

PARASHAT TZAV

The Nature of the Shelamim Sacrifice

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As we saw in last week's shiur, parashat Tzav focuses on the laws of the sacrifices from the viewpoint of the priests (in contrast to parashat Vayikra which focused on the viewpoint of the Israelites - those who bring the sacrifices). This distinction was based on the laws related to eating sacrifices - starting with the *ola* (burnt offering) that is not eaten at all and concluding with the *shelamim* (peace offerings) partially consumed by the altar, and eaten by the priests and the owners.

Our shiur today will focus on the time to eat the *shelamim*, and the internal differentiation that exists between the two types of *shelamim*.

There is a difference of opinion between the Rishonim regarding the meaning of the name "*shelamim*." Rashi (Vayikra 3:1) cites two opinions:

- a. "that they spread peace in the world";
- b. "that they bring peace to the altar and to the priests and to the owners" (meaning that everyone enjoys from the eating of the sacrifice.)

The source of these two explanations that Rashi brings are in Torat Kohanim (Nedava, 15:1-2). These two explanations base the word "*shelamim*" on the word "*shalom*" or peace. A third possibility for understanding "*shelamim*" appears in Rashbam (Vayikra 3:1:(

"The term *shelamim* derives its meaning from 'he vowed and needs to pay (*le-shalem*) for his vow' - that is, from the language of payment".

According to the Rashbam, *shelamim* are tied to the payment of a vow that a person has taken upon himself. According to these two interpretations, the *shelamim* has nothing to do with the absolution of sin. Whether it is related to a type of peace that is found in the world (i.e., God is not angry at the one who brings this sacrifice) or whether it is talking about a sacrifice whose essence depends on a voluntary vow, it does not refer to a sin that has contaminated the person bringing the sacrifice. And indeed, when examining the places where the text discusses the *shelamim*, we see that it does not serve as an absolution, but rather as an expression of happiness and spiritual emotion.

This is explicitly expressed in Devarim 27:7: "And you shall sacrifice there *shelamim* and eat them, rejoicing before the Lord your God." It also appears this way in the text at the beginning of King Shaul's reign:

"They offered sacrifices of *shelamim* there before the Lord; and Shaul and all the men of Israel held a great celebration there" (I Shmuel 11:15(and in other places (for instance in the covenant of the basins - Exodus 24, and at the purification of the Temple by Chizkiyahu - II Divrei Ha-yamim 29:30-31.(

Thus, in contrast to the other sacrifices that are usually brought out of obligation and as an atonement, the shelamim are characterized by their association with happiness - public or private - and stem from personal voluntary action. Therefore, there is no binding mitzva for future generations requiring a shelamim, with one exception - on Shavu'ot. (Next shiur we will discuss the eighth day of the completion of the Mishkan and the sin of Nadav and Avihu, and then we will discuss this unusual shelamim).

Looking at our parasha, we find that the text differentiates between two different types of shelamim:

"This is the ritual of the sacrifice of shelamim that one may offer to the Lord: If he offers it for a thanksgiving (toda) offering... If the sacrifice he offers is a votive (neder) or free-will (nedava) offering ..." (7:11-12, 16)

The style of the text: "If ... and if ..." is common in the laws of sacrifices and it generally refers to two different types that are encompassed within one basic category of sacrifice. Thus, for instance, regarding the mincha we read:

"When a person presents an offering of meal to the Lord ... If your offering is a meal offering on a griddle ... If your offering is a meal offering in a pan ... If you bring a meal offering of first fruits to the Lord ..." (Vayikra 2:1-14)

There is a sacrifice called the mincha, but there are different ways in which it may be sacrificed and these are specified by the text in the style of: "If ... and if"...

It follows that there are two types of shelamim: thanksgiving (toda) offerings and freewill (nedava) offerings. There are different laws pertaining to each of these, and our text mainly emphasizes the different times each is eaten.

In order to focus on the issue, we will carefully examine the basic differences that exist between two classes of offerings. The first are the "kodshei kodshim" - sacrifices with a major degree of sanctity which only the priests might eat, and then only in a sacred precinct, such as an ola or a mincha. The second are the "kodshim kalim" (sacrifices with a minor degree of sanctity) which may be eaten by everyone, such as shelamim of the free-will or votive kind. Let us sketch the major differences between the two categories of sacrifices:

A. KODSHEI KODSHIM

Slaughtering: North of the altar;

Place for eating: Only in the Temple court (excluding the ola, which is not eaten);

Time for eating: That day and the following night (the sages limited the eating until midnight only - "in order to keep man away from sin," but the Torah allows it to be eaten all night.)

B. KODSHIM KALIM:

Slaughtering: All of the Temple court;

Place for eating: All of Jerusalem;

Time for eating: That day, the following night, and the entire next day.

What is the significance of the time-difference when eating the different sacrifices? Why are priests allowed to eat from a chatat (sin offering) only during the day and night while the owners of a shelamim are allowed to eat from it for two days and the night in between?

In order to understand this, one must consider the two different ways of measuring time - one way is unique to the Temple and the other is in effect for the rest of the world. For the nation, the day starts at night and continues into the following day. Thus, the Shabbat begins after sunset on the sixth day, and the night is already considered sanctified by the Shabbat. In contrast, Temple time begins in the morning and continues until the end of the following night. Therefore, for example, the offerings that are brought during the day burn until the end of the following night, since it is considered one continuous time unit.

