

חמודי שי על התורה והמועדים

Chamudei Shai on the Torah and Holidays

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Parashas Tzav & Shabbos HaGodol

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Parashas Tzav

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- The meaning of bowing specifically in the blessing of the Avos and the blessing of Modim
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- The perpetual fire (*aish tamid*) in contrast to the perpetual lamp (*ner tamid*)

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- The hand of Moshe as the hand of Hashem

Parashas Tzav

I

The principle of the "Oznayim LaTorah"

צו אֶת־אֶהֱרֹךְ וְאֶת־בְּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תִּזְרֹת הַעֹלָה הוּא הָעֹלָה עַל־מִזְבֵּיחַ
כָּל־הַלֵּלָה עַד־תִּבְקֹר וְאִשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּיחַ תִּיָּקֵד בּוֹ: (ויקרא ג, ב)

In the Holy Torah, "Command Aharon and his sons, saying, this is the law of the burnt offering: It is the burnt offering that remains on the mokdah (fire-altar) on the mizbaiach all night until the morning, and the fire of the mizbaiach shall be kept burning on it." (Vayikra 6:2)

The Gaon, Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin, zt"l, the Rabbi of Lutzk, author of *Oznayim LaTorah*, writes: "Mokdah/מִזְבֵּיחַ - this is the great fire-woodpile (Yoma 33a). Everything great must show signs of humility and smallness. So too, we find

that a common person must bow in the *Shemoneh Esrei* in *Avos* at the beginning and at the end, and also in *Modim* at the beginning and at the end, while the Kohen Gadol bows at the end of each and every *berachah* (Berachos 34b). There, in Rashi, s.v. Kohen Gadol: 'The greater one is, the more he must humble and lower oneself.' The Torah hinted at this with the 'great fire-woodpile' of the *mizbaiach* and wrote Mokdah/מִזְבֵּיחַ with a small *mem*."

These are his words in his sefer *Oznayim LaTorah*.

Expanding his words in relation to bowing in prayer and the olah-offering

It seems, in my humble opinion, that one may expand the *yesod* (foundation) of the Rav of Lutzk, both in depth and in breadth.

It is known that the daily prayers were instituted corresponding to the daily *tamid* offerings (Berachos 26b), and the *tamid* offerings were olos, burnt offerings, wholly consumed by the fires, as written in our parasha. The fixed elements in the *shemoneh esrei* prayer are the first three blessings and the final three blessings that are always said. They are constant and continual blessings, corresponding precisely to the continual *tamid* offerings. Therefore, we understand why these blessings include bowings of humility and self-nullification. Just as the olah is wholly consumed by the fires and embodies complete self-nullification to Hashem, so too, these blessings contain prostrations that express absolute submission to the Holy One, blessed be He.

The meaning of the blessing of Avos and the blessing of Modim

We have already explained in several places in our books *Chamudei Shai* on

Bereishis and *Shemos* that the blessing of Avos is the foundation of everything, of our faith and our connection with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Therefore, it certainly requires bowing to nullify oneself and connect to Him, may He blessed.

Likewise, with the blessing of Modim, in which a person must thank Hashem with his whole heart for all that Hashem has given us, all as bestowed as a pure gift and not by merit. For this, one must give thanks with complete humility, expressed through bowing.

Hints in the word Mokdah

It seems to me that this is hinted at in the word *mokdah*/מִקְדָּה. The small *mem* hints at מוֹדִים - Modim, for in gratitude, one must diminish oneself and acknowledge that everything was bestowed as a free gift and not by merit. And when the *mem* is diminished, the prominent letters are those of *v'kida*/וְקִדָּה, which in Hebrew means and prostrate yourself!

The fire of the Mizbaiach as the collective fervor of Knesses Yisrael

Furthermore, it may be said that the great fire of the *ma'arachah gedolah* (large

woodpile) does not allude to the greatness of an individual from Klal Yisrael, but rather to the greatness of the entire Klal, the Knesses Yisrael.

