

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 145

Terumah | Purity of Soul Brings Joy and Tranquility



MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha
by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l**

From the weekly lectures of his son,
Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita

פרשת תרומה | אנגלית

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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Parshat Terumah

It Happened at Noon...

Yossi opened the door and entered his home. As expected, the house was empty; his wife was still at work and the children in their educational institutions. Yossi made himself a cup of coffee, sat down in the living room, opened the weekly booklet 'Mesilot - Parshat Terumah' and began to read:

"Parshat Yitro is the Torah portion of the receiving of the Torah. And behold, the Parsha begins with the story of Yitro's arrival at the camp of Israel and his meeting with his son-in-law - Moses. During that meeting, Moses told Yitro about the miracles and wonders that G-d had done for His beloved children - the people of Israel. Yitro heard about the miracles and was filled with joy: *"And Yitro rejoiced for all the goodness which the L-rd had done to Israel, whom he had*

delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exodus 18:9).

Yitro did not merely contain his joy within himself but expressed his feelings aloud, saying: *"Blessed be the L-rd, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh"* (ibid, verse 10).

The following verses explain that Moses told Yitro about the exodus from Egypt, and that filled Yitro's heart with joy.

It would therefore follow, if we examine the verses closely, that the words *"for all the goodness"*, seem superfluous, since the main story was specifically about the exodus from Egypt ?..."

Suddenly there were knocks on the door, the door opened, and Eliyahu entered the house.

'Eliyahu ! What a surprise ? ! What happened, why

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did you come home early today ? !'

'Dad, today is Rosh Chodesh Adar I, and on Rosh Chodesh we get released early.'

'How was your day at the Talmud Torah ?'

'We learned the second verse in this week's Torah portion, Terumah, *"Speak unto the children of Israel, and have them bring Me an offering: of every man whose heart makes him willing you shall take My offering"* (Exodus 25:2).

The teacher explained that G-d asked Moses to speak to the children of Israel and tell them: Every man who feels that they have a generous heart is invited to contribute to the building of the Tabernacle.

Then, the teacher stopped and said, 'I'd like to share with you a story:

In the year 5660 (1899), Rabbi Avraham Weinrib, a chassid of Radzin, arrived in Jerusalem at the head of a large group of Chassidim to explore the possibilities of settling there.

He visited 'Mea Shearim', and there he heard about a Jew who lived in the neighborhood, a wealthy man whose house was full of abundance and luxuries, and so - the residents told him - he most certainly is one of the happiest Jews in all of Jerusalem...

'Very interesting. And what's his name ?'

His name: Berel Ringelmann.

Rabbi Avraham Weinrib greatly desired to meet this lucky man.

He eventually met with him. He wrote and sent his impressions from this meeting back to Poland.

And thus he wrote ('Yerushalayim Shel Maalah' Vol. 4, p. 189):

'Our first visit to his house was in the late hours of the morning. We found him to be very busy, with a strained face to the utmost. A bundle of letters and telegrams lay on his table, and he quickly went through them. His instructions to his aged servant regarding all the correspondence were also given with a sour and gloomy expression.

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We tried to engage him in conversation, but we were unsuccessful. Berel did not turn nor pay attention to us, and according to his servant, who explained to us afterwards, it is possible that Berel did not even hear us speaking to him, despite us raising our voices.

'When Berel is busy with his trade' - his servant assured us - 'he would not even feel a scalpel in his flesh'.

We stayed a short while in Berel's house and were 'fortunate' to hear him burst out at his poor secretary. We also listened to his shouts at his family members and everyone he encountered, all because he did not succeed in locating a certain document, which he had placed in one of the drawers and forgot where.

We left and decided to visit him again at a more convenient time when he wouldn't be so busy and overwhelmed.

It was a peaceful afternoon when we headed again to Berel's house. Outside, many people were hurrying to the synagogues for the Mincha prayer. Craftsmen

and shopkeepers in the neighborhood were already closing their shops at this hour, their faces looked tired, but at the same time, calm and serene.

In this quiet hour, we entered Berel's house. We managed to see him opening a telegram that had just arrived. Berel read the contents of the telegram, and a broad smile spread across his face and momentarily dispelled the gloom that constantly seemed to cloud him. But, this too, was only for a moment - he immediately 'put on' his angry face once again.

On this occasion, we managed to engage him in conversation, and we learned what his brief joy had been about. The telegram had informed him that a certain business of his that he had long planned had been very successful and brought him several thousand dollars in profit.

Well, you may wonder, he should be happy then! But alas, you are mistaken. The reason for your thinking lies in the fact that you are not familiar with business affairs. Berel now has other worries

Parshat Terumah - It Happened at Noon...

and regrets, for example, why he involved a partner in this business. Initially, he did so because the particular venture involved a great amount of risk, but now, having completed the trade successfully, it pained him greatly and he could not forgive himself for his foolishness in involving that man as a partner.

'Why did I bring that fool into my business?' - Berel slapped his forehead aggravatedly, and he began to consider the main question- how to get rid of him? How to send this partner - who had earned great profits - away, peacefully? - These thoughts now pecked away in his mind and made him forget his joy over the success itself - he felt as though all his wealth was lost.

Unfortunately, even in our second visit, we failed to converse with the 'lucky man' as freely as we had wished. This time too, his business worries and pursuit of money overshadowed him. With no choice, we decided to try our luck yet a third time.

This time we chose to visit in the evening. At this hour, the

synagogues and study halls in Jerusalem were filled with people, old and young, leaning over their books and studying with great diligence. Workers, who had just finished their evening meal and rested a bit from their hard day's work, now squeezed onto the benches of the study hall; others, for whom learning was difficult, sat in the synagogue courtyard, drawing deep breaths of the crisp Jerusalem air, and recited chapters of Psalms.

