

## PARASHAT TETZAVEH

### The Daily Sacrifice (29:38-46)

By Rav Elchanan Samet

#### A. THE SACRIFICIAL ALTAR: TWO LACUNAE

Last week, we examined the parasha of the sacrificial altar. Close inspection of the command to construct the altar (27:1-8) and a comparison with the other vessels of the Mishkan gives rise to the feeling that two things are missing from this parasha.

1. Concerning all the other vessels (including the incense altar and the basin, which appear among the appendices to the command to construct the Mishkan), the command to create each vessel also includes the command that it be put to its proper use. This applies even to the two vessels that are not actively used for Divine service – the ark and the basin. Concerning the ark, we are told (25:16), "And you shall place within the ark the Testimony that I shall give you," while concerning the basin we read (30:17), "And you shall make a basin of copper... and you shall place water therein."

Similarly, for each of the vessels used in the Mishkan, there is a command as to what is to be done with them:

a) the table (25:30): "And you shall place upon the table the showbread before Me at all times;"

b) the menorah (ibid. 37): "And he shall light its lamps, that they may illuminate towards it;"

c) the incense altar (30:7-8): "And Aharon shall burn the incense upon it... an eternal incense before God for all your generations."

In my shiur on parashat Pekudei in 5760, I explained that these instructions are part of the commands concerning the actual construction of the vessels, for only when each vessel is used for its intended purpose is its construction and fashioning complete. An

ark without the tablets inside it is not the ark; a table without showbread upon it is not the table; etc.

Therefore, we do not find even once in the description of the fashioning of the vessels by Betzalel and his assistants that the work was executed "as God commanded Moshe," for it was not Betzalel who placed these vessels in their proper place in the Mishkan and who performed the service appropriate to each vessel. This expression is used only concerning Moshe, when he starts setting up the Mishkan (as described in 40:17-33), because it is Moshe who brings each vessel to completion by placing it in the proper place and by performing the service unique to that vessel, by means of which its fashioning is completed.

However, the command concerning the sacrificial altar records no instruction to offer the daily sacrifices upon it, corresponding to the similar instruction found in relation to all the other vessels.

Does this reflect a difference between the sacrificial altar and the other vessels? It seems not, because when Moshe erects the Mishkan we are told:

(40:29) "And he placed the sacrificial altar at the entrance to the Sanctuary, AND HE OFFERED THE BURNT OFFERING UPON IT... as God had commanded Moshe."

This description follows the pattern of the other vessels. Clearly, then, it is only when the burnt offering is offered upon it that the construction of this altar is complete, and there is no difference in this regard between the altar and the other vessels.

What, then, is the meaning of the seeming lacuna in the command, namely, the lack of a command to offer a burnt offering upon it in the parasha that commands its construction?

2. In the parasha preceding the one about making the altar – the command to make the curtain, and the consequent internal arrangement of the Mishkan (26:31-37) - we are told where each of the vessels of the Mishkan is to be placed. In my shiur on parashat Teruma I noted that the juxtaposition of the command concerning the altar to that section, forming two parts of a single literary unit, comes to include the altar among the vessels of the Mishkan and its internal arrangement.

But it is specifically this juxtaposition that highlights another "missing part" of the command concerning the altar. Although it is clear that the sacrificial altar is located outside the Sanctuary, we are not told exactly where within the courtyard it is meant

to stand. Why does the parasha not stipulate its exact location in relation to the Mishkan?

From the description of Moshe's actions regarding the altar (40:29), we know not only that Moshe offered a burnt offering upon the altar, but also that he had previously placed it "at the entrance to the Sanctuary." This is exactly what we would expect: for the altar to stand in the closest possible proximity to the Mishkan – at the entrance. But an explicit instruction to place it there is missing from the Divine command.

## B. THE BURNT OFFERING AND THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE MISHKAN

Let us now turn to parashat Tetzaveh, and take note of a difficulty that becomes apparent near its conclusion. Matters relating to the Mishkan and its service stretch over three Sefarim – Shemot, Vayikra and Bemidbar. Sefer Shemot deals with the establishment of the Mishkan as a location housing the Ark of Testimony and the sacred vessels, as well as the place of the service performed by the Kohanim. But Sefer Shemot does not address the service of the sacrifices – neither those of the Kohanim nor those of the nation. This Sefer does not get involved in the practical functioning of the Mishkan. This happens in Sefer Vayikra, and to a certain extent also in Sefer Bemidbar.

