

The Ohev Yisrael's Amazing Revelation

“תקחו את תרומת-י” and “ויקחו לי תרומה-ה” Two Distinct Types of Contributions

In this week's parsha, parshas Terumah, we read (Shemos 25, 1): “וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו לי תרומה מאת: **“לי לשמי”**—Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: **Speak to Bnei Yisrael and they shall take to Me a portion (תרומה), from every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion (תרומתי).** Regarding the words “ויקחו לי תרומה”, Rashi comments: **“לי לשמי”**—**for Me, for the sake of My name.** Understood simply, Rashi is justifying the use of the term “לי”, which is seemingly superfluous. It would have sufficed to say: **“ויקחו תרומה מאת כל איש”**—**and they shall take a portion from every man.** Hence, Rashi explains that the portion should be designated **“for the sake of My name.”** This still deserves further explanation, since all of the mitzvos must be performed for the sake of Hashem. So, why did HKB”H emphasize that aspect of the mitzvah specifically here?

Additionally, it is worth examining that which is written later on in the parsha (ibid. 3): **“וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם זהב: וכסף ונחשת, ותכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש ועזים, ועורות אילים מאדמים ועורות תחשים ועצי שטים”**—**this is the portion that you shall take from them: gold, and silver, and copper; and turquoise wool, and purple wool, and scarlet wool; and linen and goats' hair; and ram skins that are dyed red, and “techashim” skins, and shittim wood.** Rashi provides the following clarification (ibid. 5): **“תחשים, מין חיה, ולא היתה אלא לשעה, והרבה גוונים היו לה, “techashim” refers to a type of animal which existed only at that time; it had many colors; Therefore it is rendered by Targum Onkelos as “sasgonah”; for it rejoices and prides itself in its colors. [“Sas” means rejoice; “gevanim” means colors.]** The source for this comment is the Gemara (Shabbas 28a): **“אמר רב יוסף, Rav Yosef said: If so, that is why we translate it as “sasgonah,” because it delights in its many colors.**

The Gemara (ibid.) provides us with an additional tremendous chiddush: **“תחש שהיה בימי משה בריה בפני עצמה היה... ולפי שעה נזדמן לו למשה, ועשה ממנו משכן ונגנז”**—**the tachash that existed in the times of Moshe was a unique creature. . . It was available for Moshe for a short period of time; he made the Mishkan with it and then it was stored away.** As the pesukim explain later on in the parsha, HKB”H instructed him to use the techashim skins as a covering for the tent; they were to cover the roof of the tent which was made from sheets of goat-skin, as it is written (26, 14): **“ועשית מכסה לאהל עורות אילים מאדמים ומכסה: עורות תחשים מלמעלה”**—**you shall make a cover for the tent of red-dyed ram skins, and a cover of tachash skins above.**

We must endeavor to explain why HKB”H created a living creature **“that delights and takes pride in its own colors”** in order to cover the Mishkan with its skin. Furthermore, the purpose of the Mishkan was to provide a dwelling-place for the Shechinah, as it states (Shemos 25, 8): **“ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי”**—**they shall make Me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them.** Now, we know that HKB”H disdains the haughty and only rests His Shechinah on the humble. Chazal teach us (Sotah 5a): **“כל אדם שיש בו גסות הרוח, אמר הקב”ה אין אני והוא יכולין לדור: --concerning any person who possesses a haughtiness of spirit, HKB”H says: I and he cannot dwell together in the world.** That being the case, why did HKB”H see fit to create such a creature for the sake of the Mishkan **“that delights and takes pride in its own colors”**? Self-pride is diametrically opposed to the characteristic of humility.

There Were Two Types of Donations Corresponding to the Name ה”

We shall begin our investigation with an illuminating and precious introduction from the remarkable teachings of the great Rabbi of Apta, zy”a, in Ohev Yisrael. He addresses the passuk: **“ויקחו”**

“לי תרומה מואת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי” Why is the term “תרומה” employed in the beginning of the passuk, while the term “תרומתי” is employed in the conclusion of the passuk? He provides an answer based on an elucidation in the Gemara (Menachos 29b) concerning the passuk (Yeshayah 26, 4): “בטחו בה’ עדי עד כי ביה ה’ צור:” **“trust in Hashem forever, for in ‘Yud—hei,’ Hashem, is the strength of the worlds.** The Gemara teaches us that HKB”H created the two worlds with the name “יה”; Olam HaBa--the World to Come--was created with the letter “yud” and Olam HaZeh--this world--was created with the letter “hei.”

