

THE NAGEL EDITION

חומש קורן לב לדעת
THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH

ספר ויקרא
VAYIKRA/LEVITICUS



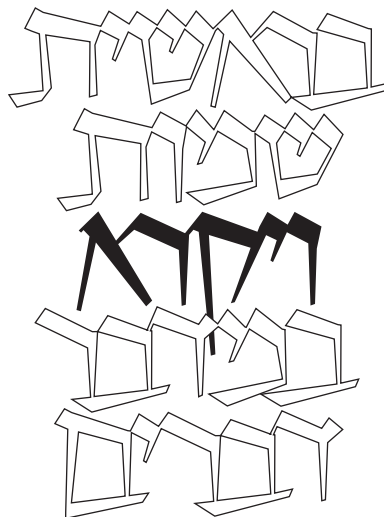
KOREN



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TORAH TRANSLATION BY
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THE NAGEL EDITION
OF THE KOREN YOUNG ADULT HUMASH LEV LADAAT
IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

Jack M. Nagel ז"ו

ר' יעקב אלימלך ז"ל

A beloved husband, devoted father, adoring grandfather and great grandfather.

A true Visionary, who survived the Shoah, and whose philosophy was
to deal compassionately and kindly with all people.

His love for Torah and being a mensch guided him throughout his life.

He believed Education was the key to Jewish survival, and he made it his life's mission
to enrich the Los Angeles community with all aspects of Jewish scholarship and culture.

He established and remained committed to many yeshivot and Centers of Jewish
Learning throughout the United States and in his cherished homeland, Israel.

He had great faith, great heart, and great courage and was blessed
together with his Eshet Chayil, our Mother Gitta,
to leave a legacy of Tzedaka, Chesed and Emunah.

מרבח תורה מרבח חיים. מרבח צדקה מרבח שלום.

"The more Torah, the more life. The more charity, the more peace." (Avot 2:8)

Dedicated with love by his children:

Dr. Ronnie and Cheryl Nagel

Los Angeles, California, USA

Esther and Dr. Paul Lerer

Englewood, New Jersey, USA

David and Marnie Nagel

Los Angeles, California, USA

Careena and Drew Parker

Englewood, New Jersey, USA

And his devoted wife, Dr. Gitta Nagel

Los Angeles, California, USA





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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

“דוד לדוד ישבח מעשיו” (תהלים קמה, ד)

“One generation will praise Your works to the next...” (Psalms 145:4)

It is with gratitude and a certain ambition that we introduce this volume of **THE NAGEL EDITION OF THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH**, a *Humash* designed to encourage connection, reflection and learning of our foundation stone, the Torah.

The connection between Jewish young adults and the Torah is critical. Our children must learn the text of the *Humash* and the classical commentators who have illuminated difficult passages. But it is just as important – and all-too-often neglected – that the student or young adult engage emotionally and experientially with the text. How does the Torah give them a prism to view the world around them? The need for this deeper, spiritual interaction gives rise to the name of this edition: **Lev Ladaat: The Understanding Heart**. For our ambition is that every Jew engage with the Torah and incorporate its values into his or her daily life, not just as an academic exercise.

It is with this ambition that Koren Publishers Jerusalem has created this edition, designed for high school students and young adults in synagogue *minyanim*. Since 1962, the Koren Tanakh has been recognized for its textual accuracy and innovative graphic design. We have remained committed to these qualities, and we have recently had the privilege of enriching the *Humash* text with the eloquent English translation of one of the most articulate and original Jewish thinkers of our time, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, *zt”l*.

It is with gratitude that we acknowledge Rabbi Sacks for this exceptional translation of the Torah. And our thanks are no less due to Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn, from whose fertile imagination and broad educational

experience the concept for this Young Adult *Humash* sprang. Likewise to Rabbi Dr. Zvi Grumet, whose intimate knowledge of the *Humash* and its commentaries has enriched these pages inestimably. And to Rabbi Yedidya Naveh and Caryn Meltz, our Managing Editors, who brought it all together into a handsome and useful edition. And finally, to the team of translators, editors, and typesetters – Rabbi Jonathan Mishkin, Rabbi Alan Haber, Suri Brand, Carolyn Budow Ben-David, Nechama Unterman, Rina Ben-Gal, and Avichai Gamdani – who made the volume a reality.

None of this would have been possible without the support and detailed involvement of the Nagel Family of California and New Jersey, who understood both the ambitions and methods of this edition. **THE NAGEL EDITION OF THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH** is dedicated to the memory of Jack Nagel, *z”l*, who was an exceptional community leader. He and his beloved wife Gitta have enabled so much of Jewish life in the Los Angeles community, especially in the area of Jewish education: *yeshivot*, high schools and so much more. Surviving the Holocaust and making a new life for himself and family, Jack’s was an exemplary Jewish life, combining *Torah im derekh eretz*. Koren is honored to be associated with his memory.

On behalf of all our *rabbanim*, scholars and designers, we thank the Nagel Family. And to the many thousands of readers, in this and future generations: We are forever in your debt.

We hope the use of this *Humash* will bring Jews closer and closer to the Torah and all the good it represents.

Matthew Miller, Publisher
Jerusalem, Spring 5782 (2022)

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

What if there were no more bookstores left on Earth? What if we woke up to discover that the written word had been almost eliminated? This is the frightening possibility we confront when we visit “The Last Bookstore” in downtown Los Angeles. The Last Bookstore takes the guise of a survival shelter where all of Earth’s great books are sold, in case there may one day be no other places to find books. I once had the opportunity to spend some time there, and I found my way to a Bible, which included a commentary for teenagers. It roused my curiosity – why is there no edition of the H̄umash directed toward young adults? Ought we be simply waiting for young Jewish people to come to the Torah, instead of bringing the Torah to them?

Some might say that teens aren’t interested in the H̄umash. They are mistaken. For twenty-two years I have been teaching young adults, and I have always found them to be as hungry for knowledge and connection as any other group. Whenever I look past a student’s distracted veneer and genuinely engage them with some profound thought, it opens a reservoir of dialogue that I could not have found elsewhere.

With social media and technology becoming a constant part of our lives, our need for real and deep connection has only grown stronger. The Torah, we know, is an עץ חיים למחוקים בה – a tree of life for all who hold on to it.

Putting together a project like this H̄umash is complex. It’s very easy to slip into anachronistic concepts aimed at grabbing attention. But we owe more to ourselves; we are hungry for substantive and truly thought-provoking conversations.

To you, our young adults, we now offer this H̄umash. Will you use it? Will you allow it to guide you? When you are having a hard day and the walls seem to close in on you, will you pick this Torah up and let it lift you up? Will you let God into your life? We find Him in these words.

Why do we study Torah?

- *The Torah is a blueprint of the universe*, starting at the beginning – Bereshit. The Midrash teaches that God “looked into the Torah and created a world.” Do we want

to understand the world? “We should look at where it came from.”

- *How to practice Judaism.* Torah teaches us how to live as Jews. It teaches us how to practice our Judaism. The Gemara teaches: “תלמוד גדול, שהתלמוד מביא לידי מעשה” – learning is great in that it moves us to action. I love the word *halakha*, which denotes Jewish Law. It means to walk. We can’t walk in the ways of Judaism unless we know the *halakha*.
- *The values of Judaism.* The Torah guides us not only in how to practice Judaism’s laws but, at times more importantly, how to live its values. The emphasis that our people places on charity, education, visiting the sick – it’s all derived from the sensibilities of the Torah.
- *To help us do battle.* The sages interpret the wars described in the Torah as symbolic of our struggle against the *yetzer hara*, our evil inclination. Our shadow side is cunning. We have only one weapon against it, says the Gemara in Kiddushin: Torah study.
- *It is our oxygen, our life force.* The Gemara in Berakhot teaches us that just as a fish cannot live without water, so too we cannot exist without Torah. There isn’t an example of a Jewish community that has thrived and flourished over multiple generations without a love and appreciation for producing Torah.
- *Crisis management.* Think about what enabled Yosef to survive trauma after trauma in Egypt? What made him so resilient? What did Yosef have that allowed him to survive? Rashi tells us that before he was thrown into the pit, Yosef would spend his time with Yaakov, studying the Torah taught by Shem and Ever. Shem and Ever were survivors. They had endured the flood and the generation of the dispersion. Deep down, Yaakov knew that Yosef would need this Torah.
- *To develop a relationship with God.* Part of our mission in this world is to cleave to the Almighty. Through a relationship with God one learns what it means to be a proper human being. We enter into a relationship with our Father in Heaven by learning His word.

- *It's the great equalizer.* Rav Boruch Ber, the great rosh yeshiva, is quoted to have once said that Torah is the great equalizer. A child starting sixth grade could learn Bava Metzia, as though it's the most basic and simple piece of the Gemara. But at the same time, it's one of the hardest parts of the Talmud, challenging even the most advanced scholars. Torah is accessible to everyone at all levels.
- *It's your story.* Project years ahead and imagine bringing your spouse back to the house of your parents. While you're cleaning up the house, you find your old year-book. You can't wait to share it with the person that you love. Why are you so excited? Because you are going to share the story of your life. That's why we open up the Torah. Our entire legacy is there; where we came from, what we went through, where our customs come from, and where our identity has come from.
- *And finally: It's your way out.* Imagine you are lost in a maze. You cannot find the way out. Suddenly, you're told by the maze keeper, who stands above the maze, that there is one way out. It's the simplest way of all – the way that you came in. Retrace your steps, and that's how you'll find a way out. The Jews have survived the Shoah and have rebuilt a remarkable edifice called the State of Israel. We have done amazing things in America and around the world. We have built *yeshivot* filled to the brim with students. But we also find ourselves at a crossroads, facing multiple challenges. God's guidance for us is: Retrace your steps. Figure out where you became lost, because that will tell us how to get through the maze of life. That's why we need the Torah.

With all these ideas in mind, we have designed this *Humash* in such a way as to maximize the student's opportunity for reflection, connection, and learning. In addition to Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks's beautiful new translation of the Torah, we have included several different commentaries to add meaning to your journey:

WISDOM OF THE HEART: This commentary is designed to make you think critically about the stories, laws, and poetry in the Torah and how they relate to your life. It

often includes a question about your own experiences and opinions.

THE CLASSIC COMMENTATORS: This section begins with a guiding issue or question and brings two or three classic commentaries from Jewish history who have offered answers. Compare the answers given by the different commentaries. With whom do you agree? These are followed by *Questions for Thought*, which push you to read the commentaries more closely and find hidden ideas below the surface.

TEXTUAL SKILLS: These questions encourage you to read the text of the Torah more closely. The exact words and phrases appear carry tremendous meaning, and by paying attention to details we can make ourselves better readers.

QUICK BITES: This section provides a brief thought about the Torah that we can take with us out of the classroom and share with family and friends. It can be a jumping-off point for a deeper conversation.

EXPLORING HASHKAFKA: This essay at the end of most *parashot* deals with a "big idea" that challenges us as Jews in the modern world. It is not meant to give us easy answers, but to help us learn to think in creative ways about complex questions.

I write these words with profound gratitude to God. It is my hope that this project brings about a deeper love and understanding of God among the Jewish people.

It is an honor to work on this project together with Koren Publishers. Their professionalism, responsibility to tradition, and keen sense of style have made this a truly wonderful experience. Thank you to Matthew Miller and all the talented and hardworking editorial staff at Koren.

Thank you to my wonderful school and community, Yeshivat Yavneh, where many of these teachings were first developed and shared with teenagers.

Thank you to my wife, Shira. We were standing on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea when you held a rough draft of this *Humash* in your hand. You looked at me and said: "This project must happen."

Thank you to my parents and family who continue to encourage, praise, and support my work.

