

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT TERUMAH AND SHEKALIM

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

THE POWER OF GIVING

The local Jewish charity realized that it had never received a donation from the city's most successful lawyer. So, a volunteer paid the lawyer a visit in his lavish office. The volunteer opened the meeting by saying, 'Our research shows that even though your annual income is over two million dollars, you do not give a penny to charity. Wouldn't you like to give something back to your community?'

The lawyer thinks for a minute and says, 'First, did your research also show you that my mother is dying after a long painful illness, and she has huge medical bills that are far beyond her ability to pay?'

Embarrassed, the rep mumbles, 'Uh... No, I did not know that.'

'Secondly,' says the lawyer, 'did it show that my brother, a disabled Veteran, is blind and confined to a wheelchair and is unable to support his wife and six children?'

The stricken rep begins to stammer an apology but is cut off again.

'Thirdly, did your research also show you that my sister's husband died in a dreadful car accident, leaving her penniless with a mortgage and three children, one of whom is disabled and another that has learning disabilities requiring an array of private tutors?'

The humiliated rep, completely beaten, says, 'I'm so sorry. I had no idea.'

And the lawyer says, 'So, if I didn't give any money to them, what makes you think I'd give any to you?'

People are born selfish. Our objective in life is to turn that selfishness into selflessness. To go out and help the needy and in so doing so impact our life mission,

Yet when we set out on the path of giving, we encounter many obstacles. The Yetzer Hara (evil inclination) does not want us to be givers, it wants to challenge our notion of unity and servitude of G-d. It enables many questions to be asked along the way that are seemingly hard to answer and cause a person to retract and refrain from giving.

Let's address some of those questions and delve into our Parasha.

Our Parasha Terumah, reveals the secret behind giving.

It deals with the building of the majestic Mishkan (Tabernacle) that the Jews built as a place of worship for G-d in the wilderness.

It revolves around the concept of donations, as G-d commands the Bnei Yisrael: "יקחו לי תרומה" – "Let them take for Me a donation" (Shemot 25:2). This phrase raises a fundamental question: Can we truly give something to Hashem? He is the Master of the universe – what could we possibly offer Him that He does not already own?

To answer this, we need to look at the word Teruma (תרומה). This word shares its root with the word Ram (רם), meaning to uplift. This teaches us that when a person gives – whether time, money, or effort – it elevates them spiritually and emotionally.

Thus, we are not giving to G-d anything. He doesn't need our donation, we do!

Through giving we are taking (as it says Veyikchu) for ourselves and growing spiritually from the act of giving. We are causing unity and bringing wellbeing and happiness to others.

Giving is great so how should we give? A further important lesson can be learnt from our Parasha.

When speaking about collecting the various materials used in building the Mishkan, the Torah enumerates various materials in descending order of value (Gold, silver, copper...). However, at the end of the list, after having enumerated relatively inexpensive items (wood, oil, spices), the Torah lists the Shoham stones, and the precious stones used in Ephod of the High Priest's breastplate (the Avnei Shoham and Avnei Miluim).

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh asks the obvious question – Why are the Avnei Shoham and Avnei Miluim out of order in this catalogue of solicited items which is apparently arranged in descending order of value?

The Ohr Hachaim offers a few answers.

First, he says that the princes of the tribes were approached to donate, and they suggested that all donations first come in from the people and at the end then they would donate any of the

The TAL Team wishes Mazal Tov to

Reuben Jebreel
on his Bar Mitzvah

Wishing much success to him and all the family



Do you enjoy the popular weekly Torah Insights?

To Sponsor or dedicate the popular Parsha sheet, contact us today:

07792 460986

info@torahactionlife.com

30TH SHEVAT 5785

SHABBAT BEGINS:
17:24pm

SHABBAT ENDS:
18:26pm

Chodesh Tov!



