



Parshas Tzav Shabbos Hagadol

For the week ending 8 Nissan 5758
3 & 4 April 1998

Overview

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws that relate to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burnt on the altar throughout the night — are to be removed from the area by the *kohen* after he takes off his special linen clothing. The *olah* is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment of the Torah. The *kohen* retains the skin. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly blazing. The *korban mincha* is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a *kohen* eats the remainder before it becomes leaven. The Parsha describes the special *korbanos* offered by the *kohen gadol* each day, and by Aharon's sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration. The *chattas*, the *korban* brought after an accidental transgression, is described, as are the laws of slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the *asham guilt-korban*. The details of *shlamim*, various peace *korbanos*, are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the *todah*, the *thanks-korban*. All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, *korbanos* may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat a *korban* when he is ritually impure. Blood and *cheilev*, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to eat. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every *korban shlamim*. The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the *Mishkan* and all of its vessels is detailed.

Insights

MYSTIC CAMOUFLAGE

"Command Aharon" (6:2)

"Exposed!" "The Real Truth Comes Out!" "Unveiled For The First Time!"

We live in a world where a lack of covering is endemic; a world where everything has to be revealed. Because our society lacks a true spiritual center, the only quality that is prized is revelation. Revelation is all. That which is unseen or *cannot* be seen is distrusted and disregarded.

Holiness is something which has to be covered. Its very nature requires covering. At any time there exist 36 holy people on whose merit the whole world rests. They are hidden. They have to be hidden.

On Sunday, February 19, 1995, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach died in Jerusalem at the age of 84. The next afternoon, 300,000 people — a number roughly equivalent to the adult Jewish population of Jerusalem — escorted him on his final journey.

The Israeli press was caught off-guard. There were no prepared obituaries, for they had never heard of him. He was frail and unimposing even in his youth. He sat on no council of sages. He created no publishing empire. He didn't distribute inspirational cassettes. He held no pulpit. For 45 years, he headed a respected Jerusalem yeshiva that provided his only salary. And 300,000 escorted this man, whom the press had never heard of, to his rest.

Holiness requires covering.

Rashi says about the above verse: "*The word 'command' always connotes alacrity and alertness. Rabbi Shimon said the Torah needs to command an extra degree of alertness where there is a lack of covering.*"

When we think of the Temple offerings, it's easy to forget that in the majority of the offerings part of the *korban* was consumed by the *kohen* and the person who brought the *korban*. You might think that this was no more than a side benefit of the offering. In fact, this eating — this most seemingly physical of actions — covered the deepest holiness of the *korban*.

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There was one *korban*, however, in which neither the *kohen* nor the person who brought the offering partook — the *korban olah* or “elevation offering.” The *korban olah* was entirely consumed by fire. No part of it was eaten.

In other words the holiness of *korban olah* was revealed. It did not have the covering, the mystic camouflage, that happened when the *kohen* and the supplicant ate from the *korban*.

It was for this reason that the *korban olah* needed an extra decree of vigilance and alacrity. For that which is revealed needs extra guarding and alertness.

VIRTUAL REALITY

“Command Aharon and his sons, saying: ‘This is the law of the olah.’” (6:2)

Imagine you are walking through a field. Behind you some cows lazily chew grass. Ahead of you is a fence. In the fence is a narrow gate. You saunter towards the gate and without too much attention exit the field. You’re just about to go back and close the metal gate when you see one of the cows that has been following you nuzzle up to the gate.

There is a blinding blue flash. The cow convulses in paroxysms. Thousands of volts course through its body. A few seconds and it is all over. The cow is very quiet and very dead. Nothing can be heard except the birds singing away in blatant disregard to this scene.

What would you feel like? Wouldn’t you think “That could have been me. That *should* have been me?”

The *korban* was the ultimate virtual reality experience.

The whole point of a *korban* was that a person who did a sin should *see* the death of the animal. He should see its lifeblood thrown on the corners of the altar. He should see its limbs being burned and he should think to himself “That should have been me. I am the one that they should really be doing this to.”

Perforce we are sent into this world, and perforce we are taken from it. We do not own our lives. Our lives are always in the Hands of the Maker. When we do evil, we remove our *raison d’être*. It is as though we tear up our contract with G-d. G-d has a deal with each of us: He gives us life and the ability to sustain ourselves. All He asks is that we

Haftorah - Shabbos Hagadol- The Great Shabbos

When the Jewish People were about to leave Egypt, G-d commanded them to take a lamb, which the Egyptians worshipped as a god, and lead it through the streets to their homes.

use the world in the correct manner. When we renege on the deal, we remove ourselves from the world.

However, Hashem in His infinite kindness allows us a way back. Through the process of *teshuvah* we can return to Him as though we had never sinned. The whole point of the *korban* is to awaken in the heart thoughts of regret for evil actions — thoughts of returning to Hashem.

