

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Tzav

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Compiled from the works of
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An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi Parshas Tzav

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Rashi in His Own Words

ויקרא ז', י"ב: אם על תודה יקריבנו ויהקריב | על זבח התודה חלות מצות בלולת בשמן ורקיקי מצות משחים בשמן וסלת מרִבֶּקֶת חלת בלולת בשמן:

רש"י ד"ה אם על תודה יקריבנו: אם על דבר הודאה על נס שנעשה לו, כגון יורדי הים והולכי מדברות וחבושי בית האסורים וחולה שנתרפא שהם צריכין להודות שכתוב בהן (תהלים ק"ז, כ"א - כ"ב) יודו לה' חסדו ונפלאותיו לבני אדם ויזבחו זבחי תודה. אם על אחת מאלה נדר שלמים הללו, שלמי תודה הן, וטעונות לחם האמור בענין, ואינן נאכלין אלא ליום ולילה, כמו שמפורש כאן:

Vayikroh 7:12: If he is bringing it as a thanksgiving offering, he shall offer, along with the thanksgiving offering, unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and scalded flour mixed with oil.

Rashi Heading - If he is bringing it as a thanksgiving offering: If (he is bringing the offering) to give thanks for a miracle that had happened to him, for instance, those who made a sea voyage, those who journeyed in the desert, those who were in prison or a sick person who recovered. All these are required to give thanks. Regarding them, it is written¹, "They shall give thanks to the Lord for His kindness and His wonders to the children of men. And they shall slaughter sacrifices of thanksgiving²." If, on account of one of these, one vowed to bring these Peace Offerings, then they are תְּלוּמֵי תוֹדָה Thanksgiving Peace Offerings. They require the accompanying offering of bread mentioned in this passage. One may eat them only on the day he offered them and the following night, as specified here.

Synopsis

This week's Torah portion, Tzav, continues teaching us sacrificial laws. It teaches us about the "Thanksgiving Offering," which the beneficiary of a miracle brought. Rashi specifies which miracles obligate one to bring this offering. He teaches that it is a Peace Offering of Thanks and lets us know the various rules that pertain to it.

1. Tehillim 107:21 – 22.

2. We see from the chapter of Tehillim, which Rashi quotes, Chapter 107, who must bring a Thanksgiving Offering. Traveling through the desert is told in verses 4 - 9, "They strayed in the desert, on a road of desolation; they did not find an inhabited city ... They shall give thanks to the Lord for His kindness, and for His wonders to the children of men. For He sated a yearning soul, and a hungry soul He filled with goodness." Release from prison is mentioned in verses 10 - 16, "Those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, prisoners of affliction and iron ... They shall give thanks to the Lord for His kindness, and for His wonders to the children of men. For He broke copper doors and cut off iron bars." Recovery from an illness in verses 17 - 22, "Fools, because of the way of their transgression and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul despises all food, and they reach the portals of death ... They shall slaughter sacrifices of thanksgiving, and they shall tell of His deeds with song." A sea journey is mentioned in verses 23 - 31, "Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do work in mighty waters ... They shall thank the Lord for His kindness, and for His wonders to the children of men."

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We must understand why a Thanksgiving Offering only applies to a miracle; it can mean thanks for anything. Even if it implies a miracle, how does Rashi know it means these four miracles? Granted, we derive these four categories of miracles from the chapter of Tehillim, which Rashi quotes; however, the chapter may only list four examples of miracles. How does Rashi know, according to Peshat, that one only brings the sacrifice for these four miracles?

We must understand what this week's portion discusses to answer these questions. Primarily, it explains sacrifices that the Torah described in the previous portion; however, it adds details that apply to each sacrifice. The only exception to this seems to be the "קרבתן שלמים - Peace Offering." It says,³ "and this is the law of the Peace Offering," which the last portion explained. However, it then describes a Thanksgiving Offering.

To answer this question, Rashi tells us that the Torah is consistent. We already discussed the Peace Offering in the last portion. Rashi clarifies that a Thanksgiving Offering is a Peace Offering with specific details that the Torah teaches here; hence, it is consistent with the rest of the Parshah.

