

PSHUTO SHEL MIKRA

From the Teachings of Rav Yehuda Copperman zt"l

PARSHAT TZAV

Composite Mitzvot

וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת זִבְחַת הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיב לָהּ. אִם עַל תּוֹדָה יִקְרִיבֶנּוּ ...

And this is the Torah¹ of the peace-offering that one will offer to Hashem. If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving-offering ... (Vayikra 7:11–12)

Parshat Tzav: “Torat HaKorbanot”

A question which is discussed by many *mefarshim* relates to the fact that virtually all of the *korbanot* discussed in *Parshat Tzav* have actually already been discussed in *Parshat Vayikra*. This almost makes it seem like a “*Mishneh Torah*,” except it takes place within the same *Chumash*, with the two *parshiyot* in question coming one right after the other! What are we being taught about these *korbanot* in *Parshat Tzav* that we did not already learn in *Parshat Vayikra*?

The **Seforno** (*Vayikra* 7:2, s.v. *Tzav*) provides the key to this question:

Having presented [in Parshat Vayikra] the procedures for offering the korban, it proceeds to teach the “Torah”² that is appropriate for each one, through which it intimates the deeper understanding of these korbanot.

1 [I.e., the law.]

2 [Hence the introductory phrase “זאת תורת” used with regards to many of the *korbanot* mentioned in *Parshat Tzav*.]

In other words, while *Parshat Vayikra* is primarily involved in the **practical** aspects of the offering of the *korbanot*: *shechitah*, receiving the blood, transporting it to the *Mizbeach* and sprinkling it there etc., *Parshat Tzav* deals with “*Torat Ha’Olah*” and “*Torat HaMinchah*” etc., i.e. the **essence** of each *korban*.

Korban Todah: Beginning with the Exception

The above distinction between the *Parshiyot of Vayikra* and *Tzav* finds very clear expression in the explanation of the Seforno regarding the *Korban Todah* — the thanksgiving-offering. This *korban* was actually not mentioned at all in *Parshat Vayikra*, it is discussed for the first time in our *Parsha*. It is very interesting to note the way this *korban* is introduced. The *korban todah* is a sub-category of *korbanot* known as *shelamim* (peace-offering). Having said that, no sooner has *pasuk* 11 introduced the category of *korban shelamim*, the very next *pasuk* introduces *korban todah*, which is a very specific type of *shelamim*, and only after having discussed this unusual type of *shelamim* does the Torah then discuss the “regular” *shelamim* (*pasuk* 16): “וְאִם נִדָּר אוֹ נִדְבָה זָבַח קִרְבָּנוֹ” — *If his korban is for a vow or a donation etc.*”

This order is quite remarkable. Why would the Torah begin the presentation of *korban shelamim* by presenting the *todah* which is the exception to the rule of this type of *korban*, and only then go back to present the *shelamim* which represent the rule itself?

Bridging Two Categories of Korbanot

To understand the order in which the Torah presented these *korbanot*, let us consider the two categories into which *korbanot* are divided:

1. *Kodashei Kodashim*: *Korbanot* of greater *kedushah*.
2. *Kodashim Kalim*: *Korbanot* of lesser *kedushah*.

The difference in *kedushah* between these types of *korbanot* is expressed in their *halachot*, as the *halachot* of *kodashei kodashim* are more stringent than those of *kodashim kalim*. For example:

- ▷ **Shechitah**: The *shechitah* of *kodashei kodashim* may only take place on the north side of the *Mizbeach*, while with *kodashim kalim* it may take place anywhere within the courtyard of the *Mishkan* (or *Beit Hamikdash*).
- ▷ **The People Eligible to Consume the Korban**: *Kodashei Kodashim* may only be eaten by *Kohanim*. *Kodashim kalim* may be eaten by anyone who is *tahor*.
- ▷ **The Timeframe for Consuming the Korban**: *Kodashei kodashim* may only be eaten the day the *korban* is offered and the night that follows. *Kodashim kalim* may be eaten over the course of the next day as well.

Taking the above into consideration, we will see that while in principle *korban todah* belongs to the category of *shelamim*, which are *kodashim kalim*, nonetheless, it also contains aspects which seem to have more in common with *kodashei kodashim*.

- ▷ On the one hand, the *shechitah* can take place anywhere in the Courtyard [like *kodashim kalim*].
- ▷ Similarly, the *korban* may be eaten by anyone who is *tahor*, not specifically *Kohanim* [like *kodashim kalim*].
- ▷ On the other hand, it can only be eaten over the course of one day [like *kodashei kodashim*]!

This unusual mix of *halachot* gives us to understand that *korban todah* is actually a **composite korban**, i.e. it comprises elements of both *kodashei kodashim* and *kodashim kalim* and partakes of both categories.

Korban Todah: Seforno's Explanation

This understanding of the composite nature of the *korban todah* parallels the *Seforno's* (*Vayikra* 7:12) explanation of the unique *halachot* that pertain to this *korban*, specifically the obligation to accompany the *korban todah* with forty loaves of bread, something that does not exist within any other type of *korban*:

The Torah informs us that even though all shelamim are in the category of kodashim kalim, nonetheless there are distinctions within them. If the korban is brought in order to express hoda'ah (thanksgiving),³ it must be accompanied by loaves of bread, some of which are chametz,⁴ indicating that while the cause of the dangerous situation regarding which the person is expressing hoda'ah (for having been saved from) is the "yeast in the dough,"⁵ nonetheless, the types of bread which are matzah outnumber those which are chametz.⁶

And with this increased volume of bread, the miracle will be publicized before the many who partake of it,⁷ and all of (these loaves) are eaten in the time frame of kodashei kodashim, which is that day and the following night.