Now, HKB”H commanded each member of Yisrael to give a donation to the Mishkan. Each person was to give the best portion of that which he loved and valued the most to the building of the Mishkan. Accordingly, Yisrael’s contributions to the Mishkan fell into two categories. The first category was comprised of the contributions of the majority of the populace. The Ohev Yisrael characterizes them definitively as: **“המון עם המשוקעים בתאוות העולם הזה, ויקר בעיניהם חמדת הממון כסף וזהב בלי גבול—”the masses of the people engrossed in the pursuits of Olam HaZeh; they value and covet money, silver and gold, without any limit and in any amount.** Therefore, they were instructed to donate to Hashem from silver and gold of Olam HaZeh—that which they valued most. Regarding this category, it states: **“ויקחו לי תרומה”**; the word “תרומה” can be broken down to form **“תרומה”**—indicating that they were to donate from their worldly belongings, which were created with the letter “hei.”

In stark contrast, there was the second category consisting of tzaddikim, who were totally removed from matters of Olam HaZeh. The Ohev Yisrael characterizes them as: **“אנשים צדיקים שכל עסקי עולם הזה אינם נחשבים בעיניהם למאומה, והמובחר והטוב בעיניו—”tzaddikim who viewed all matters related to Olam HaZeh as meaningless; the choice and best in the eyes of the tzaddik consisted solely of service to Hashem, blessed be He.** Thus, they were instructed to contribute to Hashem spiritual service related to Olam HaBa. Regarding this category, it states: **“מואת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו—”**from those pure enough to cling to Hashem **“you shall take תרומתי.”** The word “תרומתי” breaks down to form **“תרומה”**—indicating that they were to donate from matters of Olam HaBa created with the letter “yud.” This concludes his remarks.

This obligates us to explain and endeavor to comprehend the nature of the tzaddikim’s contribution to the Mishkan. They did not donate **“תרומה”**—from worldly belongings created with the letter “hei,” because they did not value money.

So, how did they contribute to the building of the Mishkan from matters pertaining to Olam HaBa—such as Torah and service of Hashem—which are alluded to by the term **“תרומתי - תרומה”**? Is it possible to construct a Mishkan with Torah and divine service?

The Tzaddik’s Pure Intentions “לשמה” Rectify the Performance of the Mitzvah “שלא לשמה”

It appears that we can explain his holy idea based on an important principle the great Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli, zy”a, revealed to us. He addresses that which the Gemara (Chullin 7b) ascribes to Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair. He explains to Rabeinu hakadosh the reason that he refuses to benefit from other human beings: **“יש רוצה ואין לו ויש שיש לו ואינו—”the people of Yisrael are holy; there is the person who wants to share but lacks sufficient resources; then there is the person who has sufficient resources but does not sincerely want to share.** Tosafot ask an obvious question. If the latter individual possesses the resources to share with others but does not wish to do so, why is he considered holy? They answer that in reality he does not sincerely wish to share with others; nevertheless, he invites others to share his food due to his sense of embarrassment. Even so, it is still difficult to comprehend why he is referred to as holy.

Rabbi Zusha, zy”a, explains. It is known that the performance of every mitzvah generates a holy malach; it acts as an advocate on behalf of the person who performed the mitzvah. Although a malach is a spiritual creature, it is nonetheless composed of a body and a neshamah. The body of the malach is generated by the actual performance of the mitzvah; while the proper intent to perform the mitzvah generates the neshamah of the malach.

