

# AHARON WAS HESITANT TO SPEND MONEY ON KOBAN OLAH, SO HASHEM CHARGED IT

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

## Parshas Tzav

### Aharon Was Hesitant To Spend Money On Koban Olah, So Hashem Charged It

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Weekly Portion Torah Tapes: Tape # 763, Eating Matzo When Ill. Good Shabbos!*

The parsha begins with the instruction: "Command Aharon (Tzav es Aharon) and his sons saying: This is the law of the olah-offering: It is the olah-offering [that stays] on the flame, on the Altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the Altar shall be kept aflame on it." [Vayikra 6:2] The Olah offering is a sacrifice that was totally burnt. With most sacrifices someone eats something. Most of a peace offering (Korban Shelamim) is eaten by the person who brings the sacrifice; the sin offering is eaten by the Kohanim. However, the Korban Olah is consumed entirely by the fire of the Mizbayach.

Rashi says that the connotation of the word "Command" (Tzav) is "charge" (lashon zeerus). Why was it necessary to "charge" Aharon? He certainly does not need any special kind of motivation lecture? R. Shimeon states that it is necessary for the Torah to emphasize a command through "charging" when monetary loss is involved. [Kiddushin 29a] People do not like to waste money or lose money. When a mitzvah involves cost with no apparent "payback," the Torah finds it necessary to "charge" those commanded to more fully motivate them and help them overcome their hesitancy.

People find it hard to take an animal, which may have cost them a thousand dollars, and merely have it "go up in smoke" without anyone getting any physical benefit from it. Therefore, by the Olah offering, the Torah says "Tzav es Aharon" -- encourage him, give him a Tzav -- because a monetary loss is involved.

Why is that? I saw an interesting observation from Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro. The world says "Time is money" but the way it should really be stated is "Money is time" -- meaning in order to make money, a person needs to spend time on it and time is the most precious commodity in the world. Almost anything else can be replaced, but time can never be replaced.

Our Sages tell us a strange thing: "For righteous people, their money is more precious to them than their bodies". This is counter-intuitive. We would think: Tzadikim? They don't care about their money.

The reason that "for righteous, money is more precious than their bodies" is because Tzadikim realize that in order to gain money, they somehow need to invest time. Therefore their money is precious to them because "my time was invested in acquiring this." This is why "in a place where monetary loss is involved" even people of the highest stature (like Aharon the High Priest) need to be charged and encouraged to nevertheless diligently proceed with the mandated expenditure.

Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro was a disciple of Rav Yitzchak Zeev Soloveitchik (the Brisker Rav) and was himself a Rosh Yeshiva in Israel. He writes as follows:

It is known that the people of America have been blessed with affluence and no doubt G-d rewarded them in this fashion due to the merit of their generosity and the merit of the charities they occupy themselves with. However, I believe, there is also another factor here. I have noticed two significant attributes which certainly also merit the bestowal of riches upon them: First of all, they are diligent in their businesses (zerizusam b'iskeihem). From the time they start their task at work until they finish, they do not allow anything to disturb them. This is different than the workers in our country who take coffee breaks every half hour. Americans appreciate their time and in that merit they have been successful financially.

Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro then mentions the following very interesting incident. The Ponnivitzer Rav and Rav Elchanon Wasserman learned together as study partners (b'chavrusa) in the Kollel in Radin. They wanted to look up something in a certain book quoted by the Chofetz Chaim in his Shaar HaTziyon commentary to Mishneh Berura. The sefer was not available in the Beis HaMidrash so they went to the Chofetz Chaim's house, knocked on his door, and asked "Can we see that sefer you quote in the Shaar HaTziyon?"

The Chofetz Chaim told them he did not have the Sefer. They were surprised inasmuch as he quoted it in his commentary. He told them that when he needed to look up something in a sefer he borrowed it from someone and then returned it. The Chofetz Chaim told them "I did not want to buy the sefer because I only buy sefarim I actually need! If I don't need a sefer I don't buy it."

At that point, the Chofetz Chaim turned to his bookshelf and let out a sigh. They thought he let out the sigh because he had so few volumes in his personal library. He corrected them: "No. What bothers me is that maybe I bought a sefer amongst my collection that I don't use enough and therefore I really shouldn't have purchased it -- I gave out my money for something I didn't really need."

