

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Terumah

6 Adar, 5777 – March 4, 2017

Compiled from the works of

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson
The Lubavitcher Rebbe

by

Rabbi Shmuel Mendelsohn
North Miami Beach, FL

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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Terumah**

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Rashi in His Own Words

שמות כ"ה – ב': דָּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת-תְּרוּמָתִי:
רש"י ד"ה ויקחו לי תרומה: לי לשמי:

Shemos 25:2: "Speak to the children of Israel, and have them take for Me an offering. From every person whose heart inspires him to generosity, you shall take My offering."

Rashi Heading - and have them take for Me an offering: (meaning that the offering must be) dedicated to My name.

A Brief Synopsis

In our Torah portion, Terumah, the Torah commands the Jews to build the portable Tabernacle. This would serve as a "dwelling place" for Hashem throughout the forty years of wandering in the wilderness (and beyond). It was to be built of objects which G-d commanded the Jews to donate "to Me." What is the meaning of "to Me?" Rashi cites the words "and have them take for Me an offering," and explains that the offerings must be "dedicated to My name." Why does Rashi need to explain this at all? The beginning student would understand that the offerings had to be taken for G-d.

A number of commentaries explain Rashi's difficulties as follows. What need is there to *take* something for Hashem? The entire world is His! Furthermore, taking something for Him would imply that prior to that point it was further from Him, and one "took" it closer to Him. However, this concept can only apply to physical people who are limited by time and space. No such limitation applies to G-d Who has no body! Because of these difficulties, Rashi explains that here the meaning of taking a offering for Hashem is that it is "dedicated to His name."

However, we cannot say that this is what bothers Rashi. First of all, Rashi only cites the words from the verse which he is explaining. If he is only bothered by the words "for Me," why does he also cite the words "have them take (for Me) an offering." In addition to this, we find a number of verses which the beginner already learned which are similar to our own. The Torah already discussed giving things to G-d, yet Rashi found no need to explain those instances. Obviously the meaning of giving something to Hashem is dedicating it to His name; an idea which does not trouble the beginning student.

Without Rashi, we would have thought that the words "for Me" in our verse mean that the donations are transferred to the heavenly domain. That is the reason that Rashi includes the words "have them take" and "an offering" in his heading. The word "take" on its own implies that the offering is being taken from the

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individual's domain and brought into G-d's domain. That is the implication of the word "take." The word offering, which is related to the Hebrew word elevated, also implies that the object is elevated into Hashem's domain. Rashi includes those words in his heading to show us that the words "for Me" do not teach us that the offerings are given to Hashem. Rather they teach us that the offerings must be "dedicated for My name." They must be given with the intent that they are for Hashem's name.

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah reading, Terumah, G-d commands the Jewish nation to build the Mishkan. This was the Tabernacle, the portable sanctuary which the Jews would carry in the desert for 40 years. Who would supply the materials from which this sanctuary to be built? The answer to this question is found in our Parshah. Hashem told Moshe¹ to "Speak to the children of Israel, and have them take for Me an offering. From every person whose heart inspires him to generosity, you shall take My offering." Rashi cites the words from the verse "have them take for Me an offering," and explains that it means that the offering must be "dedicated to My name."

Quite a few of the supercommentaries ask what Rashi finds difficult in Peshat about G-d saying that the offerings are to be taken for "Me.," i.e. Hashem². It does not seem to require any explanation!

These words can bother the beginning student on two counts. The simple meaning of an offering being taken for Me, is that it should be given to Hashem. However, this is untenable. Scripture says clearly³ that "the land and the fullness thereof are the Lord's." Furthermore, it says that⁴ "If I (meaning G-d) were hungry I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are Mine." In other words, everything already belongs to Hashem. How is it possible to *give* Him something, or to *take* something for Him? Furthermore, the idea of *taking* something for Hashem implies that before one took it the object was far from him. The one who took it brought it close to Him. Thus, this expression is only appropriate for a physical human being. However, it cannot be used in connection with G-d, Who has no physical body or form. He is neither limited by time nor by space. There is nothing in the world is either near or far from Him. Thus it would be quite impossible to draw anything closer to Him. These commentaries explain that it is for these two reasons that Rashi explains that here "taking for Me" is not to be understood in the literal sense. Rather here it means taking offerings for My sake.

