

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Terumah

Shekalim



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Torah Wellsprings - Terumah

Everything is from Hashem

The Gemara (Beitzah 15:) says, "If a person wants to guarantee his ownership over his properties, he should plant an *adar* [tree], as it states (Tehillim 93:4) 'אדיר במרום ה' "Hashem is mighty on high."¹

The Sfas Emes (Rosh Chodesh Adar) explains, "If a person wants his spiritual and material properties to remain with him, he should plant an אדר. This means he should always remember and recognize that אדיר במרום ה', and everything is from Hashem. With this awareness, he will succeed in everything he does.

The Meor Einayim teaches that אדר stands for אדר, the Alufo Shel Olam, the Master of the world, dwells in this world, and everything occurs through His decree.

The parashah begins with וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה (25:2) "Take for Me a donation; from every person whose heart inspires him to generosity, you shall take My donation." This collection was for the building of the Mishkan.

The miforshim ask: (1) Shouldn't the Torah have written "Give a donation," rather than "Take a donation?" (2) The pasuk begins

with giving "a donation" (תרומה) and conclude with the word "My donation" (תרומתי)! (3) Why is the contribution called "My donation"? Isn't it the person's donation?

Ginzei Yisrael (from Rebbe Yisrael of Chortkov zt'l, year 5685) answers that when a person donates, it is really Hashem Who gives the donation. Hashem gave him money so he could give it to Tzedakah.

Therefore, the pasuk says וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה, take the donation. You are not giving; you are taking My money and giving it where I want you to.

However, the Torah warns to take donations only from those who know the money is Hashem's. If a person donates to the Mishkan and thinks he is giving his money, don't accept the donation. מֵאֵת כָּל תְּרוּמָתִי, accept the donations only from those who know that it is תְּרוּמָתִי "My contribution".

It states in Pirkei Avos (3:7) שְׂאֵתָהּ, תֵּן לוֹ מִשְׁלוֹ, "Give to Him from that which is His, because you and what you own are His. As Dovid Hamelech said (Divrei Hayamim 1, 29:14) כִּי מִכָּל הַכֶּלֶל וּמִיָּדְךָ נָתַנוּ לָךְ, 'for all is from You, and from Your hand we have given it to You.'"²

1. The simple meaning of this Gemara is that the *adar* is a rare tree and a conversation topic. Everyone in the neighborhood knows there is an *adar* tree on So-and-So's property. Now, if someone comes and claims that the property is his, it will be known that it isn't true, for everyone knows who owns the field with the *adar*.

2. On the words (25:2) וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה Rashi writes, לִי לַשְׁמִי, that the donations should be given l'shmah, for Hashem's honor.

Tiferes Shmuel of Alexander zt'l says that when a person has emunah that everything he earns is from Hashem, that is considered a donation לִי לַשְׁמָה, for Hashem. Similarly, Reb Yaakov Dovid of Amshinov zt'l says that if a person stops in the middle of his work to serve Hashem, that is a *terumah*, a donation for Hashem – לִי לַשְׁמִי.

At a wedding, the waiter puts a tray of chicken in front of one of the guests. Everyone understands that the waiter didn't intend for that guest to eat the entire platter. The waiter intended it to be divided among everyone at the table. Similarly, the Noam Eliezer of Skulen zt'l teaches that when a person is very wealthy, he should understand that Hashem gave him so much money to help others; it isn't only for him.

Generally, when someone is collecting money, he first says why there is a collection, and then he requests a donation towards this cause. Here, by the Mishkan it was in the opposite order. The parashah begins with ויקחו לי תרומה that Yidden should donate, and at the end, it states the reason for it, ועשו לי מקדש, "they shall make for Me a sanctuary."

Reb Moshe Feinstein zt'l teaches that this unusual order isn't only in the pasukim but also in the collection that occurred at that time. First, Yidden were told to donate, but they weren't told why they should donate. Afterwards, they were told that the purpose of the donation was to build the Mishkan.

Reb Moshe Feinstein explains that the order was changed so that the money would come from people who know their wealth isn't theirs and understand that their money was given to them to donate to Hashem.

Reb Moshe explains that when one knows the reason for the collection, he understands the importance and feels that the donation is his, and his choice. But when he isn't told the reason for the collection, and he gives anyway because he knows that this is Hashem's will, it shows that he believes that whatever he has isn't really his. It is Hashem's money, and if Hashem says to donate, he will do so.

The Imrei Noam (letter 20) teaches that the limbs of a human body move about and perform actions, but everyone understands that the heart is what gives them the strength to do so. Without the heart, there is no life. The limbs won't move, and there is no activity. Hashem made it that way to give us an example of a higher lesson. We think that man carries out actions when actually, it is Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Who is called the "heart of Yisrael," as it states (Tehillim 73:26) צור לבבי, "the Rock of my heart..." Without Hashem, a person can't do anything.³

The Imrei Noam writes that this is the meaning of the pasuk (25:2) ויקחו לי תרומה, etc. The Imrei Noam says that תרומה refers to התרוממות, a person's greatness, wealth, and financial success. One must realize it isn't his; instead, it is from Hashem. To prove this, consider, מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו, everything man does is because of his heart. Without the heart, he couldn't do anything. תקחו את התרוממות, learn from this that your greatness, and success is also from Hashem, called "the Heart of Yisrael."

The Imrei Noam writes, "The people whom Hashem elevated and gave them all kinds of kindness, much wealth and honor, shouldn't think that their many efforts brought them their success, because (Shmuel 1 2:9) לא בכח יגבר איש, "For not by strength will

3. When a person hits a dog with a stick, the dog will bite the stick. The dog thinks the stick is guilty and doesn't realize it can't do anything without the person wielding it. Similarly, a person feels that this person or that person did something to him, or he thinks he did something to himself, and he fails to realize that both the good and the bad, nothing can occur without Hashem.