Thank you to the Nagel family. The connection between our families goes back over sixty years, and our bond of Torah began with a family *havura* on Wilshire Boulevard. Together with Jack, of blessed memory, we completed Sanhedrin and then began Bava Batra. It has been an exceptional privilege, and I have the *zekhut* of

continuing this tradition with the family. This work was made possible by the incredible family vision gifted to the Nagels by Jack and Gitta. To Dr. Ronnie, Esther, David, and Careena, my blessing is that the merit of this project may stand for your whole family's long life and health. May we continue to follow your trailblazing path, as together we celebrate this very historic moment – *The Koren Lev Ladaat Humash*.

Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn
Executive Editor

פרשת ויקרא

PARASHAT VAYIKRA

“Don't you hear my call though you're many years away?”

Brian May

If Bereshit is the origin story, and Shemot is the book of *גאולה*, then what is Vayikra?

For the Jewish people, *גאולה* from slavery is not a goal in its own right, but the means to an even more lofty pursuit. “Freedom” means not only freedom from something, but freedom to do something: to explore, to search, to reach for something higher, for something deeper.

Vayikra is a road map of that journey toward searching for more: for *kedusha* – sanctity which draws us closer to God, or perhaps draws God closer to us. How do we do that?

PARASHAT VAYIKRA

¹ ² The LORD called to Moshe. From the Tent of Meeting He spoke to him and said, “Speak to the Israelites. Say: When one of you brings an animal offering to the LORD, you may bring
³ it either from the herd or from the flock. If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, one must offer a male animal without blemish. The one making the offering shall bring it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to be accepted on his behalf before the
⁴ LORD; and, that it be accepted on his behalf, to make his atonement, he shall lay his
⁵ hand on the head of the burnt offering and shall have the bull slaughtered before the LORD. And Aharon’s sons the priests shall present the blood, dashing it against each
⁶ side of the altar at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. The burnt offering shall then be
⁷ skinned and cut into pieces. The sons of Aharon the priest shall arrange wood on the
⁸ fire they will have placed upon the altar. Then Aharon’s sons the priests shall arrange the pieces of the sacrifice, with the head and the fat, upon the wood on the altar fire;
⁹ the inner organs and legs shall first be washed with water. The priest shall then burn it all on the altar as a burnt offering, an offering of fire, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

רמב"ן RAMBAN

בעבור שמעשי בני אדם נגמרים במחשבה ובדיבור ובמעשה, ציוה השם כי כאשר יחטא יביא קרבן, יסמוך ידיו עליו כנגד המעשה, ויתודה בפיו כנגד הדיבור, וישרוף באש הקרב והכליות, שהם כלי המחשבה והתאוה, והכרעים - כנגד ידיו ורגליו של אדם העושים כל מלאכתו, ויזרוק הדם על המזבח - כנגד דמו בנפשו, כדי שיחשוב אדם בעשותו כל אלה כי חטא לאלוהיו בגופו ובנפשו, וראוי לו שיישפך דמו ויישרף גופו, לולא חסד הבורא שלקח ממנו תמורה.

The human being expresses himself through thoughts, with speech, and in actions. Because God recognizes this, He orders an individual to engage in the following types of behavior after he sins. Firstly, the person should bring an animal forward, and press his hands onto the beast’s head, which is a physical act corresponding to the actions he performed during his transgression. Secondly, the man should verbalize a confession of his indiscretion – and that is parallel to the sinful speech he might have uttered. Furthermore, he should burn on the altar the animal’s entrails and its kidneys, which – in the person – are the organs of thoughts and desires, as well as the legs of the animal which represent the hands and feet an individual uses to perform all of his labor. The blood of the animal is then cast against the altar, and that symbolizes the blood in the penitent’s own body. During all of these steps the individual should consider how he has used his body and soul to sin against his God, and that really, he deserves to have his own blood spilled out, and his own body burned. Were it not for the compassion of the Creator who graciously accepts a substitute for the human offender, it should be the person who is up there on the altar.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Which of the commentaries suggests that sacrifices served as an important transition away from idolatry?
- According to which of the commentaries it is easier to understand that the sacrifices could serve the same function today as they did when they were first commanded?

פרשת ויקרא

א וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מֵאֵהָל מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר: א
 ב דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אָדָם כִּי־יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם
 ג קֶרְבָּן לַיהוָה מִן־הַבְּהֵמָה מִן־הַבֶּקָר וּמִן־הַעֲצָאן תִּקְרִיבוּ אֶת־
 ד קֶרְבַּנְכֶם: אִם־עֲלֶה קֶרְבָּנוּ מִן־הַבֶּקָר זָכָר תָּמִים יִקְרִיבוּ אֶל־
 ה פֶּתַח אֵהָל מוֹעֵד יִקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לְרֹעֵנוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְסַמֵּךְ יָדוֹ עַל
 ו רֹאשׁ הָעֵלָה וְנִרְצָה לוֹ לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו: וְשָׁחַט אֶת־זֶבֶן הַבֶּקָר לִפְנֵי
 ז יְהוָה וְהִקְרִיבוּ בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הַדָּם וְזָרְקוּ אֶת־הַדָּם
 ח עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב אֲשֶׁר־פֶּתַח אֵהָל מוֹעֵד: וְהִפְשִׁיט אֶת־הָעֵלָה
 ט וּנְתַח אֹתָהּ לַנְּתָחֶיהָ: וְנָתַנוּ בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אֵשׁ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
 י וְעָרְכוּ עֵצִים עַל־הָאֵשׁ: וְעָרְכוּ בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הַנְּתָחִים
 יא אֶת־הָרֹאשׁ וְאֶת־הַפָּדֵר עַל־הָעֵצִים אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עַל־
 יב הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְקָרְבוּ וְכָרְעוּ יָרְחָן בְּמִים וְהִקְטִיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַכֹּל

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Why did God command us to bring sacrifices? There is an ancient debate about this.

רמב"ם (מורה נבוכים)

הדרך המפורסמת בעולם כולו... לא היה אלא להקריב מיני בעלי־חיים... לא הצריכו חוכמתו... שיצווה עלינו לדחות את מיני דרכי פולחן אלה, לעזוב אותם ולבטלם, כי זה היה באותם ימים דבר שאין להעלות על הדעת לקבלו... לכן השאיר יתעלה את מיני העבודות האלה והעבירן מהיותן לנבראים ולדברים דמיוניים שאין להם מהות אמיתית, להיות לשמו יתעלה... בחכמת־חסד אלוהית זאת הושג שנמחה זכר עבודה זרה, והתבסס היסוד הגדול האמיתי באמונתנו, והוא מציאות האלוה וייחודו.

RAMBAM (MOREH NEVUKHIM)

In ancient times it was customary to offer different kinds of animals to the pagan deities that people had invented and worshipped... But in God's divine wisdom He did not command Israel to completely reject the rituals of sacrifice, nor to totally reject the practice. To forgo sacrifices at that point in human history would have been unthinkable... And so, because an utter dismantling of sacrifices was untenable in the early history of the nation, God maintained the general system of animal offerings, but redirected these actions from the service of created and imaginary gods, toward the veneration of God, may He be exalted. With this divine wisdom and righteousness, God managed to obliterate Israel's interest in idolatry, and solidified the great and critical principle of our faith which is the belief in God's singular existence.

- 10 If the offering is a burnt offering from the flock, whether a sheep or a goat, one must
 11 offer a male without blemish. The one making the sacrifice shall have it slaughtered on
 the north side of the altar before the LORD, and Aharon's sons the priests shall dash its
 12 blood against each side of the altar. The sacrifice shall be cut into pieces, including the
 13 head and the fat, and the priest shall arrange these upon the wood on the altar fire, the
 inner organs and legs having been washed with water. The priest shall then offer it all,
 sending it up in smoke upon the altar as a burnt offering, an offering of fire, a pleasing
 aroma to the LORD.
- 14 If the offering for the LORD is to be a burnt offering of fowl, one may offer doves or
 15 pigeons. The priest shall bring the offering to the altar, sever its neck, and burn it on
 16 the altar; its blood shall be drained against the altar wall: the priest shall remove the
 crop with its feathers and throw that to the east side of the altar, to the place where the
 17 ashes are gathered. Then he shall tear the bird open by its wings, without dividing it
 completely. The priest shall then send it up in smoke upon the altar, on the wood of the

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

“ניחוח לשם הנחת רוח” – לתת סיפוק רוחני: הדבר
 סותר את התפיסה המוטעית, שהקרבנות נועדו לתת
 לאלוקים הנאת חושים ממשית. אלא הפירוש הוא,
 שהמבקש קרבת ה' באמצעות קרבן מקבל על עצמו
 לקיים את רצון ה', וכך מפנה לעבר ה' את השאיפה
 לתת סיפוק רוחני.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

The phrase “a pleasing aroma to God” comes to contradict our erroneous understanding of God, which suggests that the purpose of sacrifices is to indulge God's physical senses. However, what these words really mean is that when an individual wishes to grow closer to God through the medium of animal sacrifice, he thereby commits to fulfilling the will of the Almighty. The contentment that God obtains from the sacrifice's odor is therefore not the pleasurable tingling of His sense of smell, but the satisfaction that the person is willing to channel his spiritual energies toward God.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Regarding what do these two commentators agree?
- How does each understand the phrase **ריח ניחוח**?
- Ramban understands that on a mystical level, sacrifices have great impact on the universe. Would each of these commentators agree or disagree with Ramban?
- Do you think that it is possible to achieve the goal of the sacrifices, as these commentators understand it, without actually bringing the sacrifice?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. The term **ריח ניחוח לה'**, with some variation, is first introduced in this chapter and appears seven times in the section of the Torah describing sacrifices.
2. Can you find a pattern of which sacrifices are identified with the phrase **ריח ניחוח לה'** and which are not?

י המִזְבֵּחַה עֲלֶה אִשָּׁה רֵיח־נִחוּחַ לַיהוָה: ◀ וְאִם־
 מִן־הַצֵּאֵן קָרְבָּנוּ מִן־הַפְּשָׁבִים אוֹ מִן־הָעִצִּים לְעֹלָה זָכַר תָּמִים
 יא יִקְרִיבֶנּוּ: וְשָׁחַט אֹתוֹ עַל־יַרְךְ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַפְנָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְזָרְקוּ
 יב בְּנֵי אֹהֶלן הַפְּהִינִים אֶת־דָּמֹו עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וְנָתַח אֹתוֹ
 לְנִתְחָיו וְאֶת־דָּאִשׁוֹ וְאֶת־פְּדָרוֹ וְעַרְךְ הַפְּהִין אֹתָם עַל־הָעִצִּים
 יג אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְהִקְרִיב וְהִפְרָעִים יִרְחֹץ
 בַּמַּיִם וְהִקְרִיב הַפְּהִין אֶת־הַכֹּל וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עֲלֶה הוּא
 אִשָּׁה רֵיח־נִחוּחַ לַיהוָה: ▶

יד וְאִם מִן־הָעוֹף עֲלֶה קָרְבָּנוּ לַיהוָה וְהִקְרִיב מִן־הַתּוֹרִים אוֹ מִן־
 טו בְּנֵי הַיוֹנָה אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ: וְהִקְרִיבוּ הַפְּהִין אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּמָלַק אֶת־
 טז רֹאשׁוֹ וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַה וְנִמְצָה דָּמֹו עַל קִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְהִסִּיד
 אֶת־מְרֹאָתוֹ בְּנִצָּתָהּ וְהִשְׁלִיךְ אֹתָהּ אֶצֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ קֹדֶמָה אֶל־
 יז מְקוֹם הַדָּשָׁן: וְשִׁפֵּעַ אֹתוֹ בְּכַנְפָּיו לֹא יִבְדִּיל וְהִקְטִיר אֹתוֹ הַפְּהִין
 הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עַל־הָעִצִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאֵשׁ עֲלֶה הוּא אִשָּׁה רֵיח־נִחוּחַ

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

The Torah describes many of the sacrifices as ריח ניחוח לה, often translated as “a pleasing aroma to God.” This description has offended many – does God need to smell nice things to find us favorable? Do the sacrifices bring some kind of physical pleasure to God?

