Parashat Vayikra: Finding Our Anchors

Mishkan Minyan

3 Nisan 5780 // March 28, 2020

1. **From Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman**

   The phenomenon we were studying is so common and so important in the everyday world that you should know its name: it is an anchoring effect. It occurs when people consider a particular value for an unknown quantity before estimating that quantity. What happens is one of the most reliable and robust results of experimental psychology: the estimates stay close to the number that people considered—hence the image of an anchor. If you are asked whether Gandhi was more than 114 years old when he died you will end up with a much higher estimate of his age at death than you would if the anchoring question referred to death at 35. If you consider how much you should pay for a house, you will be influenced by the asking price. The same house will appear more valuable if its listing price is high than if it is low, even if you are determined to resist the influence of this number; and so on—the list of anchoring effects is endless. Any number that you are asked to consider as a possible solution to an estimation problem will induce an anchoring effect.

2. **Leviticus 4:1-3**

   The ETERNAL spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people thus: **When a person unwittingly incurs guilt in regard to any of the ETERNAL’s commandments** about things not to be done, and does one of them— If it is the anointed priest who has incurred guilt, so that blame falls upon the people, he shall offer for the sin of which he is guilty a bull of the herd without blemish as a sin offering to the ETERNAL.

3. **Leviticus 4:13-14**

   "If the anointed high priest has incurred guilt by transgressing any of the ETERNAL’s commandments..."
If it is the whole community of Israel that has erred and the matter escapes the notice of the congregation, so that they do any of the things which by the ETERNAL’s commandments ought not to be done...

4. **Leviticus 4:22-23**
In case it is a chieftain who incurs guilt by doing unwittingly any of the things which by the commandment of the ETERNAL his God ought not to be done...

5. **Leviticus 4:27-28**
If any person from among the populace unwittingly incurs guilt by doing any of the things which by the ETERNAL's commandments ought not to be done...

6. **Judges 20:15-16**
On that day the Benjaminites mustered from the towns 26,000 fighting men, mustered apart from the inhabitants of Gibeah; 700 picked men 16of all this force—700 picked men—were left-handed. Every one of them could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

7. **I Samuel 20:20**
Now I will shoot three arrows to one side of it, as though I were shooting at a mark,

8. **Ramban on Leviticus 4:2:**
"Should a soul sin inadvertently ..."
Why "soul"? Because one's thinking capacity, which is capable of inadvertence, is seated in the soul.

Why are sacrifices brought on behalf of the inadvertently sinful soul? Because all sins tarnish the soul.

9. **From Ahavah Rabbah**
Siddur Ashkenaz, Weekday, Shacharit, Blessings of the Shema, Second Blessing before Shema 1
And enlighten our eyes in Your Torah, and make our heart cling to Your commandments, and unite our hearts to love and fear Your name; and may we never be embarrassed ever. Since we have trusted in Your great and awesome holy Name, let us rejoice and be gladdened by Your salvation.