



Parashat Terumah An Offering to G-d, According to the Ari'zal

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“And they shall take for Me a Terumah (Offering)” (Ex. 25:2)

Introduction

In this week's parasha the Children of Israel are commanded by G-d to take up a collection of goods as an offering for the building of the Tabernacle.

The practical considerations herein are apparent. If there is to be a Tabernacle, the materials to build it must come from somewhere. They are not going to descend from Heaven, or are they?

According to the mystical view of life, all things descend to us from Heaven. As such, we are required by G-d to give back of portion of what we receive as a tithe or an offering. Yet, we must question the reason for this. Granted, as human beings we should always be giving and caring for others, but an offering to G-d is far more than a mere taking care of fellow human beings. An offering to G-d goes directly to Him, to support religious and spiritual tasks and institutions.

Why does G-d require of us to give back to Him something that He gave us in the first place? Certainly not just to teach us how to share, not be selfish or greedy. These lessons are taught to us (G-d be willing) by our parents. We should not need to learn these lessons of morality through the mitzvot. No, there is a far greater reason underlying the concept of a Terumah offering to G-d than merely to teach us a moral lesson.

In this following selection from the writings of the Ari'zal, we shall see that offerings to G-d are imperative. They play an important role in the upkeep of the universe.

Sefer HaLikutim 37A

Text *Know the Terumah is the secret of the Feminine.*

Commentary - The Terumah is an offering to G-d. All offerings are an act of giving. Giving is a masculine act. Receiving is a feminine act. How then can the Terumah be called Feminine? The answer is, as shall be apparent shortly is because the Terumah offerings correspond to the Female sefirotic Faces (Partzufim). Although, in relationship to mankind, these sefirotic Faces give to us, as we give the Terumah offering to HaShem, nonetheless their source and purpose in the higher planes is to receive. The Terumah is the secret of Ohr Hozer (returning light). This



light after it descends from above, reflects back to G-d from below to above. As such, although the light (represented by the Terumah offering) is being given, it is ascending. This is a Feminine act.

Text *The Feminine are two [in number], which are Leah and Rachel. They are the two Heys in the Name [YHVH].*

Commentary – As is known, the letters of G-d's holy Name YHVH have both Male and Female attributes. Yod and Vav are Male. The two Heys are Female. The first (upper) Hey corresponds to the sefirah Binah. From it comes the sefirotic Face (Partzuf) called Leah. The lower Hey manifests the Partzuf called Rahel. These two sefirotic Faces are the “wives” of Z.A. (Zeir Anpin, the Small Face, Tiferet). As Ya'aqob below had two wives, so the corresponding sefirot above (Z.A.) has two Females with which it interacts, one from above Him (Imma), one from beneath Him (Rahel).

Text *Each letter includes within it ten; these are the Fifty Gates. [Each] is made from groups of ten because it takes ten from the Yesod of the Male.*

Commentary- Each sefirotic Face emanating from one of the two Heys of G-d's Name has its own specific ten sefirot. The upper Hey (Imma, Mother, Binah) receives ten sefirot from its union with the Yod (Abba, Father, Hokhma). The lower Hey (Rahel, Malkhut) receives Her ten sefirot from its union with the Vav (Z.A. the Small Face, Tiferet). Being that each Hey is numerically equal to five, five is multiplied by the ten received to get fifty, for each Hey.

Text *This is the secret of Yihyeh (will be): Yod Key above, Yod Key below.*

Commentary – This reveals a great secret. When Mashiah comes the verse “on that day shall G-d be (yihyeh) one and His Name one (Zech. 14:9) shall be fulfilled. The word for “shall be” is Yihyeh, spelled Yod, Key, Yod, Key. The Ari'zal explains that during this present era we know G-d's Name as YHVH (with the Vav). However, when Mashiah comes, the fallen final Hey will ascend above and rise next to the first Hey. Correspondingly, the Vav is to ascend and become a Yod. Thus when Mashiah comes, G-d's Name will be called Yihyeh (Yod Key Yod Key) and no longer YHVH (Yod Key Vav Key).

Text *This is also the simple [letter] Nun (which equals 50). This is Imma. Since there is no concern [here in Imma] that the outside forces will attach [to Her] therefore, She radiates below like this:*

Commentary - In the original text is displayed the final letter Nun that extends below the line, to signify the descent of the letter Nun to the lower worlds. The light of Imma Binah is too strong for the unclean forces to attach themselves to; therefore, it can descend below without concern of becoming contaminated.



Text *This is not true of Rachel, for Her light (Binah) returns upon Her (Rahel) so that the outside forces will not cling to Her. This then is the spelled out Nun (Nun Vav Nun), which raises Her light above. The Vav is in the middle like this: (in the original text the Nun is spelled out as explained). This [Vav] is Z.A. who is concealed from one end of the world to another.*

Commentary – The light of Rahel, which is the sefirat Malkhut, is at the bottom of the sefirotic Tree. As such, it is closest to the “outside forces” that seek to entrap it and contaminate it. In order to prevent this, the sefirot interact with Rahel-Malkhut in a specific way. Both the lights from Imma and Z.A. radiate upon Her to push away the outside forces. The letter Nun spelled out, Nun Vav Nun represents Rahel. The first Nun is Imma, the Vav is Z.A., and the final Nun is Rahel Herself. She thus has within Her both the lights of Imma and Z.A. Z.A. in this case is “sandwiched” between the two Nuns, therefore, He is considered to be concealed within Rahel.

