

The Narrow Bridge

גשר צר מאוד

PARSHA PERSPECTIVES

Short Divrei Torah on Parshas Tzav

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לע"נ פעסל בת ישראל מנחם / לזכות חילינו

SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

"Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the olah-offering..." (6:2)

Mashal: Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. The first man's bed was near a window, and he took advantage of this by describing the sights he saw to the man in the other bed. The second man enjoyed these descriptions enormously. It was the only time his world became enlivened by the activity and color of the world outside.

He was told that the window overlooked a park with a lovely lake, where ducks swam merrily, and children played nearby. Majestic trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and contentedly imagine the picturesque scene.

Weeks passed in this way. Then, one day, the man by the window passed away. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. His request was granted, and he excitedly looked out the window, expecting to see the scenes he had heard so much about, but had never seen for himself.

To his shock, however, he immediately saw that the window faced a blank wall. Bewildered, he asked the nurse for an explanation for his friend's vivid descriptions.

"The man who used to be by the window?" the nurse asked. "Why, he was blind; he couldn't even see the wall at all!"

Nimshal: Rashi explains that the word "Tzav" (command) denotes encouragement. Every Jew is responsible for his fellow Jew, which includes making him feel important, seeing to his welfare, and encouraging him to be a better person. If we make an effort to assist our brothers and sisters and ensure that they are happy, both physically and spiritually, this alone will give us encouragement in our own lives and responsibilities.

QUIET ENTHUSIASM

Rabbi Moshe Schochet

"Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the olah-offering. It is the olah-offering [that remains] on the flame..." (6:2)

If you were to look into a Sefer Torah, you would notice that the letter *mem* in *mokdah* - "on the flame," is written smaller than the rest of the letters. What is the Torah teaching us through the use of the smaller *mem*?

Rav Alexander Zusha Friedman (Ma'ayana Shel Torah) quotes the Kotzker Rebbe who explains that the Torah is teaching us a very important lesson regarding how to approach life and *avodas Hashem*. The letter *mem* in *mokdah* - "on the flame," is written small to convey to us that when we are on fire in our relationship with Hashem, we do not need to be flamboyant and public about it. When we are passionate and laser-focused on our learning of Torah, davening, and acts of *chesed*, the whole world does not need to be made aware of it. Like the letter *mem*, we can be enthusiastic, energetic and "on fire" in a humble and quiet manner that only Hashem can notice.

[Reb Alexander Zusia Friedman notes that the word "*Bo*" (the Hebrew for "there") may also be rendered as "within" a person or thing. Hence, this specification may be construed to mean that "the fire of the altar shall be kept burning within him"; i.e., the zeal of sacrifice is to be kept burning within the *kohen* (Aharon and each of his descendants) to whom the commandment was addressed.]

In life, we often feel the need to ensure that other people will see and know what we are doing. We desire to be recognized for our altruistic accomplishments and endeavors. The Kotzker Rebbe is teaching us that when it comes to our *avodas Hashem*, we are encouraged to stay out of the limelight. Our motivations should be pure and devoid of ulterior motives, not focused on achieving public accolades. Instead, we should be focused solely on doing the will of our Creator. In doing so, we will surely be recognized by the One Who really counts.

TESTS OF FAITH

Sefas Emes

"Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the olah-offering..." (6:2)

The expression "command" always implies urging one to carry out a command, meaning, the command takes effect at once and, in addition, is binding on future generations. Rabbi Shimon said: "The Torah must particularly urge the fulfillment of a command in cases involving financial loss." (Rashi)

"The Torah must particularly urge the fulfillment of a command in cases involving financial loss." This admonition refers especially to the Exile's worst days, when Jews were denied almost all opportunities to earn a living and hardly had a penny. Such times constituted the most critical test of Jewish loyalty to the Torah, for the struggle for bare existence made it difficult to observe the laws of Judaism. For this reason, we must expend every effort to muster sufficient strength to pass the test.

SPIRITUAL SACRIFICE

Baal Shem Tov

"Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the olah-offering..." (6:2)

Our Sages state that "whoever occupies himself with the study of *Olah* [the laws of the burnt-offering] is considered as having offered an actual *Olah*."

How can mere study equal an actual event?

When we read the words of Torah regarding the *Olah* with passionate feelings of love and awe of G-d, we breathe new spiritual vitality into the Torah's words. This does not remain as mere spoken words, because in the spiritual realms, the vitality caused by our emotions produces an effect equivalent to an actual offering in the Holy Temple. In the spiritual realms, we have indeed offered an *Olah*.

(All the same, such an achievement does not replace a tangible offering, because a physical sacrifice introduces new spiritual vitality even to this physical world of action.)

LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"It is the olah-offering [that remains] on the flame, on the Mizbeach, all night until the morning, and the fire of the Mizbeach shall be kept aflame on it." (6:2)

The Altar fire that was kept burning throughout the night was kindled during the day.

The Altar alludes to the Jewish heart. Even when we find ourselves in situations of spiritual darkness, we must keep the Divine fire of enthusiasm for G-d, His Torah, and His commandments, always burning in our hearts. (See Ohr HaTorah, Vayikra, vol. 1, p. 13) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

"Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the olah-offering..." (6:2)

Rashi points out that Aharon was "commanded" to offer the *Olah* and not simply "told" to offer it because he needed additional encouragement to perform this *mitzvah* with the same zeal and passion as he did with the other offerings. This is because by spending time offering the *Olah*, the *Kohanim* stood to lose potential earnings because they were not compensated for their sacrificial service and would therefore not be earning any income that they could have made during this time. Therefore Hashem "commanded" Aharon and his sons as a way of urging them to fulfill this *mitzvah* with excitement despite the financial loss they would likely incur. (The Taz points out that this was especially relevant regarding the *Olah* offering which only provided the *Kohanim* with the animal's hides as a means of recompense, unlike other offerings where they also received the animal's meat - which somewhat offset their financial loss.)

It is astonishing to think that Aharon would need this encouragement. Not only was the *Kohen Gadol* fabulously wealthy (Yoma 18a) - certainly not needing the additional money that he could have earned instead of serving in the *Beis HaMikdash* - but we are talking about one of the most righteous people that ever lived who surely took every opportunity to serve Hashem with fervor and joy. If so, why would Aharon need any additional incentive to perform this *mitzvah* with alacrity?

We see from here, writes Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, that our desire for personal gain is so strong that even Aharon - the greatest of the greats - would not have necessarily escaped from possessing a tiny degree of hesitation when accepting the task of offering the *Olah*. Therefore, how important is it for us, concludes Rav Yechezkel, to learn mussar so that we can be constantly aware of any weaknesses we may possess and protect ourselves accordingly?!

Rav Yisrael Salanter was someone who certainly understood this message. Once, when he was in a room where charity money was being counted, the person counting the money had to rush out for a moment and planned to leave Rav Yisrael in the room momentarily. Rav Yisrael, however, jumped up from his seat, refusing to be alone for a second with uncounted money. Hearing the story, many are surprised that the great Rav Yisrael Salanter doubted his own self-control not to steal from charity. However, just as we have stated above, without a doubt Rav Yisrael knew that he would never steal a penny. However, he was concerned that a fleeting consideration of doing something like that might briefly cross his mind, and Rav Yisrael did not even want to entertain such a thought even though he knew that it would never lead to anything. As a pillar of *mussar*, Rav Yisrael understood the potential danger he faced and took quick steps - literally - to avoid any unnecessary challenge.

HUMBLE GREATNESS

Reb Avraham Chaim of Zlotchov

“Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the olah-offering. It is the olah-offering [that remains] on the flame...” (6:2)

The Gemara states that the words “this,” “the” and “that” are qualifications. The Hebrew term for “qualifications” is synonymous with “narrowing” or “lowering.”

Olah, the Hebrew for burnt-offering, carries the connotation of ascent. The higher the moral level to which one rises, the humbler one must become.

For this reason, the Torah specifies that in reciting the *Shemoneh Esrei* one need bow only twice, once when uttering the first *berachah* and again when ending with “We thank You...” A *Kohen Gadol*, however, had to bow after each of the *berachos*, and the king had to bow at the beginning and remain in a bowed position throughout the entire prayer.

The greater the person the more powerful their effort must be in their striving to remain humble before G-d.

