



שבע קולנו

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BIRCHAS HAGOMEL

Rabbi Michael Taubes

One of the Korbanos described in this Parsha is the Korban Todah, which is a specific type of Korban Shelamim (VaYikra - 7:11-15). Rashi (ibid. 7:12 *Im*) explains that this Korban is brought to thank Hashem for a miraculous salvation, specifically by one who had travelled by sea, or through a desert, or had been held in prison and was released, or had been sick and recovered. These four particular examples are found in the Gemara in Berachos (54b) which says that any person who has been in one of these four situations is obligated to thank Hashem for being saved. Rashi (ibid.) clearly learns that this obligation to thank Hashem means, during the time of the Beis HaMikdash, that the person must offer a Korban Todah. Rav Yerucham Perlow, in his commentary to the Sefer HaMitzvos of Rabbeinu Saadyah Gaon (Mitzvot Aseh 59-60), cites many Rishonim who agree with this position.

Tosafos, however, quoted by the Shittah Mekubetzes in Erchin (11b – Os 6), seems to hold that there is never an actual obligation to bring a Korban Todah. The Rambam, by omitting any such obligation, apparently agrees. The Rambam thus says (Hilchos Berachos - 10:8) that the aforementioned obligation upon those four people to thank Hashem refers only to that which the Gemara there actually discusses, namely, the obligation to recite a special Beracha known as Birchah Ha Gomel. The Shulchan Aruch (Orech Chaim - 219:1-2) likewise understands that the obligation of these four people is to recite the Birchah Ha Gomel. Nonetheless, there still appears to be some connection between the Birchah HaGomel and the Korban Todah, as the Rosh in Berachos (Perek 9: Siman 3) asserts that the Beracha was instituted in place of the Korban; this connection has ramifications for certain Halachos.

How much time does one have after experiencing one's salvation to recite this Beracha thanking Hashem? The Gemara does not set any time limit, and the Tur (Orech Chaim - 219) therefore writes that if one had to delay, one can say the Beracha any time he wants. The Beis Yosef, however (ibid. *V'im Ichar*) quotes that the Ramban ruled that one must do it within the first three days, and that the Rashba and Rabbeinu Yonah allowed it to be said within five days. The Mishna Berurah (ibid. Se'if Katan 8), though, quotes from the Ra'oh that the first thirty days have special significance in at least the following instance. The Gemara in Berachos (ibid.) states that it is proper to recite the Birchah HaGomel in the presence of ten people; the Shulchan Aruch (ibid Se'if 3) rules accordingly. The Ra'oh discusses a case where a person is afraid that he will not be able to be with ten people immediately, and he rules that he should wait for thirty days in case he is able to find the necessary ten people. After thirty days, however, he should no longer wait and should recite the Beracha on his own. The Ra'oh apparently is not worried about a three or five day limit on this Beracha. The Shulchan Aruch (ibid. Se'if 10) rules that it is preferable not to delay the Beracha beyond three days, but if one did, he can recite it whenever he wants.

Some authorities explain this lenient ruling on the basis of the connection between the Birchah HaGomel and the Korban Todah. Rav Ovadyah Yosef (Sha'ailos U'Teshuvos Yabia Omer - Chelek Gimmel: Orch Chaim-Siman 16) quotes the Tzeidah LaDerech who writes that it is proper to recite the Beracha within three days, but if one didn't, one has more time because the Birchah HaGomel was instituted in place of the Korban Todah, and one could bring his Korban Todah whenever he wanted. Rav Ovadyah Yosef (ibid.) adds, however, that since the Gemara in Rosh Hashana (4b) indicates that there may be a

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Tzav

Mitzvas Asei to bring one's Korban Todah by the first Yom Tov that follows the salvation, the same should be true about reciting the Birchash HaGomel, and so one should at least try to say his Birchash HaGomel by then. In a similar vein, the Pardes Yosef on the Posuk in this Parsha (VaYikra 7:12) says that one should not wait with one's Birchash HaGomel longer than the time one may wait to bring his Korban Todah. Since the aforementioned Gemara (ibid.) says that after three Yomim Tovim have passed, one is in violation of *Ba'al Ti'Acher*, the prohibition against delaying the fulfillment of an obligation, for failing to bring one's Korban, this may be the deadline as well for one's Birchash HaGomel. However, the Shulchan Aruch, as cited above (ibid.), does not mention any of these time limits.