We note that the *Seforno* did not content himself with merely pointing out that the *todah*

3 See *Berachot* 54b (quoted in Rashi to our *pasuk*), which states that there are four categories of people who are required to bring a *korban todah* over a miracle that has been performed for them and which saved them from a dangerous situation.

4 *Pasuk* 13. This is an exception to the rule (stated in *Vayikra* 2:11) that none of the bread accompanying *korbanot* may be *chametz*.

5 "שֵׂאֹר שְׁבַעֲיָסָה," a reference to the *Yetzer Hara*, see *Berachot* 17a.

6 Of the forty loaves of bread, ten are *chametz* and thirty are *matzah* (see *Menachot* 77a), indicating that the person's good deeds (represented by the *matzah*) ultimately outweighed the liability which he may have incurred by yielding to the "yeast in the dough," and which resulted in him being placed in a dangerous situation.

7 I.e. since it is forbidden to leave the food of *korbanot* beyond its designated time for eating (a prohibition known as "*notar*"), the individual who brings the *korban todah* will naturally invite others to help consume his *korban* — along with its forty loaves of bread — together with him. During that *seudah* he will have the opportunity to tell all those assembled the reason for which he brought the *korban todah*, thereby publicizing the miracle. This explanation of the *Seforno* regarding *korban* Torah identifies a clear source in the Torah for the concept of *pirsumei nisa* — the mitzvah of publicizing a miracle, which in turn becomes a prominent feature in numerous *mitzvot derabbanan*, such as Chanukah lights and the reading of the Megillah on Purim.

is eaten over the course of a night and a day; rather, he explicitly attaches the *todah* to the “family” of *kodashei kodashim*. Through this, the *Seforno* is indicating that it is the element of *kodashei kodashim* within the *korban* which results in its curtailed timeframe for eating.

With this in mind, we can understand why the Torah began the section of *korban shelamim* by discussing the atypical kind of *shelamim* known as *korban todah*. Until this point,⁸ the Torah has been discussing *korbanot* belonging to the category of *kodashei kodashim*. With *korban shelamim*, the Torah is moving on to the second category of *kodashim kalim*.

Therefore, as part of this transition, it opens the section with *korban todah* which has aspects of both categories! It is fascinating to consider in terms of *pshuto shel mikra*, that through choosing to present the *korban todah* in the location that it did, the Torah thereby revealed to us the unique nature of this *korban*.

Further Implications

Taking this idea one stage further, we find that not only does the *korban todah* contain aspects which pertain to the category of *kodashei kodashim*, but there are even aspects of *kodashei kodashim* which are themselves derived from *korban todah*!

The *Gemara* in *Masechet Zevachim* (36b) states that the source of the *halachah* that *kodashei kodashim* may only be consumed over the course of the day the *korban* is brought and the following night is derived from the *pasuk* which states this regarding *korban todah* (*pasuk* 15). The timeframe of “a day and a night,” which is so well-known to us as a trademark characteristic of *kodashei kodashim*, is ultimately sourced in *korban todah*. Not only does *korban todah* draw *halachot* from *kodashei kodashim*, it imparts *halachot* to them as well!

It is also noteworthy that whereas *kodashim kalim* (e.g. *shelamim*) are generally voluntary in nature, *kodashei kodashim* are generally obligatory (e.g. *chatat* and *asham*). The *korban todah*, too, has an obligatory aspect to it, as expressed by Chazal (*Berachot* 54b), “ארבעה חייבים להודות” — *four (types of people) are obligated to express thanksgiving (by bringing a korban todah).*”

In the Pasuk

Let us conclude this discussion by referring to a comment of the **Netziv** who demonstrates that the composite nature of the *korban todah* is expressed in the words of the Torah itself. In so doing, the *Netziv* is echoing the theme of the *Seforno* regarding this *korban*. This should come as no surprise to us as the *Netziv* frequently uses the approach of the *Seforno* as the basis for his *peirush* to a certain *pasuk* or *parsha*. The concluding *pasuk* (37) of *perek* 7 states:

8 *Vayikra* 6:11–7:10.

זאת התורה לעולה למנחה ולחטאת ולאשם ולמילואים ולזבח השלמים

This is the law of the olah, the minchah, the chatat, and the asham and the miluim and the shelamim

The problem with this list of *korbanot* is that the category of “*miluim*,” i.e. the *korbanot* accompanying the seven preparatory days before the Inauguration of the *Mishkan*, has not been discussed or even mentioned in these *parshiyot*, either in *Parshat Vayikra* or in *Parshat Tzav*!⁹ Additionally, we may ask, why is the *korban todah* — which has been discussed — absent from this list? The **Netziv** explains (*Haamek Davar*, *ibid.*):

The term “miluim” refers to the korban todah, which includes a korban minchah¹⁰ and which is consumed over the course of that day and the following night, like kodashim kodashim, which makes it similar to the miluim which were comprised of korbanot olah [which were kodashim kodashim] and shelamim [which were kodashim kalim].¹¹ Similarly, the todah has aspects of kodashim kodashim.

According to the **Netziv**, the Torah uses the term “*miluim*” to refer to the *korban todah* since, like the *miluim*, it comprises a combination of the two categories of *kodashim kodashim* and *kodashim kalim*. What is unique about this kind of “*miluim*” is that whereas the actual *miluim* featured these two categories in separate *korbanot*, the *korban todah* combines them both in one *korban*.

⁹ These *korbanot* are discussed in *Chumash Shemot* at the end of *Parshat Tetzaveh*, as well as in the section of *Parshat Tzav* which **follows** *Perek 7*, i.e., after this concluding *pasuk*.

¹⁰ I.e. the forty loaves of bread. *Korban minchah* is within the category of *kodashim kodashim*.

¹¹ See *Vayikra* 8:14, 18, and 22.