

Congregation

◆◆◆"Beth Yosef"◆◆◆

\*\*\* 2108 Ocean Parkway Brooklyn, N.Y. 11223 \*\*\*

**Rabbi Aharon Farhi**

*Parashat Tzav*  
16<sup>th</sup> Adar Sheni 5782

*Maqam Nawa*  
Issue #977

**Mr. Eliyahu Levy, President**

*Haftarat Vayhi Devar*  
March 19<sup>th</sup> 2022

*Candle Lighting 6:47pm \* Shekiah 7:05pm \* Shir Hashirim 6:40pm followed by Mincha Friday Night  
Shaharit Shabbat 8:15am \* Mincha Shabbat 6:30pm \* Shabbat Ends 7:48pm & Rabbenu Tam 8:18pm  
Time for Talit 6:51am \* Seasonal Hour 7:00 \* Alot Hashahar 5:37am \* Netz Hachama 7:01am  
Weekday Mincha 7:00pm \* Earliest Time for Arbit 6:17pm \* Tzet Hacoachavim 6:43pm \* Chatzot 1:03  
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema 9:07am \* Latest Time for Morning Amidah 10:17am*

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After reading in detail about the many different sacrifices described in Parashat Vayikra, the Torah now introduces a new sacrifice: the *Thanksgiving Offering (Todah)*. This was no ordinary sacrifice. It was not offered in order to gain atonement for sins committed, and was not sacrificed in order to become purified. This sacrifice offering would enlighten the one bringing it with the deep and clear essence of Judaism. Why was it called a *Thanksgiving Offering (Todah)*? *Rashi* explains that it is an expression of gratitude to Hashem for having survived a life-threatening crisis, as a recognition that Hashem was the One who saved him (i.e. safely crossing the ocean or the desert, being freed from jail, having recovered from a sickness...) This sacrifice is therefore titled *Thanksgiving Offering (Todah)* in recognition and gratitude of Hashem. We learn from here a valuable lesson. One who has been saved from danger should properly direct his gratitude to Hashem and recognize Hashem as the One who is always watching over him. Now, why is it also referred to in the Pasuk as a *Shalmei Todah* – a *Thanksgiving Peace* offering? The understanding is that this is a sacrifice that is brought when one draws closer to Hashem through his recognition and gratitude. One who successfully draws closer to Hashem in

such a manner merits *peace* and *completeness* through his actions, as he was in danger and has now been saved from harm and danger. The holy Anshei Knesset Hagedolah with divine insight understood the need to institute in the morning prayers, as soon as we wake up, before everything, before reading the Akeda, Korbanot, Zemiroth, Amidah, before everything else, the first thing we say is *Modeh Ani*, thank you Hashem! Then we thank Hashem for using the bathroom, for opening our eyes, for being able to get up, for having clothing, etc. Throughout life, a person can otherwise start to lose focus of the importance and great value of his existence, the true fundamental understanding of his lifetime, and therefore takes gifts and blessings for granted. For example, many do not properly realize how valuable their life is and therefore do not appreciate the priceless gifts granted to us each day, such as our health, happiness, and countless blessings. However, one who has recently been saved from certain forms of danger and offers a *Todah* sacrifice has merited a new and proper understanding of the value of life – which is actually a gift from heaven as well. He feels as if he has been reborn, given a new lease on life, and now views his days with more importance. He could have easily not survived the danger he

recently faced and all would have ended. The past is not his main focus – he looks to the future and cherishes every day as a gift from Hashem. He is now a new man, one with a future filled with endless opportunities. He enjoys his life with a passion and feels reenergized. He may have felt unmotivated before, but now that he has been saved from what could have been his end, he values every moment with great enthusiasm. He now feels *Shalem*, which is why it is called a *Shealmei Todah*, an *offering of thanks* for being blessed with *peace* and *completeness*. May Hashem watch over us, Amen.

