

THEY WERE ALL MADE 'MIKSHA'...

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion: Tape #15 is: Reinstating the S'micha. Good Shabbos!

Rav Aharon Levine: Trumpets, Menorah, and Keruvim are all made "Miksha"

In this week's parsha we have the mitzvah of making the Chatzotzrot. The command to Moshe Rabbeinu to make two trumpets of silver specifies: "you shall make them 'Miksha'". What does 'Miksha' mean? It means the trumpets have to be fashioned from one piece of silver.

The trumpets had a number of purposes. They were used as signals (based on varying sound patterns) for gathering the people and for having the people prepare for travel; they were used on Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh; and they were blown at the time of war.

What we see from the previously quoted verse is that the trumpets had to be made "Miksha" -- fashioned out of one piece. There are two other items that had to be made "miksha" -- the Menorah and the Keruvim. Rav Aharon Lewin (the "Reishe Rav") says there must be some philosophic message behind this. Why is it that these three items have to be made only from one piece?

The Reishe Rav offers a classic interpretation al pi Derush: Making something out of one piece is the more difficult way to make something. If one wants short-cuts, one assembles components that are made separately into a "final product". (An illustration being the difference in price between Tefillin that are made "me'Or Echad" (from one piece), versus Tefillin that are glued together from separate pieces). On the other hand, something made out of one piece is stronger, tougher, and more durable.

Says the "Reishe Rav" there is symbolism to each of these three items: According to Chaz"al, the Menorah symbolizes Torah. There are no shortcuts to acquisition of Torah knowledge -- the path to success in Torah is the way of "miksha". It's not the easy way, but it's the only way to do it. The proverbial attempt to learn all Torah over night while getting a good night's sleep that same night never works! The way to acquire Torah is as the Mishnah says in Avos: to minimize food consumption, minimize beverage consumption, minimize sleep, etc. That's why the Menorah was

"miksha".

The Trumpets symbolize Leadership. The Trumpets had to be made in the manner of "miksha" because the Leader, too, has to be as tough as nails. If a person wants to become a leader, to deal with people's personalities and difficult issues, and to succeed at that task then he must be "miksha" -- he must be made as tough as something that is made from one piece.

Finally, Keruvim are made "miksha". Keruvim the Talmud says have faces shaped "like children". There are two ways to raise children -- the easy way and the tough way. The only way to be successful in raising children, says the "Reishe Rav", is the tough way -- there are no shortcuts. Tough decisions have to be made. Day in day out, from mundane little things such as how you get your young child into supper on time to more complex adolescent dilemmas, there are no easy answers; no easy decisions. There always is this same decision of taking the easy way out or "biting the bullet" and facing the situation with firm and decisive action. The Torah says the only way is "miksha" -- that's the only way to make a "Keruv"; to make a child. It is not necessarily the easy way, but it is the correct way.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz: Linkage of types of individuals who are considered "like dead"

At the end of the portion we have the incident of Miriam speaking Lashon Hara about Moshe. Aharon beseeched that Miriam should not be "like a dead person". Rash"i explains that a Metzora is considered like one who is dead. There are other categories of people spoken of by Chaz"al, as being "like one who is dead" -- for example the poor person, and one who is blind.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva, zt"l, says there is a common denominator between these categories: These people are all lacking something that is so important to life that if a person doesn't have this, then he is figuratively speaking, dead. What is this item? It is the ability to give to others and to share.

The Metzora who is forced to live outside the camp and is cut off from society is "chashuv k'mes" because he cannot contribute to the community. He can't give and if one can't give, it's as if he's dead.

The blind person who, [at least during Talmudic times,] lives in his own dark world and is not aware of the needs of others is cut off from society because of his terrible disability and consequently he too, **generally speaking**, is "chashuv k'mes".

The poor person who has nothing and is on the receiving end of the community; ...and if he is not on the receiving end then he is still so occupied with his poverty that he can't give to others ..is "chashuv k'mes".

That, say Chaza"l, is why these types of people are "chashuniv k'mes" -- because they lack the

opportunity for an aspect of life which is so vital to what life is all about -- the aspect of Olam Chessed Yibaneh (the World is built up through acts of Giving). One who cannot give and share with others is missing the essence of Life and is "chashuv k'mes".

Glossary

Menorah -- Seven branched candelabra used in the Tabernacle and Temple

Keruvim -- Cherubs, childlike figures appearing atop the Ark inside the Holy of Holies

Al Pi Derush -- based on homiletical interpretation of the verses (rather than simple interpretation, i.e. -- "peshat")

Metzora -- skin condition brought about as punishment for Lashon Hara.

Lashon Hara -- gossip or slanderous conversation

Chashuv K'Mes -- considered (figuratively) like one who is dead

Personalities & Sources:

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz - (1901-1979) Rosh Yeshiva of Mir Yeshiva, Poland and Jerusalem

Rav Ahron Lewin- (19th - 20th century) Rav in Reisia, Poland

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion (#15). The corresponding halachic portion for this tape is: #15 is: Reinstating the S'micha. The other halachic portions for Parshas Behaaloscha from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are:

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