The Chasam Sofer (Sha'ailos U'Teshuvos Chasam Sofer-Orech Chaim: Siman 51) relates the Birchash HaGomel to the Korban Todah in connection with another Halacha. He suggests that women are not required to recite this Beracha because the obligation to say Birchash HaGomel is a time bound Mitzvah since it corresponds to the Korban Todah. The Korban Todah could not be brought at night and therefore this Beracha, he suggests, can also not be recited at night. However, he ultimately rejects this approach, asserting that the analogy to the Korban Todah does not go quite so far and that the Beracha can indeed be recited at night. Regarding the recitation of this Beracha by women, the Mishnah Berurah (ibid. Se'if Katan 3) writes that the custom is for women not to recite Birchash HaGomel because it is inappropriate for a woman to recite a Beracha in front of so many men. But the Magen Avraham (ibid. Hakdama of the Se'if) implies that women should be able to say this Beracha, and quotes a suggestion that she recite it in front of other women. The Mishnah Berurah (ibid.) accepts this, adding that one man should be present. However, Rav Ovadyah Yosef (Sha'ailos U'Teshuvos Yechaveh Da'as – Chelek 3: Siman 15) concludes that nowadays women may be permitted to say the Beracha in front of men, either in Shul (from the Ezras Nashim) or at home.

It is worth noting that a woman following childbirth is obligated to recite this Beracha because she is in the category of a person who was dangerously ill and has recovered. The Mishnah Berurah (ibid. Se'if Katan 17) writes that in some places, the husband recites it on behalf of his wife who stands and says Amen (See Bei'ur Halacha *V'ein*), The Sefer Toras HaYoledes (Perek 62: Seif 5)

writes that the custom in Yerushalayim is to assemble ten people in the women's home for her to make the Beracha. However, some Poskim are quoted (ibid.) who hold that she should wait thirty days after delivery, and others say at least seven, so that she will clearly have recovered fully before reciting the Beracha.

DETAIL IN KORBANOS

Shi Sebbag

This week's Parsha seems like a repetition of Parshat Vayikra. It repeats the Korbanot and their Halachot. However, the order of the Korbanot is different. In Parshat Vayikra, the order reads as follows: Olah, Mincha, Shlamim, Chatat, Asham. In Parshat Tzav the placement of the Korban Shlamim moves from third to last so that the order now reads as follows: Olah, Mincha, Chatat, Asham, and Shlamim.

Why re-list the Korbanot, and why change the order? Ramban suggests that the apparent redundancy and change in the order hints at the subject being addressed in the two sections. Parshat Vayikra addresses Bnei Yisrael, the people, while Parshat Tzav is directed toward the Kohanim. This is seen from the opening Pesukim of each Parsha. Parshat Vayikra opens with Moshe addressing the People: "Speak to Bnei Yisrael and tell them, if an individual among you wishes to offer a Korban to God, then..." (Vayikra 1:2). Parshat Tzav however, opens with an address to the Kohanim: "Command Aharon and his sons saying: this is the procedure for bringing the Olah..." (Vayikra 6:2).

The order in the two Parshiyot expresses this very concept. In Parshat Vayikra the order is first Korbanot Nedavot, or voluntary Korbanot (Olah, Mincha, and Shlamim), followed by Korbanot Chovot, or Korbanot one is obligated to bring (Chatat and Asham). This is essential information for the Ba'al ha'Korban in order for him to know when to bring various Korbanot. The list in Parshat Tzav, however, is first Kodshei Kodashim (Olah, Mincha, Chatat, and Asham) followed by Kodshei Kalim (Shlamim). This is essential information to the Kohen and is therefore written as such in Parshat Tzav and not in Parshat Vayikra.

Rav Leibtag adds that because Parshat Tzav is directed specifically to the Kohanim, instructing them on how to bring the Korbanot, it includes the Halachot of what may

and may not be eaten of the Korbanot. Parshat Vayikra, however, is addressed to the nation, as everyone must know which specific Korban he may or must bring in any given situation, and therefore it does not mention these Halachot. Rav Leibtag explains that the Korbanot in Parshat Tzav are listed in order of Kedusha. The “most Kadosh” of the Korbanot, or Kodshei Kodashim, is the Olah as it is consumed solely by the Aish Ha’tamid and goes only to Hashem. The “second holiest” is the Mincha. There are two types of Minchot – that which the Kohen brings, which is totally consumed by the fire, and that which a non-Kohen brings, which the Kohen partakes of. The Torah thus groups the two together when listing the Korbanot in Parshat Tzav. The “next holiest” Korbanot are the Chatat and the Asham, for the Kohen is permitted to eat the meat of these Korbanot. The Chatat is listed before the Asham because a Chatat is atonement for unintentional or accidental sins, while an Asham is the consequence for an intended sin. The “least holy” of the Korbanot, or Kodshei Kalim, is the Shlamim, because everyone – Hashem through the Aish Ha’tamid, the Kohen, and the Ba’al ha’Korban – all partake of it. Thus, the order of the Korbanot in Parshat Tzav is in order of the Kedusha of the Korbanot – Kodshei Kodashim then Kodshei Kalim – and therefore the Halachot of eating the Korban are listed in Parshat Tzav and not in Parshat Vayikra.

Rav Grossman points out that the reason that the Korbanot are written from the perspective of both the Ba’al ha’Korban (the person offering the Korban, i.e. Bnei Yisrael) and the Kohen is to remind us that the Kohen is merely the vessel through which Bnei Yisrael can achieve closeness to Hashem. Furthermore, the perspective of the Ba’al ha’Korban is presented first, to remind the nation that they are the ones who are the key characters when offering a Korban – not to mistake themselves for the Kohanim, mere messengers on behalf of the People.