TORAH OFFERING

Chacham Yehudah Elbaz of Morocco

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

The midrash states that when *Bnei Yisrael* heard the *parshah* dealing with the *korbanos* they became very frightened. They feared the time when there would be no *Beis HaMikdash*. How would their sins be forgiven? Moshe reassured them, “Involve yourselves in Torah and you will not be afraid.”

Torah study atones like *korbanos*, as Chazal (Menachos 110) tell us that one who involves himself in Torah study does not need an *Olah*, *Minchah*, or *Chatas*. That is what is meant by the *pasuk*, “This is the Torah for the *Olah*.” When one learns Torah, it is like he brought a *Korban Olah*.

KEEPING IT FRESH

Reb Alexander Zusia Friedman

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

The expression “command” denotes encouragement in reference to the present and future generations. (Rashi)

Since the commandment is binding on all future generations, its observance must be encouraged so that it shouldn’t grow stale but will always be performed with zeal and vigor. Hence, we say in our prayers: “Fortunate are we and how goodly is our portion.” And we say in *Shabbos Mussaf*, “twice each day, with affection, we say *Shema*.”

Therefore, “Fortunate are we and how goodly is our portion” because even though we recite *Shema* twice each day, we do so each time with affection, with ever-new delight, for it never grows stale but renews itself through the ages.

According to the Sages (Kiddushin 31), “one who receives a commandment and performs it is better than one who received no commandment and performs it,” for it is more challenging to obey a commandment than to do something out of one’s own free will, without having received an explicit command. Hence, the observance of a commandment must be given considerable encouragement.

SHOWING PROPER RESPECT

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

“The kohen shall dress in his linen garment and he shall wear linen pants on his skin, and he shall separate the ashes...” (6:3)

Hashem commanded that the *bigdei kehunah* - priestly vestments be worn when the service of *terumas ha’deshen* (removing the ashes from the Altar) was performed.

This *mitzvah*, although necessary and important, is considered a relatively low form of service, yet the *kohen* is commanded to fulfill this *mitzvah* wearing his holy and special garments. Why was it necessary for him to dress up for this *mitzvah*?

The Chacham, R’ Yitzchak Magriso of Constantinople zt”l, explains that this teaches us an important lesson. One must always be careful of Hashem’s honor when performing any service for His sake, no matter how big or small. The *kohen* therefore dressed in his priestly clothes as a way of showing respect for even the lowest of services.

AN OTHERS MINDSET

Reb Simchah Bunim of Pshischa

“The kohen shall dress in his linen garment and he shall wear linen pants on his skin, and he shall separate the ashes...” (6:3)

The Torah commanded the *Kohen Gadol* that when he entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, he should change his clothing and remove the ashes.

He changes his clothing so that at that moment of intense holiness, when the holiest Jew on the holiest day enters the holiest place, he should not forget the basic and seemingly mundane situations, such as asking for sustenance for his people.

Therefore, he was commanded to change to weekday clothing and begin to consider the weekday necessities of his people.

SANCTIFIED ACTIONS

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

"He shall remove his garments and he shall wear the garments, and he shall remove the ashes to the outside of the camp, to a pure place." (6:4)

An aspiring young Torah scholar came to the holy Steipler Gaon, R' Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski zt'l, with a problem. The young man felt that his particular predicament was impeding his spiritual growth and surely a man like the Steipler, who persevered in his Torah studies in the face of life-threatening problems when he was a young man back in Russia, could relate to his.

The young man had written the situation out on a piece of paper in extreme detail for the Steipler to grasp its severity.

"Every Friday," he wrote, "I come home from *yeshivah*, and the scene in my house leads me to despair. The table is not set, the kitchen is hardly clean, and the children are not bathed! What should I do? How can I concentrate on my studies when I have to deal with such problems?"

The Steipler looked up from the paper and peered into the face of the young man. Then he spoke in his heavy Russian-accented Yiddish.

"In Parshas Tzav, Rabbeinu Yonah asks why the Torah juxtaposes the *mitzvah* of the *terumas ha'deshen* (daily sweeping and cleaning of the ashes from the Altar), with that of the *Korban Olah*. The two seem to have little in common. He explains, however, that a person must realize that sometimes what is considered menial work in human eyes merits the highest accord in Hashem's eyes. The *mitzvah* of sweeping the Altar is prefaced with the word '*tzav*' - a Divine command, for the seemingly insignificant acts that a person is compelled to do in his daily life also yield great sanctity. In the quest for spirituality, one must never demean the simple chores."

The Steipler's expression grew stern. "Do you really want to know what to do?" he asked, and the young man nodded eagerly. Said the Steipler, "My son, grab a broom and help out!"

HOLY ASHES

Izhbitzer Rebbe

"...and [he shall] remove the ashes to the outside of the camp, to a clean place." (6:4)

Just as ashes can catch fire again, so can utter corruption, devoid of any spark of the Divine and hence "outside the camp," change for the better.

Since G-d "endeavors not to put aside an outcast," we shouldn't discard the ashes of corruption - the Jew who has left the camp and has strayed from the correct path - but put them away in a clean place. Perhaps they will return to the pure path, perhaps they will glow again.

PROPER PREPARATIONS

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"He shall remove his garments and he shall wear the garments, and he shall remove the ashes to the outside of the camp, to a pure place." (6:4)

Removing the innermost ashes was an integral part of the daily Tabernacle ritual, whereas removing the accumulated ashes was done solely to make it possible to offer up more sacrifices. Nonetheless, both deeds had to be performed by the same *kohen*. This teaches us that preparing to fulfill a Divine commandment - in this case, clearing ashes in order to offer up additional sacrifices - is a bona fide part of our spiritual life, no less than fulfilling the commandment itself.

In our desire to connect to G-d through performing His commandments, we may consider fulfilling the commandments much more important than preparing for them. From G-d's perspective, however, both the commandment and its prerequisite preparation are expressions of His will. Therefore, when we are focused on G-d's will (as opposed to our own spiritual advancement), we can prepare for the commandment with the same joy and enthusiasm that we experience while performing it. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 37, pp. 5-6) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

SACRIFICING FOR OTHERS

Rabbi Jeremy Finn

"The fire on the Mizbeach shall remain aflame on it, it shall not be extinguished; and the Kohen shall kindle wood upon it every morning; he shall arrange the olah-offering on it and shall cause the fats of the peace-offerings to go up in smoke up it." (6:5)

The Gemara (Pesachim 55b) states that the first sacrifice brought in the morning was the *tamid shel shachar*.

The last sacrifice offered at the end of the day was the *tamid shel bein ha'arbayim*.

Nothing could be brought before the *tamid shel shachar*, and nothing could be sacrificed after the *tamid shel bein ha'arbayim*.

Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Raines writes that we should notice that the first and last sacrifices offered in the *Beis HaMikdash* were communal *korbanos tzibbur*. Between them, people brought their individual offerings and discharged their private duties, *korbanos yachid*.

The message is that while we may be busy during most of the day earning *our* income, working at *our* work, performing *our* private *mitzvos*, and concentrating on *ourselves*, all our activities need to be framed in the broader context of benefiting others.

We need to start and end the day with a sacrifice that is for others as well. (Parpera'os LaTorah, p. 32)

FANNING THE FLAME

Chasam Sofer

"The fire on the Mizbeach shall remain aflame on it, it shall not be extinguished; and the Kohen shall kindle wood upon it every morning; he shall arrange the olah-offering on it and shall cause the fats of the peace-offerings to go up in smoke up it. A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Mizbeach; you shall not extinguish it." (6:5-6)

In every Jew a spark of Divine fire flickers and will never be extinguished. But our leaders, *kohanim*, prophets and scholars must feed this little spark with fiery oratory, and stir it up anew each morning. This is true with regard to our duties toward our Maker, as symbolized by the *olah* (the burnt-offering that is burned up entirely and rises directly to Heaven), as well as our duties to other people, as symbolized by the *shelomim* (the peace-offerings).

If *kohanim* do this and kindle the sparks of the Divine in our hearts they may be sure that G-d's fire will burn continually upon Judaism's altar and never go out.

WEATHERING THE STORM

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

"The fire on the Mizbeach shall remain aflame on it, it shall not be extinguished; and the Kohen shall kindle wood upon it every morning; he shall arrange the olah-offering on it and shall cause the fats of the peace-offerings to go up in smoke up it. A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Mizbeach; you shall not extinguish it." (6:5-6)

The Torah here commands ensuring that the fire on the *Mizbeach* continually burns, without ever being extinguished. In fact, as Rashi (6:6) writes, one who extinguishes the fire on the *Mizbeach* is liable for transgressing two Torah prohibitions, as the command לא תכבה is written twice. Moreover, the *kohanim* were required to place firewood on the *Mizbeach* each morning to guarantee the undisrupted presence of fire on the *Mizbeach*.

