

RED ALERT!

Tzav-Para

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DIVREI TORAH

• The first commandment in this sidra is commanding the Kohen to remove the ashes that have accumulated on the outside Altar. The Chovot HaLevavot notes that Hashem specifically commanded Aharon and his sons to remove the ashes every day, a seemingly menial task, in order to teach them humility. The greater a person is, the more he is obligated to realize how small he truly is. The tendency, obviously, is the reverse. With greatness comes haughtiness and arrogance. This sidra is dedicated to the work of the Kohanim in bringing the sacrifices of individual Jewish people who approach them in order to become closer to Hashem. The Kohanim feel important. They are the means for each individual to gain that closeness to the Almighty. Consequently, before detailing their responsibilities, the Torah commands them in the menial task that dirties their clothing and is quite janitorial in action. This was specifically meant to bring the Kohen off the pedestal, so to speak, and realize his function in the scheme of life.

• The Torah stipulates that the Kohen changes his clothing in order to take the ashes outside of the camp. Rashi comments that this is not actually obligatory, but rather teaches us and the Kohen good manners, Derech Eretz, not to dirty the clothes that he had worn while serving at the Altar. Rashi continues in his commentary and draws his example from daily life: clothes that one has worn while cooking a stew for his master, should not be worn when the servant goes to pour a glass of wine for his master. To use the same logic: in the synagogue to dress as we do outside, to speak in the same brusque manner inside Hashem's house as outside, to wear the same garment for carrying out the ashes as we do for the service of the Altar, is not only an infraction of law, but a breach of good manners. We need to think of how we conduct ourselves inside the synagogue and outside the synagogue. We are required to conduct ourselves in an honest way, at all times taking in mind our position as servants of Hashem. Nevertheless we realize that there are certain tasks that we perform that are inappropriate for inside a synagogue and when we do them outside the synagogue we still have to conduct ourselves in a proper fashion even though we are dressed in a much more informal way.

- Rabbi Mattis Weinberg of Yerushalayim states that the parsha of Vayikra is not concerned with sacrifices, per se, but with their affect on the soul of the donor who seeks closeness to Hashem. Consequently it starts with the heartfelt voluntary offerings and does not even mention the obligatory nature of the sin offerings dealt with at the end of the parsha. In this week's sidra, however, Parshat Tzav is concerned with objective laws of the sacrifices themselves, the province of the officiating Kohanim to whom these laws are directed. Now we are really talking about sacrifices and not so much the affect on the donor. When we think of the personal involvement of the donor, we should envision Avraham and the other Patriarchs when they offered sacrifices to Hashem. They truly wished to enter into the Divine proximity. Avraham in the Akeida story is offering Yitzchak as a perfect burnt offering, an Olah. There is a long drawn-out scenario of the human journey to get closer to Hashem. It is not only the description of what happened on top of the mountain, but it is the description in the three-day travel to that event. In the final analysis of that story, the physical body was preserved and yet man became much closer to God via

the sacrifice. (Reminder: in that story the ram was sacrificed as a substitute for Yitzchak.)

- From our parsha we see the Kohen as a very busy person when he ministers to Hashem as a go-between between man and God. We could look at the scene as if he were a master technician in the business of religion. The Torah, though, wishes to convey to us that the Kohen is not really a technician authorized to perform a service, but rather he is an integral part of the bringing of the sacrifice. This is seen by the various rituals involving action on the earlobe, thumb and toe of the Kohen, etc. as described in the parsha. So, too, the fact that Kohanim must eat of various offerings, indicating their integral involvement in the whole process. (Torah Tidbits, Phil Chernofsky)

- As we get closer to Pesach, we need to note the treatment of sacrifices here and the Pesach sacrifice that we recall vividly on Seder night. The act of eating of the sacrifice is a very important function of the entire ritual. Eating is one of the most physical acts a person can do, but it is critical for a Jew to realize that this mundane act of eating needs to be infused with spirituality. Rav Kook zt"l, pointed out that by the recitation of Brachot and delivering Divrei