At that time, we knocked on Berel's door, who was then in his decorated guest room, bathed in the light of large kerosene lamps.

The guest room was teeming with people celebrating and happily chatting away, and in addition to Berel and his family, several Arab and Christian guests also thronged in the crowded room. Exquisite delicacies adorned the table, and the cheerful guests enjoyed themselves, eating and drinking, talking to each other in a mixture of languages, and joking with one another. Only one of those present did not participate in everyone's

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joy, and a dark cloud seemed to hang over his face. It was our acquaintance Berel - the host himself.

But fortunately for Rabbi Avraham Weinrib and his delegation, this was an opportune moment, and they managed to snatch a conversation with him. Now they uncovered how 'lucky' and happy Berel the wealthy man really was ...

"Well, Berel' - we tried to engage him in conversation - 'you are blessed, living your day and enjoying your life to the fullest, indeed, who can compare to you ? !'

'Brrrr...' - Berel murmured under his breath - 'They are happy and cheerful, true'.

'What do you mean 'they ?' - we pressed - and where are you in your world ? Isn't everything our eyes see yours ? All this wealth is yours, and all these pleasures here are of your property.'

'I have no leisure to enjoy all this' - Berel dismissed - 'even at this moment, as I sit with you here, my head and heart are far

away. My business affairs do not let up on me even for one moment, and I am deprived of enjoying all the good you see, and even to relax a little bit, I cannot'...

'Why then are you so immersed in your overwhelming businesses day and night ? Do you still lack for your livelihood provisions, G-d forbid ?' - we asked again.

'Oh no !' - Berel groaned and replied immediately - 'I lack no abundance in my livelihood, but businesses by their very nature are like a vicious cycle, once you begin you may not easily change course, one is compelled to continue circling with them even against one's will.'

'And why don't you just completely quit this vicious cycle ?' - we asked a naive question.

'Oh, that's totally out of the question !' - Berel responded mockingly - 'quitting the business and staying out - that would be for me like a slaughter knife to an animal. The businesses are my life, and the moment I abandon them, what will remain of my life ?'

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'What do you mean, what will remain?' - we persisted - 'You have managed, thank G-d, to amass a great fortune to this day, and it's clear to you, as it is to us without a doubt, that they will suffice you for the rest of your life in abundance, and even more will be left for your descendants - is that not enough?'

Berel burst into a strange, wild laughter, and in a voice not his own - which somewhat startled us - he began to lecture us at length about business. We estimated that his wild laughter contained a bit of insanity, but we endeavored nonetheless to listen to the words of the 'lucky man'.

'All my abundant assets, all my immense wealth' - Berel began to explain - 'are worth nothing to me. Do you hear? Because inside me burns a terrible desire for money, but only for money that is not yet mine. The wealth that I have already acquired is worthless in my eyes.

I am the realization of the verse I once learned in my youth: "He who loves money will never be satisfied with money" (Ecclesiastes

5:10) - do you know why this is so? Let me explain to you:

'The reason is, because this terrible and insatiable hunger is only for money that I have not yet earned. The wealth that is already mine does not satisfy me at all. In fact, I don't know how to explain it, but, for example, hosting these guests', he said gesturing to his guests seated before him, 'costs me a significant amount, and I can afford to spend several times more on this, and still, it won't reduce my wealth by anything, but yet, even at this moment, various and farfetched plans are racing in my mind, which in fact will bring me merely meager profits - a negligible amount compared to the price I paid for this evening, and that's why I can't enjoy myself now as much as I can't enjoy anything else at all'.

'Isn't that bordering on madness, G-d forbid?' - we dared to ask him after hearing his explanation.

'Definitely ! I agree that it is insanity, it is the very embodiment of madness, but I have no power to

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save myself. I am shackled by the chains of my greed for money. This desire, which knows no satiation, rules over me without limit, like a cruel master over his poor slave. I have no day and no night, no Shabbat and no holiday. If I suffer a failure in my business, I burst out like a wounded beast, and when I succeed, I am calm for only a short time, but immediately the desire and fierce thirst for money and more money wake up in me again, and I feel like a thirsty person drinking salty water, unable to quench his thirst...

True, they, meaning my children, my wife, and even my guests, are very satisfied, they are happy and enjoy the abundance, while I - am enslaved, to my sorrow, all my life. And here you ask me if I am happy in my life - a foolish question. When someone falls into the 'fortune' of being enslaved to a rich man, is he happy? Am I not more than simply a slave to the owner of assets, for I am a slave to my assets, a prisoner to a master who knows no mercy. How happy I would have been if I could find

peace for even a short time, like that simple craftsman and worker ! How much comfort I would have found if I could sit down to study a page of Gemara and forget for just a bit about the money, the assets, and all their accessories.

But my cruel master does not relent for even a moment and embitters my life with harsh labor day and night...'

We couldn't stop Berel's flow of words. He wanted to continue lamenting his troubles more and more, but his aged servant interrupted him, entering and handing him an urgent telegram that had just arrived. With strange nervousness, Berel snatched the telegram from the servant's hand before he had time to place it before him, glanced quickly at its contents - and immediately changed his demeanor, his anger flaring up...

We took this opportunity and promptly left the house of the 'lucky man' from Mea Shearim...'

'The teacher' - Eliyahu continued to tell his father - 'upon completing this story, turned to us and asked':

Parshat Terumah - Sermon on Saturday Night

In this week's Torah portion, we learn that everyone with a '*generous heart*' was asked to bring an offering to the Tabernacle.

Now what do you think, if this 'lucky' man of Mea Shearim, Berel Ringelmann, had brought an offering to the Tabernacle, would it have been accepted from his hands?