Rav Sabato writes that Parashat Tzav presents a fundamentally different perspective on Korbanot than that of Parshat Vayikra. Parshat Vayikra offers the individual the opportunity to offer a sacrifice. Even the Chatat and Asham are to be brought only when the situation arises, but are not an established part of the Avodat ha’Mikdash. Hence, Parashat Vayikra presents sacrifices as an opportunity and privilege granted to Bnei Yisrael to achieve Devekut to Hashem through the Korbanot. Parashat Tzav, however, opens with the Aish Ha’tamid on the Mizbeiach and the

Korban Tamid, an obvious symbol that the Shechina resides in the Mikdash. In this way, the Torah teaches that the Korbanot are more than just an opportunity offered to the People; they constitute an essential part of the Mishkan, expressing the constant presence of the Shechina among the Jewish People.

Perhaps one can answer as the Malbim does regarding Sefer Yishayahu. He claims that the repetition is in order to stress that one Nevuah is not more important than another. Maybe this answer can be applied to the Korbanot. Each Korban is just as important to Hashem as the next, regardless of the particular circumstances surrounding it. This is possibly why each Korban has very specific and detailed Halachot, different from that of its neighbors.

Chasidishe Mayseh

It was a cold winter Friday night as all the chasidim packed into the shul for the tish. The majestic evening began as they all sat around the table singing. Finally it came time for the Rebbe to speak. He spoke briefly every Friday night and his words glowed with holiness. There was silence in the room as everyone awaited their precious Rebbe’s words. The Rebbe said one sentence and with it mesmerized the whole room. “Shabbos is g’matria Kugel.” Throughout the room the chasidim marveled at their Rebbe’s greatness. All was fine until it came to the attention of one person that Shabbos was g’matria 702 and kugel was 209. When he asked the Rebbe about this apparent difficulty, his answer was again short but even more impressive than the original - “nu! Nemenet lich emer kugel” (so take some more kugel)!

DON'T CUT CORNERS*

Dovie Guggenheim

The money didn't come out of the priests' own pockets. It came from the well-filled coffers of the Bet Hamikdash. Every year, money poured from all the Jewish people to a special fund which provided for the daily sacrifices. In this week's Torah portion we read that Hashem told Moshe to "command Aharon and his sons" regarding the daily Olah Korban. Why did the priests have to be "commanded"? Why wasn't it enough for them to be "told," as was usually the case? Our Sages tell us that Hashem was forewarning the priest not to cut corners in order to reduce the considerable expense of bringing an animal every morning and every afternoon.

But why was this necessary? Why would the priests even consider such a thing? After all, there was no cost to them personally, and there was plenty of public money for the sacrifices.

Let us consider for a moment the nature of the sacrificial service. There were actually two aspects to it. First, the detailed physical process of the sacrifice. Second and even more important, the thoughts, feelings, and commitments that the sacrifice represented; without the idea behind it, the sacrifice was meaningless.

Unlike most of the sacrifices, which were partially burnt on the Mishkan and partially eaten, the Olah sacrifice was kalil, completely incinerated. Therefore, the commentators explain, there was a real possibility that the priest would focus on the intent and not attribute enough importance to the physical act itself. Since all of the sacrifice was being given to Hashem, they might reason, what difference would it make if fewer funds were expended on the sacrifices? All that mattered was the intent.

The Torah, therefore, warns us that this is not so. It was not the place of the priests to make such judgments. If the Torah commanded that two animals be brought daily, the commandment was to be obeyed without question. An elderly king appointed a new chamberlain to oversee his palace affairs.

"Your first major responsibility in your new post," said the king, "will be to arrange the parade in honor of my birthday next week. Find out how it is done every year. The information is in the palace records."

The following week, on the king's birthday, there was no parade. Instead, the chamberlain brought together the greatest poets in the land in a gala public ceremony, and

each of the poets read an exquisite poem composed for the occasion. The king was pleased.

The next day, the king summoned the chamberlain and removed him from office for failing to stage the customary parade.

"But, sire," the chamberlain protested, "I only tried to please you, and if I am not mistaken, you really did seem pleased."

"The poems were very beautiful," said the king, "but it is not for you to substitute poems for the customary observance. You are not a chamberlain for me."

In our own lives, it is easy to take a somewhat cavalier attitude towards the rituals and observances of the Torah by rationalizing that it is the heart that counts. The heart indeed counts a great deal, but actions speak more loudly than words. As servants of Hashem, we should leave it to Him to decide what form those actions should take. With our own limited knowledge and understanding, we cannot possibly know the extent to which a particular ritual or observance described in the Torah may touch our Neshamot. We all understand that Hashem needs nothing from us. Therefore, if the Torah calls for a certain action, we can rest assured that it is for our own benefit and that in the end it is we ourselves who will be immeasurably enriched.

*taken from Rav Naftali Reich, Torah.org

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