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PARASHAT HASHAVUA

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PARASHAT TZAV

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This year's Parashat HaShavua series is dedicated  
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Two Perspectives on the Sacrifices:  
On the Relationship Between Parashiot Tzav and Vayikra

By Rav Mordechai Sabato

[NOTE: We would highly recommend following this *shiur* with a  
*Chumash* open in front of you.]

I. Same Sacrifices, Different Order

The first seven chapters of the Book of *Vayikra* deal with the various types of *korbanot* (sacrifices) and their *halakhot*. This section of the Torah is composed of two subdivisions: chapters 1-5, and chapters 6-7. The Torah deals with the same sacrifices in each section, as demonstrated in the following table:

Chapters 1-5:

1:	<i>ola</i> (burnt-offering)
2:	<i>mincha</i> (meal-offering)
3:	<i>shelamim</i> (peace-offering)
4-5:13:	<i>chatat</i> (sin-offering)
5:14-26:	<i>asham</i> (guilt-offering)

Chapters 6-7:

6:1-6:	<i>ola</i>
6:7-11:	<i>mincha</i> [6:12-16: <i>mincha</i> of Aharon and his sons]
6:17-23:	<i>chatat</i>
7:1-7:	<i>asham</i>
7:11-36:	<i>shelamim</i>

The Ramban (*Vayikra* 6:2) addresses this apparent redundancy:

The verse states in *Parashat Vayikra*, 'Speak to Benei Yisrael,' because there it commands [the laws regarding] the BRINGING of the sacrifices, and they were brought by Benei Yisrael. Here it says, 'Command Aharon,' because [here] it speaks of the [actual] PROCEDURE of the sacrifices, and the *kohanim* are the ones who tend to them.

The point that the first section is directed towards the nation, whereas the second addresses the *kohanim*, emerges explicitly from the introduction of each section, as the Ramban notes. But his argument that the first section relates exclusively to the bringing of the sacrifices requires further analysis, and we will return to this critical point later in our discussion.

From the aforementioned distinction between the two sections - to whom are the commandments addressed -

emerges the obvious difference in sequence between the two sections. The Ramban (*Vayikra* 6:18) writes,

The [order of] commandments in *Parashat Vayikra* was the *ola*, *mincha*, *shelamim*, *chatat* and *asham*, presenting first the voluntary sacrifices, and thereafter the mandatory offerings that are required of the sinner. But here the Torah explains first the *ola*, *mincha*, *chatat* and *asham* [and only then the *shelamim*], because it wishes to deal first with the '*kodesh kodashim*' [sacrifices of higher sanctity] and then with the '*kodashim kalim*' [sacrifices of lower sanctity].

In other words, the first section, which addresses the people, those who bring the sacrifices, can itself be divided into two parts. Chapters 1-3 deal with the voluntary sacrifices - *ola*, *mincha* and *shelamim* - while chapters 4-5 deal with the obligatory sacrifices, the *chatat* and *asham*. First the Torah presents the people with a list of offerings which they may bring voluntarily, and only then are the people commanded to bring mandatory sin-offerings in case they violate Torah laws.

This division within the first five chapters becomes even clearer in light of the fact that no new introduction of "God spoke to Moshe" appears until chapter 4, indicating that the first three chapters form a single, uninterrupted unit. Chapters 4 and 5, however, constitute a new "speech" of God, as they describe the sacrifices required of the sinner, rather than opportunities for voluntary sacrifices. For the same reason, the section dealing with the *asham* also begins with a new introduction. The *chatat* and *asham* are not two possibilities towards the same end; some sins require a *chatat*, while others require an *asham*, and the sinner cannot decide which to offer in order to achieve atonement.

The second section of sacrifices, that found in our *parasha* and addressed to the *kohanim* who actually offer the sacrifices on the altar, also features two subdivisions:

a) 6:1-7:10 - *kodashei ha-kodashim* (*ola*, *mincha*, *chatat* and *asham*). This unit also includes the *mincha* offering of Aharon and his sons (7:12-16). However, these verses are to be viewed as merely a parenthetical insert, as indicated by the fact that they begin with a new opening of, "God spoke to Moshe saying." A new opening follows these verses, thus setting them aside from the overall flow and structure of the *parasha*. Furthermore, while the entire *parasha* speaks in general terms about the various sacrifices, these verses mention a very specific instance of an offering.

b) 7:11-7:36 - *kodashim kalim* (specifically the *shelamim*). Although the Torah never employs the term "*kodashim kalim*," this status emerges from the fact that regarding the other four sacrifices the Torah emphasizes the unique level of sanctity afforded to the *korban*, which requires specific locations for the slaughtering ritual as well as consumption of the meat. With regard to the *shelamim*, we find no mention of a special status of *kedusha*, nor does the Torah insist on specific places for the slaughter or consumption of the sacrificial meat.

