



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

It's Not Just About Lambs

Ed. note: I don't know how many readers will see this PTDT and say: "Hey, he wrote this last year!" I always check the past years' PhiloTorah's articles - not just the PTDT, to try to avoid repetition. But this time, with a few tweaks, I am repeating last year's PTDT for its message. With your permission...

The mitzva of the daily T'midim (the twice daily korbanot in the Beit HaMikdash of a lamb in the morning and a lamb late afternoon - corresponding to which are the timings of our Shacharit and Mincha davenings) is found in Parshat Pinchas.

[It had been previously been presented in Parshat T'tzaveh, but it is from Pinchas that the mitzva is counted.]

The topic also just came up in connection to Shiv'a Asar b'Tamuz. The mishna in Taanit lists five calamities associated with the 17th of Tamuz, the third one being the cessation of the Tamid. The mishna expresses the idea that the interruption of the continuity of the T'midim is a noteworthy tragedy, to be singled out even though it can be viewed as one of the many results of the breach of Jerusalem and the

destruction of the Mikdash.

There are a number of sources that discuss different opinions as to the most significant pasuk in the Torah.

In short - Ben Zoma posits SH'MA YISRAEL... HASHEM ECHAD. Very reasonable choice. We need not go into its merits now.

Ben Nanas says - V'AHAVTA L'REI-ACHA KAMOCHA. Also a good choice.

ZEH SEFER TOL'DOT HAADAM is an opinion too, emphasizing that humans were created in G-d's image.

The further opinion of Ben Pazi seems to be the head-scratcher. He quotes a pasuk - ET HAKEVES HA'ECHAD... The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the second lamb you shall offer late afternoon. The pasuk from Tzav and the almost identical one from Parshat Pinchas.

At first glance, this pasuk doesn't seem to compete well with the others. Interestingly, the sources conclude with a statement from an unnamed (or unknown) Tanna - the halacha is like Ben Pazi.

How do we understand this?

The title of this PTDT introduces the answer. It's not just about lambs.

The mitzva of the T'MIDIM is about a lamb offered every morning and another every afternoon, every single day, without fail.

The Tamid represents daily, unwavering, unceasing service to HaShem. No matter what was going on – war, peace, holidays, regular weekdays – the Tamid was brought EVERY SINGLE DAY. It is a symbol of constant devotion and action in religious life. Judaism values not only the great moments of inspiration but the consistent, daily commitment to HaShem.

Rav Hirsch is quoted as saying: The greatness of Jewish life lies in the daily doing of mitzvot, not in dramatic moments of ecstasy.

The Tamid offering is the foundation and starting point of all korbanot - the Musafim, sin offerings, thanksgiving offerings... Without it, the structure collapses.

Similarly, in daily Jewish life, the basic framework of Shacharit and Mincha forms the "spiritual skeleton" of the day. Everything else is an addition or enhancement.

The Tamid is brought on behalf of the entire People of Israel. It represents Klal Yisrael's collective relationship with HaShem, renewed each morning and afternoon. That national unity and unceasing relationship with HaShem can be seen as a most significant statement of Judaism.

You can love your neighbor, say the Sh'ma, observe Shabbat – but if it's only here and there, it doesn't endure.

This pasuk reminds us: The key to a life of Torah is consistency.

While some mitzvot are dramatic and awe-inspiring, the Tamid is simple, quiet, and repetitive. Ben Pazi considers it to be of great significance, teaching us that holiness is found in routine, in the quiet devotion of the everyday Jew doing the mitzvot morning and evening, day after day.

Let me add that I am not dwelling or focusing on korbanot in and of themselves. It has been a long time since we brought korbanot. And they should never have been - or be - a substitute for our own, individual observance of mitzvot. They are communal. They shine as a model for us in our daily practices. They are a symbol. (They are more than that, too - but not for discussion here and now.)

Parshat Pinchas and Shiv'a Asar b'Tamuz are calendrically linked. (Is that a word? According to Wiktionary, it is.) Fork in the road - No Tamid; yes, Tamid. We shouldn't just mourn the Churban. We should be pro-active in preparing to the Geula.

May we all internalize the lesson of the T'midim in our observance and attitude of Torah and Mitzvot, and may we be ZOCHEH to the restoration of the Beit HaMikdash and the T'MIDIM, speedily in our time. **PTDT**