It is therefore most surprising to find the parasha of the daily sacrifice (29:38-42) appearing at the conclusion of the command to build the Mishkan – a command that stretches over two parashiot, Teruma and Tetzaveh – and prior to its ceremonial conclusion at the end of chapter 29. This section is repeated, almost word for word, in the section of the "additional" sacrifices (musafim) found in parashat Pinchas (Bemidbar 28:3-8).

The natural place for this parasha actually would seem to be in parashat Pinchas, at the beginning of the section listing all the "additional offerings." The question, then, is why it appears in parashat Tetzaveh. Sefer Shemot does not deal with the laws of the sacrifices, but rather with the construction of the Mishkan. The laws of the sacrifices are listed in Sefer Vayikra and Sefer Bemidbar. What is this parasha doing in the midst of the command concerning the construction of the Mishkan – and specifically near the end of that command?

Ibn Ezra (Shemot 29:38) and Rashi (Bemidbar 28:4) suggest that the section in Sefer Shemot regarding the daily sacrifice relates to the "seven days of inauguration" of the Mishkan (which appears previously in chapter 29), while the parallel section in Sefer Bemidbar relates to future generations. These commentaries explain the repetition thus because the parasha of the daily sacrifice appears at the end of chapter 29,

AFTER the long and detailed command concerning the sacrifices of the inaugural days.

In truth, however, there seems to be no connection between the sacrifices of the inaugural days and the daily sacrifices. The sacrifices of the seven days of inauguration are special sacrifices (some of the laws of which apply uniquely to that situation); they are offered as a one-time event in order to train the kohanim in their task. The daily sacrifice, in contrast, is a "routine" sacrifice, commanded from the time of the establishment of the Mishkan onwards "for all your generations" (verse 42). Moreover, in the parasha of the daily sacrifices no mention is made of Aharon and his sons (the kohanim) at all, nor does the expression "seven days" appear anywhere. The traditional division of the parashiot according likewise hints at the independence of the section pertaining to the daily sacrifices: all the laws of the inaugural days are included in a single parasha (29:1–37), while the section of the burnt offerings is located in a different parasha, together with the ceremonial conclusion of the command concerning the construction of the Mishkan (38-46).

It seems, then, that there is a different answer to the question of why the daily sacrifices are mentioned here in Sefer Shemot. This parasha is simply the continuation and conclusion of the parasha concerning the construction of the altar, in chapter 27! When read as a direct continuation of the parasha concerning the altar (and not as a direct continuation of the parasha concerning the inaugural days, to which it is unrelated), not only is the question of its location in Sefer Shemot solved – for now it deals with the completion of the creation of the vessels of the Mishkan – but the two questions that I posed at the start of this shiur are likewise solved, and the "missing pieces" are filled in.

1. Now the command to fashion the altar also contains an instruction to make it serve its intended purpose – to offer the daily sacrifice upon it – like the commands concerning the other vessels of the Mishkan.

2. In explaining the use to be made of the altar, in order to bring it to completion, the parasha also teaches us about the altar's location (42): "A daily sacrifice for all your generations AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE SANCTUARY, BEFORE GOD."

A clear indication of the connection between the daily offerings and the construction of the altar is to be found in the fact that the word "altar" (mizbe'ach) is mentioned six times in the command concerning its construction, and it is clearly meant to be the keyword of the section. But why does it not appear a seventh time, like any regular biblical keyword? The answer – the seventh appearance - is to be found here, in the section concerning the daily sacrifices:

(29:38) "And this is what you shall offer UPON THE ALTAR; two year-old lambs...."

### C. THE DAILY SACRIFICE IN SHEMOT AND BEMIDBAR

Now it becomes clear why there is a need for the section on the daily sacrifices to appear twice, and some of the differences between the two sources are more easily understood. In Sefer Shemot this command comes as part of the command to BUILD THE ALTAR – as a completion of the altar by making it serve its intended purpose. In Sefer Bemidbar this parasha appears as part of the system of public sacrifices related to fixed times, under the heading (28:1), "My offering, My bread of My burnt sacrifices – a sweet savor to Me – shall you observe, TO OFFER THEM TO ME AT THEIR APPOINTED TIMES." From here the difference between the introductions to the two parashot arises:

Shemot: "And this is what you shall offer upon the altar..."