Torah at the meal, a Jewish person elevates the mundane act of feeding his face to a Seudat Mitzva, a meal that honors Hashem. The sacrifices are all connected to the consumption of food, be it consumed by the Altar, by the Kohanim, and/or the donors. Partaking of the sacrifice constitutes perfect eating, meaning that it is a mundane act elevated by a religious standard. The closest we get to this is Seder night when representation of the sacrifice is at the table and so much of our Seder ritual involves itself with consumption of food. We are truly elevating our table to Altar status. Just as there is a great difference between people devouring food in a restaurant or on the street and those eating at a Shabbat table singing Zemiroth, so too there is a great difference between eating at the Seder table and in the Beit HaMikdash. When we step back and look at this bigger picture of what eating a sacrifice is all about, we realize that man has been imbued with the ability of worshiping God through eating and sustaining himself in a mundane fashion. In this way we end up sanctifying the act of eating, and a human being reaches the heights of holiness through the most physical of all acts. (based on Rabbi Shlomo Aviner)

Questions by RED

From the Text

1. To whom is this Parsha directed? (6:2)
2. Where are the ashes from the Altar placed before being taken out of the Sanctuary premises? (6:3)
3. Who gets to eat the meat of the Sin offering? (6:22)
4. Who was to witness the consecration of Aharon as Kohen Gadol? (8:4)
5. How long did the consecration ritual take? (8:33)

From Rashi

6. What clothing did the Kohen wear when he removed the ashes? (6:4)
7. How often did a regular Kohen bring a Meal (Mincha) offering? How often did the Kohen Gadol bring a Meal offering? (6:13)
8. What kind of animal was brought as a Guilt (Asham) offering? (7:3)
9. Who eats the meat of the Thanksgiving (TODA) offering? (7:14, 28-34)
10. How was Moshe going to “take” Aharon to consecrate him? (8:2)

From the Rabbis

11. Who may slaughter the animal brought as a Guilt (Asham) offering? (Sifra)
12. In the days of Mashiach, what kind of sacrifices will be brought? (Yefei Toar)

13. Who is required to bring a Thanksgiving (TODA) sacrifice? (Talmud)

From the Midrash

14. All kinds of wood are permitted to burn on the Altar, except two. Which two?

From the Haftara for Parshat Para (Yechezkel)

15. Why was the subject of Para Aduma (the Red Cow) read now, just after Purim?

Relationships

16.

- a) Aharon - Itamar
- b) Elazar - Chur
- c) Yocheved - Tzipora
- d) Pinchas - Gershom
- e) Moshe - Kalev

ANSWERS

- 1. To the Kohanim
- 2. On the ground next to the Altar.
- 3. Every Kohen.
- 4. The entire congregation of Israel.
- 5. One week.
- 6. Older, previously worn Kohanic clothing
- 7. A regular Kohen brought one, on the first day of his career as a Kohen. The

Kohen Gadol has to bring a Mincha every morning of his career.

8. Only from sheep.

9. Part is burned on the Altar; part goes to the Kohanim; and the rest goes to the owner.

10. Moshe was to convince Aharon to accept the position of Kohen Gadol.

11. Many different people such as women, converts, and non-Jewish slaves of Jews.

12. People will bring Thanksgiving offerings, but no Sin offerings will be brought because people will no longer sin. *(Ed. note - subject to dispute)*

13. One who survived a life-threatening crisis. (B'rachot 54b describes 4 such people: 1. One who survived a desert journey. 2. One who had a sea voyage. 3. One who had a dangerous imprisonment. 4. One who survived a serious illness.)

14. Olive and grape vines.

15. Because everyone had to be pure to bring the Pesach sacrifice.

16.

- a) Father - son
- b) First cousins
- c) Mother-in-law - daughter-in-law
- d) First cousins once removed.
- e) Brothers-in-law