

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayikro

Rabbi Pinches Friedman

Parshas Vayikro 5771

Translation by Dr. Baruch Fox

The Incredible Connection between an Animal Sacrifice and the Berocheh: "שעשה לי כל צרכי" Concerning Shoes

In this week's parsha, parshas Vayikro, we read: "ויקרא אל משה וידבר ה' אליו מאהל מועד לאמר, דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם, אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה' מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו יחטא ועל הבהמה יקצוף, כי הנפש החוטאת ראוי שהיא תמות, ותהי נא יד ה' באדם אשר חטא לו, ולא יחטא ולא יחליפנו ולא ימיר אותה בהמה באדם, כי אלה הצאן מה עשו"—He called to Moshe, and Hashem spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying: **Speak to Bnei Yisroel and say to them: When a person from among you will bring an offering to Hashem--from the animals, from the cattle and from the flocks you shall bring your offering.**

The early and later commentators have already expended much effort trying to explain the matter of animal sacrifices to Hashem. In the words of the holy Alshich: "כי הלא כמו זר נחשב, שאיש אחד יחטא ועל הבהמה יקצוף, כי הנפש החוטאת ראוי שהיא תמות, ותהי נא יד ה' באדם אשר חטא לו, ולא יחטא ולא יחליפנו ולא ימיר אותה בהמה באדם, כי אלה הצאן מה עשו"—it is strange that a man sins and the consequences are visited upon the animal; the one that sins deserves to die; Hashem should punish the sinner; an animal should not be substituted for a man; after all, what did these sheep do?

The Arizal in Likutei Torah V'Taamei HaMitzvot (Vayikra) provides us with an explanation. The purpose of the sacrifice is to sort out and rectify the four basic elements that exist in creation--inanimate objects, plant life, animals and man (the one who speaks). These four categories correspond to the four letters of the holy name "Havaya"; this is alluded to by the possuk's phraseology: "קרבן לה"—**an offering to Hashem**. By means of this offering, the four letters of the holy name are united and brought together—representing the four categories of inanimate objects, plant life, animals and man (the one who speaks). Here is part of the Arizal's explanation:

"והנה כנגדם ברא הקב"ה, דומם, צומח, חי, מדבר, נשמה. והנה מכל אלו הד' מינים יש בירורים ותיקונים לעלות, וכל אלו הדברים היו נתקנים על ידי הקרבן, כי המלח הוא הדומם, והיה ניתקן על ידי חלקי הדומם, וסוד יין ושמן מתקן חלקי הצומח, ובעל חי כמשמעו, והוידוי שאדם מתודה על הקרבן נגד מדבר, וכוונת כהן בעת הקרבה נגד נשמה פנימית... וזה סוד קרבן להויה שמקרב ד' כוחות הויה".

The Arizal actually adds a fifth category, the "neshomeh," represented by the tip of the letter "yod." All of these elements are rectified and elevated by means of the offering. The salt represents the inanimate; the wine and oil are brought to rectify the plant life; the animal itself obviously represents the category of animal and nonhuman living creatures; the confession that accompanies the offering is designed to rectify "the one who speaks"; and, lastly, the kohen's intent while performing the sacrifice corresponds to the inner neshomeh. This is the deeper significance of the "קרבן לה"—**an offering to Hashem** which unites and brings the forces of "Havaya" closer together.

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayikro

“שעשה לי כל צרכי” The Morning Beroche of

Let us begin by examining the blessing we recite to HKB”H every morning: **ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו**—**Blessed art Thou Hashem our Lord, King of the Universe, Who hath provided me with all of my needs.** Our blessed sages instituted this blessing with regards to wearing shoes on our feet. As expressed by the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 46,1): **כשנועל מנעליו יברך**—**שעשה לי כל צרכי**”
”**כי סיים מסאניה** (Berachos 60:): **לימא ברוך שעשה לי כל צרכי**”
When he dons his shoes, he should say: Blessed. . . Who has provided me with my every need.

At first glance, this is quite surprising. It is true that our blessed sages extol the virtue of wearing shoes. The Gemorah (Shabbos 129.) states: **“לעולם ימכור אדם קורות ביתו ויקח מנעליים לרגליו”**—**One should always sell even the beams of his house to buy shoes for his feet.** In addition, we have learned (Pesachim 113:): **“שבעה מנודין לשמים”**—**There are seven that are excommunicated vis-à-vis Heaven;** among the list is: **“המונע מנעלים מרגליו”**—**one who withholds shoes from his feet.** Nevertheless, wearing shoes is only one of many routine functions that a person performs during the course of a day. Why then did our sages institute the recitation of: **“שעשה לי כל צרכי”**—**Who has provided me with my every need**—with regards to wearing shoes? How does the action of wearing shoes constitute a fulfillment of all of one’s needs?

