

REINSTITUTING KORBANOS TODAY

Anticipating Moshiach with Sacrifices

Together with the excitement of the return of Jews into the Old City of Yerushalayim in 1967, there arose a revival of an old debate concerning whether *halachah* allows offering of *korbanos*, if it would be permitted by all the various authorities. At the same time, the associated question, as to whether we should attempt to rebuild the Beis HaMikdash, arose. This revived the discussion of these issues over 100 years earlier when Rav Zvi Hirsch Kalischer promoted the idea and consulted his mentor Rav Akiva Eger and the Chasam Sofer. Rav Kalischer's agenda was to motivate people to move to Eretz Yisrael, and although he was aware that it was practically impossible to carry out any such rebuilding plan at the time, discussion of the possibilities would act as an inspiration for people to emigrate. He worked to raise funds for settlement of Jews in the Holy Land, to buy and cultivate land there, to provide a home for poor Eastern European Jews, who would be able to support themselves by being trained in agriculture. He published these ideas in his work, *Derishas Tzion*, which also analyzed the permissibility of reintroducing *korbanos* in Yerushalayim nowadays.

RULINGS OF THE GEDOLIM

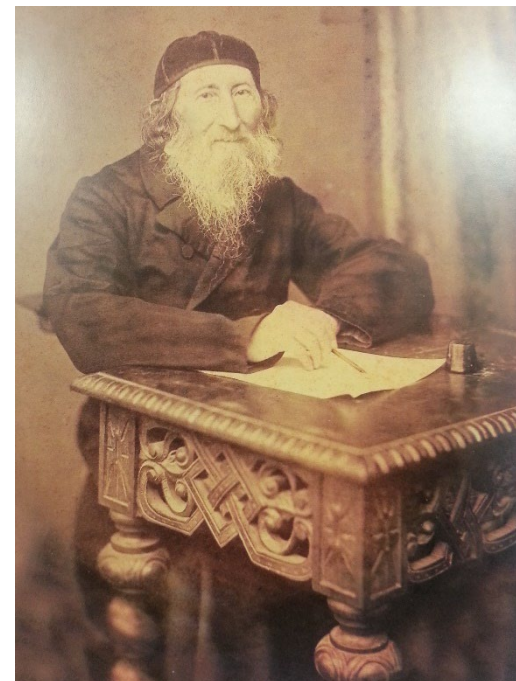
Rav Kalischer analyzed the issues at length in his *sefer*, and I can only touch the surface in this short article. I should say at the outset that the purpose of presenting both sides of the argument is not to justify those who act in clear violation of the ruling of our leading *poskim*. It is merely to sharpen our understanding of the issues involved. There are multiple additional factors which come into play when our *Gedolim* arrive at their rulings, including assessing potential dangers and political issues, which they may weigh as overriding the benefits of any *mitzvah*. We are mindful of Shmuel's response to King Saul, who tried to justify leaving some animals alive, despite HaShem's decree to wipe out the Amalek nation and its animals. He rationalized that the use of these surviving animals as *korbanos* did not contravene the commandment to destroy them. Shmuel admonished him with the rhetorical question: "Does HaShem delight in *olos* and *zevachim* as in obedience to the voice of HaShem? Behold! – to obey is better than a choice offering" (*Shmuel I*, 15:22). An offering on the altar pleases HaShem only if it is in fulfilment of His commandment, not a violation. However holy prayer or offerings on Har HaBayis may be, they may not be carried out in place of adherence to the rulings of our *Gedolim*.

HILCHASA LEMESHICHA

Some want to prove from Rava's statement in *Zevachim* 45a that rulings concerning *korbanos* are *הלכתא למשיחא*, halachic rulings for the times of Moshiach, that the practice of bringing *korbanos* is irrelevant until the Beis HaMikdash is rebuilt. Rav Shimon Sofer heard this claim and was confident that all the latter-day Rabbonim who debated this issue were fully aware of this Talmudic reference (*Hisorarus Teshuvah* 1:87). However, they relied on the report of Rav Ishtori HaParchi (d. 1355), in his work entitled *Kaftor VaFerach*, who writes that in the year 5017 (1257), Rabbeinu Yechiel of Paris wished to emigrate to Eretz Yisrael and to offer sacrifices there. Other versions have it as Rabbeinu Chananel or Rabbeinu Chaim. Rav Chaim Nathanson in his *Avodah Tamah* concludes that undoubtedly this *Rishon* was dissuaded from doing so by the *Gedolim* of his time. Rav Sofer points to the comment of Rabbeinu Chaim (possibly the same *Rishon*) in *Tosafos (Zevachim* 45a, s.v. *hilchasa*) who limited the application of the principle of not issuing rulings for *הלכתא למשיחא* to where it is in conjunction with a prohibition such as *piggul*, as in our *sugya*, or where there was liability to death by *Beis Din*, when it would be irrelevant to issue a halachic ruling.

