

Dvar Torah Outline — Shavuot: The Shalosh Regalim, “Bnei Chayei u’Mezoni,” Sefirat HaOmer, and Torah as the Root of Children

Abstract

Rabbi Shulman presents a teaching from Rav Tzadok (in *Machshavot Charutz*) that the three regalim align with the three life-areas described as dependent on “mazel”: children, life, and sustenance. He develops how Pesach corresponds to מזונות/פרנסה and why the Omer process refines human physicality from “animal food” (barley) toward “human food” (wheat), culminating in Shavuot as the internalization of revelation into lasting vessels. The centerpiece is the linkage of Torah—“עצרת” and בנינים: children represent a person’s eternity, and new souls require new expansions of Torah (especially תורה שבעל פה) as their spiritual “place” in the world.

I. Rav Tzadok’s framework: Shalosh Regalim as “Bnei, Chayei, u’Mezoni”

A. The core claim (Machshavot Charutz)

- Rabbi Shulman cites Rav Tzadok: the **three regalim** correspond to the three matters said to depend not on זכות but on מזל:
 - בני (children)
 - חיי (life)
 - מזוני (sustenance/פרנסה)

B. The Mishnah in Rosh Hashanah: each regel as a “day of judgment”

- Pesach: judgment על התבואה (produce/grain that sustains the world).
 - Shavuot: judgment על פירות האילן (fruit of the tree).
 - Sukkot (mentioned briefly): judgment relates to תחיית המתים / חיים themes (Rabbi Shulman notes this as a later discussion).
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II. Pesach as מזונות/פרנסה: a festival of “food-mitzvot” (0:31)

A. Pesach's mitzvot revolve around eating

- Matzah, korban Pesach, and later additions emphasized by חז"ל (e.g., wine): “food, food, food.”
- This makes Pesach a natural match for **מזונות**.

B. Pesach as the beginning-point: dedicating the “physical platform” to Hashem

- Rabbi Shulman frames a person as “software downloaded onto hardware”:
 - Before reaching the higher spiritual “software” of Torah, the **physical platform** must be aligned with עבודת ה'.

III. The Omer offering and Sefirat HaOmer: refining “behemiyut” into avodat Hashem (2:30)

A. Why the Omer is barley (שעורה)

- Barley is “animal food,” paralleling the korban Sotah (barley for “מעשה בהמה”).
- Here it is positive: dedicating **animalistic drives** and physical energies to Hashem.

B. Why it's called “ספירת העומר”

- Rabbi Shulman (via Rav Tzadok): the counting is named for the Omer because it marks the process that begins once physicality is offered upward.
- Only after הקדשת הבהמיות can we build toward Torah and freedom:
 - “אין לך בן חורין אלא מי שעוסק בתורה” (freedom from / death).

C. The 49-day refinement

- The seven weeks are a process of **זיכוך** (purification/refinement) of the physical self.
 - Rabbi Shulman associates this refinement with **קדושת היסוד / ברית קודש** as preparation for Shavuot.
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IV. Shavuot's symbolism: wheat, chametz, and a state "above chet" (5:30)

A. Two loaves (שתי הלחם) from wheat: "human food"

- Wheat is framed as human food, contrasted with barley.
- Rabbi Shulman uses the Midrashic idea that after Adam's sin, humanity's degradation would be to eat like animals, and the "consolation" is:
 - "בִּזְעַת אֶפֶיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם" (By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread.)

B. The puzzle: Shavuot brings chametz despite the general ban in korbanot

- The Maharal's explanation (as presented by Rabbi Shulman):
 - In the realm of Torah, we are **בני חורין**—elevated above the pull of the הרע.
 - Therefore **chametz** is not spiritually "dangerous" here; it can be brought.

