



Parashat Tzav 5765

Parashat Tzav, which we read this *Shabbat*, deals, among other things, with the service of the *kohanim* in the *Beit HaMikdash*. The daily service of the *kohen* begins with the *siluk hadeshen* (removal of the ashes and leftovers of the *korbanot*), as it says, “*V’heirim et hadeshen asher tochal haeish*, And he shall separate the ash of what the fire consumed” (*VaYikra* 6:3). The question that must be asked is why the daily service of the *kohen* doesn’t begin in an active, positive way, such as sacrificing a *korban* or lighting the *Menorah*. Why does the daily service of the *kohen* begin with the removal of the *deshen*?

Further, *sefer VaYikra* is known as the *sefer* of the *Avodah* and of the *korbanot*. The *Rishonim* argue over the reason for the *korbanot*. The *Rambam* in *Moreh Nevuchim* 3:32 writes that the reason for *korbanot* is in order to remove the traces of those who worship *avodah zarah* so that all religious service be dedicated to *Hashem* and not to false gods. The *Ramban*, in the beginning of *sefer VaYikra*, challenges this, arguing that it makes no sense to say that the whole *mitzvah* of *korbanot* is to dispel the notion of false gods from fools and pagans, which basically suggests that the whole concept of *korbanot* is a *b’dieved*, existing only because of those who serve *avodah zarah*.

Therefore the *Ramban* suggests a different explanation: The whole point of the *korban* is that a person should feel that everything done to the animal being sacrificed should really be done to him. He should feel as if his blood should be spilled and his limbs should be burned, but *Hashem*, in His ultimate mercy, agrees to accept the animal as a substitute. This thought will inspire a person in his service of *Hashem*. Our second question is the *Ramban*’s question on the *Rambam*: It seems highly implausible that the whole concept of *korbanot* is *b’dieved*, only to dispel *avodah zarah* and its worshippers! How are we to understand this?

Rather, the explanation is as follows: The *Beit HaMikdash* is a place of permeation of the *Shechinah*, the place where *Hashem* reveals Himself to the individual and to the *tzibbur*. In order that we be able to feel the *Shechinah* and the *kedushah*, the Torah says that we must make room for *Hashem*, so to speak. This is the idea behind the *siluk hadeshen*, making room within ourselves for *Hashem* to enter. It is noteworthy that on the *passuk*, “*Adam ki yakriv mikem*, When a man from among you sacrifices,” *Chazal* explain that one is not considered *Adam* (man) until he marries. This *drasha* should seemingly appear on the *passuk* of “*Zachar un’keivah bara otam, vayikra shmam Adam*, Male and female He created them, and He called them Man,” instead of here, in *sefer VaYikra*. Why does this *drasha* appear here, by the *siluk hadeshen*? *Chazal* wish to teach us that meriting *Shechinah* and *kedushah* in the Jewish home is just like in the *Mikdash*. Only if a person makes space in his life and in his actions for his or her spouse to enter, and everyone in the relationship understands that the other is a part of him or

herself, will the house become a *mikdash me'at* and a place of *Shechinah*. This is the meaning of sacrificing “*mikem*, of yourself,” as the *passuk* says—the goal is for a person to literally sacrifice of himself in order to make room for others.

This is the meaning of the *gemara Sanhedrin 7a*, “When the love between my wife and I was strong, we were able to sleep on the blade of a sword.” In other words, neither of us took up space, each of us giving space to the other. “But when our love was not strong, there was not enough room for us to lie together even in a bed of 60 *amot*.” We see that the less territorial a person acts, the more influence he actually has. The more space a person tries to take at the expense of his fellow, the smaller his influence. This is perhaps the meaning of *Chazal* who say, “When they stood they were crowded, but when they bowed they had plenty of room.” When everyone stands close together, standing in the tiniest space so as to give his fellow more space to stand, then they merit being able to spread out with an unlimited amount of space when they bow.

This is the *Rambam*'s intent as well: The reason a person serves *avodah zarah* is because he is searching for something to lean on. He misinterprets his source of strength as something external, when in fact it comes from the *sheim shamayim* that is within him. A weak person, one of little *emunah*, requires support from others; a strong person stands on his own. The more a person removes the foreign *deshen* from within himself, making space for *Hashem* to enter, the more he shows his own strength. He who understands the message of the *siluk hadeshen* merits “*Od yenuvun b'seivah, d'sheinim v'ra'ananim yiheyu*,” because *deshen* refers not just to leftovers, which must be removed, but to growth and *berachah* as well.

Shabbat Shalom!

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