

KORBAN TODAH

by Rabbi Daniel Travis

Four individuals are obligated to thank Hashem through a Korban Todah (thanksgiving offering). These are people who recovered from illness; were freed from jail; crossed the sea; or crossed the desert. This sacrifice is marked nowadays in the verses of the Korbanos section, in Psalm 100 (Mizmor l'sodah - A Psalm of Thanksgiving), which is recited as part of Pesukei D'zimra, and in the eighteenth blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei (Modim).

The offering of a Korban Todah was a sublimely joyous experience. One way that this simcha was expressed was that the Korban Todah was accompanied by nesachim, a wine libation which was poured onto the altar. Based on this service, some include the verses describing the nesachim as part of Korbanos (Mishna Berura 1,14).

Another expression of this joy is found in the way we recite Psalm 100, Mizmor l'sodah. "Mizmor l'sodah should be sung with a tune for [when the final redemption comes] all of the [current] songs and praises will no longer be said, with the exception of Mizmor l'sodah" (Shulchan Aruch 51,9). Even if a person does not sing these words, he should be careful to recite Mizmor l'sodah with special joyfulness (Chaye Adam 18,1).

A final joyous aspect of the Korban Todah was that it consisted of forty loaves of bread, of which thirty-six were eaten as part of a festive meal after the offering of the Korban. Since ten of these loaves were chametz, and chametz is prohibited from the middle of the day before Pesach, the Korban Todah was generally not brought on that day. As a result, Ashkenazim do not recite Mizmor l'sodah on the morning before and during Pesach and on erev Yom Kippur (Rema 51,9), though many Sephardim do.

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