To sharpen the question further: when looking closely at the story, it becomes clear that Berel was not miserly, he hosted guests and gave money when asked to, however he had a voracious appetite and lust for money. Does this disqualify him from falling under the category of '*generous-hearted*' or not?

Sermon on Saturday Night

In the year 5694 (1934), Rabbi Yerucham of Mir stood in the hall of the Mir Yeshiva and eulogized the 'Chafetz Chaim' who had passed away at that time. During his eulogy, he shared a personal story, saying:¹

All the students - Eliyahu continued to say - tried to answer this question, but the teacher did not accept any explanation. At the end of the day, he asked us to consult our parents.

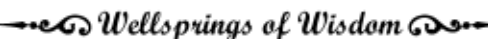
'So, Dad, what do you say?'

Yossi furrowed his brow and said, 'Well, I will think about it.'

Eliyahu ran outside and said: 'Ok Dad, I'm going out to play for a bit.'

Yossi reopened the 'Mesilot', and muttered to himself 'where was I? Ah, a question from Parshat Yitro... Wait, we're in Parshat Terumah, what does this have to do with Yitro? Well, let me see where this leads...

I want to reveal to you something that I have never disclosed to anyone all my life. In my youth, I came to Kelm, a simple young man like any other. And after I had the merit to hear the Elder from Kelm - the holy



Parshat Terumah - There is no Existence from Nothingness

Rabbi Simcha Zissel, shortly afterwards he passed away...

And I, with a heavy heart, stood all day behind the wall of the room where he lay in tears and cries, not eating or drinking, and I still remember what I said to myself: 'I only began to understand what a true Torah scholar is, and what his obligations are, my eyes were opened by hearing your words only a few times and now you have been taken away from me!'... And that's how I stood there all day...

And I feel all my life that if G-d has blessed me to understand or recognize something of divine service and spiritual development, I will always feel that it is specifically from the merit of that moment and on, from that very day'...

There is no Existence from Nothingness

At the beginning of everything (before the creation of all the worlds), His blessed light filled everything, and this caused there to be no possibility for creation at all. And

Rabbi Yerucham's spiritual stature had grown since that day immeasurably. So much so that the spiritual greats of the generation testified about him: 'If the Elder from Kelm were to rise from his grave and see Rabbi Yerucham, he would surely say: This is the image and character of the perfect Torah scholar that I had envisioned and intended in all of my sermons!'

And it was in that year (5694), on one Saturday night of Parshat Terumah, that Rabbi Yerucham entered the hall of the Mir Yeshiva, and began his discourse:²

'Know that essentially in nature itself there originally was no erosion and decay. Nature itself contains all necessary blessings'.

And Rabbi Yerucham elaborated further...

when He wished to create the worlds, He contracted His light to the sides, and an empty space (as it were) was created, and thus the possibility for creation arose.

And G-d created creation ex nihilo, as it is said in the Torah regarding the creation: "In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1) - and the Ramban explains: 'created' - 'brought into existence from nonexistence'.

And since this first creation, it was His will that all creation progress and renew in the form of 'existence from existence', that all new forms of existence be preceded by another creation before it from whom it was formed.

In the words of Rabbi Yerucham:

'There is no difference between before the creation and after the creation except in that beforehand creation of 'existence was from nonexistence', but after creation, there is no more 'existence from nonexistence'...

And here Rabbi Yerucham stopped and said: I see the surprise on your faces, you are surely asking, how can I say such a thing, when we find in the Tanach at least two instances

that prove the existence of creation from nonexistence?...

The first case:

It happened in those days that the sons of Hiel of Bethel died, because he built Jericho, and did not heed the words of Joshua son of Nun who said: "Cursed be the man before the L-rd, that rises up and builds this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it" (Joshua 6:26).

And G-d said to Elijah the prophet: 'Go to Hiel, for he is a respected man among his people, and comfort him in his mourning.'

Elijah responded: 'Master of the Universe! How can I go to the house of this sinner who violated Your commandment and built Jericho? And if he sees me, he might speak against You, blaspheme and curse, and I cannot bear it.'

The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Elijah: 'Nevertheless, go and comfort him in his mourning. And if he speaks harshly against

Parshat Terumah - There is no Existence from Nothingness

Me and you are filled with anger because of his words, I will fulfill whatever you decree upon him.'

Elijah the prophet went as commanded by G-d to comfort Hiel on the death of his sons. Upon entering Hiel's house, he found him studying the verse: "And Joshua vowed at that time, saying, 'Cursed be the man before the L-rd, that rises up and builds this city Jericho'" (Joshua 6)...

Ahab, king of Israel, was there with Hiel at that time and heard him studying this verse, and mocked Hiel's words.

Seeing Elijah the prophet, Ahab turned to him and said: 'Elijah! Tell me, who is greater, Moses or Joshua Bin Nun?' Elijah replied: 'There is no doubt that the master (Moses) is greater than his disciple (Joshua).'

Ahab scornfully said: 'If so, why were the words of Moses, who said: "Take heed, lest your heart be deceived, and turn aside, and serve other gods... and the L-rd's wrath will be kindled against you, and he will shut the

heavens, and there will be no rain" (Deuteronomy 11:16-17)... yet this has not been fulfilled?

I worship idols, and I have not left any idolatry in the world that I have not practiced, and I have filled the entire land with my idols and images, and offer sacrifices to my idols, yet I was not punished nor were Israel punished in my days, rather all the good and comforts of the world came in my era, and the rains fall in their time and season.

The words of Moses were not fulfilled, yet the words of Joshua were fulfilled in their entirety. So judge for yourself - who is greater?'