A couple was about to finalize a shidduch for their daughter. The husband said to his wife, "We didn't tell your mother about the shidduch. She will feel honored if we tell her what we are considering."

When this elderly woman was called, she immediately became involved in the shidduch. She called someone who knew the family and requested information. Then she called back to her daughter to tell her the wonderful things she heard about the family and the bachur. The joyous vort took place later that night.

The husband thought, "My mother-in-law is sure she made the shidduch, thanks to her phone call and the positive information she relayed. She doesn't know we planned to complete the shidduch tonight anyway." And then another thought entered his mind: "I also think that I made the shidduch. I don't realize it wasn't me, but it was from Hashem. Hashem made the shidduch, but He let me choose so I could think that I made the shidduch."

man prevail." Rather, it is Hashem's hashgachah, (Tehilim 75:8) *זה ישפיל וזה ירים*, "He lowers this one and elevates that one."⁴

Rely on Hashem

Regarding a donkey, the pasuk states (Shemos 23:5) *רובץ תחת משאו*, "crouching under its burden." A donkey works until it has no strength, and collapses. We should be better than animals, as we say *מותר האדם מן הבהמה*, "a person is greater than animals..." We shouldn't work so hard until we collapse under the work. We should raise our heads and trust in Hashem and place our *pekel* in His hands.

The Midrash (*Tanchuma Tisa* 3) states that Moshe said to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "Ribono Shel Olam! When I die, no one will mention me!"

Hakadosh Baruch Hu replied, "I swear, just as you are now standing and teaching them *parashas Shekalim* and you raise their heads, so will it be every year. When the nation reads this parashah before Me, it is like you are standing there, and you raise their heads."

One aspect of raising their heads is that they will discover that they can trust in Hashem, and Hashem will help them.

It states (25:31) *ועשית מנורת זהב טהור מקשה תיעשה*, "You shall make a menorah of pure gold. The menorah shall be made of hammered work...." On the words *תיעשה*, Rashi writes, *אמר, לפי שהיה משה מתקשה בה, אמר, לא הקדוש ברוך הוא השליך את הפקר לאור והיא נעשית מאליה*, "It was made by itself. Moshe had trouble [understanding how he should make the menorah], so Hakadosh Baruch Hu told him to throw the measure of gold into fire and it will be made from itself. This is the reason [it states *תיעשה*], and it doesn't state *תעשה*."

The Divrei Yisrael (this week's parashah) learns a lesson in emunah from this. When a person has troubles and is struggling to feed his family, or if he is enduring any other hardship and he is collapsing from the problem, the counsel is that he should throw himself and his problem *לאור*, to the fire, which is Hakadosh Baruch Hu Who is called *אש אוכלת*, a consuming fire. What will ensue is *נעשית מאליה*; his issues will be taken care of on their own. As it states (Tehillim 55:23) *השליך על השלך*, "ה' יהבך והוא יכלכלך", "Cast your burden on Hashem, and He will support you."⁵

4. I heard the following from a respected rav in America who helps people with medical-related issues. He told me that someone was experiencing chest pains. The first thing the Hatzalah volunteers who rushed to the scene did was to check his pulse. The man protested, "My pain is in my heart, not my wrist."

They replied, "When we check the pulse on the wrist, we know what's happening in the heart." The same can be said with regards to *hishtadlus*. By the extent one invests in *hishtadlus* of his hands, one can determine what is happening in his heart, whether he trusts in Hashem or not.

5. The words of Chazal (*Tanchuma Shemini* 8) are *נתקשה משה רבינו בעשיית המנורה*, "Moshe had difficulty [understanding] how to make the menorah." There are several kinds of *מתקשה*, hardships. For some, it is *קשה פרנסתו*, hard to earn parnassah. For others, it is *קשה זיווגו של אדם*, hard to find a shidduch, and there are other *קשה*, hardships. Sometimes, his hardship and question is, "Why is this happening to me?" He wonders why he suffers so much when it appears to him that others have a much better life than him. In response to Moshe's struggle, Hashem told him to throw a block of gold into *אש*, into the fire. *אש* is *roshei teivos* for *אמונה שלימה*. Have complete emunah, believe that this is how things are supposed to be, and all your questions and your struggles will be fixed *מאליהן*, on their own. Nothing helps more than emunah. Having emunah is mesugal for salvations.

It states (in *Shemonah Esrei*) *ומצמיח ישועה*, which indicates that the salvations sprout and grow like a plant growing from the earth. So, which seed do these plants grow from? Chazal (*Shabbos* 31.) state, *אמונה זה סדר זרעים*, that emunah is the seder of Zeraim, seeds. So, we see that emunah is the seed from which salvations sprout.

With emunah, you will experience many yeshuos.

Becoming a Sanctuary

It states (25:8) וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם, "They shall make for me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst."

The Alshich states that the pasuk doesn't state וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם, "I will dwell in it (in the Mishkan)." It states בְּתוֹכָם, "in them". This means Hashem will dwell in every single person.

Someone asked a gadol, how can Hashem dwell in a human being, made of earth? How can a person elevate himself to this high level that the Shechinah will dwell in him, as if he was a Beis HaMikdash?

The *gadol* replied, "After Shovavim, it is possible." Indeed, this parashah, which states וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם, is the first parashah which we read after Shovavim. During Shovavim, people sanctify themselves, each person according to his ability, and then he can reach the level that the Shechinah will reside in him.

When someone hears such a vort, he often says, "I wish I knew that before Shovavim. But how does it help me now? Shovavim has passed."