To receive weekly emails from TAL with all our programs and exciting updates please subscribe to our email:

<https://torahactionlife.com/subscribe/>



DVAR TORAH
The Power of Giving
By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



DVAR TORAH
Finding Happiness through Gratitude. By Rabbi David Baadani



DVAR TORAH
Houdidi & a Commitment to Torah Hashkafah. By Rabbi Benji Stone



HALACHOT
By Rabbi Eli Mansour



KIDS ZONE
Comic & Quiz

This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

THE ORIGINAL COMMUNAL PARASHA SHEET, SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 12 YEARS!

shortfall. However, once the donations started to come in, there was so much amassed that there was no shortfall. Their fault was twofold. They should have reacted straight away with giving and not waited for the end. And they should have judged the rest of the people more favourable and expected them to donate generously. They underestimated the Jewish people's ability to give. Thus, the stones are listed last because they were given last. They were the only things the princes could donate as they had left it too late. The Ohr Hachaim posits another answer. Quoting a Gemara [Yoma 75a] he states that the Avnei Shoham and Avnei Miluim were brought to the princes on clouds from Gan Eden. Since these were donations that in effect "came from Heaven" and did not represent blood, sweat, or tears – there

was no toil involved – they were listed after the oils and spices, which, although they may have cost only pennies, did represent a gift that came from people's labour and efforts and in that way were superior to the much more "expensive" gifts of precious stones. That which counts in the eyes of the Almighty is not the value of the gift received but what the gift represented for the person who brought the gift. A poor person's gift a few pounds which may be something he had to scrape for, can very well mean more in the Eyes of Heaven than a six-figure gift which is "pocket change" for a wealthy billionaire. Giving is not just about transferring resources; it's about the effort and sacrifice involved. This explains the Torah's wording "ויקחו לי תרומה" – "take for Me a donation." We do not merely give; we take from ourselves and uplift ourselves in the

process. A final beautiful insight comes from the Hebrew word alone - "לבד" which has a Gematria (numerical value) of 36. If two people stand apart, each only thinking about themselves, they remain "לבד" – isolated. However, when they come together in giving, their combined (36+36) "לבד" becomes "חסד" (Chesed – kindness = 72). The act of giving transforms separation into unity, loneliness into love. Thus, from the deeper part of the Parasha we have learnt that giving is really receiving, we create a larger good via giving to others. And G-d searches and values those that make an effort more than the value of the actual donation. May we always recognize that our giving is a means of improving society as well as elevating ourselves, bringing us closer to G-d and to one another. Shabbat Shalom!



RABBI DAVID BAADANI

Director - TAL Chazanut Program

FINDING HAPPINESS THROUGH GRATITUDE

Happiness is often viewed as a fleeting feeling, influenced by external circumstances, material possessions, or achievements. However, the most profound and lasting way to increase happiness is through the cultivation of gratitude, particularly through recognising the constant kindness and wonders that G-d bestows upon us every moment. When we take time to reflect on these blessings, a sense of gratitude fills our hearts, bringing happiness and contentment. Our Sages offer guidance on this path of gratitude, teaching us to be "מודה על העבר" – first, we express thanks for the past, and only then do we ask for the future. This wisdom is clearly reflected in the structure of the Amidah (תפילת שמונה עשרה), the central prayer of Jewish liturgy. The

prayer's structure is designed to lead us through a process of recognising our dependence on G-d before we express our gratitude.

At the beginning of the Amidah, we petition G-d for forgiveness, health, redemption, and various blessings. These requests reflect our awareness of our needs and acknowledge that we are not self-sufficient. However, after making these requests, we reach the Birkat HaHoda'ah – the blessing of thanksgiving. This comes at the end of the prayer, and it is here that we express our gratitude. But why, one might ask, do we thank G-d only after we have asked for everything we need?

One answer is that the purpose of prayer is to help us internalise the deep understanding that everything we have comes from G-d. When we begin by asking for forgiveness, health, and redemption, we are reminded of our dependence on G-d for every aspect of our lives. After we

acknowledge these needs, we can more fully appreciate that G-d's kindness is the source of everything we receive. Only then can we experience true gratitude, as we realise that nothing is taken for granted and that every moment is a gift.

This shift in perspective transforms our gratitude into something more profound. By recognising G-d's active role in our lives, we cultivate a deeper sense of appreciation. This awareness brings not only a sense of spiritual fulfilment but also a lasting happiness. When we feel truly grateful for all that we have, it fosters a sense of peace and joy that is not contingent on external circumstances.

In this way, happiness is not something that is pursued directly, but rather a by-product of aligning ourselves with a deeper sense of gratitude and awareness. Tuning in to this awareness of G-d's constant kindness fills our hearts with joy and brings us lasting contentment.



