

INSIGHTS

Into The Weekly Parsha

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Based on the Torah of our Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Yochanan Zweig

PARSHAS TZAV

Your Wish Is My Command?

Command Aharon and his sons, saying... (6:2)

Rashi (ad loc) comments that the word "tzav" (command) means enthusiastically encourage (the Kohanim) beginning now and for succeeding generations.

This would seem a little incongruous. After all, have you ever tried "commanding" someone and found that the person commanded feels "encouraged" or "enthusiastic"? Hardly. For a proper understanding of this concept try "commanding" your spouse to do the dishes and let us know how that works out for you.

In addition, how could Rashi say "to encourage the Kohanim for now and succeeding generations"? Commanding this generation of Kohanim to do their duty would seem difficult enough, how would this last for succeeding generations?

The word *mitzvah* also etymologically has the root "tzav," which is why *mitzvos* are generally translated as commandments. This is, at best, an incomplete translation.

Both Targumim on this *posuk* translate "tzav" as "paked," which means to appoint. This is also the exact same word that Moshe uses when he asks Hashem to appoint a leader in his stead over the Jewish people – "Yifkod Hashem..." (*Bamidbar* 27:16). This is a very important concept to understand. When Hashem first chose Moshe to go lead the Jewish people out of Egypt, a

week long conversation ensued. This consisted, primarily, of Moshe arguing with Hashem. This would seem very odd, after all Hashem is telling him to go, how can Moshe possibly argue?

The answer is that Hashem was asking Moshe to accept a position of responsibility, and responsibility has to be accepted willingly. This is why when Moshe finally accepts to go with Aharon the Torah uses the same exact language of "tzav" – "Vayetzavem al Bnei Yisroel" (*Shemos* 6:13). The same is true by the entire Torah and *mitzvos*, which is also a derivative of *tzav*. They are a responsibility. That is why Hashem had to ask us to accept the Torah, and every soul had to be present at Mount Sinai and sign on for this obligation. The Torah and *mitzvos* aren't merely rules we must keep. They are a complete agenda for the perfection of the world and we signed on for the responsibility to see it fulfilled.

This is also the reason that the only people who are counted (root word *pokad*) are those who take responsibility for the continuity of the Jewish nation, those who go to war and are willing to die for their ideals.

So too in our *parsha*, Hashem is telling Moshe to appoint Aharon and his sons to the permanent role of Kohanim and to do it in an encouraging and enthusiastic manner in order that they should feel the same way. They aren't being commanded, they are being



asked to accept a sacred responsibility. Once they accepted it, this responsibility became binding for all succeeding generations.

For a further discussion of how to get your spouse to do the dishes go to Rabbizweig.com/makethekidsdothem

Did You Know...

This week's *parsha* tells us about the *Korbon Todah*, under what circumstances it should be given, and the process for bringing it (7:12-18). Interestingly, four breads are brought with this *korbon*:

1. unleavened loaves mixed with oil
2. flat matzos saturated with oil
3. loaves of flour mixed with oil and then boiled
4. loaves of regular leavened bread.

Rashi (ad loc) describes the four people who have the obligation to bring a *Korbon Todah*:

1. one who traveled over-seas
2. one who was freed from jail
3. one who was sick and was healed
4. one who traveled through the desert.

Therefore, the four kind of breads correspond to these four kinds of

An Ongoing Relationship

If one offers (a peace offering) as a thanksgiving... (7:12)

Rashi (ad loc) explains that this *korbon*, which is known as a *toda*, was brought when a person was delivered through miraculous means from a difficult situation. There is a fascinating Midrash related to the *Korbon Toda*: In the future, (i.e. in the times of Moshiach and when the Beis Hamikdosh is rebuilt) all the sacrifices will become obsolete except for the *Korbon Toda* (*Vayikra Rabbah* 9:7). What's unique about this *korbon* that it endures to the times of the third Beis Hamikdosh?

Since Hashem created the world to give good to mankind, a basic tenet of our relationship with Him is *hakoras hatov* – recognizing the good he has done for us. The first individual to recognize this was Kayin, when he attempted to bring an offering of his own. Unfortunately, his motivation was to relieve himself of the obligation that he felt he owed Hashem. This caused him to bring his offering from an inferior product, which Hashem ignored. Why was it ignored?

The ultimate in good is a closeness to Hashem, so Hashem desires, for our own sake of course, that we have a relationship with Him. Kayin wanted to relieve himself of the obligation; he didn't desire a relationship, which is why he brought his offering from an inferior product. This is akin to an individual paying his taxes to the IRS in a small truck filled with pennies and nickels. In other words, he was making a statement that said, "I despise the fact that I owe this debt and I want to let you know how unhappy I am about it." Kayin missed the whole point of why Hashem created the world.

The *Korbon Toda* is not one of obligation. It is in the family of *korbonos* known as *shelamim* – peace offerings. This sacrifice is not merely a recognition of the good Hashem has bestowed, it is a testimony to our ongoing relationship. The word *shelamim* comes from *shalem* – whole. This refers to the oneness that is created by this relationship, which is also the reason for "peace." When there is a unity there is no dissension. This is why this *korbon* will still be offered in the times of Moshiach; it is the very definition of what those times are all about.

people: the boiled bread is compared to the people who crossed the sea (water), the flat bread is compared to the people who were oppressed in jail (beaten down), the challah is compared to the people who crossed the desert (swollen with hot air), and the oil saturated bread corresponds to those who recovered from a serious illness (ill through and through). While we don't have the ability to bring the *Korbon Todah* nowadays, we do have a corresponding custom that is quite similar — *Birkas Hagomel*.

Birkas Hagomel is a public proclamation of gratitude towards Hashem for saving one from a potentially life-threatening situation. The Gemara (*Berachos* 54b) tells us about our obligation of *Birkas Hagomel*, and lists the same four kinds of situations for which we are required to say this declaration of thanksgiving. Rosh actually states that *Birkas Hagomel* is in place of the *Korbon Todah*, though this seems to be a *machlokes*. There are those who hold (*Magen Avraham OC* 219:1) that *Birkas Hagomel*, like the *Korban Todah*, is non-obligatory, while others (*The Pri Megadim OC* 219:1) disagree and maintain it's required. Nevertheless, all *poskim* say to be careful to fulfill this *mitzvah* given the opportunity.

There is also the *minhag* of making a *seudas hodaah*, which in some ways seems to correspond better with the concept of a *Korbon Todah*; we know that one's table is like a *mizbeach* (which is also why we have salt on it, like the *mizbeach* did).

Additionally there are some Sephardim who hold that any travel that takes longer than 72 minutes requires a *gomel* since all roads are dangerous (Ramban on *Berachos* 54b), although there are dissenting opinions that hold that this is only regarding roads that are specifically dangerous (Meiri on *Berachos* 54b).