RAV HIRSCH'S OPPOSITION

Rav Kalischer wrote to Rav Samson Rapael Hirsch in 1864 asking him to convince Baron Wilhelm Carl Rothschild in Frankfurt to support his plans financially and to publicize his venture in his journal *Jeschurun*. Rav Hirsch responded that Chazal encouraged us to yearn for the *Geulah* by improving ourselves through teshuvah and not by preparing the Holy Land for occupation. In answer to Rav Kalischer's argument that the appointment of Benjamin Disraeli, a Jew, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, indicated a new world outlook towards Jews, Rav Hirsch objected that HaShem would not select immoral people to be His messengers of redemption. Whilst it was important to provide support for the poor of Eretz Yisrael, plans to develop agricultural settlements involving irreligious Jews would only lead to widespread *chillul Shabbos* and transgression of the special *mitzvos* unique to Eretz Yisrael (*Shemesh Marpeh*, p. 355-7). He expressed his fear that the anticipated State of Israel will only deepen the *galus*. He wrote: "... if an emancipated Israel steps into the company of non-Jewish states as a privileged member, will the Torah be any the less in exile for this? ... Or has it to endure new and harder trials, is it faced with new *galus* sufferings, is it threatened with a new and more painful and bitter exile? ... Are they now to be exiled from the Jewish family life, from the Jewish heart, as they were once exiled from the Jewish state? (Collected Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch vol. I, p. 345-6). Writing long before the reality of a Jewish State, his opposition to Rav Kalischer's plans demonstrate Rav Hirsch's keen foresight of what would result from compromising Torah principles in order to establish equality with other nations.



Rav Zvi Hirsch Kalischer - 1795-1874

RAV KALISCHER'S PROPOSALS

The proposal to re-establish offering *korbanos* despite the absence of the Beis HaMikdash appears to be anticipated by the statement of Rabbi Yehoshua: "I have heard that it is permitted to sacrifice although there is no Temple" (*Eiduyos* 8:6). The Rambam (*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah* 6:15) rules accordingly, indicating that such offerings are at least a theoretical possibility. Rav Kalischer argues not only that the reinstitution of sacrifices is both permissible and halachically feasible, but that it constitutes a positive mitzvah and is essential for the advent of Moshiach. He maintains, based on Yerushalmi (*Maaser Sheni* 5:2) that the redemption will take place in the following order, a partial ingathering of the exiles, followed by the reinstitution of *korbanos*, then the war between Gog and Magog and the complete ingathering of the exiles, culminating in the advent of Moshiach. He argues that bringing sacrifices causes the return of the *Shechinah*, just as the *Shechinah* only appeared in the *Mishkan* following the *milu'im* sacrifices.

STRONG OPPOSITION

Rav Kalischer prints a letter from the British Chief Rabbi, Rav Nathan Adler, who responded by citing Rashi (*Sukkah* 41a) and Tosafos (*Shevuos* 15b) to the effect that the Temple, the altar and all the utensils of the Third temple will be built miraculously by HaShem by means of a heavenly fire. Such miracles can only be expected after the coming of Moshiach. Rav Yakov Ettlinger was also strongly opposed to the proposal. In the first *teshuvah* of his *Binyan Tzion*, he states that the correct order of redemption is as found in *Megillah* 17b. First, the rebuilding of Yerushalayim, next, the re-establishment of *Malchus Beis Dovid*, then, the rebuilding of the Temple, and finally, the reinstitution of sacrifices. We find this order in the sequence of *berachos* in the *Amidah* which were ordained by the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* to reflect the chronological unfolding of events leading to redemption. Rav Kalischer was a *talmid* of Rav Akiva Eiger and he wrote to him asking him to endorse his project.

