

Shelach Lecha 5786

Sforno on Numbers 15:3

Until the advent of the sin of the golden calf, the expression **ריח ניחוח** had not surfaced as no libations plus gift offerings had been needed in order to make the offerings truly pleasing in the eyes of the Lord. This is why we do not find such an expression in connection with the offering of Hevel (Genesis 4,4, of Noach Genesis 8,21, and of Avraham in Genesis 12,7) Neither do we find it in Exodus 24,5 where the burnt offerings and meat offerings offered by the firstborns (before they had been exchanged for the tribe of Levi) were described. As of the sin of the golden calf gift offerings and libations were required to make public offerings pleasing to the Lord, i.e. **לריח ניחוח**. After the sin of the spies even offerings by private individuals had to be accompanied by such libations and gift offerings, **מנחה ונסכים**, in order to qualify for the expression **ריח ניחוח** as proving that the offering had pleased the Lord.

Sforno on Numbers 15:20

After the sin of the spies also the tithe (heaving) known as challah became a necessity in order for the individual homes of the Israelites to enjoy G'd's blessing. The prophet Ezekiel spells this out (Ezekiel 44,30) when speaking about the temple etc. in the future, when he writes: **עריסותיכם** ביתך, **תתנו לכהן להניח ברכה אל ביתך**, "you are to give from your kneading bowl to the priest so that a blessing will rest on your house." This practice had already been displayed when Elijah, assisting the impoverished widow, commanded her to first give to him a small cake of the little flour she had left, as G'd had said that in such a case the jar of flour in her house would not become empty during the remainder of the famine.

Sforno on Numbers 15:22

This verse has already been explained by Sifri as speaking of inadvertent commission of the sin of idolatry. Seeing that eventual exile had already been decreed for the descendants of this generation, it would be practically impossible for the exiled Jews not to become guilty of such acts in their host countries from time to time even if they did not intend thereby to violate Torah laws. They would become guilty of such acts even after their return to their homeland, having acquired idolatrous habits while under duress in exile.

Our sages (in Sifri 111) have stated flatly that anyone acknowledging that any idolatrous cult is of substance, is useful, is considered as having denied the validity of the entire Torah.

Bavli Shabbat 31a

The Gemara continues discussing the conduct of the Sages, citing that **Reish Lakish said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “And the faith of your times shall be a strength of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge, the fear of the Lord is his treasure” (Isaiah 33:6)? Faith; that is the order of *Zera'im*, Seeds, in the Mishna, because a person has faith in God and plants his seeds (Jerusalem Talmud). Your times; that is the order of *Moed*, Festival, which deals with the various occasions and Festivals that occur throughout the year. Strength; that is the order of *Nashim*, Women. Salvations; that is the order of *Nezikin*, Damages, as one who is being pursued is rescued from the hands of his pursuer. Wisdom; that is the order of *Kodashim*, Consecrated Items. And knowledge; that is the order of *Teharot*, Purity, which is particularly difficult to master. And even if a person studies and masters all of these, “the fear of the Lord is his treasure,” it is preeminent.**