

Shabbat Zachor, Tzav

March 19, 2011

13 Adar II, 5771

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NEWS

ISRAEL IN SHOCK

This week has been a very difficult week for the population in Israel, a massacre occurred on Shabbat March 12, which can be accomplished only by barbarians. Terrorists infiltrated the village of Itamar, (southeast of Nablus), early Shabbat and stabbed five family members to death. They were butchered while they were sleeping in their home. It is the Fogel family, Udi Fogel, 36, Ruth Fogel, 35, and their children Yoav, 11, Elad, 4, and three-month-old Hadas. Three children survived this massacre.

We read the news as following in the website of Ynetnew.com: “Rabbi Yaakov Cohen, a neighbor who discovered the bodies, said that the Fogel’s 12-year-old daughter knocked on his door around 12:45 am Saturday. She said that no one opened the door at her home, and that there are muddy footprints at the entrance. ‘I took my weapon and we went up to the back window of the house, where we saw one of the surviving children,’ Cohen said. ‘He was sitting in the center of the living room, where there was no sign of blood, only mud.’ They then asked the boy to open the front door. ‘The daughter went into one of the rooms, and saw the horror before I did,’ Cohen said. ‘I entered and saw that another boy survived, a two-year-old. He was lying next to his bleeding parents, shaking them with his hands and trying to get them to wake them up, while crying.’ Cohen, who was close to the family and worked with

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Udi Fogel, said that he took the boy in his arms and hugged him. ‘The girl screamed and cried, and my daughter who arrived at the house tried to calm her down and hug her,’ he said. ‘We saw the bodies in the rooms. I scanned the house in order to see that there was no terrorist there, and waited for the security forces to arrive on the scene. The sight in the house was shocking.’

The children who survived the attack are being assisted by social workers. A welfare official said Saturday evening that ‘the kids are in trauma.’ This terrorist attack was on the mind and the mouth of everyone during this week.

Your prayers for the surviving children is appreciated.

CHAG PURIM SAMEACH

This weekend is a special time in Israel and for the Jewish people all over the world. It is the time of the Celebration of Purim, G-d has saved his people during the Persian exile and will continue to save him, that is the lesson of this celebration. Haman is the prototype of the enemies of G-d and G-d people from the Pharaoh of the Exodus to Hitler and even current dictators who have only one wish: the destruction of Israel and the annihilation of the Jewish people. let’s remember what Paul says clearly “**as far as election is concerned, they [Israel] are loved on account of the patriarchs, for G-d’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.**” (Rom. 11:28b-29)



OVERVIEW

TZAV

LEVITICUS 6:1-8:36

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the korban olah (the offering burnt on the altar throughout the night) are to be removed from the area by the kohen after he changes his special linen clothing. The olah is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment of the Torah. The kohen retains the skin. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly ablaze.

The korban mincha (offering) is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a kohen eats the remainder before it becomes leaven.

The Parasha describes the special korbanot to be offered by the Kohen Gadol each day, and by Aharon's sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration.

The chatat (the korban brought after an accidental transgression), is described, as are the laws of slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the asham (guilt-korban).

The details of shelamim (various peace korbanot) are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the todah (the thanksgiving korban).

All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, korbanot may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat a korban when he is ritually impure.

Blood and chelev (forbidden animal fats) are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every korban shelamim.

The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the Mishkan and all of its vessels is detailed.

TZAV

Tzav, Rashi explains, "is a very powerful word. It means command with a charge that is to be executed with speed and dili-

gence. The word "tzav," Rashi continues, "is also used only for situations that have eternal ramifications."

ACCOUNTABLE FOR THOUGHT

The Parsha begins with the laws of the "Olah" sacrifice (the "burnt-offering") which was completely burnt on the altar. **Command Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the law of the burnt-offering: It is the burnt-offering that stays on the flame, on the altar, all night until the morning, and the fire of the Altar should be kept aflame on it.** [Leviticus 6:2] According to the Jewish the Olah atoned for sins committed through thought. Most people commonly think that thoughts won't hurt anybody. So one can think anything as long the thoughts don't enter the realm of deeds.