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (5:5) lists ten miracles which occurred in the *Beis HaMikdash*, including לא יבו גשמים - the rain never extinguished the fire on the *Mizbeach*. The *Mizbeach* was situated outdoors, in the courtyard of the *Beis HaMikdash*, and was thus exposed to the elements. Miraculously, the fire on the *Mizbeach* continued burning even during the winter rains that fell in Yerushalayim. In order to ensure that there would be an אש תמיד, a consistent presence of fire on the *Mizbeach*, Hashem performed a miracle each time rain fell, maintaining the fire.

Rav Yisroel Meir Druck, in Lahavos Eish, raises the question of why Hashem chose to perform this miracle, rather than simply arranging that rain would never fall directly over the *Mizbeach*. What might be the significance of this miracle - having rain fall on the altar without extinguishing the fire?

Rav Druck explains that this miracle conveys a vitally important lesson relevant to the "fire" of passion and enthusiasm that is to consistently "burn" in our hearts, at all times.

Hashem did not stop the rain from falling over the *Mizbeach* in order to show us that we can never expect to avoid the "rain" that threatens to "extinguish" our "fire." Our "fire" of passion is "rained on" very often. Sometimes it will be a cynical, sarcastic person who ridicules our idealism, or who introduces doubt and uncertainty into our minds. Sometimes it will be a challenging circumstance that deflates us and leads us to negativity and despair. Sometimes it will be disappointment and setbacks as we try to grow and improve. Sometimes it will be practical obstacles that get in the way of our progress or achievement.

So many things can threaten to "put out the fire," to eliminate our zeal and our enthusiasm.

Every time we feel like we're running into a wall, that our efforts to achieve are not succeeding, we need to remember the miracle of the fire on the *Mizbeach*. We need to resolve not to allow the "rain" to "extinguish" the fire, and to retain our commitment and our passion despite the challenges that we confront.

Just as G-d made the fire in the *Beis HaMikdash* strong enough to withstand even the most torrential rainstorm, so must our religious devotion be strong enough to withstand the many different challenges that we will invariably face.

KEEP THE FIRE ALIVE

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Mizbeach; you shall not extinguish it." (6:6)

We may sometimes feel so distant from the Torah's expectations of us or encumbered by negative spiritual baggage that it is hard for us to imagine how we could even begin to live in accordance with our ideals. In times of such pessimism, this verse empowers us to keep our Divine fire burning even when we feel unqualified or otherwise unable to enter realms of holiness.

By keeping our enthusiasm fired even in such times, the Divine flame within us will eventually burn away all impediments to joyful, holy living. As the Maggid of Mezeritch interpreted this verse, "If the [inner] fire [of the heart] is kept burning continuously, it will extinguish all negativity." (HaYom Yom, 20-21 Adar II)

But the fire can only be effective if it is kept burning continuously; any lapse in enthusiasm is an opportunity for pessimism to creep in. An intermittent fire or the memory of recent flames is therefore not enough; we must become adept at keeping our inner fires burning no matter how our moods may vary. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 1, p. 217) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

TRAVELING FIRE

HaDerash VeHalyun

"A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Mizbeach; you shall not extinguish it." (6:6)

It shall not go out, even when it travels (Talmud Yerushalmi, Yoma 4:6). As long as people remain at home and continue their everyday life among their relatives and friends, it isn't easy for them to stray into sin. The discipline of daily living - coupled with the ever-watchful eyes of those around them - will keep people from improper conduct.

But when people travel far from home, the situation is entirely different. They meet many strangers; there is no one in whose presence they may feel constrained to be circumspect, and many situations can arise to test them. At such times it is more likely that they will go astray.

We are therefore told by the Psalmist: "Happy is everyone who fears G-d, who walks in his ways" (Tehillim 128:1). If "his" is taken to refer not to "G-d" but to "everyone," the meaning of the *pasuk* is "Happy is he who remains G-d-fearing (even) when he walks on his ways," i.e., when one is on a journey far from home. The true test of one's fear of G-d is whether one remains steadfast in observance even when removed from one's usual environment.

This is the message the Torah and Talmud both seek to convey in the text quoted above: "A fire shall be kept burning upon the altar continually" - the fire of the love and fear of G-d must be kept burning at all times upon the altar of the human heart, and "it shall not go out, even when it travels" - that Divine spark must not be permitted to go out even when one is far from home.

CONSTANTLY GIFTED

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld

"A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Mizbeach; you shall not extinguish it." (6:6)

The verse says, *אש תמיד תוקד על המזבח לא תכבה* - "A constant fire shall burn upon the altar; it shall not be extinguished" (6:6). The Sefer HaChinuch offers a fascinating explanation for this *mitzvah* which illustrates the degree to which Hashem's presence is hidden in this world. The Chinuch explains that many of the greatest miracles in history were always concealed, almost appearing to be a manifestation of nature. For example, if we look at one of the greatest miracles which ever occurred, *Krias Yam Suf*, we find that the Torah tells us that moments before Hashem miraculously split the Sea there was a powerful wind that blew (Shemos 14:21). This was done in order to give people the opportunity to say that the splitting of the Sea was perhaps the result of a tornado.

Similarly, in this week's *Parshah*, despite the fact that the fire descended from *shamayim* onto the *mizbeach*, we are nevertheless commanded to light a constant fire on the *mizbeach*, almost as if to disguise the open miracle.

Nevertheless, it is our job to try as much as we can to see beyond that. Part of our work is to realize that there is a grand Master behind the orchestration of everything that happens in the world.

Have you ever read the fine print of an insurance policy? You will find that the insurer lists the events that the policy does not cover. "Your property is fully covered from all damages with the exception of natural disasters." What is the definition of "natural disasters"? We tend to think of them as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes. The question which we ought to ask ourselves and ponder is, is the fact that the sun rises and sets any less of a miracle than what we generally call natural disasters?

As we approach Pesach, let us endeavor to recognize Hashem's hand in every one of the seemingly natural occurrences from which we benefit and so often take for granted.

KEEPING WARM

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

"A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Mizbeach; you shall not extinguish it." (6:6)

There are times when we get a wave of inspiration: whether from a moving speech, a period of personal reflection, or even a sudden realization that we could be so much greater. The first thing that we must do is to grab the moment and take a genuine step to improve ourselves with a solid and achievable resolution to change. The *Baalei Mussar* use the above verse to outline the next step in ensuring that our moment of clarity does not go to waste - keep the fire burning, namely, maintain our initial determination to change.

The Chazon Ish emphasized that most people cannot sustain the burning passion that they had at the moment when they decided to improve, but there is a crucial piece of advice that he gave: never switch off.

The Chazon Ish was speaking to *yeshivah* students who were about to finish their studies for the summer break. He explained that while the break from such intense study was necessary, nevertheless, in order not to lose what they had achieved in the previous term, they should ensure that they maintain some serious degree of learning every day.

To exemplify his point, he explained that someone who was trying to maintain a pan of hot water on a gas fire, even if he initially heats it to a high degree, once it cools down, he will have to start again. What he should be doing, however, is, after boiling it, keep it on a low simmer - never extinguishing the flame. This way, when he wants to boil the water again, he will get there a lot quicker.

In the same way, even when our commitment to improvement falters, we must ensure never to allow our initial resolution to completely cool. Because if we keep the flame burning - however small the flame is - it will always be a lot easier and quicker to return to where we want to be when we are ready.

HEART ON FIRE

Baal Shem Tov

“A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Mizbeach; you shall not extinguish it.” (6:6)

Our heart is the altar and no matter what we do, we should let the holy fire remain within us so that we may fan it into a flame.

