

פרשה תרומה

“Take for me a portion” - “ויקחו לי תרומה”

The Jewish people were exhorted to contribute towards the construction of the Mishkan. Rashi explains לי-for me, to mean לשמי- for my name sake. There are many different explanations as to what Rashi was teaching us with this word לשמי (it is amazing to see so many different understandings of just a single word of the holy Rashi, and Rashi most definitely meant every one of them! Every single word and letter in our holy Torah is “bursting” with countless wondrous interpretations!)

One interpretation is that Rashi is referring to money in general (since the Pasuk is discussing distributing funds towards the Mishkan). Money in its own right is very dangerous. It can change peoples lives in a negative way, and it changes the way people act. Money can destroy a life if used improperly. As a matter of fact, the word “dollar” (דולר=240) has the same numerical value as Amalek (עמלק=240)!!

However if it is used properly לשם שמים- for Hashem’s sake then it is elevated (תרומה מלשון תרום). Money becomes a tool to do Chesed, charity and many other virtuous acts. Rashi is teaching us this lesson, that when is money elevated (תרומה)? When its לי-לשמי when it is used לשם שמים, only then are the dangers of money lifted.

This explains why the Pasuk says “-לי הכסף ולי הזהב נאם ה'” - “to me is gold, and to me is silver says Hashem”. What is the meaning of this? Could it be that Hashem takes pride in gold and silver?! We now understand that the word לי refers to לשמי for לשם שמים. So the Pasuk is saying; when is gold and silver of value? Only when its לי, when used לשם שמים, for the purpose of a Misvah.

This also explains what it says about Tsadikim “-חביב עליהם ממונם יותר מגופם” - “their money is more dear to them than their lives”, how can this be? This seems like eschewed priorities?! Now we understand that since the Tsadikim only spend their money לשם שמים to save lives, to support Yeshivas etc...these are acts that the body alone cannot accomplish. We cannot build a Yeshivah or help feed the poor with only our body, we need money to facilitate these acts. So in **this respect** their money is more precious to them than their bodies, because only with money can they accomplish these acts of Hesed.

Another understanding of **לִי לְשָׁמִי** is that Rashi is referring literally to Hashem's name when he says **לְשָׁמִי**. Meaning, the Pasuk is warning the Jews to give charity for the sake of my name, that it should not be erased by the water of Sotah. (Sotah is an unfaithful wife who after being warned, secludes herself with another man. She is then brought to the temple and must undergo a procedure administered by the Kohen that includes drinking water in which a parchment with the name of Hashem was dipped in. This procedure caused the name of Hashem to be erased in the water). How would this happen? The Kohen usually had to approach the people in order to collect the **תרומות ומעשרות** (the portions and tithes) that are due to them. Many times people would avoid the Kohen, so as not to be forced to give them their due portions. It is written that the reason the Parasha of Sotah is found next to the Parasha of Terumah and Maaser is because those that avoid the Kohen so as not to give him his portion, will ultimately need the Kohen and seek him out, in order to administer the Sotah proceedings for his wife. The Pasuk is saying; give charity (the portions that are due to the Kohen are called charity) do not avoid him! **לִי-לְשָׁמִי** for my name sake, that it shouldn't be erased with the Sotah water, that you would need to give to your wife since you avoided the Kohen!

Why does this happen? Why when man avoids giving charity does he end up needing to bring his wife to the temple in suspicion of her being unfaithful?? It is written that Hashem asks us to give 10% of our earnings to him (to charity). This is very generous of him! If Hashem wanted he could have said I will keep 90% (that we must give 90% to charity) and you could have 10%. After all, anything we make comes only from Hashem. However if a person refrains from giving his portion, Hashem indeed takes the 90% and leaves the person with 10%. "(Like the well known story in the Gemarah of a wealthy man who used to give charity from his fields, after he passed on his children decided that the father had given too much charity and decreased it. At the end of the year they had found that the field produced 10% less than the previous year. The children decided that now, since the field had produced less they had to give even **less** charity, etc. Every year till eventually the fields produced only a tenth of what it used to produce and Hashem had "taken" the other ninety percent!). This is one way that a man loses his money. There is however another way. When a man goes after his desires with women, it says "רועה זונות יאבד הון" "he will lose a fortune" **בעד אשה זונה** - until he is a pauper that begs for bread. The wife of a man that loses his money (because he does not give charity) thinks the reason her husband is losing his money is because he is not being faithful. So she in turns tries to "copy" him and she becomes a Sotah. She does not realize that the reason he is losing his money is because he is not giving charity. With this we can understand why a man who avoids