For we have only one *mizbaiach*, and the offerings brought upon it included the communal offerings. The entire community contributed equally through a half-shekel, in complete equality. All of it was given with the fervor of a holy fire, beginning already with the giving of the half-shekel, in the secret of the coin of fire that Hashem showed Moshe. Thus, the communal offering ascended on the *mizbaiach* together with the fervor and love of Klal Yisrael for their Father in Heaven, and with their readiness to devote themselves entirely to Him. (See Rashi on *Bamidbar* 16:6, s.v. *zos asu*, and what is written in *Chamudei Shai* on *Bereishis* in the essay on *Zos Chanukah*, and in *Chamudei Shai* on *Shemos* in Parashas *Terumah*).

The aish tamid in contrast to the ner tamid

When we delve deeper, we find that the *aish tamid*, the continual fire, signifies the fervor of the love of Knesses Yisrael for their Father in Heaven, burning always with a holy fire whose flames endure at all times and seasons, even when the *temidim* themselves are not being offered, they are

represented by the three prayers of the day. The fervor of love is continual, whether during our *avodah* to Him, blessed be He, or while we are engaged in the affairs of this world.

And behold, the *ner tamid*, continual lamp of the menorah, was a perpetual miracle from Him, blessed be He, to show all who come to the world that the Shechinah always dwells with Klal Yisrael. But the *aish tamid* was from Knesses Yisrael, even if its origin was from Heaven. Nevertheless, the obligation of *איש תמיד תוקד על המזבה לא* "איש תמיד תוקד על המזבה לא" - "A continual fire shall burn on the *mizbaiach*; it shall not be extinguished" rests upon Knesses Yisrael and derives from our strength. We are obligated to ensure there is sufficient firewood for the fire-pile so that the fire does not go out, because the *aish tamid* represents the fervor of Knesses Yisrael's love for their Father in Heaven.



II

The hand of Moshe as the Hand of Hashem

And Aharon and his sons did all the things that Hashem commanded by the hand of Moshe (Vayikra 8:36).

The phrase *אשר צוה ה' - "by the hand of Moshe"* requires explanation. It would seem to have been sufficient to have said that Hashem commanded Moshe. What is the meaning of "by the hand of Moshe"?

In Chamudei Shai on *Shemos*, Parashas Ki Sisa, in the section Pearls from the Torah of the Maharal Tzintz, we cited from his sefer *Melo HaOmer* that the anointing oil became holy through the holiness of Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe imparted from his holiness, thereby rendering the oil holy.

Furthermore, we see in our parasha that Moshe Rabbeinu served as the Kohen Gadol during all *shiv'as yemei hamiluim*, seven days of inauguration,

dedicating the Mishkan and its vessels, as well as Aharon and his sons, for the service of the Mishkan. We see that Moshe does not merely transmit instructions regarding the holiness of the Mishkan and its vessels and the holiness of Aharon and his sons. Rather, he assumed the status of a *shaliach*, an agent who performs an act according to the command of the One Who sent him. The power of the hand of the agent operates through the strength and merits of the sender.

Accordingly, it follows that the entire sanctity of the Mishkan and its vessels, and the sanctity of the *kehunah* of Aharon and his sons, came into being through the hands and agency of Moshe, empowered through the authorization from the command of Hashem. Therefore, it is fittingly written, "that Hashem commanded by the hand of Moshe."

Maharal Tzintz ב-י-ל-א ואמן

PEARLS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE GAON FROM PLOTZK

The crown of Torah is greater than the crown of kehunah

Our parasha deals with the practical details of the laws of the sacrificial service and the unique holiness of Aharon and his sons, the kohanim. However, the parasha opens with: *Command Aharon and his sons, saying, This is the law of the olah, burnt offering: It is the olah.*

Rabbeinu, the Maharal Tzintz, explains that when Klal Yisrael comes to offer korbanos to Hashem in the Beis HaMikdash, there is a concern that their hearts may become distressed. They may feel pained because they themselves did not merit to be granted the privilege of serving before Hashem, while only the kohanim perform the service of the korbanos. To prevent this grief, the pasuk opens with this introduction.

