



PROBING

BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER

Faculty, OU Israel Center

THE PROPHETS

This week we begin the third book of the Torah with the reading of Parashat VaYikra. And with it, we open up a new world in service to Hashem: the world of korbanot, ritual sacrifices. Having completed the second book of the Torah, Sefer Shmot, with the construction and the purpose of the mishkan, the Torah now explains the precise details of HOW the sacrificial rite must be observed. And, although sacrifice was known in the ancient world—the Torah records that Noach, Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov offered korbanot to Hashem, no specific laws had been set up regarding the exact formal procedure that was to be followed. Sefer VaYikra does just that.

Given this background, we understand Chazal’s choice of the 43rd and 44th prakim of Sefer Yishayahu as the haftarah for this parasha. These chapters focus upon the sacrificial rite that was observed-or not observed-by the nation during the prophet’s lifetime. Indeed, the bulk of the selection depicts the glory of the future epoch when even idolators will turn to sacrifice to Hashem upon realizing the emptiness of pagan worship.

Nonetheless, the haftarah begins with Yishayahu’s criticism of Israel for having turned away from G-d. The navi’s condemnation of Israel for not

having sacrificed to Him is a source of disagreement between the parshanim. Rashi explains that G-d condemned the people for sacrificing to the false gods rather than to the true One. The Radak supports that view by quoting the episode found in Divrei HaYamim II that describes how King Ahaz locked the gates of the Beit HaMikdash and built altars throughout the land, leading the nation to idolatry. The Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, suggests that the navi was referring to the behavior of Israel in the Diaspora of Bavel where they did not observe the sacrificial rite at all.

The different approaches suggested by these commentators reflect two possible sins that Yishayahu condemns: either the people’s cessation of worshipping G-d or their active involvement in actual idolatry. We would imagine that the second sin is far worse than the first. But perhaps we can understand both approaches as actually being part of a process—a process in which one sin of omission leads to the more serious sin of commission.

As mortal beings, whose time on this earth is limited, we seek to cling to the Unlimited. Blessed with an immortal soul that seeks to reunite to its source, we naturally thirst for spirituality, for immortality, for Hashem, as the Psalmist wrote: “Tzam’ah nafshi leilokim”

(Tehillim 43:3). In today's parasha, the Torah provides us with a way to do just that, a way to reach out and connect to G-d. And, when followed as prescribed, that way quenches the soul and satisfies our longing.

But when, for whatever reason, people cease reaching out, when they stop searching or stop thirsting, they seek other paths. Often they find material success as satisfying that need. Or, perhaps, it can be intellectual achievement or technological advance that calms that yearning. They begin to see their progress as the accomplishment of Man alone and begin to believe, as the Torah puts it: (D'varim 8:17) "Kochi v'otzem yadi asa li et hachayil hazeh", that all this success I have achieved through my own efforts. They replace "Him" with "I". And yet, often enough, even the great accomplishments fill the void only temporarily. That thirst and that longing remain. And so they search. And eventually return to worship. But not the worship of the Al-mighty but worship of false powers, of nature, of philosophies, of "isms"- of idols. Simply, the abandonment of service of the Divine Being can lead to the service of a non-being.

The laws of korbanot, like the laws of tefilla, may seem to many as irrelevant or, perhaps, too picayune to be of real significance. But it is this body of laws that paves for us our way to draw nearer to G-d, to our true Source. It quenches our thirst, it soothes our longing and it elevates us beyond the world of the mortal. ■

Eiferman Properties Ltd.

SALES:

- **YAVNIEL** - Villa + Rental Units! NIS 2,790,000!
- **OLD KATAMON** * New on Market! Spacious 3 en suite bdrm. apt. Beautifully renovated! Succah balcony!
*Bilu, 2 bdrms. renovated, 1st floor
*Negba, Duplex 132 sqm + rooftop, parking!
- **RECHAVIA** - Ben Maimon St. Beautiful new 240 sqm garden apt. private entrance, storage, parking.
- **TALBIEH** - Alkelai St. 2 bdrms. priv. land, NIS 2,250,000
- **CITY CENTER** - 4 Bdrms, renovated, elevator, balconies.
- **ROMEMA** - New 137 sqm, 5 bdrms. (2 with en suite bathrooms) parking, storage, succah, view
- **HAR NOF** - 330 sqm private villa! currently 3 separate apts. with private entrances & outdoor areas! Open view!
- **BAYIT V'GAN** - 142 sqm, 212 sqm garden, 40 sqm terrace, view, parking, storage, NIS 3,490,000 !

RENTALS:

- **RECHAVIA** Fabulous new duplex, 200 sqm. terrace, view!
- **HAR NOF** Villa, beautiful 6 bedrooms, view!

02-651-4030 www.eifermanrealty.com

Bs"d



WATERPROOF
your home

SEALING SERVICES

- Leak detection + moisture
- Sealing solutions
- Water damage
- Roof coating
- Waterproofing, pools, porches, stone walls, tiled roofs
- High standard interior - exterior painting 
- Licensed & insured

**Mold
mildew
expert**

Shmuel34@hotmail.com
www.freshcoatpainters.co.il

052-840-5660