Elijah was greatly angered by Ahab's words, which belittled the honor of the righteous Moses, and replied: "As the L-rd G-d of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but only according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1)...

And thus very difficult years of famine began at once...

A long time passed, and G-d revealed himself to Elijah and

Parshat Terumah - The Story of the Jug of Oil

said: "Arise, go to Zarephath of Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain you" (1 Kings 17:9).

Elijah arrived there, and behold, a woman was gathering sticks and came to meet him. Elijah turned to her and said: 'I am very hungry as I have not eaten anything all day, please give me a piece of bread and revive my soul.'

The woman answered: "As the L-rd your G-d lives, I have not a cake, only a handful of flour in a barrel and a little oil in a jug" (1 Kings 17:12)...

Elijah said to her: 'Nevertheless, prepare from them a cake for me, for thus says the L-rd, G-d of Israel, 'The barrel of

meal shall not finish, neither shall the cruse of oil diminish, until the day that the L-rd sends rain upon the earth"' (1 Kings 17:13-14).

And the woman did not hesitate and prepared, and so it was, for a whole year the woman had unlimited flour and oil !...

As we explained, initially, G-d created 'existence from nonexistence', and after the 'existence' was created, it retained its 'nature'. And the nature of 'existence' is to deplete and end, but if the 'flour and oil' did not run out, it demonstrates that there was actually a new creation of 'existence from nonexistence'...

Let us now move on to the second case...

The Story of the Jug of Oil

One of the most famous converts to Judaism was Ovadiah. He was originally from Edom, a great and wealthy man, and left everything behind to convert to Judaism. Despite being a newcomer to Judaism, Ovadiah rose to great heights and even attained the exalted

status of a prophet, and his prophecy is recorded in the Tanach.

Our sages tell us that Ovadiah merited this greatness because he selflessly supported Torah scholars.

The story goes as follows:

Parshat Terumah - The Story of the Jug of Oil

Ovadia**h**, the prophet, was a great and wealthy man, but he did not withhold his wealth or save it for his descendants. Instead, when Jezebel (Ahab's wife) sought to kill the prophets, he saved a hundred prophets, hiding them in caves and providing for all their needs. This earned him the gift of prophecy, and even though he was an Edomite convert, the spirit of G-d rested upon him, and prophesied, "The vision of Ovadia" (Obadiah 1:1) regarding Edom...

Ovadia**h** was an honest and simple man, who pursued righteousness and kindness with all his heart. When his money ran out, and he had nothing to feed the prophets with, he borrowed money at a high interest from Jehoram, the son of Ahab, to meet their needs...

Like every person, Ovadia's time came, and he passed away, leaving behind a widow and two sons. When Jehoram heard of Ovadia's death, he quickly sent to the widow, saying, 'Your husband owed me money and has not repaid his debt. Give me the money, or else your two sons will become my slaves.'

The widow replied to the king's messengers, 'I am a poor widow with not even a penny to my name. Have mercy on me and do not harm my sons.' But the messengers refused to listen, as Jehoram had commanded them.

Ovadia**'s** widow went to Elisha the prophet. When she arrived, she cried out in anguish, 'My husband has died and left nothing behind but a debt to the king's son, and now Jehoram wants to take my two children as slaves.'

Elisha asked her, 'Tell me, what do you have in your house?' She replied, 'I have only a small jug of oil.'

The prophet then said to her, 'Go, borrow many various vessels from your neighbors, gather them in your house, then close the door behind you and your sons and pour the oil into all the vessels you have gathered.' Elisha prayed on her behalf and blessed her.

Immediately, the oil began to flow abundantly, filling all the vessels in her house. When all the vessels were filled, she hurriedly

Parshat Terumah - The Blessing of Nature - Unspoiled

took broken and cracked jars and said, 'He who commanded the empty vessels to be filled will also command the broken ones to be repaired.' As soon as she finished speaking, all the broken pieces of the vessels adhered to each other, becoming whole again, and they too were filled with oil. The flow of oil only ceased when there were no more vessels left unfilled...

The widow sold the oil for a substantial amount of money, paid off her debt to Jehoram, and

had enough left over to support herself and leave a significant inheritance for her sons...

As we explained in the previous story, initially, G-d created 'existence from nonexistence', and after the 'existence' was created, it retained its 'nature'.

And the nature of 'existence' is to deplete and eventually end, but if the 'jug of oil' did not run out, it demonstrates that there was a new creation of 'existence from nonexistence' that took place...

The Blessing of Nature - Unspoiled

'Know this,' Rabbi Yerucham continued, 'that with both Elijah and Elisha, there was no real creation of 'existence from nonexistence'. Let me explain why:

In the six days of creation, the Holy One, blessed be He, created His world. During those six days, He instilled in each creation its unique nature.

And in the nature of creation, there is a secret !

In the essential nature that the Holy One, blessed be He,

created (at the time of creation), the divine blessing dwelled, and resulting from this blessing, nature experienced no depletion or destruction !

For in nature alone there was such holiness and goodness, that even a mere root in nature, and even something very small contained an endless and boundless blessing that never ceased.

After creating all the creatures, the Holy One, blessed be He, created Man and placed

Parshat Terumah - Make Me a Sanctuary

him in the Garden of Eden. And there, all of nature shone with the simplicity of its essence...

The serpent was the first creature to deviate from this simplicity, as it says: "And the serpent was sly" (Genesis 3:1), and with its cunning and deception, caused Man to sin.

And following the sin, Man was cursed: "Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you... In

the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread" (Genesis 3:18)...

Since then, the curse has reigned over nature, and the infinite power hidden in nature was confined and locked away, creating the natural state of lack and depletion that we all are familiar with...

And thus, thousands of years passed...

