

DIFFERENT GENERATIONS / DIFFERENT CHALLENGES

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Parshas Tzav

Different Generations / Different Challenges

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Weekly Portion Torah Tapes: Tape # 543, Birchas Hagomel, Airplane Travel & Other Issues. Good Shabbos!

The first Rashi in this week's parsha quotes (in the name of the Toras Kohanim) a teaching to the effect that the word "Tzav" [command] indicates "ziruz" (encouraging in the strongest possible terms) for the immediate moment and for future generations. Rashi further quotes the Tanna Rav Shimon who teaches that in situations which involve a loss of money, the Torah must especially urge people to act.

However, the question can be asked, what kind of loss of money (chisaron kis) was involved from Aharon's perspective here? It was, after all, Aharon who was given this Command, and the Mitzvah in question did not cost him a dime. People would come to the Beis HaMikdash and bring their Olah offerings to him. That did not cost him anything!

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky presents an interesting idea. Aharon was a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace. He had a special relationship with the Nation of Israel that even surpassed that of his brother, Moshe Rabbeinu. The level of mourning present when Aharon died involved *"the entire house of Israel"* [Bamidbar 20:29]. He had no peer in the nation in terms of his endearment to the people.

Rav Yaakov suggests that because of the great empathy Aharon had for the masses of the Jewish people, it was personally troublesome for him to see the Jews spend money for their olah offerings (which, after all, completely "went up in smoke"). This is particularly true because of the institution of the "olahs ketz haMizbeach." This was a special fund to guarantee that sacrifices would always be burning on the altar throughout the day (even when there were no obligatory or other voluntary personal offerings being brought). Aharon's relationship with the people was such that he felt bad for their expenses (chisaron kis).

Rav Shimon Schwab had a different approach. He connects the beginning and the end of Rashi on this pasuk [Vayikra 6:2]. After linking the word "tzav" with encouragement (zirus), Rashi commented that this command was "now and for future generations (m'yad u'l'doros). Only then does Rashi introduce the idea that it is most necessary to emphasize encouragement (ziruz) when expenditure (chisaron kis) is involved.

Rav Schwab points out that every generation has different problems and challenges. Each period is tested with their own particular set of trials and temptations. In the period of the First Beis HaMikdash [Temple], the problem was not that the people were skimpy. The problem was that they brought their sacrifices by rote.

Bringing a korban is supposed to represent a watershed event in a person's life. He is supposed to imagine his own blood being splattered on the altar and his own flesh burning thereon. It was supposed to be an awe-inspiring event. What happened, unfortunately, with the passage of time is that people came to the Beis HaMikdash, they bought their korban, gave it to the Kohen, and told him to offer it. It became just another thing to do. Their spending money on the sacrifices degenerated into an empty gesture. As the prophet writes [Yeshaya 1:11] *"Why do I need your numerous sacrifices? Says Hashem, I am sated with elevation offerings of rams and the fat of fatlings; the blood of bulls, sheep and goats, I do not desire."* The offerings were offered in such a non-spiritual way that G-d complained He did not want such offerings.

They were expensive offerings, not at all stingy -- the fat of fatlings - but the L-rd rejected them. Hashem much prefers that we bring less expensive sacrifices but put our hearts into them rather than bringing big fancy sacrifices as meaningless gestures. This was the mindset during the First Beis HaMikdash.

In the Second Beis HaMikdash, ironically, the reverse was the case. As we see from the Prophet Malachi, the problem was that the people brought inferior animals to the Beis HaMikdash. The attitude was, as we hear from so many people today, "the main idea is to be a Jew at heart". People claimed that it did not make any difference to Hashem if the animal cost more or cost less. "Who cares? As long as I have a Jewish heart! A Korban is a Korban."

The prophet finally needed to chastise them: *"You present on My Altar loathsome food, and you say, 'How have we loathed You?' By your saying, 'The table of Hashem is repulsive.' When you present a blind animal for sacrifice is nothing wrong? And when you present a lame or sick animal is nothing wrong? Present it, if you please to your governor: Would he be pleased with you or show you favor? Said Hashem, Master of Legions."* [Malachi 1:7-8]

This attitude as well was incorrect. Both factors are necessary. One needs the intent (kavanah) but one also needs objective action (l'maaseh) - one also needs to meticulously follow the rules of what a korban is supposed to look like.