In response to this feeling, pay attention to the following story, which Reb Tzvi Meir Zilberberg Shlita told. He heard it from a talmid chacham who used to travel to Rebbe Itzikel of Pshevorsk zy'a. During these trips, he also enjoyed learning from the wisdom and holiness of Rebbe Itzikel's son-in-law, Rebbe Yankele of Pshevorsk. Once, this man traveled to the Pshevorsker Rebbe, discussing something with Rebbe Yankele of Pshevorsk. The conversation brought them to a Gemara (Chagigah 4.). The man repeated the Gemara, which says, אִיזְהוּ שׁוֹטָה, הַמַּאבֵּד כָּל מַה שְּׁנוֹתָנִים לוֹ,

"Who is a fool? It is someone who loses everything that is given to him."

Rebbe Yankele said, "You repeated the Gemara incorrectly. The Gemara says אִיזְהוּ שׁוֹטָה, הַמַּאבֵּד מַה שְּׁנוֹתָנִים לוֹ, 'Who is a fool? It is someone who loses what is given to him.' When you repeated the Gemara by heart, you added the word, כָּל."

The man replied, "I said כָּל because the Gemara says כָּל!"

They checked the Gemara, and they saw that indeed, the Gemara says כָּל. (Afterwards, they checked Shulchan Aruch, Yorah Deiah 1:5, and there, indeed, it is written *without* the word כָּל. It states there, הַמַּאבֵּד מַה שְּׁנוֹתָנִים לוֹ, but the Gemara wrote it as the man said, with the word כָּל.)

The Yid explained, "Don't think that I am an expert in Shas. Not at all. I am not even an expert in one *Masechta*. But when I learned this Gemara, I felt a *chalishas hadaas* and *yeush*. I asked myself, perhaps I am a *shotah*, a fool, because I sometimes lose what is given to me. Sometimes I lose my *tabak pushke*, a pen, and the like. Right now, I am trying to remember where I put my eyeglasses and the towel I took to the mikvah. I forget some things; perhaps I am also called a שׁוֹטָה? But then I saw that the Gemara says אִיזְהוּ שׁוֹטָה, הַמַּאבֵּד כָּל מַה שְּׁנוֹתָנִים לוֹ, and I was comforted. For losing only one thing, a man isn't called a שׁוֹטָה. He is a fool only when he loses everything, and I don't lose everything."

Reb Yankele praised him for being so truthful.

Sometimes, we squander opportunities and are upset, but we must remember that we didn't lose *everything*. There were many opportunities that we grasped, and that should give us comfort and hope.⁶

6. A bachur came to the Nesivos Shalom, and with tears in his eyes, he said that he discovered that his tefillin were pasul. He added, "My tefillin didn't become pasul; they were always pasul, because they weren't written correctly. Since my bar mitzvah, I never wore kosher tefillin!"

The Nesivos Shalom encouraged him to be happy that from now on, he will be wearing kosher tefillin.

The lesson is that if you make an error, instead of crying over the past, rejoice that you have the future.

We return to our vort, that with Shovavim, one can reach the level of וּשְׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם, that a person can make himself like a Beis HaMikdash, where the Shechinah resides. We asked how a person can achieve this level. We answered that with Shovavim, it is possible. We asked, but how does this vort help us now, after Shovavim has passed?

Here are three approaches:

(1) Although Shovavim has passed, we didn't lose *everything*. We did many good things in Shovavim that purified us immensely, to be worthy of being a Mishkan for Hashem.

(2) The Arizal says that Shovavim includes Terumah and Tetzaveh. (Some say that it is only during a leap year, but the Arizal says that this applies to every year. It is called Shovavim Ta"t - Ta"t referring to תְּרוּמָה (תַּצְוֵה).) So, Shovavim isn't over yet. Even if we lost some opportunities, we didn't lose *everything*. It is still Shovavim, and we can rectify ourselves.

(3) Our third response is based on a lesson from the Chasam Sofer zt'l. The Chasam Sofer discusses two pesukim that discuss the yomim tovim. The two pesukim are similar, but there are differences between them. One pasuk states (Vayikra 23:2) מוֹעֲדֵי ה' אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם, "Hashem's holidays that

you shall designate as holy occasions. These are My holidays." A couple of pesukim afterwards, it states (23:4) אֵלֶּה מוֹעֲדֵי ה' מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ, "These are Hashem's holidays, which you shall designate in their designated time." The second pasuk doesn't refer to the holidays as מוֹעֲדֵי, "My holidays." Also, the second pasuk states בְּמוֹעֲדָם, "in their designated time", which isn't written in the first pasuk.

The Chasam Sofer says that the first pasuk we mentioned discusses when a person turns a regular weekday into a holiday. A day that one invests in avodas Hashem is a regular day that becomes a holiday for him. It isn't בְּמוֹעֲדָם at a set time of the year, yet, the Torah says, אֵלֶּה הֵם מוֹעֲדֵי, these are My yomim tovim. These are the days that are most precious to Me.

Shovavim is a special time to rectify us from severe aveiros, but the potential to attain purity and kedushah isn't solely on these days. Even regular days can be very holy and special before Hashem when we use them for avodas Hashem.

In response to the question, how can one merit that the Shechinah will reside on him? The answer is with Shovavim it is possible. But it isn't solely on Shovavim. On any day of the year, when a person acts with kedushah

Rejoice with what you can gain, because you didn't lose *everything*.

A husband and wife were very tired on the seder night, so they decided to go to sleep for a half-hour and then begin the seder. When they awoke, it was morning. The man, not knowing what to do, ran to the beis medresh of the Shefa Chaim, the Klausenberger Rebbe, zt'l, he cried to the rebbe, "This year, I didn't have matzah, maror, four cups of wine, sipur yetzias Mitzrayim, and Hallel; I slept the entire night. What should I do?"

The Klausenberger Rebbe replied, "What should you do? You daven Shacharis," Even if you missed out on a tremendous opportunity, you must remain focused on the present, and gain whatever you can.

The Chofetz Chaim said that if a person realizes when he gets to שִׁים שְׁלוֹם in Shemonah Esrei that he said the entire Shemonah Esrei without kavanah, he should begin davening with kavanah now. He should grasp whatever he can.