Make Me a Sanctuary

On the 15th of Nissan in the year 2448 to creation, the people of Israel were redeemed from Egypt.

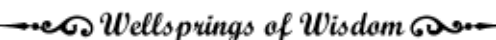
Six months later, on the 11th of Tishrei, they were commanded to build the Tabernacle.

They promptly began gathering the necessary materials for the Tabernacle's construction, completing the collection in just two days, and started the building of the Tabernacle and its vessels...

Rabbi Eliyahu Zilberman once explained:³

'The commandment to build the Temple is one of the 613 commandments of the Torah, as it is written: 'And they shall make me a sanctuary for me; that I may dwell among them' (Exodus 25:8). This commandment is that the people of Israel build a house for the Holy One, blessed be He, so that He may dwell among them.

But when we look at how the Torah addresses this commandment, it seems much



Parshat Terumah - Make Me a Sanctuary

more fundamental and significant than other commandments.

Immediately after leaving Egypt, within just a week, they sang the Song of the Sea, and our sages (Sanhedrin 91b) say that this song will also be sung in the future.

And they concluded this song with the prayer and aspiration: 'You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of Your inheritance, the place, L-rd, which You have made for Your abode, the sanctuary, L-rd, which Your hands have established' (Exodus 15:17).

From the beginning of their journey, the Jewish people already prophesied and anticipated the 'sanctuary established by Your hands.'

We find that the Torah elaborates on this commandment to build the Tabernacle and the Temple, dedicating a whole Torah portion (Parshat Terumah) to how all the vessels should be prepared, describing each vessel separately and in great detail.

Then another Torah portion (Parshat Vayakhel), where the Torah describes how each vessel was actually constructed.

Similarly, for the priestly garments, the Torah (in Parshat Tetzaveh) details how each garment looked. Then, the Torah returns in Parshat Pekudei to describe how the garments were finally made.

From all this, we see how much importance the Torah places on this commandment.

For the entire purpose of the Exodus from Egypt was to enable G-d to dwell among the people of Israel, as it is said: 'And they shall know that I am the L-rd their G-d, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them: I am the L-rd their G-d' (Exodus 29:46).

And the reason that the Holy One, blessed be He, dwells in the world specifically through the Tabernacle is that in the Tabernacle once again illuminated 'the simplicity of nature' of the first days of creation...

The Tabernacle and its Vessels

Rabbi Yerucham continued and explained:

The secret of the Tabernacle, from which blessing flowed to all of Israel, was in its wooden pillars and sockets; in the simplicity of its natural components

For the role of the Tabernacle was to return 'nature' to its original state as it was at the time of creation, meaning to

remove the curse that rested on nature due to Adam's sin.

When nature is restored to its state as in the six days of creation, even a simple root of natural fabric contains the secret of endless blessing and influence !

Let us now take a few moments to examine two of the vessels of the Tabernacle, the 'Table' and the 'Ark of the Covenant'...

"And You Shall Make A Table"

In our Torah portion, we are commanded to make a 'table', as it is said: 'And they shall make a table of acacia wood' (Exodus 25:23)...

The 'table' was made of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high, and was gold plated. It was placed in the 'Tent of Meeting' of the tabernacle, five cubits away to the east of the curtain and two and a half cubits south of the northern wall pillars.

On it, the showbread was placed.

The showbread consisted of twelve loaves, baked every Friday, each made from two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour.

On Shabbat, they were brought in and arranged on the table in two stacks, each stack with six loaves, each upon the other.

The Ramban writes (Exodus 25:24) about the significance and meaning of the 'table':

'The secret of the 'table' - Since the world's creation, G-d's blessing does not create something from nothing, but rather, the world operates in its usual manner...

Parshat Terumah - The Ark - the Crown of Torah

But when there is an existing root of something, blessing can rest upon it and increase it, as Elisha said... as well as Elijah: 'The jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry'

(Kings 1 17:16)...

Likewise, the 'table' with the showbread on it was where the blessing rested, and from it, sustenance came to all Israel, and therefore: 'Any priest whose turn it was, ate a bean sized amount of bread and was satisfied (Yoma 39a).''

From his words, we understand:

By making the 'table', the Jewish people purified nature and returned it to its natural simplicity, as it was at the time of creation.

And after reaching this level, on the 'table,' - a small bit of simplified and refined 'nature' - dwelled the divine power of blessing and increase.

For this is the essence of nature that even a simple table is a 'symbol of wealth and greatness,' and brings sustenance to all Israel...

Now we understand that the reason Elijah and Elisha succeeded in performing such miracles is that they purified their nature with their holiness and returned it to its natural simplicity.

When it returned to this state, there was no limit to its influence...

And this influence is called 'existence from existence' ('yesh meyesh') because this is the true wondrous 'existence' of nature..."

The Ark - the Crown of Torah

The second vessel we wish to discuss is the Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark stood in the Holy of Holies and contained the Tablets of the Covenant, the broken pieces of the first Tablets, and a Torah scroll written by Moses.

Our Torah portion details the specifics of how to construct it. Regarding its construction, we were commanded: 'And you shall make upon it a crown of gold around it' (Exodus 25:11), and

Rashi explains: 'This serves as a sign of the crown of Torah.'

Rabbi Yerucham continues and explains: When we contemplate the components of the Tabernacle, we see something amazing, that all the actions of the Tabernacle are symbols:⁴

The Ark - symbolic of the crown of Torah.

The Altar - symbolic of the crown of priesthood.

The Table - symbolic of the crown of kingship.

The Menorah - a symbol of the crown of reputation.

Yet, despite being merely symbols, all holiness and influences were drawn from them.

