



And If A Soul Makes an Offering Parshas Vayikra

The Chasid was stunned; all the way from Jerusalem to Warsaw he had excitedly anticipated spending time with his Rebbe's son, but this was completely unexpected. He was standing in the market in the middle of Warsaw with the Rebbe's son, as they listened to a woman for a very long time.

Rabbi David Minsberg had awoken very early that morning, as he did every day. On his way into town he met Rabbi Aharon Biderman, son of the Karlin Rebbe. He was surprised to meet him at such an early hour, and speaking to a woman as well. He continued on, and later on in the day returned to the same spot to find Reb Aharon still standing and listening to the woman who was repeating the same things over and over. He continued on, and in the evening found Reb Aharon praying out loud. After prayers, they talked and studied together.

Reb Aharon explained what happened earlier that day. "I learned an important lesson from my father – when a woman comes and wants to be heard – I give her my full attention – one should give his heart to his fellow", he stated as he placed his hand on his heart. The Chasid asked: "but she kept on saying the same thing over and over – wasn't once enough?" "No", Reb Aharon replied. "The more she spoke the better she felt."

Our weekly parsha says: "And if a person brings a meal offering to the Lord...And he shall bring it to Aharon's descendants, the Kohanim."¹ Rashi explains: "The verse is meant to be taken literally, "And if a **soul** brings." Regarding all the sacrifices which were donated voluntarily, the only instance where Scripture states the word, נַפְשׁוֹ, "soul", is in the case of the meal-offering. Now, who usually donates a meal-offering- a poor man; because flour is less expensive than birds or animals. Hence, the Holy One Blessed is He, says: "I account if for him as if he has sacrificed his very soul!"

Our Sages have warned us several times about respecting offerings from the poor. Ba'al Haturim² learned from the words

"Aharon's descendants, the Kohanim" that a poor person's offering is not eaten in public, so as not to shame him by displaying his "meager" offering.



Another source in our parsha expresses the same idea: "And if his sacrifice to the Lord, is a burnt offering from birds... And he shall split it open with its wing feathers."³ The Midrash says: "Here, it refers to the actual feathers of its wings. But surely even a person who is not particular, who, when smelling the odor of burnt feathers, does not find it repulsive? Why then does Scripture command us to send the feathers up in smoke? The feathers are left intact so that the altar should appear sated and adorned with the sacrifice of the poor man (who could afford only a bird)."⁴

A fundamental concept is taught here. A poor person, when making his offer, is giving his entire being, and when he offers a bird the Torah permits to burn the entire offering on the altar. And why is this so? If the feathers are removed from the bird little is left, and we do not want to cause him sorrow.

To prevent insult from an underprivileged person the Torah enables the entire bird to be offered, despite the odor it will generate.

My father, Rabbi Yisrael Grossman OB"AM, would teach us a lesson – you must give all the time needed to those in distraught. Shimele "News" liked to discuss news, and would follow my father home on Shabbos eve with a desire to discuss the latest developments. My father was not interested, but would spend hours listening, as we waited patiently at home. When he would come in he would say: "How did Reb Aharon phrase it? I gave him my heart."

Judaism

He was an influential Medieval rabbinic authority from Spain. He is often referred to as the Baal ha-Turim' ("Master of the Rows"), after his main work in halakha (Jewish law), the Arba'ah Turim ("Four Rows"). The work was divided into 4 sections, each called a "tur," alluding to the rows of jewels on the High Priest's breastplate. He was the third son of the Rabbi Asher ben Jehiel (known as the "Rosh"), a German-born Rabbi who moved to Spain.

¹ Vayikra 2, 1- 2.

² Yaacov ben Asher, also known as Ba'al ha-Turim (c.1269 - c.1343).

³ Vayikra 1, 14 – 17.

⁴ Midrash Rabba Vayikra 3, 5.