ר' אליעזר אשכנזי

כאשר אמר בקרבנות “ריח ניחוח לה” לא לסיפור מעלת הקרבנות נאמר כך, אבל אדרבא, לסיפור גרעון המעלה נאמר כן, כי המביא קרבן ויחשוב כי בקרבן נתכפר העוון הודיעה לו התורה שאין הדבר כך, כי הקרבן איננו רק “ריח ניחוח” על מה שהוא עתיד לעשות... כי כאשר הריח הטוב הבא מרחוק יעיד על הדבר בעצמו היותו טוב, כמו כן כל “ריח ניחוח” שנאמר בקרבנות... פירושו שהקרבן ההוא יהיה לפני ה' כמבשר על המעשים הטובים שעתידי המקריב ההוא לעשות.

RABBI ELIEZER ASHKENAZI

When the Torah portrays the sacrifices as being “a pleasing aroma to God,” this phrase is not intended to describe some wonderful attribute of the offerings. On the contrary, these words convey the limitation of burning animals as offerings. For when an individual brings his sacrifice, it would be natural for him to imagine that his gesture effects an atonement for his transgression. But in fact, the Torah teaches, the sacrifice is merely “a pleasing aroma,” a whiff of what the penitent man is expected to do in the future... For just as a pleasing fragrance that wafts in from a distance testifies to something delightful unseen, so too do the smells of the offerings inform God that the individual is promising better deeds and improved behavior in the days to come.

- 2 ¹ altar fire. It is a burnt offering, an offering of fire, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. When one brings a grain offering to the LORD, it shall be of fine flour. The one who brings
- 2 the sacrifice shall pour oil over it, then place incense upon it, and bring it to Aharon's sons, the priests. From this, the priest shall scoop out a handful of its fine flour and oil, together with all its incense, and send this remembrance up in smoke upon the altar
- 3 as an offering of fire, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. What remains of the grain offering shall belong to Aharon and his sons; it is holy of holies among the fire offerings to
- 4 the LORD. When you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, it shall be of fine flour: 5 unleavened loaves mixed with oil or unleavened wafers spread with oil. If your offering is grain prepared on a griddle, it shall be of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened.
- 6 Crumble it into pieces and pour oil over it; this is a grain offering. If your offering is
- 7 grain prepared in a pan, it shall be of fine flour in oil. You shall bring the grain offering made in one of these ways to the LORD, presenting it to the priest, who will bring it to
- 8 the altar. The priest shall lift a remembrance from the grain offering and send it up in
- 9 smoke upon the altar as an offering of fire, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. What is left
- 10 of this grain offering shall belong to Aharon and his sons; it is holy of holies among the

ר' יוסף בכור שור

כל המנחות קדשי קדשים ואין זר אוכל עמהם. ולפי שהוא דרך עניים להביא מנחה, חיבבן הקב"ה לעשות אותם קדשי קדשים, להראות ענוותנותו של הקב"ה, שהוא מלך גדול ומחבב עניים.

ר' דוד צבי הופמן

ערך יותר נעלה נודע למנחה, כשהיא הוקרבה כקרבן מיוחד ביד העני במקום העולה. הוא הקריב בזה לא רק את קנינו, אלא אף את עצמו כקרבן: "מעלה אני עליו כאלו הקריב נפשו". מידת הסולת של מנחה היתה צריכה להיות לפחות עשירית האיפה. זאת היא, כפי שהעיד אל נכון ש.ד. הירש, מידת כלכלתו של בן אדם ליום. והנה העני שמוסר את לחם חוקו למזבח, הקדיש בו את הונו ונפשו לאלהים.

RABBI YOSEF BEKHOR SHOR

All grain offerings fall within the category of the holiest type of sacrifice, which may be eaten only by priests. Now, since it is poor individuals who tend to bring grain offerings, the Holy One, blessed be He, favored them by including them in the most sanctified group of offerings. And by bestowing such an honor to the impoverished, the King of the world displays a humility rarely seen in a monarch.

RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

There is a great attribute afforded to the grain offering which is brought especially by the nation's poorest population in place of a burnt offering. When the destitute individual brings a sack of flour and donates it to the Temple, he is not only parting with the meager possessions that he owns, but he is sacrificing himself as well, as the Midrash states: It is as if the poor man has climbed onto the altar in devotion to the Almighty. Every grain offering must comprise at least a tenth of an ephah of flour which, as Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch correctly points out, represents the amount an average person eats in a day. As such, when a person forgoes his daily ration, he consecrates both his money and his soul to God.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- On what point do all three of the above commentators agree?
- What aspect of the **מנחה** does Bekhor Shor highlight to strengthen the point which Rashi makes?
- Rashi bases his explanation on a midrash that "quotes" God's response to the *minḥa*. How does Rabbi David Tzvi Hoffman explain that "quote"?

ב « לִיהוּה: וְנִפְשׁ כִּי־תִקְרֵיב קָרְבַּן מִנְחָה לַיהוָה סֹלֶת
 יהיה קָרְבָּנוּ וַיִּצַק עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן וְנָתַן עָלֶיהָ לְבִנְהָ: וְהִבִּיֵּאתָ אֶל־
 בְּנֵי אֹהֶרֶן הַכֹּהֲנִים וְקִמְיֵן מִשֶּׁם מְלֵא קִמְצוֹ מִסֹּלֶתָהּ וּמִשֶּׁמֶן
 עַל כָּל־לִבְנֹתָהּ וְהִקְטִיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־אֲזִפְרָתָהּ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר
 רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: וְהֵנוּתַרְתָּ מִן־הַמִּנְחָה לְאֹהֶרֶן וּלְבָנָיו קֹדֶשׁ
 קֳדָשִׁים מֵאֲשֵׁי יְהוָה: וְכִי תִקְרַב קָרְבַּן מִנְחָה
 מֵאִפֶּה תִנּוֹד סֹלֶת חֲלֹת מִצֵּת בְּלוּלֹת בְּשֶׁמֶן וְדִקְיָקִי מִצֹּת
 מִשְׁחִים בְּשֶׁמֶן: וְאִם־מִנְחָה עַל־הַמַּחֲבֵת קָרְבָּנְךָ
 סֹלֶת בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן מִצָּה תִהְיֶה: פָּתוּת אֹתָהּ פְּתִים וַיִּצְקֵת
 עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן מִנְחָה הוּא: וְאִם־מִנְחַת מִרְחֶשֶׁת קָרְבָּנְךָ
 סֹלֶת בְּשֶׁמֶן תַּעֲשֶׂה: וְהִבִּיֵּאתָ אֶת־הַמִּנְחָה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה מֵאִלָּה
 לַיהוָה וְהִקְרִיבָהּ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן וְהִגִּישָׁהּ אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְהֵרִים הַכֹּהֵן
 מִן־הַמִּנְחָה אֶת־אֲזִפְרָתָהּ וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ
 לַיהוָה: וְהֵנוּתַרְתָּ מִן־הַמִּנְחָה לְאֹהֶרֶן וּלְבָנָיו קֹדֶשׁ קֳדָשִׁים

שלישי

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

When the Torah introduces the subject of the **מנחה**, instead of mentioning a *person* bringing the **מנחה** it speaks of a **נפש** that brings a **מנחה**. This caught the attention of many commentators.

רש"י RASHI

לא נאמר נפש בכל הקורבנות נדבה אלא במנחה.
 מי דרכו להתנדב מנחה? עני. אמר הקב"ה: מעלה
 אני עליו כאלו הקריב נפשו.

Among the voluntary offerings, the term **נפש** [soul] appears only in conjunction with the grain offering. For what kind of individual brings a meal offering? Only a poor person [who cannot afford to donate an animal or a bird]. Says the Holy One, blessed be He: I consider such a gesture tantamount to the person offering his actual soul to Me!

2:11–16 No honey or yeast is permitted with the **מנחה**; it must be baked as matza (no *ḥametz*) and have salt added. Unlike other **מנחה** offerings, the **מנחה** of the first fruits (**בכורים**) is to be roasted in the fire (not baked or fried).

- 11 fire offerings to the LORD. No grain offering that you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven, for no leaven or honey may be used in a fire offering to the LORD, sent up
 12 in smoke. You may bring them as offerings of first produce to the LORD, but they may
 13 not be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma. You shall season all your grain offerings with salt; do not omit from your grain offering the salt of your covenant with God. You
 14 shall offer salt with all your offerings. If you bring a grain offering of first produce to the LORD, it shall be brought as soon as it ripens on the stalk. Roasted in fire, crushed
 15 from fresh kernels; thus shall you bring the grain offering of first produce. You shall put
 16 oil and incense on it; it is a grain offering. The priest shall send its remembrance up in smoke – some of the crushed new grain and oil together with all of the incense – as a fire offering to the LORD.

ספר החינוך SEFER HAḤINUKH

שרשי מצוה זו נעלמים מאד למצוא אפילו רמז קטן מהם... על כן אכתוב בהם כל אשר יעלה בתחלת המחשבה... בהרחיק החמץ... מקרבנו יקח דמיון לקנות מדת הזריוות... במעשה ה' ברוך הוא.

It is very difficult to detect any sort of explanation for this law. Nevertheless, I will suggest that by banning **חמץ** from the grain offerings, God encourages the attribute of alacrity.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Two of the commentaries provide a historical explanation for the prohibition of **חמץ** as part of the **מנחה**. Which of those two is grounded in information that we know from the Torah itself?
- In what way might the positions of *Sefer Haḥinukh* and Ramban be similar (look carefully at the way they introduce their comments)? In what way are they dramatically different?
- Rambam's general opinion about sacrifices is that they are a concession permitted by God to draw Israel away from idolatry. Ramban fiercely rejects Rambam's position, arguing that the sacrifices have cosmic significance, yet here he seems to embrace Rambam's approach. Why do you think Ramban would be willing to do such a radical turnaround for this particular detail?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Notice which word appears three times in verse 13. and commemoration of the Exodus. One is **חמץ**. What is the other?
2. In this section, there are two words that connect to the story

QUICK BITE

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, known as Netziv, points out that on its own, salt is nearly inedible. In fact, halakhically speaking, it is not even considered food; there is no blessing for eating salt. But when it is used carefully, it can enhance other foods. He continues by noting that the role God plays in our lives is

similar. If it is too overt, too much, it would overpower our lives and make them unlivable, like pouring too much salt on food or pouring salt on soil makes it unable to produce. But when added to our lives in subtle ways, God's involvement can bring out the best in us.

יא מֵאִשֵּׁי יְהוָה: כָּל-הַמִּנְחָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרְיבוּ לַיהוָה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה
 יב חֲמֵץ כִּי כָל-שְׂאֹר וְכָל-דְּבַשׁ לֹא-תִקְטְרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה:
 יג קָרְבַּן רֵאשִׁית תִּקְרְיבוּ אֹתָם לַיהוָה וְאֶל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא-יֵעָלוּ
 יד לְרֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ: וְכָל-קָרְבַּן מִנְחַתְךָ בַּמֶּלֶח תִּמְלֹחַ וְלֹא תִשְׁפִּית
 טו מֶלֶח בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעַל מִנְחַתְךָ עַל כָּל-קָרְבַּנְךָ תִּקְרִיב
 טז מֶלֶח: וְאִם-תִּקְרִיב מִנְחַת בַּפּוֹדִים לַיהוָה אָבִיב קִלְוֵי
 זא בָּאֵשׁ גֵּרֶשׁ כִּרְמֵל תִּקְרִיב אֶת מִנְחַת בַּפּוֹדִיךָ: וְנָתַתְּ עֲלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן
 זב וְשִׁמְתָּ עֲלֶיהָ לְבִנָּה מִנְחָה הוּא: וְהִקְטִיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-אֲזִכְרֹתָהּ
 זג מִגֵּרְשָׁהּ וּמִשֶּׁמֶנָּה עַל כָּל-לִבְנֹתֶיהָ אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Why does the Torah forbid bringing yeast or honey (which helps in the fermentation that causes dough to rise and turn into חמץ) as an offering?