Another strong indication of this subdivision appears towards the end of the Torah's treatment of the *asham*. After establishing who among the *kohanim* may partake of the meat of the *asham* (7:6), the Torah summarizes the rights of the *kohanim* regarding all the other sacrifices within the category of *kodashei ha-kodashim* (7:7-10). Thus, a clear division has been

drawn between the four *kodesh ha-kodashim* sacrifices (*ola*, *mincha*, *chatat* and *asham*) and the *shelamim*, which is *kodashim kalim*.

The reason for this division in *Parashat Tzav*, as opposed to the division in *Parashat Vayikra* discussed earlier, is clear: here the Torah speaks to the *kohanim*, who are responsible for properly tending to the sacrifice and following the appropriate procedures. Whether the sacrifice is obligatory or voluntary is of no consequence to them. The difference between *kodashi ha-kodashim* and *kodashi kalim*, however, is critical for the *kohanim*, as the former category contains more rigid guidelines and restrictions.

Earlier, we cited the Ramban's contention that in *Parashat Vayikra*, as opposed to *Parashat Tzav*, the Chumash deals strictly with the BRINGING of the sacrifice, not the process of the actual offering. This distinction seems, at first glance, inaccurate, as even in *Parashat Vayikra* the Torah specifies the various means by which the sacrifices are to be offered. (The one exception is the *asham*; the reason for this deviation lies beyond the scope of our discussion.) Given the explicit distinction between the two *parshiyot* - that *Vayikra* is addressed to the individual who BRINGS the sacrifice, whereas *Tzav* speaks to the *kohanim* who OFFER the sacrifice in the Tabernacle/Temple - then the inclusion in *Parashat Vayikra* of laws relating to the actual offering process implies that these laws, too, have relevance to the person bringing the sacrifice. Apparently, these laws reveal the unique character of each sacrifice, and therefore the person bringing the sacrifice must be aware of the precise nature of his sacrifice.

Thus, the distinction between *Parashat Vayikra* and *Parashat Tzav* must now be refined. Both include details relating to the actual offering process. However, whereas *Parashat Vayikra* deals exclusively with those details that reflect the unique nature and character of the sacrifice, *Parashat Tzav* instructs the *kohanim* about the specifications related to the *korban's* level of sanctity (i.e., the locations for slaughtering and eating the sacrifice and the appropriate treatment of the ashes), not those involving the overall nature of the sacrifice.

## II. Mount Sinai Versus the Tent of Meeting

The difference between *Vayikra* and *Tzav* extends even further than what we have just indicated. The discussion of the *korbanot* in *Parashat Tzav* concludes,

Such are the rituals of the *ola*, the *mincha*, the *chatat*, the *asham*, the *milu'im* (the offering of ordination), and the *shelamim*, with which God charged Moshe on Mount Sinai, when He commanded that the Israelites present their offerings to God, in the wilderness of Sinai. (7:37-8)

Two important nuances must be noted.

a) The emphasis that these instructions were transmitted specifically at Sinai poses great difficulty. After all, the opening verse of the *sefer* stated explicitly that Moshe received these *mitzvot* in the *Ohel Mo'ed* (Tent of Meeting). The Rashbam (introduction to *Bemidbar*) establishes that,

Regarding all the commandments that were given in the first year before the Tabernacle was erected, it is written, 'at Mount Sinai;' but once the Tabernacle was erected on the first of the month in the second year, it does not say 'at Mount Sinai,' but rather, 'in the Sinai Desert in the Tent of Meeting.'

Thus, if these instructions were given in the Tent of Meeting, how could they have been given at Mount Sinai?

b) These verses, which seem to summarize the entire section, make mention of the *milu'im* (the "offering of ordination," sacrifices offered as part of the formal consecration of the Tabernacle), even though the *milu'im* appear nowhere in the entire section!

The solution may relate to a critical clarification regarding these concluding verses. They form the conclusion not for the ENTIRE section of sacrifices, from the beginning of *Sefer Vayikra* until this point, but rather for the second section alone, that is, specifically the discussion of the sacrifices in *Parashat Tzav*. These verses refer to the laws of the sacrifices with the term, "*torat*" (the law), an expression repeated in the context of each sacrifice throughout the section in *Parashat Tzav*, but appearing nowhere in *Parashat Vayikra*. Furthermore, the sequence in these verses corresponds to the order employed in *Tzav*, not the one in *Vayikra*.

Now the *milu'im*, mentioned in *Parashat Tzav*, are first discussed in *Sefer Shemot* (chapter 29) PRIOR to the construction of the Tabernacle, i.e., at Mount Sinai, not in the Tent of Meeting. Rav David Zvi Hoffmann (in his commentary to *Vayikra*) thus suggests that as opposed to the first section - in *Parashat Vayikra* - which was transmitted in Tent of Meeting, this second section - in *Parashat Tzav* - was presented at Mount Sinai, together with the instructions regarding the *milu'im*. When the Torah was actually written, these two sections were placed adjacent to one another.

