

## **"If a man among you desires to bring a sacrifice near to Hashem, from the cattle, from the herd, and from the flock shall you bring near your sacrifice."**

In the *Midrash*, *Chazal* explain the *Torah's* choice of the word "ost" rather than "aht". They state that one's *korban* must be similar to that of *iuatrv ost*. As he was the rightful owner of his possessions, his sacrifice was pure and untainted by the stigma of theft. We, too, must take care not to offer a sacrifice which is taken from anything which was unlawfully acquired. This statement is problematic. Obviously, *Chazal* do not use the word "theft" in the usual sense of the word. This meaning could have been derived from the last word of the verse, "your sacrifice." Indeed, the *Talmud* in *Baba Kamma 6b* notes, "*Your sacrifice and not that which is derived unlawfully.*" The *Torah* must, therefore, be alluding to a different form of unlawful acquisition -- one which disqualifies the sacrifice, even though the source seems to be trivial.

*Horav S. R. Hirsch, z.l.*, suggests that the word "*adam*" does not refer to man as being "earthborn." This characteristic is applicable to all creatures. *Adam* is related to *ousv, hadom*, which means footstool. This word portrays man as the footstool of the Almighty, the executor of the Divine Glory on earth. As *vnst*, the earth is beholden to man whose responsibility it is to guide the earth to its Divinely appointed destiny. Nature's destiny is distorted and doomed to decay if man does not fulfill his task. Although heaven and earth were fully created, the earth remained "*void and empty*" until man, *ost*, was to come and stimulate *vnst* towards its ultimate perfection.

In his farewell to *Am Yisrael*, Moshe implored the people to be conscious of responding to Hashem's demands. He perceived that his people were in possession of material plenty. He admonished them to take note of the source of the abundance, Hashem. Moshe saw the disaster which would befall those who considered themselves master over their possessions and lords over their own destiny. If the awareness of Hashem's supreme leadership fades from our consciousness, we forfeit our relationship with Him.

*Horav Shlomo Breuer, z.l.*, explains that the delusion of *hjf hsh omugu* - human strength and power - as the source of human possession is blasphemous and ultimately destructive. A person driven by this delusion manifests a form of robbery which, if allowed to germinate, will poison his religious consciousness. The *korbanos* demand that we bring Hashem closer into our lives. This goal is realized when we rid ourselves of the false image of *hsh omugu hjf*. Hashem's proximity arouses the constant awareness within us that "*He is the one who provides your strength.*" If we sacrifice that which is "ours," we are actually offering to Hashem that which is "stolen." We cannot pursue Hashem's nearness using material goods which we have "unlawfully acquired" through misguided arrogance.

Hashem demands *korbanos* like Adam's, completely untainted by personal vanity and delusions of power. *Korbanos* are designed to renew the relationship which, at the beginning of Creation,

intimately bound man to Hashem. Thus, we understand the admonition at the prelude to the law of sacrifices, chreh hf ost. You must seek My nearness by affirming your belief in the source of all material plenty, just as Adam, the bearer of Divinity, did.