Bemidbar: "This is the burnt offering that you shall offer to God...."

In Sefer Shemot what is important is the "doing" – the offering – upon the altar, for it is this service UPON THE ALTAR that completes the fulfillment of the command (27:1), "And you shall make the altar." In Sefer Bemidbar, in contrast, there is no mention of the altar in this section at all. Instead, the emphasis at the beginning of the parasha – and another three times within it – is on the fact that this daily sacrifice, with its meal offering and drink offering, is A SACRIFICE TO GOD, offered as a sweet savor (in Sefer Shemot this issue is mentioned only once, in verse 41).

The different aims of the parasha of the daily sacrifice in these two Sefarim is likewise highlighted in the following verses:

Shemot: "A daily sacrifice... at the entrance to the Sanctuary, before God."

Bemidbar: "A daily sacrifice... for a sweet savor, a burnt offering to God."

In Sefer Shemot, it is important that the LOCATION of the daily sacrifice be mentioned – upon the altar that stands at the entrance to the Sanctuary, before God, "where I shall meet with you." Thus, the sacrifice and the altar are related to the Mishkan as a whole and to its purpose as the place of God's meeting with Moshe. In Sefer Bemidbar, on the other hand, there is no mention of the place where the sacrifice takes place; instead, the emphasis (again) is on the daily sacrifice as part of "My offering, My bread of My burnt sacrifices – a sweet savor to Me."

Despite the disparate reasons for mentioning the daily sacrifice in these two places, the Torah is speaking, after all, about the same sacrifice – but in each place it serves a different function, as appropriate to the context of each Sefer. Therefore, each Sefer also hints at the purpose that is emphasized in the other:

Shemot: "A daily sacrifice FOR ALL YOUR GENERATIONS..."

Bemidbar: "A daily sacrifice COMMANDED UPON HAR SINAI..."

Even though in Sefer Shemot the daily sacrifice is mentioned in the context of the establishment of the Mishkan, the parasha nevertheless emphasizes that the daily sacrifice is "for all your generations" – for it does have an additional purpose, as part of the system of fixed sacrifices to God. On the other hand, the parasha of the daily sacrifices in Sefer Bemidbar mentions that this sacrifice – serving as the basis for all the other sacrifices that have a fixed time – was "commanded at Har Sinai" as part of the construction of the altar and as part of God's encounter with Moshe that took place in the Mishkan.

#### D. THE DAILY SACRIFICE AND THE INCENSE OFFERING

The interpretation proposed thus far – that the parasha of the daily sacrifices in Sefer Shemot is the conclusion of the section concerning the construction of the altar – gives rise to the question why this parasha is "uprooted" from its seemingly proper place in chapter 27 and placed here, at the end of chapter 29. The answer to this question is clear: the command concerning the daily sacrifice is meant to connect to the conclusion of the greater command concerning the construction of the Mishkan. The transition between the verses about the daily burnt sacrifices and those of the general conclusion is so smooth that it is difficult to locate the boundary between them with any precision:

(29:42) "A daily sacrifice for all your generations at the entrance to the Sanctuary before God, where I will meet with you, to speak with you there.

(43) And I will meet there with the children of Israel, and it will be sanctified with My glory.

(44) And I shall sanctify the Sanctuary and the altar, and I shall sanctify Aharon and his sons to serve before Me.

(45) And I shall dwell among the children of Israel, and I shall be their God.

(46) And they shall know that I am the Lord, their God, who took them out of the land of Egypt, to dwell among them, I am the Lord their God."

But why is specifically the daily sacrifice selected to connect to the conclusion of the greater command to construct the Mishkan? Here again, the answer seems clear: the twice-daily sacrifice in the morning and towards evening is the central human service performed in the Mishkan, and it relates to what is happening at the "heart" of the Mishkan – the encounter between God and Moshe, and thereby with all of Israel.

The arranging of the showbread on the table in the Sanctuary (once each week) and the preparation of the candles of the menorah (each evening) are "secondary" services, just as the vessels with which these are performed are likewise "secondary" vessels: they stand at the SIDES of the Mishkan (the table on the northern side and the menorah on the southern side). The purpose of these services is to honor God's symbolic presence in the Mishkan through a table that continually offers bread and a light that continually illuminates the Mishkan.

