



Likkutei Sichos

Volume 16 | Terumah | Sichah 1

Proper Intentions

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1.

TO ME OR FOR ME

Rashi quotes the words, “*veyikchu li terumah* — they will take to Me a donation,”¹ from the beginning of our *parshah*,² and comments, “*li — lishmi* {to Me — for My sake}.”³

What difficulty in these words compelled Rashi to clarify them?

The commentators⁴ explain:

Understood simply, the words “*veyikchu li*” mean “to Me,” meaning, *terumah* should be given to Hashem. But this cannot be said regarding Hashem for several reasons:

a) Suggesting that we have something to offer Hashem, or that Hashem needs something, is preposterous, for, “The earth and its fullness are Hashem’s”;⁵ everything belongs to Him, and {Hashem declares}, “If I were hungry, I would not tell you.”⁶

b) The word “*li*” refers to an item that becomes associated with its owner by (taking) bringing it close. This can only apply to something physical, whereas, “Hashem has no body ... and no image or form....”⁷

Thus, Rashi had to explain that “to Me” means, “for My sake.”

¹ *Shemos* 25:2. {Lit., *veyikchu* — they will take; *li* — to Me; *terumah* — something “raised up.” This verse is intentionally translated literally and appears awkward. The *sichah* will delve into the meaning of these words.}

² {The verse continues on to detail the materials that the Jewish people were expected to donate towards the building of the *Mishkan* — the portable temple that accompanied the Jews during their travels in the desert. Usually the word *terumah* refers to a portion of the agricultural produce given to the *kohanim*; this portion must be guarded from ritual impurity and eaten in a state of purity. However, in this context *terumah* refers to the donations of materials for the *Mishkan*.}

³ {To understand the *sichah*, it is important to understand the definition of the term “*lishmah*,” lit., *for its sake*. Many *mitzvos* require a person to have the intention to perform the act of the *mitzvah* for a specific purpose; this is known as *lishmah*. In this context, people donating materials for the *Mishkan* would have to have in mind that their donation for the sake of Hashem, so to speak.}

⁴ *Re'em*; *Sefer Hazikaron*; *Maharik*; *Gur Aryeh*; *Be'er Mayim Chaim*; *Devek Tov*.

⁵ *Tehillim* 24:1.

⁶ *Tehillim* 50:12.

⁷ *Dikdukei Rashi (Be'er Rehovos)* on our verse.

However, explaining Rashi this way is difficult, because [in addition to a lack of clarity as to why Rashi also quotes the words “*veyikchu*” and “*terumah*” in his caption if the difficulty addressed only relates to the word “*li*”] —

We find other similarly worded verses earlier in Torah (regarding Hashem) that have a similar connotation, such as, “I will set aside a tenth to You”⁸; “Sanctify to Me every first-born”⁹; and the like. In those instances, Rashi does not address this issue by clarifying that these verses are not to be understood simply to mean, *to Hashem*, or “*for*” *Hashem*.

In light of these issues, Rashi did not find the difficulties raised above — our ability to give something to Hashem — to be problematic according to *pshuto shel mikra*,¹⁰ nor did he need to negate this interpretation {of the other commentators, above}. Indeed, this is easily understandable, as giving Temple donations (tithes) for Hashem does not insinuate that Hashem needs this donation or the like, G-d forbid.

2.

TAKING VS. SANCTIFYING

Perhaps the following solves the problem. The wording, “they will take to Me a donation” differs from the wording, “I will set aside a tenth to You,” “Sanctify to Me every first-born,” and similar verses: The verse, “they will take to Me a donation,” makes no mention of **sanctifying** something to Hashem, or the like; rather, it says, “take.” This wording seems inappropriate for the reasons mentioned. Therefore, Rashi had to explain that “to Me” means “for My sake.” This would also explain why Rashi also quotes the word “*veyikchu* {they will take}” in his caption.

⁸ *Bereishis* 28:22.

⁹ *Shemos* 13:2.

