

Parashat Tzav, 5779, 2019:

For All Future Generations

Rabbi David Etengoff

Dedicated to the sacred memories of my mother, Miriam Tovah bat Aharon Hakohen, father-in-law, Levi ben Yitzhak, sister-in-law, Ruchama Rivka Sondra bat Yechiel, sister, Shulamit bat Menachem, Yehonatan Binyamin ben Mordechai Meir Halevi, Shoshana Elka bat Avraham, Tikvah bat Rivka Perel, the *Kedoshim* of Har Nof and Pittsburgh, and the *refuah shlaimah* of Yakir Ephraim ben Rachel Devorah, Mordechai ben Miriam Tovah, and the safety of our brothers and sisters in Israel and around the world.

The second verse of our *parasha* presents the commandment to offer a *korban olah* (completely burnt offering) in the *Mishkan* (Portable Desert Sanctuary) and *Beit HaMikdash* (Holy Temple): “Command (*tzav*) Aaron 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* 6:1, this and all Rashi and Bible translations, *The Judaica Press Complete Tanach*) Rashi (1040-1105), basing himself upon the *Sifra*, the halachic Midrash to *Sefer Vayikra*, explains the word, “*tzav*,” in this manner: “The expression *tzav* always denotes urging [to promptly and meticulously fulfill a particular commandment] for the present (*miyad*), and also for future generations (*v’ledorot*).” The word, “*miyad*,” makes perfectly good sense in this context, since our verse is the source of the obligation to bring a *korban olah* — something that was possible for Aharon and his sons, and during the period of time we were blessed with the *Mishkan* and *Beit HaMikdash*. The term, “*v’ledorot*,” however, seems quite problematic, since we have not had a *Mishkan* or *Beit HaMikdash* for nearly 2,000 years, and we have, therefore, been prohibited from offering the *korban olah*.

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

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 answered our question based upon a narrative passage in *Talmud Bavli, Megillah 31b* that presents a fascinating dialogue between Hashem and *Avraham Avinu* (our father Abraham):

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.

In sum, our study of the laws concerning the sacrifices that are found throughout Rabbinic literature enables us to bring “virtual sacrificial offerings,” and thereby fulfill these laws in a substitute manner. At this juncture, the Rav extends the notion of that which is 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* [Passover offering]. Although we no longer offer a *korban pesach*, we read *Parashas Parah* as if the *Beis Hamikdash* still exists. (Brackets my own)

2,000 years is a long time to wait and hope for the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*. Yet, it is a dream that remains indelibly engraved in our minds, and inspires us to say three times daily:

Return in mercy to Jerusalem 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 L-rd, who rebuilds Jerusalem. (*Shemoneh Esrai*, translation, https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/867674/jewish/Translation.htm)

With Hashem's help and mercy, may we once again be *zocheh* (merit) to bring *korbanot* in the *Beit HaMikdash*, soon and in our days, *v'ledorot* — and for all generations to come! *V'chane yihi ratzon*.

Shabbat Shalom

Past *drashot* may be found at my blog-website: <http://reparashathashavuah.org>

They may also be found on <http://www.yutorah.org/> using the search criteria of Etengoff and the parasha's name.

The email list, *b'chasdei Hashem*, has expanded to hundreds of people. I am always happy to add more members to the list. If you have family or friends you would like to have added, please do not hesitate to contact me via email <mailto:rdbe718@gmail.com>.

*** My audio *shiurim* for Women on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at: [**http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpd**](http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpd)

*** 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.