A Lesson the Shlah HaKadosh Learned from His great Rabbi the Maharshal

A deep and amazing insight concerning this Beroche, **“שעשה לי כל צרכי”**—**Who has provided me with my every need**, can be found in the siddur of the Shlah, quoting his teacher and Rav, the incomparable Maharshal. It is our sacred duty to publicize his holy words throughout the congregations of Yisroel:

“וצריך לתת טוב טעם ודעת השייכות לנעילת מנעליים ברכה זו. וקיבלתי ממורי הגאון החסיד מהרש”ל, שהענין הוא כפי מה שאמר דוד המלך ע”ה במעלת האדם (תהלים ח ו) ותחסרהו מעט מאלקים וגו’, תמשילהו במעשי ידיך כל שתה תחת רגליו צונה ואלפים’ וגו’. הכוונה כי הקב”ה ברא ד’ מדרגות בעולם הזה זו למעלה מזו, א’ הדומם, ב’ הצומח עולה עליו ויונק ממנו, ג’ בעלי חיים עולים על הצומח ואוכלים אותו, ד’ חי מדבר, הוא האדם המושל בבעלי חיים ואוכלם ומשתמש בהם ועולה.

וזהו שאמר, כל שתה תחת רגליו צונה ואלפים, רצונו לומר מאחר שמושל בבעלי חיים צונה ואלפים, מכל שכן שמושל בצומח ודומם שתחתיהם, נמצא שהכל תחת רגלי האדם, וכשלוקח האדם העור מהבהמה לעשות מנעליים למדרך כף רגליו, מראה ביותר שהוא המושל, והכל תחת רגליו ממש, ומצד הממשלה הזאת נמצא מבואר שנעשה לו כל הצרכים, שהרי מושל הוא בכל מה שיש בעולם, על כן כשנעל מנעליו מברך שעשה לי כל צרכי.”

He begins by quoting Dovid HaMelech’s, a”h, description of man’s distinguished status in this world (Tehillim 8,6): **“ותחסרהו מעט מאלקים וגו’, תמשילהו במעשי ידיך כל שתה תחת רגליו צונה ואלפים”**—**Yet You have made him only a little less than the angels . . . You have given him dominion over the works of Your hand, You placed everything under his feet. Sheep and cattle,**

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayikro

everything . . . He explains that these verses refer to the four categories or levels that exist within creation and their order.

First, there is the inanimate segment; the second level consists of plant and vegetative life which derives its nourishment from the first level; the third level consists of the creatures in the animal kingdom—who consume the plant life. The fourth level is occupied by man, a living creature with the faculty of speech; he reigns over the animals and other creatures, eats them, uses them and transcends them all. This is the meaning of the possuk: **“כל שתה תחת רגליו”**—**You placed everything under his feet**. Since man has dominion over the animal kingdom, it is clear that he rules over the plant life and inanimate objects, as well. Consequently, everything is under his feet. Furthermore, when he makes footwear out of an animal’s hide, he exhibits even more so that he reigns supreme in this world, and everything is truly under his feet. Having this dominion, all his needs and wants are readily available to him. Therefore, when he dons his shoes, he recites the Beroche **“שעשה לי כל צרכי”**.

Elevating All Four Categories to Hashem Is the Purpose of Creation

Let us now attempt to achieve a deeper understanding of the Maharshal’s insight. As our early sources point out, all that HKB”H created in this world falls into one of four categories: **דומם, צומח, חי, מדבר**—inanimate objects, plant life, animal life and mankind. The “inanimate” category, **“דומם”**, consists of all objects that are stationary and cannot change locations on their own—such as earth, rocks, water and salt. The “plant life” category, **“צומח”**, includes everything that has the ability to grow and thrive—such as trees, grass, plants and vegetation.

The “animal” category, **“חי”**, includes living creatures that possess the ability to move from place to place. The highest category, man, **“מדבר”**, corresponds to human beings—to whom HKB”H gave the power of speech. As the possuk states (Bereishis 2,7): **“וּפָח בְּאַפֵּי נְשַׁמַּת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה—**and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life; and man became a living being. The Targum comments: **“וְהוּוּת בְּאָדָם לְרוּחַ מִמְּלֵלָא”**—the power of speech comes from the living soul that HKB”H, so to speak, blew into man’s body.