This is what Rashi means that the word "tzav" indicates encouragement immediately and for future

generations. There would come a time in Jewish history when people would become lax about the quality of their sacrifices because it was something that affected their pocketbook. That is why the pasuk said "tzav" -- strongly encourage them. It is going to cost them money, but such is the price of being a Jew.

Why Can The Todah Offering Only Be Eaten For One Day?

Later on in the parsha, we learn the details of the various sacrifices. One of the offerings is the Korban Todah (Thanksgiving offering): *"This is the law of the sacrifice of the peace-offering that one will offer to Hashem: If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving-offering, with the sacrifice of the thanksgiving-offering shall he offer unleavened loaves, mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of scalded fine flour mixed with oil... And the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace-offering must be eaten on the day of its offering..."* [Vayikra 7:11-15].

When a person was sick, captured, or in mortal danger and was healed or rescued from this danger, he needed to bring a "Thanksgiving-offering." The Thanksgiving-offering contained 40 loaves - the "lachmei Todah". The Thanksgiving-offering is a form of Peace Offering (Korban Shlamim). However, it deviates from the normal protocol of a Peace Offering in a significant way. A standard Korban Shlamim may be eaten over a 2 day span (including the intervening night). The Thanksgiving-offering is an exception to this rule. It must be entirely consumed the day that it is offered.

This could be very difficult. If a person brought the sacrifice late in the day, he might have only a few hours or theoretically only a few minutes to consume the entire offering, and all the accompanying loaves! Why is this so?

The Netziv gives a beautiful answer. When a person is confronted with a large quantity of food that has to be consumed in a short amount of time, there is only one way to handle the situation -- he must throw a party! He needs to invite his brother and his brother-in-law and his neighbor and his neighbor's neighbor together to help him eat all the food.

Thanksgiving, he explains, requires publicity. With a Todah offering, the more the merrier. Despite the fact that the over-riding rule in Judaism is *"walking humbly with the L-rd your G-d"* [Micha 6:8] -- doing Mitzvos privately and without fanfare -- regarding thanksgiving, one should invite as many people as available to partake of the offering.

The Torah therefore built into the halacha of Korban Todah this concept that it must be shared with others. Using this idea, the Netziv gives a beautiful insight to a pasuk in Hallel: *"To you I will offer a Todah sacrifice and I will call out in the Name of the L-rd. My vow to Hashem I will pay up opposite the entire congregation. In the Courtyard of the House of G-d, in the midst of Jerusalem"* [Tehillim 116:17-19]. The vow (the Korban Todah) I have to pay up, but it will be in the presence of everyone! It is offered privately in the Courtyard of the House of G-d, but it is also eaten in the midst of Jerusalem so that everyone should know of my thanksgiving expression to the Almighty.

The Netziv points out elsewhere that there is another Shelamim offering that is only eaten for one night (rather than the normal 2 day and one night time period). That is the Korban Pesach (Paschal lamb). Here too we have emphasis on inviting people and registering them to join with us in our Paschal offering. The Korban Pesach is also a Thanksgiving offering of sorts. We publicly thank the Almighty for taking us out of Egypt. We do not allow "leftovers" such that people are eating lamb sandwiches for days after the 14th of Nissan. No. We want it all finished that night. This way people have no choice but to invite over many others to share the lamb together and to spread the word of G-d's kindnesses to us.

The Chidushei HaRim asks the same question as the Netziv: Why is the Korban Todah only eaten for one day? The Chidushei HaRim gives a different answer than the Netziv, but nonetheless a beautiful one.

The Chidushei HaRim explains that a Thanksgiving offering is only eaten for one day because the offering is brought as a result of a miracle done for a person by the Almighty. Yesterday's miracle is yesterday's miracle. Today is a different day and it comes with its own miracles. "And upon your miracles that are with us EVERY day" (From the Modim paragraph in the daily Amidah). We do not want to celebrate yesterday's miracle today when today has new miracles of its own. Therefore, the Korban Todah representing today's miracle, must be finished today.

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