The Chofetz Chaim compared this to a girl selling apples, and a thief came by and turned over the table with the apples and everyone started grabbing the apples for themselves. She stood there, crying. A wise person told her, "Everyone is grabbing, go grab as well." Because even if you incur a steep loss, you don't have to lose *everything*. Salvage whatever you can.

and taharah, it is possible to reach high levels until he can become like a Beis HaMikdash.⁷

7. A mashal is told of a person who returned to a wedding hall to pick up something he had forgotten there. All the guests had already left, and he found the hall in a big mess. He remembers how everything was so beautiful just a few hours before, but now many of the tables were overturned, and those still standing had leftover chicken bones on them. The man thought, "If this is the end of a wedding, what is the whole purpose?" But then he remembered that a kiddushin happened. The chasan gave a ring to the kallah and said *הרי את מקודשת לי*. For this, the entire wedding was worthwhile.

But if the chasunah didn't occur, indeed he can ask, "What is the purpose of it all?"

The nimshal is a person's life. We live seventy, eighty, ninety, or more years. Many things happened during this time, but then it ends, and the person is placed in the ground. Nothing remains but some bones. If, during his lifetime, there was kiddushin, which means he sanctified himself by performing good deeds, it was all worthwhile. But if there was no kiddushin, one can indeed ask what was the purpose of it all?

This can be hinted in the Chazal (Eiruvim 54.) *האי עלמא כבי הילולא דמיא*, "This world is like a chasunah." If you perform your mission, everything is worthwhile, otherwise, it is a waste, r'l.

The Divrei Shmuel said that this is the meaning of the pasuk *וישמע יתרו*, which means Yisro understood. He understood that he was superfluous in the world, with no purpose. He thought, "Was I brought to the world just to eat and enjoy pleasures? If I don't fulfill the mission that Hashem sent me to do in this world, I am extra."

I heard the following story:

As it is known, the mashpiah, Reb Mendel Futerfas zt'l, was sent to Siberia as a prisoner of the Russian government. Someone came to him one day and said, "Please, give me a brachah for success because tonight I will attempt to escape from here."

Reb Mendel looked at him as if he had gone mad. "How can you escape? There are walls all around us, guards standing on high towers watching, and wild dogs trained to attack anyone who escapes."

The man replied that he discovered a short moment every night when one guard left his post, and the next one came to take his place. For many days, during this moment, he approached one of the walls and drilled a drop in the wall. "Tonight, I have a drop more drilling to do and I will have created myself an escape door."

Reb Mendel gave him his brachos.

That night, Reb Mendel stood outdoors to witness what would occur.

He saw the man approach the wall, drill, and kick the door he created with his foot. Part of the wall broke off, and he snuck through and ran to freedom. The dogs pursued him, but he was prepared for them. He dropped some pieces of meat from his pockets, and the dogs became busy with the meat and forgot about him.

The guard was watching from above. When he saw the dogs chasing after the prisoner, he was pleased and watched with satisfaction. The dogs were doing what they were trained to do. But when he noticed the dogs eating the meat the prisoner dropped for them, he became furious, grabbed his gun, and shot the dogs dead.

Sometime later, Reb Mendel was talking to this guard and asked him a question that had bothered him since that episode. "Why did you kill your dogs? What did the dogs do wrong, and besides, don't you need your dogs?"

The guard replied, "Much money and effort was invested to train the dogs. If the dogs don't do their mission after all this, why do I need them? What purpose are they serving?"

Investing in Avodas Hashem

The Divrei Yechezkel (Shinov) zt'l writes that by watching how people are involved in their *parnassah* with all their heart and soul, you can learn how you should be devoted to *avodas Hashem*. This is the meaning of the words ויקחו לי תרומה. The Torah is urging every Yid to elevate himself and become more spiritual. (תרומה means to elevate oneself.) But how can one do so? How can one train himself to be devoted to *avodas Hashem*? The answer is מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו, copy the people who vigorously pursue

their *parnassah*. They work so hard, by day and by night. You should do the same in *avodas Hashem*. They are working to succeed in this temporary world, so you should certainly work as hard in *avodas Hashem*, where the reward is eternal.

The Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe, Ki Seitzei, ד"ה או, (יאמר) writes this lesson on the words (Tehillim 119:98) מאויבי תחכמני מצותיך כי לעולם היא לי. He writes, "The mitzvos are לעולם, forever. If a person works so hard to get a bit of pleasure in this world, a fleeting moment of earthly

Reb Mendel often repeated this episode and said, "A person came to this world to serve Hashem and pass tests. But if he forgets his mission and becomes occupied with other foolish pursuits, what is the purpose of his life?

We can also explain the Chazal (Eiruvim 54.) הא' עלמא כבי הילולא דמיא, "This world is like a chasunah hall" in the following way: Friends of the chasan and kallah, and family friends, sit and eat a full meal at a wedding. Family members eat a portion of the meal, but not much more. The very close family, such as the brothers and sisters of the chasan and kallah, eat even less than that. They are happy with the simchah, and their mind is on this joy, not on the food, and they are busy helping their parents greet all the guests. The parents of the chasan and kallah eat even less. They hardly have a piece of challah... and the chasan and kallah themselves eat the least of all.

The *nimshal* is that this world is like a chasunah. Those whose focus is serving Hashem and making Him a *nachas ruach* aren't too involved in worldly matters. They are involved in the purpose for which they came to this world. Those who are interested in enjoying this world, this shows that they aren't close...

A person came to a veterinarian with a sick donkey. The doctor said, "I have a powerful drug that will put your donkey back on its feet in a day or two, but it is expensive."

The man paid the money and brought the medicine to give a shot of it to his donkey. A day or two passed, and nothing changed. He complained to the veterinarian: "Why did you lie to me? Your medicine doesn't work. It doesn't do anything, and I paid so much for it!"

