

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE WORLD TO COME BY OBSERVING MITZVOT IN THIS WORLD (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

At the beginning of this week's parsha we read, "Let them take for Me an offering, from every man whose heart motivates him, you shall take My offering" (Exodus 25:2). Here Rashi explains, "Let them take for Me – for My Name." Regarding this passage the Midrash Pliyah states: "Thus it is written, 'Hear O Israel, the L-RD is our G-d, the L-RD is One.'"

In examining this subject, two very difficult questions arise. First, why did the Holy One, blessed be He, select this mitzvah and encourage us to perform it "for My Name"? Should other mitzvot not be done for the sake of His Name? Why only with regards to this particular mitzvah is this stressed? Secondly, what is the significance of the Midrash Pliyah's statement? What connection is there between the Shema and the mitzvah of Terumah? The answer is that the subject of the building of the Sanctuary and its vessels alludes to the elevation of man and his path in serving G-d. In fact a person must work throughout his life to resemble the holy Ark, a vessel that contains holiness, that contains the Torah. When a person dies he is called righteous, and in eulogizing him we say, "The holy Ark has been captured" (Ketubot 104a).

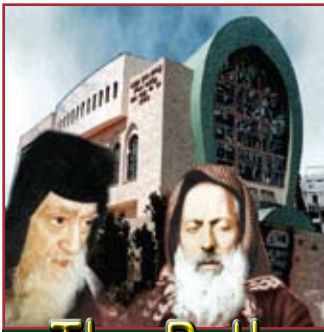
A person must also develop, on his own, good characteristics inside and out, just as the Ark was covered with gold on all sides. In the observance of mitzvot, one must constantly look for ways to add a gold crown, an ornament, to the mitzvot. He must adorn each mitzvah that he performs, as it is written: "This is my G-d, and I will adorn Him" (Exodus 15:2), which the Sages explain as meaning: "Adorn yourself before Him in mitzvot" (Shabbat 133b; Sukkah 11b). How was the holy Ark lifted for transport – that is, how can a person lift himself to higher levels in Torah and the fear of Heaven? Just as the Ark of the Sanctuary was transported with poles, a person should grasp the poles of the Ark in order to lift it and walk. What do these poles allude to in a person's life? It is written, "You shall make poles of acacia atzei [wood]" (Exodus 25:10), a reference to the Torah, which is called etz [a tree] of life (Perkei Avoth 6:7; Berachot 32b). This means that by diligently studying Torah, and by the love that a person demonstrates for it and the effort that he puts into it, he can lift himself to ever-higher levels (Psalms 84:8). We must be careful to support it, as well as to help those who are devoted to grasping its poles, as it is written: "It is a tree of life to those who grasp it" (Proverbs 3:18).

The more a person holds on to these poles, the more he will grow. He will also come to appreciate the true value of holiness and love Torah more and more. He will understand it to an ever greater degree, until he feels his soul escaping due to his great love for it. Such a person will seek to fulfill mitzvot and recite sacred words. He will also spend a great deal of money for the Torah and its mitzvot, just as the Tannaim did in expending large sums to fulfill mitzvot.

When those around us see what we are doing, they will certainly worry that we aren't acting properly. They will think that this wood is not made of shittim (acacia), but of shtut (foolishness), for they will claim that it is absurd to spend so much money on mitzvot. However one who loves Torah will not allow things to come apart. He will continue to diligently and continuously hold on to the poles of the Torah, which "shall not

be removed from it" (Exodus 25:15), for that is Hashem's will. He wants us to persevere in our study and support of Torah, as well as in the performance of mitzvot. Above all, the Creator wants to help us perform this mitzvah and ease us through this trial. Hence in His compassion He reminds us of the day of death, the day when neither silver nor gold will accompany us – only the Torah that we studied and the mitzvot and good deeds we performed (Perkei Avoth 6:9) – for wealth will not help us then.