### **Insights on the Parasha**

The Pasuk says regarding the Minha offering, “*It is most holy (Kodesh Kadashim), like the sin-offering (Chatat) and the like the guilt-offering (Asham)*”. Why are the Chatat and Asham offerings, brought when one sins, considered to be Kodesh Kadashim? The Torah is teaching us that when a person sins and does Teshuvah, repents and corrects himself for the future, such actions are most holy, Kodesh Kadashim! Someone who does Teshuvah becomes ever so close to Hashem by distancing from the wrong of the world, the pleasures and desires, the evil inclination, and instead reserves himself for Hashem and holiness, waking up early to pray in Shul, not sleeping Shabbat morning until 10:00am, doesn’t eat anything unless it is Kosher, as well as countless examples of what is permitted and what is prohibited. Therefore such a reserved person, who can clear his mind and actions, and can return to Hashem, is considered most holy.

### **History in Brief**

*80 years after the Temple’s destruction, in the year 150AD.* The Roman Caesar forced the Jews to do things against the Torah. For example, he would force a Jewish shopkeeper to first only sell Kosher meat for the Jews, which doesn’t sound bad, but then one day he would switch the instructions suddenly to only selling pork and bacon for Romans. What happened? When someone entered his store to eat, he would pay

attention and see if he washed Netillat Yadayim to know whether he was a Jew or a Roman. One day a Jew came in but did not wash his hands Netillah, The storekeeper, not being allowed to ask, gave him pig to eat, as instructed when serving Romans, and he ate without a blessing. When it came time to pay, the customer did not understand the bill, so the storekeeper explained it was due to the price of the pig. The hairs stood up on the Jewish customer’s back. He had been fed pig! But the shopkeeper defended himself that he could not have known, as the customer was not acting like a Jew, by not washing his hands or reciting blessings. During those times, unfortunately many Jews went off the path of Judaism and were collected by the priests. The Romans prohibited Brit Milah, and many Jews didn’t circumcise their children, who then grew up and married Roman women. They also took away the special day of Shabbat and switched the day of rest to Sunday.

### **Health and Recovery**

The olive is one of seven species that the land of Israel is praised for producing. It is first introduced in the Torah during the Great Flood in the days of Noah, as the dove brought back an olive branch in its mouth. An olive branch therefore symbolizes peace, a symbol recognized and used throughout the world. Olive oil was used to anoint our kings and Cohen Gadol. Olive oil was also used with sacrifices brought upon the Mizbeah. Olive trees can live for hundreds of years, and in fact there are olive trees in Israel today that are over a thousand years old! David Hamelech wished to be like an olive tree in his older years. In the Torah, olive oil labeled as Yitzhar is pure, clean olive oil without anything else. Oil is used for lighting, eating, smearing, and healing. There are hundreds of different types of olives – some are grown for the oil, and some are grown for consumption.

### **Mussar: Love for Hashem**

There is nothing greater than loving Hashem, for all services for Hashem sprout forth from this attribute. There is no comparison between a

person who serves Hashem with love and a person who serves Hashem with fear. Loving Hashem is one of the 613 Mitzvot that one is able to always fulfill. One can fulfill this Mitzvah even through just thought. Everyone has constant thoughts – one should just substitute his usual thoughts with some thoughts of love for Hashem, and he will have fulfilled a great Mitzvah! Love Hashem and His great Torah, which is the source and the wellsprings of life and from which you can draw much merit. If someone gives you a gift you automatically begin to like them. If they completely support you and grant you all of your needs, you begin to love them. If they then save your life and prevent, or even cure you, from terrible sicknesses, you will feel great love towards that person. How much more must we love Hashem who grants us everything, whether it appears to be coming from heaven or from another person – it is really always from Hashem! For every breath we take we must thank Hashem and feel great love towards Him. Do not close off your heart! Hashem continuously grants us life and countless goodness, even while we are sinning, and allows us time to repent and have remorse over our wrongdoings. One can begin counting the great favors Hashem performs for us, starting from his mother's womb before he was even born! There are countless favors Hashem does for us each and every moment - we are unaware of most of them - and unfortunately, we do not think enough about the ones we do know about. We must strengthen our love for Hashem and our bond with Him, fulfill His Mitzvot, and toil greatly in the depths of His holy Torah. May Hashem merit us, Amen.