רמב"ן

יתכן שהוא כדברי הרב [רמב"ם] במורה הנבוכים, אמר שמצא בספריהם שהמנהג היה לעובדי עבודה זרה להקריב כל מנחתם חמץ ולערב הדבש בכל קרבניהם, ולכן אסרם לגבוה.

RAMBAN

The Rambam's approach to this law seems to be correct. He says he had read accounts of idolatrous services which utilize חמץ in all of their grain offerings. Furthermore, the pagans would mix honey into these breads as well. As such, God has forbidden the usage of these ingredients in His own grain offerings.

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

לחמם הראשון של ישראל היה מצה. אילו היו ישראל נעזבים לנפשם, עדיין היו אוכלים את "לחם העבדות". כל שנה כאשר אנו חוגגים את חג זיכרון גאולתנו ממצרים, מגרשת המצה שאור וחמץ מבתינו, ומוכיחה לנו מחדש שלא מכוח ידינו זכינו לחירות ולעצמאות, אלא בחסד ה' התמידי. רעיון זה יש לזכור תמיד, כאשר אנו עומדים במקדש מול מזבח תורתנו. הלחם שאנו מקריבים שם כאות להכנעתנו צריך תמיד להיות מצה.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

The first national bread that the Israelites ate was matza, and indeed, had God not effected the redemption from Egypt, our people would still be eating this "bread of servitude." Every year, when we celebrate our festival of freedom, matza comes into our homes and chases out our usual leaven and חמץ. We are then reminded all over again that it was not our own efforts or power which secured Jewish liberty generations ago. Rather, it is God's continued kindness that maintains our independence. Thus when the Israelite stands in the Temple in front of the altar, it behooves him to keep this fact in mind, which is why the bread that we offer in submission to the Almighty must always be matza.

3:1-5 The **שלמים** offering is different from the **עולה**, as only certain parts of the animal are burned on the altar; the Torah will later teach that the rest of the animal is shared with both the kohen who processes it and the person bringing the offering. **שלמים** can be brought from land animals (cows, sheep, or goats) and can be either male or female.

- 3 ¹ If one's sacrifice is a peace offering, and brought from the herd, whether male or female,
² the animal one offers before the LORD must be without blemish. The one bringing the offering shall lay his hand on its head and have it slaughtered at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Aharon's sons the priests shall dash the blood against each side of the altar.
³ A priest shall present of the peace offering a fire offering to the LORD: the fat that covers
⁴ the entrails and all the fat surrounding them; the two kidneys and the fat that is on them at the loins; and the diaphragm of the liver, which should be removed with the kidneys.
⁵ Aharon's sons shall send all these up in smoke upon the altar, along with the burnt offering on the wood on the altar fire – a fire offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- According to Rashbam, the term **שלמים** is related to fulfilling an obligation. Read Rashbam carefully and explain what sort of obligation the **שלמים** represents (it is not simply the obligation to serve God).
- Which of the other commentators also suggests that the word **שלמים** describes a voluntary reaching out to God? What does this commentator add that Rashbam doesn't include?
- Two of the commentators understand that the **שלמים** is basically about building a personal relationship with God. The third commentator doesn't describe what **שלמים** is supposed to accomplish for the person bringing it, but rather suggests that the **שלמים** represents an attempt to make peace. Which one is that?
- Do you think that sacrifices were intended to help people express and/or build their relationship with God?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Notice from what point onward in the processing of the offering the Torah mentions what the *kohanim* must do. which was not used to describe any of the **עולה** offerings. What is that word?
2. There is a word used to describe the **שלמים** in verse 1

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Most *korbanot* require something called **סמיכה**, usually translated as laying the hands on the animal. Rabbi Hirsch points out that it is much more than that. **סמיכה** requires leaning one's entire weight on the animal, a far more intense form of contact. What's the idea behind this? It is apparently about delegating that animal to take our place. It is often we who, theoretically, should be offering ourselves on the altar. But God rejects human sacrifice, accepting animals instead as a

substitution. We are completely reliant on that animal, and to demonstrate that we do **סמיכה**.

What kind of relationship do you need to have with someone to be able to say with absolute confidence that you rely on them completely? How do we build those relationships in our lives?

ג « וְאִם-זִבַּח שְׁלָמִים קָרְבָּנוֹ אִם מִן-הַבָּקָר הוּא מִקְרִיב אִם-זֹכֶר
 ב אִם-נִקְבָּה תָּמִים יִקְרִיבֵנוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְסִמֵּךְ יָדוֹ עַל-רֵאשׁ קָרְבָּנוֹ
 וּשְׁחָטוּ פֶתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּזְרָקוּ בְּנֵי אֹהֶרֶן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת-הַדָּם
 ג עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וְהִקְרִיב מִזִּבְּחַת הַשְּׁלָמִים אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה אֶת-
 הַחֶלֶב הַמְּכַסֶּה אֶת-הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת כָּל-הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַקֶּרֶב:
 ד וְאֶת שְׁתֵּי הַפְּלִיֹת וְאֶת-הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר עֲלֵהֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַכֶּסֶלִים
 ה וְאֶת-הַיִּתְרֹת עַל-הַכֶּבֶד עַל-הַפְּלִיֹת יִסְדָּנָה: וְהִקְטִירוּ אֹתוֹ
 בְּנֵי-אֹהֶרֶן הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עַל-הָעֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עַל-הָעֵצִים אֲשֶׁר עַל-
 הָאֵשׁ אִשָּׁה יִיחַ נִיחַח לַיהוָה:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Why is this type of sacrifice called *shelamim*?

ר' יוסף בכור שור

לכך נקרא שלמים, שממנו למזבח – האימורים, וממנו לכהנים – חזה ושוק, ממנו לבעלים – שאר הבשר, וזהו דרך שלום, שכולם אוכלים יחד.

RABBI YOSEF BEKHOR SHOR

This type of sacrifice is called **שלמים** because parts of it – the inner organs – are burned on the altar; other parts – the breast and the thigh – are given to the officiating priests, and the rest of the meat is given to the donors to eat. Thus is created an atmosphere of peace [**שלום**], when all three parties dine together.

רשב"ם

לשון שלמים, שמשמע לשון נדר וצריך לשלם את נדריו, שהוא לשון תשלומים.

RASHBAM

The term **שלמים** reflects the fact that these offerings are brought in fulfillment of a vow to bring a sacrifice. As such, the individual is required to pay [**לשלם**] the offering which he owes.

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

שלמים הם קרבנות הנובעים מתחושת שלמות. בעוד שקרבן עולה מסמל בקשת קרבת ה' מחמת הצורך לקדש את מעשי האדם... הרי שקרבן שלמים מסמל את בקשת קרבת ה' מתוך תחושת שביעות רצון, תחושה שלא חסר לאדם דבר, ושרק קרבת ה' נעדרת ממנו – ועתה הוא מבקש קרבה זו על ידי קרבנו.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

The **שלמות** offerings are brought out of a sense of wholeness [**שלמות**] and contentment. In contrast, the burnt offering represents an individual's efforts to draw close to the LORD by recognizing that he must dedicate his behavior to the Almighty. The **שלמים** signifies a person's eagerness to express his satisfaction with what God has provided him. It makes a statement that the person lacks nothing in his life except for a stronger relationship with God which he craves. By bringing this offering, the Israelite hopes to obtain that as well.

6 If one's offering is a peace offering from the flock, whether male or female, it must be
 7 without blemish. If one brings a sheep as his offering, he shall present it before the
 8 LORD. He shall lay his hand on the head of the offering and have it slaughtered at the
 entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Aharon's sons the priests shall dash the blood against
 9 each side of the altar. The priest shall present the fat from the peace offering as a fire
 offering to the LORD: the whole broad tail, removed close to the backbone; the fat that
 10 covers the entrails and all the fat surrounding them; the two kidneys and the fat that
 is on them at the loins; and the diaphragm of the liver, which should be removed with
 11 the kidneys. The priest shall send these up in smoke upon the altar: foodstuffs – a fire
 offering to the LORD.

12 If the sacrifice is a goat, the one bringing it shall present it before the LORD. He shall lay
 13 his hand on the head of the offering and have it slaughtered at the entrance to the Tent
 of Meeting. Aharon's sons the priests shall dash the blood against each side of the altar.
 14 The priest shall present of the offering a fire offering to the LORD: the fat that covers the
 15 entrails and all the fat surrounding them; the two kidneys and the fat that is on them at
 the loins; and the diaphragm of the liver, which should be removed with the kidneys.
 16 The priest shall send these up in smoke upon the altar: foodstuffs – a fire offering to the
 17 LORD. All the fatty parts belong to the LORD: this is an everlasting statute throughout your
 generations in all your dwellings: you shall not eat either that fat or blood.”

ר' דוד צבי הופמן

הקרבת לחם אינם ממש במשמעותו הרגילה, כי-אם לחם אשה, לחם מקרבן-אש, היינו לשם ה' השוכן בתוך ישראל, לשם השכינה. ואם מקריבים את לחם-אשה זה כהלכתו, ואם מקיימים את שהוא מסמל, משרה ה' את שכינתו בתוך ישראל, כמו ששורה נפש בריאה בגוף אדם בריא.

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

מעשי קרבן השלמים כוללים את האכילה ממנו בבית. דבר זה הופך את שולחן המשפחה למזבח, את הבית למקדש, ומעלה את האוכלים ממנו לדרגת כהנים וכהנות. נמצא שעצם מעשי קרבן השלמים מייצגים את שכינת ה' בכל שמחת חיינו הארציים. והתנאי-המוקדם ההכרחי לכך, הוא הרעיון שסמלו הוא ה"לחם"; שכן שכינת ה' לא תשרה בחיינו הארציים, אלא אם כן מטרתנו ושאיופתינו תהיינה ראויות לאותה שכינה.

RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

Of course the sacrifices are not actually "bread" in the conventional sense of the term, but a "fire bread." This refers to the bread of a fiery sacrifice, an offering that is brought for the sake of the LORD who dwells within the camp of Israel. If the people offer this "fire bread" properly and follow the correct procedures, and if they live the lives that the offerings are meant to symbolize, then the Divine Presence will descend into the midst of the nation, in the way that the soul of an individual inhabits his healthy body.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

Part of the שלמים ritual involves the consumption of its meat in the home of the donor. Such an act transforms the household's dining room table into an altar, turns the home into the Temple, and elevates the family members to the level of priests and priestesses. What emerges is that the celebration of שלמים serves to introduce the Divine Presence into what would otherwise be a mundane and regular meal. Still, the original prerequisite for this metamorphosis is that the desires and the motives of the people inviting God into their midst must be pure and deserving of such a visitation. It is this idea that is symbolized by the term "bread" – the most common and fundamental human food is therefore raised to the sacred.