Although we have solved Rashi's main difficulty, he adds other details about the Thanksgiving Offering. Rashi is explaining why it is specifically for these four miracles.

If one had to bring an offering to thank Hashem for everything we have, we would have to bring numerous offerings daily; this is not so. Hence, one must only bring a Thanksgiving Offering for a miracle.

Yet this also leaves us with a problem. The Jews in the desert ate, drank, and were protected miraculously every day. If one had to bring an offering for miracles, the several million Jews in the wilderness would have had to bring an individual offering daily. The obligation must only be for *certain* miracles.

The Torah does not tell us which miracles obligate one to offer a sacrifice, but the chapter of Tehillim, which Rashi cites, does. It says⁴ that "they shall slaughter sacrifices of thanksgiving ..." and enumerates four miracle categories. We understand that one must offer a Thanksgiving Offering for these miracles. However, since the words are stated explicitly only regarding a healed sick person, Rashi lists all four categories of miracles.

Rashi's Explanation

This week's Torah portion, Tzav, continues teaching us sacrificial laws. It teaches us about the "Thanksgiving Offering, קרבן תודה," which was brought by one who was the beneficiary of a miracle. Rashi lists four examples: one who made a sea voyage, who journeyed in the desert, who had been imprisoned, and a sick person who recovered. Rashi cites two verses from Tehillim as proof that each must bring a sacrifice. This chapter alludes to these four categories². He concludes that if one experiences one of these circumstances and vows to

3. Ouyr Parshah, Vayikroh 7:11.

4. Tehillim 107:22.

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bring a sacrifice, it is a "Peace Offering." Specific rules govern it, i.e., it must be brought together with particular meal offerings and be eaten on the day he brings it and the following night, as the Torah describes in the following verses.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

This sacrifice is called a Thanksgiving Offering. How does Rashi know that it is only thanks for a miracle? Even if it implies exclusively giving thanks for a miracle, how does Rashi know it only applies to the four miracles he mentions? Perhaps he derives it from the chapter of Tehillim, which he mentions. However, why would one say that, according to Peshat, these are the only miracles it would apply? Maybe these are just four examples of miracles.

Perhaps Rashi can somehow derive from Tehillim that according to Peshat, one only offers the Thanksgiving Offering for these four miracles. However, why does he need to cite all four instances of miracles? Rashi is not a book of Jewish law, and he could have mentioned one as an example and concluded with "etc." as he often does.

After listing these four miracles, Rashi adds that "if on account of one of these, one vowed to bring these peace-offerings, then they are "שְׁלָמֵי תוֹדָה" - Thanksgiving Peace Offerings." That much is obvious. Rashi is explaining a Thanksgiving Offering!

The order in which Rashi mentions the four categories of miracles is surprising; he deviates from the order in Tehillim² and Talmud⁵.

Why does Rashi list "a sick person who recovered" in the singular while he lists the other three in the plural? Moreover, the Talmud writes, "a prisoner who has been set free." Rashi changes that and writes in the plural, "those who had been imprisoned." Furthermore, recovering from an illness or being freed from prison generally affects an individual, whereas going out to sea or a desert usually involves a group. Hence, writing those two categories in the plural, as in the Talmud, would seem more logical.

The Explanation

We must look at this week's Torah portion to answer these questions. For the most part, it discusses sacrifices that were already explained in the previous portion, Vayikroh. However, it adds details regarding each sacrifice that the Torah did not mention earlier. The only exception seems to be the קרבן שלמים or Peace Offering, which the Torah discussed in the portion of Vayikroh. In this week's portion, Tzav says⁶, "And this is the law of the Peace Offering." However, what follows is a description of a completely different offering, a Thanksgiving Offering. It would seem that the words "and this is the law of the Peace Offering" are superfluous because we do not explain other laws of that sacrifice!