However, according to the Torah and Yeshua HaMashiach, one is responsible and accountable for thought as well. Yeshua said **"You have heard ... 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment."** (Matatyahu 5:21-22). He said also: **"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** (Matatyahu 5:27, 28)

This is why in the "Al Chet" prayer which we recite on Yom Kippur asking G-d to forgive us for our sins, we also ask forgiveness for the sin of "improper thoughts."

Rabbi Bechaye explains the difference between a Sin Offering and an Olah offering. The sin offering (korban chatat) comes from [unintentional] violation of prohibited actions. A korban olah, on the other hand, atones for improper thoughts. Improper thoughts, Rabbi Bechaye explains, is something that a person can never totally escape from. Unfortunately, they are very prevalent and they are more prevalent at night than during the daytime. It is for this reason that the Olah offerings are to burn the entire night. Night time is the time when people especially need atonement from improper thoughts. About this it is written: **"Command Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the law of the burnt-offering: It is the burnt-offering that stays on the flame, on the altar, all night until the morning, and the fire of the Altar should be kept aflame on it."** [Leviticus 6:2]

THANKSGIVING OFFERING

One of the sacrifices was the “Korban Toda” - “Thanksgiving offering”. **“If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving offering, then shall he offer unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of scalded fine flour mixed with oil...”** (Leviticus 7:12)

The Korban Todah, thanksgiving offering, is basically a “peace offering” (Shelamim), this word is from “Shalom”. But unlike any other peace offering it is brought with four different types of flour offerings.

The Talmud (Berachot 7b) relates that from the day G-d created the world, no one thanked Him until Leah thanked Him for the birth of her fourth son Yehudah. At first glance, this defies understanding. Didn't Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel have countless reasons and opportunities to thank G-d? And why didn't Leah herself thank G-d for her first three children? The matriarchs knew that Jacob would have 12 sons, and each one of the four matriarchs expected three sons. Therefore, when Leah had her fourth son, she thanked G-d, for she had received more than her portion.

In the Bible time, the “Korban Toda” was offered by an individual to express gratitude and thanks to G-d.

A person sacrificed the Korban Toda after experiencing one of the following: 1) When one was freed from prison 2) When one recovered from a serious illness 3) When coming safely unto land after a sea voyage 4) When one traveled safely through the desert.

Since the coming of the Mashiach who fulfilled the commandment of sacrifices by being (himself) sacrificed in Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, nobody no longer offered sacrifices. Instead, Ribbi Yéhouda said on behalf of Rav, four group of people have to recite a prayer of thanksgiving to G-d called “HaGomel” if someone is 1) freed from prison, 2) recovers from a serious illness, 3) travels over the ocean, 4) or the desert (Tractate Shabbath 54b). This blessing is usually recited at the end of the Torah reading on Shabbat.

In fact thanksgiving prayer is a basic attitude in Judaism Each day (except for Shabbat and holidays) during the morning prayers, Jews recite “A Psalm of Thanksgiving” (Psalm 100). It reminds them to appreciate the many miracles which G-d performs for them daily. They are day-to-day and minute-to-

minute miracles, many of which we do not even notice, for they are concealed in what we call “nature.” But in truth, “nature” itself is one of the greatest miracles of all.

