

א ביסל תורה!

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THE PARSHA NEWSLETTER
OF MAIMONIDES SCHOOL

ב' ניסן תשפ"ו · ויקרא

פר העלם דבר

By Eitan Orkaby '27

After one sins by accident, one brings a sin offering for the sin that they committed. One would assume that this should be the case for each individual in the Jewish people if everyone collectively sins; however, this is not the case. In such a case, where every person in the Jewish people sins only one sacrifice is brought on behalf of the entire people, called the פר העלם דבר, the cow of a matter escaping. This sacrifice is probably one of the most complicated sacrifices in the entire תורה, having an entire מסכת of גמרא dedicated to explaining the sacrifice and its intricacies, called הוריות.

In order for this sacrifice to be in order many factors must be true. First and foremost, the entire Head Court must make a decree that a prohibited action, that the תורה gives a punishment of ברת, being cut off from the Jewish people, is allowed. This action cannot be obscure, it has to be stated explicitly as not allowed. And the decree itself, paradoxically, only deems this special sacrifice if the Head Court only allowed part of the action and not part of it (הוריות ד). This is the first factor that must be true.

The second factor is one with two branches; the prohibited action must be forgotten "מעיני הקהל" "from the eyes of the congregation" (ויקרא דיג). The simple reading of this phrase is that the congregation, being represented by the majority of the people, follow the Head Court's ruling, that goes against an explicitly prohibited action. However, as the רמב"ם

points out (שגגות יב:א), there is another פסוק where "and יהושפט stood in the congregation of יהודה" (דברי הימים ב' כ:ה). The use of the word קהל in this context seems to be the as a substitute for tribe, implying that קהל by דבר פר העלם דבר also is a tribe. Thus, the majority of the Jewish people is seven tribes, which could include much less than half of the Jewish people. If either of these scenarios play out, a פר העלם דבר is required to atone for the Jewish people's sin. These are merely two factors of many much more complicated ones that must be fulfilled for this special sacrifice.

It would seem that to bring this sacrifice the Jewish nation must try their best to sin properly. Yet, again, paradoxically, having intention to sin in this manner makes the Jewish people exempt from this sacrifice. One, therefore, questions the practicality of this sacrifice, taking an entire nine פסוקים to describe. For most of world Jewry this would be a serious question, as everything in the תורה must be coming to teach us something practical or at least conceptual; this is not the case for Briskers. One of the favorite מסכתות by Briskers is, in fact, הוריות. The way the Briskers view learning תורה is not one of practicality or gleaning lessons from passages, it is to learn. What Briskers most love to do is learn the essence of a law, not what it means but what is behind it. One might describe this type of learning as digging down to discover the entire root system of a tree, which is the תורה. While no fruit will be beared through this extensive exploring of the roots, a foundation can be made. הוריות is difficult to conceptualize as it has never been

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the case that the Jewish people have needed to bring a דבר פר העלם דבר. Thus, the Briskers love the topic, since there is absolutely no fruit to be borne from deep study. This is the beauty of the דבר פר העלם דבר.

Connecting With G-d Without קרבנות

By Shifra Leibowitz '29

In this week's פרשה we talk a lot about קרבנות, but what is the reason for giving sacrifices?

The reason we do this is in order to connect physically with Hashem. At first, Hashem did not want sacrifices. What He wanted was for us to connect to Him through מצוות and Torah observance. But after seeing the golden calf, Hashem knew that the people needed something different. They needed a physical way to connect with Him that would be easier for them as human beings. so, Hashem provides the Jewish people with a list of instructions for the קרבנות, the sacrifices.

Today, we are currently deprived of having a בית המקדש, so we don't have a place to do the sacrifices and can't use this way of connecting to Hashem. Instead we have holy books like the Torah which we read and study, and the סדור which we use to daven with. We use these books and the activities that are involved with them. For example, every שבת in shul, we dress the Torah with really nice clothes and kiss the Torah to show our respect for it. We read from the Torah to hear what Hashem did for us and what he wants us to do. We also hold our סדור in our hands and use it to read and sing the prayers in order to thank Hashem for all that He does for us. We take 3

steps forward and back for the עמידה and we bow. Even without the sacrifices, there is still so much that we do physically in order to get and stay close to Hashem.

There is one part of the instructions for the sacrifices that is especially interesting. When a Jew wanted to bring a עולה sacrifice to get close to Hashem, the main animals the person had to choose from were cattle, sheep and goats. Those were really expensive, though, and not everyone could afford them. so, the Torah gives different options to choose from including a turtledove or young doves, which was much easier for less fortunate people to bring. This shows how much Hashem cares for us - even though some people can't afford to bring big sacrifices Hashem knows that we still love Him, no matter how much we bring.

Similarly, with religious acts in our current exile, the quantity of Torah and חסד may be different for every person. The thing that is objectively important is attitude. Our lives should be centered around religious fulfillment and Torah. Every person has a different situation, and some people might not have time to learn Torah or money to give to צדקה. However, as long as the goal in life is to do what Hashem wants, done in life is like bringing קרבנות to Hashem.



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