



# Likkutei Sichos

Volume 17 | Tzav | Sichah 1

This is the Torah...

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## 1.

### INTRODUCING THE SACRIFICES

The first section of our *parshah* discusses five types of sacrifices: *olah*, *minchah*, *chatas*, *asham*, and *shelamim*.<sup>1</sup> Each is prefaced by the phrase, “(And) this is the law of the {*toras*, תּוֹרָה}....”<sup>2</sup>

Simply understood, the words “this is the law of {*toras*}” introduce the “*torah*”<sup>3</sup> (the rules) governing each type of sacrifice. Although the laws of these sacrifices were recorded previously in *parshas Vayikra*, nevertheless, the phrase “**this is the law**” is appropriate here because our *parshah* introduces additional details that are **not** mentioned in the previous *parshah*.

However, in *Toras Kohanim*<sup>4</sup> (and similarly in the Talmud),<sup>5</sup> our Sages expounded: “*This is the law {torah} of the olah* – one law<sup>6</sup> applies to everything that is fit to be brought up {onto the altar}: If they were brought up {onto the altar}, they may not be taken down.” Meaning, the term, “the law of” comes to add a category of *olah* offerings (disqualified *olah*-sacrifices) to which we would not have known that this *olah* law applies (“the *olah*... on the altar”),<sup>7</sup> if not for this extension.

Similarly, regarding the other four categories of sacrifices – *minchah*, *chatas*, *asham*, and *shelamim*: Regarding each of these, the word, “(this is the) law” comes to include a type of sacrifice (at least with respect to a

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<sup>1</sup> {Translated in the *Kehot Chumash*, respectively: ascent-offering, grain-offering, sin-offering, guilt-offering, peace-feast-offering.}

<sup>2</sup> *Vayikra* 6:2 – “This is the Torah {i.e., law} of the *olah*”; *Vayikra* 6:7 – “And this is the Torah of the *minchah*”; *Vayikra* 6:18 – “This is the Torah of the *chatas*”; *Vayikra* 7:1 – “And this is the Torah of the *asham*”; *Vayikra* 7:11 – “And this is the Torah of the *shelamim*.”

<sup>3</sup> {In our context, *torah* means a body or system of rules and regulations that govern the proper performance of a mitzvah. In this sense, in this translation, the word *torah*, and its derivative, *toras*, has been rendered as *law*.}

<sup>4</sup> *Toras Kohanim* on our *parshah* {*Vayikra* 6:2}.

<sup>5</sup> *Zevachim*, bottom of 84a.

<sup>6</sup> {“Torah” connotes an instruction or a law.}

<sup>7</sup> *Vayikra* 6:2.

specific law) that would have been excluded if not for this extension, as *Toras Kohanim* explains:<sup>8</sup>

“*The law of the minchah* — one law applies to all *menachos*: They all require oil and frankincense.” Even those “*menachos* whose remainder<sup>9</sup> are not to be eaten (such as the *menachos* offered by *kohanim*)... require oil and frankincense.” “*The law of the chatas* — one law applies to all *chata’os*: Their blood requires laundering.”<sup>10</sup> Even the blood of “inner *chata’os*<sup>11</sup> (which are not eaten)... requires laundering.” “*The law of the asham* — one law applies to all *ashamos*: Their blood is applied below.”<sup>12</sup> Even the blood of a “*metzora*’s<sup>13</sup> *asham* is applied below” (despite the Torah writing regarding a *metzora*’s *asham*,<sup>14</sup> “the *asham* is like the *chatas*,” and the blood of the *chatas* “is applied above”).<sup>15</sup> And from the words, “The law of the *shelamim*,” our Sages learn that “one law applies to all *shelamim*: Time limits apply to the sacrifices offered on private altars,<sup>16</sup> similar to the time limits {applicable to the sacrifices offered} in the Tent of Meeting {the *Mishkan*}.” (Meaning, the laws of *nosar*<sup>17</sup> and *pigul*<sup>18</sup> apply even to sacrifices offered on a private altar).

