

Parsha Ponders

Terumah / Zachor | February 17, 2021 | 5 Adar 5781

Amazing abode allusions¹

דבר אל בני-ישראל ויקחו-לי תרומה מאת כל-איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את-תרומתי: וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם זהב וכסף ונחשת

Speak to the Children of Israel: “Take for Me a portion from each person. [From] those whose heart feels generous, take My portion. This is the portion that you should take from them: gold, silver, and copper”²

This week’s *parsha* introduces us to the *Mishkan*, or Tabernacle, the portable Temple that the Jews constructed and used in the wilderness. It was literally a place for Hashem’s presence in this world. His presence was palpable, and allowed the Jews a chance to connect with Hashem in a way we can only imagine. The Torah tells us that the Jews were asked to take part in its construction. Each person would donate the materials needed for the *Mishkan*, donating what they saw fit. Besides gold, silver, and copper, many other materials are listed. However, if we focus on these three materials, we’ll find an amazing allusion hidden in their letters³.

The Hebrew letters for gold, זהב, silver, כסף, copper, נחשת, spell out the days and times that we read from a *sefer Torah*. זהב has ז, which is the numerical value for seven, as in the seventh day of the week, Shabbos. כ is two, and ה is five, which represent the second and fifth days of the week, Monday and Thursday, respectively. כסף has כ, which is for כפור, as in Yom Kippur, ס is for Sukkos, and פ is for Purim and Pesach. נחשת has נ, which is for נר, referring to Chanukah. ח is for חודש, as in Rosh Chodesh. Rosh Hashanah is included, as it is also Rosh Chodesh. ש is for Shavuos and Shemini Atzeres. ת is for תענית, meaning fast days⁴. While this is a very cool allusion, what is it doing here? What does reading from the Torah have to do with the *Mishkan*?

One explanation could come from a *Midrash*⁵. Our Sages quote the verse כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם, תורת י, א, א great purchase I have given you; do not forsake My Torah⁶. We see the Torah is compared to a purchase. Now, usually, when someone purchases gold, they by definition didn’t purchase silver. Or if they purchase silver, they didn’t purchase gold. The Torah however is not like this. We were given the Torah, which contains both silver and gold. It says in Psalms that the Torah is purified silver⁷, and the Torah is more desired than gold⁸. It would stand to reason then that if the Torah is equivalent to silver and gold, that the times we read from it should be alluded to in the words for silver and gold. Very nice, but is there a more tangible lesson we can glean from this allusion?

¹ Based on [VeDarashta VeChakarta VI parshas Terumah 5767 \(LePurim\) Belyan Kriyas Aseres Benei Haman § 7 s.v. טובה](#), and by [Rav Aharon Yehudah Grossman](#), Rosh Kollel in Brachfeld, Modiin Illit, Israel

² [Exodus 25:2,3](#)

³ The following allusion is cited by many works in the name of the [Chasam Sofer](#). Indeed, it appears in his [Toras Moshe I parshas Terumah](#) (at the very end). For some reason, [VeDarashta VeChakarta](#) cites it from the [Vilna Gaon](#), who was forty years the [Chasam Sofer](#)’s senior. However, I didn’t find anyone else cite it in the [Vilna Gaon](#)’s name. Furthermore, in [Kesav VeChasam Sofer parshas Terumah](#) (published in 1988 from a manuscript of a student of the [Kesav Sofer](#)), it’s cited as from the [Chasam Sofer](#)’s teacher, [Rav Nosson Adler](#)

⁴ ת is also for Simchas Torah. In [Kesav VeChasam Sofer](#) it also has ת is for Tisha B’Av

⁵ [Shemos Rabbah 33:1](#)

⁶ [Proverbs 4:2](#)

⁷ [Psalms 12:7](#)

⁸ [Ibid 19:11](#)

There's another *Midrash*⁹ which gives a different explanation for why the Torah is compared to a purchase. Have you ever heard of someone who sells something to another, and includes themselves in the purchase? Obviously when a person sells something, they're not selling themselves as well¹⁰. Yet, the Torah is different. Hashem tells us in this week's *parsha* that when He gave us the Torah, He gave us Himself as well (so to speak)¹¹, as it says: ויקחו לי תרומה, take Me for a portion¹². What does this mean? Let's explain with a parable.

There was once a King with an only child, a daughter. Another King from a distant land courted her and they were married. As they were about to depart for the distant land, the King, her father, had one request. "My daughter whom I have married off to you is my only child. I can't part myself from her, due to our close relationship. To tell her not to go with you, I also can't do, since she is now your wife. Rather, please do me the following favor: Every place that you go, please prepare a small room¹³ for me. This way, whenever I please, I can stay by you when I visit. I can't bear the thought of never seeing my daughter again." The exact same is with Hashem. Hashem told the Jewish people that, "I gave you the Torah. To part from it, I can not do. To tell you not to take it, I can not do. Rather, any place that you go, make a House for Me to dwell in". As it says, "Make for Me a Sanctuary"¹⁴.

We see then that our Sages saw an intricate connection between the Torah and the *Mishkan*. The whole reason why the *Mishkan* was constructed was for the Torah. This explains why the Torah, when describing the portions that the people should donate for the *Mishkan*, used the word תרומה. *Terumah*, also the name of the *parsha*, is the same letters as תורה, with an extra מ. The letter מ has the numerical value of forty, as Moshe learned the Torah for forty days and forty nights before he taught it to the people^{15 16}. As such, it makes complete sense why the days we read from the Torah would be alluded to in the materials of the *Mishkan*. The two are interconnected, and were given as opportunities to connect to our Creator. These days we don't have a home for Hashem, but we still have His Torah. Let's not waste the opportunity to connect to Him. Perhaps that's the intent of this amazing allusion.

Good Shabbos

⁹ *Shemos Rabbah loc. cit.*

¹⁰ *Eitz Yosef and Mattanos Kehunah ad. loc.*

¹¹ See *Yedei Moshe ad. loc.*, who says this could be the reason for the aphorism שהקב"ה גוזר גזירה וצדיק מבלטה (Moed Kattan 16b)

¹² *Exodus loc. cit.*

¹³ *Mattanos Kehunah ad. loc.*

¹⁴ *Exodus 25:8*

¹⁵ *Ibid 34:28*

¹⁶ *VeDarashta VeChakarta* doesn't cite anyone for this allusion, but it happens to appear in *Kesav VeChasam Sofer loc. cit.*