The two "permanent" services performed in the Mishkan, on the other hand – the offering of the daily sacrifices and the continual offering of the incense – are "central" services that touch upon the real essence of the Mishkan: the meeting of God with Moshe and with the nation of Israel in the Holy of Holies "from above the covering, between the two keruvim that are upon the ark of Testimony" (25:24). This fact finds expression in the centrality of the two altars: they stand in the center, facing the place of this encounter (the ark and its covering), one inside and one outside.

This connection between the two altars (and the services performed upon them) and the place of meeting finds overt stylistic expression in a comparison of the two parashot standing on either side of the ceremonial conclusion of the command to construct the Mishkan - the parasha of the daily sacrifices preceding it, and the parasha of the incense altar following it:

a) Loca:

- sacrificial altar (29:42): "At the entrance to the Sanctuary, before God, WHERE I SHALL MEET WITH YOU"

- incense altar (30:6): "Before the curtain that is upon the ark of Testimony, before the covering that is upon the Testimony, WHERE I SHALL MEET WITH YOU"

- incense service (30:36): "Before the Testimony in the Sanctuary, WHERE I SHALL MEET WITH YOU"

b) Command:

- burnt offering (29:42): "A daily sacrifice for all your generations... before God"

- incense (30:8): "A continuous incense before God for all your generations."

In what way, then, do these two "continual services" – both related to the encounter between God and Israel – differ? And why does the daily sacrifice rate its "place of honor," prior to the conclusion of the greater command and juxtaposed to it, while the incense service lingers to the end, forming the first "appendix" in proximity to the conclusion?

Both the continual incense and the daily sacrifices are meant to accompany the encounter between God and Moshe and Bnei Yisrael. But the significance of each of these services in this context is quite different: they are almost the opposite of one another. In my shiur on Parashat Tetzaveh in 5760, which was devoted to the incense altar and its service, I explained that the function of the incense is to create a human-made cloud that screens God's revelation. This is stated explicitly in relation to the incense offered by the Kohen Gadol when he enters within the curtain once a year (Vayikra 16:13): "And the cloud of incense will surround the covering that is upon the Testimony, that he not die." The encounter between God and Moshe may take place in the Sanctuary on any regular day, and therefore a continuous incense accompanies this encounter, in order that God's revelation will be from within a cloud, "For in a cloud I shall appear above the covering" (Vayikra 16:2).

The incense service, then, is unlike the sacrificial service (or any other service performed in the Mishkan). It is not a "primary need," and man does not thereby serve God directly. Rather, by offering the incense, man acts as God's agent: he creates a cloud screen between himself and the place of the Revelation, in order to facilitate the encounter with God. This explains the seemingly surprising location of the parasha concerning the incense altar, which is not mentioned among the vessels of the Mishkan at the beginning of Parashat Teruma (as would seem appropriate to a vessel that stands within the Sanctuary itself), but rather as an appendix outside the framework of the main command to build the Mishkan and its vessels.

The sacrificial altar, in contrast, although located (of necessity) outside of the Mishkan, nevertheless stands "at the entrance to the Sanctuary ... before God" – i.e., facing the curtain and the covering of the ark, the place where God meets with Israel "to speak with you there." It is the human accompaniment to that encounter: it is the reaction – or perhaps the invitation – on man's part for that encounter to take place.

Here man does not act as God's agent to create a screen behind which the revelation can take place, but rather acts as the human partner in that covenant represented by the Mishkan. The purpose of his act is to create "a sweet savor, a burnt offering to God."

We find that the command concerning the construction of the Mishkan is located in its entirety in between the parasha of the ark at its beginning and the parasha of the daily sacrifices at its conclusion. These bookends frame the encounter between God and man: on the one hand, the covering of the Keruvim, which is in the most hidden part of the Mishkan – "and I SHALL MEET THERE with you and I SHALL SPEAK WITH YOU..." (25:22), and on the other hand, the sacrificial altar that is external and exposed: "a daily sacrifice... at the entrance to the Sanctuary... where I SHALL MEET with you, TO SPEAK with you there" (29:42). It is only through this double-sided connection between God and Israel that the promise of "And they shall make Me a Sanctuary and I shall dwell in their midst" (25:8) will be realized, as the end of the parasha relates:

(29:45) "And I shall dwell amongst Bnei Yisrael, and I shall be their God."

(Translated by Kaeren Fish.

The unabridged Hebrew version of this shiur is archived at: <http://www.vbm-torah.org/hparsha-7/hparsha7.htm>.)

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