

# Parsha Ponders

Emor | May 8, 2020 | 15 Iyar 5780

## *The desecration of ingratitude*<sup>1</sup>

וכי-תזבחו זבח-תודה ליקוק לרצנכם תזבחו: ביום ההוא יאכל לא-תותירנו ממןנו עד-בקר אני יקוק: ושמרתם מצותי ועשיתם אותן אני יקוק: ולא תחללו את-שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני יקוק מקדשכם  
When you offer a *Todah* offering for Hashem, it shall be offered in a way that is acceptable. It shall be eaten on that day; don't leave any of it over until morning. I am Hashem. Safeguard my *mitzvos*, and perform them; I am Hashem. Don't profane my Holy Name, and I shall be sanctified amongst the Children of Israel; I am Hashem, who sanctifies you.<sup>2</sup>

One type of offering that is brought in the Temple is known as a *Todah* offering. It consists of an animal that is offered, as well as many loaves of bread. All of these need to be consumed on the day that they are brought. After this offering is mentioned in the Torah, the prohibition against a *chillul Hashem*, profaning Hashem's name, is commanded. What is the significance of this juxtaposition? What do these two *mitzvos* have to do with each other?

There's a *Midrash* which teaches<sup>3</sup> us that there's nothing more detestable to Hashem than ingratitude. The reason that Adam was exiled from the Garden of Eden was because he was ungrateful for the wife that Hashem gave him<sup>4</sup>. The Jews were punished with poisonous snakes because they were ungrateful for the *munn* from Heaven which they had been given to eat<sup>5</sup>.

Why is ingratitude so abhorrent to Hashem? Because someone who denies the good that is given to them by man, will eventually deny the existence of Hashem. We see this from Pharaoh, who received so much good to his nation because of Yosef. How did Pharaoh repay Yosef? He enslaved Yosef's descendants with backbreaking labor. As a result, when Moshe told Pharaoh that Hashem, the G-d of the Hebrews, demands their release, Pharaoh responded: "Who is Hashem that I should listen to Him?"<sup>6</sup> His trait of ingratitude lead to his denial of Hashem.

A *Todah* offering is literally translated as a thanksgiving offering. Who is obligated to bring one? *Chazal* tell us<sup>7</sup> that there four individuals who must bring one: someone who recovered from a life threatening illness, someone who survived traveling over the sea, someone who survived traveling through the desert, and someone who was released from prison. All of these people were in life-threatening situations, and are required to express their gratitude to Hashem for ensuring their salvation.

The reason for the juxtaposition is obvious then. Someone doesn't have gratitude, especially if Hashem saved their life? There's no greater desecration of Hashem's name than that. It's as if they're denying Hashem's existence. They're showing there's no need for gratitude. The opposite is true. We must inculcate within ourselves the value of gratitude, and express it properly. Otherwise, there could be a *chillul Hashem*.

Good Shabbos

<sup>1</sup> Based on Ta'amah D'Krah by Rav Chaim Kanievsky *shlita* to Leviticus 22:29, 32

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus 22:29-32

<sup>3</sup> Mishnas Rabbi Eliezer § 7 p. 137, brought in Torah Sheleimah to Exodus Chapter 1 § 88. See also Midrash HaGadol and Lekach Tov to Exodus 1:8

<sup>4</sup> See Rashi to Genesis 3:12, quoting Avodah Zara 5b

<sup>5</sup> Numbers 21:5

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 5:2

<sup>7</sup> Rashi to Leviticus 7:12, based on Psalms Chapter 107. See Berachos 54b which only connects this verse to Birkas HaGomel, and Rosh Berachos 9:3 who brings a dispute how connected the two concepts are