



Parshas Tzav

For the week ending 10 Nissan 5759
26 -27 March 1999

Overview

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating 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 ablaze. 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 chatas, 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 shelamim, 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 chelev, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every korban shelamim. The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the Mishkan and all of its vessels is detailed.

Insights

INTERLACED

"And raise up the ash..." (6:3)

At first sight, some things in Judaism look pretty weird. I remember someone who wasn't religious discovering the halacha that you have to tie your left shoe before your right. He said to me "I really can't believe that G-d cares which shoe I tie first."

I could have explained to him that we tie the left shoelace first as a gesture of respect to the leather strap of the tefillin which is worn on the left arm. However, I realized that what was bothering him was something more fundamental.

Those of us born in the West grew up in a world where religion is a weekend activity. The main role of the clergy is, at best, to "hatch, match, and dispatch." Religion is compartmentalized, and so is G-d. To the Western mind, if there be a G-d, He is limited to guest appearances on weekends. Any further intrusion into our lives is considered extremely irksome.

In 1898, Lord Melbourne remarked on hearing an evangelical sermon: "Things have come to a pretty pass when religion is allowed to invade the sphere of private life."

To the Jew, however, Judaism is not a leisure activity. It is not an aspect of life. It is life.

The Jew sees every activity as an opportunity to come closer to G-d. What we eat. What we think. What we say. What we do. What we don't do. Nothing in this world is devoid of the potential for spirituality. Nothing is neutral.

If the purpose of creation is for us to recognize G-d, then everything must have been created to that end. The alternative would be that there are vast areas of this world which have no part in G-d's purpose, and that would be accusing the Master of the world of extreme sloppiness.

In the above verse, the Hebrew word for ash is *deshen*. *Deshen* can be read as an acronym for *davar*

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shelo nechshav — “something without importance.” When the Torah says, “and raise up the ash,” it is telling us to take everything, even those things that seem to us like ash, insignificant and valueless, and place them next to the altar. To raise up the little thought of parts of our lives and to use them to serve G-d. For there is nothing in this world which cannot be used to serve Him. Even the humblest shoelace.

SCALING PEAKS

“He shall separate the ash of what the fire consumed...and place it next to the altar” (6:3)

If you'd spent many years learning to play the piano, you'd be pretty disappointed if you woke up one morning and found it a struggle to play *Chopsticks*. If you'd made a million dollars and put it in the bank, you'd be pretty upset if the next day it had vanished into thin air.

Physical achievements tend not to vanish overnight. However, when it comes to our spiritual achievements, every day we start from scratch. We can't assume that yesterday's spiritual triumphs will protect us from today's challenges. Every day there is another spiritual Everest to climb.

Sounds like hard work, doesn't it? It is.

But there is one consolation. Even though we face anew our spiritual challenges every day, we are not the same person we were yesterday. Through rising to yesterday's spiritual challenges, we have become a different being. And we go out to scale those spiritual peaks, not as who we were yesterday morning, but as a new person.

We can see this idea in the beginning of this week's Parsha: Every day the *kohen* would remove the ash of the daily offering and place it at the base of the altar. Miraculously, the ash would be swallowed by the ground around the base of the altar. Thus, the daily offering was a different offering every day, but its ashes, the evidence of yesterday's service, became part and parcel of the altar on which that service was performed.

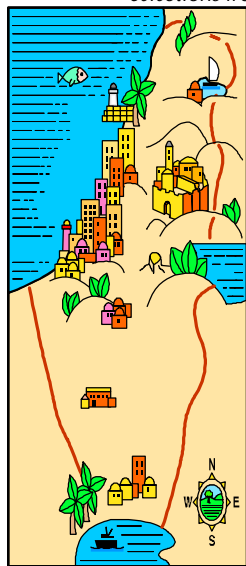
Sources:

Interlaced - Admor Rabbi Tzvi HaKohen MiRimanov in *Iturei Torah*

Scaling Peaks - Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, Rabbi Mordechai Perlmán

LOVE OF THE LAND

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



Gilgal - The First Korban Pesach In The Land We Love

Although you will find nothing on the map or in geography books about this place, it was the most important site in the first years of the Nation of Israel in *Eretz Yisrael*. Here is where the Israelites under Yehoshua camped after their miraculous crossing of the Jordan River, and here is where they placed the twelve large stones which they had removed from the river bed to serve as a remembrance for generations of that miracle. (*Yehoshua 4:20-24*)

The name Gilgal comes from the Hebrew word for “removing.” Gilgal became the name for this site because here is where Yehoshua carried out a mass circumcision for all those who had been born during the 40 years in the wilderness, whose climate made such an operation too dangerous to life. “Today I have removed from you the shame of Egypt,” said Hashem, “and the place shall be called Gilgal.” (*Yehoshua 5:9*)

This removal of the foreskin which distinguished them from their former masters made the entire nation eligible to offer a *korban Pesach*, the first one in forty years.

The *Mishkan* (Sanctuary) which the Israelites had carried with them throughout their wandering in the wilderness stood in Gilgal for 14 years, until the land was conquered and divided amongst the tribes, after which it was transferred to Shiloh.