STOKING THE FIRE

Rabbi Aryeh Dachs

“A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Mizbeach; you shall not extinguish it.” (6:6)

In Parashas Tzav we are taught the law of the fire on the Altar, the *Mizbeach*. Sadly, today, without a *Beis HaMikdash*, these laws are practically irrelevant. We are charged with two distinct *mitzvos* to ensure a fire is always kept aflame on the Altar. The first is that each day, a *Kohen* must ignite the Altar with a fire. The second is that we are prohibited from extinguishing, even partially, the fire that is on the Altar. The command ends with the verse (6:6), *“Eish tamid tukad al haMizbeach lo sichbeh - A continuous fire shall burn upon the Altar; it shall not go out.”*

However, the Kabbalists understand that this verse is also infused with meaning that is both practical and relevant. They teach that the Altar references a Jewish heart, and just like the Jewish heart has a fire within it and is passionately driven to serve Hashem, the fire on the Altar is never extinguished.

Rabbi Yeshayahu ben Avraham HaLevi Horowitz, the Shelah HaKadosh, says in the name of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero that when one has intrusive, inappropriate thoughts they should repeat this verse over and over again, as its recitation helps quell those creeping thoughts. We need Divine assistance to succeed spiritually. The most difficult battles are sometimes fought in our own heads, and by reciting the verse, we call on the Divine piece - the fire that resides within us. We stoke those nascent embers to create a raging fire that destroys even our inappropriate thoughts.

The Chasam Sofer has a slightly different take. It is clear from the beginning of the verse that although the fire is already burning on the altar, the *Kohen* must still do his part and kindle the fire on the Altar.

The Chasam Sofer explains that like the Altar in the *Beis HaMikdash*, all Jewish people have a fire within them, the *“pintele Yid”* - a Jewish spark. The task for contemporary rabbis and preachers or anyone who has the opportunity to influence other Jews is the same as that of the *Kohen* in the *Beis HaMikdash*: We are not charged with creating a new fire; rather, we need only to stoke an existing flame. The Chasam Sofer assures us that with this attitude, we will surely be successful. As the verse states at the end, *“lo sichbeh,”* the flame of the Torah will not be extinguished.

EVERLASTING RELATIONSHIP

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

“A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Mizbeach; you shall not extinguish it.” (6:6)

Parashas Tzav relays the process of sacrifices, beginning with the *Olah* offering, which was entirely consumed by fire on the *Mizbeach*, to the exclusion of any priests. The *pesukim* specify that the fire should burn all night, after which the ashes should be removed, and that the fire shall remain burning on the altar (6:2-5). The Torah immediately reiterates in the next *pasuk* that the fire on the altar shall continue burning and should not go out (6:6).

Why would the Torah need to tell us three times in just six *pesukim* that the fire on the altar should not be allowed to extinguish?

While the Gemara (Yoma 45a) explains that the three mentions involve different numbers of woodpiles to be arranged, there is a practical application for us in another explanation. The Altar represents an intersection between a person's desire to right a personal wrong (our sacrifice) and G-d's accepting and recognizing an improved person (the fire). Even when we're away from the *Mizbeach*, taking care of the ashes, G-d is reaffirming that the fire/He is still there, waiting for us to return with another personal sacrifice and self-improvement.

There's always a place for us to go where personal growth is recognized, where we do our part to improve the world, and G-d reciprocates our efforts and improves our world too. Just like the fire that doesn't extinguish, the partnership with G-d is always there.

PRECIOUS SACRIFICES

Abarbanel

“It [the meal offering] shall not be baked leavened; I have given it as their portion from My fire-offerings; it is most holy, like the sin-offering, and like the guilt-offering.” (6:10)

The meal offering is “most holy” because it is a poor person's offering and as such it is quite precious to G-d.

Similarly, the sin-offering and the guilt-offering are also “most holy,” for both are brought to demonstrate repentance, and repentant sinners, too, are dear to G-d, as it is said: “Even people of perfect righteousness cannot stand in the same place as repentant sinners.”

ANCHORED BY APPRECIATION

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

“This is the offering of Aharon and his sons... half of it in the morning and half of it in the afternoon.” (6:13)

Our *parashah* contains a *pasuk* describing the inaugural *Minchah* offering as well as the daily *Minchah* offering, offered twice a day in perpetuity (6:13).

If the offering is brought twice daily, why do we need the added instructions of its being brought on the first day of service? Wouldn't twice daily be inclusive of the first time it's offered?

Rav Moshe Feinstein extracts a meaningful lesson from this *pasuk*. Every day of service the *Kohen* brings the same offering as his first day to instill in him a sense of humility. While the *Kohen* could easily get carried away with his status as a *Kohen*, this daily *Minchah* is an anchoring reminder that his service is a privilege not to be taken for granted. That initial gratitude of being in a position to contribute should be the prevailing attitude throughout our many roles in life.

DAILY DEDICATIONS

Reb Alexander Zusia Friedman

"This is the offering of Aharon and his sons on the day he is inaugurated: a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a meal-offering perpetually..." (6:13)

An ordinary *kohen* was obliged to bring a meal-offering only on the day of his induction into *Beis HaMikdash* service. The *Kohen Gadol*, however, had to bring one each day. For with a person on a higher spiritual level, every day must represent a new beginning, a renewal of zeal for the task that must be accomplished. Thus, in the case of the *Kohen Gadol*, every day was a new "dedication" such as the ordinary *kohen* experienced only on the day of his induction into office.

CONSTANTLY GIFTED

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein

"The Kohen from among his sons who is anointed in his place shall perform it; it is an eternal decree." (6:15)

There are two meal-offerings which can be brought only by a *Kohen*. One is offered the first time a *Kohen* performs the Temple service, and when a *Kohen Gadol* assumes his new office. The other is offered every day by the *Kohen Gadol*. The "first-day" offering is often called מנחת חנוך, induction meal-offering, while that of the *Kohen Gadol* is called מנחת חבתין, a pan meal-offering. It was so named after the מחבת, the flat pan in which it is baked.

It is noteworthy that the *Kohen Gadol* brings each day the identical offering, that of the day of his induction. This is because, although Hashem grants him a special position, it is to be considered like a new gift every day. Although it was already given to him and to his descendants, it is theirs only if they deserve it. Even if the *Kohen Gadol* will not be deposed by *beis din* - an unusual occurrence - Hashem may cause him to be demoted by bringing upon him blemishes, contamination or death. Hence, the position of *Kohen Gadol* is like a gift being granted anew.

From here we learn that any blessing or appointment that Hashem gives must be continually deserved and the recipient must contemplate it and appreciate it every day.

SENSITIVITY TOWARDS SINNERS

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

"This is the law of the sin-offering; in the place where the olah-offering is slaughtered shall the sin-offering be slaughtered, before Hashem - it is most holy." (6:18)

The Gemara (Sotah 32b) writes: "Rebbe Yochanan said in the name of Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai: 'Why did Chazal institute [certain] prayers to be said silently? In order not to embarrass sinners, since the Torah itself does not differentiate between the place [where the *Korban*] *Chatas* and *Olah* were brought.'"

The Torah is very sensitive to the feelings of every Jew, even those who have sinned. One may not view a sinner with dishonor or ridicule. Thus, just as the *Chatas* and *Olah* offerings were brought in the same spot in the *Mishkan* so that the one who brought the *Chatas* not be singled out as a sinner, so too, certain prayers - especially the confessions of sins - are to be recited silently so as not to differentiate between sinners and the rest of the congregation.

MAINTAINING THEIR DIGNITY

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

"This is the law of the sin-offering; in the place where the olah-offering is slaughtered shall the sin-offering be slaughtered, before Hashem - it is most holy." (6:18)

The Gemara explains that the sin-offering was to be sacrificed in the same place as the elevation-sacrifice so that the sinners would be saved from embarrassment; because anyone who witnessed his friend bringing a sin-offering would instead assume that it was an elevation-offering, which could be brought as a donation and not in relation to any sin.

Based on this practice, the Gemara (Sotah 32b) explains that Chazal dictated for us to say the *Shemoneh Esrei* in silence, so that someone who is confessing their sins to Hashem will not be embarrassed in front of others.

Seeking to avoid another's shame is an essential character trait and a principal aspect of the *mitzvah* to love one's fellow as himself (Vayikra 19:18).

The following story involving Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky shows just how far one should go in order to avoid someone else's embarrassment:

One day, a stranger to the town stopped the Rav to ask for directions how to get to his destination. The man had a terrible stutter, so Rav Chaim Ozer walked him all the way to his host's home. After the stranger was safely where he wanted to be, Rav Chaim Ozer's students asked why he had taken the man all the way considering his unusually busy schedule that day. Rav Chaim Ozer answered, "If I didn't take him there, he might have needed to ask for directions again, and because of his stutter he may have been embarrassed; to avoid this, I took him all the way myself!"