1 וְאִם־מִן־הַצֹּאן קָרְבָּנוֹ לְזֶבַח שְׁלָמִים לִיהוָה זָכַר אִו נִקְבָּה
 2 תָּמִים יִקְרִיבוּנוּ: אִם־כֶּשֶׁב הוּא־מִקְרִיב אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ וְהִקְרִיב
 3 אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְסָמַךְ אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־דָּאֵשׁ קָרְבָּנוֹ וְשָׁחַט אֹתוֹ
 4 לִפְנֵי אֱהֹל מוֹעֵד וְזָרְקוּ בְנֵי אֱהֹרֹן אֶת־דָּמֹו עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב:
 5 וְהִקְרִיב מִזְבַּח הַשְּׁלָמִים אִשָּׁה לִיהוָה חֶלְבֹו הָאֵלִיָּה תְּמִימָה
 6 לְעֵמֶת הָעֵצָה יְסִירְנָה וְאֶת־הַחֶלֶב הַמְּכַסֶּה אֶת־הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת־כָּל־
 7 הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַקֶּרֶב: וְאֶת שְׁתֵּי הַפְּלִיֹת וְאֶת־הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר
 8 עֲלֵהֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַכֶּסֶלִים וְאֶת־הַיִּתְרֹת עַל־הַכֶּבֶד עַל־הַפְּלִיֹת
 9 יְסִירְנָה: וְהִקְטִירוּ הַכֹּהֵן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לַחֵם אִשָּׁה לִיהוָה:
 10 וְאִם־עִז קָרְבָּנוֹ וְהִקְרִיבוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְסָמַךְ אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־דָּאֵשׁוֹ
 11 וְשָׁחַט אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי אֱהֹל מוֹעֵד וְזָרְקוּ בְנֵי אֱהֹרֹן אֶת־דָּמֹו עַל־
 12 הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וְהִקְרִיב מִמֶּנּוּ קָרְבָּנוֹ אִשָּׁה לִיהוָה אֶת־הַחֶלֶב
 13 הַמְּכַסֶּה אֶת־הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת כָּל־הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַקֶּרֶב: וְאֶת שְׁתֵּי
 14 הַפְּלִיֹת וְאֶת־הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר עֲלֵהֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַכֶּסֶלִים וְאֶת־הַיִּתְרֹת
 15 עַל־הַכֶּבֶד עַל־הַפְּלִיֹת יְסִירְנָה: וְהִקְטִירֶם הַכֹּהֵן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לַחֵם
 16 אִשָּׁה לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ כָּל־חֶלֶב לִיהוָה: חֲקַת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בְּכָל־
 17 מוֹשְׁבֵי־תֵיכֶם כָּל־חֶלֶב וְכָל־דָּם לֹא תֹאכְלוּ:

TEXTUAL SKILLS

- At the end of the section of the goat **שלמים** the Torah adds two further prohibitions. What are they? places, why do you think that these two prohibitions are placed in the context of the sacrifices?
- Given that the Torah addresses the laws of *kashrut* in other

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

When it comes to the **שלמים**, the Torah introduces a new phrase – **לחם אשה** – which literally translates as the “fire bread” for God. What does this mean, and why is it introduced specifically for the *shelamim*?

- 4 ¹ The LORD spoke to Moshe: “Tell the Israelites: If a person sins unintentionally with regard
² to any of the LORD’s commands, doing what should not be done; any transgression – if it
³ is the anointed priest who sins, bringing guilt upon his people, he shall bring an unblemished young bull to the LORD as a purification offering for the sin he has committed.
⁴ He shall bring the bull before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, lay his
⁵ hand upon the bull’s head, and slaughter the bull before the LORD. The anointed priest
⁶ shall take some of the bull’s blood and bring it into the Tent of Meeting. The priest shall
⁷ dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle of it seven times before the LORD in front
⁸ of the Sanctuary’s inner curtain. Then the priest shall apply some of the blood to the
⁹ horns of the altar of fragrant incense, which is in the Tent of Meeting before the LORD.
¹⁰ The rest of the bull’s blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offerings,
¹¹ at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He shall remove all the fat from the bull of the
¹² purification offering: the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat surrounding them;
the two kidneys and the fat that is on them at the loins; and the diaphragm of the liver,
which should be removed with the kidneys, just as it is removed from the ox of the peace
offering. The priest shall send these up in smoke upon the altar of burnt offerings. But
the bull’s skin and all its flesh, together with its head, legs, entrails, and dung – all the
rest of the bull – he shall take to a ritually pure place outside the camp, to the ash heap,
and burn upon a wood fire; at the ash heap it shall be burned.

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

למדו מכאן בתורת כהנים, שלמדות שמצווה היא שהכהן המשיח יעשה בעצמו את מעשי הקרבן של חטאתו, אף על פי כן אם עשה אותם כהן אחר, עבודתו כשרה.

משך חכמה

ואינו מן הנימוס שהוא יכפר על עצמו... שלא נימוס שהחוטא יכפר על עצמו רק למעלת הכהן המשיח וקדושתו, אם יתפרסם חטאו יהיה סיבה לאשמת העם שיאשמו במזיד... לכן ציורה התורה להסתיר חטאו ולבלתי פרסם... וציורה התורה, שהכהן המשיח בעצמו יביא הדם להיכל, כדי שלא יתפרסם חטאו.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

Torat Kohanim teaches us that despite the fact that the High Priest is commanded to officiate at the offering of his own חטאת sacrifice, should a different priest perform these duties, the service is valid.

MESHEKH HOKHMA

Really, it should be inappropriate for the *kohen gadol* to himself obtain atonement for his own indiscretion. However, due to the elevated status of the anointed priest and his sanctity, should his sin become public knowledge, people would accuse him of acting intentionally. Hence the Torah instructs the High Priest to hide his transgression, and as such to bring the blood of the bull inside the Temple himself. If he does this, the fact that he has committed a violation will not be publicized.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Both commentators understand that it is preferable for the *kohen gadol* to process his own חטאת. Under normal circumstances, why would that be considered problematic?
- What explanation does *Meshekh Hokhma* offer for why it is preferable for the *kohen gadol* to process his own חטאת?

ד וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר: ב
 נַפֶּשׁ כִּי־תַחַטָּא בְּשָׁגָגָה מִכָּל מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַעֲשִׂינָהּ
 ג וְעָשָׂה מֵאַחַת מֵהֵנָּה: אִם הִכְהִין הַמְשִׁיחַ יַחַטָּא לְאַשְׁמַת הָעַם
 ד וְהִקְרִיב עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא פֶּה בֶן־בְּקָר תָּמִים לִיהוָה
 ה לְחַטָּאת: וְהֵבִיא אֶת־הַפֶּה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
 וּסְמַךְ אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ הַפֶּה וְשַׁחַט אֶת־הַפֶּה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
 ו וּלְקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַמְשִׁיחַ מִדָּם הַפֶּה וְהֵבִיא אֹתוֹ אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:
 ז וְטָבַל הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־אֶצְבָּעוֹ בְּדָם וְהִזָּה מִן־הַדָּם שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים לִפְנֵי
 ח יְהוָה אֶת־פָּנָיו פְּרֹכֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ: וְנָתַן הַכֹּהֵן מִן־הַדָּם עַל־קַרְנוֹת
 ט מִזְבֵּחַ קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֵת וּפְלִי־
 י דָּם הַפֶּה יִשְׁפֹךְ אֶל־יְסוּד מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה אֲשֶׁר־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:
 יא וְאֵת־כָּל־חֵלֶב פֶּה הַחַטָּאת יָרִים מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת־הַחֵלֶב הַמְכֻסֶּה
 יב עַל־הַקֹּרֶב וְאֵת כָּל־הַחֵלֶב אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַקֹּרֶב: וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי הַכְּלִיֹּת
 יג וְאֵת־הַחֵלֶב אֲשֶׁר עֲלֵיהֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַכֶּסֶלִים וְאֵת־הַיִּתְדֹת עַל־
 יד הַכַּבֵּד עַל־הַכְּלִיֹּת יְסִירְנָה: כַּאֲשֶׁר יוֹרֵם מִשׁוֹר זִבַּח הַשְּׁלָמִים
 טו וְהִקְטִירֵם הַכֹּהֵן עַל מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה: וְאֵת־עוֹר הַפֶּה וְאֵת־כָּל־
 טז בָּשָׂרוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וְעַל־כַּרְעוֹ וְקִרְבּוֹ וּפְרָשׁוֹ: וְהוֹצִיא אֶת־כָּל־הַפֶּה
 אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל־מְקוֹם טְהוֹר אֶל־שַׁפַּךְ הַדָּשָׁן וְשָׂרַף אֹתוֹ
 עַל־עֵצִים בָּאֵשׁ עַל־שַׁפַּךְ הַדָּשָׁן יִשָּׂרַף:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

The *kohen*, appointed to a special status, is the one who performs the service for the person who brings the sacrifice. Who performs the atonement service for the *kohen gadol*?

- 13 If it is the entire community of Israel that commits an unintentional sin, the congregation unwittingly violating one of the LORD's commands, doing what must not be done,
 14 when the sin that they committed becomes known, the community shall bring a young
 15 bull as a purification offering, presenting it before the Tent of Meeting. The community
 elders shall lay their hands on the bull's head before the LORD and, before the LORD,
 16 the bull shall be slaughtered. The anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood into
 17 the Tent of Meeting. The priest shall dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it seven
 18 times before the LORD in front of the curtain. Then he shall apply some of the blood to
 the horns of the altar before the LORD in the Tent of Meeting, and pour out all the rest
 19 at the base of the altar of burnt offerings, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then
 20 he shall remove all its fat and send it up in smoke upon the altar. He shall do the same
 with this bull as he does with the bull of his purification offering; he shall do the same
 with this. So shall the priest make atonement for the people, and they shall be forgiven.
 21 The priest shall then take the bull outside the camp and burn it just as he burns the first
 bull. This is the community's purification offering.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Regarding what do the above commentaries agree?
- What does Rabbi David Tzvi Hoffman add that Rabbi Reggio does not address?
- On Yom Kippur, the **יָדוּי** includes a request for **כַּפֵּרָה**, **סְלִיחָה**, **מוֹחִלָּה**, and **כַּפֵּרָה**. According to the above commentaries, what should the order be? Why do you think that the order is different from what you might have expected based on these commentaries?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. In verse 13 there are two different words used to describe the idea of the community. What are they?
2. Compare verse 3, which describes the *kohen gadol* sinning, with its parallel in verse 13, which describes the situation of the entire nation sinning. What word stands out in the later verse which is absent from the earlier one?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

When the Sanhedrin errs and instructs the people to do something that is actually forbidden, there is a special national offering which is brought. Interestingly, Rambam rules that if a single individual were to err based on that erroneous ruling then he or she would not have bring an offering. Rav Yaakov Kanievsky, known as the Steipler Rav, suggests that the ruling of the Sanhedrin is considered authoritative only if it is accepted by the masses. Hence, if the masses sin then it can be considered an error of the

Sanhedrin, but if only an individual sinned, then it seems that the Sanhedrin's ruling carries no weight.

The Talmud rules that a decree of the Sanhedrin that was not accepted by the community is not binding. What principle does this seemingly undermine? What does it strengthen?

יג וְאִם כָּל־עֵדֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁגּוּ וְנִעְלַם דְּבַר מֵעֵינֵי הַקָּהֵל וְעָשׂוּ
 יד אֶחָת מִכָּל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תַעֲשִׂינָהּ וְאָשְׁמוּ: וְנֹדַעַה
 הַחֲטָאתָא אֲשֶׁר חָטְאוּ עָלֶיהָ וְהִקְרִיבוּ הַקָּהֵל פֶּר בֶּן־בְּקָר
 טו לַחֲטָאתָא וְהֵבִיאוּ אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וְסָמְכוּ זְקַנֵי הָעֵדָה
 אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל־רֹאשׁ הַפֶּר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְשַׁחַט אֶת־הַפֶּר לִפְנֵי
 טז יְהוָה: וְהֵבִיֵא הַכֹּהֵן הַמָּשִׁיחַ מִדַּם הַפֶּר אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וְטָבַל
 הַכֹּהֵן אֶצְבָּעוֹ מִן־הַדָּם וְהִזָּה שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶת־פְּנֵי
 יז הַפְּרֹכֶת: וּמִן־הַדָּם יִתֵּן ׀ עַל־קֶרְנֵת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
 אֲשֶׁר בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֵת כָּל־הַדָּם יִשְׁפֹךְ אֶל־יְסוֹד מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה
 יט אֲשֶׁר־פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וְאֵת כָּל־חֻלְבּוֹ יָרִים מִמֶּנּוּ וְהִקְטִיר
 כ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְעָשָׂה לֶפֶר כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לֶפֶר הַחֲטָאתָא בֶּן יַעֲשֶׂה־לוֹ
 כא וּכְפָר עֲלֵהֶם הַכֹּהֵן וְנִסְלַח לָהֶם: וְהוֹצִיֵא אֶת־הַפֶּר אֶל־מַחוּץ
 לַמַּחֲנֶה וְשָׂרַף אֹתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף אֵת הַפֶּר הַרְאֵשׁוֹן חֲטָאתָא
 הַקָּהֵל הוּא:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

The Torah states (v. 20) that when the *kohen gadol* follows the procedure there will be כפרה and סליחה. What is the difference between these two?