The Torah commands Aharon and his sons, *leimor*, to say... that the kohanim are to say to the Jews who come to offer korbanos: Know that although you did not merit to offer the korban yourselves, you are able to engage in the Torah, and Torah is more beloved than anything else. *This is the law (Zos Toras) of the olah* – means one who engages in the Torah is as if he himself offered an olah. Thus, through the Torah, one can merit the mitzvah of offering just like the kohanim.

The pasuk further teaches that one who studies Torah is not only considered like the kohanim but is on a higher level than them. For it is written, "It is the olah" הוא העולה in the masculine form, which refers to the korban, but it is read in the Torah as "It is the olah" - "היא העולה" in the feminine form, which refers to the holy Torah. This indicates that the Torah is the burnt offering. The level of offering before Hashem achieved through studying Torah is the most important olah. It is the olah, with the definite article. The crown of Torah is greater than the crown of *kehunah*.

And as with the opening, so too with the conclusion. Rabbeinu, the Maharal Tzintz, continues and shows that just as the Torah opens the laws of the sacrificial service with the greatness of the crown of Torah, it also concludes with the greatness of the Torah. Let us reflect and see that at the conclusion of the laws of the korbanos, after the Torah summarizes the virtue of the kohanim and the gifts of the *kehunah*, it is stated: *This is the law for the olah, for the mincha, for the chatas, for the asham, for the miluim, and for the zevach ha'shelamim (Vayikra 7:37)*. Our Sages derived from this that anyone who engages in the Torah is as if he offered all the korbanos mentioned in that pasuk.

Among the virtues of the Torah: There are three crowns: *kehunah*, kingship, and Torah. The crown of *kehunah* was merited by Aharon, the crown of kingship was merited by Dovid Hamelech, and the crown of Torah is available to anyone who wishes to take it. And it is the greatest of them all. For the Torah says of itself, בי מלאכים ימלוכו - "Through me, kings rule," the Torah is what crowns the other kings, and one who crowns is greater than the one who is crowned. The mitzvah of korbanos began only with the dedication of the Mishkan, whereas the offering through studying the Torah began already with the receiving of the Torah at Sinai.

The crown of Torah is greater than the crown of *kehunah*, and it is accessible to all who wish to acquire it.

Shabbos HaGadol

Insights on the miracle of Shabbos HaGadol

The words of the Tur are well known,

citing Chazal, that Shabbos HaGadol commemorates a special law unique to the Pesach in Mitzrayim. Four days before the offering of the *Korban Pesach* in

Mitzrayim, on Shabbos day, they prepared the lambs by tying them to bedposts. The Egyptians saw what we were doing and knew that we were preparing this animal,

which they worshipped, as an offering to Hashem! Yet they did not harm us; they remained silent and allowed us to fulfill the temporary commandment of "משכו וקחו" - "Draw and take". Therefore, we call this Shabbos, Shabbos HaGadol, in remembrance of the great miracle that occurred there.

Now, there are two points to examine:

1. Why was the commandment of "Draw and take" specifically for the Pesach Mitzrayim and not for the Pesach of future generations?
2. The temporary commandment was on the 10th of Nissan, as Chazal say, "Purchase it on the tenth," and it seems that the fact that it fell on Shabbos that year was entirely incidental. If so, why do we commemorate this miracle on the Shabbos before Pesach, rather than on the 10th of Nissan?

