

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"o, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



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אמרות שמשון

Why Only a Jewish Renegade Is Disqualified from Bringing Voluntary Offerings

דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה' מן בהמה מן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם (ויקרא א ב)

Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them, "When a person from among you will bring an offering to Hashem, from the animals; from the cattle and from the flocks you shall bring your offering".

The Midrash (ויקרא ד טז) expounds upon that which Hashem commanded Moshe to speak to the Children of Israel, and says as follows. *Speak to the Children of Israel... Moshe said before Hashem: Master of the universe! Of the seventy dominant nations You have in the world, You command me only regarding Israel, for You have told me, 'Command the Children of Israel', 'Speak to the Children of Israel, and 'Say to the Children of Israel'.* [We find Hashem using these three distinct expressions when telling Moshe to teach the Jewish People the laws regarding the offerings in the Bais Hamikdash.] *Hashem said to Moshe: This is because the Jewish People are attached to me... This is because the Jewish People are the ones who coronated Me first, at the Reed Sea, for they said to Me, Hashem shall reign for all eternity!... That is because the Jewish People accepted My authority upon themselves at Har Sinai, for they said "Everything that Hashem Has said, we will do and we will obey".*

There is much in this Midrash that needs to be explained. First of all, since when did Moshe seek the good of the non-Jews, that he should request of Hashem that His words be directed to them as well? Secondly, what does this request that Hashem should direct His words to the non-Jews, have to do with the fact that Hashem used those three expressions when commanding the Jews?

The Gemara in Chulin [ה ע"א] expounds on this Passuk and teaches us as follows. *The Passuk says, 'When a person among you will bring an offering to Hashem, from the animals...'* *When the Passuk states, 'When a person among you will bring an offering', it implies that 'not all of you may bring an offering', and it comes to exclude a renegade Jew from donating a voluntary offering.* [i.e. The expression 'a man among you' teaches that we are not to accept voluntary offerings of every Jew, but only of certain ones among you]. *Furthermore, the phrase 'among you' teaches that only among 'you' - the Jewish People - has Hashem distinguished between a renegade and others, but among the other nations this distinction has not been made.* [i.e. The Gemara derives from other Pesukim that non-Jews may donate certain voluntary offerings for sacrifice in the Bais Hamikdash. Since the exclusionary phrase 'among you' appears in the Passuk dealing with Jews who donate voluntary offerings, and there is no similar expression in the Passuk which alludes to the fact that non-Jews as well can donate offerings, we learn that

there is no exclusion among the non-Jews.] *When the Passuk states further, 'from the animals', it comes to include people who are similar in their actions to animals, to also be eligible to donate offerings. From here the Sages said, 'We accept offerings from the sinners of Israel so that they should return in repentance [i.e. for if we were to reject these people totally, they would never improve their ways]. This applies to all sinners, except for a renegade, one who pours offerings of wine to idols and one who desecrates the Shabbos publicly, from whom we do not accept offerings.*

In summary: We accept voluntary offerings from any Jew or non-Jew, whether righteous or sinful, besides from a Jewish renegade of whom we don't accept any voluntary offerings.



When Hashem used three expressions to instruct Moshe to teach the Jewish People the laws of the offerings, Moshe understood that those three specific and distinct expressions were in reference to three groups of Jews. For the Jewish People are made up of three distinct groups; the righteous, those who are neither specifically righteous nor sinful, and the sinners. Accordingly, Hashem used those three expressions; אמר - say, which is an expression of love and is alluding to the righteous, צו - command, which is an expression of a king commanding his subjects and is alluding to the typical layman, and דבר - speak, which is an expression of harsh talk and is alluding to the sinners. Hashem instructed Moshe to teach the laws of the offerings to these three groups, for they are all eligible to donate offerings.

What Moshe could not understand was why when commanding the laws of the offerings to the non-Jews, did Hashem not use the same three expressions; weren't the non-Jews also made up of those same exact three groups? Didn't they as well have sinners among themselves? Furthermore, because Hashem directed His words only to the Jews, therefore when excluding the renegade, it only excluded the Jewish renegade. This too Moshe found hard to understand; why would the non-Jewish renegade be found more worthy of bringing an offering than the Jewish renegade?

To these difficulties Hashem replied, *'This is because the Jewish People are attached to me... are the ones who coronated Me first at the Reed Sea... accepted My authority upon themselves at Har Sinai'.* With this reply Hashem was alluding to the answer to Moshe's two questions. Firstly, because only the Jews were so close and attached to Him, it was only their offerings that He truly desired, and thus it was only to them that He taught the laws of the voluntary offerings. While the non-Jews, although if they so wanted, they were indeed able to offer voluntary offerings to Hashem, nevertheless they weren't commanded to do so.

Secondly, the Gemara in Sukkah [ג ע"ב] says that something which developed a disqualification after having been fit is more likely to be considered permanently 'rejected', than one that was disqualified initially. Accordingly, the rejection of a Jewish renegade, who initially was so close and attached to Hashem, is so much more severe than the rejection of a non-Jewish renegade, and thus only from a Jewish renegade do we not accept offerings.