JUDGING FAVORABLY

Rabbi Ari Ciment

"This is the law of the sin-offering; in the place where the olah-offering is slaughtered shall the sin-offering be slaughtered, before Hashem - it is most holy." (6:18)

Make for yourself a master... and judge every man on the side of merit. (Avos 1:6)

1. Is there any connection between the first and last parts of this Mishnah, quoted above?
2. Is the purpose of assuming the best of another person to avoid shaming them, or is it actually to better ourselves in some way? For example, if I see someone desecrating Shabbos, should I assume that he is doing so only because he has some permissibility?

The answer may be found in this week's *parashah*. The *pasuk* states, "The place where the burnt-offering is killed, the sin-offering shall be killed before Hashem; it is most holy."

The Gemara in Sotah (32b) says that by having the *chatas*, sin-offering, brought in the same place as the less sin-related *olah*, elevation-offering, those bringing the sin-offerings are saved embarrassment! That is to say, when you see someone bringing an offering in the Courtyard north of the Altar, you should judge him favorably and assume it is for an *olah* and not for a sin to avoid embarrassing the sinner!

The Yerushalmi in Yevamos (8:3) says on this very same *pasuk*: *כדי שלא לפרסם את החוטאים* - "In order not to publicize the sinners," which seems to be reiterating the point from Sotah that we wish to not shame the sinners! But if the Yerushalmi is simply repeating the Gemara in Sotah, shouldn't it have said: *כדי שלא לבייש את החוטאים* - "In order not to embarrass the sinners"?

The Yerushalmi in Yevamos may purposely be teaching us a disparate point: We need to avoid pointing out the sinners because that would lead to an overall detracting of holiness. That is to say, when you see someone bringing an offering in the Courtyard north of the Altar, you should judge favorably and assume it is for an *olah* and not for a *chatas* to avoid highlighting the sin thus adulterating our minds! (Seeing people we otherwise respect having sinned may subconsciously denigrate them and also the sanctity of the thing they desecrate.)

The Maharal Diskin (end of volume 1) says: *חז"ל יעצונו לדון - לכף זכות למען לא ימצא לנו פתח בלבבינו לפרוץ גדר הבושה* - "The Sages advise us to judge meritoriously, so that we don't find in our hearts an opening to similarly desecrate!" (I thank Rabbi Neuhaus for teaching me this). In other words, if one thinks someone else is transgressing, then it becomes more acceptable to transgress too. But if one judges him positively and thinks that he is not acting inappropriately, then it remains unacceptable to transgress. Thus, the Torah tells us to judge others positively to preserve our own spirituality.

This may beautifully explain our Mishnah in Avos: *עשה לך רב... והוי דן את כל האדם לכף זכות*. The conventional way to learn this is "Get yourself a *rav*..." but perhaps, in a sense, you can make yourself a *rav* by understanding the twofold lesson of *לכף זכות*. First, you should avoid shaming others, and second, try to remain on a spiritual high (*לא ימצא לנו פתח בלבבינו לפרוץ גדר הבושה*).

Takeaway Messages: By allowing us to offer the *chatas* in the same place as the less sin-related *olah*, G-d teaches us that we should judge others favorably to avoid shaming them and not to publicize sinning, which would cheapen/adulterate our belief system in some way.

This lesson is thus, in fact, "קדש קדשים" (as the *pasuk* ends), because it keeps our belief system unscathed!

If you see someone desecrating Shabbos, first assume that there are extenuating circumstances that allow the person to do what they are doing.

Why judge others positively? So that we retain spirit ourselves.

MIND CONTROL

Rabbi Jeremy Finn

"This is the law of the sin-offering; in the place where the olah-offering is slaughtered shall the sin-offering be slaughtered, before Hashem - it is most holy." (6:18)

This *pasuk* instructs that just as the *Korban Olah* is slaughtered in the north of the *Beis HaMikdash*, so too, the *Korban Chatas* needs to be slaughtered in the north.

The Avnei Neizer explains that the *Korban Olah* is slaughtered in the north because it comes to atone for the negative thoughts that led to the sinful act. These thoughts are hidden within our minds. Therefore, the slaughter of the animal is in the *צפון* - the north, which is derived from the Hebrew word *צפון* - hidden.

Just as the thoughts are hidden, so too, the place that we slaughter represents that which is hidden.

If so, why is the *Korban Chatas* slaughtered in the north? The *Korban Chatas* is not brought to atone for sinful thoughts. It is brought to atone for sinful actions. Actions, by definition, are in the open and revealed. They are the opposite of *צפון*, so why are they brought in the north?

The Shem MiShmuel, son of the Avnei Neizer, answers that no one sins without first thinking. Thoughts enter our mind and entice us to sin. Even if we manage to suspend acting upon that thought for a period of time, if we do subsequently act, it is due to those original thoughts.

So even though the *Korban Chatas* is being brought to atone for the act, it is slaughtered in the north, the *צפון*, to impress upon us that no action is born in a vacuum. Our actions are the result of sinful thoughts, and if we overcome having those hidden, sinful thoughts, we will not be led to sin.

The Satmar Rebbe adds that this idea is alluded to in the words of our *pasuk*. The *pasuk* says, במקום אשר תשחט, העלה תשחט החטאת, which he interprets to mean: במקום - the same place within us - אשר תשחט העלה - that is responsible for us having to bring an *Olah*, namely our mind and thoughts - תשחט החטאת - is the same place that is ultimately responsible for us having to bring a *Chatas*.

Everything begins in the mind. If we manage to lead our mind and thoughts away from that which is negative and forbidden, we will avoid performing those actions that are negative and forbidden. (Talelie Oros, p. 124)

SALTED TO PERFECTION

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"This is the law of the sin-offering; in the place where the olah-offering is slaughtered shall the sin-offering be slaughtered, before Hashem - it is most holy." (6:18)

The fact that offerings were accompanied by salt teaches us that our approach to G-d must incorporate the various properties of salt:

- Taste: Salt brings out the taste in foods (Iyov 6:6). Thus, salt is compared to the inner dimension of the Torah, the study of which adds vitality and "taste" to our observance of the Torah's laws.
- Permanence: Salt is a preservative (Shabbos 31a); it itself never decays. Similarly, our approach to G-d must be consistent and persistent. This is achieved when we stir the essence of our soul and reveal our super-rational love for G-d.
- Cleansing: Salt is a cleanser and disinfectant. Similarly, our approach to G-d must be accompanied by an attempt to purge our lives of all negative forces.
- Healing: The prophet Elisha healed the poison water of Yericho with salt (II Melachim 2:19-22). Similarly, our approach to G-d must serve to "heal" our animal drives, by eliminating their materialistic orientation and directing them toward Divinity. (Sefer HaSichot 5749, vol. 1, pp. 337-338) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky

PREPARED TO RESTART

Rabbi Moshe Schochet

"And the earthenware vessel that the korban was cooked in must be broken..." (6:21)

The *halachah* is that any leftover meat from the *korban* that lasts beyond one day and one night must be burned. Since there will be flavor absorbed into the walls of the earthenware vessel that will last beyond one day and one night and cannot be removed, it must be broken in lieu of burning it. Rashi notes that this *halachah* does not only apply to the *korban chatas* but to all *korbanos*. The Kli Yakar asks why the Torah specifically selects the *korban chatas* as the sacrifice to teach this *halachah* regarding all other *korbanos*.

The Kli Yakar explains that the Torah is using the *korban chatas* to teach us about how to approach situations in life in which we commit sins. Very often when we do something that isn't correct, we try to work around it, refusing to fully acknowledge that which we have done. We attempt to circumvent the issue so that we don't have to completely revamp our mindset or attitude. The Torah is teaching us that the same way we need to break an earthenware vessel that has imbibed some of the *korban* because there is no way to remove the prohibited taste, we too have to be willing, when acknowledging that we have committed an *aveirah*, to break ourselves in order to remove the blemishes of sin inside of us.

We have to be open to recognizing that when we are headed in the wrong direction, we are prepared to start from scratch. We can't just make a minor adjustment and hope that it will be enough. Sometimes, we need to have the courage to hit the reset button. The Kli Yakar explains that this is why the Torah chooses the *korban chatas* to teach this *halachah*; the Torah is highlighting this important lesson regarding how we should approach rectifying our wrongdoings. Let us live lives of *emes* and integrity as we yearn and strive to become the best servants of Hashem that we can be.

