

When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem. (1:2)

The Torah refers to the person who brings the korban, sacrifice/offering, as Adam, which is also the name of Adam HaRishon, to imply that, just as Adam did not bring an offering from a stolen animal (since everything belonged to him), so, too, should we not serve Hashem with ill-begotten goods. Adam HaRishon offered a bull as his korban to Hashem. This primordial bull was different from any other bull that would ever be created. Chazal (Chullin 60a) state: “Adam arose and offered up a bull whose horns appeared before its hooves, as David Hamelech writes (Tehillim 69:32): V’sitav l’Hashem mishor par makrin mafris, “It shall be more pleasing to Hashem than a yearling bull, with horns, with hooves.” While most bulls have hooves and horns, the first bull was unique in that it was created fully grown from the earth. It rose from the earth, headfirst, fully grown, standing erect. Chazal teach that everything was initially created fully mature, complete and developed. The emergence of the primordial bull from the ground (as opposed to every succeeding bull), with its horns preceding its hooves, warrants the appellation, makrin mafris.

What is the significance of the horns preceding the hooves as far as a korban is concerned? Horav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zl, comments on the unusual expression, makrin mafris. We understand the significance of hooves, since cloven hooves form the part of the kosher sign of an animal: cloven hooves and chewing its cud. It is, therefore, understandable that Adam’s korban underscores its hooves. What significance, however, do the horns have? Horns do not impact the kashrus of the animal, so why emphasize the uniqueness of the primordial bull?

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that, while horns do not impact the life of a human being, they do serve the animal by enhancing his power and beauty. This is evidenced from the pasuk in Devarim 33:17, B’chor shoro hadar v’karnei re’eim karnov, “His first-born bull in his grandeur and its horns are like the horns of a re’eim.” Since the bull’s horns have no practical use to man, why is it necessary to mention them as part of Adam HaRishon’s sacrifice?

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that horns add a sense of pride and power to the animal, engendering it with an appearance of grandeur. It also gives it the ability to fend off or attack other animals. It is this aspect – the grandeur, power, pride – that we offer up to Hashem on the Mizbayach as part of the Korban Olah (where everything is consumed). This is the lesson of Adam ki yakriv mikem korban l’Hashem, “When a man (Adam) from amongst you shall bring an offering.” By invoking the name Adam (referring to Adam HaRishon), the Torah recalls the very first korban offered – the only animal whose horns appeared before its body. This means: the glory, power and pride preceded the usefulness of its body. This animal was slaughtered for the sake of the Divine service, l’shem Shomayim. This implies a lesson to every individual in each generation who will offer up a sacrifice to Hashem, that he, too, should be prepared to sacrifice, dispense, his gaavah, arrogance, haughtiness (which some might pejoratively refer to as pride), to Hashem.

Horav Yisrael Belsky, zl, builds upon this exposition. Adam ki yakriv mikem korban l’Hashem, “When a man amongst you shall bring near a korban to Hashem.” Adam HaRishon emerged onto the face of the world and beheld before him the entirety of Creation. When he viewed its enormity, he asked himself, “What is this world? Why was it created? Who am I?”

The answer to these questions are initiated by the first word of the Torah – Bereishis, which (as Chazal explain) is a contraction of Beis – Reishis. For the sake of two primary things did Hashem

create the world: Klal Yisrael; and Torah. The entire world and all of mankind were created for the specific purpose of enabling Hashem's people to serve Him.

Thus, Adam HaRishon's first act was to take the primordial bull, the makrin mafris, and slaughter it as a sacrifice for Hashem. This sacrifice was unique, one of the original and most glorious elements of Creation. Yet, it was slaughtered for Hashem. This accentuates Adam's awareness of the notion that everything – regardless of its beauty, glory and uniqueness, as well as a person's animal drives and pride all exists for one primary purpose: to serve Hashem. Adam taught us that at every step in life, at every juncture, we must make a point to recognize, affirm and attest to the purpose of Creation. Nothing belongs to us; nothing has value unless it fulfills a purpose, and that purpose is the service of Hashem.

We are enjoined to use everything that Hashem created in this world for the express purpose of bringing out kavod Shomayim, glory of Heaven. By offering the first korban, Adam HaRishon achieved this goal. We follow his lesson, whether it be in bringing a korban or in our daily endeavor; everything that we do is to be held up to the barometer of kavod Shomayim. If we live our lives in such a manner, we are not only carrying out Hashem's will, we give value and meaning to our lives, since we are no longer just living for ourselves. We live for kavod Shomayim