We have learned in the Mishnah (Avos 6,11): **“כֹּל מַה שֶּׁבְּרָא הַקָּב“ה בְּעוֹלָמוֹ לֹא בְּרָא אֶלָּא לְכַבוֹדוֹ, וְכֹל מַה שֶּׁבְּרָא הַקָּב“ה בְּעוֹלָמוֹ לֹא בְּרָא אֶלָּא לְכַבוֹדוֹ, וְכֹל מַה שֶּׁבְּרָא הַקָּב“ה בְּעוֹלָמוֹ לֹא בְּרָא אֶלָּא לְכַבוֹדוֹ, וְכֹל מַה שֶּׁבְּרָא הַקָּב“ה בְּעוֹלָמוֹ לֹא בְּרָא אֶלָּא לְכַבוֹדוֹ.”** **Whatever HKB”H created in His world, He created solely for His own glory, as it is said (Yeshayah 43,7): “All that is called by My Name and that I have created for My glory, I have formed, even made.”** The Mishnah states clearly that the purpose of creation is that all of its constituents sanctify the Name of Heaven. As per our discussion, this requires that all four categories that make up creation sanctify the Name of Heaven. This is alluded to by the Mishnah as follows: **“כֹּל הַנִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁמִי—**all that is called by My Name—is a reference to man, who was created in the image of G-d; **“וּלְכַבוֹדִי—**and that I have created for my own glory—so that he will elevate the “animal” category; **“וְיִצְרֵתִי—**I have formed—to elevate the “plant” category; **“אֶף עֲשִׂיתִי—**even made—to elevate even the elements in the “inanimate” category.

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayikro

The matter of elevating all four of these categories to HKB”H is explained by the Arizal in Shaar HaMitzvot (Ekev). We find that HKB”H created the world in such a manner that each category derives its nourishment and life-force from the category below it. The plants and vegetation receive nourishment from the soil of the earth; the animals feed off of the plants and their essence becomes inseparable from that of the animals.

Alas, man, possessing the power of speech, comes along representing the pinnacle of creation. He slaughters the kosher animal according to Torah guidelines, and consumes its meat after reciting a Beroche; thus, he incorporates the essence and life-force of the animal which already contains that of the plant life and inanimate elements. As a result, when he learns Torah and serves Hashem, he is able to do so because of the strength and nourishment that he has received from the three lower categories that make up creation—the inanimate elements, the plant life and the animal life. By this process, all of the holy sparks contained in creation are rectified and elevated.

With this understanding of creation, the Arizal addresses the Gemorah (Pesachim 49:): **”תניא רבי אומר, עם הארץ אסור לאכול בשר, שנאמר זאת תורת הבהמה והעוף, כל העוסק בתורה מותר לאכול בשר—It was taught in a Baraisa: Rebbi says: it is forbidden for an “am haaretz” to eat meat. For it is stated: “This is the Torah pertaining to the animal and the bird.” Whoever is occupied with the study of Torah is permitted to eat the meat of an animal or bird, but whoever is not occupied with the study of Torah is forbidden to eat the meat of an animal or bird.**

Only a Torah scholar is permitted to eat meat, because he rectifies and elevates the holy sparks contained in the meat to please Hashem. An “am haaretz,” on the other hand, who does not engage in Torah study—but rather occupies his time with the nonsensical pursuits of this world—is prohibited from consuming meat. Rather than elevate the sparks of kedushah contained in the food, he drags them down to a level of spiritual desolation.

This provides us with a greater appreciation of the Maharshal’s explanation of the formula of the Beroche recited upon donning one’s shoes: **”שעשה לי כל צרכי”—Who has provided my every need.** By using leather obtained from an animal’s hide to make shoes—upon which we walk—we demonstrate that HKB”H has given man dominion over all of creation. This act reflects the message conveyed by the possuk (Tehillim 8,7): **”תמשילוהו במעשי ידיך כל שתה תחת רגליו, צונה ואלפים כולם וגם בהמות שדי”—You gave him dominion over the works of Your hand, You placed everything under his feet--sheep and cattle, everything, even the beasts of the open field.**

Certainly, if man rules over the members of the animal kingdom, he also rules over the elements of creation that are in the plant life and inanimate object categories; for they are inferior to the animals and as explained become part of the animal’s makeup. All the more so that it was fitting to institute the Beroche of **”שעשה לי כל צרכי”** over the wearing of shoes made from leather that comes from an animal. By wearing these leather articles that we walk on, we demonstrate, as just explained, that HKB”H has given man dominion over all of creation.

