

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



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Tzav, Sicha 1

The Zohar:

The Zohar identifies the fire that consumed the sacrifices on the altar as the angel Oriel. It then offers two descriptions of this fire. 1) as “a powerful lion crouching over its prey” 2) as “a great, large lion crouching over the sacrifices.” (Zohar II:32b)

The Rebbe’s father comments that these two descriptions correspond to the two elements that comprise the Supernal Lion, one of the four beasts that drive the Heavenly Chariot described in Yechezkel’s vision. The lion is a carnivorous beast and therefore alludes to the divine power of severity, *gevurah*. Yet it is positioned on the right side of the Chariot, thus also alluding to the Divine capacity for kindness, for kindness is always associated with the right side.

Describing the lion as “powerful” and “crouching over prey” alludes to the dominant, severe aspect of the lion. While describing the lion as “great and large,” and

crouching over the sacrifices” alludes to the open, giving aspect of the lion. This is because the term “great/large” in kabbalah generally refers to the realm of kindness, and that the word “sacrifice” means to “draw close to G-d,” a consequence of kindness and openness.

The Question:

By dividing the descriptions of the lion crouching over the altar into two statements, the Zohar implies that sometimes one aspect of the sacrifice is more expressed than the other. Why is this so?

The Preface to the Explanation:

In order to inaugurate the Mishkan, Aharon performed all the sacrificial rites for seven days, but it was not until the eighth day that the Divine presence descended upon the Mishkan. This does not mean the work of the first seven days was meaningless. Aharon’s service represented the limited spiritual efforts of a human being. Therefore, it elicited a constrained revelation of G-dliness, commensurate with the constrained human efforts. The Divine

presence was not openly revealed in the Mishkan.

On the eighth day, which alludes to the supernatural dimension (seven being the cycle of natural creation), G-d Himself gifted the revelation of His presence. But in order for this gift to feel earned, it only arrived after a display of human effort — which was why the Mishkan service was performed on the eighth day as well.

The Explanation:

Prior to describing the fire as a “large lion crouching over the sacrifices,” the Zohar offers another metaphor for the fire, “as a king who instructs his servant to receive the gift of appeasement offered to him.” The fire that consumes the sacrifice is G-d’s servant accepting the people’s gift.

The notion of a gift of appeasement differs from the normal function of the sacrifice, which is to restore wholeness to the person

after a sin. Bringing a sacrifice as a gift seeks to bring delight to G-d, beyond the mere repairing of the rupture caused by sin.

We can thus explain the two statements of the Zohar as referring to differing intentions accompanying the sacrifice. When it is offered with the intention of restoring wholeness to the human being, then it is a limited revelation, commensurate with the limited human being. This revelation is associated with G-d’s severity, the “powerful lion that crouches over prey.”

When the sacrifice is offered with the intention of bringing pleasure and delight to G-d, then it elicits G-d’s unlimited revelation, a function of G-d’s kindness. The fire then appears as a “great lion crouching over the sacrifices,” alluding to the element of kindness within the sacrifice.