1. Shemos 25:2.

2. See the Mizrachi, Sefer Hazikaron, the commentary of the Maharik, Gur Aryeh, Be'ar Mayim Chaim, Devek Tov and others on this verse.

3. Tehillim 24:1.

4. Tehillim 50:12.

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Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

This leaves us with a number of difficulties which we need to resolve. Firstly, we know how particular Rashi is with the words which he cites from the verse to serve as the heading for his comments. He only quotes the words which he is explaining. Based on the above explanation the only difficulty in the verse is in understanding the “for me.” Why does he also cite the words “have them take (for Me) an offering.”

Additionally, there are earlier verses in the Torah where similar expressions were used regarding Hashem. The beginning student already learned that our forefather Ya’akov said⁵ that “... everything that You give me, I will surely tithe *to You*.” In other words, he specifically promised to offer a tenth of everything to Hashem. Likewise we find that Hashem commanded⁶ to “sanctify to Me every firstborn ...” In neither case does Rashi find a need to explain what is meant by giving something to Hashem. From this it is clear that Rashi is not bothered by these expressions. Tithing or giving something to the Almighty refers to consecrating an object to Him. One is not (G-d forbid) giving Him something which He needs. Rather we must say that Rashi’s explanation is necessary in order to answer a different question.

The Explanation

We would learn simply that the words “for Me” mean that the objects which are offered are to become consecrated to Hashem. In other words, they become heavenly property, which is not permitted to be used for one’s personal needs. However, Rashi negates this idea by citing the words “have them take,” and “an offering” in addition to the words “for Me.”

The word “take” has the connotation of moving something from one place to another. It does not merely refer to a physical place; it also has the meaning of moving something from one person’s property to that of another’s. In other words, the meaning of “take” in the verse is that the offerings are transferred from the original owner’s property to that of G-d. It becomes a consecrated object.

The Hebrew word “Terumah - תְּרוּמָה,” which we have translated as offering, can have two possible meanings according to Peshat. The first translation is found in Rashi’s comments on our very verse. He explains the word “Terumah” to mean “separation. They shall set apart from their property an offering for Me.” According to this meaning, the sanctified object was separated from the individual’s property, and moved into the heavenly domain. The second translation of “Terumah” is “lifting up.” This means physically raising something, if the object under discussion is something physical. However if that which is being discussed is an item’s ownership, it refers to transferring it to a higher domain⁷. In our case what is meant is that the offering

5. Bereishis 28:11.

6. Shemos 13:2.

7. We find that Rashi himself explained the same concept earlier. The Torah tells us how Avrohom bought a burial plot for his wife Soroh from Efron. In Bereishis 23:17 the Torah says that “and so the field of Efron which was in Machpelah, facing Mamre, was established (as Avrohom's possession).” Rashi explains that the Hebrew word meaning

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leaves the ownership of an individual Jew, and is raised to Hashem's domain.

From this we can see Rashi's reason for citing the words "have them take" and "an offering." He is demonstrating that the words "for Me" cannot mean that the objects which are offered become heavenly property. We already know that from the words "take" and "offering." Therefore Rashi explains that the meaning of "for Me" is "dedicated to My name." Rashi is teaching us that donating an offering to Hashem does not suffice. One must do it for the sake of dedicating it for Hashem's name.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

Rashi's commentary on the Torah is known to contain wondrous teachings in all aspects of Torah. This includes the mysteries of Torah. Rashi explains on our verse, quoting from the Talmud⁸, that our portion is actually alluding to three different Terumos, meaning offerings. One of these was the mandatory half shekel offering which had to be brought every year. This offering was used to fund all of the communal offerings, which were brought on behalf of each and every Jew. The point is that each Jew was obligated to bring all of the communal offerings; in this manner each individual actually had a part in each sacrifice which was offered. If someone refused to give this particular offering, the court would force him to do so. If someone is forced to give something, how can Rashi say that he must have the intention of dedicating it to Hashem's name? In such an instance he has no such intention. Quite to the contrary, he is telling us that he does not wish to give.

