

(2) Heed. **Ex. 19:5, 6.** We need to decide to shama (listen until we hear, until we get it) and to shamar (guard, protect, build a hedge [of thorns] around).

Parashat Terumah Offerings

Torah: Ex. 25:1- 27:19
Haftarah: I Kings 5:26-6:13
Brit Chadashah: Matt. 5:33-37 (L)
2 Cor. 9:1-15 (F)

Jewish Hero: Miriam

Introduction

Belief is the first step of a spiritual pilgrimage. It has to be followed up with an application of the new meaning into the life that has been altered forever. The Children of Israel were lifted up and carried out of Egypt on the wings of an eagle. Now the eagle wants to lead them into a totally new life and a totally new lifestyle.

“Now, if you will hear (shama) my voice and keep (shamar) my covenant, you shall belong to me from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine. You shall be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall say to the Children of Israel.”

Israel was given a choice with permanent, generational consequences, and the History of this people has been, for the most part, a living out of those consequences. That choice had two inseparable parts: hearing and heeding (or keeping). In the past I have said that you only have three friends in this world: your head, your heart and the Word of G-d. Unless these friends move you from understanding, to action, the process is not complete – it is just virtual, or imaginary.

James the brother of our L-rd is often criticized for preaching a Gospel of works, rather than of grace. This is a gross misrepresentation of his words. Grace that is not acted on, and put into practice, is not real or true – it is like filling the tank, and not turning on the tap. He said that as the body without the spirit (or the breath) is dead, so faith without works is dead. He challenged people to show their faith without their works, because truly, the only way you can honestly show your faith, is through your works.

You can only show that you have SHAMA if you have SHAMAR. One may not be the full measure of the other, but neither can exist without the other, and both signal the presence of each other.

How do you move from shama through to shamar? It is not an easy task, but it is the first task believers are called to and the one our entire life of faith needs to be built upon.

Four Spiritual Laws of Romans Seven and Eight

Rav Sha'ul spoke about this transition from agreement (SHAMA) to action (SHAMAR), in chapters seven and eight of his epistle to the Romans and I would like to illustrate this necessary shift by speaking of the four laws that are at work in our lives, and which determine whether we are **unfruitful hearers**, who stop short of heeding, or whether we are **faithful doers**, plunging into the perfect law of liberty and persevering there in (James 1:25).

Law Number One: The Law of G-d

Paul spoke first of the Law of G-d, which he described as holy, righteous and good (7:12). When he said that we have been set free from the Law, and from the letter of the Law that has aged and withered, he is not talking about the Law of Moses (the Ten Commandments), but about the agreement, the marriage deed, that tied us to an observance that provoked our flesh into rebellion and all kinds of evil. This is the second Law, the law of sin that is in our members, and that overpowers the third law, the law of our understanding and prevents us from fulfilling the Law of G-d, which we readily admit is good, holy and righteous.

Law Number Two: The Law of Sin

When we are born, we are born with two invisible natures – the rabbis call it Yetzer Hatov (the drive to do good) and Yetzer Hara (the drive to do bad). These do not disappear when we encounter the Law, nor do they disappear when we accept the L-rd into our hearts and lives. They are two drives, vying for control over our lives.

Law Number Three: The Law of Our Understanding

Sometimes we are able to appeal to the good that is in all people. Sometimes the bad rises up and overpowers the good. Sometimes the good rises up and succeeds in triumphing over the bad. It is like a civil war, an incessant combat, where the Law of G-d is held up as a standard, and which the Law of Sin uses to overpower the Law of our understanding.

Law Number Four: The Law of Spirit and of Life

The fourth Law is the Law of the Spirit and of Life, which enables us to fulfill, to observe (to shamar) the righteousness of the Law in ourselves, because we do not walk according to the flesh (Law number two), but according to the spirit (Law number four).

Law number two: the Law of our understanding is not powerful enough to move us through SHAMA to SHAMAR, with Law Number One, because Law number three, the Law of sin in our members, overpowers our understanding and: “we do not do the good which we want to do, we do the bad which we do not want to do”.

We are trapped, blocked and unable to turn our SHAMA into SHAMAR, until we let the fourth Law, the Law of the Spirit work through us to accomplish the righteousness of Law Number One