In the previous shiur we emphasized that the portions of the priests from the kodshei kodshim essentially belong on the altar, except that God gives it to them. (In the language of the Talmud, "What they acquire, they have acquired from the Divine Table.") Therefore, the time within which the priest may eat this offering is integrally associated with the time the altar may "eat" the sacrifice, since both the priests and the altar share in the consumption. The priests must finish their meal when the altar finishes its meal, and this is at the end of the unit of time within which the sacrifice was slaughtered, meaning the day of slaughtering and the following night (in other words, the Temple day.)

In contrast, the meal of the shelamim's owner is not based on God bestowing part of the sacrifice upon him. From the beginning the table is set for two - for God and for the owners, two equal partners fully participating in the meal. Therefore, the two time units are joined: first, a Temple day, where the night follows the day, and then the second, a standard day, where the night precedes the day. In effect, the time that results from the combination of these two units of time is two days and one night in between them, with the night serving both as the end of Temple time and the beginning of standard time.

In light of this, the reason for the different dining areas also becomes clear. The priests who eat from the Divine Table, must eat in the vicinity of the altar, meaning within the Temple Court, while the Israelites, who eat their offerings as men of flesh and blood (but also with participation from God), can eat within the entire holy city!

It is interesting to examine the time for eating the Passover sacrifice. The Paschal Lamb may be eaten one night only (and during this time frame there is a divergence of opinion between Tannaim over whether this means until morning or only until midnight). An analysis of Passover and its time frame requires its own space. Suffice to say that the Pesach is eaten in the time common to both types of day - the intermediate night, as opposed to regular shelamim, which is eaten in the time period formed by conjoining the two types of day.

After seeing the basic differences between the nedava shelamim and the kodshei kodshim, we will look at the second type of shelamim - the toda:

Slaughtering: the entire Temple court [in accordance with the laws of shelamim;]
Place for eating: All of Jerusalem [in accordance with the laws of shelamim;]

Time for eating: Day and the following night [like a chatat:!
"and the flesh of his thanksgiving sacrifice of shelamim shall be eaten on the day that it is offered; none shall be set aside until morning." (7:15)

At a first glance, it appears that a toda exemplifies a sort of integration between the laws of kodshei kodshim and kodshim kalim. On the one hand, they may be slaughtered anywhere within the entire Temple court and eaten throughout the city of Jerusalem (as with all shelamim), but on the other hand, the toda may be eaten only during the day and following night as with kodshei kodshim.

There is another detail regarding toda - the fact that matzot and challot are brought together with the sacrifice. The expression that appears in connection to this, "... unleavened cakes with oil mixed in, unleavened wafers spread with oil ..." (7:12), appears as a law applicable to future generations in only one other instance of an animal sacrifice - the ram that the nazir brings as a shelamim when he purifies himself:
..."one ram without blemish for a shelamim; a basket of unleavened cakes of choice flour with oil mixed in, and unleavened wafers spread with oil ..." (Bamidbar 6:14-15)

This comparison was noted by the Sages, who compared the laws of the nazir ram to the toda, and therefore derived that the ram of the nazir could only be eaten during the day and following night, as opposed to the nedava (which can be eaten an additional day.)

What distinguishes the toda and the nazir shelamim, so that they are somewhat related to the chatat?

It seems to me that the answer lies in the basic motivation that causes a person to bring a sacrifice to the Temple.

Going back to the beginning of our shiur, the shelamim are distinguished because they are not brought as an atonement for a specific sin, and they are almost never the subject of a Divine command to the public or an individual. The shelamim are integrally related to the personal generosity a person feels as a servant of God, who desires to bring his animal to God. As such, God invites him to join in the feast and the two of them (together with God's servants - the priests) eat from the sacrifice, as expressed by Rashi: "They spread peace in the world - that they bring peace to the altar and to the priests and to the owners." As such, the two time units combine to become one overlapping permitted time for eating the sacrifice.

In comparison, kodshei kodshim are integrally related to atonement, and usually there is an obligation to bring them (the free-will ola which is not eaten at all). For this reason, owners are not "invited" to a feast when they bring these offerings, but stand with a lowered head and request atonement, or aspire for acceptance before God.

There are two sacrifices that do not fit easily into this schema - the toda and the nazir shelamim.

On the one hand, these two offerings are tied to the inner voluntary motivation of the person who brings them. The one who brings the toda wishes to thank God for the kindness He bestowed on him. The nazir did not become a nazir out of religious obligation. However, these two types of sacrifices are not brought in the same

spontaneous manner as a free-will or votive offering is brought. One who brings a thanksgiving offering is responding from a spiritual perspective to God's actions that bestowed good upon him, and in reaction to this he brings a sacrifice. This is true also for the nazir, who is compelled by the Torah at the end of the nazir period to embark on a specific and detailed process of purification, even if the original nezirut was voluntary.

Of course I am not coming to denigrate the generous spirit of the two types of people who bring these offerings. However, they are both shrouded in an internal tension with regard to their motivation for bringing the offerings. This tension is reflected by their laws. On the one hand - they have some of the same laws as a freewill offering, infused with the characteristic of spontaneity; on the other hand, the time for eating them is the same as for chatat and asham, which result from obligation and from religious commandment.

(Translated by Nechama Barach.)