ר' יצחק שמואל רגיו

מבטיח הכתוב שאם הכהן יכפר עליהם בקרבן זה ה' יסלח לחטאתם.

RABBI ISAAC SAMUEL REGGIO

The text guarantees that if the priest atones for the people then their sin will be forgiven.

ר' דוד צבי הופמן

כפר – פירושו... כסה, עשות בלתי נראה... מתכסה החטא או החוטא.

ונסלח להם – כלומר נסלח להם מאת ה'. סלוח משמעותו בטל כליל את החטא. הכפרה נעשית על-ידי הכהן, אבל הסליחה יכולה לבוא רק מעם ה'.

RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

The term כפר connotes: to cover something up so that it is no longer visible. In the case of a sin, the transgression or the sinner himself is concealed. סליחה, on the other hand, implies retroactive and utter nullification of an infraction. Atonement can be achieved by the priest, whereas forgiveness is only granted by the Lord.

4:22–26 *The third type of חטאת is the last of the sacrifices brought by public figures; this one is the נשיא. In the Torah every tribe had a נשיא at its head. Later there was a single figure, the king, who stood at the head of the entire nation. As opposed to other public חטאת sacrifices which had to be male cows, this one is a male goat. Also different is that for this one, the blood is sprinkled on the regular, outer altar and the animal is also placed on the altar to be totally consumed by the fire there.*

- 22 When a leader sins unintentionally with regard to any of the LORD's commands, doing
 23 what must not be done and thus incurring guilt, when the sin that he has committed is
 24 made known to him, he shall bring an unblemished male goat as his offering. He shall
 lay his hand upon the goat's head, and it shall be slaughtered in the place where burnt
 25 offerings are slaughtered before the LORD. It is a purification offering. The priest shall
 take some of the blood from the purification offering with his finger, and apply it to the
 horns of the altar of burnt offerings. The rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base
 26 of the altar of burnt offerings. He shall send up all its fat in smoke upon the altar, like
 the fat of the peace offerings. So shall the priest make atonement for that leader for his
 sin, and he will be forgiven.

- The interpretations of both Rashi and Sforno are based on a universal truth about supreme leaders. What is that universal truth?
- In what way does Rashi go farther than Sforno?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Notice where this חטאת is slaughtered (as opposed to the two which preceded it).
2. In the opening verse of this section (v. 22) the Torah's description of the sin has one word which does not appear in

the previous two חטאת passages. Find that word. Can you suggest a reason why that word appears specifically for the sin of a נשיא?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

There are four different states of awareness that could describe a person while committing a sin. Intentional (מוזיד) is when he knows exactly what he is doing, and that it is wrong, yet he does it nonetheless. Forced (אונס) is when he knows what he is doing is wrong but a factor beyond his control is forcing him to do it.

Unintentional (שוגג) is when he doesn't realize that the act he is doing is forbidden. And then there is a situation where someone did something without even realizing that he was doing it (מתעסק). The only category for which an offering is brought is the שוגג.

כב אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂא יַחֲטָא וְעָשָׂה אַחַת מִכָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיו אֲשֶׁר
 כג לֹא-תַעֲשִׂינָהּ בְּשִׁגְגָה וְאִשָּׁם: אוֹ-הוֹדַע אֵלָיו חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר
 כד חָטָא בָּהּ וְהֵבִיא אֶת-קָרְבָּנוֹ שְׁעִיר עִזִּים זָכָר תָּמִים: וּסְמַךְ יָדוֹ
 על־רֹאשׁ הַשְּׁעִיר וְשָׁחַט אֹתוֹ בְּמִקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׁחַט אֶת-הָעֹלָה
 כה לְפָנָי יְהוָה חַטָּאת הִוא: וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מַדָּם הַחַטָּאת בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ
 וְנָתַן עַל-קַרְנֵת מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה וְאֶת-דָּמּוֹ יִשְׁפֹךְ אֶל-יְסוֹד מִזְבַּח
 כו הָעֹלָה: וְאֶת-כָּל-חֲלָבוֹ יִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַהּ כְּחֶלֶב זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים
 וּכְפָר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן מִחַטָּאתוֹ וְנִסְלַח לוֹ:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

The introductory word for this sacrifice, **אשר**, is different from the word that introduces the other **חטאת** sacrifices, **אם** (if). This minor difference caught the attention of many commentators.

רש"י
 לשון אשרי, אשרי הדור שהנשיא שלו נותן לב להביא כפרה
 על שגגתו, קל וחומר שמתחרט על זדונותיו.

RASHI

The text uses the term *asher* [when] as an allusion to the word *ashrei* [fortunate], as if to say: How fortunate is the generation of Israelites whose leaders care enough about their behavior to atone for their errors! How much more so would such individuals feel contrition for their intentional crimes.

אבן עזרא
 כאילו אמר: ואם אשר יחטא הוא נשיא שבט או נשיא בית אב.

IBN EZRA

What the text means is: If the person who sins is a tribal leader, or the chief of a clan...

ר' עובדיה ספורנו
 על עון המלך אמר: אשר נשיא יחטא – כי אמנם זה דבר
 מצוי שיחטא.

RABBI OVADYA SFORNO

The term *nasi* here refers to a king. And hence the Torah states: *When* [אשר] a leader sins, for it is quite common for an individual of stature to violate the law.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- How would each of the above commentators translate the word **אשר**? Which of those would you categorize as *peshat* (what the word literally means) and which would you categorize as *derash* (something meaningful to learn from the text)?
- Which of the commentators understands that there is essentially no difference between **אשר** and **אם**?

- 27 If an individual among the people sins unintentionally with regard to any of the LORD's
 28 commands, doing what should not be done and thus incurring guilt, when the sin he
 has committed is made known to him, he shall bring an unblemished female goat as his
 29 offering to atone for the sin that he committed. He shall lay his hand on the head of the
 purification offering, and it shall be slaughtered in the same place as the burnt offerings.
 30 The priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and apply it to the horns of the
 altar of burnt offerings. The rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar.
 31 The priest shall remove all its fat, just as the fat is removed from a peace offering, and
 send it up in smoke upon the altar as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. So shall the priest
 make atonement for that person, and he will be forgiven.
 32 If one brings a sheep as a purification offering, it shall be an unblemished female. One
 33 shall lay one's hand upon the head of the purification offering, and it shall be slaughtered
 34 in the place where burnt offerings are slaughtered. The priest shall take some of its blood
 with his finger, and apply it to the horns of the altar of burnt offering. The rest of the
 35 blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. He shall remove all its fat, as the fat of a
 sheep is removed from a peace offering. The priest shall send it up in smoke upon the
 altar with the other fire offerings to the LORD. So shall the priest make atonement for
 that person for the sin that he committed, and he will be forgiven.

רמב"ן RAMBAN

כל העוונות יולידו גנאי בנפש והם מום בה, ולא תזכה להקביל פני יוצרה רק בהיותה טהורה מכל חטא... ולכן הנפש השוגגת תקריב קרבן שתזכה לקרבה אל האלהים.

Whenever an individual commits a sin he damages his soul to a certain degree and introduces a blemish to his heart. And yet, no person can enter into the company of the divine unless he is clear of all sin and stain... This is why even one who has sinned inadvertently must offer a sacrifice, to make him worthy of approaching his God.

ר' דוד צבי הופמן RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

אף השוגג זקוק לכפרה, משום שלא היה נזהר ונשמר כראוי. עם ישראל נצטוה "ושמרתם את משמרתני",... להשמר ולהזהר שלא להחטיא את דרך ה'. על כל אחד לפלס את מעגלותיו ולכוננם כך, שימצא תמיד בדרך ה', ולכן כלל הוא בתורה שגם השוגג זקוק לכפרה.

Even a person who has sinned unintentionally requires atonement for the fact that he was not properly cautious or attentive enough to avoid his transgression. This is what God means when He advises His followers to "guard My statutes," namely, to take care not to violate the word of the LORD. The Torah's adherents must constantly and vigilantly guide themselves down the path of the law. As such, the principle stands that even the accidental sinner must atone for his negligence.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Three different explanations are offered here for the **חטאת**. In what way is Rabbi David Tzvi Hoffman's explanation different from the other two?
- Which of the commentators suggests that the **חטאת** serves an important psychological/educational purpose? Which understands that the **חטאת** works on a mystical level to permit the "blemished" soul to reconnect with God?

כו וְאִם־נִפְשׁ אַחַת תַּחֲטָא בְשִׁגְגָה מֵעַם הָאָרֶץ בְּעִשְׂתָּהּ אַחַת שִׁשִּׁי
 כח מִמִּצְוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תַעֲשִׂינָהּ וְאִשָּׁם: אִזּו הוֹדַע אֱלֹו חַטָּאתוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר חָטָא וְהֵבִיא קָרְבָּנוֹ שְׁעִירַת עִזִּים תְּמִימָה נְקִיבָה עַל־
 כט חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא: וְסָמַךְ אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ הַחַטָּאת וְשַׁחַט
 ל אֶת־הַחַטָּאת בְּמִקְוֹם הָעֹלָה: וּלְקַח הַפֶּהֶן מִדָּמָהּ בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ
 וְנָתַן עַל־קֶרְנֵת מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־כָּל־דָּמָהּ יִשְׁפֹךְ אֶל־יְסוּד
 לא הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְאֶת־כָּל־חֶלְבָהּ יִסִּיר כַּאֲשֶׁר הוֹסֵר חֵלֶב מֵעַל־זֶבַח
 הַשְּׁלָמִים וְהִקְטִיר הַפֶּהֶן הַמִּזְבֵּחַה לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה וְכִפֹּר
 עָלָיו הַפֶּהֶן וְנִסְלַח לוֹ:

לב וְאִם־כֶּבֶשׂ יֵבִיא קָרְבָּנוֹ לַחַטָּאת נְקִיבָה תְּמִימָה יְבִיאָנָהּ: וְסָמַךְ
 לג אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ הַחַטָּאת וְשַׁחַט אֶת־הַחַטָּאת בְּמִקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר
 לד יִשַּׁחַט אֶת־הָעֹלָה: וּלְקַח הַפֶּהֶן מִדָּם הַחַטָּאת בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ וְנָתַן
 עַל־קֶרְנֵת מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־כָּל־דָּמָהּ יִשְׁפֹךְ אֶל־יְסוּד הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:
 לה וְאֶת־כָּל־חֶלְבָהּ יִסִּיר כַּאֲשֶׁר יוֹסֵר חֶלְבֵּי־הַדָּשֵׁב מִזֶּבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים
 וְהִקְטִיר הַפֶּהֶן אֶתֶם הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עַל אִשֵּׁי יְהוָה וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו הַפֶּהֶן
 עַל־חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־חָטָא וְנִסְלַח לוֹ:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

What is the rationale for the חַטָּאת offering?

ספר החינוך

כי עיקרי הלבבות תלויים אחר הפעולות, ועל כן
 כי יחטא איש לא יטהר ליבו בדבר שפתים לבד
 שיאמר בינו ולכותל: "חטאתי, לא אוסיף עוד",
 אבל בעשותו מעשה גדול על דבר חטאו לקחת
 ממכלאותיו עתודים ולטרוח להביאם אל הבית, אל
 הכהן, וכל המעשה הכתוב בקורבנות החוטאים.