5. Talmud Berachos 54, b.

6. Our Parshah, Vayikroh 7:11.

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To answer this question, Rashi says that "they are *שְׁלֵמֵי תוֹדָה* Thanksgiving Peace Offerings, which require ..." In the portion of Vayikroh, we discussed the Peace Offering in general; Rashi clarified that a Thanksgiving Offering is a type of Peace Offering. Rashi also tells us that the Torah teaches precise details about this type of Peace Offering, which does not apply to other offerings. They "require the accompanying offering of bread mentioned in this passage, and one may only eat them on the day they were offered. The night that follows, as is specified *here*." This means that all of these details regarding one type of Peace Offering are explained in Parshas Tzav after the Torah says, "and this is the law of the Peace Offering." Hence, it remains consistent with the rest of the portion.

Even though we have solved Rashi's primary difficulty, he adds other things. We might have made a mistake, so Rashi specifically states them here. He tells us that one only brings this sacrifice for miracles, specifically for the four specific types of miracles listed here.

Even a small child understands that we must constantly thank Hashem for all the good He bestows upon us. We all know that everything we have comes from G-d, which is true even regarding things we have acquired through seemingly natural means. Avrohom, our forefather, taught *the world* to "Bless the One from Whom you ate. Do you think that you ate food that was my possession? You ate the possessions of the Almighty!" We must say thank you for whatever anyone gave us; how much more so is this true of Hashem! Therefore, our Sages instituted numerous prayers and blessings with which we need to thank and praise G-d. Additionally, even before Hashem commanded us to bring the Thanksgiving Offering, we find multiple stories of our forefathers thanking Hashem even for His promise of something good to come.

Based on this, it would seem that every Jew should be obligated to bring a Thanksgiving Offering numerous times every day. However, this is not so. Perhaps one may wish to say that we should all bring a Thanksgiving Offering at least once a year. If such a thing were true, the Torah would have said so. Therefore, according to Peshat, even for a beginning student, it is evident that one must only bring this sacrifice for miracles.

However, this, too, is not understood. The Torah already told us that G-d miraculously gave us food from heaven, the Manna, throughout our forty years in the desert. He miraculously gave us a well that went with us and supplied the entire Jewish nation with water. We also had "Clouds of Glory," which miraculously protected us from all the dangers in the wilderness. This being the case, it would seem that every one of the millions of Jews in the desert was obligated and, therefore, brought a Thanksgiving Offering every day. We know that this is not true. Hence, they only brought the Thanksgiving Offering for certain miracles.

The Torah does not enumerate specific miracles for which one would offer a Thanksgiving Offering. However, in the chapter of Tehillim, which Rashi cites, it does. The book of Tehillim says⁷ that "they shall

7. Tehillim 107:22.

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slaughter sacrifices of thanksgiving ..." and enumerates four categories of miracles. Therefore, it is logical to say that one must offer a Thanksgiving Offering for miracles of this sort. However, Rashi is not satisfied with merely citing the chapter of Tehillim. Therefore, Rashi enumerates all four categories to ensure we realize we must bring this offering for all of them.

While listing various miracles for which a person must give thanks, it is essential to begin with one that concerns the person himself; if there is more than one, we should list them in chronological order. When Hashem commanded the Jewish people to bring a Thanksgiving Offering, they were in the wilderness. Having left Egypt, they first passed through the Red Sea; therefore, Rashi lists "those who made a sea voyage" first because it was the first of the four that the nation experienced. We began wandering in the desert; hence, Rashi lists "those who journeyed in the desert" second. Once those over twenty years old were sentenced to remain in the wilderness and to die there without entering Israel, we became prisoners in the wilderness. Therefore, Rashi subsequently lists "those who were in prison." Since these are things that all of the Jews experienced, Rashi lists them all in the plural. He saves "a sick person who recovered" for last because that did not concern any of us personally; he, therefore, writes it in the singular.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

As long as a Jew is in Egypt, meaning in exile⁸, no matter how much good he has received from Hashem, he is languishing in prison. This is comparable to "those who dwell in darkness" who should be obligated to bring a Thanksgiving Offering. As long as one is in exile, G-dliness does not shine upon him in a revealed manner. The G-dliness within him is in prison, so to speak. Consequently, it is understood the extent to which we must await the coming of Moshiach. He will take us out of our spiritual and physical prison and lead us to redemption!

(Adapted from talks given throughout the month of Nissan 5728)

I hope you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.

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8. As our Sages tell us, "All exiles are called Mitzrayim - Egypt."

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