### **Rishon LeSion: R' Rephael Meir 1801-1893**

When R' Rephael found favor in the eyes of the Pope during his travels to Rome, the Pope asked R' Rephael if he wished to see the treasures of the Vatican. He was shown the special vessels of the Bet Hamikdash that the wicked Titus had taken after he destroyed it. R' Rephael writes in his Sefer that when he saw this, tears streamed down his face. He knew he was one of the only Jews to have such an opportunity at that time.

When he returned from his Shelichut journeys, he was appointed as a leader, Nasi, and a head judge, Av Bet Din. He was a powerful force of holiness committed to serving and guiding the Jewish Sephardic people. He established the Yeshivot and Talmud Torah "Doresh Sion" and "Tiferet Yerushalayim" for Sepharadim. These were powerful institutions that produced many great Torah Scholars and countless generations of righteousness to follow. Such work would prove essential to fighting off the waves of Maskilim enlightenment during the years to come, who would often trample over the holy Sages of Israel.

### **Story**

Shimon was a merchant who leased a wheat grinding mill along the waterfront. To produce flour, no longer would you need countless workers to turn the grinding stone from morning to night, with too much sweat and energy just to produce a small amount of flour. In those days, they already had the technology of using the water nearby to power the grinding process, and as a result Shimon was able to produce much more fine flour than ever before. Shimon used this business to employ his Jewish brethren and provide food to his people as well. For ten years Shimon leased this mill from the non-Jewish owner, and they shared a very good business relationship, always paying on time and having no issues at all.

### **Laws: Pesah**

- 1** – It is a good custom, beginning from the first day of the month of Nissan, to read every day the Parasha of the Nasi's donation for that day.
- 2** – There are no communal fasts during the month of Nissan. However, it is permitted for an individual to fast on the passing of a father or mother.
- 3** – The Shabbat immediately preceding Pesach is called *Shabbat Hagadol*, the *Great Shabbat*, and on this day, everyone has a holy obligation to gather in Shul and listen to their Rabbi speak about the laws and topics pertaining to Pesach. One greets his friend on this day by saying *Shabbat Hagadol Shalom*.

**4** – Both men and women are obligated to recite Birkat Ha'Ilanot, the blessing on the trees. One may also recite it during Shabbat and Yom Tov.

**5** – Birkat Ha'Ilanot may be recited any time throughout the month of Nissan. One should however be quick to fulfill this Mitzvah sooner than later, and should rather say it alone than wait until he gets an opportunity to recite it with a Minyan.

**6** – If the fruit already grew, or if the flowers already fell off and the fruit is beginning to grow, then the blessings can no longer be recited. If the trees have still not blossomed by the end of the month of Nissan, one may recite the blessing in the month of Iyar.

**7** – Before the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan we clean the entire house and make sure that there isn't any Chametz to be found. We also clean the library and children's briefcases.

**8** – It is necessary to search for Chametz in the holes and cracks in the house, car, porch, stairs, garden, buffet, refrigerator, kitchen cabinets, appliances, and under the dressers and beds. Even though this is very bothersome, *According to the degree of pain is the reward.* Also, the Shuls and Batei Medrashim must be checked.

**9** – It is customary to place ten very small pieces of bread, individually wrapped in aluminum foil or paper, and place them around the house before the person doing the search for Chametz begins. If one of these ten pieces is not found during the course of the search, there is no need to search the premises again until that piece is found; the person can rely on the Bittul Chametz.

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