



Parshas Tzav 2023, looking back to the future

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the immediate and speedy recovery of Daniel Aaron Moshe Ben Ruth and Chai Ben Sarina. May he and all those who need a Refuah Shlema experience G-d's mercy and compassion swiftly!

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

*This Shabbos, Parsha Tzav, is known as **Shabbos Hagadol - the Great Shabbos.** It is customary that the Rabbi gives a speech regarding Pesach's intricate and complex laws.*

Our Parsha begins with G-d instructing Moshe to tell his brother Aaron and his sons how to fulfill their duties in the Mishkan. The Torah details how to perform the various sacrifices and what must be brought along with them. The Parsha concludes with Moshe completing the process of anointing his brother, Aaron, and his descendants to serve in Mishkan.

However, a question comes to mind: The first Mitzvah G-d gave Moshe in this Parsha is Terumas Hadeshen. It is the commandment to remove the previous day's ashes from the altar each morning. The Pasuk writes (6:3), "*The Cohen shall dress in linen garments and take the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt offering on the altar and place them beside the altar.*"

But why does a Cohen need to wear his white and pure linen garments, which will certainly get stained when removing the ashes? What is the purpose of wearing the priestly garments while removing the ashes?!

Furthermore, the next Pasuk writes that the Cohen must change his clothes before taking the ashes out of the Mishkan. So why did he wear the special priestly garments while removing the ashes?

The Bekhor Shor, Rav Yosef Ben Yitzchak, a leading commentator from the mid-12th Century, gives a simple answer. He writes that the Torah needed to reiterate that the Cohen wears his special garments because we might think otherwise. Since he will probably get his white linen garments dirty, we could assume that a Cohen should wear different clothes.

The Bekhor Shor explains that since it is a service done in the Mishkan, the Cohen must wear his special priestly garments. Even though the garments will probably get dirty, the Cohen must wear them nevertheless. But he must change his clothing before he leaves the Mishkan with the ashes, for wearing the priestly garments outside the Mishkan is forbidden.

However, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He answers that there is a deeper purpose for the Terumas Hadeshen - the ashes removal. The Pasuk writes that these ashes were from burning the fats from the previous day's sacrifices. In the evening, all that was not burnt during the day was put on the altar to burn during the night.

The Rebbe explains that this was the first service done each morning in the Mishkan to signify a powerful lesson. The sacrifices of yesterday enable the achievements that can be accomplished today. The Cohen can only add wood to keep the present fire alive by removing the ashes of the previous day's fire.

The Cohen wears the priestly garments during this service not only because it must be done with the utmost dedication. But to help the Cohen recognize the importance of what he represents. **A connection to G-d through a physical offering that parallels an internal commitment and devotion.** A meaningful and practical relationship with our Creator, the Master of the Universe.

This lesson directly correlates with the purpose and intention of Pesach, the holiday of freedom. During the Seder night, we harp on our past to give us perspective for our future. **Why were we enslaved in Egypt? Why were we taken out of Egypt? Why did the King of all Kings, the Master of the Universe, choose us to be His Nation?!**

The answer is simple, because of the sacrifices of our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzhak and Ya'akov. Avraham circumcised himself at 99 years old because G-d commanded. Yitzhak offered himself as a sacrifice because G-d desired it. Ya'akov committed his entire life to G-d in the face of immense temptation, hardship and persecution.

Collectively, their actions represented a dedication to the mission of uniting G-d's holiness with the physical and finite world He graciously created.

In our daily life, it is imperative to realize that the challenges we overcame yesterday enable us to accomplish more today. The sacrifices that were previously made should inspire us to the capacity we have to achieve our goals.

Most often, the path to success is difficult and requires significant sacrifice and dedication. But the sacrifices of the people who came before us to accomplish the impossible should inspire us to continue going.

By looking back, and what we have accomplished, we can find the reason and motivation to keep working. Our past sacrifices represent the power and capacity we have within ourselves to go beyond our limits and experience a personal exodus from Egypt. A breaking of our individual limitations for the continuity of our G-dly mission.

"The past is not a burden to be forgotten, but a legacy to be honored."

Have a meaningful Shabbos!

Rabbi Sholom Yemini