TREATED AS EQUALS

Reb Yitzchak of Vorka

"And any meal offering that is mixed with oil or that is dry, it shall belong to all of Aharon's sons, every man alike." (7:10)

From this *pasuk* we learn that the observant Jew who brings a voluntary-offering and the sinner who brings a sin-offering should be treated equally with a friendly and brotherly attitude, for it says: "every man alike."

PAY IT FORWARD

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

"If he shall offer the 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 it..." (7:12)

The Torah in Parshas Tzav introduces the concept of the *korban todah* - the thanksgiving-offering, which one would bring to express gratitude to G-d.

The Gemara (Berachos 54b) discusses different situations when people would bring this *korban*, based on a chapter in Tehillim (107) which speaks of the offering of a *korban todah* after emerging from four types of dangerous situations: serious illness, captivity, sea travel, and desert travel. Additionally, Rabbeinu Bechaye (here in Parshas Tzav) writes that people would bring a *korban todah* on other joyous occasions, such as a bride and groom when they got married.

This *korban* was unique in that it consisted of a large amount of food that needed to be eaten within a short period of time. The meat of the animal, as well as the forty loaves of bread which accompanied it, all had to be eaten on the day the *korban* was brought, or that night. Nothing was allowed to be left over by the next morning (7:15).

The Netziv famously explained that this unique requirement forced the person who offered the sacrifice to conduct a large gathering, inviting others to join him in his celebration. This was the only way to ensure that all this food would be eaten by the next morning.

The idea behind this requirement is that when somebody feels genuine gratitude, he does not want to keep it inside. He wants to share the news and tell people about what he had just experienced. When somebody found himself in a perilous situation, and was saved, his feelings of gratitude should overflow, and lead him to want to talk about it with as many people as possible. The person offering a *todah* was therefore required to invite guests to his feast, so he could share the news of his experience and express his feelings of gratitude to a large number of people.

The work U'l'sitcha Elyon offers an additional insight into this special feature of the *korban todah*. After experiencing Hashem's beneficence, a person should respond by seeking to follow His example and dispense kindness to others. When G-d showers us with His blessings, we are to proceed to share those blessings with other people. Gratitude should lead to action. When we feel grateful for what Hashem has done for us, we must follow up on those feelings by looking for ways to give to the people around us, to extend kindness to people just as Hashem has extended kindness to us.

Therefore, the Torah arranged that the *korban todah* should be brought in a manner that necessitated a large crowd, compelling the individual offering the sacrifice to invite a large number of guests and share his food with other people. When we contemplate Hashem's kindness, and are overcome by feelings of gratitude, we should feel inspired to follow His example and give to others just as Hashem is constantly giving to us.

PRAYING WITH GRATITUDE

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"If he shall offer the thanksgiving-offering..." (7:12)

In general, the sacrifices served to disentangle us from our materiality, drawing us nearer to G-d. Prayer, which in the absence of the Temple substitutes for the sacrifices, largely serves the same purpose.

Inasmuch as the physical realm is the lowest rung of existence, we need to rise above it in order to cleave to our Divine source. In the Messianic Era, however, the physical realm will be saturated with G-dliness even more than the loftiest spiritual realms. We will therefore not need to rise above our milieu, and both sacrifices and prayers will become obsolete.

The exception will be thanksgiving sacrifices and prayers. This is because rather than the effort to reach higher consciousness, thanksgiving is the experience of that consciousness - our recognition and awe of G-d's presence in our lives. Since our Divine awareness will perpetually ascend in the Messianic Era, our joy in experiencing it will also perpetually intensify. We will therefore continue to offer sacrifices and prayers of thanksgiving.

By focusing our prayers nowadays on being thankful for feeling close to G-d, we can hasten the advent of the Messianic Redemption, when this will indeed be the sole focus of our prayers. (Torah Ohr 97a; Ohr HaTorah, Vayikra, vol. 1, p. 23) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

In the Messianic era, communal sacrifices will continue to be offered up, but there will no longer be personal sacrifices. The sole exception will be the thanksgiving-offering. Similarly, we are taught that in the Messianic era, all forms of prayer will cease except for prayers of thanksgiving.

The purpose of personal sacrifices (other than the thanksgiving-offering) is to orient our animal soul toward Divinity. Once the process of atonement will have been completed - and we will no longer have the desire to sin - these types of sacrifices will become obsolete. Only the thanksgiving-offering will remain, for its function is to express our acknowledgement of our dependence upon G-d, and this will continue to be the case.

Similarly, we will no longer need to pray for our needs: we will not lack anything, illness and poverty will be matters of the past, and harmony and spiritual sensitivity will become the hallmarks of society. Prayer will consist only of giving thanks, as we continuously acknowledge G-d's benevolence and wonders.

We can hasten the Messianic era by emphasizing in our present lives what will be true in Messianic times. Thus, by placing the emphasis in our prayers on appreciating G-d's goodness, we hasten the time when this will indeed be our prayers' sole focus. (Ohr HaTorah, Nach, vol. 2, pp. 963-964) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

CONNECTED THROUGH GRATITUDE

Rebbe Nachman

"If he shall offer the thanksgiving-offering..." (7:12)

In the Future, all of the sacrifices will be suspended except for the thanksgiving-offering (Vayikra Rabbah 9:7). At that time, when there will be no sin, it will be necessary only to offer thanks to G-d. (See Likutey Moharan II, 2:1).

Then we will draw ever closer to G-d and, as we do, our understanding of G-d's greatness will increase; thus, our thanks will increase, too.

The opposite also applies: giving thanks to G-d helps us draw close to Him. And that is something that we can do in this present world.

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

"If he shall offer the thanksgiving-offering..." (7:12)

In Parshas Tzav we read about the "Korban Todah" - "Thanksgiving-Offering" through which those who had experienced a personal salvation would offer their thanks to Hashem. The quality of recognizing that one received an act of kindness and saying thank you is not limited to verbal thanks; one's gratitude should change the way that he relates to that person from then onwards.

The most extraordinary example of this lesson is found in the Torah as the Jews were leaving Egypt. Rashi writes that the Jewish People left Egypt carrying weapons (Shemos 13:18); if so, asks the Chasam Sofer, why did Hashem have to perform such a great miracle by drowning the Egyptians in the sea - Hashem could have commanded them to fight the Egyptians and through a miracle ensure their victory (in the same way that we celebrate Chanukah, when we commemorate the defeat of the mighty Greek army at the hands of the weak, righteous Jews who were few in number)?

The Chasam Sofer (Haggadas HaChasam Sofer, p. 319) answers that the Jewish People were not permitted to fight Egypt directly because they had a duty of gratitude to the country which had hosted Yaakov and his family when Yosef brought them down to Egypt. The Chasam Sofer bases this principle on the Gemara's words (Bava Kama 92b): "Into the well which you drank, do not throw stones."

This incredible statement from the Chasam Sofer means that despite decades of slavery, where an entire nation was abused, tortured and forced to work to an unthinkable degree, and whose young children were systematically thrown into the Nile River, nevertheless, the Jewish People were bound to a level of gratitude for something that benefitted their grandparents and great grandparents!

From here we can see just how far our sense of gratitude should take us, towards people, and even more so, towards Hashem.

ELEVATING HAUGHTINESS

Reb Noson of Breslov

"Speak to the Children of Israel, saying: Any fat of oxen, sheep, or goats - you shall not eat." (7:23)

Fats represent pride and haughtiness, as in "They enclosed themselves in their fats; their mouths spoke arrogantly" (Tehillim 17:10).

Therefore, the fats must be placed upon the Altar, for all pride belongs to G-d, as in "G-d has reigned, in pride He has dressed" (ibid., 93:1).

By sacrificing the fats, one elevates blemished haughtiness to G-d. (Likutey Halakhos IV, p. 60)

RECTIFICATION AND ELEVATION

Reb Noson of Breslov

"This is the Torah of the burnt-offering, the meal-offering, the sin-offering, the guilt-offering, the inauguration-offering and the peace-offering." (7:37)

The Torah is greater than all the sacrifices. (Megillah 3b)

Each sacrifice has a unique devotion which parallels its intended rectification. The Torah is an all-inclusive rectification. Therefore, the Torah is called a bride (כלה, *Kallah*), for it includes (כולל, *Kollel*) everything, all the rectifications. (Likutey Halakhos VII, p. 180a)

The Torah is compared to fire (cf. Yirmiyahu 23:29). Just as the fire of the Altar burns the fats, so too, the Torah "burns" the materialism to which a person has attached himself.