¹⁰ {The plain meaning of the Torah, often referred to as “*pshat*.” Rashi states in his commentary to *Bereishis* 3:8: “I have come only to explain the plain meaning of the Torah.” When the plain meaning is understood clearly, Rashi does not comment. Though there are many levels and depths of interpretation on the Torah, Rashi adopts a straightforward approach.}

But on this basis, the connotation of *veyikchu li* would have been clearer if Rashi had explained it to mean, “they should sanctify it (to Me).”

3.

THEY WILL TAKE MY NAME

Other authorities¹¹ maintain that the difficulty Rashi addresses is the Torah’s diction: ‘**veyikchu li** – **they will take** to Me.’ The verse should have said, ‘**veyitnu li** – **they will give** to Me.’” Rashi explains that “*li*” means “*lishmi*” {lit., for My name}. With this explanation, Rashi hints that by donating *terumah*, we “**take**” Hashem. Similar to the *midrashic*¹² exposition that although, “The earth and all that it holds is Hashem’s,”¹³ Hashem wants His presence to rest amongst the Jewish people, as intimated by the clause, “you have taken Me.”¹⁴ However, since it is inconceivable to actually “take” Hashem Himself, since “the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain You,”¹⁵ Rashi clarifies that “*li*” means “*lishmi*” {“to Me” means “for My name”}.¹⁶ Meaning, Hashem’s holy name is attributed to the Jewish people by donating *terumah* and building the *Mishkan* (similar to the verse, “They shall place **My name** upon the Children of Israel”).¹⁷

However, as we have explained on numerous occasions, Rashi wrote his commentary and offered explanations in a style that was clear enough for a novice¹⁸ (at the study of Scripture) to understand (based on Rashi’s remarks alone, without having to consult commentators on Rashi). Had Rashi intended the above explanation, he would have written this explicitly, rather than hinting at it by writing, “*lishmi*.”

¹¹ *Maskil L'Dovid's* gloss on Rashi; *Maharik*.

¹² *Yalkut Shimoni*(remez 363) based on *Midrash Avkir*.

¹³ *Tehillim* 24:1.

¹⁴ See *Midrash Rabbah*, “*Shemos*,” ch. 33, par. 1, 6.

¹⁵ *I Melachim* 8:27.

¹⁶ {“*Li* – *lishmi*” literally translates, “for Me – for My name.” These authorities maintain that Rashi’s using the word *lishmi* is not in the conventional sense, i.e., for My sake, rather it is more literal, “for My name.”}

¹⁷ *Bamidbar* 6:27.

¹⁸ {“*Ben chamesh lemikra*,” in the Hebrew original, meaning, “a five-year-old beginning to study Scripture.” This is a quote from the *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos*, which teaches that the appropriate age for a child to begin studying *Tanach* is 5 years old. Rashi wrote his commentary on *Tanach* to be simple enough for a 5 year old student to understand. Additionally, Rashi never expects the student to know more than the plain meaning of the earlier verses in the Torah.}

4.

TERUMAH OR NO TERUMAH

As mentioned above, Rashi {in his caption} also quotes from Scripture the word “*terumah*.” This indicates that Rashi isn’t compelled to explain, “*li – lishmi*” based solely on the words “*veyikchu li*,” but also based on the word “*terumah*.” To preface: When the word that compels Rashi’s explanation is found later in a verse, Rashi’s practice is to explain that later word before explaining an earlier word. (Thus follows because *his explanation of the later word* is the basis of his explanation of the earlier word.)

Therefore, since the word “*terumah*” (also) necessitates Rashi’s explanation, and Rashi explains the word “*terumah*” **after** explaining the word¹⁹ “*li*,” **Rashi’s explanation** of the word “*terumah*” is irrelevant to why “*terumah*” also compels the explanation of “*li – lishmi*.” In other words, any explanation of the word “*terumah*” (even if it is not explained as Rashi does, “separation”) contributes to the necessity of Rashi’s explanation that “*li*” means “*lishmi*.”

5.

LI MEANS MORE THAN VEYIKCHU TERUMAH

The explanation:

At first blush, “*veyikchu li*” means that a person should sanctify the article to Hashem, i.e., the Jewish people’s *terumah* becomes holy. Rashi precludes this explanation by quoting, “***veyikchu li terumah***.”