For this is the nature of a 'symbol' to show and exemplify how nature appears in its simplicity, and to show and teach the influence of holiness that exists in the simplicity of nature.

And through the vessels of the Tabernacle, the influence of

'essential nature' was drawn to the people of Israel.

And we return to the Ark of the Covenant:

At Mount Sinai, we merited the revelation of the Divine Presence. And that revelation of the Divine Presence that was at Mount Sinai constantly dwelled in a revealed manner in the Tabernacle - and this was through the Ark! As it says: 'And I will meet with you there, and I will speak with you from above the covering, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, all the things which I will command you regarding the children of Israel' (Exodus 25:22).

'And I will meet' - a dwelling of the Divine Presence was specifically through the Ark and the cherubim, which were but a *symbol* of the crown of Torah!

And behold, the Ark, the cherubim, and the rods were but 'simple natural materials'. But as soon as the Ark was made

Parshat Terumah - "Let Us Make Man in Our Image And Likeness"

according to law, with all its statutes, and with the rods and cherubim, "And their faces shall be one toward another; the faces of the cherubim..." (Exodus 25:20), then the Holy Presence rested there.

Such greatness and holiness already existed essentially in nature, in the 'source of the matter,' to the extent that through

a symbol and reminder of the receiving the Torah, the Divine Presence already takes hold, and 'let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them' is specifically through this 'symbol of the crown of Torah'...

And after understanding all this, we move on to man himself...

"Let Us Make Man in Our Image And Likeness"

Rabbi Yerucham continued and said:

From this, we derive a tremendous lesson: if the Tabernacle, which is but nature alone and merely 'the source of the matter,' once the curse of Adam had been removed from it, already contained such boundless holiness, and nature alone shone with 'infinite' light...

Who can comprehend the Divine Presence contained within man, who is "in Our image, after Our likeness" (Genesis 1:26), which is much more than merely the 'source of the matter'.

Thus, a person himself, without doing anything, in

his natural state alone, can merit all completeness, and all the work of man is truly light and straightforward, for he merely needs to take care that his nature remains in its holiness and purity, and to guard against crookedness!

Indeed, mankind could have merited everything by their nature alone, and it could have been possible for them to draw close to their Creator without any effort at all. All the obligations of human effort in the divine service are merely because if not for them, the weakness of the curse would take effect and their nature

Parshat Terumah - Seeking: Simple Natured People

would not remain in its holiness as it was at the time of their creation.

But truly, the nature of a person in its simplicity contains infinite holiness and light...

Yossi closed the 'Mesilot' booklet and a smile appeared on his face: What divine providence, through this thorough explanation I have an answer for Eliyahu's teacher...

Seeking: Simple Natured People

Laughter echoed from the stairwell, Eliyahu returned from his game. 'Hello, Dad ! I'm back !'

'**Oh**, I've been waiting for you, how was the game ?'

'**Baruch** Hashem, it was fun.'

'**You** know, Eliyahu, I found an answer to your teacher's question.'

'**Really ? !** Tell me.'

Yossi explained to his son: All the work that was done in the making of the Tabernacle was to restore nature to its original pure form as it was at the time of creation, meaning to remove the curse that lay on nature due to sin. Therefore, in order to build it, it was necessary to have people who had purified their nature and returned it to its simplicity.

That's why G-d commanded Moses and said:

*"**Speak** unto the children of Israel, and have them bring Me an offering: of every man whose heart makes him willing you shall take My offering" (Exodus 25:2) - I want an offering from people whose hearts shine with the simplicity of nature, people of generous spirit, because only through their offering can we effect a change through the Tabernacle.*

Berel Ringelmann, the 'lucky man' of Mea Shearim, although he was not stingy, was far from being simple natured, and therefore if he had brought an offering to the Tabernacle, presumably they would not have accepted it...

A smile appeared on Eliyahu's face, and he ran to write down the answer...

Yossi stood up, and suddenly remembered, what

Parshat Terumah - Now I Know That the L-rd is Great

about the questions on the Torah
portion of Yitro ?

And he opened the 'Mesilot'
once again...

Now I Know That the L-rd is Great

Yitro, Moses' father-in-law,
went through a rough life
journey. We do not mean a
journey of physical suffering,
poverty, and persecution.

Yitro went through a much
harder journey, a journey of
mental and soulful anguish.

Almost all his life was spent
in doubts and uncertainties, in a
search for 'solid ground' on
which to rest his weary soul...

Our sages revealed to us
that during his searches, he
reached every corner of the
world, he climbed the slippery
steps in the mountains of Tibet,
crawled into temples of idolatry
in India, and slid down the ropes
in the mountains of Mexico...

Yet always, in the end, he
reached the same conclusion: it's
all emptiness ! All these foreign
worships are merely foolishness,
and involve nothing more than
desires, falseness and ego...

All these follies are, in essence,
a distorted form of nature...

Yitro would be disappointed
yet again. After each such
disappointment, he would
presumably sit on a bench in his
garden and sigh...

And as is known, no good
desire and thought goes to waste.
All those desires, yearnings,
passions, and searches did not go
in vain. They accumulated, and
eventually brought him salvation.

Moses fled from Egypt and
reached Yitro in Midian and Yitro
began to study the holy faith...

Many years later, on one bright
day, Moses received instructions to
begin the process of redemption,
and left Midian to return to Egypt...

About a year and a half passed,
and Yitro left Midian and began his
journey to the Sinai Desert to meet
his son-in-law Moses.

When he arrived, Moses told
him about the miracles and

Parshat Terumah - Simple, All Inclusive Joy

wonders that G-d had done for His beloved children, Israel. Yitro heard about the miracles and was filled with joy: "And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the L-rd had done to Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exodus 18:9).