With this understanding, it turns out that a person who has sufficient funds but is reluctant to give tzedakah, yet he gives anyways out of embarrassment, generates only the body of a malach; for he performed the actual mitzvah alBeis unwillingly. Seeing as he did not perform the mitzvah l’shmah, the neshamah of the malach is still lacking. In contrast, the person who wishes to give tzedakah but lacks sufficient funds to perform the mitzvah, generates the neshamah of a malach; for, he sincerely desires and intends to fulfill the mitzvah. Seeing as he is unable to actually perform the mitzvah, the body of the malach is lacking. So, how does HKB”H remedy the situation? In His infinite mercy and kindness, He combines the first person’s deed with the second person’s intent. Together they form a complete, holy malach containing both a body and a neshamah.

This then is the message conveyed by Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair: **“Yisrael are holy!”** In other words, when the two types are joined together, they form a holy union. He explains how this works: **“There is the person who wants to share but lacks sufficient resources”**—his good intentions generate the malach’s neshamah; **“then there is the person who has sufficient resources but does not sincerely want to share”**—yet, he gives out of embarrassment; his act, alBeis insincere, generates the malach’s body. HKB”H combines the deed with the thought in order to produce both a complete mitzvah and a complete malach.

We find this noble idea also expressed by his holy brother, Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, zy”a, in his Noam Elimelech (Metzora). He addresses our blessed sages’ statement (Pesachim 50b): **“לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה ומצוות אף על פי שלא לשמה”**—**“a person should always engage in the study of Torah and the performance of mitzvos even though his actions are not purely motivated—not l’shmah; because from these activities that are not purely motivated he will eventually come to learn Torah and perform mitzvos for its own sake, with the purest of intentions—l’shmah. In other words, HKB”H takes the Torah and mitzvos that were learned and performed “not l’shmah” and brings them to the tzaddik who has pure intentions “l’shmah”—thereby purifying and completing the Torah and mitzvos that were performed not l’shmah.**

In this manner, he explains the significance of the Gemara’s precise choice of terminology (Kiddushin 40a): **“מחשבה טובה”**—**“מחשבה למעשה—He associates a proper thought with an actual deed. Seemingly, the Gemara should have said: “מחשבה”**—**“מחשבה—He considers a proper thought as an actual deed. However, they are conveying the message that HKB”H “combines” the proper intentions of the tzaddik—which were l’shmah—with the actual performance of the mitzvah by the person who lacked the proper intentions l’shmah. The combination of the two together completes the mitzvah in ideal fashion. This concludes his words.**

The Tzaddikim Contributed the Intentions L’shmah

Now, we can rejoice at having gained a better understanding of the holy words of the Ohev Yisrael regarding the two categories of donations. The first category was donated by those heavily mired in the concerns of Olam HaZeh; they contribute to Hashem that which is most dear to them. Regarding this

group, HKB”H says: **“They shall take to Me תרומה”**—from earthly matters created with the letter “hei.” However, since they are so engrossed in the pursuits of Olam HaZeh, it is impossible for them to have proper intentions l’shmah. Seeing as the Mishkan was built as a dwelling-place for the Shechinah, it could not very well be built from contributions lacking proper intentions—i.e. not purely for the sake of Hashem.

Therefore, HKB”H immediately added the following proviso: **“מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו”**—**from every man whose heart will motivate him**—namely the tzaddik whose pure heart motivates him to contribute to the construction of the Mishkan. The tzaddik, however, cannot actually donate material components, because he has dissociated himself from matters pertaining to Olam HaZeh. Hence, regarding the tzaddik, the Torah specifies: **“You shall take תרומת י”**—**תרומת י”**—you shall combine his pure intentions and sincere desire to complete the intentions which were lacking from the contributions of the rest of Yisrael. The combination of these two contributions--**תרומה - תרומה י”**—will complete the contributions to the Mishkan in the ideal fashion corresponding to the name **י”ה**.