Understood simply, “*veyikchu*” means to take an object from one place to another, or to transfer the possession of an object from one domain to another.

According to *pshuto shel mikra*, “*terumah*” can be defined in two ways :

¹⁹ {In Rashi’s gloss on this verse, he quotes the word “*terumah*” alone and defines it.}

a) As Rashi renders, “separation.” The item is separated or removed from the donor’s domain, i.e., it is no longer owned by the donor, and by being designated (as *hekdesh*²⁰) it becomes associated with holiness.²¹

b) “To elevate and to lift.” When this wording is used, not in the context of physically lifting an object, but in the sense of ownership, etc., it connotes entering a higher domain, and reaching a higher level of ownership. (This is similar to the way Rashi explains:²² “*The field of Efron arose*” — “the field underwent an elevation, leaving possession by a simple person and entering possession by a king.”) So, too, in our context: Originally, a person owned the article and now *hekdesh*²³ owns it.

On this basis, it is clear that the Torah, by using the word “(veyikchu) **li**,” cannot be teaching that the item is given to *hekdesh*, for its association with *hekdesh* has already been implied by the words “*veyikchu*” and “*terumah*.” These words imply that the item now belongs to *hekdesh* (“*terumah*”), and *hekdesh* owns it (“*veyikchu*”).

[The only difference {as to how the above transfer takes place} depends on which of the two definitions of *terumah* is assumed: If *terumah* means elevation and lifting, then the word *terumah* itself connotes that the item has come under the ownership of *hekdesh*. The word *veyikchu* connotes only a change of possession, i.e., that the object is now in the possession of *hekdesh*. But if the word *terumah* means {just} separation, then we {must} say that *veyikchu* not only means transferring possession, but also that the object becomes fully owned by *hekdesh*.]

Thus, Rashi teaches us there that “*li*” does not connote the item becoming Hashem’s property — *hekdesh* (as in the verse “consecrate to Me,” and so forth)²⁴ {as this transfer of possession and (total) ownership} is implied by *veyikchu* and

²⁰ {*Hekdesh*, from the root word *kadosh*, lit., holy. *Hekdesh* usually refers to consecrated property; however, the term can also be used in general for matters of holiness.}

²¹ {I.e., it becomes *hekdesh* — property consecrated to the Temple.}

²² *Bereishis* 23:17.

²³ {The Temple treasury.}

²⁴ {*Shemos* 13:2.}

terumah}. Rather, **li** implies a distinct concept — that the donation must be given “*lishmi*.” That is, in addition to giving the item to *hekdes*h, there is another requirement: A person must intend to consecrate it for the sake of Hashem (similar to giving a divorce document,²⁵ or to writing a *Sefer Torah*,²⁶ etc.). Meaning, when giving the article to *hekdes*h, a person must have in mind to donate it “for My sake.”

6.

RASHI AND RAAVAD

In light of this elucidation, we can posit regarding the above issue (i.e., a person had to intend that his donations were “*lishmi*”), based on the “wondrous” *halachic* teachings ensconced in Rashi’s remarks, that Rashi’s opinion here is consistent with his opinion in his *Talmud* commentary:

The *Mishnah* teaches:²⁷

Neither animals consecrated for the altar nor articles consecrated for the Temple upkeep, may be changed from one type of consecration to another.²⁸

Rambam and Raavad disagree regarding this issue: Rambam²⁹ maintains that this law also applies to changes within Temple upkeep itself: “If a person consecrated an item for the upkeep of the *Heichal*,³⁰ he may not change it’s

²⁵ {The writing of a *get* (divorce document) and the signature of the witnesses must be done for the sake of the man and the woman being divorced. If not written with this intention, the *get* is invalid. *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Even Ha’ezer*,” ch. 131.}

²⁶ {Meaning, the passages must be written for the sake of the *mitzvah*, i.e., one must write them with the explicit intent that they be a sacred *Sefer Torah*. If one writes them without this specific intent, they are invalid. *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*” ch. 274.}

²⁷ *Temurah* 32a.