C. Another anomaly: Shavuot lacks a korban chatat

- Rabbi Shulman notes the Gemara's observation:
 - Shavuot is the only regel where a **korban chatat** is not emphasized.
 - Explanation: Shavuot represents a **מדריגה above chet**—the Torah-state.
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V. Shavuot as "עצרת": stopping, gathering, and internalizing revelation (10:31)

A. "עצרת" as קליטה (reception that stays)

- Rabbi Shulman explains עצרת as:
 - stopping/holding, and also
 - gathering/bringing inward—**internalization**.

B. Contrast: Kriyat Yam Suf was only "seeing," not lasting

- Rabbi Shulman quotes the חז"ל statement:
 - "רֵאֵתָהּ שֶׁפָּחָה עַל הַיָּם מָה שֶׁלֹּא רָאָה יִחְזָקָא לְבָן בְּיוֹמָיו"
- Rav Tzadok's point as Rabbi Shulman presents it:
 - She **saw**, but seeing can be fleeting—"one and done."
 - Shavuot/Har Sinai is where revelation becomes **absorbed** into כלי הנפש.

C. “Bizzat hayam” as metaphor for spiritual treasure

- Rabbi Shulman recalls the Midrash (via Rashi) that Moshe had to **pull** Bnei Yisrael away from the sea’s spoils.
- The “real treasure” was the **revelation of Godliness**.are the external garments כסף וזהב ;

D. Too much revelation can be dangerous: “די זהב”

- Rabbi Shulman references the Gemara in Berachot on “די זהב” in the tochachah:
 - Interpreted as “too much gold,” connected to the golden calf.
 - The point: the revelation/wealth was more than the people could yet “hold.”
 - Har Sinai is meant to be revelation with **prepared vessels**.
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VI. Pesach as תפילה לעני and the “day-to-day” nature of מזונות (19:00)

A. Pesach and לחם עוני → תפילה לעני

- Rabbi Shulman connects Pesach to poverty of merits and crying out to Hashem.
- He cites Tehillim 102:
 - “תַּפִּלָּה לְעֹנִי” (A prayer of the poor)

B. Clarification: “mazal” vs. tefillah for sustenance

- Rabbi Shulman notes Tosafot’s approach:
 - Some cases of מזונות are “fixed” by mazal beyond tefillah (e.g., Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa’s personal poverty sustaining others).
 - Yet day-to-day, tefillah is centrally about ongoing needs—especially **food/sustenance**.
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VII. The “bomb kashya”: why no explicit berachah in Shemoneh Esrei for children? (22:00)

A. The question

- Rabbi Shulman (citing Rav Tzadok): Shemoneh Esrei has many requests—how can it be there is no direct berachah **for בני**?

B. Torah vs. tefillah: “חיי עולם” and “חיי שעה”

- Rabbi Shulman recalls the Gemara's critique:
 - leaving **חיי עולם** (Torah) for **חיי שעה** (tefillah for transient needs).

C. Rav Tzadok's answer as Rabbi Shulman teaches it

- **Tefillah** is fundamentally for **day-to-day**, transient needs (parnassah, ongoing sustenance).
 - **Banim** are not “today's need” but a person's **eternity**:
 - Children are one's continuation (קיום לנצח נצחים).
 - Rabbi Shulman notes that people certainly do daven for children (e.g., Channah), but conceptually, children align with eternity rather than the “daily cycle” of requests.
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VIII. Ishah, banim, and Torah: one system of eternity and expression (26:31)

A. Banim as the telos of marriage (carefully framed)

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Gemara in Yevamot:
 - “**אין אשה אלא לבנים**” (A wife is for children)
- He stresses this is not reductive:
 - it means a couple's union aims at building something **נצח**—physical or spiritual “children.”

B. Torah compared to a wife; mitzvot compared to children

- Rabbi Shulman notes Chazal compare **Torah** to a wife.
- Parallel structure:
 - Wife → leads to children
 - Torah → leads to mitzvot (“תלמוד גדול... שמביא לידי מעשה”)

C. Ethical warning from the story of Er (son of Yehudah)

- Rabbi Shulman references Er's sin: having a wife while refusing children is “רע בעיני ה'.”
 - A symbolic aside: the Tur's “רע”ר “סימן” for הלכות כתיבת ספר תורה as a תיקון-theme (as Rabbi Shulman presents it).
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IX. The Torah “bookends”: first mitzvah and last mitzvah mirror banim and Torah transmission (32:30)

A. The first mitzvah: “פרו ורבו”

- Rabbi Shulman: the Torah opens mitzvah-life with children—perpetuation.