This provides us with a very nice explanation for Rashi’s comment: **“ויקחו לי תרומה, לי לשמי”**. Rashi was bothered by the language of the passuk. Why does it say: **“ויקחו לי תרומה”**—**they shall take to Me a portion**—rather than: **“ויתנו לי תרומה”**—**they shall give Me a portion?** Therefore, Rashi comments that they shall take **“for Me, for the sake of My name”**; because those who are engrossed and mired in matters of Olam HaZeh find it difficult to contribute l’shmah. Hence, HKB”H specifies to those performing the labor: **“ויקחו לי תרומה”**—take care that even the contributions of the majority of the populace be in the form of **תרומה - תרומה י”**; their contributions should be **“for the sake of My name”**—for the sake of the name **י”ה**, with which HKB”H created the two worlds.

The Torah goes on to explain how to complete the divine name: **“מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו”**—you shall take contributions from the tzaddikim, who are motivated to contribute wholeheartedly to the Mishkan even though they are not capable of contributing in actual deed; take from them **“תרומת י”**—**תרומת י”**—that which is associated with the letter “yud.” Thus, HKB”H will combine the thoughts of the tzaddikim l’shmah with the actual contributions of the masses donated not l’shmah. From the two together, the name **י”ה** will be formed to erect the Mishkan in the perfect manner.

I would like to add a wonderful idea I heard from my teacher and Rebbe, the esteemed Admor of Belz, shlit"a, at his holy table on the evening of Shabbas Kodesh parshas Terumah 5751. Based on what we have learned from the Ohev Yisrael, he explained the Gemara's statement (Berachos 55a): **יודע היה "Betzalel knew how to combine the letters with which the heavens and the earth were created.** The Gemara is teaching us that in the process of building the Mishkan, he understood how to form the name **יה"ו** with which the heavens and the earth were created. He accomplished this feat by combining the contributions of the simple folk—who gave in the form of **תרומה** - תרומה - with the contributions of the tzaddikim—given in the form of **תרומת י** - תרומת י. The two together represent the divine name **יה"ו**. This concludes his wonderful idea.

Now, we can comprehend why HKB"H commanded that the Mishkan be covered with the skins of techashim. As explained, the tachash was a unique creature, created by HKB"H for that short period of time. Its name derives from the fact: **ששש**—"that it rejoices and takes pride in the magnificence of its own colors. HKB"H wished to convey the message that we should not think erroneously that He chooses only the color of the minority who serve Hashem in an exalted manner. Rather, HKB"H delights and takes pride in all the different colors and shades of those who serve Him—each according to his personal spiritual level and capacity—as it is written (Yeshayah 49, 3): **ישראל אשר בך אתפאר**—**Yisrael in whom I take pride.**

The proof of this fact is that this is why HKB"H commanded that the Mishkan be built from a combination of these two types of contributions—the donations of the masses in the form of **תרומה** and the donations of the tzaddikim in the form of **תרומת י**. Although the contributions of the majority of the populace were lacking and imperfect, HKB"H strove, so to speak, to refine their deeds by combining them with the contributions of the tzaddikim. These then are the multiple colors in which HKB"H delights and takes pride.

Fifteen Shir HaMa'alos for Fifteen Spiritual Levels

I was struck by a wonderful idea. Based on our current discussion, we can begin to understand why there were fifteen steps in the Beis HaMikdash ascending from the Ezras Nashim to the Ezras Yisrael. These steps corresponded to the

fifteen Shir HaMa'alos (Songs of Ascents) composed by David HaMelech in sefer Tehillim (from Mizmor 120 to Mizmor 135). The Leviim stood on these fifteen steps during the Simchat Beis HaShoeivah to sing their songs. We learned this in the Mishnah with regards to the Ezras Nashim (Midot 2, 5): **ועשרה מעלות עולות מתוכה לעזרת ישראל, כנגד חמש עשרה מעלות שבתהלים, שעליהן הלויים וחמש עשרה מעלות—and fifteen steps ascended from its midst to the Ezras Yisrael--corresponding to the fifteen ascents in Tehillim--on them the Leviim sang their songs.**

