



A Taste of Torah

The Generous Giver

By Rabbi Moshe Heyman

The Kli Yakar points out in the portion that we read this week for Parshas Shekalim, that when the Torah talks about the Jewish people giving a half-shekel in Parshas Terumah, the word used is “viyikchu”, “and they shall take”. In our parsha, Ki Sisa, the word used is “v’nosnu”, “and they shall give”. He also notes that here, in Parshas Ki Sisa, Hashem associates his name all three times with the mention of the concept of giving. When you look back at Parshas Terumah, however, Hashem does not associate His name with the mention of taking. Hashem, the Kli Yikar explains, appreciates one who donates out of generosity, not just because he has been commanded to do so. Such an act is something Hashem wants to associate His Name with. On the other hand, one who gives the half-shekel because he has been obligated to do so, but does not “give” it out of generosity, is not on the same level. Although Hashem says “take for Me”, which clearly indicates the importance of the money being given, Hashem’s Name does not appear where the money is “taken”, as an obligation, rather than

being “given”, out of generosity.

The Vilna Gaon remarks that the word “v’nasnu” the Hebrew word for “and they shall give”, is a palindrome (a word spelled the same forward and backward). The lesson this teaches is that when we decide to give charity and the like, we need to realize that we are not merely fulfilling a commandment to do so. We are actually receiving just as much as the recipient. We have received the opportunity to help someone, and we have become greater, more generous people by giving. The Torah is teaching us that although we do have an obligation to others, we can approach it two ways: one approach is that they are taking from us, and we have to give because Hashem says so, hence a fulfillment of “take from them”; or, we can appreciate that we have been given the opportunity to be a giver. What an opportunity! May we merit to use this special Torah reading to focus on the upcoming Holiday of Purim, where one of the main avodos (work on spiritual growth) of the day is turning ourselves into people who see the benefit of becoming a generous giver to family, community, and the Jewish people.

Ask the Rabbi

Jewish Lite

Email@Witheld wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I am Jewish, but not Orthodox. I do not follow all 613 commandments all the time, I do not say all the prayers, I don’t keep completely kosher, and I occasionally speak improper words and

think improper thoughts.

I do not celebrate Xmas or Easter with my non-Jewish friends, and would not ever consider changing to a different religion.

At synagogue, we do not say all the traditional prayers, and we add a few “new” English prayers. I avoid pork

Stories For The Soul

Without a Doubt

It once happened that the renowned Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan (1838-1933), needed to leave early one morning to do a certain mitzva. Consequently, he was unable to attend the morning minyan that he normally attended at the Radin Yeshiva. He went instead to a small early minyan elsewhere.

As he was leaving to tend to the matter at hand, he saw people walking toward the regular minyan. He made it a point to go over to every person he passed and tell them that he had davened at an early minyan in order to take care of an important matter. He didn’t want them to think that he had simply skipped services.

The Chofetz Chaim was known, literally throughout the world, for his great piety. Who would suspect him of cavalierly skipping out on services? It would never even dawn on anyone to think that. Nonetheless, we learn from here that we cannot take a chance that our actions would be misinterpreted. We should never allow the impression to be given that we are acting with any impropriety.

In this week’s Parsha, the Torah gives a full and detailed list of all the contributions to the Temple, showing how everything was used. Even though Moshe Rabbeinu and the righteous Betzalel were in charge, and there was no way that anyone could suspect them of dishonesty or impropriety, the Torah gives an exact accounting so that there can be absolutely no doubt.

Adapted with permission from Shul-Week by Rabbi Boruch Lederman

Kollel Happenings

JOY IN PARENTING

As part of our "Joy in Relationships" series, Rabbi Moshe Heyman will be giving a class on "Joy in Parenting." It will be held on Mon., March 7 at the home of Neil and Vicki Olesky at 9345 Riviera Hills Dr. For information or to RSVP, contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman at 303-820-2855 or rmh@denverkollel.org



TUESDAY NIGHT TORAH AT AISH KODESH IN BOULDER

Join the Kollel for a dynamic one-on-one and small groups Torah encounter. Maariv will be held at 8:15 followed by Torah study at 8:30. Program will be held at Aish Kodesh, 1805 Balsam Ave. For information, contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman at 303-820-2855 or rmh@denverkollel.org or Charles Fried at 917-499-4307 or charlesfried@gmail.com.



BENEFIT EVENT JOURNAL DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MARCH 6

The deadline for ads for the March 10 Benefit Event has been extended to Sun., March 6. Honorees are Dr. Marc and Dale Sievers. Chairs are Rabbi Yissochur and Avigail Steinharter. The event will be held at District 475, with guest speaker Rabbi Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro addressing the theme, "Joy: Awakening the Power Within." To place an ad for RSVP, call 303-820-2855 or visit www.denverkollel.org

Interpersonal Issues Prohibition of Envy Part III

The prohibition of pressuring the owner applies once the owner has refused the offer to buy his item. Harassing the owner is forbidden, even if the buyer offers more money for the desired item. However, if there is room to believe the owner would be interested in selling at a

higher price, or if the owner's situation changed and there is reason to believe he may now be interested in selling, it is permitted to approach him again.

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

continued from front

and don't mix meat and milk, but I don't necessarily eat kosher food or make blessings over my food.

My question is this: Am I doing any good at all? Do abbreviated prayers, selective mitzvos, and acknowledged Jewish identity reap any reward at all? Or by being "Jewish Lite" am I no better than someone who is completely non-observant?

I just need to feel that somehow I am contributing toward the greater good of Judaism by being somewhat observant instead of non-observant. Please let me know if I am making any difference by doing the little I do. Thank you.

Dear Email@Witheld

You and I have a lot in common. I am also Jewish. I also had a bris and I was also bar-mitzvah at age 13.

Like you, I also don't think of myself as "Orthodox" (although most people would call me that); rather, I think of myself as a Jew who tries to observe the Torah which G-d gave us. But, like you, I often succumb to the inexorable onslaught of human failings ~ laziness, desire, convenience, etc.

You wrote that you occasionally speak improper words. Did you know that more than one-third of the Yom Kippur penitential prayers are devoted to asking G-d to forgive us for sins committed through speech? Regarding proper thoughts, King David prayed:

"Create within me a pure heart, G-d."

Everyone fails. Nobody is perfect.

So, I think my answer to your question should be evident by now. Any mitzvos which you perform are certainly praiseworthy and should be encouraged. (Obviously, a mitzvah shouldn't be done at the expense of a transgression. Examples: Friday night after sunset, lighting Shabbat candles is no longer a mitzvah but rather a transgression. The same goes for driving to synagogue. In such a case, the way to express your Jewish identity is to stay home!) Furthermore, your deeds can influence others, without you even knowing it; for example a Jewish friend may stop eating pork because of your example.

There is a danger of being "Jewish Lite," however: It could furnish you with a feeling of being "comfortable" with your observance level. That should never happen to anyone. We all need to continually strive to grow, study and learn more and more about the Torah. Therefore, you should feel happy about the Jewish things that you do, but you shouldn't think of yourself as being at a fixed level of observance. Realize that you can add, if even just one mitzvah a year. Perhaps the most important thing for you now is to study Torah on a daily, or at least weekly, basis.

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