makes sense because sometimes ה' is talking to only משה and other times He is talking to both משה and אהרן. Therefore, the תורה had to specify that this was specifically to משה.

רש"י gives another explanation that is more literary-focused. He says that the word "ויקרא" begins a new section, the section of קרבנות, while the word "ויאמר" splits up the major section into smaller subsections about each specific קרבן. While רש"י's previous explanation used this word to derive something we didn't already know from the פסוק, this explanation simply tells us how the sections of the תורה are broken up. This seems to be supported by the fact that this week, we start the ספר ויקרא which deals almost exclusively with קרבנות and the משכן. The other parts of putting together the משכן were already discussed in ספר שמות, showing how the section of קרבנות is completely new.

רמב"ן and a few other פרשנים give a different text-based explanation. They explain that we know from the end of the previous פרשה, פרשת פקודי, that משה couldn't enter the מועד אהל since the שכינה was covering it. This פסוק tells us that ה' called out to משה to tell him that he could enter the מועד אהל. This פסוק, like the previous explanation, seems to mark a new beginning. משה is finally allowed to enter the מועד אהל after being barred from it for so long. This is a new era for the Jewish people, where they have a place to worship ה', and it is being slowly brought in. First only to משה, and eventually to the rest of the Jewish people.

The final explanation is given both by רמב"ן and by רש"י. They state that it was a sign of affection from ה' when He called to משה instead of just talking to him. This teaches us a valuable lesson about etiquette. ה' is teaching us that before we speak to someone we must address them and ensure they know who is speaking to them. If ה' does this with משה when the message is coming directly from ה', even more so does this apply to us. It is respectful to the person you are speaking to and helps them gain more respect for you.

קרבנות The Importance of

By Eitan Orkaby

ויקרא begins with an introduction of all of the different קרבנות a person can bring and then segways into the steps of how to bring a קרבן. In the introduction, ה' tells משה: "מִן־הַבְּהֵמָה מִן־הַבֶּקָר" (ויקרא א:ב), "When a person from you goes to bring a קרבן to ה' they should bring it from an animal, cattle, or sheep." The word מִקָּמָם in this פסוק seems extra, as you could easily say קָרְבַּן קָרְבַּן and it would seem perfectly normal. The תורה is perfect, therefore this can't be a mistake, so what is "מִקָּמָם" coming to teach us?

רש"י says "מִקָּמָם" comes to teach us that the קרבן is a נדבה, voluntary offering. This shows that a person makes a conscious decision to bring a קרבן voluntarily, instead of bringing a קרבן because he is forced to.

The קרי similarly explains, that the first person to ever bring a קרבן was אדם הראשון, who didn't have any jealousy towards anyone else (as there was no one else), and just like אדם we should bring קרבנות from ourselves, "מִקָּמָם", and not look at other people's קרבנות. We should bring a קרבן נדבה because we want to, and not because we feel pressured in to doing so.

רמב"ן has a very different idea of what are קרבנות. He asks why do we use only certain animals for the קרבנות? The cow, sheep, and bull which are used as קרבנות have the same limbs as us. They have legs, "arms", a head, stomach, etc. When קרבנות used to be brought, people would see themselves burning. They would realize that they should really be the ones up on the מזבח burning like the animal, but they are not. Bringing a קרבן is a terrifying experience, of which the one bringing the קרבן really feels the מדה כנגד מדה that just like they sinned, so too they should have been burned.

The problem with this opinion is that it only works for non-voluntary sacrifices. Why should someone who wants to thank ה' for all of the good in his life want to feel like they are supposed to be burnt?

To answer this question, רב פניקס makes us completely reevaluate what קרבנות are. He says that the root of קרבן is קרב, closeness, because the whole goal in bringing them is to become closer to ה'. There are three types of gifts, an inanimate object (jewelry, clothing, etc.), a plant (flowers, blossoms, etc.), and a living object, which being the highest form of a gift, is what is given as a קרבן.

From all of the different opinions, we see a common theme, the importance of קרבנות. In fact, רב הירש thinks that it is the way to get closer to ה'. Since nowadays we don't have קרבנות our substitute is תפילה. Every time we Daven we are getting closer to ה'. Just like a קרבן is supposed to be a scary thing, according to רמב"ן, so too תפילה is supposed to be very scary, as we are talking to רבונו של עולם, master of the universe. May we be זוכה to build the בית המקדש and bring קרבנות to ה' very soon.

Editors in Chief: Binyamin Orkaby and Ephraim Fischer

Editors: Avi Abbett and Eitan Orkaby

Faculty Advisor: Rabbi Jaffe



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