

# Torah Weekly

## PARSHAT TZAV

29 March – 4 April 2026  
11 – 17 Nissan 5786

Torah: Leviticus 6:1-8:36  
Parshat Parah: 19:1-22  
Haftorah: Ezekiel 36:16-36

**Calendars**  
We have Jewish calendars and applications. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

**Family Programs**  
Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

**Grape Juice & Matzah**  
We offer free Grape Juice and Matzah for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

Sacred document please do not destroy

## What Is the Key to a Good Life?

“Money doesn’t buy happiness,” someone told me the other day, as I rolled my eyes and internally chuckled at one of the oldest clichés in the book. But then he added, “But money does buy a jet ski. And have you ever seen anyone not smiling on a jet ski?”

So does that mean it's not true?

Of course not. It’s just hard to keep front and center of our consciousness. And the more successful we are (thank G-d), the harder it becomes to not get carried away with the satisfaction and perceived security that financial stability can bring.

It’s specifically at those times that it’s most important to remember the truth: there is more to life than financial success.

How do we keep that in mind?

By keeping conscious of where the money really comes from.

### A Flour Offering that Doesn’t Rise

Parshat Tzav contains many details about sacrifices. Most of them were animals, but one type of sacrifice described in our parshah was the minchah offering, made of flour and oil. And like many animal sacrifices, the entire flour offering wasn’t consumed on the altar; much of it was left behind for the priests to eat.

The way it worked was the priest would take out a fistful of flour that was then offered on the altar. One unique feature of this flour offering was that much like the matzah we eat on Passover, it wasn’t allowed to become chametz—leaven.

The portion of flour not offered on the altar was left for the priest and his family, who would eat it. They were required to handle the holy flour mixture with the reverence afforded to all sacrificial food (e.g., not eating it while ritually impure). In other words, even the part eaten at home was a sort of quasi-sacrifice.

It is in this context that the Torah

warns that just like the offering burned on the altar, the portion eaten at home couldn’t become chametz:

And Aaron and his sons shall eat whatever is left from it. It shall be eaten as unleavened bread in a holy place . . . It is a holy of holies, like the sin offering and like the guilt offering.<sup>1</sup>

What is the significance of this detail? Why was the part consumed by the priests given the same status as the part burned on the altar? They’re not the same thing—one was to G-d, the other was eaten by humans?

### Holy Life and Regular Life

The simple answer is because they should be the same: The part we eat should absolutely be the same as the part offered to G-d.

To explain, we must understand this entire story of flour offering as a metaphor for Jewish life in general.

You see, there are those times akin to the small fistful burned on the altar to G-d. These are the times when we pray, do a mitzvah, give money to charity, or do a favor for someone.

And as it worked in the Temple, so it does in our lives. As you recall, once the portion was offered to G-d, the priests were allowed to eat the rest of the flour offering in their private homes in a state of quasi-sanctity. So it is with us: when we take the time to engage in those holier, spiritually charged moments, it gives a stamp of approval for the rest of our private day.

In other words—when done properly—the more spiritually attuned times of our day influences the rest of the day and render it as part of a broader picture of a person whose life is devoted to G-d.

### Private Life Shan’t Become Chametz

It is here the notion that the portion eaten at home cannot become chametz is important:

When life is such that there are parts offered to G-d and other parts only “eaten in sanctity” but still largely “regular” and “me-time,” it’s easy to fall into the “chametz trap.”

What’s the “chametz trap?”

Chametz is famously puffed up, a fully risen loaf of bread—representing ego and self-reliance.

So, when you’re doing spiritual stuff, it’s relatively easy to avoid chametz. When contemplating G-d, it’s not so difficult to avoid ego and that sense of “I’m in charge, and I’m the product of my own success.”

But when you’re going about your regular day, well, that’s you. You’re making it all happen, and it’s easy to forget G-d and let the ego come roaring in.

**Aleph Institute**  
Hyman & Martha Rogal Center  
5804 Beacon Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217  
412-421-0111  
Fax: 412-521-5948  
www.alephne.org  
info@alephne.org



**ALEPH INSTITUTE**  
No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

You've fallen into the chametz trap.

The Torah reminds us that even the part the priests ate on their own must not become chametz. The private "me moments" of life are also ultimately part of a wholesome life dedicated to something higher, and they should be conducted with humility and G-dly awareness.

Money Doesn't Buy Happiness. G-d Does

Should a person sit at home and pray all day, waiting for G-d to shower you with goodness?

Of course not.

