

# SICHA SUMMARY

## Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 27

*Shemini, Sicha 2*

### The Context:

On the eighth day of the Mishkan's inauguration, the first of Nissan, Moshe commanded Aharon to offer a variety of sacrifices. Tragically, on the same day, Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, died due to improper sacrificial procedures. This rendered Aharon and his remaining sons "onenim" (mourners for close relatives on the day of death and burial). A kohen who is an *onen* is restricted from consuming sacred offerings. A disagreement arose between Moshe and Aharon regarding the application of these laws during the unique circumstances of the Mishkan's inauguration. Ultimately, Moshe conceded to Aharon's interpretation.

The debate centered on the following:

Three sin-offering goats were to be offered on that day:

1) a he-goat as a sin-offering as part of the general dedication of the Mishkan (*Vayikra*. 9:3);

2) the he-goat of Nachshon the son of Aminadav, leader of the tribe of Yehudah, which was the first offering of the twelve-day dedication of the altar (*Bamidbar* 7:16);

3) the he-goat of the additional offering of Rosh Chodesh.

Moshe instructed Aharon and his sons to consume the meal offerings accompanying these sacrifices, despite their *onen* status, emphasizing this as a unique command from G-d, "eat it as unleavened loaves beside the altar... for so I have been commanded." However, Aharon and his sons burned the Rosh Chodesh sin-offering, following the standard protocol for an *onen*. Moshe questioned this distinction, reasoning that if G-d commanded them to eat the inauguration offerings, they should have done the same with the Rosh Chodesh offering.

The Talmud and Rashi offer slightly contrasting explanations as to the substance of Aharon's response: They both center around a distinction between the temporary sacrificial procedures unique to the inauguration (*kadshei sha'a*), and the

standard, permanent sacrificial procedures, such as the Rosh Chodesh offering (*kadshei doros*).

### The Talmud:

The dispensation allowing *onanim* to consume sacrifices applied only to the one-time inauguration offerings, but not to the standard, permanent sacrifices. This distinction is supported by an *a fortiori* argument: if the second tithe (*maaser sheni*), which is less stringent than sacrificial meat, is forbidden to an *onen*, then permanent sacrifices must also be forbidden. It is clear, then, that the dispensation to Aharon to eat the one-time inauguration sacrifice was an exception only for those unique offerings, but not applicable to the standard Rosh Chodesh offering. (*Zevachim 101a*)

### The Rashi:

Aharon argued that the standard, eternal sacrifices are more stringent than the temporary, special circumstance sacrifices. Just because G-d allowed an *onen* to eat from the temporary sacrifices, that does not mean that an *onen* can eat from the standard Rosh Chodesh sacrifice. (*Rashi to Vayikra 10:19*)

### The Distinction:

Rashi clearly maintains that the standard sacrifices are more stringent than the one-time sacrifices of the inauguration. The Talmud, however, does not make that argument. It resorts to an argument based on the leniency of the second tithe to say that the standard sacrifices are forbidden to an *onen*. This implies that the temporary

sacrifices are more stringent still than the standard sacrifices, and therefore we cannot make Rashi's argument from the leniency of the temporary sacrifices.

### The Argument:

There are two kinds of temporary sacrifices. An isolated, one-time sacrifice such as Eliyahu on Mt. Carmel, and a one-time sacrifice that is intended to have an eternal effect, such as the inauguration sacrifices which dedicated the Mishkan as a whole for eternity. The former is clearly a more lenient sacrifice than the standard, eternal sacrifices, as we see that Eliyahu's sacrifice was given all sorts of dispensations. The latter, however, is more stringent than eternal sacrifices since they initiate the entire concept of sacrifices in the Mishkan.

Rashi and the Talmud do not disagree about these fundamental distinctions. But they do disagree about how to classify the kohanim's consumption of the inauguration sacrifices. Rashi maintains that only the offering of the sacrifice itself inaugurated the Mishkan, but the kohanim's consumption is incidental to the sacrifice and is not part of the inauguration. It was this aspect of the temporary sacrifice that was more lenient than the standard sacrifices, and therefore, according to Rashi, the dispensation of the *onen* could not be applied to the standard Rosh Chodesh sacrifice.

The Talmud, however, maintains that the kohanim's consumption is an integral part of the sacrifice and therefore of the inauguration. Thus, it, too, has the same stringent classification as the entire

inauguration sacrifice. Thus, the inference could not be made from this more stringent sacrifice to the standard sacrifices, as Rashi did. Instead the argument had to be made from the second tithe, which, in relation to standard sacrifices, are more lenient.

### **Moshe's Admittance:**

This difference is also reflected in how the Talmud and Rashi describe Moshe's reply: The Talmud quotes Moshe as saying, "I heard this law, and I forgot it." Rashi, however, says "Moshe admitted that Aharon was correct, and was not ashamed to say "I have not heard of this law."

According to the Talmud the law that an *onen* does not eat from the standard sacrifices is derived from the a *fortiori* argument from the second tithe. Without this argument, Aharon would concede to Moshe that the temporary, inauguration

sacrifice was more stringent than the standard sacrifices and therefore would impose that same permission on the standard sacrifice. Thus, this was not a logical disagreement, it was tradition that was taught which Aharon had recalled but Moshe did not. So Moshe says, "I heard it but forgot it."

According to Rashi, Moshe and Aharon debated a logical point. Moshe maintained that G-d's dispensation for the *onen* applied to all the sacrificial rites of the eighth day, no matter if the sacrifice was temporary or standard. Aharon argued that the dispensation was only given to specific inauguration sacrifices, and was not a blanket dispensation to all the day's offerings. Thus, Moshe did not say he "forgot it," because one does not forget a logical argument. He only admitted to the correctness of his brother's argument.

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