PRACTICAL OBSTACLES

Rav Akiva Eiger's approach was to show that alluring as it may have been, there were several practical obstacles to bringing *korbanos* nowadays. Rav Kalischer admitted that the building of the Beis HaMikdash is impossible without prophetic direction, but he argues that only the *mizbeach* is necessary in order to offer sacrifices, as is evident from the fact that Ezra reinstituted *korbanos* before the Temple was rebuilt. However, there are a number of other barriers which we will review very briefly, and we will have opportunity to delve into them individually more deeply in the future.

SANCTITY OF THE HAR HABAYIS

We have previously discussed the problem of entering the Temple area in a state of *tumah*, and accordingly, Rav Kalischer limits his proposal to communal offerings and the *korban Pesach*, to which the principle of *tumah dechuyah betzibbur* applies. When the majority of a community is impure, the normal *hilchos tumah* are set aside and the offering is permitted despite the impurity. Rav Kalischer then addresses the problem of erecting an altar on the Temple Mount. He argues that according to the Rambam, who holds that the original sanctification did not lapse with the Churban, an altar erected on the Temple site retains its original *kedushah* (*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah* 1:3). According to the opinion of the Ravad, who maintains that the *kedushah* was abrogated upon the destruction of the Temple, *bamos* or private altars should be now permissible, as they were prior to the erection of the Temple. Rambam ruled that once the Temple was erected, the prohibition against private altars became permanent and continues even after the destruction of the Temple. Ravad, who argues that the sanctification lapsed, should have appended a critical note to this Rambam, saying that *bamos* should be permitted after the Churban, but does not do so. Rav Akiva Eiger reasons that Ravad must hold like Rabbeinu Chananel in Tosafos, *Zevachim* 61a, that *bamos* are now forbidden even if the *kedushah* lapsed. Even if a Beis HaMikdash may not be required, any sacrifice must be offered on the precise location of the original altar, which we cannot ascertain. We shall discuss this in more detail in connection with *Zevachim* 62b, which relates that the exact location had to be revealed by a prophet at the time of the construction of the Second Beis HaMikdash.

YICHUS OF KOHANIM

Ezra demanded written pedigrees to authenticate claims of priestly descent, but Rav Kalischer contended that we can rely on their *chezkas kashrus*, as the Mishnah (*Eiduyos* 8:7) which states that: "Eliyahu will come neither to defile nor to purify". Rav Ettlinger draws on the same Tosafos (*Zevachim* 45a, s.v. *hilchasa*) who questions why this Mishnah does not constitute *hilchasa lemeshicha*. Since Tosafos fails to answer that such a statement is necessary in order to sanction kohanim serving prior to the coming of Moshiach, Rav Ettlinger concludes that this Mishnah only refers to questions of legitimacy and *mamzeirus* and does not refer to priestly status. Rav Akiva Eiger maintains that there are many historical uncertainties and therefore priestly status remains in doubt, an opinion shared by the Chafetz Chaim (*Zevach Todah, Zevachim*, chapter 13).

BIGDEI KEHUNAH

Rav Akiva Eiger raised a further barrier in his response relating to the unavailability of the threads necessary to weave the priestly garments. The *avneit*, the girdle, contained *techeles*, *argaman* and *tola'as shani*, three dyes manufactured from extractions from creatures which cannot be properly identified. Furthermore there is also discussion in the Rishonim regarding the number of fabrics which went into weaving the *avneit* (*Mishneh LeMelech, Klei HaMikdash* 8:2). Rav Akiva Eiger also argued that since the *tumah* is *dechuyah* rather than *hutrah*, rescinded rather than nullified, the *Kohen gadol* wearing a *tzitz* would be required to expiate the sin of defilement, and that appointment is impossible without his special garments and jewels for the breastplate and *eiphod*. Another impediment amongst others raised by the Acharonim, is the requirement for *korbanos* to be purchased from public *shekalim*, which would not apply to the *korban Pesach*.

SWEET ODORS

Let us conclude with another objection of the Binyan Tzion based on *Zevachim* 46a, where the Mishnah prescribes that each sacrifice be offered with six intentions, including *reiaich* and *nichoach*. Rav Ettlinger argues that the pasuk: וְנִתְּמִי אֶת עֲרִיכָם הָרֶכֶב וְנִתְּמִי אֶת מִקְדְּשֵׁיכֶם וְלֹא אֲרִיחַ בְּרִיחַ נִיחֹחַכֶם, and I will bring your sanctuaries unto destruction, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors (*Vayikra* 26:31) indicates since HaShem says that He will not smell "the savor of your sweet odors" while the Temple lies desolate, we cannot offer the sacrifice with that intention.

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