Work hard, and absolutely make a broad, wide-open receptacle through which you can receive G-d's blessing. Like the flour sacrifice, only a portion of it was actually consumed on the altar for G-d, so don't get carried away turning into a secluded saint or an ascetic who needs nothing. There was a whole portion eaten at home, in the priest's private dining room. So you do the same.

But remember not to let it become chametz. Retain the humility that comes with being devoted to G-d the entire day. Render your entire day an act of divine service. Yes, as you close that multi-million dollar deal you've been working on for three years, you remember that it's G-d who's guiding you here, not just your own brilliance.

And then, your entire day is holy, free of any trace of chametz.

*By Aharon Loschak*

## Tzav in a Nutshell

Leviticus 6:1–8:36

The name of the Parshah, "Tzav," means "command" and it is found in Leviticus 6:2.

G-d instructs Moses to command Aaron and his sons regarding their duties and rights as kohanim ("priests") who offer the korbanot (animal and meal offerings) in the Sanctuary.

The fire on the altar must be kept burning at all times. In it are burned the wholly consumed ascending offering; veins of fat from the peace, sin and guilt offerings; and the "handful" separated from the meal offering.

The kohanim eat the meat of the sin and guilt offerings, and the remainder of the meal offering. The peace offering is eaten by the one who brought it, except for specified portions given to the kohen. The holy meat of the offerings must be eaten by ritually pure persons, in their designated holy place and within their specified time.

Aaron and his sons remain within the Sanctuary compound for seven days, during which Moses initiates them into the priesthood.

## IN JEWISH HISTORY

### War of Egyptian Firstborn (1313 BCE)

On the Shabbat before the Exodus--Nissan 10th on that year--the first-born of Egypt, who occupied the senior positions in the priesthood and government, fought a bloody battle with Pharaoh's troops, in an effort to secure the release of the Israelites and prevent the Plague of the Firstborn. This "great miracle" is commemorated each year on the Shabbat before Passover, which is therefore called Shabbat HaGadol, "The Great Shabbat." (This is one of the rare instances in which a commemorative date in the Jewish calendar is set by the day of the week rather than the day of the month.)

### Miriam's Passing (1274 BCE)

Miriam, the sister of Moses, passed away at the age of 126 on the 10th of Nissan of the year 2487 from creation (1274 BCE) -- 39 years after the Exodus and exactly one year before the Children of Israel entered the Holy Land. It is in deference to her passing that the "Great Shabbat" is commemorated on the Shabbat before Passover rather than the calendar date of the miracle's occurrence, Nissan 10.

### Israelites Cross Jordan (1273 BCE)

Three days after the two spies dispatched by Joshua scouted the city of Jericho (see entry for "Nissan 7" above), the children of Israel were ready to enter the land promised by G-d to their ancestors as their eternal heritage. As they approached the Jordan with the Holy Ark carried by the Kohanim (priests) in their lead, the river parted for them, as the waters of the Red Sea had split when their fathers and mothers marched out of Egypt 40 years earlier.

### Hospital Convoy Ambushed (1948)

On the morning of the 4th of Nissan, a civilian convoy of doctors and nurses traveling to the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus (see Today in Jewish History for 20 Iyar) was attacked by Arab forces. Of the ten vehicles in the caravan, five escaped. The other five vehicles, however, which included two buses and an ambulance, were riddled with machine gun fire and later set ablaze. Altogether 77 Jewish civilians were massacred on that day.

Shortly afterwards, the hospital was closed down and moved to the western part of Jerusalem.

The Mt. Scopus hospital only reopened after the eastern part of Jerusalem was liberated by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. Primarily staffed by Israeli doctors, it is the largest and best equipped hospital in the eastern section of Jerusalem.

### Spies to Jericho (1273 BCE)

Two days before the conclusion of the thirty-day mourning period following the passing of Moses on Adar 7 (see Jewish History for the 7th of Nissan), Joshua dispatched two scouts--Caleb and Pinchas--across the Jordan River to Jericho, to gather intelligence in preparation of the Israelites' battle with the first city in their conquest of the Holy Land. In Jericho, they were assisted and hidden by Rahab, a woman who lived inside the city walls. (Rahab later married Joshua).

### Passing of R. Avraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apta (1825)

R. Avraham Yehoshua Heshel was one of the leading Rebbes of his day, serving as rabbi and spiritual leader first in Apta (presently called Opatow), then in Iasi, and finally in Mezhibuzh. He was known for his great love of his fellow Jews, and is commonly known as "the Ohev Yisroel [lover of Jews] of Apta."