

Shemini - The Korbonos of the Eighth Day And lessons for Us by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

In Vayikra Chapter 9 we read of the special korbonos that were brought on the eighth day of consecration which was the first official day that Mishkan was being used for its most sacred purpose. Other korbonos were brought on this day as well being it was Rosh Chodosh and the first of the twelve days of dedication when each tribe brought its own voluntary offering. These other korbonos are talked about elsewhere in the Torah. Our Parsha focuses specifically on the korbonos brought because it was the eighth day of Consecration. The Mishkan was to be our place to bring korbonos and to be close to Hashem. It was the model for the future Bais Hamikdash. To show divine approval, we are told in verse 24 that a fire came down and consumed the korbonos.

The korbonos brought on the eighth day require reflection and introspection. Aharon brought a calf for a *chatas*, sin offering and ram for an *olah*, burnt offering. Am Yisroel brought a goat for chatas, as well as a calf and lamb both yearlings for *olah*. In addition Am Yisroel brought an ox and ram for a *shlomim*, peace offering and a *minchah*, a flour offering. The Kli yakar points out that since Aharon sinned only in action but not thought his *chatas* was a calf. Aharon is blamed for making the golden calf as we are told in Shemos 32:35 Hashem smote the nation that made the calf that Aharon had made. But Aharon intended to prevent more bloodshed after Chur had already been killed and hoped that Moshe would return sooner before there would be a chance to actually worship the calf. So Aharon's thoughts and intentions were pure. However, Am Yisroel sinned in thought as well as action. Therefore they needed a calf for an *olah* which atones for wrong thoughts. Since they did sin in action, a goat was more appropriate for their sin offering since the *yetzer hahra*, evil inclination is often represented as a goat. One example of the goat being representative of the *yetzer hara* is that in Vayikra 17:7 that korbonos in one central place was to wean Am Yisroel away from the practice of sacrificing to *seerim*. Though the context of the verse is evil spirits, *seerim* literally means goats. So explains the Kli

Yakar .Perhaps this can explain why we see in Bamidbar 15:24 and 28 that a goat is brought as a *chatas* for idolatry.

The Kli Yakar further develops this idea of goats symbolizing the waywardness of Am Yisroel. He quotes the Toras Kohanim that states why Am Yisroel needed more korbonos than Aharon. Am Yisroel had a lingering sin from the very beginning when the brothers took slaughtered a goat and dipped Yosef's coat in its blood to fool their father about Yosef being killed by a wild animal;. This led to the sin of the golden calf. The Kli Yakar then asks the obvious questions. Aharon was as much part of that sin as everyone else. Furthermore, he was descended directly from Levi and we know that Shimon and Levi were the most responsible for all that happened to Yosef. So why did Aharon not need to bring a goat? The Kli Yakar answers that root of the sin of the brothers was jealousy. This jealousy between the brothers has been with us since that time. This jealousy led to the over Moshe being the leader and this was the underlying cause of the sin of the golden calf. The Kli Yakar proves this idea by Am Yisroel's statement, 'we do not know what became of Moshe' to mean they wanted to be free of his authority or anyone else's. There was never a real desire to worship idols. Aharon rectified the sin of jealousy with this motif of loving peace and pursuing peace. This caused Am Yisroel to come close to each other as well to Hashem as we are told in verse 6, 'And the entire assembly approached and stood before Hashem.' The Kli Yakar understands this to mean they first came close to each other and only then came close to Hashem. If we rid ourselves of all of our petty jealousies, then we can merit coming close to Hashem.

All too often, our growth in Torah and closeness to Hashem is obstructed precisely because of our own inability to be happy with what we have and only to look at others with envy. If we truly want to serve Hashem, we will conquer these bad character traits of self centeredness and envy and worship Hashem Baagudah achas, united as one and be worthy of serving Hashem with true simcha.