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayikro

Man's Dominion Requires that He Elevate Himself above the Animals

Continuing along this path, let us examine the practical implications of the Maharshal's incredible insight. Seemingly, there is room to wonder why our blessed sages chose to express man's dominion over creation specifically by means of his wearing of shoes, reflecting the idea of **כל שמה** "תחת רגליו" -- **You placed everything under his feet**. Man uses animals in many ways, especially by eating their meat; this, too, clearly demonstrates man's position of superiority over the animals.

Let us present a noble idea concerning this matter. Indeed, every Jew is obligated to sanctify and elevate all elements of creation to Hashem. He does so by serving Hashem with the strength and nourishment he has received from the inanimate, plant and animal categories. Nevertheless, we have been taught a basic principle. Man is incapable of elevating material matters to Hashem unless he demonstrates by his actions and behavior that he is superior to an animal.

The Toldos Yaakov Yosef (beginning of Behaaloscha) brings home this point by means of a parable cited in the name of the Baal Shem Tov. If someone wishes to save his friend who is drowning in the ocean, he must first be sure that he is stronger than the person who is drowning. Otherwise, rather than pulling his friend out of the water, his friend is likely to drown them both. The moral of the parable is clear. If a person himself behaves like an animal, how can he possibly elevate the sparks contained in that animal? Rather than elevating those sparks, he will actually drag them down to spiritual desolation. It is for this reason that an "am haaretz" is prohibited from eating meat.

We see that the mere fact that man consumes the flesh of an animal or uses animals to work his fields does not necessarily indicate that he is spiritually superior to the animals or that he is able to elevate their sparks closer to Hashem. If one does not act or behave in a manner that is superior to that of an animal, if one chases after the meaningless pursuits of this world, one will be unable to elevate the elements of creation.

Therefore, it is specifically by wearing shoes made of leather from an animal's hide that demonstrates one's desire to be superior to an animal. By treading with both feet on footwear made from animal leather, man reveals his yearning to elevate himself spiritually and to trounce his animalistic tendencies—as stated in the possuk (Devarim 33,29): **"ואתה על במותימו תדרוך"**—**but you will trample their haughty ones**—you will conduct yourself in a morally superior manner. By means of this revelation, he merits to reign over them and to elevate them spiritually to Hashem—by utilizing them to serve only Hashem and to fulfill Hashem's wishes.

It is for this reason that our blessed sages instituted this Beroche with regards to wearing shoes: **"שעשה לי כל צרכי"**—**Who provided me with every need**. This formula teaches us that HKB"H only gave man dominion over the other parts of creation--the inanimate, the plants and the animals--on the condition that he elevate himself above them and trample on them and the lower spiritual and moral values that they represent. Thus, he will fulfill the condition described in the possuk: **כל שמה תחת רגליו**-- **You placed everything under his feet**; in this manner, he will be able to utilize them in the Name of Heaven and to elevate them to Hashem.

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayikro

Chanoch Used to Stitch Shoes

Utilizing this concept, I would like to propose an interpretation of a statement found in the Yalkut Reuveni (Bereishis 764) citing the Asarah Maamarot written by the divine kabbalist, the Rama of Pano: “מטטרון היה תופר מנעלים, ועל כל תפירה מכויין ואמר ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד” — **Matatron used to stitch shoes and with each stitch he would concentrate and say: Blessed is His Name, Whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever.** Let us examine why he occupied himself specifically with stitching shoes and why he focused on the phrase “ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו” with each and every stitch.

It appears that Chanoch intended to connect and unite all of creation—consisting of the four categories דומם צומח חי ומדבר—with Hashem. As explained above, this connection is accomplished by means of wearing shoes. When man—who possesses the power of speech—treads on the leather footwear made from an animal’s hide, he fulfills the words: “כל שמה תחת רגליו” — **You placed everything under his feet.**

With this act he alludes to the fact that he wishes to elevate himself spiritually above the level of an animal, and to utilize the resources he has obtained from the animals—including the inanimate and plant elements that they have incorporated—solely for the purpose of serving Hashem. Hence, Chanoch made every effort within his power to publicize to the world the important custom instituted by our sages—to wear shoes. Additionally, he strove to stitch them himself and proclaimed with proper intent with each and every stitch: “ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד” — **Blessed is His Name, Whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever.**

In other words, his intention was to pray that whoever wore those particular shoes would merit to extend the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven to the entire world—by having the desire to elevate the inanimate elements and plant elements, contained within the animal material strapped on his feet, to Hashem.