giving charity by avoiding the Kohen ends up in need of the Kohen for his wife who will be a Sotah.

Another understanding of לי לשמי is from the Baal Shem Tov, who explains that when a person does a Misvah he is supposed to do it לשמה- to have in mind the reason why he is doing it or at least have in mind that the act he is doing is a Misvah. There is one exception and that is the Misvah of giving charity. Even if a person does not give charity לשמה, ultimately the poor person still benefits from his money and is revived. Even if a person lost money in the street and a poor man finds it, the one who lost it still gets the Misvah. As it says in Tehilim “פזר נתן לאביונים”. פזר- means to distribute or disperse (implying without intention), whereas נתן- means to give with intention. Even if a person was "פזר" his money (gave it without intention) נתן-it is as if he gave it with the proper intent. The Pasuk also says זרעו לכם צדקה- plant for yourself charity, meaning just like a seed needs no “intentions” to grow when placed in the ground so too charity as long as it gets “from point a to point b” the giver gets rewarded. However even in the act of charity the **receiver** must be לשם שמים-meaning, he must be careful only to accept what he needs to live. ויקחו לי- לשמי the word ויקחו means to take. Seemingly the Torah should have written ויתנו לי **give** for my sake, why does it say take? Since the Torah is instructing the receiver- לי לשמי- to be לשמה in his accepting charity.

Another understanding of לי לשמי is that in the Beit Hamikdash (and Mishkan) they would pronounce Hashem’s name as spelled (whereas today we do not pronounce it as spelled י-ה-ו-ה, we pronounce it אד-ני). לי לשמי- give the charity to build the Mishkan for the sake of my name, meaning, in order that my name should be said - which can only be done after the Mishkan is built.

Another understanding of לי לשמי is that it says in the Gemarah, one who gives charity should not give more than 20% of his money. One is obligated to give 10% but should not give more than 20%. We see this from Yaakov Avinu that said עשר אעשרנו I will give 10% twice (20%). By Avraham Avinu it says ויתן לו מעשר מכל that he gave 10%. This is hinted to in the word צדקה, the first and third letters are צ-ק which are 90-100. This signifies giving the obligatory 10% (90 out of 100), the second and fourth letters are ד-ה which are 4-5 this signifies giving 20% (four out of five) to charity. It also says about giving charity that one who gives charity is blessed with six blessings. Even greater is one that speaks words of encouragement to the poor man, he is blessed with eleven blessings (this is hinted in the Hagadah of Pesah that says **הא לחמא עניא**, literally; this the bread of affliction. **הא**- the six blessings [**הא** is numerically 6]- go to **לחמא**-one who **gives** bread to the poor man.). **עניא**- but if one **speaks** to the poor

man (עני- מלשון ועניית ואמרת), he gets 11 blessings (יא equals 11). These concepts are hinted in the name of Hashem. The יוד stands for the 10 percent one is obligated to give to charity, the ה' stands for the 20% (one fifth) maximum one can give. The ו' stands for the six blessings that one receives when he gives charity and the final ה' stands for the additional 5 blessings totaling 11 that one receives for speaking kind words to a poor man. לי לשמי give for my **name**, Rashi is hinting to all the concepts of Tzedakah that are represented in the **name** of Hashem.

