



ALSHICH

INSIGHTS FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

ספר ויקרא

פרשת צו

SERIES 2: ISSUE 25

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KORBAN TODAH'S FORTY LOAVES

Chapter 7

11) *And this is the law of the shelamim (peace-offering) that one may bring to Hashem.*

12) *If he brings it as a todah (thanksgiving-offering), [then] together with the todah-sacrifice he shall bring matzah-loaves mixed with oil, matzah-wafers smeared with oil, and [baked matzah-] loaves of fine flour scalded with water, mixed with oil.*

13) *[Together] with loaves of chametz he shall bring his offering, along with his shelamim.*

16) *If his sacrificial offering is a vow or free-will offering, it shall be eaten on the day he brings his sacrifice, and on the next day whatever is left over may be eaten*

(יא) וְזֹאת תֹּדַת זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיב לָהּ.

(יב) אִם עַל־תּוֹדָה יִקְרִיבֶנּוּ וְהִקְרִיב עַל־זֶבַח הַתּוֹדָה חֲלוֹת מִצּוֹת בְּלוֹלֹת בְּשֶׁמֶן וְרִקִּיקֵי מִצּוֹת מְשֻׁחִים בְּשֶׁמֶן וְסֹלֶת מְרֻבֶּקֶת חֹלֵת בְּלוֹלֹת בְּשֶׁמֶן.

(יג) עַל־חֹלֵת לֶחֶם חֲמֵץ יִקְרִיב קֶרְבָּנוּ עַל־זֶבַח תּוֹדַת שְׁלָמָיו.

(טז) וְאִם־יָנֹדֵר אוֹ נִדְבָה זֶבַח קֶרְבָּנוּ בְּיוֹם הַקְרִיבוֹ אֶת־זֶבְחוֹ יֵאָכַל וּמִמָּחָרָת וְהַנּוֹתָר מִמֶּנּוּ יֵאָכַל.

Consider the following questions:

1. Why does a person offering a *korban todah* bring four different types of loaves?
2. Forty loaves were brought in total, ten of each type. Why ten?
3. Why were thirty of the loaves made of matzah and ten made of *chametz*?
4. Why were the *chametz* loaves made without oil, unlike the other thirty?
5. What is the significance of the three different types of matzah: matzah-loaves, matzah wafers, and matzah that was scalded and baked?

The Torah here is telling us that there are two types of *shelamim*: thanksgiving *shelamim* (verses 12–13) and free-will *shelamim* (verse 16). The thanksgiving-*shelamim* (*korban todah*) is accompanied by four types of loaves: (a) matzah-loaves mixed with oil; (b) matzah-wafers smeared with oil; (c) fine flour scalded with water, mixed with oil, and baked into matzah-loaves; and (d) loaves of *chametz*. All together there were forty loaves, ten of each type.

Now, as we have mentioned before, all the *korbanos* and their various details contain hidden, Kabbalistic meanings. Yet we have not refrained from explaining various allusions according to our level of understanding, and it is fitting to do the same here.

Our Sages (*Berachos* 54b) teach that four kinds of people bring a *korban todah* for having been delivered from danger by Hashem: one who has successfully traversed a desert wilderness, one who has recovered from a dangerous illness, one who was imprisoned and then released, and one who completes a sea-journey. It seems to me that Hashem commanded that four types of loaves be brought together with the sacrifice as a remembrance of these four categories. Each person who brings a *korban todah* brings all four kinds of loaves, so that none of the four reasons for bringing this *korban* should be forgotten. **[This answers Question 1.]** In addition, the reason there are ten loaves of each type is to correspond to the fact that the thanks must be offered in the presence of a minyan of ten men, as these Sages learned from the verse (*Tehillim* 137:32), *And they shall exalt Him in a congregation of people.* The word *congregation* refers to a minimum of ten. **[This answers Question 2.]**

Three out of the four kinds of people who bring this *korban* – namely those who passed safely through the desert or the sea, and those who were released from prison – remained physically healthy throughout their ordeal. Since fermentation and decay, which are represented by *chametz*, did not attack their bodies, they are represented by the thirty loaves of matzah. But the fourth person was not exposed to dangerous external situations; rather, he was afflicted from Heaven with the decay of illness. If not for Hashem having cured him, the powerful disease “fermenting” in his body would have caused his death. For this reason, he gives thanks upon his recovery with the type of loaves which represent him, namely ten loaves made of *chametz*. **[This answers Question 3.]**

The physical health of the first three is also symbolized by the fact that all their loaf-offerings are enriched with oil. This is because oil represents health and vitality, as it says (*Koheles* 9:8): *At all times, let your garments be white, and let oil not be wanting on your head.* But since the fourth person was sick and would have died had Hashem not had mercy on him, his offering does not contain oil. **[This answers Question 4.]**

Let us now explain why each of the first three is represented by its own **type** of matzah. *Tehillim* 107:4–9 states about people who escaped from the desert: *They wandered in the wilderness ... hungry as well as thirsty ... they cried out to Hashem in their distress ... they shall give thanks to Hashem ... for He has satiated the yearning soul and filled the hungry soul with good.* This category is therefore represented by the ten matzah loaves, which are thick and substantial, thus satiating hunger. The person who suffered and grew weak in his prison cell and was then released is represented by the ten thin *matzah* wafers. And the ten loaves where the flour is scalded with boiling water before being baked correspond to those who crossed over and emerged from the seething waters of the sea. **[This answers Question 5.]**

THE ALSHICH AND HIS COMMENTARY

The Alshich (1508 - 1600), was one of only five famous rabbis in Jewish history universally known by the title “HaKodosh” (the Holy one). He served on the same Beis Din as Rabbi Yosef Caro, author of the *Shulchan Aruch*. He simultaneously focuses on both the text as well as the context of a series of verses by listing a range of questions and then answering them all using one or two concepts.

These sheets are drawn from the Alshich on the Torah published by Feldheim and are in memory of Yental Bas Yitzchok, Mrs Jean Silkin. They seek to expand the spectrum of readers who can appreciate the Alshich’s true greatness.

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