



Parsha Perspectives RABBI Z. SKLAR

וזאת תורת זבח השלמים אשר יקריב...

"If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving offering..." (Leviticus 7:11)

The Hebrew word *todah* means *thank you*. In the times of the Temple, when a person survived a life-threatening situation, he or she brought a *korban todah* — a thanksgiving offering. This offering, which consisted of a cow, sheep, or goat, was brought together with thirty matzahs and ten loaves of bread. One tenth of this was given to the kohen (priest), and the rest was to be eaten within one day and a night.

The Netziv (an acronym for Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin) asks how the Torah can require a person to eat an entire animal plus a tableful of matzah and bread — all within 24 hours (*Ha'emek Davar*, 7:13). In fact, it is nearly impossible. The person bringing the *todah* offering therefore had no choice but to invite family and friends to take part in his meal. At this meal, he would explain to all of his guests what had transpired to require him to bring the *todah*, publicly acknowledging G-d's help in saving him from a dangerous situation. All those present would hear a moving, firsthand account of G-d's benevolence.

Hearing a story — even a certifiably true story — third- or fourth-hand can be uplifting, even inspiring, but it doesn't compare to hearing a first-person account of how G-d clearly saved the day. Everyone present at such a meal would hopefully reflect on the role G-d plays in their own lives and realize that, when the chips are down, G-d can come to *my* aid. If He helped that person, He can do the same for me.

The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabba* 9:7)

explains that when the Messiah comes, there will no longer be a need for sacrifices to atone for sin; as there will be no evil inclination, sin will no longer exist. However, not all sacrifices will cease. The *todah* sacrifice will still be offered. Why? According to Rabbi Henschel Zundel (a commentator on the Midrash known as the Eitz Yosef), there will be no illness and no grave perils after the Messiah arrives. What evil can G-d save a person from, that he would be required to offer a *todah* sacrifice?

The Eitz Yosef understands that the *todah* will no longer be an obligatory offering when the Messiah comes. Rather, it will be brought voluntarily, as a way for people to express their utter appreciation for everything G-d does. And when it is shared, as it must be, with a large group of people, the whole group will develop a greater appreciation for G-d's goodness.

The *todah* offering teaches us the value of thanking G-d not only when He saves us from grave danger, but for *everything* He does. It also teaches us the need to express our gratitude to anyone who has

done something for our benefit — even for something as trivial as emptying our trash can. How much more so must we express our appreciation for those who do much greater things for us! How about our parents? Or spouses? It wouldn't hurt to ask ourselves whether there are things we've taken for granted over the years.

Thanking people not only prevents us from taking favors for granted, but it also helps us realize all the good we actually do have in our lives.

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WORD of the WEEK צו

The Torah portion is called *tzav* — צו which means "command" as an imperative, as in the verse, "Command the children of Israel." The word has the same root, צוה, as *mitzvah* — מצוה, a commandment. Rashi, based on the Talmud, understands that the expression צו is always meant to enthruse and encourage, especially where there may be reason for a person to hesitate or hold back. Some maintain that the word is related to צורת, meaning "group" or "joined together," since a *mitzvah* — מצוה is that which binds together the Commander and the commanded (Rabbi Moshe Shapiro).

Table Talk FOR DISCUSSION AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE

The sages compare the leavening in bread to the evil inclination within — the *yetzer hara* — which influences a person to sin. On Passover, when we commemorate that G-d took us out of Egypt, away from its culture of rampant sinning, we do not eat *chametz* (leavened bread) or *se'or* (leavening agents, such as yeast or sourdough), symbolizing that we, too, must remove ourselves from sin. Likewise, leavened bread is forbidden to be used in sacrifices. Sacrifices were brought after a person sinned (following his evil inclination); therefore, as on Passover, we avoid *chametz* in a sacrifice, since the person is now repenting, distancing himself from his evil inclination. However, there are two sacrifices that do contain *chametz*: the *korban todah* (thanksgiving offering), and the *korban shtei halechem* which was sacrificed on Shavuot.

נ) The *korban todah*, brought when a person survived a life-threatening situation, includes leavened bread. Why might the normal consideration of avoiding leaven, associated with one's evil inclination, not be necessary for a person who survived a life-threatening situation?

ב) Shavuot celebrates the receiving of the Torah. The offering brought on Shavuot, which was intended to bring blessing to the upcoming harvest, consisted of leavened bread, suggesting that we are not as concerned about our evil inclination at that point as we are on Passover. How could receiving the Torah affect how we relate to the *yetzer hara*?

A QUESTION FOR THE RABBIS

The chazzan (cantor) of a community was growing old and was not capable of leading the community in prayer. He appointed his son to assist him and to lead the prayers. But the son's voice was not as good as the father's. Members of the community objected to the son leading the prayers and asked the Rashba (*Responsa Rashba* 1:300) if they could prevent the son from leading prayers. The Rashba concluded that if the son was a G-d-fearing individual, and was competent in leading the prayers, even if his voice was not as pleasant as his father's, he had the right to take his father's place. He cites the verse in the Torah portion this week as evidence for his ruling. The verse states that, "The priest who is anointed instead of him from his sons shall do [the service]" (Leviticus 6:15), implying that the anointed successor to the High Priest should be one of his sons. The *Code of Jewish Law* cites this response and rules in accordance with the Rashba (*Orach Chaim* 53:25).

HEY, I NEVER KNEW THAT!

The Torah forbids the consumption of *cheilev*, a specific type of fat found around the kidneys and loins of an animal (Leviticus 7:23). However, the Torah explicitly permits the use of this fat for "all manner of work" (ibid 7:24). This means that one may benefit from forbidden fat, but one may not eat it (*Mishneh Torah, Ma'achalot Asurot* 8:15). Rabbeinu Bachya (commentary on Exodus 12:4) quotes a statement of the sages that "The Torah cares about the money of the Jews" and demonstrates from a number of different laws that the Torah attempts to alleviate, as much as possible, monetary loss. One of the examples that he cites is the law permitting the use of forbidden fat for anything other than food. Similarly, the Torah states that one may sell or give away an animal that died in any way other than kosher slaughter, so that we do not incur the loss of having to destroy the carcass.



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