The explanation is as follows. All of these offerings were for the purpose of building and maintaining the sanctuary, which was to serve as G-d's dwelling place in this world. As in the construction and preparation of any palace, two things are needed⁹. First any and all dirt must be removed from the palace. The next step is to arrange all of the most beautiful furniture within the palace. In terms of our service of Hashem, this applies to the two things which are demanded of us.¹⁰ "Shun evil, and do that which is good." Specifically, shunning evil is only a preparation for building the palace for Hashem. We actually build the palace by doing that which is good.

It is for this reason that our intent is of primary concern when it comes to performing positive actions. The most important concern when it comes to shunning evil is that we actually do not perform any acts which are wrong. That is how we "clean out the palace," in order to enable us to bring in the beautiful furniture and prepare the palace for Hashem. Regarding positive actions we are more concerned with intent.

In order to insure that we fulfill our obligations and can build the palace, if there is a need to force one to fulfill his obligation, we do so. However, when it comes to positive actions, we must perform them with the

"was established" literally means "rose up, or was elevated." Rashi explains there that "It experienced an elevation, for it left the possession of a simple person (and went) into the possession of a king."

8. See Talmud Yerushalmi Shekalim 1:1, and Talmud Megillah 29, b.

9. See Likkutei Torah Parshas Balak, Page 70, Column 3. See also there Parshas Shelach Page 36, Column 4.

10. Tehillim 34:15.

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intent that we are dedicating them to Hashem's name.

It is for this reason that the Sages said that¹¹ “one should always occupy himself with Torah and Mitzvos even if it is not for its own sake, with a pure intent. The reason is because as a result of performing Torah and Mitzvos for ulterior motives, he will come to perform them with a pure intent.” This means to say, that it is not because performing Mitzvos in a perfunctory is sufficient. Rather because ultimately one will come to have the proper intentions. At that time he will be able to complete and perfect Hashem's dwelling place in this world.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Terumah, 5725)

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<http://www.rebbeteachesrashi.org/contact-us-dedicate-an-issue>

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11. See Talmud Pesochim Page 50, Side b. See also the Laws of Torah Study from the Alter Rebbe Chapter 4, Paragraph 3.

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the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

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**IN HONOR OF
Chaim and Aiden Oded שיחיו Morris**

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**DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS
Rabbi & Mrs. Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka שיחיו Morris**

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**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Mr. Yoel ben Reb Sholom Dovid Hacoheh ע"ה Mankes**
Passed away on 28 Nissan, 5776
May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

*

**IN HONOR OF
Shimshon ben Chassibah שי'
Yosef Yitzchok ben Sarah שי'
and Shoshana Devorah Hodya bas Tovah Sarah שת'
For a complete and speedy recovery**

*

**DEDICATED BY
Mr. and Mrs. Yonatan Itsik Hacoheh and Shaindel Miriam שיחיו Mankes**

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For a complete and speedy recovery

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**IN HONOR OF
Berocho bas Soroh שתח' Cohen**
For a complete and speedy recovery

* * *

**DEDICATED BY
Hatomim Moshe Shlomoh Zohar שי' Mars**

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MAY HE MERIT TO BE A CHOSSID, A YEREI SHOMAYIM AND A LAMDON

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

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נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

לעילוי נשמת

ר' יואל בן ר' שלום דוד הכהן ע"ה מנקס

נפטר ביום כ"ה ניסן ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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לזכות

ר' שמשון בן חסיבה שי'

ר' יוסף יצחק בן שרה שי'

ושושנה דבורה הודי' בת טובה שרה שתחי'

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

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נדפס ע"י משפחתם

ר' יונתן איציק הכהן

וזוגתו מרת שיינדל מרים שיחיו מנקס

לעילוי נשמת

ר' חיים יצחק בן ר' יחיאל משה ע"ה האנטווערקער

נפטר ביום כ"ה אדר שני, ה'תשע"ו

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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נדפס ע"י בנו וכלתו

ר' יואב וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו האנטווערקער

לעילוי נשמת

מרת חנה בת ר' שמואל ע"ה מענדלסאהן

נפטרה ביום ז' אדר שני, ה'תשנ"ב

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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נדפס ע"י משפחתה שי'

נתרם ע"י

הת' משה שלמה זהר שי' מאריס

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יהי רצון שיזכה להיות חסיד, ירא שמים, ולמדן