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PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

A Deeper Understanding of Terumah

“...and let them take for Me Terumah” (25:2)

There’s a hidden message in the name of this week’s Torah portion: Terumah.

The entire Oral Torah begins with a Mishna that asks the question, “When should one recite the Shema prayer in the evening?” It answers, “When the Kohanim come in to eat their Terumah.” If this is the first Mishna in the whole of the Oral Law, it must be that there is an essential message for us here.

Also, why is the commandment to say Shema linked to the mitzvah of Terumah? What connection is there between the two?

Our Sages teach the spectrum of how much a person needs to separate from his produce and give it to the Kohen. One-sixtieth is minimal, one-fortieth is admirable, and one-fiftieth is the median amount. The Vilna Gaon explains that the word *terumah* is an allusion to *trei m’meah*, two out of one hundred, which is one-fiftieth, and alludes to the median fraction of produce one should give as Terumah.

But this begs the question: If the Torah wanted to hint that a person should give one-fiftieth, why express it as two parts in a hundred? Wouldn’t it be simpler and more direct just to say one part in fifty? And the word “Terumah” should be a word like “Chadmish” – or something like that. Why didn’t the Torah use a word that expressed a fiftieth in its most basic form?

The Gaon explains that the essence of Shema lies in the first verse of “*Shema Yisrael...*” and in the second phrase “*Baruch Shem kevod malchuso leolam vaed*” - Blessed is the Name of the Honor of His Kingship for ever and ever.”

The essence of Shema is *yichud Hashem*, unifying Hashem’s Name by expressing that every detail in creation – everything - ultimately is Him alone. The Gaon observed that there are

twenty-five letters in the first verse of “Shema Yisrael...” and twenty-four letters in the phrase “Baruch Shem...” Together, they equal forty-nine. And since we recite Shema twice daily, each time we are expressing forty-nine in terms of the spoken letters, plus two expressed by the twice-daily recitation itself. The result is *trei memeah*, two out of one hundred – Terumah.

The Yichud, the unifying of Hashem’s name, comes from the ‘one’ that follows the ‘forty-nine,’ but which we do not - we cannot – count. This we do twice daily. And that totals fifty.

This is a deeper meaning of why the Mishna uses the time when the Kohanim come in to eat their Terumah to tell us the time to recite the Shema.

TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Sanhedrin 86-92

A Bedtime Story

"The punishment of the chronic liar is that he is not believed even when he tells the truth."

This teaching in our *gemara* sounds eerily like the message of the fable about “the boy who cried wolf.” I have heard from many rabbis and Torah educators over the years that all of the important lessons to teach our children can be found in Torah sources. And that these Jewish story-lessons are the only appropriate “bedtime stories” to read to our children.

▪ *Sanhedrin 89b*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Hashem commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Jewish People are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard there is an Altar for the burnt offerings and a Laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the *Kohanim*, the descendants of Aharon. This contains the Table of showbreads, the *Menorah*, and the Golden Altar for incense. Entrance to the innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, was permitted only for the *Kohen Gadol*, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone which Hashem gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the instructions for the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

KRIAT SHEMA AL HAMITAH (PART 7)

“The amount of sleep required by the average person is five minutes more.”
Wilson Mizener – American Playwright

The first paragraph of the Shema begins with the inspiring pronouncement: “You shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your resources.”

As I wrote earlier (see Blessings of the Shema Part 8:

https://ohr.edu/this_week/counting_our_blessings/9612), Rabbi Akiva Eiger points out that the blessing immediately prior to the Shema declares Hashem’s love for us, “Blessed are You, Hashem, Who chooses His people with love.” Rabbi Eiger explains that true love must be mutual. Healthy and nurturing love exists only when it is reciprocal. This is why we first recognize that Hashem’s love for us is all-encompassing and then we respond, “You shall love Hashem, your G-d.”

Our verse defines how our love for Hashem is supposed to be. We must love Hashem, “with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your resources.” Rashi, commenting on “with all your heart,” writes that it is imperative that we direct our entire heart towards serving Hashem and not let it be a “half-hearted” relationship.

The Talmud (*Brachot* 54a) points out that the Hebrew spelling of the word “*levavcha* – your heart” seems to be incorrect. The correct way to spell your heart in Hebrew is ‘lamed, bet, final chaf’ – pronounced “*libcha*.” However, in the Torah it is spelled with an extra ‘bet’ – ‘lamed, bet, bet, final chaf.’ Our Sages explain that the extra letter ‘bet’ teaches us to serve Hashem with both the *Yetzer HaTov* – the good inclination – and with the *Yetzer HaRah* – the evil inclination.