We find a similar teaching in the Mishnah (Succah 51a) with regards to the Simchat Beis HaShoeivah: **חסידים ואנשי מעשה היו מרקדין בפניהם באבוקות של אור שבידיהן, ואומרים לפניו דברי שירות ותשבחות, והלויים בכינורות ובנבלים ובמצלות ובכלי שיר בלא מספר, על חמש עשרה מעלות היורדות מעזרת ישראל לעזרת נשים, כנגד חמש עשרה מעלות שבתהלים, שעליהן לויים עומדין בכלי שיר ואומרים שירה**—**Chassidim and men of good deeds would dance before them with flaming torches in their hands, and say before them words of songs and praises. And the Leviim, with their harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets and countless other musical instruments, stood on the fifteen steps that led down from the Ezras Yisrael to the Ezras Nashim, which corresponded to the fifteen "Shir HaMa'alos" in Tehillim. For on them the Leviim would stand with their musical instruments and utter song.**

A similar explanation is found in Rashi's commentary on the first of the fifteen Shir HaMa'alos (Tehillim 120, 1): **שיר המעלות. שיאמרו הלויים אותו על חמש עשרה מעלות היורדות מעזרת ישראל עד עזרת נשים, ויש כאן ט"ו מזמורים של שיר המעלות.**

In Gevuros Hashem (Chapter 59), the Maharal of Prague explains at great length the significance of the fifteen steps in the Beis HaMikdash between the Ezras Nashim and the Ezras Yisrael. Seeing as HKB"H created the worlds with the two letters **יה**, as it is written: **כי ביה ה' צור עולמים**—this is an indication that there are fifteen levels in the world to climb and ascend. [Translator's note: The letter "yud" possesses a numerical value of ten, while the letter "hei" possesses a numerical value of five; therefore, their sum equals fifteen.] They extend from the lowest level represented by the Ezras Nashim—alluding to those lowly people who still maintain the cravings of women; they extend up to the highest level represented by the Ezras Yisrael—alluding to the tzaddikim who serve Hashem in an exalted manner. There are fifteen days from the beginning of the month to the full moon corresponding to these fifteen levels. Here is an excerpt from the Maharal's explanation:

“ולכך היו גם כן חמשה עשר מעלות מעזרת הנשים עד עזרת ישראל, כי יש לדעת כי מדרגת הנשים היא המדרגה היותר שפלה נוטה אל החומרית, ועד עזרת ישראל ט”ו מעלות, כי בין המעלה החומרית ובין המעלה הנבדלת ט”ו מעלות. לפיכך אמרו שם (סוכה נא): כאשר ירדו מן המעלות הפכו פניהם אל המקדש, ואמרו לי”ה עינינו, הזכירו שם י”ה, כלומר אבותינו היו הולכים אחר הדברים השפלים, והיו משתחוים לחמה וכיוצא בזה מן הדברים הגשמיים, ואנו עינינו לי”ה שאנו הולכים אחר הקב”ה המתעלה על כל המעלות ועליון על כל”.

Therefore, there were also fifteen steps from the Ezras Nashim to the Ezras Yisrael; for it is essential to realize that the level of the women represents the lowest level—tending toward materialism. There are fifteen steps up to the Ezras Yisrael; because there are fifteen levels between the level of materialism and the level of the sublime. Therefore, it is taught there (Succah 51b) that when they descended the steps, they turned their faces toward the Mikdash and uttered: “Our eyes are to ה”י.” In other words, our ancestors followed lowly pursuits; they bowed down to the sun and similar physical objects. We, our eyes look toward G-d (ה”י); we follow HKB”H, Who rises above all of the levels and is superior to everything else.

Shevet Levi Was Already Chosen by Yaakov Avinu

Continuing along the path paved for us by the Maharal, let us proceed to explain why the Leviim stood on the fifteen steps between the Ezras Nashim and the Ezras Yisrael to utter their song. We shall refer to the words of the Rambam (Hilchos Avodas Kochavim 1, 3). He writes that Levi was already chosen by his father, Yaakov Avinu, to be the Rosh Yeshivah entrusted with the task of teaching Yisrael the ways of Hashem. He enumerates there the tradition of Torah and emunah that was handed down from Avraham Avinu to his son Yitzchak and from Yitzchak Avinu to his son Yaakov:

“ויעקב אבינו למד בניו כולם, והבדיל לוי ומינהו ראש, והושיבו בישיבה ללמד דרך השם ולשמור מצוות אברהם, וצוה את בניו שלא יפסיקו מבני לוי ממונה אחר ממונה כדי שלא תשכח הלימוד, והיה הדבר הולך ומתגבר בבני יעקב ובנלווים עליהם, ונעשית בעולם אומה שהיא יודעת את ה’, עד שארכו הימים לישראל במצרים וחזרו ללמוד מעשיהן ולעבוד כוכבים כמותן, חוץ משבט לוי שעמד במצוות אבות, ומעולם לא עבד שבט לוי עבודת כוכבים”.