The veterinarian sold him another medicine and said, "This one should do the trick." He charged a very low price because he had *rachmanus* on this person who had already paid so much money on a medicine that, for some reason, didn't work.

A couple of days later, the man returned to the vet again and said the second medicine didn't work either.

The veterinarian said, "Let me go with you to your donkey to see why it is so ill that it isn't responding to the medications."

Even before they reached the donkey, the vet smelled the heavy odor of a corpse. "It died a month ago," the man admitted.

The vet replied, "My medications can only help animals that want to get up and walk. But for animals who have no interest at all in getting up, the medicines won't help."

The *nimshal* is that there are *segulos* for improvement. There are times in the year that are *mesugal* for growth. However, these only work for those who want to improve. For those who are okay to stay the same, none of these matters will help.

enjoyment, certainly one should toil to earn a mitzvah, for it is eternal."

Avodas Hashem is for Us

The Zohar (Chadash 7:) writes, "Klal Yisrael gives parnassah to their Father in heaven." The Nefesh HaChaim (2:6) explains that just as food makes the connection between body and neshamah (and without food, the neshamah departs), similarly, the Zohar teaches, Hashem's connection to the world is from the mitzvos that Klal Yisrael perform.

The Divrei Yisrael zt'l (Kedoshim) writes in the name of his grandfather, Rebbe Yechezkel of Kozmir zt'l that this Zohar refers to our generation as well. Even today, we (keviyachol) give Hashem parnassah with our good deeds.

"Whoever doesn't say so is a fool. We are running Hashem's store. In the past, it was a big store, and there was an abundance of parnassah. But today, it is up to us to give Hashem parnassah. If not from us, then from where does Hashem get His parnassah? From the Arabs? From the descendants of Eisav? Even if our *parnassah* is minimal, nevertheless, we are giving keviyachol, to Hashem today."

On the words (25:2) ויקחו לי תרומה, the Saraf of Mogalentza zt'l explains that Hashem requests that we should elevate Him (keviyachol) with our good deeds. (תרומה Means to elevate.) And don't think that Hashem asks this only from the great tzaddikim. Rather, מאת כל איש... תקחו את תרומתי, Hashem wants to be elevated by every Yid. The Saraf of Mogalentza explains that Hashem knew from the beginning of time that this generation would come to the world, and He wanted our avodah. This tells us that

every Yid and every generation has the potential to elevate Hashem (keviyachol) when they perform His service.

The Midrash (Shemos Rabba 34:1) writes on the pasuk (25:10) וַעֲשׂוּ אֲרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu never requests from His creations more than they can do. When Hashem gave them the Torah at Har Sinai, He came to them according to their strength. This is as it states (Tehillim 29:4) קוֹל ה' בְּכַח, according to the strength of each individual. Also, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe to build a Mishkan, Moshe wondered, 'Hashem's honor fills the upper and the lower worlds, and He is asking for a Mishkan?! [How can we possibly build a Mishkan sufficient for Hashem to dwell there?].' Hakadosh Baruch Hu replies, 'I do not intend as you think. I am asking for twenty kerashim (planks) on the north side, twenty on the southern side, and eight to the west. And...I will bring the Shechinah to dwell within a square amah (of the Kodesh HaKadoshim).'¹¹⁸

This is an important lesson: Hashem doesn't expect from us more than we can do, and our limited abilities are sufficient in Hashem's eyes.

The Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe אשר ידבנו) discusses the *nesi'im* who wanted to bring precious stones for the *choshen* (which were needed for the service in the Mishkan), but how was it possible to obtain them in the desert?

With all their heart, the *nesi'im* wanted to bring this donation to Hashem, so Hashem helped them. Chazal tell us that the gems fell from heaven along with the *manna*. When we want to serve Hashem, Hashem helps us succeed. The Chasam Sofer said that this is alluded to in the words, אשר ידבנו לבו, all you need to do is to desire and yearn to serve

8. The Ropshitzer Rav zt'l (Zera Kodosh וְעֵשִׂי שִׁטִּים) quotes this Midrash and explains that the aron was made of עֵשִׂי שִׁטִּים, which represents aveiros because Chazal (Sotah 3.) says, "A person doesn't sin unless a רוח שטות, a foolish spirit enters him." So, the עֵשִׂי שִׁטִּים represents this foolishness that enters a person when he sins. Furthermore, שִׁטִּים is gematriya שט"ן, which causes us to sin. A person thinks he can't rectify his aveiros because there are so many. Hashem replies that His expectations of us are in accordance with our strengths and abilities.

Hashem, and that will be enough. Miraculously, Hashem will grant you *siyata d'shmaya*, and you will succeed.⁹

Sweetened *Dinim* are Better than Before

People think, "Why do I need a *tzarah* and the salvation that comes after it? Wouldn't it be better if the *tzarah* wasn't there in the first place?"

Be aware that when there is a *tzarah*, which is sweetened due to our tefillos and the like, a person's situation becomes even better than before.

A *meshal* to this idea is someone who was given a hot cup of bitter tea. He wonders, "Why do I need this?"

Then sugar is added to the tea. Now, his problem, the bitter cup of tea, is to his benefit. He currently has a delicious hot drink to enjoy.

The same is true with all *yesurim* and hardships. When they disappear and become sweetened, it isn't that there aren't *yesurim* anymore. It is actually better now. It is better than if there was no trouble to begin with.

The Prishah (Orach Chaim 130) says this lesson regarding a "bad dream." When the dream turns around and becomes a good dream, it becomes better than before. If the dream disappeared, he wouldn't gain, and he wouldn't lose from the bad dream. But when a dream is sweetened, everything becomes better for him.

He writes, "It is known that all dreams are according to how they are interpreted.

