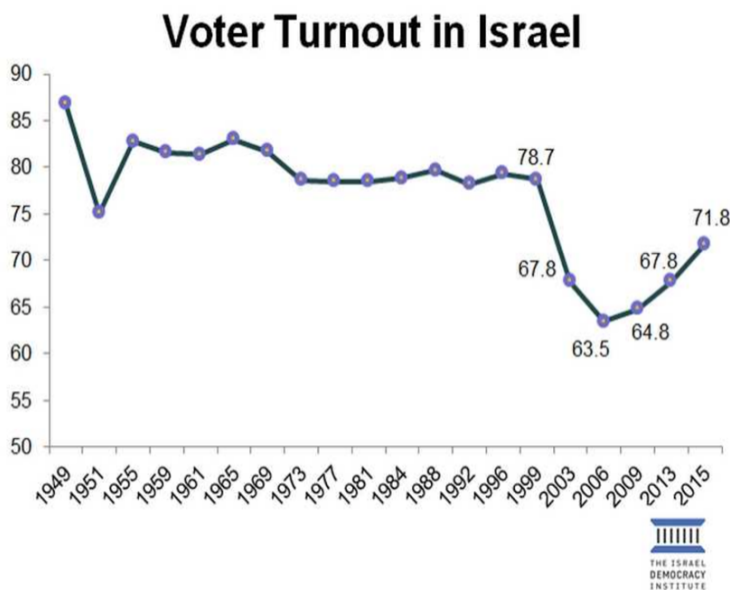


Tzav April 8, 2017

הַמִּקְרִיב אֶת-זֶבַח שְׁלֵמֹי, לַיהוָה--יָבִיא אֶת-קִרְבָּנוּ לַיהוָה
מִזֶּבַח שְׁלֵמֹי. יָדָיו תִּבְיָאֵינָה, אֶת אֲשֵׁי יְהוָה

Leviticus 7:28-30 *The offering to Adonai that is a sacrifice of well-being must be presented by him who offers his sacrifice of well-being to Adonai; his own hands shall present Adonai's offerings by fire.*



The opening chapters of Leviticus teach about the types of offerings to be brought by the people to the High Priest. This week's portion outlines the rituals that accompany these offerings. The modern Torah commentator Nechama Leibowitz suggests that the first five chapters of Leviticus were instructions for the masses while the repetition in *Tzav*, with additional regulations, was intended for the priests. Yet, there is something distinct in the ritual concerning one particular offering. In 7:28-30 the *shelemah* - the wellbeing offering - must be brought by each individual. The command required people to offer up their individual sacrifice. It clearly states that the person's "own hands" are to bring the *zevach shelemah*.

Biblical commentaries suggest that the *shelemah* was a lesser offering than that of the other four types of offerings. Therefore the priests handled each of the four primary offerings, while the *shelemah* was handled by the individual himself. An alternative explanation is that the *shelemah* is actually of the highest importance and thereby required individuals to manage it themselves (up until the very moment it was laid on the fire by the priest). This latter explanation teaches that one's wellbeing cannot be given over to leadership; individuals must have a hand in their own state of health, comfort, security, and prosperity.

This alternative explanation to the rabbinic one harmonizes with the reasoning that the State of Israel required democracy—people need to have agency over their own well being, their own fate. The responsibility for leading the country, enacting legal means to ensure the safety and *shelemah* (the welfare of the citizens) may rest on the shoulders of leaders, yet each and every person must have a hand in

electing those leaders. This kind of democracy is the foundation of the Jewish people from ancient times through this day; it is a cornerstone in the foundation of the State of Israel. Just as the *shelemah* proves that the priesthood was not an autocracy, so too does the system of governance in Israel ensure that the country is not governed by an autocrat. Every citizen's wellbeing is dependent upon that principle. The power to rule in a democracy is derived from the people's beliefs, preferences, and choices. This is truly a bedrock of self-determination. There is a contract between the ruler and the ruled—a bill of rights. And in countries without constitutions, such as Britain and Israel, declarations, court cases, and acts serve as the reference for obligations and limitations imposed between the ruler and the ruled.

Israel's consistently high percentage of voter turnout illustrates the success of its democracy. Irrespective of whether or not one's favored party holds the most or the least seats, observers and participants must be satisfied by voting, exercising their rights to be involved in their own wellbeing; the fundamental way in which Israelis hold destiny in their own hands.

Discussion Questions:

1. Examine the very basis of Zionism. Jews of various ideological outlooks agreed that individuals should use their human agency to go from weakness and dependency to strength and independence.
2. How did Israel's March 17, 2015 election result translate into a functioning Israeli Parliament at the time and since? What occurs between the end of an election and the establishment of a new Israeli government?

Additional Resources:

Various offerings mentioned in this week's portion:

1. Burnt Offering (*olah* Leviticus 6:8-13)
2. Grain Offering (*minhah* Leviticus 6:14-23)
3. Sacrifice of Well-Being/Fellowship Offering (*zevah shelamim* Leviticus 7:11-35)
4. Sin Offering/Purification Offering (*hatta't* Leviticus 4:1 – 5:13; 6:24-30)
5. Guilt Offering (*asham* Leviticus 7:1-10 ;6:7 – 5:14)

Background and context on Zionism can be found in [Early History to 1897](#) and [1898-1948](#) within the section "Eras" on the [CIE Website](#).