SEFER HAHINUKH

A person's emotions are guided by his actions, and hence when an individual
 sins, he cannot simply purify himself by confessing privately, "I have trans-
 gressed the will of God, and I vow not to continue that behavior." Rather, he
 must engage in the difficult and protracted endeavor of taking an animal from
 his barn and transporting it to the Temple, handing it to the priest for sacrifice,
 and following all of the procedures a sinner must perform.

5:1-13 The last type of offering discussed here is the **אשם**, sometimes called the “guilt offering.” It is brought for certain specific sins, including someone who swears falsely that he does not know anything about a particular court case, someone who mistakenly dealt with the Mikdash or other sanctified objects while impure, and someone who mistakenly violated his oath in which he obligated himself to do something or forbade himself from doing something. There is a sliding scale of offerings (this is called a **קרבן עולה ויורד**) to be brought based on the individual’s financial status. The most expensive offering is a female sheep or goat, second is a pair of birds, and for the most destitute, there is an offering of grain.

- 5** ¹ If a person sins by failing to testify after hearing a public adjuration to do so: if he knows
² or has seen something, yet does not speak up, and thus bears his guilt; or sins through touching an impure thing – the carcass of an impure beast, or a carcass of impure livestock, or the carcass of an impure creeping creature – and it escapes his notice, and while impure,
³ he incurs guilt; or sins by touching human impurity of any kind that makes him impure,
⁴ and it escapes his notice, but later he realizes his guilt; or sins by making a verbal oath to do something, bad or good – whatever one might carelessly swear – and it escapes his
⁵ attention, but later he realizes his guilt; in any one of these ways – when he realizes the
⁶ guilt he has incurred in any of these ways, he shall confess the sin he has committed, and bring the amends of his guilt to the LORD for the sin he has committed: a female sheep or goat as a purification offering. So shall the priest make atonement for that person
⁷ for his sin. If he cannot afford a sheep, he shall bring two doves or two pigeons as his guilt offering to the LORD, one as a purification offering and the other as a burnt

ר' דוד צבי הופמן

כל חוטא חוטא בשני פנים: ראשית לעצמו, ונפשו הוא שנפגעה בטהרתה ע"י החטא ומורחקת מקרבת אלוקים... חוטאים מסוג זה מחויבים להביא קרבן שמטרתו בעיקר “לחטאת”, כלומר לטיהור... אבל יש חטאים אחרים שהם... יותר עברות כלפי ה' וקיפוח זכויותיו... במקרים כאלה שבהם זכויות ה' מקופחות במישרין או בעקיפין נדרש קרבן “אשם”.

RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

There are two consequences to every sin. Firstly, the perpetrator damages his own purity by acting unlawfully. Secondly, his behavior opens up a distance between himself and God. This is why individuals who have created these conditions are required to bring a **חטאת** sacrifice whose primary goal is to purify the tainted situation. However, there are instances of transgression which are crimes against the LORD, for directly or indirectly, they deny God the expectations that He demands of us. This is why these actions require an **אשם** offering.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- A **חטאת** is brought only for sins committed by mistake. Is that true as well for an **אשם**?
- Which of the above commentators understands that the main difference between a **חטאת** and an **אשם** is the severity of the sin?
- Which of the above commentators understands that the main difference between a **חטאת** and an **אשם** is that the **אשם** is brought for sins that somehow “challenge” God’s rights?

ה « וּנְפֹשׁ כִּי־תַחַטָּא וְשָׁמְעָה קוֹל אֱלֹהִים וְהוּא עֵד אוֹ רָאָה אוֹ
 ב ידַע אִם־לוֹא יִגִּיד וְנִשְׂא עֹנֹו: אוֹ נֶפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תִּגַּע בְּכָל־דְּבַר
 טָמֵא אוֹ בְּנִבְלַת חַיָּה טָמֵאָה אוֹ בְּנִבְלַת בְּהֵמָה טָמֵאָה אוֹ
 ג בְּנִבְלַת שְׂרָץ טָמֵא וְנִעְלַם מִמֶּנּוּ וְהוּא טָמֵא וְאֲשָׁם: אוֹ כִּי
 יִגַּע בְּטָמְאֵת אָדָם לְכָל טָמְאָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִטְמֵא בָּהּ וְנִעְלַם מִמֶּנּוּ
 ד וְהוּא יָדַע וְאֲשָׁם: אוֹ נֶפֶשׁ כִּי תִשָּׁבַע לְבַטָּא בְּשִׁפְתָיִם לְהִרְעוֹ
 אוֹ לְהִיטִיב לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִבְטֵא הָאָדָם בְּשִׁבְעָה וְנִעְלַם מִמֶּנּוּ
 ה וְהוּא־יָדַע וְאֲשָׁם לְאַחַת מֵאלֹהִים: וְהָיָה כִּי־יֵאֱשָׁם לְאַחַת מֵאלֹהִים
 וְהִתְוֹדָה אֲשֶׁר חָטָא עָלֶיהָ: וְהֵבִיא אֶת־אֲשָׁמוֹ לִיהוָה עַל
 ו חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא נִקְבָּה מִן־הַצֵּאֵן כְּשִׁבְעָה אוֹ־שְׁעִירַת עֲזִים
 ז לְחַטָּאת וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו הִכָּהֵן מִחַטָּאתוֹ: וְאִם־לֹא תִגִּיעַ יָדוֹ דֵּי־
 שָׁה וְהֵבִיא אֶת־אֲשָׁמוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא שְׁתֵּי תָרִים אוֹ־שְׁנֵי בָנָיִם

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

What is the difference between a חטאת and an אשם?

רמב"ן RAMBAN

והנראה בעיני, כי שם "אשם" מורה על דבר גדול, העושה אותו יתחייב להיות שמם ונאבד בו... ו"חטאת" מורה על דבר נוטה בו מן הדרך... והנה אשם גלות ואשם שפחה חרופה בעבור שהם באים על המזיד יקרא קרבנם "אשם" וכן אשם הנזיר, אבל אשם מעילות אע"פ שהוא בשוגג, בעבור שהוא בקדשי ה' יקרא הקרבן "אשם", כי החטא הגדול יחייב להיותו אשם בו.

In my opinion the label "אשם" reflects the severity of the transgression such that one who commits a violation that warrants an אשם should really be made שמש – desolate, and eliminated from this world... On the other hand, the term חטאת indicates that the perpetrator has strayed from the proper path... In the case of an אשם גלות (which an individual brings for denying a debt), and an אשם שפחה חרופה, in which a man has relations with a maidservant designated to marry somebody else, the sacrifice in each case is an אשם, which indicates that these are serious offenses. These offerings are brought even when the stated violations are done intentionally. The same can be said for the אשם brought by a nazir upon coming into contact with a dead body. However, an אשם מעילות, offered when a person unintentionally commits sacrilege, is also called an אשם because the individual has abused an object sacred to God. Such a severe act warrants the obliteration of the person, and hence he brings a קרבן אשם.

8 offering. He shall bring them to the priest, who will offer the first as a purification offering,
 9 severing its neck at the back without detaching the head. Then he shall sprinkle some of
 the blood of the purification offering against the side of the altar; the rest of the blood
 10 shall be drained out at its base. This is the purification offering. He shall then offer the
 second bird as a burnt offering in the prescribed way. So shall the priest make atonement
 11 for that person for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven. If he cannot afford
 two doves or two pigeons, he shall bring the purification offering of a tenth of an ephah
 of fine flour as the sacrifice for his sin. He shall not put any oil on it, nor place on it any
 12 incense, for it is a purification offering. He shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall
 lift a handful from it – its remembrance – and send it up in smoke upon the altar with the
 13 LORD’s fire offerings. It is a purification offering. Thus shall the priest make atonement
 for that person for whichever one of these sins he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

WISDOM OF THE HEART

While most animals undergo **שחיטה** (slaughtering with a knife) to prepare them as offerings, bird offerings undergo a different process called **מליקה** (which is performed without a knife). One important difference is that technically, **שחיטה** need not be done by a *kohen* while **מליקה** must be. One explanation for this is that

since birds are the offerings usually brought by the poor, they represent those who are already broken. Having the *kohen* do the **מליקה** is not simply the technical preparation of the offering but the beginning of a process of healing, and it is fitting that a representative of God should be involved.

QUICK BITE

When speaking of a wealthy person’s offering, the Torah doesn’t say **ונסלח לו** – “he will be forgiven.” But it does use this phrase in 5:13, with regard to a poor man’s offering. Why the discrepancy? A wealthy person is able to bring a large and generous offering. He can afford it. However, a pauper must make compromises,

cut corners in order to bring any offering at all. The animals he brings are less expensive, and seem inferior. The Torah wants us to know that even though his sacrifice might seem sub-par, in the eyes of God it is his effort that mattered.

ח יִזְנֶה לַיהוָה אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת וְאֶחָד לְעֹלָה: וְהֵבִיא אֶת־אֶל־
 הַפֶּהֶן וְהִקְרִיב אֶת־אֲשֶׁר לַחֲטָאת רֵאשׁוֹנָה וּמֶלֶק אֶת־רֵאשׁוֹ
 ט מִמּוֹל עֶרְפוֹ וְלֹא יִבְדִּיל: וְהִזָּה מִדַּם הַחֲטָאת עַל־קִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
 י וְהִנְשָׂאֵר בְּדָם יִמְצֶה אֶל־יְסוֹד הַמִּזְבֵּחַ חֲטָאת הוּא: וְאֶת־הַשְּׂנִי
 יֵעֲשֶׂה עֲלֶיהָ כַּמִּשְׁפֵּט וּכְפָר עָלָיו הַפֶּהֶן מִחֲטָאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־חֲטָא
 ז וְנִסְלַח לוֹ: וְאִם־לֹא תִשָּׂג יָדוֹ לְשֵׁנֵי תוֹרִים אִוֹ לְשֵׁנֵי
 בְנֵי־יִזְנֶה וְהֵבִיא אֶת־קֶרְבָּנוֹ אֲשֶׁר חֲטָא עֲשִׂירֵת הָאֵפֶה סֹלֶת
 לַחֲטָאת לֹא־יִשִּׂים עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן וְלֹא־יִתֵּן עָלֶיהָ לְבֹנָה כִּי חֲטָאת
 יב הוּא: וְהֵבִיאהּ אֶל־הַפֶּהֶן וְקִמֵּץ הַפֶּהֶן וּמִמֶּנָּה מְלֹא קִמְצוֹ אֶת־
 יג אֶזְרָתָהּ וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עַל אֲשֵׁי יְהוָה חֲטָאת הוּא: וּכְפָר
 עָלָיו הַפֶּהֶן עַל־חֲטָאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־חֲטָא מֵאֶחָת מֵאֵלֶּה וְנִסְלַח

שביעי

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Even though this is an **אשם** offering, notice what the Torah calls it when the person takes the option of bringing birds.
2. In chapter 2 the Torah identifies five types of grain offering. Here the Torah identifies a sixth type. In what way is this one different from the first five?

5:14–19 Two additional kinds of **אשם** are introduced here, both of which require a ram (a male sheep) as the offering. The first is for a sin known as **מעילה**: mistakenly getting personal benefit from items that are designated for use in the Mikdash. In addition to the ram, the individual must pay the kohen the value of the benefit received plus an additional 25%. The second is for when the individual is not sure whether or not he committed a serious violation (the kind that would require a **חטאת** if he was certain). He must therefore bring a type of **אשם**, called an **אשם תלוי**, which offers atonement unless and until he discovers definitively that he did commit that offense. If so, he must then bring a **חטאת**.

- 14 The rest of the offering, as in the case of a grain offering, shall belong to the priest.” And
 15 the LORD spoke to Moshe: “If a person commits a trespass, sinning unintentionally with respect to any of the LORD’s sacred objects, he shall bring an unblemished ram from the flock, valued in silver shekel by the Sanctuary weight, as his guilt offering to the LORD; it is
 16 a guilt offering. He shall make restitution for his trespass against the sacred object, adding one-fifth to its value and giving it to the priest. The priest shall make his atonement with the ram of the guilt offering, and he will be forgiven.
 17 If a person sins without realizing it, doing any of the things that the LORD commanded not
 18 to be done, he incurs guilt and is subject to punishment. He shall bring an unblemished ram from the flock, of the appropriate value, as a guilt offering to the priest. The priest shall atone for him for that unintentional sin, committed unknowingly, and he will be forgiven.
 19 This is a guilt offering, for he had incurred guilt before the LORD.”