So, if one interprets the dream in a good way, he will receive more goodness than if he had never experienced a bad dream. This is the reason [when one says the tefillah for a bad dream at birkas kohanim, he says] וְאָמַר, צְרִיכִים רְפוּאָה רַפְאֵם ... כְּמוֹ מִי מָרָה עַל יְדֵי מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ, 'If the dream needs curing, cure it... as the bitter waters of Marah were cured by Moshe Rabbeinu.' We don't say, 'If the dreams were bad, take them away,' because we want the dream, but we want it to be healed and become a good dream. This is why we compare it to the bitter waters of Marah that Moshe Rabbeinu healed. Moshe didn't daven for the bitter waters to disappear because they still wouldn't have water to drink. Instead, Moshe davened that the water became sweet so the Yidden could gain from the existing problem. The same [we pray at birkas kohanim] that if the dream was bad, it should be healed like Miryam was healed from her *tzaraas*. When Miryam was healed from her *tzaraas*, there was a benefit for her, greater than if she had never had *tzaraas*. Her *tzaraas* taught klal Yisrael the severity of lashon hara, and to be distant from lashon hara. Again, we see that healed *tzaraas*, has a greater benefit than no *tzaraas* at all. We also daven at birkas kohanim that the dream should be healed] like Naaman, who was cured when he had *tzaraas*. The *tzaraas* was a great benefit because Hashem's name became sanctified through it. As it states all the kings of the world praised Hashem. The same is with Chizkiyahu who was healed from his illness. This created a kiddush Hashem."¹⁰

9. We can also translate כל אשר ידבנו לך, that for avodas Hashem, give Hashem your heart. Whatever you do, do it l'shem shamayim. Use this approach when you eat, drink, speak to people, and work. You will appear the same as everyone else, but your heart is with Hashem; you are always serving Hashem.

10. When Chizkiyahu's father, Achaz, died, the day was only two hours long, and the sun went down. Hashem performed this miracle so there shouldn't be time to eulogize him.

But the world lacked ten hours of daylight. Those missing hours were returned in the days of Chizkiyahu, for when he was ill, the sun stood in heaven for twenty-two hours – ten hours longer than usual – to heal him.

This lesson is also taught by the "Piaseczna" the author of Chovas HaTalmidim and other sefarim. He teaches that a tree doesn't have any taste at all. Fruit from a tree are bitter at first and later turn sweet. The lesson is that when something is bitter and fixed, it becomes even better.

The lesson is taught in a Midrash (Shemos Rabba 43:2), "When the Yidden came to Marah... Moshe was thinking, 'Why did Hashem create this bitter water? What benefit does the world benefit from it? It would be better if it were never created.' Hakadosh Baruch Hu knew what he was thinking. Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, 'Don't say that. Isn't it the work of My hands? Is there anything in the world that was created for no purpose? I will teach you what you should say. Say, "Turn the bitter into sweet!"'

Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter Shlita teaches from this Midrash that Hashem takes bitterness, turns it around, and makes it sweet for Klal Yisrael.¹¹

Salvations on Shabbos and on Shabbos Shekalim

The גווי ישראל from Rebbe Yisrael of Chortkov zt'l writes, "Every Shabbos of the

four *parshiyos* brings down bounty to the world... On parashas Shekalim, comes down the bounty for parnassah and wealth..."

Ateres Yeshuah (*Moadim, Mishpatim, Shekalim*) writes, שבת שקלים מסוגל להמשכת פרנסה, "Shabbos Shekalim is *mesugal* for attaining parnassah."¹²

The Imrei Yosef of Spinka said that since the *shekalim* (which were donated to the Beis HaMikdash) covered the cost of the *korbanos* for the entire year, similarly, on this Shabbos, we prepare the tefillos for the entire year. This means this Shabbos is *mesugal* for tefillah.

The brothers Reb Meir and Reb Zanzvil Kahana z'l from Drogmeresht came to the Imrei Yosef of Spinka zt'l for the first time for Shabbos Shekalim in the year 5643. They hoped to get their salvation from this great tzaddik, as both were *baalei yesurim*.

Reb Meir spoke with the Imrei Yosef on erev Shabbos and expressed his distress that he didn't have children and that his wife was ill. The Imrei Yosef told him to give a *pidyon* of one hundred gold coins, and he would have a *yeshuah*.

Reb Zanzvil wanted to speak with the Rebbe on erev Shabbos to tell him that his sons were ill, but there wasn't time to do so.

The goyim saw the sun standing and were astonished. When Nevuchadnezzar heard that it was in honor of Chizkiyahu, he wrote a letter to Chizkiyahu to honor him.

11. The Chazon Ish (Kobetz Igros vol.3 60) provides counsel on handling tzaros with a calm mind. He writes, "A person should consider his problems to be small. When he removes his emotions, he won't feel them and will receive reward for detaching himself.

A father and son came to Reb Avraham Genichovsky zt'l, two weeks before Reb Avraham's petirah. The father said, "My son suffers a lot. Wherever he goes, he feels that people are against him..."

Reb Avraham replied, "We are obligated to experience bitterness only once a year, at the seder when we eat maror. Other than that, we aren't obligated to feel bitterness."

In other words, don't think about your trouble and things that make you bitter, and they won't bother you anymore.

12. The Ateres Yeshuah concludes with a Rashi from the beginning of parashas Mishpatim, and this is how he reads Rashi's words: אמר לו הקב"ה למשה, לא תעלה על דעתך לומר, אשנה להם הפרק, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe, 'Don't think it is sufficient just to teach them Torah. You must be *mashpia* for them parnassah, too, because לך נאמר אשר תשים לפניהם, כשלחן הערוך ומוכן לאכול לפני, אם אין קמה אין תורה, without parnassah, there is no Torah. You must provide them with a set table, prepared to eat. You must bestow parnassah on Klal Yisrael.'"

At the Friday night *tish*, the Rebbe blessed Reb Zanzvil that his children should have a *refuah sheleimah*. The Rebbe added that on Shabbos Shekalim, one can request that all one's tefillos be answered (he told them the explanation we wrote above).