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<sup>8</sup> *Toras Kohanim* on the verse associated with each type of sacrifice. Similarly, this explanation is found in the Talmud regarding the *chatas* (*Mishnah*, “*Zevachim*,” beg. ch. 11) and the *shelamim* (end of *Zevachim*).

<sup>9</sup> {After the portion to be burnt on the altar had been separated.}

<sup>10</sup> {A garment soiled with *chatas* blood had to be laundered in a prescribed way.}

<sup>11</sup> {Whose blood service was performed in the Temple’s inner sanctum, as opposed to conventional *chata’os*, whose blood service was performed on the outer altar.}

<sup>12</sup> {Their blood was applied to the lower part of the altar.}

<sup>13</sup> {A person afflicted with *tzara’as*, a spiritual affliction with physical symptoms, affecting the skin.}

<sup>14</sup> *Vayikra* 14:13.

<sup>15</sup> {Their blood was applied to the upper part of the altar.}

<sup>16</sup> {A private altar is an altar situated anywhere outside of the *Mishkan* or the Temple courtyard. According to *Zevachim* 112b, offering sacrifices on private altars was prohibited during the time the *Mishkan* functioned in the desert; permitted when the *Mishkan* was established at Gilgal; prohibited when the *Mishkan* stood at Shilo; permitted when the *Mishkan* stood at Nov and Giv’on; and finally, prohibited from the First Temple was built, and onwards.}

<sup>17</sup> {Sacrifices that pass their Torah-mandated expiry date invalidates them. They are called “*nosar*.”}

<sup>18</sup> {The intention to offer or consume sacrifices beyond their Torah-mandated expiry date invalidates them. They are called “*pigul*.”}

## 2.

### EXPLANATION NEEDED?

What is Rashi's position concerning the above explanation? In Rashi's Torah commentary, we find something astonishing in this regard:

The first two times the Torah says, "This is the law {*toras*}" — in connection with the *olah* and the *minchah* — Rashi explains that {the extra word} "law" comes to expand the scope: "One law applies (to all of them), etc.," and he quotes the exposition found in *Toras Kohanim*. However, in the last three instances — "This is the law of the *chatas*," "And this is the law of the *asham*," "And this is the law of the *shelamim*" — Rashi offers no explanation.

Either way, this is perplexing: If Rashi maintains that the word "law" {*toras*} comes to expand a law's scope, he also should have explained what "law" comes to add in the last three cases of the *chatas*, *asham*, and *shelamim*. And if Rashi maintains that the word "law" is not superfluous according to *pshat*,<sup>19</sup> and it is to be understood simply (as mentioned above), why does Rashi explain that "law" comes to expand the rule's scope in cases of the *olah* and the *minchah*?

## 3.

### THE CORRECT CASE

Ostensibly, we might resolve this difficulty as follows: Rashi *does* maintain that {Scriptures's use of the redundant word} "law" generally is intended to expand a law's scope, as he emphasizes in his explanation of the clause,<sup>20</sup> *This is the law of the olah* — "every instance of {an extra} 'law' {in Scripture} is intended to broaden {a law's scope}. It comes to say that there

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<sup>19</sup> {The plain meaning of the Torah's text. When the plain meaning is understood clearly, Rashi does not comment.}

<sup>20</sup> *Vayikra* 6:2.

is one law for all....” Thus, Rashi does not need to repeat this explanation with respect to the *chatas*, *asham*, and *shelamim*. Rashi relies on the student {of his commentary} to himself seek and find the new case to be included in the legal framework of each of these sacrifices on account of the word *toras*.

Rashi **does not** rely on the student’s ability in the case of the *minchah*, but rather, he explains the case to be included in the law:

One law applies to all *menachos*: They all require oil and frankincense as explained in this section. For one might think that only *minchah* offerings of ordinary Israelites {i.e., non-*kohanim*} need oil and frankincense, because their *menachos* require scooping out {קמִיֶּצֶה}. How do we know that *menachos* of *kohanim*, which are burned in their entirety {also require oil and frankincense}? Scripture, therefore, writes “law.”

