

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

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❖ PARSHAT TERUMAH

This week's Torah portion, Teruma, details the various components that went into the Mishkan -- the portable Sanctuary erected by the Jews during their journey through the wilderness. The Sanctuary itself was built of tremendous planks of acacia wood, the dimensions of which were "ten cubits the length of the board, and one-and-a-half cubits the width of each board."

An obvious question is asked: Where did the Children of Israel find such a huge amount of wood in the middle of the desert? Rashi, the great Torah commentator, provides us with an answer taken from the Midrash Tanchuma: "Our Forefather Jacob perceived with his spirit of prophecy that the Jewish people would one day build a Sanctuary in the wilderness. He therefore brought cedars with him to Egypt and planted them, commanding his children to carry the trees with them when they later left Egypt."

This explanation is also in accord with another verse in the Torah which states that the donations of wood for the Sanctuary were made by "those who had acacia wood with them," implying that the wood belonged to the Children of Israel while they were yet in Egypt. Indeed, more than two hundred years before the Jews were even subjugated, Jacob saw to it that his descendants would have a sufficient reserve of wood to build the Sanctuary. But why was this so important? Couldn't they have purchased the wood from Egyptian merchants, or sent emissaries to the nearest forest to obtain the needed materials?

In truth, Jacob's actions held a deeper meaning than merely supplying his children with wood. Jacob's intent was to provide the Jewish people with succor and consolation that would enable them to survive the harshness of the exile. G-d's promise to redeem them from Egypt was not enough; Jacob wanted his children to be comforted by the sight of the trees and reminded of the Sanctuary they would one day erect. Additional solace was derived from the fact that Jacob had brought the saplings with him from the holy land of Israel, reminding the Jewish people of their origins as well as G-d's promise to bring them back to their land.

This consolation during the exile is also alluded to in the source for this explanation -- Midrash Tanchuma, as Tanchuma is word related to the Hebrew word for consolation and comfort -- "nechama." A similar type of consolation has also been granted to us during our present exile, which, G-d willing, is about to come to an end. The "cedar trees" of our time are the tzadikim (righteous people) who exist in every generation, as it states in Psalms, "A righteous man will flourish like a date palm, like a cedar in the Lebanon he will grow tall." These tzadikim, who are entirely above the constraints of exile, prevent the Jewish people from losing hope and awaken their hearts to the Redemption. In this way, the Jewish people will merit the ultimate comfort and consolation in the literal sense, with the full and complete Redemption with Moshiach NOW! (From: L'Chaim #354, 5755, From Likutei Sichot Vol. XXXI)

"Let them take for Me an offering, of every man whose heart is willing, you shall take My offering." (25:2) QUESTION: Why does the pasuk start with the word "terumah" -- an offering -- and conclude with the word "terumati" -- My offering? ANSWER: Sometimes people do not contribute to charitable causes wholeheartedly because they have to use money designated for another purpose when a collector for charity arrives unexpectedly. It is therefore advisable to have a special box or account in which one deposits at least 10 percent of one's earnings earmarked "charity distributions." Thus, when a collector comes for a charitable cause, one will contribute willingly, because the money was already set aside exclusively for tzedakah. The Torah imparts in this pasuk the following important advice: Hashem told Moshe to tell the Jewish people that the first thing each Jew should do is "Veyikchu li" -- "Take from their earnings a portion for Me and set it aside as 'terumah' -- money to go for tzedakah causes. After doing

this, you can be sure that when the time comes to take from them an offering for the Mishkan (or any other charitable cause), they will give it with the graciousness of their hearts. Because 'tikchu et terumati' -- they will not feel that you are taking theirs, but instead they are giving tzedakah from that which was already designated as My offering."

"And this is the offering you shall take from them: gold and silver and copper...and let them make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them." (25:3,8) QUESTION: Why were our forefathers instructed to use silver and copper and not exclusively gold? ANSWER: G-d commanded the Jews to build the Mishkan in order that "veshachanti betocham" -- "I will dwell in them." Grammatically it should have said "veshachanti betocho" -- "I will dwell in it." According to the Shelah (Sha'ar Ha'otiot 30) this indicates that in addition to building the physical Mishkan, Hashem wants each and every Jew to make himself and his home a holy place so that He can be among every Jew. Among the Jewish populace there exists various levels. Some Jews are very pure (holy) like gold; others are compared to inferior metals such as silver and copper. The building of the Mishkan was for all Jews; regardless of a person's level, he must make himself a proper dwelling for Hashem.

"And let them make Me a Mishkan that I may dwell among them. Like everything that I show you, the form of the Mishkan and the form of all its vessels, so shall you do." (25:8-9) QUESTION: The words "vechein ta'asu" -- "so shall you do" -- seem superfluous -- how else? ANSWER: When Hashem conveyed through Moshe the command of building a Mishkan, He said, "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me -- so that I may dwell "betocham" -- "among them" (25:8). Grammatically, "betocham," in the singular, should be used. The Shelah explains that in addition to the physical Mishkan, Hashem requests that each Jew should transform himself into a Sanctuary, so that He can dwell in them -- in each and every Jew. Thus the Torah adds, "vechein ta'asu," to indicate that in addition to the construction of the physical Mishkan, "so shall you do" -- make yourself a Sanctuary for Hashem. This is accomplished by living a life in accordance with the significance of all the details of the Mishkan. The Sanctuary contained the Ark, menorah, table, and altar. The Ark represents Torah study, the menorah depicts mitzvot (neir mitzvah), the table alludes to hospitality and kashrut, and the altar signifies mesirut nefesh -- dedication. Likewise, the home of every individual must have seforim and Torah study, the performance of mitzvot, a table with Kosher food and guests, and mesirut nefesh to maintain the highest standards of Yiddishkeit. The Jew who builds such a home can be assured that just as G-d abides in the Mishkan, so He will also dwell in the home.

"And you shall make an Ark...and cover it with pure gold. And you shall make poles of cedar wood and cover them with gold." (25:10-11,13) QUESTION: Why were the poles which carried the Ark covered with ordinary gold, while the Ark itself was covered with pure gold? ANSWER: The Ark, which housed the tablets, alludes to the one who studies Torah. The poles, which carry the Ark, represent the people who support the scholars dedicated to Torah study. Torah should be studied lishma -- for the sake of Hashem and without ulterior motives. Tzedakah, however, may be given with personal gain in mind. According to the Gemara, even if one gives charity on the condition that his child should live, it is "tzedakah gamurah" -- the highest form of charity -- and the giver is considered a "tzaddik gamur" -- a "perfect tzaddik" (Rosh Hashanah 4a, see Rabbeinu Chananeil). Consequently, when speaking of the Ark, which represents Torah study, pure gold is required, to emphasize that Torah study should be totally pure of ulterior motives. (From: Vedibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky)

FROM MY FATHER'S SICHOT:

"IT IS A MAGNIFICENT GIFT OF G-D TO MERIT AN INNATE SENSE - "FEEL" FOR DOING KINDNESS TO ANOTHER, TO DERIVE DEEP PLEASURE FROM IT. THIS CAN DEVELOP TO THE POINT THAT ONE CHERISHES THE OTHER MORE THAN ONE SELF. HE MAY FIND MANY EXPLANATIONS AS TO WHY HE DESERVES HIS OWN TRIBULATIONS, G-D FORBID, BUT TO DO SO WITH REGARD TO ANOTHER'S SUFFERING - IS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM 6 ADAR 1)

Care in a man's heart bows it down, but a good word makes it cheerful.

- King Solomon