Another understanding in לי לשמי is that in the Beit Hamikdash on Yom Kippur the Kohen Gadol used to say the 72 letter name of Hashem in his prayer (this is the name of ישו used to perform his “magic” after he heard it from the Kohen Gadol, after this happened the Kohen Gadol started to say this name in a whisper). The Talmud Yerushalmi says that one who knows of this 72 letter name must not benefit from others, since he may misuse the powers of this name for the wrong reasons. (Meaning, if he normally accepts charity from someone and one time the person cannot give him, he may come to improperly use this 72 letter name to harm the person) That’s why it says לי-ויבטחו בך יודעי שמך lit; those that know your name rely on you. בך-ויבטחו they rely **only** on you and not on people’s charity. יודעי שמך- those that know your 72 letter name. The question is, that the Kohen Gadol would say this name and he had to collect תרומות-charity from the people. How could he have learned the 72 letter name if he accepts charity? If he accepts it as a messenger- שליח – of Hashem then it is ok, as it says ויקחו לי Hashem says to the Kohen; take for **me**, לי-לשמי-for my name, so that you will be able to learn my 72 letter **name**.

The merit of this 72 letter name was invoked by Queen Esther in the story of Purim, when she decreed a 3 day fast for the Jewish people; 3 days have 72 hours, corresponding to the 72 letter name. The Pasuk in the Megillah says ובכן אבוא אל המלך – “with this I will approach the king”. ובכן- “with this”- is numerically 72, with the merit of the 72 letter name and the 72 hour fast of the people I will approach the king to save us. Esther herself did not fast the complete 72 hours since she could not approach the king weak and famished. Therefore she ate 2 hours before she was due to approach the king and fasted 70 hours total. This is hinted to in the Pasuk ואני ונערתי אצום כן – “myself and my maids will fast as well”. The word כן is numerically 70, alluding to the 70 hours that Esther herself had fasted.

We also allude to this 72 letter name in the Amidah of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when we say many times the word ובכן-the word בן is 72, we are asking Hashem to answer us in the merit of this 72 letter name.

Another understanding in **לִי לְשָׂמִי** is that when we give Sedakah we are “acting out” the letters of Hashem’s name. The **יֹד** is for the coin (or cash), the **ה** is for the hand of the giver (**ה** is numerically 5 for the 5 fingers of the hand). The **ו** is for the extended arm of the giver and the **ה** is for the hand of the receiver. Thus we find the act of giving charity unifies the letters of Hashem’s name **י-ה-ו-ה**. The Pasuk says Give Sedakah **לִי לְשָׂמִי**, **לִי**-stands for **יְחֻד**- for the sake of uniting, **לְשָׂמִי**- the letters of the name of Hashem.

How is one supposed to make this unification in the proper if, instead of initially approaching the poor man, the poor man initially approaches him? In that case the hand of the **receiver** is extended first, this represents the **ה** of Hashem’s name coming **before** the rest of the letters. This is like the letters of Hashem’s name out of order?!).

One way is to first give the man a little, than to call him back and give him **again**. The second time you give you will be the one taking the initiative and extending your hand first to the poor man. This is why the Pasuk says **פָּתַח תִּפְתַּח** a double expression of giving Sedakah, to show us that by giving the **second** time we form Hashem’s name in the proper order (simply understood the Pasuk uses a double expression for giving charity because a person usually needs extra prodding to take money out of his pocket to give it to charity).

Another way to form the letters of Hashem’s name in the proper order when approached by someone is to make the unification “with yourself” meaning to hand yourself the money from the right hand to the left hand. The left hand “acts” as the final **ה** in Hashem’s name. After you do this and “spell out” the name of Hashem you give the money to the **עֲנִי**. This method should also be employed when giving money to a woman. It is not proper for a man to directly hand money into the palm of a woman, lest it lead to improper thought. The Pasuk says **יָד לִיד לֹא יִנְקָה** the Gemarah explains; if a person intentionally approaches a woman -just too merely glance at her hand- he will not be spared from Gehinom for that act. This is illustrated is a story with R’ Meir from Parmishlan, who was once about to give charity to a woman and before he did so, he started to pass the money from one hand to the next. His students asked him, what are you doing? He explained that he was making the **יְחֻד**-unification of Hashem’s name with himself as this is the proper way of giving Sedakah to a woman. This is why the Pasuk says **מֵאֵת כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לָבוֹ** “from every **man** whose heart induces him to give, take” Why does the Pasuk specify a man? The woman gave as well! They gave even more than the men!?! The Torah was teaching that the unification accomplished by directly giving Sedakah should be done with a man, but regarding a woman it is improper to **directly** take or give charity.

