



The Significance of Sacrifice

YEchezkel 43:10 - 27

וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת הַפָּר הַחֲטָאת וּשְׂרָפּוּ בְּמִקְדָּשׁ הַבַּיִת
מִחוּץ לַמִּקְדָּשׁ:

Then you shall take the bull of sin offering and burn it in the designated area of the Temple, outside the Sanctuary.

Understanding the ancient rituals of animal sacrifices can be a struggle in our modern world. How do we capture the value and messages of the Karbonot for ourselves today? Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch provides a fascinating insight into the concept of Karbanot and its relevance to our times. He posits that animals have traits that are unique to their species. For example, an ox is dutiful as it serves its master going up and down the rows in the field pulling a plow. Sheep depend on their shepherd, following obediently while rams are daring, jumping boldly and bravely climbing on the rocky crags of the mountain. By offering these animals, individuals express their dedication to Hashem through the unique trait of the animal being offered. “Hashem, please let me serve you dutifully”, as the ox was being sacrificed or “Please let me direct my spirited nature to you”, when offering a ram.

Furthermore, the number of animals offered carries symbolic significance. One animal represents national unity, two symbolize individual plurality, and seven allude to Hashem’s presence in the natural world.

For instance, the Karbon Tamid daily sacrifice of one sheep in the Beit HaMikdash signifies the Jewish nation’s dependency on Hashem both morning and evening.

In our Haftorah, Yechezkel describes the offerings in the Third Beit HaMikdash. The sin offerings that we are instructed to give reinforces our submission to Hashem and His Torah. Despite the absence of the physical Beit HaMikdash today, we can connect the concept of sacrifices through prayer. When we recite the sacrificial offerings in our prayers, we dedicate our essence and personalities to Hashem and His mission. This act of selfless devotion and commitment can lead us toward ultimate redemption and the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, where we will have the opportunity to offer a variety of Karbanot, reflecting our desire to align our traits and characteristics with Hashem’s will.

During these tumultuous days of war, the verse from Tehillim 20:4 resonates with profound new meaning , וְזָכַר כָּל־מִנְחֹתֶיךָ , וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ יְדֻשְׁנָה סֵלָה , *May He remember all your offerings, and accept with favor your burnt offerings.* In our plea to Hashem, we beseech Him to recall and find satisfaction in the extreme sacrifices we have made during these difficult times, and pray that they find favor in His eyes. ■