The reason for this change between the initial presentation of the *halakhot* and their location in the written Torah relates back to our previous discussion. This *parasha* is addressed to the *kohanim*, teaching them how to handle the various *korbanot*. This section was presented back at Mount Sinai, when the *kohanim* were first designated to serve the Almighty in the Tabernacle, a role that necessarily involves the *korbanot* service. *Parashat Vayikra*, by contrast, speaks to the people, teaching them that one who wishes to make an offering may do so in accordance with the Torah's specifications. Presumably, this *parasha* was presented only AFTER the construction of the Tabernacle, for only at this point were they given the opportunity to offer sacrifices.

However, the Torah was written for its readers. Obviously, one cannot read the *halakhot* relating to the *kohanim's* handling of the sacrifices before he learns of the general concept of bringing *korbanot*. Therefore, the Torah places *Parashat Vayikra* - the general discussion of the various types of sacrifices - before *Parashat Tzav* - the specific laws regarding the actual ritual of offering.

## III. Two Themes of *Korbanot*

The distinction between these two discussions of the sacrifices - *Parashat Vayikra* and *Parashat Tzav* - may reflect two different perspectives regarding the entire institution of *korbanot*.<sup>1</sup>

The second section - this week's *parasha* - opens as follows:

This is the ritual of the burnt-offering: The burnt offering itself shall remain where it is burned upon the altar all night until morning, while the fire on the altar is kept going on it. The *kohen* shall dress in linen raiment, with

<sup>1</sup> A more elaborate discussion of this concept appears in an article by A. Shama in *Megadim*, vol. 2 (5747), pp. 32-44.

linen breeches next to his body; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt-offering on the altar and place them beside the altar. He shall then take off his vestments and put on other vestments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. The fire on the altar shall be kept burning, not to go out: every morning the *kohen* shall feed wood to it, lay out the burnt-offering on it, and turn into smoke the fat parts of the peace-offering. A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar, not to go out.

These verses relate to two different *ola* sacrifices. The first is that which burns all night on the altar, and the second is arranged on the altar in the morning. These two *ola* sacrifices are the two daily "*tamid*" sacrifices, prescribed in the Torah in *Shemot* 29:38-46:

Now this is what you shall offer upon the altar: two yearling lambs each day, regularly. You shall offer the one lamb in the morning, and you shall offer the other lamb at twilight... a regular burnt-offering throughout the generations, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting before God. For there I will meet with you, and there I will speak with you, and there I will meet with the Israelites, and it shall be sanctified by My Presence. I will sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and I will consecrate Aharon and his sons to serve me as *kohanim*. I will abide among the Israelites, and I will be their God. And they shall know that I the Lord am their God, who brought them out from the land of Egypt that I might abide among them; I the Lord am their God.

The conclusion of this section, the depiction of the Divine Presence residing among the people, indicates a connection between the *tamid* sacrifice and the presence of the *Shekhina* in the Jewish camp.

In the beginning of *Parashat Tzav*, where the *tamid* appears once again, emphasis is placed on the constancy of the flame on the altar. "Fire" appears three times in these verses: 1) "...while the fire on the altar is kept going on it;" 2) "The fire on the altar shall be kept burning, not to go out;" 3) "A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar, not to go out." Apparently, the Torah affords great significance to the constant burning of the flame on the altar.

It seems that *Parashat Tzav* presents a fundamentally different perspective on *korbanot* from that of *Parashat Vayikra*. *Vayikra* offers the individual the opportunity to offer a sacrifice: "When any of you presents an offering of cattle to God." Even the sin-offerings come only when circumstances so dictate, but are not a set part of the Temple ritual. Thus, *Parashat Vayikra* presents sacrifices as an opportunity, a privilege granted to the Jew to come before the Almighty and express his feelings through the venue of a *korban*. *Parashat Tzav*, however, opens with the constant flame on the altar and the regular daily sacrifice, which express the altar's serving as a representation of the presence of the *Shekhina*. In this way, the Torah teaches that the institution of sacrifices is more than just an opportunity offered to the people; it constitutes an essential part of the *Mishkan*, expressing the constant residence of the *Shekhina* among the Jewish people.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> An example of this function of sacrifices may be the angel's ascent to the heavens via the sacrifice of Manoach and his wife (*Shoftim* 13:20).

Herein may lie the theological underpinnings of the well-known dispute between the Rambam and Ramban regarding the reason behind the sacrifices, whether they are a concession to an unfortunate reality, as the Rambam contends (*Moreh Nevukhim* III:32, III:46), or an optimal ritual, as the Ramban argues (*Vayikra* 1:9). Interestingly, the Ramban concludes his discussion with the aforementioned incident of Manoach

They shall know that I the Lord am their God, Who brought them out from the Land of Egypt that I might abide among them, I the Lord their God. (*Shemot* 29:46)

(Translated by Rav David Silverberg)

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and the angel and writes, "...He then ascended with the flame of the altar. The matter is thus explicit and clear."