²⁸ {Some background: The consecration of property was the means of providing for the upkeep of the Temple and the sacrificial services as detailed in *Vayikra* 2:7. In the Temple period, generally, a person could consecrate: (a) items to the Temple treasury (*hekdes*h *bedek habayis*), which was used for maintaining and repairing the Temple buildings; or (b) animals, meal and drink offerings to the altar (*hekdes*h *mizbeach*), which were offered on the Temple altar. The donations to the construction of the *Mishkan* discussed in our *parshah* would fit into the category of *hekdes*h *bedek habayis*.}

²⁹ {*Peirush Hamishnayos*, *ibid.*}

³⁰ {The *Heichal* is another name of area known as *Kodesh* (“Holy”), but it also refers to the entire enclosed building of the Temple, consisting of three rooms: the *Ulam* (the Hall), *Kodesh* (the Holy) and the *Kodesh HaKodashim* (the Holy of Holies). Each room is holier than the previous one with the holiest room in the Temple being the *Kodesh HaKodashim*.}

designation and use it for the upkeep of the altar; similar rules apply in similar cases.” Raavad argues with Rambam and maintains, “There is no difference between the consecration for the upkeep of the *Heichal* and any other rooms or the altar.” He explains that the *Mishnah’s* law only applies to items consecrated to the altar: “Regarding items consecrated to the altar, one may not change their consecration, even from lesser degrees of holiness to higher degrees; and one may not reduce {the time for} the eating of sacrifices.³¹ However, regarding items consecrated for the upkeep of the Temple, what difference is there between one type of consecration and another?”³²

In his *Talmud* commentary, Rashi comments on the above mentioned *Mishnah*: “(If a person changes his designation from ‘Temple maintenance,’ {*hekdesch bedek habayis*}³³ to ‘altar offerings’ {*hekdesch mizbeach*}, he has accomplished nothing) and within *hekdesch mizbeach*, he may not change his designation from an *olah*³⁴ to a *shelamim*³⁵ or vice versa.” But Rashi does not mention that changing his designation is forbidden within *hekdesch bedek habayis* itself (in line with Raavad’s opinion).

Conceivably, this also relates to the aforementioned law that *terumah*³⁶ had to be given “*lishmi*.” Since the person had to intend to donate “*lishmi*” — for the sake of **Hashem** — the particular use for which he consecrated the item should have been of (little or) no significance, as long as it “came” into Hashem’s possession and was given “*lishmi*.” Thus, if a person consecrated an item to be used for the upkeep of the *heichal*, it would have been permitted to change its

³¹ {E.g., some types of sacrifices may be eaten until the end of the following day; others may only be eaten until daybreak on the following day.}

³² {To clarify: Both Rambam and Raavad agree that an object consecrated for *hekdesch bedek habayis* cannot be altered to *hekdesch Mizbeach* and vice versa, for this is stated explicitly in the *Mishnah*. Their dispute is if this law applies within each of these two categories individually. Rambam maintains that the law applies within both, and Raavad maintains that it is only forbidden to alter designations within the category of *hekdesch Mizbeach*; however, making changes within *hekdesch bedek habayis* is of no consequence.}

³³ {See footnote 28.}

³⁴ {An *olah* is completely burnt on the altar; no part of it is eaten by anyone and the entire offering is given to Hashem (i.e., it cannot be used after it is burnt). An *olah* could be from cattle, sheep, goats, or even birds, depending on the offerer's means.}

³⁵ {A *shelamim* is an offering expressing thanks or gratitude to Hashem for His bounties and mercies. A portion of the offering is burnt on the altar, a portion is given to the *kohanim*, and the rest is eaten by the person who offers the sacrifice and his family; thus, everyone gets a part of this offering. This category of offerings includes thanksgiving-offerings obligatory for survivors of life-threatening crises, free will-offerings, and offerings made after fulfillment of a vow.}

³⁶ *Terumah* for the *Mishkan* (in our *parshah*) was considered *bedek habayis*.

designation to be used for the upkeep of the altar, etc., because the intention “*lishmi*” (is not intended specifically for the *heichal*, rather, it) implies a general intention of *lishmah* for the Temple’s upkeep.

7.

WHO HAD TO HAVE THE INTENTION?