True, Hashem does not want a Jew to be affected by feelings of sadness that damage and ruin all that is good. He just wants a person to wake up and realize that he can give of his money and acquire a great mitzvah, the mitzvah of tzedakah. With a little effort, he can acquire true goodness for himself, a possession that will accompany him when his lengthy stay on earth draws to a close. This is why the Holy One, blessed be He, ordered the poles (which allude to the support of Torah) to be placed into the rings. Since the rings are round, they recall the day of death, a time of mourning, just as all round things do, which is why we eat lentils in a house of mourning (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 552:5). Thus a person will remember, wake up, and give to tzedakah, and in this way he can win the difficult fight against his evil inclination. Hence the Holy One, blessed be He, asked for an offering from the Children of Israel by saying: "Let them take for Me an offering." The Creator speaks to them using tender words, saying: "Please, know that after 120 years you will be able to take only the Terumah [offering] with you." This term is formed by the letters of the word Torah and the letter mem (numerical value: 40) – alluding to the Torah that was given in 40 days (Menachot 99b) – including this mitzvah of tzedakah along with the rest of the mitzvot. This is the only thing you can take with you, which is why today is the time to collect more merits for this mitzvah, for it will sustain you for eternity. This is what the Midrash Pliyah means by citing the Shema: "Hear O Israel, the L-RD is our G-d, the L-RD is One." In fact it is through the rings that Hashem wants us to recall the last Shema that we will ever say, namely on the day of death. This is meant to awaken us so we can take full advantage of our time and money in this world, now while we are still alive, to collect more mitzvot and merits. Furthermore, in order to further awaken us to the mitzvah of tzedakah, the Holy One, blessed be He, is teaching us the importance of this mitzvah by saying: "Let them take for Me an offering" – for My Name. A person who gives tzedakah and supports Torah is as if he were truly supporting Hashem and connecting himself to Hashem's Name. The fact that a person gives is what enables him to cleave to His Name. One who gives will also remember that he is building the Sanctuary by his gift. To conclude, we may say by allusion that the words li lishmi ("for Me, for My Name") form the initials of the expression lekachtem yuchal leolam shekulo metukan yafeh ("he can take them into the world that is entirely perfect"). This is because the only things that accompany a person into the World to Come are Torah and mitzvot, for only through them can he cleave to the Creator.



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Under Aegis of

RABBI DAVID HANANIA
PINTO CHLITA

11, rue du plateau
75019 PARIS

Tel: +331 42 08 25 40

Fax +331 42 08 50 85

www.hevratpinto.org

Responsible of publication
Hanania Soussan

GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

Just a Little Praise

You are forbidden to praise someone excessively, even if the listeners do not dislike him. You are likely to add something derogatory at the end of your praise. Also, excessive praise can easily encourage the listeners to try and refute you by mentioning the faults of the subject.

Rivka had just praised Brenda for the past ten minutes. Miriam, who had been listening quietly to all the praises lavished on Brenda, raised on objection: "Nobody is perfect. She must have some faults." Chaya, who also listened to Rivka, said, "You're right. She has a tendency to look down on people who don't meet her standards."

Excessive praise in itself is forbidden, since it is likely to end with a fault, as actually occurred in this example.

– Guard Your Tongue, pp.109-110

MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

A Single Whole

It is written, “You shall make two cherubim of gold – hammered out shall you make them.... You shall make one cherub on one end.... The cherubim shall be with wings spread upward...with their faces toward one another” (Exodus 25:18-20).

Rashi states: “Hammered out. You should not make them separate and then join them at the ends of the Ark Cover after they are made.... Instead, you should take a large quantity of gold at the beginning of the construction of the Ark Cover and beat it with a hammer and with a mallet in the center, so that its ends protrude upward and form the cherubim from the protrusion of its ends.”

Rabbi Aryeh Levin and his wife were walking in Jerusalem on the way to see her doctor. They finally arrived at his office and answered the usual questions, after which the doctor inquired as to the reason for their visit. Rabbi Aryeh replied, “Doctor, my wife’s leg is hurting us.” No, this isn’t a typo, nor was it a syntax error on the part of Rabbi Aryeh. Instead it constitutes an immense lesson on the proper relationship between husband and wife.

Husband and wife are not two separate bodies that just happen to be living under the same roof. Our Sages have said, “A man’s wife is like his own body,” which means like his actual body, an integral part of himself. This has many Halachic implications, clearly demonstrating the correct relationship that the spouses should have with one another. In the making of the cherubim, Rashi explains that it was forbidden to fashion them separately and then attach them to the Ark Cover afterwards. Instead a large piece of gold was used from the outset, and it was fashioned starting from the middle until a protrusion appeared on either side. The cherubim were then formed from these protrusions. When a couple gets married, it is forbidden for the newlyweds to take their former selves and attach them to the Ark Cover, meaning to their new home. Instead they must form a single piece of gold without boundaries, realizing that they will now have to give up many things. They must begin working at the center with hammer and mallet, removing the things that disrupt their relationship, until finally there are only two protrusions left. The cherubim are then formed, meaning that they mold their characters by considering the needs of the other, at which point they become a single whole.

The cherubim spread their wings upwards, meaning that husband and wife must both yearn for spiritual growth in the ways of Hashem.