Wearing Shoes Creates a Barrier between Man and the Cursed Ground

Now, let us consider a novel interpretation as to why our blessed sages instituted this Beroche-- “שעשה לי כל צרכי” —to be recited when putting on shoes. This interpretation is presented by the great author of the Bnei Yissaschar in his Agra D’Pirka (304), based on the lessons of the Maharam Chagiz, brought in the name of the kabbalists. The reason one must wear shoes on one’s feet is to create a barrier between oneself and the earth, which was cursed due to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. Here are his holy words:

“הרב מהר”מ חאגיז בספרו משנת חכמים מביא בשם חכמי הרמז, דענין לבישת המנעלים הוא כדי שלא יגע בשרו על האדמה, כי בחטאו של האדם נתקללה, על כן עושין הפסק בין הרגל לאדמה. וכתב דבעבור זה במקום אדמת קודש שיצאה האדמה מכלל ארור לכלל ברוך, יש לילך יחף, וזהו (שמות ג ה) של נעליך מעל רגליך כי המקום אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת קודש הוא.”

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayikro

He adds that in instances where the ground has been sanctified, and is no longer cursed, one is to go barefoot. An example of such an instance is seen by the burning bush, where HKB”H tells Moshe (Shemos 3,5) to remove his shoes, because he is standing on holy ground.

Next, he applies this concept to explain the intent of the Beroche “שעשה לי כל צרכי”. Since shoes constitute a barrier between oneself and the cursed ground, one is effectively able to negate all of the curses and merit all of the berachos by wearing shoes; after all, all of the curses in this world came about as a result of that sin that caused the earth to be cursed. What more could one possibly want or need than to merit blessings and to be free of curses?! This surely warrants a blessing to Hashem. The Agra D’Pirka expresses this idea as follows:

“ובזה מצאנו טוב טעם למה שאמרו רבותינו ז”ל (שבת קכט.) [לעולם] ימכור אדם כל מה שיש לו ויקח מנעליים לרגליו, דכיון שההפסק הוא בכדי להפסיק בין הקללה, על כן ימכור כל מה שיש לו ויקח מנעליים להפסיק, וזה שמברכין על מנעליים שעשה לי כל צרכי, כי זהו כל צרכי לחפוץ בברכה ולהפסיק הקללה.”

In the sefer Ruach Chaim written by the great Rabbi Chaim Plagi (O.C. 554,2), he also cites this reason, in the name of the kabbalists, as the rationale for wearing shoes. He adds, however, a nice allusion in the name of his son, the great Rabbi Avraham Plagi. He points out that the word נע”ל—meaning shoe—is an abbreviation for נ’חש ע’פר ל’חמו—conveying that dust is the snake’s bread or sustenance. So, shoes separate us from the ground which is the snake’s sustenance.

Clearly, besides the mere physical act of wearing shoes, some deeper thought process and intent are also required in order to establish this barrier between man and the cursed ground.

“He Will Pound Your Head and You Will Bite His Heel”

To explain the matter further, let us return to the text following Adam and Chava’s transgression—eating from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge—where HKB”H curses the serpent (Bereishis 3,14): “ויאמר ה’ אלקים אל הנחש כי עשית זאת ארור אתה מכל הבהמה ומכל חית השדה, על גחונך תלך ועפר תאכל כל ימי חיך, ואיבה אשית בינך ובין האשה ובין זרעך ובין זרעה, הוא ישופך ראש ואתה תשופנו עקב”—**And Hashem G-d said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, accursed are you beyond all the cattle and beyond all beasts of the field; upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will pound your head, and you will bite his heel.”** The commentators have expended much effort to explain the issue of: **and dust shall you eat all the days of your life.**

Let us propose a worthwhile explanation founded on the well-known fact that the primeval serpent is actually the evil inclination—the yetzer hora—that persuaded Adam and Chava and all of the neshamos contained within them to partake of the forbidden fruit. As a consequence of his treachery, HKB”H cursed the serpent: “על גחונך תלך ועפר תאכל כל ימי חיך”-- **upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life.** In reality, the serpent is actually sustained and empowered by man.