This explains the Gemarah that says: "כל מי שיש לו עסק עם נשים לא יתיחד עמהם"; "anyone that has dealings with women should not seclude himself with them". Simply understood, this means that whoever has a business that entails dealings with women should be careful not to be secluded with them. The question could be asked; why is the Gemarah specifying someone that *deals with women* should not be secluded with them, **no one** - no matter who they are may be secluded with women!? The Gemarah was really referring to this unification when giving charity and should be understood as follows; anyone that has dealings (עסק) **of charity** with women, should not do the unification (יחוד) with them-
 לא יתיחד עמהם - because it is improper.

This concept of forming the letters of the name of Hashem is also seen in marriage. A man gives a coin to a woman and pronounces זה-הרי את מקודשת לי בטבעת זו "you are betrothed to me with this coin". The coin is the 'י, the hand of the חתן is the 'ה, his arm is the 'ו, and the hand of the כלה is the final 'ה. לי לשמי לי -מקודשת לי is like the act of giving charity, an act that forms the name of Hashem. This is another way of explaining what it says שכינה שרויה ביניהם "a man and woman has the שכינה with them", with the act of their marriage they "bring down" the שכינה to dwell with them by forming the name of Hashem.

There is also another כונה (intention) one should have when giving charity and that is for the name of Hashem of הויה in the manner that it numerically totals 40. This is thru the letter ה that is formed either as a ד' and ו' or as י' and ד', (when a Sofer writes the letter ה he can either form the letter by writing a ד with a ו "inside" or with a י with a ד "inside", either way is kosher) . The numerical value of י-ד is 14 and numerical value of ו-ד is 10. If we form one of the two ה's in Hashem's name as ד-י and one of them as ו-ד (since they are both valid methods to form a ה) the numerical value of Hashem's name becomes 40.

$$\begin{array}{cccc} & & ה' & ו' & י' \\ & & 6+ & 10 & =40 \\ 10 & + & 14 & + & \end{array}$$

This is why on the night of Pesach we break the Matzah into two pieces, one the shape of the ד', and one the shape of the ו'. The Arizal says the Matzah is compared to a ה' as it says הא לחמה עניא (הא spells the letter ה') we brake it into the two letters that form a ה' - the letter ד' and ו'.

This is hinted to in the Pasuk in שיר השירים that says אני לדודי ודודי לי - "I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me". The word דודי is דו-די, - the two different ways of forming the letter ה'. This totals 40, which is the numerical value of the word לי-לודי.

when we spell the name of Hashem with the 2 ה's formed in the 2 different ways, we have a numerical value that totals 40- לי.

With the words לי לשמי – Rashi is hinting that the name of Hashem, in the method that it equals לי-40 - is the one that we should have in mind when giving charity.

There is another understanding in לי לשמי. The Parasha describes later on (פרק כו' פסוק) (א) some of the items that were crafted from the donations of the people, such as the ירעות (panels) for the roof of the Mishkan. There were ten panels. Five of them were attached to each other, and the other five attached to each other. In addition, they also used the donations to make eleven panels to be used to *cover* the Mishkan. These eleven were comprised of six panels attached to one another and the remaining five attached to one another. This is hinted to in the name of Hashem. The י is 10- that represents the first 10 panels for the roof. The ה is 5 – representing the fact that these panels were divided 5 and 5. The ו is 6 and the final ה is 5 – representing the panels that covered the Mishkan that were divided into 6 and 5. With the word לשמי (referring to the name of Hashem) Rashi is hinting to us what the donations went towards - the panels used for construction of the Mishkan – which are alluded to in the Name of Hashem.