WISDOM OF THE HEART

The Torah, when introducing the scenario leading to an obligation to bring one of the sacrifices, literally describes the individual as having “done one of the commandments of God which should not have been done.” This is an awkward way of describing someone who violated a prohibition. Reb Chaim Meir of Vizhnitz explained this homiletically as referring to someone

who was meticulous in performing a mitzva but whose priorities were nonetheless wrong. For example, imagine someone witnessing someone else who is suffering and who could help the victim, but decides to delay doing so in order to count the Omer or finish his Torah learning for the day. These are mitzvot which, at that moment, one should not be performing!

QUICK BITE

The tractate of *Kinnim* discusses the pairs of birds mentioned here. It is considered one of the most complex collections of *mishnayot* because of the complicated math involved. Professor Robert Aumann, an Israeli mathematician who earned the Nobel

Prize for his work on game theory, has applied his work to the analysis of *Masekhet Kinnim*. It is incredible that God’s wisdom can be reflected in so many different fields and yet find multiple points of conversion.

יד לו והיתה לפהן במנחה: וידבר יהוה אל-משה
 טו לאמר: נפש כִּי-תִמְעַל מֵעַל וְחָטְאָה בְּשִׁגְגָה מִקֹּדְשֵׁי יְהוָה
 טז וְהָבִיֵא אֶת-אֲשָׁמוֹ לַיהוָה אֵיל תָּמִים מִן-הַצֹּאֵן בְּעֶרְבֹךְ כֶּסֶף-
 שְׁקָלִים בְּשִׁקְל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְאִשָּׁם: וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר חָטָא מִן-הַקֹּדֶשׁ
 יִשְׁלֵם וְאֶת-חֲמִישְׁתּוֹ יוֹסֵף עָלָיו וְנָתַן אֹתוֹ לַפֹּהֵן וְהִפְהִין יִכְפֹּר
 עָלָיו בְּאֵיל הָאִשָּׁם וְנִסְלַח לוֹ:
 יז וְאִם-נִפְשׁ כִּי תִחַטָּא וְעָשְׂתָה אֶחָת מִכָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא
 יח תַּעֲשִׂינָהּ וְלֹא-יָדַע וְאִשָּׁם וְנִשְׂא עֹנּוֹ: וְהָבִיֵא אֵיל תָּמִים מִן-הַצֹּאֵן
 בְּעֶרְבֹךְ לְאִשָּׁם אֶל-הַפֹּהֵן וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו הַפֹּהֵן עַל שִׁגְגָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-שָׁגַג
 יט וְהוּא לֹא-יָדַע וְנִסְלַח לוֹ: אִשָּׁם הוּא אִשָּׁם לַיהוָה:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Why would someone have to bring an offering if he's not even sure that he sinned?

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>ר' יצחק שמואל רגיו ואשם - שמאשים עצמו שבא לידי ספק כרת ומבקש כפרה.</p> | <p>RABBI ISAAC SAMUEL REGGIO With the אשם תלוי, the concerned individual blames [מאשים] himself for not even knowing whether or not he deserves <i>karet</i> and seeks atonement for his behavior.</p> |
| <p>ר' שמשון רפאל הירש עצם מצב הספק מהווה חטא שהוא חייב בו.</p> | <p>RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH The very condition of uncertainty is itself a sin that obligates the person.</p> |

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Each of the commentaries offers an explanation for the **אשם תלוי**. Even though they seem very similar, there is an important difference between them. According to each, what is the driving force behind the need for this **אשם**?
- Can you think of a time in your life when you would have appreciated the opportunity to clear your conscience?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

- Find the verse in this section in which there is an important word that appears three times.
- The term for getting personal benefit from the *Mikdash*, **מעילה**, is very similar to the name of one of the outer items of clothing worn by the *kohen gadol*, the **מעיל**. Similarly, the word for betraying a trust is **בגידה**, which is similar to the word for a regular article of clothing, a **בגד**.

5:20–26 *The final kind of אשם relates to a passive kind of theft. An object came into someone's possession legitimately, because he found it or someone gave it to him to watch, but then he swore falsely – denying any knowledge about the object's whereabouts. Here, too, he must restore or pay for the object and add 25%, and also bring an אשם, known as an אשם גולות. This one, too, is a ram.*

²⁰ The LORD spoke to Moshe: “If a person sins, committing a trespass against the LORD
²¹ by lying to his neighbor about a deposit or pledge, or by robbery, or by defrauding his
²² neighbor, or by finding lost property and lying about it; if he swears falsely about any-
²³ thing he does in any of the ways a person sins, afterward acknowledging guilt for the
 sin, he shall return what he took by robbery or fraud, or the deposit left with him for
²⁴ safekeeping, or the lost property that he found, or anything else about which he swore
 falsely. He shall repay its value and add to that a fifth; he shall pay this to its owner on
²⁵ the day he presents his guilt offering. And as his guilt offering to the LORD he shall bring
²⁶ the priest an unblemished ram from the flock of the appropriate value. The priest shall
 make his atonement before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for whatever he did to
 incur this guilt.”

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Bekhor Shor and Rabbi Hirsch give two very different opinions about this. According to each, what is the sin against God?
- Which of those opinions is similar to the opinion of Ibn Ezra?
- Which of the above explanations provides an insight into the basis of how we are to treat other people?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Notice how many words are doubled in verse 24. goes to the *kohen*. To whom does the additional 25% go for
2. In the אשם מעילות the Torah says that the additional 25% אשם גולות?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Sometimes we are well aware that we are doing something wrong, but we do it anyway. To allow ourselves to continue to fulfill our forbidden desire there is a cacophony of inner voices: “Just do it, it’s not so bad; I really don’t care; when they forbade it they didn’t mean me, in my situation; I don’t really believe it; everybody else does it...” It is only afterward that we look back and ask, “Was it really worth it?” and begin to deal with our guilt. In the Torah, that process culminates with the sacrifice – we confess, acknowledge (genuinely!) what we did wrong,

and accept the consequence. The offering of the sacrifice is a formal acknowledgment of that process, which then allows us to move on.

How do you transform feelings of guilt into positive energy? At what point do you allow yourself to let go of the guilt, confident that you’ve dealt with it in a way that builds you for the future?

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: נֶפֶשׁ כִּי תַחֲטָא וּמַעֲלָה מֵעַל
 בִּיהוָה וְכַחַשׁ בְּעֵמִיתוֹ בְּפִקְדוֹן אִוֶּבֶת-שׁוֹמֵת יָד אִוֶּ בְּגִזְלֹ אִוֶּ
 עָשָׂק אֶת-עֵמִיתוֹ: אִוֶּ-מֵצֵא אֲבֹדָה וְכַחַשׁ בָּהּ וְנִשְׁבַּע עַל-
 שִׁקְרָה עַל-אַחַת מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה הָאָדָם לַחֲטָא בְהִנָּה: וְהָיָה
 כִּי-יַחֲטָא וְאָשָׁם וְהָשִׁיב אֶת-הַגִּזְלָה אֲשֶׁר גָּזַל אִוֶּ אֶת-הָעֹשֶׂק
 אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂק אִוֶּ אֶת-הַפִּקְדוֹן אֲשֶׁר הִפְקִיד אֹתוֹ אִוֶּ אֶת-הָאֲבֹדָה
 אֲשֶׁר מֵצָא: אִוֶּ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׁבַּע עָלָיו לְשִׁקְרָה וְשָׁלַם אֹתוֹ
 בְּרֵאשִׁי וְחִמְשָׁתָיו יוֹסֵף עָלָיו לְאֲשֶׁר הוּא לוֹ יִתְּנֶנּוּ בַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁמְתוֹ:
 וְאֶת-אֲשָׁמוֹ יָבִיא לַיהוָה אֵיל תָּמִים מִן-הָעֵצָאן בְּעֵרֶכְךָ לְאֲשָׁם
 אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן: וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְנִסְלַח לוֹ עַל-אַחַת
 מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לְאֲשָׁמָה בָּהּ:

מפטיר

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

The Torah introduces this section by describing it as a person who did something against God, yet the section deals with a form of theft. How is theft a sin against God?

אבן עזרא

IBN EZRA

מעלה מעל בה' – ועבר על מצות לא תעשה מדבר שהוא בינו ובין אדם.

The person who steals commits a trespass against God because he has violated a divine commandment meant to govern interpersonal relationships.

ר' יוסף בכור שור

RABBI YOSEF BEKHOR SHOR

והמכחש בעמיתו בפקדון דאיכא תרתני: שנהנה, ונשבע לשקר.

When an individual denies holding another person's deposit he sins twice: he benefits unlawfully from somebody else's possession, and he also swears falsely in the name of God.

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

כי תחטא ומעלה מעל בה' – כל חוסר יושר ביחסים בין אדם לחברו, נחשב למעילה [הפרת אמונים] בה'.

Any lack of righteousness between a man and his neighbor is considered a trespass against God for it displays a lack of faith in Him.

EXPLORING HASHKAFAT

SACRIFICES

The modern mind is puzzled trying to understand the entire concept of sacrifices, and especially animal sacrifices. This idea is completely foreign to the way we live our lives and the way most of us understand spirituality. In fact, it would be hard for many of us to imagine giving up daily prayer (which the Talmud indicates was a replacement for the sacrifices after the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash*), uplifting congregational singing, and beautiful synagogues to have them replaced by bringing an animal to be slaughtered and have its blood sprinkled on an altar.

The truth is, it is only modern people who are troubled by this. Writing in the twelfth century, Rambam (*Guide of the Perplexed* 3:32) suggests that the institution of sacrifices was a gateway God established to wean *Benei Yisrael* from pagan practices. Animal sacrifice was very much part of the pagan world in which *Benei Yisrael* lived, so much so that God recognized that the people would not accept an outright ban on the practice. As such, He allowed it but only under carefully prescribed circumstances.

While many embrace Rambam's opinion, even to the point of suggesting that this may mean we've now "graduated" from the stage of needing sacrifices, there are others who view this position with horror. Perhaps the most vocal of those is Ramban (Lev. 1:9) who engages in a vicious attack on this position, accusing Rambam of "turning God's table [the altar] into something disgusting."

Ramban offers two alternate understandings. The first is that the sacrifices are meant to substitute for people – it is *we* who should be offered on that altar, but God abhors human sacrifice

so He allows us to offer a substitute instead. That is why we need to do **סמיכה**, leaning on the animal before it is slaughtered, as we are transferring our responsibility and commitment onto it, fully investing it with our fate. Ramban's second explanation reaches into the world of mysticism, through which he explains that the sacrifices are actually the most important form of worship we could possibly have, as they have a transformative impact on the very fabric of the hidden universe.

In truth, it may indeed be difficult for modern people to fully embrace the sacrificial practices and experience them as a spiritual endeavor. After all, we live in a sanitized world. Most of us don't witness animals being slaughtered or the blood being processed, and if we did we'd probably stop eating meat! In our experience, meat doesn't come from animals: it comes from the store, neatly wrapped in plastic. It is hard for us to imagine how we would relate to sacrifices if our own lives were different.

Perhaps that is why in the nineteenth century, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch – who spent much of his life trying to find a bridge between the modern-thinking person and traditional Judaism – championed a fourth position. He developed an intricate theory focusing both on the big picture of the sacrifices and the small details, in which he argues that the sacrifices symbolize spiritual ideas. Perhaps the most significant thing today about the sacrifices is not their performance but in gaining a deep understanding of them, including their symbolism and the psychological impact they are designed to bring about.