

Parsha Thought

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לזכר נשמת מלכה בת יהושע - משה צבי בן גדליה

לזכר נשמת דוד בן אברהם

VAYIKRA

Sefer Vayikra begins with Hashem calling to Moshe to relay instructions to the Jewish people about animal sacrifices. **אדם**, When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem. All the commentators give various reasons the Torah's use of the word **אדם**, which seems unnecessary. One of the many interpretations given by the Ohr HaChaim is of an allegoric nature. He says that once the Jewish people saw that Hashem had singled out Moshe and conferred honor and prestige upon him, Hashem wishes to inform the Jewish people how Moshe merited this. Therefore, He said **אדם כי יקריב**, which can also be understood to mean, when a person will draw close, meriting a closeness to the Shechina as Moshe did, it can only be, **מכם**, from you, meaning it can only be on account of the Jewish people. The only way for a leader to merit that close relationship with Hashem is through the merit of the Jewish people as a whole. We have learnt before that Hashem only spoke with Moshe for the sake of the Jewish people. When Hashem was upset at the people, Moshe did not share the same close relationship with Hashem as he was accustomed to.

Reb Shlomo Ephraim, the author of the Ollelos Ephraim, had to meet with the ruler of the city to ask for a favor for the benefit of the Jews. At the same time he was there, there was also a priest who hated the Jews standing with the ruler. The priest turned to the ruler and said, "don't pay any attention to this Jew. The Jews are our enemies and have no right to ask for favors". The ruler said to him, "that's a pretty strong accusation, can you back up that claim?" The priest said, "of course, even ask the rabbi. In their Talmud it says **אתם קרויים אדם ואין הגויים קרויים אדם**, "you are called man, and the nations are not called man". They consider us animals and then they ask for favors!?" "Is this true, asked the ruler?"

"How great are the words of the chachamim", began the rabbi with a smile, "that they forbid a gentile to learn Torah. For he reads it as written without understanding the meaning. It's true that the posuk is expounded to say that only Jews are **אדם**, but we need to understand what that means. We find in the Hebrew language four different ways to refer to man. **אדם**, **איש**, **גבר**, **אנוש**. However, only three of them can be used in plural. All except for **אדם** can be used in the plural form. **אדם** is singular only, and that's why it's used to refer to the Jewish people. The Jewish people are one unit, whatever happens to another Jew affects us no matter where he lives, who he is or if we know him or not. However, the nations of the world are many and the people of one country are unaffected by what happens to people in another country, an Italian and a Russian have no connection, but if it's a Jewish Russian and Jewish Italian then they care for one another. The Jewish people are united that's why we are called **אדם**." The ruler listened to the explanation of the rabbi and agreed with him that what he said was true. The ruler then said, "the help even I see from one Jew to another is to be envied; we have nothing that compares; rabbi how can I help you?"

I was thinking about how much we see this today, particularly around this time of year. How many people go out of their way to help other people, to make sure people have what they need for Yom Tov. Money is given out to thousands of people whom the donors do not know. It's at times like this when we have these people with great merit, that each and every one of us can reconnect to Hashem and merit to have that special connection!