And the Torah continues and tells that Yitro stood up and proclaimed aloud: Know this, in my life I have come to deeply know all the idolatrous worships

in the world ! And I tell you they are all nonsense ! Only the L-rd is the truth ! - "Now I know that the L-rd is greater than all gods" (Exodus 18:11)...

We need to understand why it matters whether Yitro was happy or not. In other words: why did the Torah bother to note that Yitro "rejoiced"?...

Before we answer this question as well, let us preface...

Simple, All Inclusive Joy

On one occasion when Rabbi Nachman of Breslov zt"l sat with his students, he told them (Likutei Moharan II, 34):

Know that there are many reasons for a person to be happy. Sometimes it is joy stemming from success in trade, and sometimes it is joy from delicious food or good news.

And on a higher level, there is joy from understanding a page of Gemara or from prayer with devotion, and so from giving true honor to others (from giving true honor to others, the heart is filled

with joy and divine bliss, and this is the meaning of the saying of our sages (Avot 4:1): 'Who is honored? One who honors his fellow beings').

Yet despite this, all these joys are still on a low level, because at this level there are still two modes: joy and sadness.

However, when one merits the revelation of 'simple nature,' as G-d implanted in a person at the time of creation, then joy emanates from the person constantly and simply. The 'simple nature' within a person is expressed as constant joy and a heart brimming with true

Parshat Terumah - Joy of Heart Opens Gates of Comprehension

happiness. And songs and melodies arise and spread from him...

A happy person has a special aura around him, an aura that spreads tranquility, peace, and sweetness to all those around him.

Parenthetically: In one of the lectures delivered by Rabbi Yoram Abargel, he said:

Know that infants are very pure beings, and they sense the aura surrounding the people near them. Therefore, when a person who is angry, anxious, or sad picks them up, they feel it and they start to act out, cry, or scream...

Whereas when a happy person picks them up, even if they have a stomach ache, or a headache or teething pain... they calm down immediately...

Joy of Heart Opens Gates of Comprehension

The simple joy that revealed itself in Yitro's heart elevated his intellect to very lofty and exalted levels.

Suddenly, the gates of heaven and the upper chambers opened before him, and his soul soared to the highest heavens...

Know - Rabbi Nachman continued and said - that when Yitro, Moses' father-in-law, arrived at Mount Sinai, he underwent such a great purification that he merited the 'simple nature' of joy! And the joy burst forth and revealed itself from within him!

Therefore, it is said about him: "And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the L-rd had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exodus 18:9).

This is because Yitro merited and attained the 'nature of joy' of 'all the goodness', a joy which requires no reason to rejoice, but is permeated with the feeling that everything that happens is the perfect good!

And from the elevation of the intellect and the greatness of understanding, he stood and proclaimed: Now, I can testify: there is no one as great as the Creator of the World, and no one knows Him as do those who study Torah with joy and devotion!

Parshat Terumah - Joy of Heart Opens Gates of Comprehension

So it was with Yitro, and so it continued throughout the generations: to recognize the One who spoke and created the world, we need the joy of heart and the study of Torah, one without the other is not enough!

And here we quote from our series 'Chelev Haaretz' (vol. 3, p. 136):

Know that joy is the foundation on which the Divine Presence to rest upon a person, as stated in the Talmud (Pesachim 117a): 'The Divine Presence does not dwell, not in a state of sadness, nor in a state of laziness... but through the joy of the commandments.

Therefore, when Elisha the prophet wanted the Divine Presence and prophecy to rest upon him, he said: "But now bring me a musician. And it came to pass, when the musician played, the spirit of the G-d was upon him" (2 Kings 3:15).

Similarly, with other prophets it is written: "A company of prophets coming down from the place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before

them; and they shall prophesy" (Samuel 1 10:5), meaning they were engaged in drumming and harping, from which the spirit of prophecy from above would rest upon them.

Rabbi Yonah wrote (Proverbs 4:21) that the joy in commandments is one of the fundamentals of service, and through it, one merits to ascend in levels of perception and to behold the pleasantness of the L-rd and to visit His heavenly palace, in a manner that is incomparably more than when performing the commandments without the trait of joy.

Similarly, it is written in 'Orchot Tzaddikim' (The Gate of Joy): Anyone who performs a commandment with joy has a thousand times more reward than someone for whom the commandment is a burden, and he will be successful in all his ways, and the Holy One, blessed be He, sends the Holy Spirit within him, and his heart is happy and filled with the love of the Holy One, blessed be He.

And when a person serves G-d with joy, as it is written:

Parshat Terumah - Purity of Heart - The Key to Joy

"Serve the L-rd with gladness" (Psalms 100:2), a great desire to cleave to Him is experienced, and from this comes great and exalted levels, unlike one who serves G-d with sadness, G-d forbid, which greatly detracts from his service, as it is written: "Because you did not serve the L-rd your G-d with joy and gladness of heart" (Deuteronomy 28:47).

Our sages explained that the virtue of joy is very great and powerful, it saves one

from every transgression and obstacle, and inspires the heart to a wonderful devotion to G-d.

It also generates great patience, peace of mind, and many other great virtues.

May G-d help us to adhere to this wonderful trait to be always joyful, as one who is joyous merits a great number of virtues:

And now it is upon us to search properly and strategize how to merit pure 'natural joy'...

Purity of Heart - The Key to Joy

As we mentioned at the beginning, when G-d created all creations, 'simple nature' shone in its completeness.

Afterward, He created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve walked about in the Garden, and their light shone and illuminated. Then the serpent came and managed to inject droplets of impurity into Adam's heart, and he ate from the Tree of Knowledge.

Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Arizal, revealed to us that the

reason the serpent succeeded in making Adam sin was because of the souls of the wicked that were included in him.