This is a very interesting story and it is contrary to conventional wisdom. Conventional wisdom is that people like to have large libraries. The Chofetz Chaim's opinion was if you do not absolutely need something you do not buy it, because money was very precious to him -- because time was very precious to him. This is in line with the idea that "in a place where there is monetary loss

encouragement and 'Tzav' is necessary.

### **In Lieu Of Korban Todah: A Short Psalm (#100) Or A Long Shmoneh Esrei**

Parshas Tzav also contains the Thanksgiving offering -- the Korban Todah. The Korban Todah was brought when a person emerged from an inherently dangerous situation, such as traveling on the high seas, recovering from a serious illness, or being released from captivity.

A person who brought a Korban Todah had to bring 40 loaves of bread together with it. Furthermore, even though it is a type of Korban Shelamim (which are normally eaten for two days and one night) it could only be eaten for one day and one night. The Netziv notes a peculiarity here: We have a lot to eat (more than a regular Shelamim) and a very minimal time in which to eat it (less than a regular Shelamim). Why is that?

The Netziv answers that this is because a Todah is brought when the Almighty does a miracle for a person. When Hashem does a miracle for someone, that person has an obligation to publicize the miracle. For this reason the Torah specifically requires a large amount of food to be eaten in a short amount of time to force the person to invite people to share the offering with him and thereby share with them news and celebration of the miracle performed for him by the Almighty.

All this is well and good when the Bais Hamikdash was standing and we could offer Thanksgiving sacrifices. But the Almighty does miracles for us today as well. He is Kind to us today as well. How, in the absence of a Bais Hamikdash might we publicize His Kindness to us? What do we do in lieu of a Korban Todah?

The Kav HaYashar suggests that today when we are beneficiaries of Divine intervention in our favor - be it escape from danger, from injury, from illness, and so forth -- then it becomes incumbent upon us to take some positive action or improve our behavior in some recognizable fashion in appreciation of the Almighty's Kindness to us, in lieu of our inability to offer a Korban Todah.

The Shibalei Haleket (Rav Zedekiah ben Abraham Anaw) writes "I was deathly ill. My family members gave up hope for me. I had a vision at that time in which a short man stood before me with a candle in his hand. He started blowing out the candle and then he relit it. I asked him what the meaning of all that was. He told me 'The candle symbolizes your soul. It was time for you to die just like the candle was about to burn out. But just as I relit the candle, so too you will recove in three days and have a new lease on life because G-d recognizes that you still have the ability to help the community'. And so it happened. I recovered and I made special efforts to write a commentary on the Torah in appreciation of having been saved."

The commentary to which he refers is the Shibalei HaLeket, the name by which this 13th century Rabbinic scholar was known for all future generations.

We cannot bring a Korban Todah and we cannot write a Shibalei HaLeket. If something happens to us what should we do? We should at least say the Chapter Mizmor L'Sodah [Tehillim 100] with great

intent and kavanah. This is why our Sages instituted the recital of this Psalm as part of our daily prayer. Every day we have an opportunity to thank the Almighty for the miracles he does for us on a daily basis.

Chazal did us another favor. They provided a prayer which we say even on Shabbos and even on Pessach (unlike Mizmor S'Todah) -- the prayer called "Modim anachnu lach" (we thank You). We say it every single day -- three times a day!

A Yeshiva student once noticed that his Rosh Yeshiva would take a long time to recite Shmoneh Esrei. He wanted to emulate his Rosh Yeshiva so he said every paragraph very slowly, focusing on each word with kavanah. Try as he might, however, he could not make his Shmoneh Esrei as long as his Rosh Yeshiva's Shmoneh Esrei. He went to his mentor and said "Rebbe, what is your secret? How can you say such a long Shmoneh Esrei? What do you think about? I've tried everything and I cannot say such a long prayer!"

The Rebbe told his student "I say Shmoneh Esrei as fast as everyone else; but before I get to Modim, I stop and I think 'What do I have to be thankful for?' I think that I have my health and I have my family. I have my children and I have my grandchildren and I have this and I have that. In my mind, I go through all the things that I am thankful for. That is what takes me so long."

Chag Kasher V'Sameach.

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