This seems to be a counterintuitive. Without being privy to this lesson, we would assume that it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to uproot the *Yetzer HaRah* in order to serve Hashem properly. However, the Talmud is teaching us that this is not so. Our Sages are clarifying that *it is the Yetzer HaRah that is causing us to grow!* Because, without the *Yetzer HaRah* pushing against us, there is nothing forcing us to stretch beyond ourselves. There is no reason to aspire to greater levels of spiritual connection. In the thought-provoking words of Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, our *Yetzer HaRah* should not frighten us because the ultimate level of serving Hashem is to overcome it.

The verse then continues “with all your soul.” Our Sages teach us that this is an even higher level of connection than “with all your heart.” We need to try and reach such a level of connection to Hashem that we would be prepared to give up our lives for Him. The Maharal writes that a person who can reach a level of “with all your soul” has an immeasurable spiritual influence and impact in this world.

Rabbi Shimon Schwab used an incident that took place in the late 1930s in Germany to describe what it means to serve Hashem with all one's soul. He writes that there was a Ba'al Teshuvah who was learning in the Yeshiva in Frankfurt. Once, he was stopped in the street by a Nazi officer and commanded to pronounce Hashem's Name together with a terrible curse word. The Ba'al Teshuva refused. The officer took out his pistol and held it against the Ba'al Teshuva's heart and told him that he would shoot if he did not do as he was told. The Jew refused again, and, after a brief standoff, the Nazi officer returned his pistol to its holster and told him that he was "just checking to see if he was a Jewish coward."

Explains Rabbi Schwab: Serving Hashem "with all your soul" does not mean that we have to give up our lives to show Hashem how much we love Him. "With all your soul" means that we have to be *prepared* to give up our lives to serve Hashem.

Then we say, "With all your resources." The Rabbis teach that each level is progressively harder to attain than the previous one. It is harder to give up our lives to serve Hashem than it is to serve Hashem with all our hearts. But the hardest and highest level of serving Hashem is being prepared to sacrifice everything we own to be able to continue serving Him. In Judaism, there is a well-known truism that it is "easier to die sanctifying Hashem's Name than to live sanctifying Hashem's Name."

One truly needs to be totally attached to Hashem to be prepared to give up all one's possessions to be able to remain steadfast in one's *Avodat Hashem*. Historically, it was the Jews who moved from one country to another to be able to practice their Judaism. Or, more recently in Jewish history, those who had to find a new place to work each week rather than work on Shabbat and were willing to forfeit everything they had in order to remain sincere God-fearing Jews. It is to these spiritual heroes that King David refers in Tehillim 119:72, when he writes, "I prefer the Torah of Your Mouth more than thousands in gold and silver."

Rabbi Schwab points out that the word for resources in the Shema is "*meodecha*." The root of the word "*meodecha*" is "*meod* – very much." A dear friend related to me an intriguing and challenging thought that he had on our verse. These three criteria of serving Hashem, "with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your resources," represent three different epochs in Jewish history. There have been times when the battle for the hearts of the Jewish People has been uppermost. Periods in history where we have had to fight to serve Hashem with all our hearts and not to vanish into the great void of assimilation. To fight with all our might the foreign philosophies and belief systems that encroach on the purity and the beauty of our way of life.

In the same way, there have been countless moments where we have had to fight for our lives, and, on too many occasions to even begin to count, to give up our lives simply because we are Jews.

And now we have "today," when we find ourselves living in a world of plenty. We are living in an era of undreamed material wealth. We are bombarded with adverts for unnecessary luxuries that were unimaginable only a few years ago. And it is in this climate of "*meod-ness*" of "very-muchness," where the Shema is commanding us to remain focused on Hashem. To sacrifice the glitter and allure of the hedonistic materialism of secular society. To remember that the only real, lasting aspiration is the one that lets us enhance our relationship with Hashem.