According to the Rambam, the tribe of Levi (Shevet Levi) was always designated as the elite of the people. It was their task to connect with Yisrael and influence them with their Torah and emunah in Hashem. This is why HKB”H did not give Shevet Levi

a portion or inheritance in Eretz Yisrael. Instead, He obligated all of Yisrael to separate “terumot” and “ma’asrot” to be given to the Kohanim and the Leviim. This procedure would fortify the relationship between them and would enable Shevet Levi to elevate Yisrael from their current level and connect them to HKB”H. In truth, however, the main and ultimate connection was achieved in the Beis HaMikdash. There the sinner was obligated to bring his korban; the Kohanim would sacrifice the korban; and the Leviim would utter the song of the day over the korban.

Shevet Levi Did Not Take Property from Mitzrayim

Now, let us present a fascinating tidbit worth publicizing concerning Shevet Levi found in Siftei Kohen, authored by the divine kabbalist, Rabbi Mordechai hakohen, one of the young disciples of the Arizal (Korach):

“שמעתי שכשאמר הקב”ה למשה (שמות יא-ב) דבר נא באזני העם וישאלו איש מאת רעהו וגו’, ולא נאמר זה אלא לישראל שהוא להם חלף עבודתם, אבל שבט לוי שלא היו בעבודה לא הותר להם והוא גזל בידם, כי אחת משבע מצוות בני נח הוא הגזל, ולזה שבט לוי לא הקריבו קרבנות עם הנשיאים, שלא היה להם קערת כסף מזרק כסף כף אחת עשרה זהב, והם כולם עניים מחזרין על הגרנות, ושום אחד מבני לוי לא פשט יד לא בבית הים ולא שאלו ממצרים...”

ומכאן תדע מעלתו וקדושתו של בני לוי, שראו כל כך ממון ולא חמדוהו, ובביזה לא שלחו את ידם, כי מאסו בחמדת העולם נגד לימודם, ואמרו (תהלים קיט-עב) טוב לי תורת פיך מאלפי זהב וכסף... ועל זה בחר בהם הקב”ה והבטיחם ואמר להם (במדבר יח-כ) אני חלקך ונחלתך וגו’.

I heard that when HKB”H told Moshe (Shemos 11, 2) to instruct the people of Yisrael to request certain items from their Egyptian neighbors as compensation for their labor, this did not include Shevet Levi; for they did not perform hard labor in Mitzrayim; thus, they were not permitted to confiscate Egyptian property; for them to do so would have been tantamount to stealing. After all stealing was prohibited as one of the seven Noahide laws. For this reason, Shevet Levi did not offer korbanot with the other princes of Yisrael, because they did not possess a silver bowl, a silver bowl, one ladle of gold weighing ten shekel; they were all paupers seeking handouts at the granaries. No member of Levi availed himself of the booty at the sea and none of them borrowed goods from the Egyptians...

This exemplifies the spiritual level and kedushah of the children of Levi. They saw so much wealth and did not covet it; they did not take from the booty; for they despised the

desire of this world, which conflicts with what they profess. Their doctrine was (Tehillim 119, 72): **"I prefer the Torah of Your mouth to thousands in gold and silver."** . . . Hence, HKB"H chose them and promised them (Bamidbar 18, 20): **"I am your portion and your legacy . . ."**

Let us apply this tidbit to the Ohev Yisrael's explanation regarding the two types of contributions brought by Yisrael for the construction of the Mishkan. On the one hand, there was the contribution of the general populace consisting of silver, gold and bronze—items belonging to Olam HaZeh—representing **תרומה** - **תרומה**. Secondly, there was the spiritual contribution provided by the tzaddikim pertaining to Olam HaBa—representing **תרומת י**. This latter group comprised of tzaddikim refers to Shevet Levi, who did not possess silver or gold; for, as we learned, they despised the desires and pursuits of Olam HaZeh.