The faces of the cherubim were turned to one another, meaning that in order to achieve perfect unity, each spouse must remember their obligations to the other. If the husband thinks, “Which woman is complete? The one who does her husband’s will,” while the wife thinks, “A man must honor his wife more than his own body,” it means that their faces are not turned to one another. In such a case they do not resemble the cherubim, and therefore the Shechinah will not dwell between them, G-d forbid. Engraved before each of them must be a reminder – before the eyes of the husband: “A man must honor his wife more than his own body,” and before the eyes of the wife: “Which woman is complete? The one who does her husband’s will.” Only then, when each of them is ready to fulfill their obligations, will they be part of the Ark Cover and their home will be a holy place. Just as the Ark Cover, insofar as it was part of the holy Ark, contained the Tablets of the Covenant, so too will the couple’s home be filled with holiness and purity. The Shechinah will then rest upon them, and only peace, happiness, and blessing will reign within.

A Pearl From the Rav

On the verse, “Let them make a Sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8), Rashi explains: “They shall make in My Name a house of sanctity.” Our Sages have noted that the verse does not say that Hashem would dwell “in it,” but rather “among them.” Here the book Meorei Shearim asks why a Sanctuary was needed, since the Shechinah dwelled in Israel.

In his book Pahad David, Rabbi David Pinto Shlita replies that Hashem’s aim and desire is for the Shechinah and the Sanctuary itself to be found in man, meaning “among them.” However since this requires some preparation, Hashem told the Children of Israel, “Make a Sanctuary for Me,” meaning a holy house in My Name. In other words: Let the Children of Israel build the Sanctuary – let them build themselves, body and soul – “that I may dwell among them” – in the Children of Israel. How? By the actual construction of the Sanctuary, one sanctified the other, and they demonstrated their desire to grow in good middot, in which case the Shechinah would dwell among them. It was for this reason that the Sanctuary had to be built, constituting a preparation for “that I may dwell among them.”

Make us Rejoice in its Completion

It is written, “Let them make a Sanctuary for Me” (Exodus 25:8).

The Sages have said that the next Temple will descend from Heaven as a Temple of fire. However on the verse, “Her gates are sunk into the ground” (Lamentations 2:9), it is said that the gates of the second Temple were hidden in the ground. The question then becomes: If we have been promised that the Temple will descend from Heaven, why are its gates hidden in the ground?

Since the Children of Israel received the mitzvah to “Make a Sanctuary for Me,” if the next Temple were to descend in its entirety, fully completed, it would be to their disgrace, not having been allowed to fulfill this mitzvah. Divine Providence therefore caused the gates to be hidden in the ground, for when the Temple will descend from Heaven, the elders of Israel will affix these gates to it. Now we know that a person who has affixed doors to a house is considered to have built it (Bava Batra 53b). Hence we say in the holiday prayers: “Let us behold its building” – the perfect edifice that will descend from above – “and make us rejoice in its completion” – the completion of the Temple by the affixing of its gates. When will fulfill this mitzvah, we will rejoice!

– Shulchan Melachim

One Who Gives In Good Health

It is written, “Gold, silver, and copper” (Exodus 25:3).

There are three levels in giving tzeddakah. The first is when a person generously opens his hand at every opportunity, for he can feel the other’s pain and genuinely wants to help. The second level is when a person gives when he sees that he is in danger. Finally the third level is when a person decides to tithe his money only when he is desperately in need of help. These levels are found in the expression, “Gold, silver, and copper.” The word zahav (“gold”) is formed by the initials of zeh hanoten bari (“one who gives in complete health”); the word kesef (“silver”) comes from kesheroeh sakana poteach (“he opens his hand when he sees danger”); and finally the word nechoshet (“copper”) comes from netinat choleh she’omer tru (“the gift of the sick who says: Give”).

The Beams of the Sanctuary

It is written, “You shall make the beams of the Sanctuary” (Exodus 26:15).

Here the definite article “the” is used in connection with these beams, a reference to the cedars planted in Egypt by Jacob. This is indicated by the

expression hakerashim lamishkan (“the beams of the Sanctuary”), which has the same numerical value (1095) as Yaakov avinu neta lahem arazim beMitzraim (“our father Jacob planted cedars in Egypt”). Jacob asked the Holy One, blessed be He, “What can appease Your anger after the sin of the golden calf?” He replied, “Acacia trees.”

The Middle Bar

It is written, “The middle bar inside the beams” (Exodus 26:28).