The Beginning of Jewish Identity

And this is the wording of Rashi on *Shemos* (12:6):

"And why did He require taking it four days before its slaughter, something He did not command for the Pesach of future generations? Rebbi Masya ben Charash said: Behold, it says (Yechezkel 16:8), 'And I passed over you and saw you, and behold, your time was a time of love.' The oath I swore to Avraham that I would redeem his children had come due, but they had no divine commandments to engage in so that they should merit to be redeemed, as it is said (ibid.), 'And you were naked and bare' (i.e. bare of all merit earned through the fulfilment of Hashem's commands). Therefore, He gave them two commandments: the blood of the *Korban Pesach* and the blood of *bris milah*, for they circumcised themselves that night, as it is said, 'Wallowing in your bloods' (ibid.) (בְּדַמֵּיךָ is plural) with two kinds of blood. And further it says (Zechariah 9:11), 'As for you also, because of the blood of your

covenant, I have sent forth your prisoners from the pit where there is no water.' And since they were steeped in idolatry, He said to them, 'Draw משכו and take וקחו for yourselves' – withdraw your hands away from idolatry and take for yourselves sheep to fulfill a mitzvah (Mechilta)."

Thus, Hashem, had to give us the mitzvos of *Korban Pesach* and *bris milah* to truly make us truly children of Avraham, so that Hashem would be bound to fulfill toward us the oath He had sworn to Avraham. However, mitzvos beyond the seven mitzvos for the descendants of Noach, have no spiritual effect if performed by non-Jews. At that time, we were immersed in idolatry, just like the Egyptians. Therefore, it could have been justly argued: What makes this nation different from the Egyptians? Both were idol worshippers. Why then should the commandments of *Korban Pesach* and *bris milah* work to our merit and elevate us spiritually?

Therefore, in order to help that generation detach from idolatry and thereby separate from the Egyptians, Hashem gave

them the special command of "Draw and take. This established the very beginning of Jewish identity, distinct from the rest of the descendants of Noah. Hashem commanded them: "Draw and Take." **Draw** your hands away from idolatry, and by doing so, you separate yourselves from the nations. Then, **take** for yourselves sheep for a mitzvah and through this act, enter a higher spiritual plane, which is the very beginning of your Jewish identity. Only after withdrawal from idolatry could the mitzvos of *Korban Pesach* and *bris milah* affect us positively.

**Shabbos HaGadol
every Year, the
renewal of the
beginning of Jewish
identity**

Since the essence of "Draw and take" is about detachment from idolatry and the beginning of Jewish identity, the fact that the 10th of Nissan fell on Shabbos in the year of the Exodus from Egypt was not a coincidence. It was the central intent!

The sanctity of Shabbos and its laws were given to us at Marah. Yet Hashem desired that through "Draw and take,"

they would experience a revelation of the sanctity of Shabbos, which is truly essential to Jewish identity, as it is said, "עכו"ם" "ששבת חייב מיתה" "A non-Jew who observes Shabbos is liable to death." The Bnei Yisrael in Egypt already recognized Shabbos as a special and spiritual day, for Moshe Rabbeinu had arranged for them to be exempt from the labor of enslavement on Shabbos, and they had scrolls of Torah teachings from their forefathers, which they would study on Shabbos. Therefore, it was certainly fitting to give them the mitzvah of "Draw and take" on Shabbos. And since its whole purpose was "draw your hands from idols", Shabbos is particularly suited for this, for Chazal say, "for one who observes Shabbos properly, even if he is an idolater like the generation of Enosh is forgiven" (Shabbos 118b).

Accordingly, it is clear why, after the year of Yetzias Mitzrayim, we do not commemorate this miracle on the 10th of Nissan, but rather on the Shabbos before Pesach. The emphasis on Shabbos reveals, retroactively, that an essential intent was to draw some aspect of the sanctity of Shabbos in that

first Shabbos HaGadol in Mitzrayim. And ever since we have had Shabbos, our Jewish identity is renewed through it, as we say in Havdalah: "He who separates between holy and secular, between light and darkness, between Yisrael and the nations, between the Seventh day and the six days of labor." See further what is written about this in Chamudei Shai on *Shemos* in Parashas Bo and in Chamudei Shai on the *Pesach Haggadah* regarding the Makkas Choshech.