Needless to say, both of the brothers had their salvation, and they became devoted chassidim of the Imrei Yosef.

Every Shabbos is mesugal for yeshuos, especially when we accept the Shabbos with joy. It states (21:19), רק שבתו יתן ורפא ירפא, all one needs to do is שבתו יתן, to keep Shabbos, ורפא ירפא and he will have a *refuah*.

The Shem MiShmuel (*Shelach* 5677) writes in the name of his father, the Avnei Nezer zt'l, "Even if someone has an ill person in his home if he can refrain from complaining and from thinking about his troubles, he will certainly be healed." This is based on the Gemara (*Shabbos* 12.), "When one visits the sick on Shabbos he says, שבת היא מלועזק ורפואה קרובה לבוא, 'Shabbos we don't shout, and the *refuah* is coming quickly,' and Rashi explains, "The merit of Shabbos can bring you compassion if you honor Shabbos by refraining from having *tzaar* on this day."

The Gemara discusses an ill person. However, it also applies to all kinds of troubles and problems. If one doesn't have *tzaar* on Shabbos, the *tzaar* will disappear.

The Eliyahu Rabba says that this is *midah kneged midah*. He doesn't have *tzaar* on Shabbos, so Hashem removes his *tzaar* and distress. On Shabbos, one is supposed to feel כאילו כל מלאכתך עשויה, as if you have nothing to

take care of and everything is perfect in your life (Rashi, *Shemos* 20:9). And when one thinks that way on Shabbos, it becomes so.

Masuk m'Dvash (Reb Yitzchak Parchi 6) writes, "We saw with our own eyes people who had a *tzarah* before Shabbos, and on Shabbos, they forgot about their *tzarah* entirely, and they were happy with Shabbos, as it is proper to be happy on Shabbos. They didn't have any distress or worries on Shabbos despite their *tzaros*, and they merited that they were saved from their troubles in miraculous ways."¹³

The Menoras HaMeor (ח"ב פ"ח) (אלנאקר"ה) tells the story of a woman who had two children who fell into a pit on Shabbos. She waited until her husband came home from the *beis knesses*. When he came, they ate and drank, and when they finished the meal, she said, "If you want, I will tell you something."

"Go ahead."

She said, "For ten years, I was guarding two gold crowns. Now, the owners are asking for the crowns back. What should I do? Should I return the crowns, or shouldn't I?"

"Return them."

She said, "Your two sons fell into a pit, and they died. Now honor Hashem and don't be *mechalel* Shabbos." (She meant, "Don't be sad on Shabbos." They were the two crowns that the Owner requested back, ten years after they were given to them.)

They weren't sad that Shabbos. When it was dark, they went to the pit to take their children out to bury them. In the merit that

13. In his later years, Reb Yaakov Yosef Herman settled in Eretz Yisrael. He traveled by ship with all his possessions. They docked in Haifa. It was close to Shabbos, so he couldn't take his bags with him. The officers told him, "If you leave it here, everything will be taken away. You won't have anything."

Reb Yaakov Yosef was very happy that Shabbos, and didn't think about his great loss.

Even after Shabbos was over, they didn't rush to the port at the earliest *zman* of motzei Shabbos. He waited for the *zman* of Rabbeinu Tam, like he did every week, and only then did he return to the port.

They found a guard standing near his bags. "They told me to stand here," he told them. Everything was there; nothing was missing. Because when you are happy and calm on Shabbos, all troubles go away.

they didn't have *tzaar* on Shabbos, the children came out of the pit alive and well.

Shevet HaKahasi (vol.3 180) writes that Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l* didn't put on new shoes on Shabbos. He first wore them on weekdays to be "broken into" a little before Shabbos. He didn't want to feel the pinch that comes along with wearing new shoes on Shabbos. We should try to avoid feeling any distress on Shabbos. Shabbos is (*Bamidbar* 10:10), *יום שמחתכם*, a day of joy, and when we are happy on Shabbos, the *tzaros* will never return.

So, every Shabbos is *mesugal* for *yeshuos*, and special *yeshuos* come from Shabbos *Shekalim* and the four Shabbosim of the Four *Parshiyos* we read this time of year.

A Coin of Fire

Midrash Tanchuma (9) tells us that Moshe had difficulty understanding a *machatzis hashekel*. "Hakadosh Baruch Hu took a coin of fire from under His throne, showed it to Moshe, and said, *זה יתנו*, 'This is what they should give.'" We can explain that Moshe didn't have difficulty understanding what a *machatzis hashekel* is. Moshe's question was how was it possible for half a coin to accomplish so much? The Midrash (*Tanchuma Tisa* 3) states that Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe, "I swear, just as you are now standing and teaching them *parashas Shekalim* and you raise their heads, so will it be every year: When the nation reads this *parashah* before Me, it is like you are standing there, and you raise their heads."

Why would such a small donation cause *זקיפת ראש*, the heads of the Jewish nation to be raised?

Hashem showed Moshe a fiery coin to imply that it is the fire and the *hislachavus* that Klal Yisrael has when they perform this *mitzvah*, which is so precious to Hashem.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* was once in Germany, and he heard the Rav of a *beis knesses* ask in his *drashah*, "Why did Hashem show Moshe a *מטבע של אש*, a coin of fire? Hashem could have shown Moshe a silver coin! The answer is Hashem did not only show him the size and weight of the coin. Hashem showed him how the coin should be given. It should be given with a fiery *hislachavus*."

Towards the end of *parashas Mishpatim*, it states (24:17), *ומראה כבוד ה' כאש אוכלת ההר*, "The appearance of the glory of Hashem was like a consuming fire on the mountain-top before the eyes of Bnei Yisrael."