Rashi writes this explicitly with respect to the *minchah* because a person could easily blunder, erroneously assuming that {the redundant} “law” comes to include a **different** case:

The Talmud<sup>21</sup> learns from the clause, “This is the law of the *minchah*” that “one law applies to all *menachos*” — even with respect to *menachos* “that are not written” (*menachos* regarding which the Torah does not write explicitly the rule that their remainder is to be eaten by the *kohanim*, such as *the sinner’s minchah*), “their remainder is to be eaten by the *kohanim*.”

Rashi quotes the exposition of *Toras Kohanim* in his commentary so that we will not mistakenly think, based on *pshat*, that “the law of (the *minchah*)” comes to include the law that the remainder of the sinner’s *minchah* is to be eaten by the *kohanim* (as the Talmud learns). As Rashi explained **earlier** in his commentary,<sup>22</sup> this (talmudic) law that even the remainder of the sinner’s *minchah* is to be eaten by the *kohanim* is learned,

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<sup>21</sup> *Menachos* 82b with Rashi’s commentary.

<sup>22</sup> *Vayikra* 5:13.

“according to *pshat*,” from the verse (in the previous *parshah*),<sup>23</sup> “it shall belong to the *kohen* like the *minchah*.”

#### 4.

HE WON'T COME TO THIS ON HIS OWN

Yet this explanation is insufficient for several reasons:

- a) As mentioned above, Rashi explained previously that the law that the remainder of the sinner's *minchah* is to be eaten is derived from a verse in *parshas Vayikra*. Therefore, he no longer needs to inform us that “the law of the *minchah*” does not come to **include** this law.
- b) **Most importantly:** It is completely unreasonable to assume that a novice Torah student<sup>24</sup> would understand on his own what the apparent redundancies, noted in *Toras Kohanim* regarding the *chatas*, *asham*, and *shelamim*, come to teach us:

“This is the law of the *chatas*” — how is a novice Torah student expected to know that a unique exegesis is needed to teach the rule that “the blood of inner *chata'os*... requires laundering”? Logic dictates the opposite conclusion {that a unique exegesis is unnecessary}: Since the blood of outer *chata'os* requires laundering, how much more so would the blood of inner *chata'os* require laundering!

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<sup>23</sup> *Vayikra* 5:13.

<sup>24</sup> {“*Ben chamesh lamikra*,” in the Hebrew original. Lit., “a five-year-old beginning to study Scripture.” This is a term borrowed from *Pirkei Avos*, which teaches that the appropriate age for a child to begin studying Scripture is at the age of five. Rashi wrote his commentary on *Tanach* to solve problems that a 5-year-old student would encounter in understanding the simple meaning of a verse. Additionally, Rashi never expects the student to know more than the plain meaning of the earlier verses in the Torah.}

[The initial conjecture that the blood of inner *chata'os* does not require laundering is expounded in *Toras Kohanim* by means of a *kal vachomer*<sup>25</sup> comparing this case to *kodshei kodashim*:<sup>26</sup>

*Kodshei kodashim* are comparable to the outer *chata'os* in that they both require *merikah ushetifah*.<sup>27</sup> But they are not comparable regarding laundering {because the blood of *kodshei kodashim* (other than *chata'os*) does not require laundering}. It stands to reason, then, that the inner *chata'os*, which are *not* comparable {to the outer *chata'os*} regarding *merikah ushetifah*, are {also} certainly *not* comparable {to the outer *chata'os*} regarding laundering!

However, it is not at all reasonable to posit that Rashi expects that a novice Torah student will think of this *kal vachomer* himself (especially since the law that inner *chata'os* are not comparable {to outer *chata'os*} regarding *merikah ushetifah* is not mentioned in Rashi's Torah commentary.)]

“And this is the law of the *asham*”: The *metzora's ashm* is mentioned initially in Scripture **later on**, in *parshas Metzora*. As such, as such, it would be unreasonable to posit that a {novice Torah} student would, **in our *parshah***, figure out the inclusionary exposition of the *Toras Kohanim* by himself (that even the blood of a *metzora's ashm* is “applied below”).