RABBI BENJI STONE, TAL Chavruta Program

HOUDINI AND A COMMITMENT TO TORAH HASHKAFAT

The following story was heard from a first-hand witness to the event. The students in a prominent Yeshiva were horrified to discover

that standards of Kashrut which they considered essential were not being met by the Yeshiva cook. Having grown up accustomed to these standards, the students considered that their interests had been disregarded and that the cook should be dealt with accordingly. Certainly a Yeshiva was not the place to exhibit lax standards in

Kashrut. The students took the matter to their Rosh Yeshiva (who was in fact one of the Gedolei Hador and who, for understandable reasons, will remain nameless) expecting him to empathise with their righteous complaint. Quite to their surprise, the Rosh Yeshiva could not agree with their gripe.

"Whilst you may consider the cook to have failed to meet basic standards which you take for granted and would not dream of negating" said the Rosh Yeshiva, "the actual infringements which have occurred relate to Chumrot (stringencies) which you have grown to treat as non-negotiable rules. As you know, the cook is a widow and this job provides her only Parnassa. Are you going to transgress the grave sin of causing anguish and financial harm to a widow, for the sake of what is not a breach of Halacha but a mere stringency?" (The Legacy, Maggid (2012)).

A similar episode occurred with R' Yisrael Salanter, the father of the Mussar (self-improvement) movement. R' Yisrael had just completed a visit to the house of the Admor, R' Yitchak Meir, the Gerrer Rebbe. The Rebbe's Chasidim saw the great honour which their Rebbe had accorded to R' Yisrael and when R' Yisrael went to daven Mincha, the Shul quickly filled with Chasidim hoping to catch a glimpse of the visiting Gadol. R' Yisrael's Shemona Esreh in fact turned out to be extremely brief and he was one of the first to finish. He noticed that the crowd were disappointed, having expected to witness an extended exhibition of R' Yisrael's brand of Tzidkut. R' Yisrael took the initiative and explained that when he saw that so many workers – cobblers, tailors, blacksmiths - had taken time off work to see him, he thought it would be incorrect to prolong his Shemona Esreh which would cause them to lose the money they could have been earning if they had been at work (Tenuat Hamussar 1,361).

We think we walk around making decisions which are in line with Ratzon Hashem (Hashem's will) - certainly in cases where we have good intentions. However, we need to realise that generally speaking we are ensnared by self interest. We do not easily take positions which do not align with our own interests or goals. We need an external impetus to keep us on the right track.

We are instructed in Parashat Eikev (Devarim 10:17) "Umaltem et Orlat Levavchem" – "You should circumcise the foreskin of your hearts".

The Ramban interprets this Pasuk as an instruction for our "hearts to be open to know the truth". The implication is that by default our hearts are constrained by a concern for personal gain. This Pasuk calls on us to take steps to ensure that decisions we take are Leshem Shamayim. (This commandment is in fact included by some as one of the 613 codified Mitzvot (see Smak: 9)).

In this week's Parasha we are introduced to the concept of the Aron Hakodesh (the Holy Ark). We are told (Shemot 25:17) to "place in the Aron the testimony (the Luchot) which I will give you".

Remarkably, we receive the exact same commandment shortly afterwards (Shemot 25:21)

"And you should put the covering (Kaporet) on the ark from above and into the ark you should put the testimony (the Luchot) which I will give you".

What is the reason for this unwarranted repetition?

Rashi writes that the purpose of the second Pasuk is to inform us that the Luchot must be inside the Aron before the Kaporet is put in place. This explanation deserves further consideration because apparently the Torah is dealing with a scenario in which one might have wished to place the Luchot in the Aron after the covering was already in place. This Houdini - like possibility is questioned by many - including the Rosh.

The Rosh explains instead that the intention of the Pasuk is to completely prohibit the placing of the Kaporet on the Aron - even for the purpose of testing if it is a good fit. The Kaporet cannot be placed for even one second on the Aron without the Luchot already inside.

But this explanation begs further clarification.

Why should it be forbidden to test the Kaporet out for size? Why is it so important that the Kaporet not be placed on the Aron without the Luchot already inside – even on a temporary basis?