These are his holy words (Sefer HaLikutim - Parshat Haazinu):

"The cause of Adam's first sin was the souls that were included in him from all kinds - some righteous, some wicked, some thieves, some cheaters, and because of them, he desired to eat from the tree, so the sin was not so much from him but because of them..."

Parshat Terumah - Summary and Practical Applications

Initially, the evil inclination existed 'outside' Adam's heart, but after he sinned, the evil inclination entered him internally. Negative emotions began to sprout, seeds of despair and abandonment, hatred and jealousy, and desires for money and honor started to grow. But worst of all - a veil of concealment spread, and G-d's light was hidden.

And since the reason the 'simple nature' was covered was because of the droplets of impurity that entered the heart, it is clear that now the main work is to purify the heart from all hatred, pride,

anger, and desire for honor and money.

And each according to their strength, the more they purify their heart, the more the 'natural joy' will be revealed...

Yossi closed the 'Mesilot' and his eyes lifted for a moment to heaven: Master of the Universe, grant me true purity of heart! Grant me 'simple joy'...

Yossi stood up, approached the library, and added 'Mesilot' - Parshat Terumah, to the 144 booklets that were already on his shelf...

Summary and Practical Applications

A. In the nature created by G-d, there exists a secret power!

In the simple nature as originally created by G-d, the divine blessing prevailed, and through its power, there was no extinction or ceasing in nature!

So much holiness and goodness existed in nature itself that even in the slight natural element, there existed an endless and boundless blessing that would never cease.

This was the case until man first sinned, and since then, a reality of limit and extinction has ruled nature.

B. This was the secret of the Tabernacle: to return nature to its original source. Therefore, the Tabernacle and its vessels were made from simple materials found in nature (wood, stones, gold, etc.), and through their power, it was possible to remove the curse that existed on nature due to sin. When nature is thus restored to its original state as it was during the six days of creation, the

Parshat Terumah - Summary and Practical Applications

natural secret of infinite influence and blessing bursts forth !

C. Any person who succeeds in purifying his nature and returning it to its natural simplicity has the power to influence the world in general and every individual in particular with unlimited abundance, just as it was at the time of creation.

D. Joy - There are many reasons for a person to be happy. Sometimes it's joy from success in business, and sometimes from delicious food or good news. A greater joy yet, is from the understanding of a page of Talmud or from prayer with devotion, as well as from giving true respect to others.

However, these joys all belong to a lower level, as they still allow and leave the possibility for either of the two modes: happiness or sadness.

E. The desired level is to merit a 'simple joy' that naturally and plainly arises from a person's heart, in other words, to return to the simple and original nature of a person - a persistent cheerfulness and happiness of the heart.

F. A happy person has a special aura around him, an aura that spreads calm, peace, and sweetness to everyone around him. Therefore, when a happy person holds a baby, even if the baby is currently in pain, it is immediately soothed.

G. Simple joy elevates a person's 'mochin' (intellect) to very lofty and sublime levels. They merit that the gates of heaven and the higher chambers open before them, and their soul ascends to the highest heavens. And when they engage in Torah, they merit to recognize the One who spoke, and the world came into being.

H. The virtue of joy is very great and powerful, and it protects one from every snare and obstacle, and arouses the heart to a wonderful devotion to the G-d, and even affords him with many distinct and unique virtues.

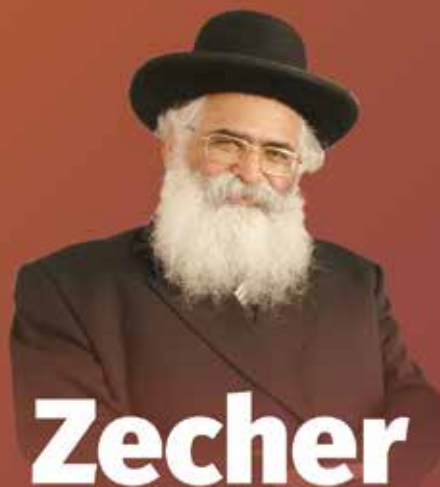
I. The way to merit simple joy is by purifying one's heart from hatred, arrogance, anger, and material desire for honor and money.

Each according to their strength, the more they purify their heart, the more a natural happiness will be revealed.

Shabbat Shalom !



bs"d



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8th of Adar I, 5784



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	5:13 pm	6:14 pm	6:44 pm
Miami	5:57 pm	6:50 pm	7:27 pm
Los Angeles	5:20 pm	6:17 pm	6:51 pm
Montreal	5:04 pm	6:09 pm	6:36 pm
Toronto	5:31 pm	6:33 pm	7:02 pm
London	4:58 pm	6:09 pm	6:30 pm
Jerusalem	5:10 pm	6:01 pm	6:39 pm
Tel Aviv	5:07 pm	5:58 pm	6:35 pm
Haifa	5:05 pm	5:56 pm	6:33 pm
Be'er Sheva	5:08 pm	5:59 pm	6:36 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

Our sages say "gourds are discernable from their bud" (Berachot 48a) referring to children.

From when a child is born, one must consider and give thought how they want them to grow to be in the future. What they will accomplish at the various ages of childhood and beyond; at what age they will study and excel in Torah, Mishnah, Talmud, as well as proper behavior and fear of G-d.

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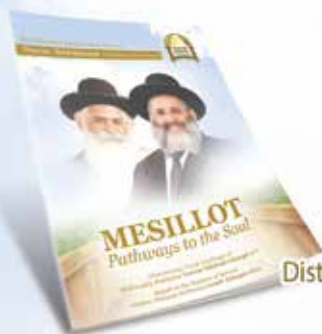
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