And certainly a novice Torah student cannot be expected to understand himself that the clause, “And this is the law of the *shelamim*” comes to include sacrifices offered on private altars (as expounded in *Toras Kohanim*). Moreover and most importantly —

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<sup>25</sup> {Lit., “light and heavy,” *kal vachomer* is a talmudic logical proof, whereby a strict ruling in a lenient case demands a similarly strict ruling in a more stringent case; alternatively, a lenient ruling in stringent case demands a similarly lenient ruling in a lenient case.}

<sup>26</sup> {Lit., “holy of holies,” referring to the holiest grade of sacrifices, as distinct from *kodashim kalim*.}

<sup>27</sup> {Lit., “purging and rinsing.” Utensils in which these sacrifices were cooked had to be purged and rinsed because sacrificial meat absorbed in the utensil's walls will become *nosar*. See Rashi's commentary on *Vayikra* 6:21.}

the novice Torah student will only learn of these rules in *parshas Re'eh*.

## 5.

NOT SUPERFLUOUS

The explanation:

Based on *pshat*, it is clear that the principle, “every instance of ‘law’ {*toras*} comes to **expand** {a rules’s scope}” only applies when the word “law” appears superfluous, or, moreover, when it is incongruous with the verse’s content. For example, in the verse, “this is the law of the *olah*”: Since most of (the rules of) the *olah* were explained previously in *parshas Vayikra*, the clause, “this is the law of the *olah*” is out of place. Meaning, “**this**” — the **few** additional rules in our *parshah* — wouldn’t warrant Scripture saying, “the law of the *olah*.” In such a case, we must explain that “law” comes to teach that one rule applies to everything fit to be brought on the altar.”

[Similarly, most of the rules implicit in, “this is the law of the *minchah*” and, “this is the law of the *chatas*” are explained earlier in *parshas Vayikra*; only a few rules are added in our *parshah*.]

In contrast, the rules implicit in “this is the law of the *asham*” were not explained in *parshas Vayikra*, which only identified the **individuals** liable to bring an *asham*, but not the sacrificial laws. As such, according to *pshat*, the term, “this is the law of the *asham*” is to be understood in its plain sense, i.e., as an introduction to the body of law governing the *asham* sacrifice.

The same reasoning applies to the phrase, “this is the law of the *shelamim*,” which refers {specifically} to the *todah*,<sup>28</sup> discussed in the

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<sup>28</sup> See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 12, p. 21 ff. {The *todah* is a particular type of *shelamim* brought to give thanks to Hashem.}



Torah following the verse,<sup>29</sup> “If he is bringing it as a thanksgiving offering.” Now, the *todah* offering is not mentioned at all in *parshas Vayikra*; as such, “this is the law of the *shelamim*” does not come to include additional laws. Rather, it is to be understood in its plain sense, as {in the case of the *asham*} above.

## 6.

### ALL CHATA’OS ON THE NORTH

Why Rashi offers no explanation, however, on the verse, “this is the law of the *chatas*,” is still unclear. This verse [**cannot** be understood simply (because most of the rules of the *chatas* have been explained earlier in *parshas Vayikra*), but rather] comes to expand {a law’s scope}. We must say that according to *pshat*, this amplification, derived from “the law of the *chatas*” is so straightforward that Rashi has no need to write it in his commentary.

The explanation:

Immediately after writing “the law of the *chatas*,” the Torah says:<sup>30</sup> “In the place where the *olah* is slaughtered, the *chatas* shall be slaughtered.” Meaning that (“*chatas*,” written without qualification, refers to) all *chata’os* — even the *chatas* of the *Kohen Gadol* and the communal *chatas*, regarding which the Torah does not write explicitly that it is slaughtered on the north side {of the Temple courtyard} (the place where the *olah* is slaughtered) — are slaughtered on the north side.

But there is another type of *chatas* that we may have mistakenly assumed was not required to have been slaughtered on the north side (even though the Torah says, without qualification, “the *chatas* shall be slaughtered”): the variable offering,<sup>31</sup> which depended on a person’s

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<sup>29</sup> *Vayikra* 7:12; see Rashi, loc. cit.: “One of **these** vowed *shelamim*.”

<sup>30</sup> *Vayikra* 6:18.