B. The last mitzvah: writing a Sefer Torah

- “**כְּתַבְּכֶם לָכֶם אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת**” (Write for yourselves this song)
- This “נעוץ סופו בתחילתו” pattern:
 - children ↔ Torah-writing/transmission as one continuum.

C. A broader question: Ben Azzai and the relationship of Torah to פרו ורבו

- Rabbi Shulman references the classic tension:
 - How Ben Azzai prioritized Torah.
 - Rambam’s framing: תלמוד תורה is deeply tied to **teaching/transmitting** Torah onward—connected to children as continuity.
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X. Chiddushei Torah as the “space” for new souls: why Torah and children are one (33:30)

A. If not for the sin of the golden calf: “we would not have come into the world” (reframed)

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Gemara’s discussion:
 - It doesn’t mean literally no one would be born,
 - but that existence could become purposeless if everything were already spiritually complete.

B. Key thesis: each soul is rooted in a חלק of Torah

- Rabbi Shulman presents Rav Tzadok’s idea:
 - Every neshamah is connected to some aspect of Torah.
 - New people must arrive with a **unique contribution**.

C. Why new Torah must be produced: chiddush as spiritual vessel

- **חידושי תורה** תלמידי חכמים are מחדש in every generation.
- Those chiddushim become the “foundation/vessel” enabling **new souls** to enter with purpose.
- “Each new avenue” in Torah creates a lifeline for future people to expand and express.

D. Human uniqueness demands contribution

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Chazal:
 - “כשם שפרצופיהם שונים כך אין דעותיהם שוות”
 - Therefore each person must bring a distinct דעת/insight—primarily through Torah and its downstream mitzvah-life.
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XI. Two loaves as two Torahs: תורה שבכתב and תורה שבעל פה (39:00)

A. Shteí halechem as a symbol of two Torahs

- Rabbi Shulman: Rav Tzadok’s idea “for sure includes” **תורה שבעל פה**, not only **תורה שבכתב**.
- The two loaves correspond to:
 - **תורה שבכתב**
 - **תורה שבעל פה**

B. Why chametz represents Torah in this context

- Chametz can be “safe” only in a state of freedom from the **יצר הרע**—achieved through Torah.
- Therefore Shavuot’s chametz becomes a sign of Torah’s liberating power.

C. The Gra in Shir HaShirim: “פיהו” as feminine + masculine

- Rabbi Shulman brings the Gra on “פיהו”:
 - not purely masculine “פיו” and not purely feminine “פיה,” but a composite.
- Symbolic mapping:
 - → חמישה חומשי תורה
 - → שישה סדרי משנה

D. Practical application: the bar mitzvah “p’shat”

- Rabbi Shulman suggests a possible explanation for the minhag of a bar mitzvah boy saying a dvar Torah:
 - becoming obligated in mitzvot is also a call to **contribute a chiddush**—to express one’s place in Torah.
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In Summary

- Rabbi Shulman (via Rav Tzadok) aligns the three regalim with **מזוני, בני, חיי**, using the Mishnah’s “judgment days” to map Pesach and Shavuot in particular.
- Pesach and the Omer begin with refining physicality (barley/בהמיות) so that Shavuot can be the “human” Torah state (wheat), even accommodating chametz and implying a מדריגה above chet.
- Shavuot as **עצרת** means internalization: unlike the fleeting “seeing” of Kriyat Yam Suf, Har Sinai is revelation received into prepared vessels.
- The bond between **Torah and children** is essential: children represent eternity, and new souls require new **chiddushei Torah**—especially תורה שבעל פה—as their spiritual foundation and purpose in the world.