CHAG PURIM SAMEACH

Purim is the last of the Jewish holy days to enter the Jewish calendar. The Torah describes two sets of holy days: 1. The three festivals - Passover, Shavuot, and Succot (which were times of pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Temple era). 2. Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, (occasions for reconciliation, repentance and forgiveness.) Rabbi Noson Weisz says “A closer look at these holy days leads to the discovery that the three festivals are all related to the food cycle. Passover, in the spring, falls at the time of the earliest annual harvest, the barley crop. The omer sacrifice brought on the second day of Passover permits the consumption of the new harvest. Shavuot coincides with the wheat harvest, the source of the annual supply of the main staple of the human diet. Two loaves of bread are sacrificed on the Altar to mark the occasion. Succot marks the end of the summer when the produce, which has been left in the fields to dry in the summer heat, is finally gathered into the granaries and storage houses in preparation of winter. We celebrate the occasion with the four species. Man's physical survival depends on the success of these harvests, or to put it another way, on the stability of the tripod that rests on these three festivals, called in Hebrew the three regalim, or the three legs.” (Advanced Compendium parasha Tzav 5771).

The Torah has given holy days only in the Spring time and in the Autumn time, there is no holy days through the winter. However the rabbis have given to Israel two feasts on the winter time Chanukah and Purim. Not only that, but they are also “exile” feasts. Chanukah celebrates the end of the Greek occupation, while Purim was instituted to celebrate the end of the Persian exile and the victory over Haman.

The Maharal explains that the rabbis added these holy days because we require greater inputs of spiritual power in times of exile in order to maintain our spiritual integrity in the face of the special problems it presents. Living among the nations forces the Jewish people to confront two distinct threats to their survival, the twin threats of spiritual assimilation and physical annihilation. Chanukah celebrates the delivery of the spiritual input required to overcome the threat of spiritual assimilation, while Purim is dedicated to the celebration of the input required to counteract the problem of physical annihilation.

THANKSGIVING OFFERING

Rabbi Berachiah said in the name of Rabbi Levi, “This can be compared to a Kohen who was given a large amount of terumah by one individual and did not thank him. He was then given a small measure of unconsecrated grain, and he thanked the donor.

Said the first individual to the Kohen: “I gave you a large amount, and you did not thank me; he gave you a very small amount and you thanked him. Why?” The Kohen replied: “You gave me what rightfully belonged to me, so I saw no reason to thank you. He gave me what belonged to him and upon which I had no claim. Therefore I thanked him.”

GARBAGE

A Parable told by Rabbi Mordecai Kamenetzky An aspiring young scholar once came to the home of the Rosh Yeshiva to discuss what the young man held to be a serious problem. His wife, busy with the important task of raising a family had often chided him for not taking out the garbage. “Rebbe,” complained the Rosh Yeshiva wanna be, “It is below my dignity to be carrying out garbage, when people look at me as a future Rosh Yeshiva.”

The elderly sage nodded quietly, his expression showed deep concern. “I will deal with this issue tomorrow.” The next day, not long after the young couple had finished dinner, there was a knock on the door. The couple was startled to see the sage standing in the threshold of their apartment. What he said to the young mother of the house startled them even more.

“Being that it is below your husband’s dignity to remove the garbage, I have come to assist you with that task.”

There is no small work in the service of G-d, that is why the mitzvah of sweeping the Altar is introduced with the word tzav and placed next to the Korban olah.

LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

Seventy-five years ago, a young yeshiva student who had escaped from Nazi Europe with the Mir Yeshiva was walking through the

streets of Shanghai. He was stopped in his tracks by hysterical ranting coming from a radio in an upstairs apartment. The voice sounded like a wild animal. And then he realized he could understand what was being said: The voice was shrieking in German, “Come, let us obliterate from the world that nation that will not let us live in peace!” A sea of voices swelled behind him chanting, “Seig Heil! Seig Heil!”

The young man was shaken to the depths of his soul; he had never heard such a statement. He ran immediately to the mashgiach (spiritual mentor) of the Mir Yeshiva, Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein, zatzal, and repeated what he had heard. “For once,” responded the mashgiach, “for once, he’s telling the truth.”

The Jewish People will not let the world live in peace. The Jewish People proclaim to the world, by our very existence, that many things the world holds extremely dear are, in fact, worthless. When Haman looks at Mordechai he sees someone to whom all his power and money and status is a joke — Mordechai negates his entire existence. For this, the Jewish People have been hated down throughout the generations. But it was not always so.