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayikro

When man pursues earthly desires and becomes attached to the material dust of the earth, he empowers the serpent and allows the serpent to bite him and trip him up in his evil trap. Therefore, it is crucial that man raise his feet off of the ground; he must elevate himself and transcend all of the earthly matters and temptations. This is one reason why Yaakov lifted his feet as he embarked on his journey to Charan, a place inhabited by wicked people (Bereishis 29,1): **“וַיִּשָׂא יַעֲקֹב רַגְלָיו וַיֵּלֶךְ”**—**So Yaakov lifted his feet, and went toward the land of the easterners.**

This message is inherent in HKB”H’s words to the serpent: **“הוּא יִשׁוּפֵךְ רֹאשׁ”**—**he will pound your head.** When man elevates his feet above the dust of the earth, in an effort to separate himself and transcend his earthly desires, he will have the power to crush the head of the serpent with the force of his foot—in that situation the serpent will be powerless against him. If, however, man remains connected to his earthly cravings and remains in contact with the dust and the ground, then **“וַיִּאָתֶה”**—**and you will bite his heel.** If man is incapable of elevating his feet off of the dust of the earth, in this event, the serpent will surely win out. Seeing as the dust is his sustenance and his domain, he will strike man a harmful blow and trap him in his earthly net.

The reason for wearing shoes, according to the kabbalists, is now apparent. By performing this simple mundane act, wearing shoes made out of leather from an animal’s hide, man expresses: (1) that he has risen above the level of an animal and is, in fact, superior to the animals, in keeping with the verse: **“כָּל שֵׁתָה תַחַת רַגְלָיו”**-- **You placed everything under his feet** and (2) that he is using the shoes to separate himself from the dust of the earth, the serpent’s sustenance and domain, since he yearns to rise above all of the earthly and material concerns.

So, when man dons shoes with this noble intent, the shoes certainly serve their vital function—creating an effective barrier between man and the cursed earth, domain of the serpent. Thus, the words of the possuk are fulfilled: **“הוּא יִשׁוּפֵךְ רֹאשׁ”**—**he will pound your head.** After all, it is Hashem’s will that man succeed in elevating his feet and creating a separation from the dust of the earth—symbolizing his earthly concerns and desires. If successful, man will crush the head of the serpent—his age-old nemesis, the yetzer hora.

“The Beams of His House” as Opposed to “Shoes for His Feet”

Let us return, now, for a more careful inspection of the language employed by the Gemorah: **“לֵעוֹלָם”**—**One should always sell even the beams of his house to buy shoes for his feet.** When a person is enclosed within the confines of his house, he is protected from snakes and scorpions crawling around outside. In a spiritual sense, as well, when he is inside his house, he is protected from the negative influences that surround him in the outside material world.

Nevertheless, the true purpose of creation is that man should leave his house, involve himself with the outside world and, despite the risks and negative influences, still succeed in elevating himself above the material, earthly concerns. This is expressed in Tehillim (104,23) as follows: **“יֵצֵא אָדָם”**—**Man goes forth to his work, and to his labor until evening.**

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Vayikro

Therefore, man is obligated to sell everything in order to purchase shoes for his feet. In this manner, he indicates his desire to create a barrier between himself and the dust of the earth; additionally, he demonstrates that by treading on the leather hide of an animal, he is fulfilling the words of the possuk: "כל שתה תחת רגליו"-- **You placed everything under his feet.**

This explains our sages precise choice of words: "לעולם ימכור אדם קורות ביתו"-- **One should always sell even the beams of his house**—in that protected environment, one is fairly safe from snakes and scorpions; nonetheless, "ויקח מנעלים לרגליו"—one should procure shoes for his feet, thereby insuring his safety and protection even while engaged in material, earthly matters of the outside world.

By now, we should have also achieved a better understanding of the Arizal's explanation concerning animal sacrifices. HKB"H commanded us to bring an animal as an offering, in order to elevate all four categories of creation—the inanimate, the plant life, the animal life and mankind (the one with the power of speech)—to Hashem. This teaches us the important lesson that man was created for this purpose—to elevate and sanctify everything in creation, all four categories, to Hashem.

How beautifully this explains the mitzvah of "smichah" described in our parsha (Vayikra 1,4): "וסמך" "ידו על ראש העולה ונרצה לו לכפר עליו"—**He shall lean his hands on the head of the olah-offering, and it will be considered pleasing on his behalf, to atone for him.** This is the procedure by which the sinner confesses that he did not behave any better than an animal nor did he properly live up to the dictum of: "כל שתה תחת רגליו"-- **You placed everything under his feet.** With this in mind, he must lean forcefully with his hands on the animal's head as a symbolic gesture that he must strive to be superior to an animal, so that his actions will be pleasing to Hashem and that this offering will serve as atonement for his actions.