<sup>31</sup> {“*Korban oleh veyored*,” in the Hebrew original.}

financial ability. If able, he would have brought “a female from the flock — a sheep or a goat”; “but if his means were insufficient for a sheep or a goat, then he shall bring... two turtledoves or two young doves...,” i.e., birds. “But if his means are insufficient... he shall bring... a tenth-ephah of fine flour for a *chatas*.”<sup>32</sup>

Since it was possible to bring an offering of “**fine flour** for a *chatas*,” that was not slaughtered and had no neck to nip at the nape (as was required in the case with bird *chata’os*, and even bird *olos*),<sup>33</sup> it would be reasonable to say that slaughtering was not a primary element of the atonement afforded by this offering. As such, we might posit that this offering didn’t have to be slaughtered (on the north side) “in the place he would slaughter the *olah*... before Hashem,” even when a person had brought a sheep or goat, which would have needed to be slaughtered.

For this reason, the Torah uses inclusive wording, “*This is the law of the chatas* — one law applies to all *chata’os*.” Since the variable offering was also a *chatas* {this wording teaches us that} it had to be slaughtered on the north side. Rashi does not need to explain this rule explicitly, for the Torah discusses the requirement to slaughter on the north immediately after the introduction, “this is the law of the *chatas*,” and the rules of the *chatas* were already discussed in *parshas Vayikra*.

## 7.

### A SEPARATE TOPIC

However, on this basis, it is very difficult to understand why Rashi had to explain, “*This is the law of the minchah* — one law applies to all *menachos*: They all require oil and frankincense” (even “*menachos* of *kohanim*, which are burned in their entirety). Why didn’t Rashi trust that we would understand ourselves what the apparent redundancy comes to include, as he does regarding, “this is the law of the *chatas*”?

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<sup>32</sup> *Vayikra* 5:6-11.

<sup>33</sup> *Vayikra* 1:14 ff.

The explanation:

Based on ***pshat***, we can reasonably limit the scope implied by “(this is) the law }” (“one law applies to all...”) specifically to rules mentioned in this *parshah* itself (following the preface, “this is the law ...). Meaning, the rule that **follows** {the phrase, “this is the law...”} applies to all types of sacrifices (even to those which, based on reason, should not be included (in this law) together with the other types of sacrifices).

However, in applying this to the *minchah* offering, the term “law” adds the requirement to bring “oil and frankincense.” This requirement does not appear in our *parshah* (which only says,<sup>34</sup> “He shall **separate** from it... some of the fine flour... that is on the *minchah*...,” but not the rule itself requiring oil and frankincense). The obligation to bring oil and frankincense is found in *parshas Vayikra*.<sup>35</sup>

As such, we might have thought that the {redundant} phrase “this is the law of...” is *not* intended to add this rule {about needing to bring oil and frankincense with a *minchah* offering} (but rather, it’s purpose is to add one of the rules spoken about in our *parshah*). Therefore, Rashi preemptively explains that this redundant phrase is indeed intended to include this rule.

There is an additional reason why (without Rashi’s explanation) we would not have learned that the phrase, “this is the law of the *minchah*” teaches us that *menachos of kohanim* require oil and frankincense:

The laws of the *menachos of kohanim*, which follow the *parshah*<sup>36</sup> beginning, “this is the law of the *minchah*,” begins with a separate Divine

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<sup>34</sup> *Vayikra* 6:8.

<sup>35</sup> *Vayikra* 2:1.

<sup>36</sup> {In this usage, *parshah* connotes a discrete paragraph of Scripture, preceded, and followed, by a space in a Torah scroll.}

communiqué:<sup>37</sup> “Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, ‘This is the offering of Aharon and his sons....’”

Since these topics are differentiated not only by being written in two distinct *parshiyos* — the purpose of *parshah* breaks being “to give Moshe time to reflect between *parshiyos* and between topics”<sup>38</sup> — but also by being conveyed in two **separate Divine messages**, it would be difficult to posit that the teaching, “*this is the law of the minchah* — one law applies to all” comes to include *menachos* of *kohanim* (teaching us that one law applies to them and to all *menachos*). For *menachos* of *kohanim* is part of a distinct Divine communication, indicating that this type of *minchah* is a new topic, separate from what came before it.

