

B”H

Eitz Chayim Hee: A Torah Commentary for Environmental Learning and Action

Hebrew/English Source Sheet

Torah Portion of Ki Tisa

“*The Coin of Fire- Rectification of Material Wealth*”

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The sources are presented in the order they appear in the commentary

שמות ל:טו-טז

טו העשיר לא-ירבה והדל לא ימעט ממחצית השקל לתת את-תרומת יהוה לכפר על-נפשתיכם.
טז ולקחת את-כסף הכפרים מאת בני ישראל ונתת אתו על-עבדת אהל מועד והיה לבני ישראל לזכרון
לבני יהוה לכפר על-נפשתיכם

Exodus 30:15-16

The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half a shekel to the portion of Hashem, to atone for your souls. You shall taken the silver of the atonements from the Children of Israel and give it for the work of the Tent of Meeting; and it shall be a memorial before Hashem of the Children of Israel, to atone for your souls.

רש"י שמות ל:טו

לכפר על נפשתיכם - שלא תנגפו ע"י מנין, ד"א לכפר על נפשותיכם לפי שרמז להם כאן ג' תרומות שנכתב כאן תרומת ה' ג"פ אחת תרומת אדנים שמנאן כשהתחילו בנדבת המשכן ונתנו כל אחד ואחד מחצית השקל ועלה למאת הככר שנא' (שמות לח) וכסף פקודי העדה מאת ככר ומהם נעשו האדנים שנאמר ויהי מאת ככר הכסף וגו' ...

Rashi commentary on Exodus 30:15

“**To atone for your souls**”- That they should not be struck by a plague because of the counting. Another explanation: [This was written] because [God] hinted to them [the Israelites] here [about] three offerings, because “an offering to the Lord” is written here three times. The first [represents] the offering [of silver] for the sockets [of the Mishkan], for he [Moses] counted them when they commenced with the donations for the Mishkan. Everyone gave a half-shekel, amounting to one hundred talents, as it is said: “And the silver of the community census was one hundred talents” (Exod. 38:25). The sockets were made from this, as it is said: “One hundred talents of the silver was [used to cast the sockets of the Mishkan and the sockets of the dividing curtain]” (Exod. 38:27).

שמות כה:ג-ז

ג וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם זהב וכסף ונחשת. ד ותכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני ושש ועזים. ה ועלת אילים מאדמים ועלת תחשים ועצי שטים. ו שמן למאור בשמים לשמן המשחה ולקטרת הסמים. ז אבני-שהם ואבני מלאים לאפד ולחשו.

Exodus 25:3-7

This is the portion that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and copper. Turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool, linen and goat hair. Red-dyed ram skins, tachash skins, acacia wood. Oil for illumination; spices for the annointment, oil and the aromatic incense. Shoham stones and stones for the settings, for the ephod and the breastplate.

שמות ל:יג

זה יתנו כל-העבר על-הפקדים מחצית השקל בשקל הקדש עשרים גרה השקל מחצית השקל תרומה ליהוה.

Exodus 30:13

This they shall give, every one that passes among them that are counted, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary--the shekel is twenty gerahs--half a shekel for an offering to the Lord.

רש"י שמות ל:יג

זה יתנו - , (שמות רבה) הראה לו כמין מטבע של אש ומשקלה מחצית השקל ואומר לו כזה יתנו

Rashi commentary on Exodus 30:13

“This they shall give” -He [God] showed him [Moses] a sort of coin of fire weighing half a shekel, and He said to him, “Like this one they shall give.” -[from Tanchuma 9; Tanchuma Buber, Naso p. 35; Pesikta d’Rav Kahana 19a; Midrash Psalms 91:1; Yerushalmi, Shekalim 1:4]

נועם אלימלך פרשת כי תשא

דאש שורף ואש מחמם דהיינו אם ח"ו מתנהג בכספו שלא כהוגן אז שורפתו ואם מתנהג כשורה בצדקה בלב שלם וגמלות חסדים אזי המצוה הזאת מגעת עד כסא הכבוד..

Noam Elimelech-Parshat Ki Tisa

Fire has the ability to burn as well as to warm. If a person uses his money in inappropriate ways then it “burns” him but if he uses it wisely ie: to give tzedaka wholeheartedly and performs deeds of kindness, then this mitzvah reaches until the throne of glory... (translation by Gideon Aronovich)

שמות יב:לה-לו

ובני-ישראל עשו כדבר משה וישאלו ממצרים כלי-כסף וכלי זהב ושמלת. לו ויהוה נתן את-חן העם בעיני מצרים וישאלום וינצלו את-מצרים.

Exodus 12:35-36

The Children of Israel carried out the words of Moses; they requested from the Egyptians silver vessels, gold vessels, and garments. Hashem gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians, and they granted their request - so they emptied Egypt.