One who wishes to repent should fast, which reduces the amount of "fats" in his body. But one who studies Torah does not need to fast, since the fire of Torah purges those materialistic desires for him. (Likutey Halakhos IV, p. 64)

The verse concludes with the peace-offering, because the goal of all the sacrifices is peace. (Likutey Halakhos II, p. 171a)

Man's primary mission is to elevate all levels of creation - mineral, vegetable and animal - to the highest level, that of the "speaker" (i.e., man himself).

One who merits the level of "speaker" can bring forth all the good found in others by judging them favorably and elaborating on that good in articulated speech.

Similarly, the sacrifices were meant to elevate creation by bringing mineral, vegetable and animal components upon the Altar to G-d.

In the absence of the Temple sacrifices today, our Sages (Menachos 110a) teach: "When a person studies the laws of the sacrifices, it is as if he has offered all the sacrifices." Thus, our speech has the power to elevate all creation to G-d. (Likutey Halakhos I, p. 2b-3a)

POWER OF SPEECH

Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

"This is the Torah of the olah-offering, the meal-offering, the sin-offering, the guilt-offering, the inauguration-offering and the sacrifice of the peace-offering." (7:37)

The Midrash here quotes the *pasuk* (Tehillim 33:6): "By the word of Hashem the Heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host." The Midrash implies that this *pasuk* is a reference to the *korbanos*. In what way is our *parshah* regarding the *korbanos* connected to this *pasuk* in Tehillim?

R' Yehonason Eibenschutz zt'l, in Ya'aros D'vash, gives a powerful answer.

Chazal tell us that when one learns and recites the *parshah* of *korbanos*, it is as though he's actually bringing a *korban*.

This is quite evident regarding a *korban olah*, since that *korban* was brought to atone for sinful thoughts; studying the laws of the *korban olah* will likewise atone for sinful thoughts.

However, *korban chatas*, for instance, atones for actual sinful deeds. How can merely uttering words regarding this *korban* and how it was brought provide an atonement for a sinful deed?

To this question, the Midrash gives a clear reply: "By the word of Hashem the Heavens were made." The entire world came into being by force of the very words uttered from the mouth of Hashem, *kivyachol*. This teaches us an important lesson. Words of holiness can be as powerful as actual deeds! Accordingly, words do have the power to neutralize a sinful act.

One must recognize the inherent power of speech, utilizing it for studying Torah and performing *mitzvos*.

DAY AND NIGHT

Reb Noson of Breslov

"...which Hashem has commanded to Moshe on Har Sinai, on the day that He commanded the Children of Israel to bring their sacrifices to G-d, in the desert of Sinai." (7:38)

Most *mitzvos* can be performed only during the day. "Day" represents intellect, understanding and clear knowledge of what is required of a person. "Night" represents constricted knowledge and, by extension, faith.

Faith sustains us when things are difficult and we find it hard to perform the *mitzvos*. (Thus, Jacob established the Evening Prayer [Berachos 26b] to imbue us with hope even at the darkest times.)

Armed with faith, even the "night" can become as bright as the "day." (Likutey Halakhos VIII, p. 264b)

Yom (יום, day) corresponds to the clarity of G-d's manifestation, as opposed to *Erev* (ערב, night), which represents *Irvuv* (ערבוב, confusion).

The *Eirev rav* (ערב רב, mixed multitude) darkened and confused the Jews' vision of spirituality with imaginary ideas.

When one finds himself surrounded by darkness and confusion, he must patiently await the daylight - the light of G-d - to illuminate his situation and clear his intellect of distorted illusions. (Likutey Halakhos III, p. 376)

IMPARTING VALUES

Rabbi Jeremy Finn

"Take Aharon and his sons with him, and the garments, and the oil of anointment [and consecrate them]..." (8:2)

Parashas Tzav is often read on the Shabbos before Pesach, called *Shabbos Hagadol*. Is there any connection between the two, or is it merely by chance that they overlap?

In the eighth chapter of Sefer Vayikra, the Torah describes the inauguration of Aharon as the *Kohen Gadol* and of his sons as *Kohanim* to serve in the Temple.

What is striking is that the consecration of Aharon and his sons took place in one ceremony.

The *pasuk* says, קח את אהרן ובניו אתו - "Take Aharon and his sons with him and consecrate them." And then again, ויקרב משה את אהרן ואת בניו וירחץ אתם, ו' - "And Moshe brought Aharon and his sons forward and immersed them in water."

Throughout the chapter, the Torah refers to אהרן ובניו - Aharon and his children as one group who were inaugurated into service at the same time and in the same ceremony.

The sanctity of the *Kohen Gadol* and his office was higher than that of a regular *Kohen*. This difference was clearly displayed through the extra ceremonial robes that he wore, by the type of service that he performed, and, most of all, by the fact that once a year, he alone was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies.

Accordingly, we would not have been surprised if Moshe had first inaugurated Aharon's sons as regular priests, and then consecrated Aharon in a special ceremony befitting his level and status. Why was there only one joint ceremony?

By connecting Aharon and his sons in their elevation to holiness, the Torah seems to be telling us that a person is measured not only by how much they have grown and achieved with their life, but also by how much they have managed to pass on to their children.

Children do not have to become carbon copies of their parents. Still, parents hope that they will be successful in imparting fundamental values and beliefs that will join them and their children together forever.

This is the connection between Parashas Tzav and *Shabbos HaGadol*.

As we enter Pesach, we do so as parents with a responsibility and opportunity to share with our children the fundamental values of *hakaras ha'tov*, *emunah*, *bitachon*, and so much more.

We, as parents, will do our part to try to inspire, and it is up to the next generation to take that torch forward and blaze a burning path for themselves and for the future. (Bein Adam LaParashah, p. 42)

INSPIRING ACTION

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

“Moshe did as Hashem commanded him; and the assembly was gathered at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.” (8:4)

Moshe is instructed to gather the people and teach them about the service of the *Mishkan* (8:3). The next *pasuk* tells us that Moshe did as instructed, and that the community gathered (8:4). However, the Torah specifically tells us that the crowd gathered independently, not that Moshe gathered them. How, then, can the Torah tell us that Moshe did as he was told?

Rabbi Raphi Butler suggests that the fact that the people gathered on their own proves that Moshe inspired them and is therefore given credit for their independent actions. Inspiring future generations requires openly conveying our emotions and openheartedly expressing our awe and admiration to G-d for all that we receive.

As Pesach (and as with all of our holidays) approaches, as we read this *parashah*, our focus becomes one of inspiring the next generation as we share the miracles of our past to help them forge their future. It may mean not rushing through the Haggadah in order to eat but facilitating a Seder that elicits emotions of our collective past and an engaging experience that inspires an appreciation for all that G-d has provided.

OUR INNER KOHEN

Lubavitcher Rebbe

“Moshe said to the assembly, ‘This is the thing that Hashem commanded to be done.’” (8:5)

Aharon and his son were installed into the priesthood through two types of offerings: specific sacrifices that Moshe offered up on their behalf every day for a full week when the Tabernacle was first erected, and a grain-offering that every *kohen* was required to offer up on the first day of his service (and which the high *kohen* was required to offer up twice every day).

The purpose of these sacrifices was to awaken within Aharon and his sons the qualities that would enable them to act as the Jewish people’s representatives before G-d, whether by securing atonement for their misdeeds or by raising them to higher levels of Divine consciousness.

Every one of us has the inner power to not only overcome spiritual darkness but to transform it into light. But this inner power is not always readily available to us, for various reasons. We must therefore seek out individuals who are steeped in the Torah and further along the path of spiritual refinement than we are, so we can benefit from their inspiration and guidance.

At the same time, we must also develop our inner *“kohen,”* both in order to transform our own inner darkness into light, as well as to help others do the same for themselves. - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

GIVING MORE THAN WE HAVE

Lubavitcher Rebbe

“He poured from the oil of anointment upon Aharon’s head, and he anointed him to sanctify him.” (8:12)

Moshe was not a *kohen*, yet he was able to confer the priesthood upon Aharon. Thus, Moshe was able to impart a degree of holiness to Aharon that he himself did not even possess. This was possible because Moshe was not acting on his own, but as G-d’s agent.

