

## Introduction to מסכת זבחים

*מדרש הלכה* takes us into an entirely different world of study – not only contextually, but methodologically as well. The cornerstone text of *מדרש הלכה*, also known as *תורת כהנים* – the Halakhic exegesis of *ספר ויקרא*. As such, the *משניות* in *סדר קדשים*, which begins with *מסכתות זבחים ומנחות*, are deeply anchored in text and its interpretation; as such, the starting point of analyzing a dispute will be the text and the various methods used to analyze it. *מסכת זבחים* is devoted, by and large, to the *הלכות* governing animal offerings – the word *זבח* literally means “slaughter”; whereas *מנחות* focuses, with significant tangents, on avian, grain, wine & oil offerings. One prefatory note – there are, generally speaking, four types of animal offerings:

- 1) *עולה* – which is fully burnt up – this might be from the flock, the herd – or a bird (*ויקרא א'*) and may be brought voluntarily (*נדר/נדבה*)
- 2) *חטאת* – the meat of which is eaten by *זכרי כהונה* – and may also come from the flock, the herd (in some cases) and a bird (*העוף*) but may only be brought if such obligation exists
- 3) *אשם* – the meat of which is eaten by *זכרי כהונה* – and may only come from the flock – and may only be brought if such obligation exists
- 4) *שלמים* – some of which is given to *כהנים*, the rest eaten by donors and their entourage – this may only come from flock or herd and is nearly always brought voluntarily (*נדר/נדבה*)

Each animal offering goes through four *עבודות* – worship-stages – which are critical points in the offering, as we will see:

- 1) *שחיטה* – this may be done by anyone, male or female, *כהן* or otherwise, providing no *טומאה* obtains
- 2) *קבלה (קבלת הדם)* – receiving the blood of the animal in a chalice – from this point on, the *עבודות* must be performed by male *כהן*
- 3) *הולכה* – bringing *דם* to *מזבח* for sprinkling
- 4) *זריקה* – sprinkling the *דם* on the *מזבח*, each offering according to its prescribed location and number

It is recommended to read one of the several introductions to *סדר קדשים* – the *דמב"ם*'s introduction in his *פירוש המשניות* is clear and comprehensive

28.1.1

2a (משנה א) → 3a (הרי את מותרת לכל אדם)

1. מוצא שפתיך תשמר ועשית כאשר נדרת לה' אלהיך נדבה אשר דברת בפיך: זבחים כג:כד

- I 'א: status of a זבח that was לשמה שלא נשחט (i.e. intent for another type of קרבן)
  - a *any*: קרבן that was slaughtered לשמה is still כשר, however it is no longer reckoned for the donor
    - i *comment on language*: אלא (“however”) – demonstrates that קרבן maintains קדושה and further שינויים are אסור
      - 1 *rationale*: no reason to add violation OR
      - 2 *source*: v. 1 – if done properly, נדר; if not, still נדבה, which still has איסור of בקדשים
    - b *exceptions*: פסח (in its time –i.e. the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup>) and חטאת (at all times)
    - c *dissent*: ר"א adds the אשם to the list, as it comes to expiate like a חטאת
  - II 'ב: additional formulae
    - a יוסי בן חוני: if any other offering is brought לשם חטאת or לשם פסח – invalid
    - b שמעון אחי עזריה: if any קרבן is brought for a higher status (e.g. קדק"ד mis-directed as קדק"ל) – valid
      - i but: any offering brought for a lower status (e.g. קדק"ל for קדק"ד) – invalid
  - III ר'בא's successful night of “conflict resolution” (part 1)
    - a default of קדשים is לשמה (w/o errant thought – כשר); default of גט is לא לשמה (w/o correct intent)
      - i *Source for קדשים*: cannot be our משנה, as parallel language is used in re: גט (גא: ג)
        - 1 *Proposal*: א:ד → לשמן and then סתם is כשר
          - (a) *Rejection*: perhaps there the reason is עושה הוא ראשונה
        - 2 *Proposal*: א:ד → סתם and לשמן is כשר
          - (a) *Rejection*: perhaps there the reason is הוכיח סופו על תחילתו
        - 3 *Rather*: ו:ו – the six intents necessary, and ב"ד ordained that to avoid problems, כהן should say nothing
          - (a) *Explanation*: only if סתם is valid would ב"ד forbid saying aloud
      - ii *Source for גיטין*: cannot be גא:ג, each clause has local reason (not written for גט, written for this man/woman, ברירה)
        - 1 *Rather*: ר'בא's dictum that הרי את מותרת... cannot be written in advance → must be לשמה
    - b *Resolution*:
      - i *סתם::לשמן*: the unspecified purpose of the קרבן is שחיטה → *סתם::לשמן*
      - ii *סתם::לא לשמן*: the unspecified goal of the relationship with the woman is *not* divorce → *סתם::לא לשמן*