[The idea of *menachos* of *kohanim* being a separate topic is reinforced by the fact that even the other types of offerings — *minchah*, *asham*, and *shelamim* — are not differentiated from one another by being communicated separately by Hashem. The only thing distinguishing them is that they are written in separate *parshiyos*.]

## 8.

### TRANSFORMING QUANTITY INTO QUALITY

In light of all the above, in discussing the offerings, our *parshah* adds two elements to what was discussed in *parshas Vayikra*: (a) Additional details in the laws of the *olah*, *minchah*, and *chatas* offerings; and (b) other offerings — the *asham* and the *todah* — the rules of which had not been explained at all previously. Similarly, with respect to the first three offerings {*olah*, *minchah*, and *chatas*}, the Torah adds {in our *parshah*}: “(This is) the law,” which expands the scope {of the law}, including other **types** of offerings (one law applies to **all** *olos*, *menachos*, etc.).

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<sup>37</sup> *Vayikra* 6:12 ff.

<sup>38</sup> **Rashi's** commentary, beg. of *parshas Vayikra*.

Rashi notes these two types of additions with respect to the first offering — “This is the law of the *olah*”:<sup>39</sup> “This passage comes to teach us: (a) that the burning of fats and limbs is valid throughout the entire night.” This rule is said immediately {at the beginning of the discussion of the *olah*}, in the verse, “on the altar all night until morning.” (b) This passage also “teaches us regarding invalid sacrifices: Which ones, if brought up {onto the altar} must be taken down; and which ones, if brought up {onto the altar} may not be taken down. For every {apparently redundant} instance of *law* {in Scripture} comes to add... that if they have been brought up {onto the altar}, they may not be taken down.”

The difference between these two types of additions is that one is qualitative and the other, quantitative. The first involves a **qualitative** addition to the offering — adding new details to the rules of a sacrifice affects the offering’s quality. The second involves a **quantitative** addition — another type of offering, or an addition to the number of sacrifices to which this same rule applies.

Since the addition is not only qualitative (adding legal details) but is also quantitative (adding an offering), we can derive a practical lesson in our *avodah*:<sup>40</sup>

“The physical” is measured primarily by *quantity*, whereas, “the spiritual” is measured by *quality*.

The above discussion teaches us that the way to grow qualitatively and spiritually is, at times, to add specifically in (our *avodah* in terms of) “quantity” and the material. The way to achieve a genuine ascent in our spiritual *avodah* is (not by **escaping** the world, engaging exclusively in spirituality, but rather) by transforming (more) **material** entities into offerings for Hashem. Specifically by “giving supremacy to {spiritual} form over {material} substance”<sup>41</sup> — by transforming substance into form, and

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<sup>39</sup> {*Vayikra* 6:2.}

<sup>40</sup> {Our divine service.}

<sup>41</sup> See *Kuntres Toras HaChassidus*, ch. 11, 12.

quantity into quality — we can effect a much greater ascent in the spiritual *avodah* of our souls.

## 9.

### BRING OTHERS CLOSE

In a broader sense, *avodah* involving quantitative growth translates into efforts to bring a larger number of Jews closer to Torah and *mitzvos*, to the extent that even those who appear superficially to be *unfit for the altar* (“invalid,” Heaven forbid) are brought up onto the *altar* — “(if brought up,) **they may not be taken down.**”

In this way, “Hashem will enlighten the eyes of both.”<sup>42</sup> The one engaged in this *avodah* will merit a *great light*, incommensurate with his *avodah*. The person {whom he brought closer to Torah and *mitzvos*} will **ascend** (remaining constantly connected {to Hashem}) onto the “altar,” which will sacrifice and nullify his {self-centered} existence. This ascent will be beyond measure or limitation — “all night until morning,”<sup>43</sup> throughout the entire period of exilic concealment, until the arrival of the *light* of the redemption.

-Based on a talk delivered Shabbos *parshas Tzav*, 5733 (1973)

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<sup>42</sup> *Mishlei* 29:13; *Temurah* 16a; *Tanya*, “Introduction.”

<sup>43</sup> {*Vayikra* 6:2.}