

Parashat VaYikra 5773

By Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

The parasha discusses the various korbanot. Korbanot were the medium with which an individual achieved the desired goal of coming and bringing one closer to HaShem.

Of all the korbanot, only one is referred to as a Mincha, meaning a gift to HaShem. That was the poor man's gift, the one who couldn't afford the expensive animals or even the lesser expensive birds. The poor individual offered mere grain which was a minuscule expense compared to the others. Yet, only this one is called a "mincha" to G-d. The Mishna in Menachot [13:11] states "*ECHAD HA'MARBEH VE'ECHAD HA'MAMIT, U'VILVAD SHEH'YECHAVEN ADAM ET DA'ATOH LA'SHAMIYIM*". It makes no difference to HaShem if one brings a lot or little, as long as his intention is sincere to G-d.

As a matter of fact, all korbanot are preceded with the phrase "Adam," Ki Yakriv Mikem", IF an individual, a person of prominence will offer a korban. However, by the poor man it begins with "NEFESH Ki Yakriv," if a nefesh, a poor soul brings a korban it is regarded by HaShem as more precious because he's bringing it with his soul, he is giving something of "himself." That to HaShem is Chashuv, precious.

There is a story that really brings out this point, and I think its worthwhile sharing. Some time ago, a man punished his five year old daughter for wasting a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. Money was tight and he became even more upset when the child pasted the gold paper so as to decorate a gift box.

Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift box to her father the next day and said, "This is for you, Daddy (Abba)." The father was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, but his anger flared again when he found the box was empty. He spoke to her in a harsh manner: Don't you know, young lady, when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside the package?"

The little girl looked up to him with tears in her eyes and said: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was full."

The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his little girl, and he begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger, and thanked her for her precious gift.

Only a short time later, a tragic accident took the life of that child. The father kept that gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. And whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems he would open the box and take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who put it there.

A korban Mincha is precious to HaShem. Our two daily Tefillot are called by the time of day we pray: Shacharit = morning, Arvit = evening. Only one is called Mincha, the afternoon Tefillah, the most difficult one to find the time to Daven, the easiest one to forget. Therefore, it's not called "afternoon prayer," but rather Tefillat Mincha. Eliyahu HaNavi was not answered when he confronted the false prophet on Mt Carmel, until the time of Mincha. Let's keep that in mind the next time we daven Mincha. I am happy to see many women have gotten into the habit of davening Shacharit; I would like to see them extend that practice of davening Mincha as well.