



5786 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Reuven Schreier Parashat Vayikra/ויקרא

The Pauper with Flour Rivals the Bull

As *Sefer Vayikra* begins, the *Mikdash* becomes the dominant center of almost every *mitzvah* introduced by the Torah. Our *parshah* begins by introducing the various types of animals that can be brought as a *korban olah*. A Jew could bring a bull, goat, or sheep entirely on to the *mizbeach* as a fire offering to *Hashem*. While there is a plethora of animals to choose from, the basic process of *olah* offering remains the same: the animal is slaughtered, the blood is caught in a *kli shareit* by a *kohen*, the blood is walked over to the *mizbeach*, and the blood is applied to the corners of the *mizbeach*. (A bird offering differs in terms of slaughter and application but still maintains the basic structure of *avodah*.)

But after describing the animal offerings, the Torah begins the *parsha* of *Menachot*: the flour offering. The flour offering is quite simple. It contains flour and oil, with some spices. The Torah describes the process: the flour was mixed with oil and the *levonah* spice was placed on top. The *kohen* takes away a small portion of the flour with three fingers and burns it on the *mizbeach*. The rest of the *korban* is consumed by the *kohanim*.

Simple enough. But then the Torah describes another form of flour offering. The materials are the same, but the method changes. This time, the *korban* – known as *ma'aphe tanur* – is baked in advance, then crumbled down. The *kohen* takes the altar-portion from the crumbled loaves. It seems quite strange for the Torah to offer another method of *hakrava* when the materials remain exactly the same. In fact, the Torah says that the *mincha* can be baked into loaves or wafers, two different baked products before it is broken down.

And it doesn't end there. The Torah goes on to introduce another two forms of *menachot*, in which the flour is shallow fried, or deep fried in oil. Why so much variety for such a simple form of *korban*?

Rebbe Yitzchak (*Menachot* 104b) beautifully explains that *Hashem* sends a very powerful message to those who cannot afford the more expensive *korbanot* that open *Sefer Vayikra*. A pauper, unable to afford an animal sacrifice, is forced to bring a meager flour offering. But *Hashem* is worried that he will feel dejected, inadequate. Seeing the fattened bulls and beautiful flocks being brought as *korbanot*, he will view his simple flour offering as overly plain and pathetic.

Hashem counteracts the pauper's dejection with a brilliant gesture. He creates variety where there seems to be simplicity. More so than any other *korban*, the *minchah* has so many forms of *hakrava* that there is an entire *masechta* devoted to it (as those who learn *Daf Yomi* are well aware). The pauper can now choose what to do with his flour offering. And he sees that *Hashem* is interested in him. Why else would *Hashem* place so much emphasis and create so many forms *menachot*?

The lesson learned by this pauper – that even the smallest and most simple of Jews is desired by *Hashem* – is what *Yerushalayim* reveals. Outside of the *Mikdash* and far away from *Yerushalayim*, mortal hierarchies reign



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supreme. One of the most powerful factors in establishing these hierarchies was, and remains, wealth. These socio-economic distinctions leave a pauper feeling subclass and inadequate.

But upon entering *Hashem's* home in *Yerushalayim*, pathetic and vain pecking orders melt away. In front of the King of Kings, all mortal accomplishment amounts to nothing. All *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* cares about is the relationship that is created with every Jew, no matter how small, when he puts his best foot forward.

In *Yerushalayim*, a Jew discovers a truth the world works hard to obscure: the same God Who commands the offering of mighty bulls lingers over a handful of flour, savoring it with the same Divine pleasure. And in this moment, the pauper stands as an equal among his brothers. He finally realizes that in *Hashem's* world, no Jew is small.