Text *The Vav is the Name MAH. Yet, do not read MAH, but rather Meah (100), which are the two Nuns that equal 100.*

Commentary – The Vav of YHVH is also represented by the miluie (spelled out) version of the Name that numerically equals forty-five. Forty-five in Hebrew is Mem (40), Hey (5). Thus, the Name is called MAH, which is how one would read the two letters as a word. Now, a pun is being made on the Name. We are told to not read it as MAH (Mem, Hey), but rather as Meah (Mem, Alef, Hey). This traditional Rabbinic addition of a letter is used to prove a point or to show a relationship. MAH, who is Z.A., is sandwiched between the two Nuns, the two letter Heys, each with ten sefirot. Thus Z.A. who is MAH is in between the two 50's which add up to 100. Thus, in this way, Z.A. who is MAH, can also be Meah (100).

Text *[For] always, the blessing that comes to the world is founded upon [the number] 100. This is as it is written; “one hundred gates and they will bless G-d.” (Gen. 26:12). Therefore, we offer the Terumah (offering) to restore every hundred to its source.*

Commentary – The Ari'zal explains that numbers have their origins in the supernal spiritual worlds. Single digit numbers correspond to the physical realm Asiyah, the sefirat Malkhut. Tens correspond to the angelic realm Yetzirah, the sefirat Tiferet. Hundreds correspond to the Neshama realm Beriah, the sefirat Binah, Imma. Being that hundreds emanate from the realm of Imma, they are the source of blessing. Therefore, all offerings are the rectification of 100% of the produce offered. We offer back to G-d from that which was received from Him, similar to Rahel reflecting back to the upper sefirot a small portion (a Terumah offering) of Her light.

Text *This then is the meaning of [the word] Terumah; it is related to the word “Harama” (to elevate). This [occurs] to the Feminine. For the Male has no need of this, for they [the outside forces] do not cling to Him. However, with the Feminine, in which they can cling, there is a need for Terumah (an offering).*



Commentary – Because the lower Feminine Partzuf (Rahel) is in danger (from the outside forces of evil), She is in need of protection. Therefore, the upper lights (of Imma and Z.A.) shower down upon Her to protect Her. Being that She receives this extra light, She must return a portion of it above to complete the cycle. What goes up comes down and what comes down goes up. This is only applicable to the lower Female, who is Rahel, Malkhut corresponding to the physical world.

Conclusions

The purpose of an offering to G-d is not merely our way of saying thank you for what we receive. The offering to G-d is the means of spiritual protection to protect our physical assets. When G-d's abundant light (shefa) manifests in Rahel (here, in the physical world), it is subject to being attacked and contaminated.

In other words, when one is granted an abundant livelihood and has large sums of money, the "outside forces" of evil attack such a person to cause him/her to squander their fortune and to waste it on endeavors that do not support holiness. In this way, the rectification of the world and the establishment of a just society is thwarted, because the money necessary to build them is being wasted and misused.

The way to safeguard Rahel-Malkhut and the shefa (Divine radiance) She (and we) receive is to take a portion and return it to G-d. In this way, instead of the shefa only moving in one direction (below) and thus ending, the course of movement is cyclical.

Whenever G-d's radiance reaches our physical world, instead of all of it staying here, a portion is sent back above. This arousal is what the Kabbalists call MahN (mayim nokbin, the Feminine waters). This is the power of arousal from below that motivates and excites the forces above to give further.

The Terumah can be compared to the desire of the female for the male. When the male wishes to attract the attention of the female, he gives something to her. This is the descent of Divine radiance from the upper sefirot to Rahel-Malkhut. Yet, in order to keep him interested in her, she must respond by showing appreciation for what she receives and, however subtly, she must flirt with him to continue to arouse his interests. Without such return flirtation, the male will lose interest in the female.

As it is below, so it is above. Malkhut must always show its interest, even if such an interest is merely a flirtation. The flirtation is a small amount of attention expressed in a very precise manner. Therefore, an offering to G-d is only a small portion of the abundance that we receive, but it must be offered in a precise manner. It must be given over entirely to religious works.

In this way, G-d sees our interest in Him and returns by blessing us seven-fold that we may continue to serve Him by making our world and society a better place in which holiness can reign and the fullness of human potential become manifest.



By the Terumah offering for building the Tabernacle and by the daily offerings of tzedaka that the wealthy give today to needy Yeshivot and Rabbis, we reinforce the spiritual protection of Rahel-Malkhut-our physical world and support the growth of holiness and righteousness. This is such a great mitzvah in that it protects Rahel-Malkhut from harm. As above, so below.

This explains why the verse says, “tzedaka (charity) saves from death” (Pr.10:2). As we save Rahel-Malkhut from contamination, which is in a way, a death for her, so G-d saves us from harm and death, when we give back to Him, by supporting Yeshivot and Rabbis.

May G-d protect us and may we learn to protect ourselves by our continuous generosity.