**Tzav 5776: Duty Calls**

By Rabbi Joshua (dutifully known as The Hoffer) Hoffman

Parshas Tzav begins with Moshe being told, "Command Aharon and his sons saying (leimor), "This is the law of the olah offering." The rabbis derive from the word - toras - the law of - that one who studies the laws of the olah is considered as if he brought an olah. Ostensibly, this teaching has reference to a time in which it is not possible to bring a korban, namely after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. However, Rav Mordechai Gifter, in his Pirkei Torah, shows at length that it has relevance to the Kohen bringing the korban, as well. The more the Kohen studies the laws of the korban, the more will his act of service be enhanced. Rav Gifter points out that the word leimor - to say - comes to include the oral law in this prescription. Studying the laws in depth further enhances their fulfillment. This idea can, actually, be applied to our fulfillment of mitzvos in general. The more we delve into the background of the mitzvah, the more meaningful will be our performance.

In the past, we have mentioned another reason for the Kohen to study the laws of the korban in conjunction with the offering. The Torah here describes the olah, which is a korban brought by the Kohen twice a day, every day. This constant service may tend lead to routine action, thus compromising the Kohen’s intensity in bringing the offering. By studying the laws of the korban, the Kohen maintains a fresh attitude to his service, always finding new meaning in the mitzvah.

A further element is pointed out by the Chasam Sofer. He notes that Aharon, the Kohen gadol, is mentioned here for the first time in the book of Vayikra. There seems to be an insistence that it is specifically Aharon who must perform the service about to be described. That service is the terumas hadeshen, the removing of ashes from the altar. One might think that it is not such an honorable thing to do, and therefore it should be done by an ordinary Kohen, but not by the Kohen gadol. However, when it comes to the service of God, nothing is insignificant, and it is therefore specifically the Kohen gadol who must perform it. We may add that studying the laws governing this mitzvah helps the Kohen deepen his sense of duty in fulfilling it and his realization that all service of God is important and meaningful. We may add that it further inculcates a sense of humility, an element that, as we noted in Parshas Vayikra, is central to the offering of korbanos, and the service in the Beis HaMikdash.