Regarding this law — that donations had to be given with the intention that it be “*lishmi*” — we might ask:

One of the donations mentioned in our verse is the *terumah* used for the altar by purchasing communal sacrifices. (As Rashi remarks here:³⁷ “Our Rabbis said: “Three offerings are mentioned here.”” The *halachah*³⁸ specifies that the donation for the *altar* is exacted by **force**, and they {the collectors} take collateral {from those who refuse to pay} for the *shekalim*.³⁹ If so, how can we propose that this donation had to be given “*lishmi*”? When a person donates against their will, they clearly have **no** {voluntary} intention at all, and certainly no intention to donate for the sake of Hashem!

Additionally, the above mentioned question raised by the commentators, “Why does the verse state “*veyikchu li*” and not “*veyitnu li* — they will give to Me?” remains unanswered.

We can posit that these questions **answer each other**. The law that donations (at least those given for the purpose of purchasing sacrifices) had to be “*lishmi*” did not apply to their **conferral**, i.e., that a person had to intend to **give** them for the sake of Hashem. Rather, this applied to “*veyikchu* {those who

³⁷ {*Shemos* 25:2, s.v. “*tikchu es terumasi*.” Rashi writes: “...One is the offering of a half-shekel per head, from which they made the sockets, as is delineated in *Shemos* 38:26, 27.... Another is the offering of a half-shekel per head for the community coffers, from which to purchase the communal sacrifices, and another is the offering for the *Mishkan*.”}

³⁸ *Shekalim*, ch. 1, *mishnah* 3,5; but Rashi does not quote this here in *parshas Ki Sisa*.

³⁹ {*Shekalim*, plural of shekel, in Hebrew, is a type of coin. However, *shekalim* is also a general term used as a reference for this “tax” collected for the purchase of sacrifices. It was given this name based on the words of the verse [*Shemos* 30:13] “*machatzis hashekel*.” Every Jew was required to donate a half-shekel coin for this purpose. These coins were occasionally also used to take a census.}

take}” — the Temple treasurers. They had to have the intention to **take** these donations from the Jewish people for the sake of Hashem.

[This corresponds to the two expressions used: “Speak to the **children of Israel, veyikchu li terumah; from every person....**” “Speak to the children of Israel” refers to the people who collected the donations, i.e., the treasurers; “from each person” refers to all the Jewish people who gave the materials.]

Therefore, since “*veyikchu*” refers to the collection of the Temple treasurers “*lishmi*,” it is immaterial that the person giving the donation was forced.

8.

THE TAKING ITSELF HAD TO FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN

We must still clarify the deeper meaning behind these issues:

The donation (of the half shekel) could be taken against the will of the person who gave it. This demonstrates that intention was not needed for this **donation** (unlike the donations for the construction of the *Mishkan*, given by self-motivated benefactors).⁴⁰ Of significance was only that the item be transferred to *hekdesh*. As such, why did the treasurers who collected these donations need to have the intention “*lishmi*”?

At first glance, we can answer this question based the Sages’ statement,⁴¹ “A community leader should not cast excessive fear on the community if not for the sake of Heaven.” Since the treasurers’ task was to collect donations from the Jewish people (even) by force, it was absolutely crucial that they had no ulterior motives. Therefore, they had to be forewarned to collect “*lishmi*,” for the sake of Hashem.

⁴⁰ {*Shemos* 25:2.}

⁴¹ *Rosh Hashanah* 17a.

This answer however, is not altogether adequate: On this basis, the requirement of “*lishmi*” did not relate to (taking) the **donations**, rather it related to the treasurers — that **they** had to do so for the sake of Heaven. However, the plain reading of the Torah’s wording implies that the requirement of “*lishmi*” related to (taking) the **donations**, that **it** had to be “*li — lishmi* {to Me — for My sake}.”

9.

DO NO EVIL VS. DO GOOD

The explanation:

This *terumah* was donated for the *Mishkan* and the sacrifices, in order to construct a *Mishkan* in which Hashem’s presence would dwell, and from there, would spread throughout the entire world.