R' Chaim Kaufman zts"l (Mishchat Shemen) writes that an important message lies behind this instruction. The Aron is simply a casing for the Luchot. Until the Luchot are placed inside the Aron, we must not even begin to contemplate the Aron as having fulfilled its purpose. That is why it is forbidden to even try to put the Kaporet in place - an act which would symbolise the completion of the Aron – until the Luchot are safely inside.

We are supposed to derive from here a powerful lesson, writes R'Chaim zts"l. We need to realize that we are very influenced by our Yetzer (instinct) and without the tangible influence of the Torah we will struggle make decisions in line with Torah Hashkafa. Just as we must not even contemplate the idea that the Aron Hakodesh can function without the Torah inside it, so too must we ensure not to contemplate approaching our lives without the influence of Torah.

It is a frenzied world out there. When we sit on the tube or walk through the street, advertisements, ideas and cultures are thrown at us from every direction. Themes of money, glory and self-aggrandizement underpin modern society. It is near impossible to shelter ourselves and our mindset from this onslaught of non-Torah ideas. The only hope we have to keep us on track is the Torah itself. That Mishna that you read before you go to work or the Shiur you listen to on the bus, is not just about increasing your level of knowledge or earning some more brownie points on high. The learning that you do imbues you with the spirit of Torah, thereby connecting you to your source and ensuring that your thoughts and actions throughout the day remain anchored to Ratzon Hashem.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Should One Recite Birkat Ha'mazon if He is Inebriated?

The Torah introduces the command of Birkat Ha'mazon with the verse, "Ve'achalta Ve'sabata U'berachta" – "You will eat, you will be satiated, and you shall bless" (Debarim 8:10). The Sages understood the word "Ve'sabata" in this verse as referring to drinking – specifically, to drinking wine. On this basis, they established that even one who drank

wine during his meal, and is in a state of inebriation, is required to recite Birkat Ha'mazon. Since the Torah speaks in this context of somebody who drank wine, we may deduce that such a person is required to recite Birkat Ha'mazon despite his state of intoxication. When it comes to prayer, one who is inebriated to the point where it would be disrespectful for him to speak to a king, because he cannot pronounce his words clearly, may not

pray. With regard to Birkat Ha'mazon, however, the Torah allows – and requires – one to recite this blessing even in a state of inebriation, as long as he is able to recite the words.

Summary: One who drank wine during his meal and is inebriated must nevertheless recite Birkat Ha'mazon, as long as he can pronounce the words, even if he cannot speak as clearly as usual.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Terumah

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 cham-

bers. 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.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com

Q

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?

A

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).



T"01

HOW TAL HAS IMPACTED MY LIFE

TAL is a place to learn in a very fun and enjoyable environment

After School Boys ★★★★★

Chavruta Program Eddie K

Through the TAL chavruta program I'm now able to pick up a Gemara and understand its layout, sections, and how to read and understand it. I've also enhanced my Gemara vocabulary and formed some new friendships. It's a chance to learn and connect with others and something I hope to continue doing.

I look forward to coming every Monday morning to TAL to empower my week with Ruthie's inspiring words and warmth. A.M

★★★★★ (5.0)

Coffee for the Soul

After School Boys ★★★★★

TAL after school program for boys is good because we make great friends, listen to amazing shiurim and we grow together

Chavruta Program Michael K

The weekly Chavruta program has truly enhanced my Gemara (Beracht) learning by offering structured study meaningful and practically relevant discussions. It's been a great opportunity to connect with both Rabbi Tavel and Rabbi Stone, who offer thoughtful guidance and ensure a deeper understanding of the material that we can apply on a daily basis. Their mentorship has been invaluable. The weekly gemras create a warm, welcoming atmosphere, allowing us to bond as a group and engage in further meaningful conversations. Additionally, the end-of-year shiur trip is a fantastic way to celebrate the year's growth while strengthening friendships made through the program. It's an experience I truly look forward to each week.

TAL really changed my life and I would love to give back, even from abroad :)

Abi B ★★★★★

MONDAY NIGHTS

I look forward each week to hearing words of Chizuk and wisdom from Ruthie and connecting with my friends at TAL. MEI ★★★★★

TAL brings Jews together, it brings the whole community and creates a new community

After School Boys ★★★★★

Betzalel H ★★★★★

TAL is important to me because it gives me the ability to lead the Torah reading

www.torahactionlife.com | +447792460986 | Scan here to get in touch