Questions

1. How many types of items were the Jews to donate?
2. The donation of silver for the Mishkan differed from the donation of the other items. How?
3. What property do techelet and argaman share that orot eilim m'adamim do not share?
4. What property do the above three share that shesh and orot techashim do not share?
5. Onkelos translates "tachash" as "sasgona." Why?
6. What kind of trees did Yaakov plant in Egypt?
7. Describe two uses of:
 - (a) oil ,
 - (b) spices,
 - (c) jewels.
8. The aron was made with three boxes, one inside the other. Exactly how tall was the outer box?
9. Why is the Torah referred to as "testimony"?
10. What did the faces of the keruvim resemble?
11. On what day of the week was the lechem hapanim baked?
12. What does miksha mean?
13. What was the purpose of the menorah's gevi'im (cups)?
14. How did Moshe know the shape of the menorah?
15. What designs were embroidered into the tapestries of the Mishkan?
16. What is meant by "standing wood"?
17. How long was the Mishkan?
18. How wide was the interior of the Mishkan?
19. Why was the altar coated with nechoshet?
20. What function did the copper yeteidot serve?

Answers

1. 25:2 - 13.
2. 25:3 - No fixed amount of the other items was required. The silver was given as a fixed amount: a half-shekel.
3. 25:4,5 - They are wool; orot eilim are not.
4. 25:4,5 - They are dyed; shesh and orot techashim are not.
5. 25:5 - The tachash delights (sas) in its multi-colors (g'vanim).
6. 25:5 - Arazim -- cedars.
7. 25:6-7:
 - (a) The oil was lit in the menorah and used for anointing.
 - (b) The spices were used in the anointing oil and for the incense.
 - (c) The precious stones were for the ephod and the choshen.
8. 25:11 - The outer box was one and a half amot plus a tefach plus a little bit, because it rose a little bit above the kaporet. (The kaporet was a tefach thick. -- see 25:17)
9. 25:16 - It testifies that G-d commanded us to keep the mitzvot.
- 10.25:18 - The faces of children.
- 11.25:29 - Friday.
- 12.25:31 - Hammered.
- 13.25:31 - Purely ornamental.
- 14.25:40 - G-d showed Moshe a menorah of fire.
- 15.26:1 - On one side a lion; on the other side an eagle.
- 16.26:15 - The wooden beams were to be upright and not stacked one upon the other.
- 17.26:16 - 30 amot.
- 18.26:23 - 10 amot.
- 19.27:2 - To atone for brazenness.
- 20.27:19 - They secured the curtains against the wind.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

Color Me

The Talmud (Shabbat 49b, 73b-74b, 96b) teaches that the thirty-nine forms of labor that are forbidden on Shabbat reflect the thirty-nine sorts of creative crafts used in the construction of the Tabernacle and its paraphernalia. One of those is known as tzovea — the act of “coloring/dying” (Mishnah Shabbat 7:2, 13:4). That labor entails taking an uncolored material and placing it within some colored substance that will cause the material to change color. In Hebrew, the general term of “color” is tzeva, a word derived from the verb tzovea. In this essay we look at several different Hebrew words for “color,” including tzeva, gavan, ein, and mareh.

Let’s begin with the word tzeva. Its root TZADI-BET-AYIN does not appear in the Pentateuch, but does appear four times in Biblical Hebrew. For example, when Sisera's mother fantasized that her son will have defeated the Jews and will take from them various prizes of war, she imagines tzevaim among those spoils (Jud. 5:30). That particular verse uses inflections of this root three times. Radak (to Jud. 5:30) explains that tzevaim refers to “colorful clothing,” that is a single article of clothing that is made of many colors. Likewise, Jeremiah wonders whether the Jewish People are like a “colorful” (tzavua) bird of prey who is hated by all the other birds (Jer. 12:9). These four examples are the only times that derivatives of the TZADI-BET-AYIN appear in Biblical Hebrew (except for perhaps the given name Zibeon in Gen. 36 and the place-name Zeboim in Neh. 11:34, I Sam. 13:18).

Various inflections of tzeva appear in the Mishnah in many different contexts, like when discussing what happens when one gives wool to be “dyed” one color, and the hired hand “dyes” it a different “color” (Bava Kamma 9:4), what happens if one “dyes” a garment with peels from fruits that are orlah (Orlah 3:1), and how to tell when a spot of red colorization is blood or simply paint (Niddah 9:6). The term also appears in various other contexts in rabbinic literature, like when the Midrash (Tanchuma Tazria §2, see also Bereishit Rabbah §7:4) states that the peacock has thirty-hundred and sixty-five colors, it refers to the peacock’s “types of tzivonim.” Additionally, people who are “superficial” or even “duplicitous” are sometimes called tzavua (literally, “colored”) because, as Rashi (to Sotah 22b) explains, the “color” of their outside veneer does not match what is really inside of them.