ישעיהו לא:א

הוי הירידים מצרים לעזרה על-סוסים ישענו ויבטחו על-רכב כי רב ועל פרשים כי-עצמו מאד ולא שיעו על-קדוש ישראל ואת-יהנה לא דרשו.

Isaiah 31:1

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and who rely on horses; they trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, and they did not turn to the Holy One of Israel and did not seek out Hashem.

תלמוד בבלי חולין פד:

אמר רב חסדא מאי דכתיב (דברים ז) ועשתרות צאנך שמעשרות את בעליהן

Talmud Bavli Tractate Chulin 84B

Rav Chisda said: What is [the meaning] of that which is written: and the flocks (*astheros*) of your sheep? Because they make their owners wealthier (*me'ashros*) [in this context, the slaughter of the Pascal Lamb and the smearing of the blood can be seen as a dramatic statement of the rejection of the wealth-centered worldview of Egypt.]

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Torah Studies, p. 167, Letter, 11th Nissan 5721

...The Israelites had spent 210 years in Egypt, a highly agricultural country, where the nomadic life was mistrusted, where the soil was fertile and irrigated by the Nile whatever the caprices of the climate. They forsook all the security of the natural order...

Why did they do so? The question is echoed in every generation. The secular world, and the Jew who has strayed from Jewish truth, asks the practicing Jew: You live like us in a materialistic world. You belong to a competitive society. You too face the struggle for economic survival. How can you exempt yourself from its values? How can you adhere to a code of precepts that burden your life and restrict your actions at every turn?

The answer lies in the Exodus from Egypt.

Then, when the Jews responded to the call of G-d, disregarding what seemed reasonable at the time, breaking with the values of their Egyptian environment, it transpired that the path they took was the path of true happiness, *spiritually* in receiving the Torah and becoming G-d's people, *materially* in reaching the promised land, flowing with milk and honey...

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Torah Studies, p. 168, Letter, 11th Nissan 5725

...The gods of Egypt have their descendants. There are those today who base their lives on the deification of the forces of nature, and who still say, "My power and the strength of my hand have made me this wealth." And there are those who leave room for G-d in their homes, while forsaking him outside for the sake of social norms...

ליקוטי הלכות פורים ו:ט

ועל כן היו המצרים עובדים לצאן כי עקר נפילת העשירות הוא במצרים... כ מצרים מלאה גלולים ועבודה זרה שהוא תאות ממון.. ובשביל זה גלו ישראל למצרים כדי לברר העשירות משם..

Likutei Halachot – Purim 6:9

The Egyptians worshipped sheep because spiritual decline by means of wealth was mainly in Egypt... because Egypt was full of abominations and idols. This is what greed, and money worship is as well.. Therefore Israel was exiled into Egypt to elevate and refine the wealth from there. (translation by Gideon Aronovich)

שמות לב:א

א וַיִּרְא הָעָם, כִּי-בָשַׁשׁ מֹשֶׁה לְרִדְתַּת מֶן-הַהָר; וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם עַל-אַהֲרֹן, וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּם עֲשֵׂה-לָנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יֵלְכוּ לִפְנֵינוּ--כִּי-זֶה מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה-הָיָה לוֹ.

Exodus 32:1

When the people saw that Moses was late in coming down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aaron, and they said to him: "Come on! Make us gods that will go before us, because this man Moses, who brought us up from the land of Egypt we don't know what has become of him."

שמות לב:ו

וַיִּשְׁכְּבִימוּ, מִמְּחֻרַת, וַיַּעֲלוּ עֹלֹת, וַיִּגִּשׁוּ שְׁלָמִים; וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָם לֶאֱכֹל וְשִׂתוֹ, וַיִּקְמוּ לְצַחֵק.

Exodus 32:6

On the next day they arose early, offered up burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and they got up to make merry.

רש"י שמות לב:ו

וישכימו - השטן זרזם כדי שיחטאו

לצחק - יש במשמע הזה גלוי עריות כמו שנאמר (בראשית לט) לצחק בי ושפיכות דמים כמו שנאמר (שמואל ב ב) יקומו נא הנערים וישחקו לפנינו אף כאן נהרג חור

Rashicommentary on Exodus 32:10

they arose early- Satan roused them so that they would sin.

to make merry -Heb. לְצַחֵק. In this word, there is [also] a connotation of sexual immorality, as it is said: "to mock (לְצַחֵק) me" (Gen. 39:17), and bloodshed, as it is said: "Let the boys get up now and play (וַיִּשְׁחָקוּ) before us" (II Sam. 2:14). Here too, Hur was slain. -[from Midrash Tanchuma 20]

Sources not included

Shemot Rabba 11

Unless otherwise noted, all English Translations from Judaica Press, available online at www.chabad.org