

Parashat Tzav, 5784, 2024:

For All Generations to Come

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ה' יעזור וירחם על אחינו כל בני ישראל, בארץ ישראל ובכל חלקי הארץ

Like much of *Sefer Vayikra*, our *parasha* focuses on the *korbanot*. Accordingly, the second verse presents the *mitzvah* of the *korban olah*: “Command (*tzav*) Aharon and his sons, saying, ‘This is the law of the burnt offering: That is the burnt offering which burns on the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall burn with it.’” (*Sefer Vayikra* 6:2, this and all Rashi and Tanach translations, *The Judaica Press Complete Tanach*) Rashi (1040-1105), basing himself on *Midrash Sifra* on our verse and *Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin* 29a, explains “*tzav*” in this manner: “The expression *tzav* always denotes urging [to promptly and meticulously fulfill a particular commandment] for the present (*miyad*) and for future generations (*v’ledorot*).” The word, “*miyad*,” makes perfectly good sense in this context, since the *kohanim* were able to offer the *korban olah* during the time of the *Mishkan* and *Beit HaMikdash*. The term, “*v’ledorot*,” however, seems problematic, as we have not had a *Mishkan* or *Beit HaMikdash* for nearly 2,000 years.

My rebbe and mentor, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik *zatzal* (1903-1993), known as “the Rav” by his students and followers, expands on our question:

What is the meaning of the word *ledoros* (for future generations) in this context? The *mitzvos* of *mezuzah*, *tefillin* and *Shabbos* are clearly *ledoros*. Thousands of years have gone by, and these *mitzvos* are observed as they had been when they were originally given. But in what way are the *mitzvos* of the *Mishkan* practiced today? There has been no *korban tamid* [daily offering] for almost two thousand years! In what sense does the *mitzvah* of offering *korbanos* continue? (*Sefer Vayikra Chumash Mesoras HaRav*, with commentary based upon the teachings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, edited by Dr. Arnold Lustiger, page 33)

The Rav begins his answer by citing a midrashic passage in *Talmud Bavli, Megillah* that presents a fascinating dialogue between Hashem and *Avraham Avinu*:

Abraham asked how he was to know that G-d would not forsake Israel if they sinned. G-d answered, “In the merit of the [Temple] sacrifices.” Abraham insisted that this merit is fine when these sacrifices are in existence, but what was to happen after the destruction of the Temple? G-d replied that if the Children of Israel learned the laws surrounding the sacrifices, He would consider their study as a virtual sacrificial offering. When we cannot offer sacrifices, we recite the *halachos* [laws] pertaining to them as a substitute. (31b)

In short, the study of the laws of *korbanot* enables us to bring “virtual sacrificial offerings” and fulfill these *mitzvot* in a substitute manner. At this juncture, the Rav extends his interpretation of “virtual” to include the *Beit HaMikdash* itself:

There is a *Mikdash* in our days as well—not physically, but through *halachic* study. This is the *mesorah* [the passing down from each generation to the next] of *Torah Sheb'al Peh*, the Oral Law. Today, we read *Parashas Shekalim* as if the *Beis Hamikdash* was still standing; it is *ledoros*. *Parashas Parah* reminds us to be ritually pure so that we may bring the *korban pesach*. Although we no longer offer a *korban pesach*, we read *Parashas Parah* as if the *Beis Hamikdash* still exists.

2,000 years is a long time to wait for the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*. Nonetheless, this vision remains indelibly engraved in our *neshamot*, and was given powerful voice in the *Shemoneh Esrei*:

Return in mercy to *Yerushalayim* Your city and dwell therein as You have promised; speedily establish therein the throne of David Your servant, and rebuild it, soon in our days, as an everlasting edifice. Blessed are You Hashem, who rebuilds *Yerushalayim*. (*Shemoneh Esrei*, translation, https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/867674/jewish/Translation.htm)

With Hashem’s overflowing kindness and mercy, may we be *zocheh* to serve Him in the rebuilt *Beit HaMikdash* in our time, *v’ledorot*—and for all generations to come! *V’chane yihi ratzon*.

Shabbat Shalom

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Please contact me at rdbe718@gmail.com to be added to my weekly email list.

*** My audio *shiurim* on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpvd>

*** I have posted 164 of Rabbi Soloveitchik's English language audio *shiurim* (MP3 format) spanning the years 1958-1984. Please click on the highlighted link: [The Rav](#)