**The refinement of
Jewish identity
through the Exodus
and Matan Torah**

This was the beginning of our Jewish identity. But our identity continued to be refined through the commandments we fulfilled and the events that transpired during the Exodus and the giving of the Torah.

We offered the first *Korban Pesach* in our history. We were commanded to smear the blood, according to most opinions, on the outside of the doorposts as a sign that we had fulfilled the mitzvah. The blood

displayed prominently outside the doorposts testified that we had slaughtered the deity of the Egyptians. We were unafraid. We proved our faith in Hashem by showing the Egyptians that we did not fear them or their gods. We rejected them. We have a new Master, Ribbono Shel Olam, and we were fulfilling His commandments.

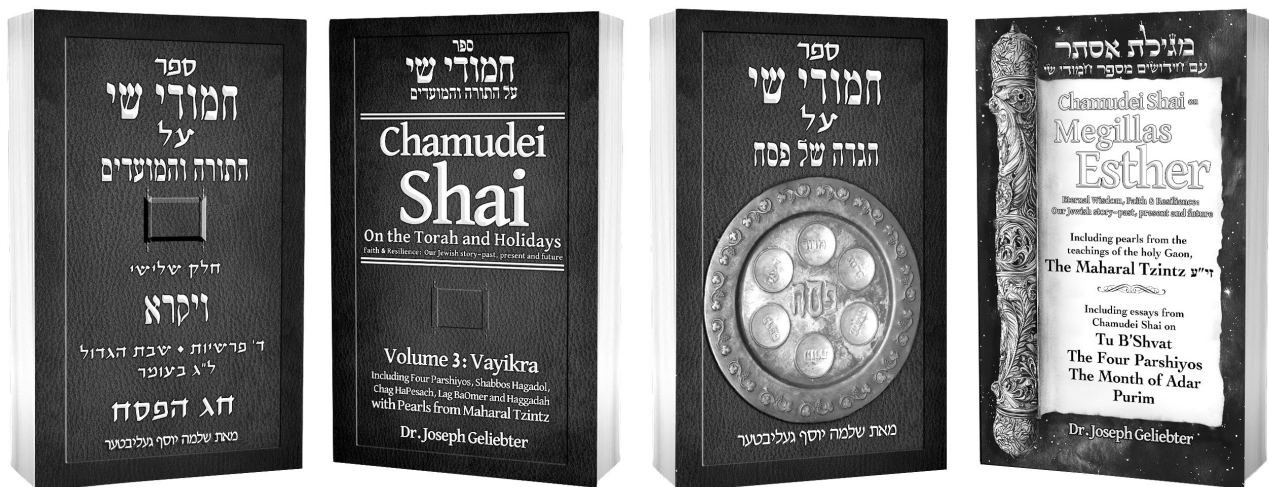
Through this, the concept of Jewish identity was further refined into the idea of "the Jewish family", as

we were commanded, שה - "A lamb for a father's house, a lamb for a household."

And at midnight, when Hashem struck every firstborn in the land of Egypt, at that moment there was a revelation of the Shechinah that purified us with the secret of מקוה ה' - "the mikveh of Klal Yisrael is Hashem," as we explained at length above in *Parashas Parah*. Then there came a full Divine acceptance for the *Korban Pesach*, this connects to the secret of

"Nirtzah" on the Seder night, as we will explain in Chamudei Shai on the Pesach Haggadah on the topic "Pesach", and in the introduction to "Nirtzah".

And at Matan Torah, Jewish identity was further refined into the status of a Jewish nation, when we received the Torah as "one person with one heart", and in the famous words of Rav Saadia Gaon: אין אומתינו - "Our nation is not a nation except through its Torah."



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