

# דברי מנחם

*Diarei Menachem*

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Many are the reasons given for the animal offerings that are a focus of the book of Vayikra. Foremost, based on the root meaning of the word for sacrifice, **KORBAN**, the essential idea is that the individual who brings the offering should come closer to Hashem. Notably, only the term for G-d, "Hashem" - that represents G-d's merciful aspect - is associated with these offerings. The implication is that on account of their sins, the supplicants are aware that they could have been the slaughtered animals, but now they gratefully turn to Hashem in recognition of His compassion.

Rambam views the Korbanot as a divine concession to man's intrinsic need to engage in idol worship, what Rabbi U. Uziel described as "man's primitive, dark tendency to engage in pagan rituals". Ramban, in contradistinction, notes that the Olah sacrifice, which was burnt entirely, was specifically an "appeasing fragrance to G-d", indicating that Hashem takes pleasure, as it were, from the fact that a Jew acts according to His will (after Rashi).

The complete burning of the Olah sacrifice means that there was no gain to the one who brought the sacrifice or to the receiving Kohen. Yes, this was a form of self-sacrifice, in this case, of one's personal assets: The individual has dedicated himself to Hashem and has minimized his personal desires. Self-sacrifice, notes R. Uziel, can thus manifest itself in "Avoda Zara", that in its widest sense is base self-gratification, or in subsuming our materialistic urges to the higher ethical, spiritual plane in the service of G-d. The choice is ours.