When building a home befitting for a king, two tasks are necessary: “They must first dispose of any dirt... and only then can beautiful furnishings be {brought in and} arranged.”⁴² In our service of Hashem, these tasks correspond to turning from evil and doing good.⁴³ The difference between them: **Turning** from evil (only) serves to prepare and lay the groundwork for making a dwelling place for Hashem. Actually constructing it — bringing G-dliness into physical things in order to transform them into a dwelling place Hashem — is accomplished through “**doing** good.”

Thus, as explained by *Chassidus*, there is a distinction between the *avodah* of *turning from evil* and of *doing good*, :⁴⁴ In *turning from evil*, the **outcome** is of primary importance. How a person brings himself to refrain from disobeying Hashem’s will is inconsequential. He may even be motivated by selfishness, fear of sin, or the like. In contrast, when *doing good*, it is important to do so *lishmah*; a person’s entire intention should be for the sake of Hashem, and not for a self-serving reason. Since through this *avodah* a person draws G-dliness into the

⁴² *Likkutei Torah*, “*Balak*,” p. 70c; “*Shlach*,” p. 36d.

⁴³ {*Tehillim* 34:15.}

⁴⁴ *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5708, discourse entitled, “*Vayachalom*,” ch. 3 ff.

world and makes a dwelling for Hashem in the lower realms, his actions should be appropriate in order to enable G-dliness to dwell in the world. (Accordingly, he can have no ulterior motives, G-d forbid).

Therefore, the Sages say,⁴⁵ “A person should always engage in Torah study and the performance of *mitzvos*, even not for their own sake, for doing so not for their own sake will lead to doing so for their own sake.” Meaning, the reason why a person should perform Torah and *mitzvos* even for ulterior motives is not because **such** *avodah* is also adequate (for “actions are primary”).⁴⁶ Rather, it is because eventually he will reach his goal and objective — *avodah lishmah* — which then creates a perfect *dirah betachtonim*.⁴⁷

10.

THE EQUIVALENT GIVING AND COLLECTION

Just as these two {aforementioned} movements apply in an individual’s *avodah*, it also applies to our interaction with all the elements of the world that we use to build a *Mishkan* for Hashem:

- a) “**Turning away**” — Exiting the domain of “worldliness” which is under the domain of *klipas nogah*,⁴⁸ analogous to, “turn from evil.”
- b) Entering Hashem’s domain — when we consecrate something, we thereby create a *Mishkan* for Hashem, analogous to, “do good.”

On this basis, it is clear why it was acceptable that “the collectors take collateral {from those who refuse to pay} for the *shekalim*,” i.e., collecting from a

⁴⁵ *Pesachim* 50b.

⁴⁶ *Pirkei Avos* 1:17.

⁴⁷ {Home for Hashem in the lower realms.}

⁴⁸ {*Kelipah* translates literally as “a shell” or “a peel.” The term refers to anything that conceals, and thus opposes G-dliness, just as a shell or a peel conceals the fruit within. *Kelipah* is often used to refer to evil or impurity. *Kabbalah* delineates two distinct types of *kelipah*: *Kelipas nogah*—literally, a *kelipah* that can be illuminated, and *shalosh kelipos hatmeios* — “three totally impure *kelipos*.” *Kelipas nogah*, which includes most things in the world can be elevated and refined when used for a G-dly purpose, while conventionally, the only form of reformation or redemption for the three impure *kelipos* is their destruction. A *baal teshuva*, though, can even elevate the *shalosh kelipos hatmeios*. (See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 14, “*Vezos Haberacha*,” 1st *sichah*, section 6.)}

donor who gives under coercion. Intention (*lishmi*) is unnecessary when turning from evil, since the practical outcome is of primary matter of importance — extracting the *terumah* from the domain of *kelipas nogah*. However, the collection of the Temple treasurers who bring the *terumah* into the domain of holiness had to be done “*lishmi*.”

11.

TERUMAH — SEPARATING FROM THE MUNDANE AND ELEVATING TO HOLINESS

These two elements are reflected in the two interpretations of the word *terumah* (mentioned above): separation; and elevation, lifting.