It was the ultimate in virtual reality.

Your life on the line.

WARNING: HEART - DO NOT EXTINGUISH!

A continual fire shall be kept burning on it; it must not be extinguished.” (6:6)

The Torah prohibits extinguishing the fire of the altar. On the contrary, the fire must be attended, wood and kindling added as necessary, so that flame ascends constantly.

If it is forbidden to put out even a single coal on the altar, ***how much more is it forbidden to put out even a single burning ember on the spiritual altar, the Jewish heart.***

The yearning for holiness, the flame in the heart which aspires longingly upward, homeward, must rather be constantly added to; aided and strengthened through reason, wisdom and discernment — with the illumination of mitzvos and the light of the Torah.

THANKS!

“If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving offering..” (7:12)

No-one can say thanks for you, except you.

One of the offerings mentioned in this week’s Parsha is the *korban todah* — the sacrifice that people brought when they wanted to thank Hashem.

The Sages tell us that in the future, when all the other *korbanos* cease, the *korban todah* will still continue because there’s always need to say “thank you.”

In the repetition of the *amidah*, the standing prayer, only the *shaliach tzibbur* — the one leading the service — repeats the prayers. The congregation responds, but they do not repeat the blessings.

With one exception. The blessing of *modim* — “thanks.”

For all blessings in the *amidah* we can send a *shaliach*, a messenger. When we pray to Hashem to heal us, we can send a messenger. When we ask for sustenance, we can send a messenger.

But there is one thing no one else can say for us: “Thank You.” Thank you is something you have to say yourself.

Parshas Tzav

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and it was eaten at the first *seder* on the very night that the Jewish People left Egypt.

On Shabbat, the tenth of Nissan, the Egyptians saw the Jews leading lambs through the street and asked "What is this lamb for?" The Jews replied "We're going to slaughter it as a Pesach offering, as G-d has commanded us." You can imagine how the Egyptians felt — seeing their god led through the street and then tied to a bedpost! Miraculously, however, they were prevented from harming the Jewish People. They ground their teeth in fury, but did not utter a murmur.

We commemorate this miracle on the Shabbat immediately preceding Pesach on *Shabbos Hagadol* — "the Great Shabbos."

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT "THE GREAT SHABBOS?"

The Shabbos before Pesach is called "The Great Shabbos" because of the miracle which happened on the 10th of Nissan (see above).

But what was it about this miracle that we connect it to Shabbos. We commemorate Shavuot on whichever day of the week the 6th of Sivan occurs. Similarly, Chanukah always starts on the 25th of Kislev, whichever day of the week that happens to be.

What was it about this miracle that we link it to Shabbos rather than its actual calendar date?

It is known that during Shabbos, all the plagues of Egypt were temporarily suspended: The bloody rivers changed back to water; the frogs stopped swarming. In honor of the greatness of Shabbos, even the plagues "took a rest."

The tenth of Nissan, when the Jews led the lambs through the streets of Egypt, occurred during the plague of darkness. If this event had taken place on a weekday, ***the Egyptians would not have been able to see the what the Jews were doing and there would have been no miracle***, for the entire land was engulfed in darkness.

Now we can understand why we celebrate this miracle on the Shabbos before Pesach and not on the 10th of Nissan. For without Shabbos there would have been no miracle. That's why it's the "Great Shabbos."

Sources: *Ba'al HaTurim* - Parshas Vaera, *Devash L'pi*

Sources:

Mystic Camouflage - Chiddushei HaRim

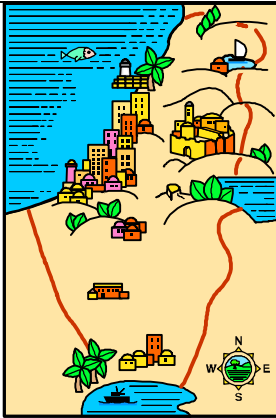
Virtual Reality - Ramban

Thanks! - Midrash, Avudraham, Rabbi Yissochar Frand

Warning: Heart - Do Not Extinguish! - Oros HaKodesh Zevachim 91

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael



WHERE WISDOM IS WIDESPREAD

"Ten measures of wisdom descended to the world. *Eretz Yisrael* took nine of them, and one (was taken by) the entire world." (*Kiddushin 49b*)

Wisdom is defined by Rashi as pertaining to both Torah and worldly matters.

Nowhere else do we find Rashi incorporating worldly matters into the definition of the word "wisdom" used by the Talmudic Sages.

The ten measures of wisdom, explains Iyuan Yaakov, descended to the world at the time of creation, as indicated by the number ten which corresponds to the ten Divine statements which brought about creation. At the time of creation, the Torah had not yet been given to man. The wisdom which descended from the Creator to man could therefore not refer to Torah alone, but also to worldly matters such as business and vocations. These matters are a necessary complement to Torah study, since one who studies Torah also needs a source of livelihood.

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