When G-d gave the Jewish People the Torah on Mount Sinai, the kings of the East and the West were aware that something had happened that could destabilize their power. They felt the shaking of the earth beneath their feet. They feared another global flood and so they enquired of the Gentile prophet Bilaam what was the cause of this disturbance of the natural order. Bilaam said that there would be no flood, nor would a deluge of fire envelop the world. Rather, the world was responding to the momentous event of the giving of the Torah on Sinai. To which they responded, “May Hashem bless His people with peace.”

EDITOR

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Romans 12:9-15

One of the sacrifices offered by the priests in the text of the parasha is the shelamim sacrifice of “well-being” or peace. The word shelamim comes from the same root as shalom. It is important for G-d that his children feel well, that they feel at peace.

To get this peace, the believer should go to the temple and ask G-d to give it to him. In the second part of the Bible, Yeshua is the one who gives this peace. On various occasions Yeshua healed or blessed people and said to them, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 7:50).

Reading the Haftara of this week we understand why it was difficult for Israel to get or to feel this peace. However after reading why G-d reproached his people, it is time to look at our own actions and to evaluate our own situation. Are we at peace with G-d?

A commitment to the Lord has two components: a vertical one, the relationship between G-d and his people, and a horizontal one which relates to others. It is certainly one of the reasons that the Ten Commandments can be divided in two parts, two tables. While on the first table the commandments 1 to 4 were written, they were about our relationships with G-d. The commandments 5 to 10 were written on the second table and relate to our relationships with our neighbors (others).

The Jewish tradition said that if the Temple was destroyed two thousand years ago, it is because of hatred and lack of love for one another. Here is the advice of Rabbi Shaul, “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ... Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.” (Rom. 12:9-15). Shaul invites us to love, to hold what is good, to have affection for one another etc... it is only in that way we will get peace in our heart.

When we (Jews) lose our connection to Torah, the response of the nations is that of Haman. They see us no more than a choker around their necks, stifling their enjoyment of this world. They see in us no spirituality, no “chosen people.” They see us as a gang of killjoys, for we have lost the ability to be the light to the nations, which is G-d’s role for His people. However, when we try and exemplify our true heritage, there will be those amongst the nations who will still say, “May Hashem bless His people with peace!”

HAFTARAH

Jeremiah 7:21- 9:23

G-d speaks to the prophet Jeremiah just before the destruction of Jerusalem, saying to the people of Israel that he prefers obedience rather than sacrifice: “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. For in the day that I brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to them or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them, “Obey my voice, and I will be your G-d, and you shall be my people; and walk only in the way that I command you, so that it may be well with you.” (Jer 7:21-23).

G-d’s appreciation of Israel is strong. “Yet they did not obey or incline their ear ... For the people of Judah have done evil in my sight” (Jeremiah 7:24; 30).

Israel is full of illusion, they don’t see their exact spiritual situation: How can you say, “We are wise, and the law of the L-RD is with us,” when, in fact, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie? (Jeremiah 8:8)

That’s why G-d allows Babylon to come and to punish Israel for her sins. “Therefore I will give their wives to others and their fields to conquerors” (Jeremiah 8:10).

The Almighty continues his reproaches towards Israel, “oppression upon oppression, deceit upon deceit! They refuse to know me, says the L-RD” (Jeremiah 9:6).

The consequences are clear. Here is what the Lord declared about Jerusalem and Judah, “I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a lair of jackals; and I will make the towns of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant.” (Jeremiah 9:11).

It is difficult to be G-d’s people; it gives responsibilities. They are accountable for their actions, and because of their disobedience the punishment is terrible. “I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their ancestors have known; and I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them” (Jeremiah 9:16). What about us today? It is good to read what happened three thousand years ago but only if we receive the lessons that the L-rd wanted to give us for today. Are we faithful to our covenant and our commitment? It is a question for each one of us to answer.