Thus, we learn that already at the time of the construction of the Mishkan, Shevet Levi merited combining their spiritual contribution—represented by the letter "yud"—with Yisrael's contribution—represented by the letter "hei." The combination of the two contributions achieved a tikun for Yisrael's portion; because HKB"H joined the good intentions of Shevet Levi with the actual material contributions of all of Yisrael. In this manner, the Mishkan was constructed by means of the magnificent union of the name **יה**, with which HKB"H created Olam HaBa and Olam HaZeh.

This enlightens us as to why the Leviim stood on the fifteen steps in the Beis HaMikdash extending from the Ezras Nashim to the Ezras Yisrael—corresponding to the name **יה**—to utter their song. For, the purpose of their song was to elevate Yisrael from the lowest level within the realm of the letter "hei" in the Ezras Nashim to the highest level within the realm of the letter "yud" in the Ezras Yisrael. For, by means of their "shirah"—their song—they influenced Yisrael with kedushah, enabling them to ascend from level to level. This fact is alluded to by the very term **שיר** which breaks down to the letters **שד י**—alluding to the fact that as a result of their singing, Yisrael ascended fifteen levels.

David HaMelech Composed Fifteen Shir HaMa'alos

Rising to the occasion, let us proceed to clarify Rashi's comment that David HaMelech composed fifteen Shir HaMa'alos **"that the Leviim would utter on the fifteen steps**

descending from the Ezras Yisrael to the Ezras Nashim." As the King of Yisrael, it was his sacred duty to connect the common folk with the people of virtue. The Gemara expresses this fact as follows (Berachos 3b):

"כינור היה תלוי למעלה ממיטתו של דוד, וכיון שהגיע חצות לילה בא רוח צפונית ונושבת בו ומנגן מאליו, מיד היה עומד ועוסק בתורה עד שעלה עמוד השחר, כיון שעלה עמוד השחר נכנסו חכמי ישראל אצלו, אמרו לו אדונינו המלך עמך ישראל צריכין פרנסה, אמר להם לכו והתפרנסו זה מזה."

A harp hung above David's bed. At midnight, a northerly wind came and blew on it and it played by itself. Immediately, he would get up and engage in Torah-study until the break of dawn. At the break of dawn, the sages of Yisrael would enter his quarters. They would say to him, "Our master, the King, your people Yisrael require sustenance." He would reply to them, "Go and support each other."

The Panim Yafos (Vayechi) explains David's reply to the sages: **"Go and support each other."** He was indicating that the masses should support the Torah scholars; conversely, the Torah scholars should support the masses with their Torah and service of Hashem. Now, we can suggest that this is why David HaMelech composed fifteen Shir HaMa'alos—Songs of Ascents—to be sung by the Leviim on the fifteen steps between the Ezras Nashim and the Ezras Yisrael. They were designed to elevate Yisrael from the lowly level of Ezras Nashim to the elevated level of Ezras Yisrael.

This explains very nicely why HKB"H commanded the Kohanim, who were from Shevet Levi, to bless Yisrael with the formula of Birkat Kohanim in the Beis HaMikdash. As the Rishonim explain, the priestly blessings are composed of precisely fifteen words corresponding to the name **יה**. By means of these blessings, the Kohanim bestowed upon Yisrael the blessing of shalom, as mentioned at the conclusion of these blessings: **וישם** **"לך שלום—and He should bestow peace (shalom) upon you."** Based on what we have learned, this blessing of shalom is aimed at uniting the common folk who serve Hashem in the realm of the letter "hei" with the Kohanim who serve Hashem in the realm of the letter "yud." This serves the same purpose as the Leviim's song on the fifteen steps extending between the Ezras Nashim and the Ezras Yisrael.

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