Maimonides sometimes uses forms of the word tzeva or tzovea when referring to colors or coloring, like when referring to the prohibition of a man dying his hair black (Laws of Avodah Zarah 12:10), regarding the coloring of tzitzit (Laws of Tzitzit 2:3), regarding dying on Shabbat (Laws of Shabbat 9:13), regarding red spotting (Laws of Issurei Biah 9:36, Laws of Mitamei Mishkav U'Moshav 4:11), and regarding using shemitta fruit for dying (Law of Shemitta 5:1). Yet, in other cases, Maimonides consistently uses a different Hebrew word to

mean “color” — ein. For example, Maimonides uses this word when describing how the galgalim have no physical “color” (Laws of Yesodei HaTorah 3:3), when describing how tzaraat of the garment entails the clothing changing color (Laws of Tumat Tzaraat 16:10), and when describing how one cannot sell something abstract like the taste of honey or the color of a crystal (Laws of Mechirah 22:14). In one place, Maimonides even uses these two terms together, when talking about making an ein ha’tzeva (i.e., a colorant) on Shabbat (Laws of Shabbat 9:14). Where does this word ein come from?

**To answer this question and to learn more about the different Hebrew words for “color,” visit us online at: https://ohr.edu/this_week/whats_in_a_word/ and check out the full version of this article.*

TAAMEI HAMITZVOS – Reasons behind the Mitzvos

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

“Study improves the quality of the act and completes it, and a mitzvah is more beautiful when it emerges from someone who understands its significance.” (Meiri, Bava Kama 17a)

LENDING WITHOUT INTEREST (Part Two)

Mitzvah #68; *Shemos* 22:24 and *Vayikra* 25:335-38

The Sages observe that lending without interest is the way of the world. For example, the day borrows from the night during the summer and the night borrows from the day during the winter; the earth lends the heavens vapor and the heavens lends the earth rain (see *Tanchuma*). This Midrash is puzzling: perhaps the night is “willing” to lend the day during the summer only because it “knows” that it will borrow it all back during the winter! However, that is exactly the point, for whoever lends without interest can expect reciprocation when either he or his descendants need such a loan, as the Sages teach: A person should always pray to be spared from poverty because poverty is a natural cycle in the world, and if it does not come upon him, it will come upon one of his descendants (*Shabbos* 151b; see *Maharsha*). Hence, lending without interest is a natural part of the society Hashem designed for us (see also *Malbim* to *Sifri*, *Ki Seitzei* §129). Since lending without interest is essential to the Torah-ordained society and the tenet of kindness, it is understandable why the Torah issued prohibitions against all involved parties, including the borrower himself.

When teaching this Mitzvah, the Torah emphasizes that one must not take interest from a Jewish “brother.” It means to teach us that just as brothers are willing to do favors for each other and would generally not consider charging each other interest, so too, we must regard our fellow Jews as brothers and treat them with a higher standard of kindness than that which might be acceptable in the rest of the world (*Akeidas Yitzchak* §69).

Hashem explained that we are required to live according to this standard because, "I am Hashem, your God, Who took you out of Egypt to give you the Land of Canaan, to be your God" (*Vayikra* 25:38). The Sages infer from this that whoever lends with interest has denied the Exodus. How so? *Rav Hirsch* explains that Hashem redeemed the Jewish people from slavery and granted them independence, wealth, and Eretz Yisrael *only on the condition* that they lend their money to each other without interest.

As to the difference between charging rent for the usage of property and charging interest for the usage of money, charging rent may be justified on account of wear and tear, whereas, lending funds does not cause wear and tear (*Bava Metzia* 69b). *Akeidas Yitzchak* (ibid.) explains further that money is usually lent to cover expenses. Once it has been spent, the borrower has no means to return the loan, which might therefore remain unpaid for a long time while the venom of interest courses through him. When a person rents a property, on the other hand, he always has an option to return the property and stop paying.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that Hashem gives a person unneeded funds so that he will provide for someone who lacks needed funds, either to punish the needy person or to grant merit to his benefactor (*Shemos* 22:24). Considering that all of our excess funds were assigned to us for the purpose of helping our fellow Jews, it should not be difficult for us to lend without interest. Should one think that it would be preferable for him to place his money in a [halachically certified] investment, *Akeidas Yitzchak* writes that when a person lends to the poor, Hashem considers it as if He is the borrower (*Bava Basra* 10a), and He will repay the loan — with interest. Hashem's commitment is surer than any investment.

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