Similarly, each one of us can help improve the lives of others, drawing them closer to holiness and enabling them to lead happier and more fulfilled lives - even if it seems to us that we do not possess that much holiness or zest for life ourselves.

By involving others in the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of G-d’s commandments, we are drawing them closer to G-d, the source of life and fulfillment. And when we help others, G-d is certain to help us, as well. (Hitva’aduyot 5747, vol. 3, p. 74; Torah Ohr 1b) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

ALWAYS CONNECTED

Lubavitcher Rebbe

“He brought forward the sin-offering bull; Aharon and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the sin-offering bull.” (8:14)

The minds and hearts of the people who offered up sacrifices were spiritually elevated, even if the people themselves were not consciously aware of it. This is because our Divine soul is always aware of the true state of our relationship with G-d.

Thus, the Torah does not need to explicitly state that the physical offering must be accompanied by a spiritual, inner offering - because this is always the case, from the soul’s perspective.

Instead, the Torah begins its discussion of offerings with voluntary offerings since these clearly involve the offeror’s mind and heart. This indicates that all offerings, even obligatory ones, are essentially voluntary offerings, stemming from the soul’s innate desire to come close to G-d.

The same is true of our prayers, which correspond to the daily sacrifices. Our minds and hearts are always involved in our prayers, even when we do not consciously sense this involvement. Thus, we need never feel that when our minds or hearts “wander” during our prayers that nothing was accomplished.

This awareness can inspire us firstly to cultivate the habit of praying regularly (no matter how well we succeed in concentrating), and secondly to invest more effort in involving our conscious minds and hearts when we pray. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 17, pp. 12-13) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

SWEET SURRENDER

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"He brought forward the sin-offering bull; Aharon and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the sin-offering bull." (8:14)

The person offering up a sacrifice leans with both hands upon the animal in order to demonstrate that, through the animal, he is giving his entire being over to G-d.

It is noteworthy that this act was the first one that Aharon and his sons performed themselves during the installation ceremonies; until this point, they were passive objects of the rites that Moshe was performing. Thus, paradoxically, the first act of self-assertion was one of self-nullification.

This teaches us that by nullifying ourselves humbly before G-d, we are not turning ourselves into mindless automatons. On the contrary, surrendering to G-d's will frees us from the bondage of living up to the dictates of materialism and keeping up with the latest fashions in all areas of physical, emotional, and intellectual life. Thus liberated, we can express our true, most individual selves, as we play our unique role in fulfilling the purpose of creation. (Hitva'aduyot 5744, vol. 2, p. 1178) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

SOCIAL PRESSURES

Rabbi Shlomo Ressler

"He brought forward the sin-offering bull; Aharon and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the sin-offering bull." (8:14)

As the *Kohanim* are inducted at the *Mishkan's* inauguration, a *Chatas* is offered as the very first sacrifice (8:14). What is the sin that is being atoned for?

Sifra suggests that atonement was required because some people may have been shamed into donating for the *Mishkan*; if they did not truly give voluntarily, then the material could be considered stolen. This inaugural sacrifice sets the tone for the level of sensitivity exhibited by the Torah and, in turn, serves as a model for our own conduct. Social pressure can lead to devastating outcomes, and being conscious of its effects can help us avoid its havoc.

APPLYING OUR STUDIES

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"Then he brought near the ram for the olah-offering, and Aharon and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the ram." (8:18)

The sages teach us that, in the absence of the holy Temple, someone who studies the laws of a given sacrifice is considered as if he had offered it up. But if the study of the laws of a sacrifice accomplishes the same thing as offering it up, why should we bother with the sacrifice itself, even when the Temple will be rebuilt?

The difference between the "virtual" sacrifice and the actual one is their effect on the world. While a sacrifice "offered up" by studying its laws elevates the person, it does not elevate the world around him. Only the physical sacrifice, which includes all aspects of creation - human (the *kohen* offering up the sacrifice), animal (the sacrifice itself), vegetable (the wood of the fire), and mineral (the salt added to all sacrifices) - elevates the world at large.

Thus, we should always seek a practical, tangible way to apply the spiritual inspiration or insight we garner, in order for it to affect and elevate not merely ourselves, but the entire world. (Hitva'aduyot 5742, vol. 2, pp. 1137, 1145-1146) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

SOULFUL EATING

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"Then he brought near the second ram, the inauguration ram, and Aharon and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the ram." (8:22)

Of the three sacrifices offered up during the installation week as part of the installation ceremonies, only the third one - the second ram - is specifically called "the installation ram." Rashi tells us that this is because it was only this third sacrifice that completed the process of installing the priests in their office. This is because an integral part of the priests' role is to eat the parts of the sacrifices that they are meant to eat, and it was only regarding this third offering that Aharon and his sons were instructed to eat part of it.

At first glance, it seems puzzling that eating parts of the sacrifices should be an integral part of offering them up to G-d. After all, sacrifices are meant to draw us closer to G-d, and focusing on G-d usually involves some degree of weaning ourselves from our innate attachment to materiality.

The fact that eating is nonetheless part of the sacrificial process teaches us that eating for holy purposes is part and parcel of drawing close to G-d.

Rather than ascetically renouncing the material life, our challenge is to sanctify it, thereby transforming this physical world into G-d's true home. (Hitva'aduyot 5730, vol. 2, pp. 428-430, 439-442) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

SPIRITUAL REORIENTATION

Lubavitcher Rebbe

"Then Moshe took them from on their palms and he caused them to go up in smoke on the Mizbeach after the olah-offering; they were inauguration offerings, for a satisfying aroma; it was a fire-offering to Hashem." (8:28)

The procedures for the sacrifices all allude to inner, psychological processes that we must undergo in order to draw close to G-d. (The Hebrew word for "sacrifice" [*korban*] means "drawing close.")

Slaughtering the animal alludes to how we slaughter - i.e., renounce - our animalistic orientation toward life.

Sprinkling the blood on the Altar alludes to how we then re-orient our enthusiasm (signified by our warm blood) toward G-dliness.

Placing the fat of the slaughtered animal on the Altar alludes to how we re-orient our sense of delight (signified by fat, which results from indulging in eating foods that trigger feelings of delight in our brain) toward G-dliness.

Burning the animal by fire on the Altar alludes to the consumption of our animal nature by Divinity, meaning that our formerly animalistic drives become drives for goodness, as we transform the world into G-d's home. (Reshimot 108) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

HAFTARAH

NOT AN END ONTO ITSELF

Malbim

"For I didn't speak to your fathers, nor command them... concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Hear My voice, and I shall be your G-d, and you shall be My people and you shall walk in the way that I command you...'" (Yirmiyahu 7:22-23)

But didn't G-d command us to offer sacrifices?

The *pasuk* should be interpreted as follows: "For I did not speak to your fathers nor commanded them concerning burnt-offerings" in the sense that they should be considered as ends in themselves. The purpose of My commandment concerning these sacrifices was that you should "hear My voice."

You must learn to do My will, so that the sacrifice will serve primarily as a symbol of your desire to please Me by doing My will. So that "I shall be your G-d, and you shall be My People" - the sacrifice will be a sign of the covenant between Israel and G-d, showing that He accepts gifts from them like a king accepts tribute from his subjects.

"And you shall walk in the way that I command you." The intention behind the bringing of sacrifices is to remind you to follow the path of G-d and forsake evil ways.

Hence, if you don't do His will, if you fail to acknowledge G-d as your King and adhere to His ways, and if you regard the sacrifices not as symbols fulfilling a purpose but as ends in themselves, then you are not acting in accordance with what He has said to your ancestors.

PROPER USAGE

Vilna Gaon

"Thus says Hashem, 'Let a wise man not glory in his wisdom, nor let the strong man glory in his strength, nor let the rich man glory in his riches. But let he who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me...'" (Yirmiyahu 9:22-23)

The wise, the powerful and the rich have no reason to glory in their wisdom, their strength and their riches.

"But let he who glories glory in this" - in one's willingness to make use of these attributes for Heaven's sake, "to understand and to know Me."

If one does not make use of them to serve the Most High, these virtues are absolutely meaningless and, in fact, should be considered serious shortcomings. Only when one uses them for this purpose can wisdom, power and riches be regarded as authentic virtues.

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