Kedushas Levi explains, "If a person wants to know whether Hashem enjoys his service, he should see if he has a yearning and *hislachavus* to serve Hashem like a burning fire. If he does, this is a clear sign that Hashem enjoys his service. Heaven helps him and sends into his mind holy thoughts [of *hislachavus* so Hashem can enjoy his *mitzvos*]. This is the meaning of the *pasuk*, *ומראה כבוד ה'*, the sign to know whether he sees Hashem's honor and that Hashem is happy with his service, the test is, *כאש אוכלת*, if his heart is burning with *hislachavus* to serve Hashem."¹⁴

14. Once upon a time, there was a very wealthy person. The only thing that matched his vast wealth was his stinginess. He would often pride himself with his *yichus*, telling everyone that he was a descendant of the Magen Avraham.

Once, the rav of the community spoke to this wealthy person and tried to convince him to give money to *tzedakah*. The rav's inspirational plea would have opened up anyone's heart, but the stingy man's heart remained cold and unmoved. The rav told him, "You aren't an *einikel* of the Magen Avraham!"

The man was upset, "Why do you say that I'm not a descendant of the Magen Avraham? Did you ever check my *yichus*? And besides, why is it your business? And what does that have to do with our conversation?"

Time for Change

In the Gemara, the translation of שקל is to take. The Chidushei HaRim zt'l said that on Shabbos Shekalim, the *zman* is *mesugal* for one to take himself with both hands (*Imrei Yehudah*). In other words, it is a time for change. It is a time to take himself in his hands and begin anew.

Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer zt'l looked forward to this time of year when we read the four parshiyos. "I want to meet with the Eibishter," he said (*Imrei Pinchas* 4:225).

This is as we say in the *yotzros* of *Musaf* on Shabbos Shekalim, אור פניך עלינו נשא, we request that Hashem shine the light of His countenance on us. It is a time when we can keviyachol meet with Hashem. The Ruzhiner zt'l said, "In the [Shabbosim of the] four parshiyos, each Yid can become attached to the *Shechinah* because each week represents another letter of Hashem's name (הו"ה)."

In *Megillas Esther* it states (*Esther* 7:8) ופני המן חסרו, "Haman's face was covered." The Alshich HaKadosh explains that the ancient law of Persia (and of many other countries of old) was that if a person convicted and sentenced to death saw the king, he was pardoned. When Achashveirosh's anger was aroused on Haman, someone quickly covered Haman's face, so Haman wouldn't look at the king's face and be pardoned. As we said above, during the weeks of the "four parshiyos" we merit seeing Hashem's face, *keviyachol*. As we say on Shabbos Shekalim, אור פניך עלינו נשא. And when one sees the King's face, all his sins are pardoned.

Furthermore, it states (30:13), זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים... The Yerushalmi writes that כל העובר על הפקודים means "all those who transgressed Hashem's commands" (and sinned with the *egel*), with the *machatzis hashekel*, לכפר על, נפשותיכם, they will have atonement. Similarly, we attain atonement on this Shabbos.

The Sfas Emes (*Shekalim* תרל"ג) explains that this atonement is also applicable in our times because we *desire* to give the *machatzis hashekel*, and that is sufficient to attain atonement.¹⁵

Adar

The Meor Einayim teaches that אדר stands for א, the Alef, (אלופי של עולם, Hashem) dwells. In Adar we can discover that Hashem dwells in this world and leads it with *hashgachah pratis*. The *avodah* of this month is to keep our eyes open and to recognize the א, that Hashem is here, with us, saving us, and helping us all the time.

The Ahavas Shalom zt'l says that אדר is *roshei teivos* for רעיון דרעיון אשתכח, "The desire of all desires prevails." The expression רעיון דרעיון means a time when Hashem's love and desire for us is expressed and felt profoundly. For example, *shalosh seudos* is considered to be the peak and holiest moments of Shabbos, and it is called רעיון דרעיון. This love and desire to us is revealed in this month.

The custom of the tzaddikim of Ziditchov was that they wouldn't say *tachanun* the entire month of Adar. The Yeshuos Yaakov zy'a (the Rav of Lemberg) met with one of the tzaddikim of Ziditchov (Rebbe Isaac of Ziditchov

The rav replied, "Everyone who opens the *Shulchan Aruch* knows you can't learn *Magen Avraham* without the commentary *Machatzis HaShekel*. They go together. I tried for a half hour to get a half shekel out of you, but I failed. So, if there is no *machatzis hashekel*, I know the *Magen Avraham* is not here either."

15. The Sfas Emes (*Shekalim* 5633) writes, "Chazal instituted that we read parashas Shekalim now, even though we can't bring a *korban*. It seems that our desire to bring *korbanos* is accepted, just like in the past, because the *korbanos* were accepted due to the yearning and the desires of the Jewish people.... This devotion and the yearning exist until today – and perhaps it's even stronger because we want to bring *korbanos* again as we had in the past. This is the entire purpose of creation; to yearn for Hashem from amidst the darkness."

zy'a) and said, "Give me a source for this custom of not saying *tachanun*. And please, don't tell me a source from kabbalah or chassidus. I want a halachic source."

Rebbe Isaac Ziditchover replied that it states (*Esther* 9:22), והחודש אשר נהפך להם מיגון לשמחה, ומאבל ליום טוב, "The month that was transformed for them from grief to joy and from mourning to a yom tov..." So we see that the entire month became a yom tov, and we don't say *tachanun* on a yom tov."

It is good to say Tehillim on Rosh Chodesh Adar.

Reb Sariyah Dibletzky zt'l (*Davar Nechmad*) writes, "Reb Eliyahu Cohen and Reb Chaim Abulafia zt'l heard from Reb Chaim Vital's students that one... should recite the entire *Tehillim* on Rosh Chodesh Adar. This will fix his *neshamah*. There are other secrets, too. It is proper that those who fear Hashem should gather to make this *tikkun*."

The rule in spiritual matters is that if you can't do everything, do as much as possible. So, those who cannot say the entire *Tehillim* on Rosh Chodesh Adar should say a few chapters of *Tehillim*.