

Parshas Tzav

In this week's Parsha, Tzav, and Shabbos Hagadol, we are further presented with the Korbanos. The Parsha specifically starts with the Olah offering that is burnt throughout the night. Rashi explains the use of the word "Command" (Tzav) to urge us to perform this commandment. Rashi quotes Kiddushin 29a, that this mitzvah is for future generations, and quotes R'Shimon that the pesukim especially urges the fulfillment of Mitzvos even when there is monetary loss involved. Ramban states that R'Shimon's point wasn't concerning financial loss because of the Korban because the Kohanim stand to gain (i.e., profit).

Ramban then explains that this explanation urges people to heed the mitzvah. If we take this further, the Torah and Rashi's explanation of it is eternal. The lesson here is precisely to override the human inclination to try to implement efficiencies by cutting costs. In modern times, businesses and organizations go through a "restructuring." Often, cost-saving regimens are implemented, specifically around cutting costs, so certain systems "have to go." Rashi tells us to negate this inclination by heeding the commandments and not trying to apply "cost-saving" measures and reduce the mitzvah. This is not to say that in Halacha, the concept of Hephseid Meruba is invaluable, it is used all the time by Halakhic masters as a (personal) gauge of loss and whether to be strict (in the event the issue isn't the violation of biblical wrongdoing). But Hephseid Meruba is arguably a subjective value. Whereas what Rashi is telling us here is to bear in mind that on a communal level, especially when it comes

to supporting our communal servants, we ought not to cut costs by saying they may or may not deserve to be paid.

Furthermore, on an individual level, perhaps we can push ourselves beyond our comfort zone; when it feels like we want to "cut costs," we resist the temptation (logical as it may be) and remember Tzav! We do this for Hashem! (Following Chizkuni's explanation on the above Rashi).

Another point to remember, the Olah offering is a complete offering and voluntarily brought (Sforno explains). So, when a voluntary offering is brought, one ought not to forget to bring the offering, even in a cost-cutting measure, because Hashem appreciates the complete offering (which brings a sweet smell to Hashem-Reiach Nichoach, according to Chassidus this level of pleasure-Ta'anug to Hashem- is even higher than logic).

The Gemara in Berachos 2a explains that all the remaining fats that must be burned do so throughout the night (in case there was no time during the day). The Gemara there asks why the Chachamim tell us to stop burning at midnight. They answer to prevent a transgression. That is, if a person thinks they have all night to do something, it is possible they will wait until the last minute, which the sages wanted to prevent. This also aligns with Rashi et al.'s explanations about the haste in which a person needs to heed the mitzvah; beyond trying to justify it away, even when performing it, it ought to be done as early as possible.

Rambam on the Parsha elucidates that when Mashiach comes, the laws of the Korbanos will be reinstated. Perhaps Rambam is focused on the Tzav for future

generations, to note that we should make haste on Mitzvos (even the ones which may be voluntary and “cost us”) in Golus as a method for preparing for Mashiach. As I explained from Chassidus last week, Korbanos in our time are replaced by the sacrifices we make in our time to negate the animal soul’s desire to trump the spiritual soul.

How appropriate is the reading of Tzav on the Shabbos that precedes Pesach, where we celebrate and recognize the redemption from slavery? Tzav teaches us that we must perform our Mitzvos with the same haste, reverence, alacrity, and fervour as if they were just commanded to us, and even now, all this time later, when we are at the door awaiting Mashiach, with our buttons and shoes polished¹. Every Pesach, we renew our memories of the distant past and make that story relevant to us in our own Golus as we await speedy redemption. As the Alter Rebbe in Lekutei Torah on the Parsha explains, just as the fire on the Mizbeach must always be kept aflame (as explained in Talmud Yerushalmi, whether in a state of impurity or on Shabbos), so too, our alter, which is our Neshama, must continuously be set aflame toward our Father in Heaven. Furthermore, on Shabbos Hagadol, the Rabbis of Shuls give halachic speeches regarding Pesach. Pesach is a holiday full of precise and unique laws requiring much scrutiny and intention. Tzav, in the general sense, tells us and reminds us not to be weary but instead with haste and alacrity to welcome the holiday and all its nuances. Tzav also means connection. Through these

lessons, and the alacritous method of serving Hashem, ultimately, we connect to Hashem, which is the point.

May the lessons of Tzav keep our soul fire aflame, and may we merit to the final redemption Now! Good Shabbos

¹ From the Freidieker Rebbe Sefer Hasichos 5689 p. 42. The rebbe also repeated this in a sicha on 12 Teves 5747.