Separation, which on a simple level means *removing something from a mixture* {in the context of *terumah*} refers to the separation from mundane matters. Similarly, as this idea applies to people, separation means *removing something from a person’s domain*. Elevation and lifting means, as mentioned, elevating {the spiritual level of} an item, bringing it into the domain of holiness.

Rashi alludes to this concept by writing “*li — lishmi*” after quoting the words, “*veyikchu li terumah*,” but **before** writing “*terumah* means separating.” (Before reading Rashi’s explanation, “*terumah* means separating,” a student would naturally understand the word *terumah* literally: “lifting.”) For the requirement, “*lishmi*” (primarily) relates to the act of lifting, i.e., the act of bringing matters into the domain of *hekdesh*, and not to the act of separating the item from a person’s domain.

12.

HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE

The lesson for our service of Hashem:

When a Jew wants to influence his fellow by drawing him closer to Torah and *mitzvos* in fulfillment of the *mitzvah*,⁴⁹ “You shall surely rebuke your

⁴⁹ *Vayikra* 19:17.

fellow,” he may think: “Indeed, my study of Torah and performance of *mitzvos* must be done properly: “*lishmah*.” But as far as influencing others, the practical outcome is of primary importance — the person I am working with should begin to don *tefillin*, refrain from sinning, or the like. But the **way** I achieve this goal is not (so) relevant.” Consequently, one’s rebuke may have feelings mixed in that are opposite of love for a fellow Jew. Or a person may feel that since **he** is the admonisher, he is superior to the other person, etc.

Although he realizes that thinking this way constitutes a shortcoming in his service of Hashem, as he has not yet refined his character completely, and still has feelings of *yeshus*.⁵⁰ {He thinks to himself,} “What has this got to do with my ability to positively influence another person? The other should accept the truth no matter from whom it comes.⁵¹ This applies especially to *turning from evil*, in which a person’s intention is certainly irrelevant,” as discussed.

This, then, is the lesson: This type of calculation is only relevant for the other person, who should want to run away from evil by any effective method. However, a person setting out to improve his fellow must act *lishmah*, even when trying to persuade his fellow to rethink his bad choices. For his efforts to influence others are always considered *doing good for him*, and proactive activities must be done *lishmah*. Furthermore, when it is noticeable that the influencer’s *lishmah* is deficient, that he has ulterior motives, etc., not only does his own *avodah* suffer, but his (needed) impact on the other person will also be inadequate.

Therefore, the teaching that a person “should not cast excessive fear”⁵² on the community unless he does so for the sake of Heaven also applies when attempting to influence the community to avoid evil, and the like. For if an unseemly interest is mixed in with his motives,⁵³ he will not fully realize his objective.

⁵⁰ {*Yeshus* connotes an exaggerated sense of self, self-importance, and an over-embellished focus on one’s needs to the exclusion of those of others.}

⁵¹ Rambam’s *Perush HaMishnayos*, “*Hakdamah LePirkei Avos*” (Kapach ed.); *Rema*’s introduction to *Mechir Yayin*.

⁵² {Cf. Gittin 6b.}

⁵³ {In the euphemistic original Hebrew, “*hergesch hafchi*”; lit. “a contrary feeling.”}

When a person performs this *avodah* “*lishmi*,” however, even if compels the other person, employing coercion — “strong arming {מעשׂין} someone to give charity,”⁵⁴ or the like — then “he receives a greater reward than the person who gave, as alluded to by the verse,⁵⁵ ‘And the deed {מעשה} of charity is peace.’ Regarding charity collectors and the like, Scripture says,⁵⁶ ‘Those who bring merit to the many are like the stars.’”⁵⁷ And {our Sages taught}, “Giving charity (even such {involuntarily given} charity) is great, and hastens the Redemption.”

⁵⁸

-Based on a talk delivered on Shabbos, *parshas Terumah*, 5725 (1965)

⁵⁴ {See *Bava Batra* 9a; *Chidushei Aggados*, by Maharal, ad loc.}

⁵⁵ {*Yeshaya* 32:17.}

⁵⁶ {*Daniel* 12:3.}

⁵⁷ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Matnos Aniyim*,” ch. 10, par. 6.

⁵⁸ *Bava Basra* 10a.