From where did they get this middle bar? Yonatan ben Uzziel reveals the answer: “The middle bar within the beams, which bolted them from one end to the other, was made from the tree that our father Abraham planted in Beersheba. When the Children of Israel crossed the sea, the angels cut this tree down and sent it into the sea, where it floated upon the waters. An angel proclaimed, ‘This is the tree that Abraham planted in Beersheba, where he prayed to the Name of Hashem.’ The Children of Israel took it and fashioned a middle bar having a length of 70 cubits, and which produced miracles: When the Sanctuary was being built and the middle bar was inserted into the beams, it turned at a right angle and inserted itself into the beams of the adjacent wall. Thus the bar joined all three walls of the Sanctuary, and when the Sanctuary was taken down, the bar became as straight as a stick.”

Standing Together Crowded

It is written, “I will dwell among the Children of Israel” (Exodus 29:45).

The Chatam Sofer asks why the Mishnah praises the Temple because people stood together crowded there, but had ample room when they prostrated themselves (Perkei Avoth 5:5). After all, in our time we also see the same thing happening in houses of study! (Note: We know that such a miracle occurred in the room where the Chatam Sofer gave his daily lectures. While the room only had enough place for a few dozen people, hundreds of people actually fit inside.)

The Chatam Sofer answers by saying that the miracle in the Temple was not that people had ample room when they prostrated themselves, but that when they stood up, they were crowded! Normally they all should have had a great deal of room when they stood up. Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, arrange things such that people were crowded when they were standing? It was in order to reward them, for the merit of attending Torah lessons lies in being crowded (Berachot 6b).

– Tuvcha Yabiu

Overview of the Parsha

Once the Jewish people were formed by the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, Parsha Terumah contains the order to prepare a place where Hashem would reside among the Children of Israel. There He would be represented first and foremost by the Tablets of the Covenant, which are the Torah. The Sanctuary is like a royal palace, but without any figure to represent the King Himself. Hashem asks the Children of Israel for an offering in order to make the Ark, the Ark Cover with the cherubim, the Table for the showbread, and the Menorah with its lights to illuminate the Table. They are also instructed to make the curtains and hangings to cover the exterior form of the Sanctuary, the beams for the walls on three sides, and the partition to separate the holy places. Offerings are brought to Hashem outside the tent, and thus the Altar is built as well as a courtyard surrounding it and the tent.

REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

Everyone Must Participate!

It is written, “Let them take for Me an offering, from every man whose heart motivates him, you shall take My offering” (Exodus 25:2).

The Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to build a Sanctuary where His Shechinah would dwell. However He wanted all the Children of Israel to participate in its construction, which is why He asked everyone to take His offering. Everyone was to participate of his own free will and according to the generosity of his heart. We should realize that the Children of Israel were extremely wealthy when they left Egypt, so much so that each individual could have built the entire Sanctuary alone. That being the case, why did Hashem ask each of them to contribute? After all, Moses or Betzalel alone could have built everything!

We shall explain according to a story told by the Sages: A father asked his sons to bring him some branches from outside. Since his sons were tzaddikim, they all went out and immediately brought their father what he had asked for. After they each returned with a branch, the father took all the branches and bundled them together. He then asked his sons to break the bundle. Try as they may, from the oldest to the youngest, they all failed, despite using all kinds of ways to break it. They returned the bundle to their father and said, “There’s no way to break it. It’s too solid!” The father took the bundle and smiled. He then untied it and broke each branch individually, showing them how easy it is to break. He said, “If you are united and no strife exists among you, you will resemble the bundle I gave you, and nobody will be able to divide or overcome you. However if you let the evil inclination unravel your unity by provoking strife among you, you will be delivered into the hands of whoever seeks your harm.”

Hashem wanted to build the Sanctuary, the place from which all abundance and blessing come into the world. It had to be sturdy and stand for many years, as it did, for the Sanctuary was never destroyed. Instead it was simply hidden when King Solomon built the Temple.

This is why Hashem wanted all the Children of Israel to participate in it. He wanted the Sanctuary to unify them, in which case the Jewish people, the holy people, would always be united. The Children of Israel understood this goal and were quick to achieve it. In fact within two days they had offered everything necessary to build it. They had offered themselves.

EISHET CHAYIL

Of Course You’re Important!

Living near the home of Rebbetzin Esther Blumenkranz was a poor man and his disabled wife. Whenever he needed to go shopping, he would ask the Rebbetzin for her shopping basket, which he would return the next day.

One day this man did not return her basket, and the Rebbetzin realized that something had happened. She went to their home to see how they were, and there she learned that the man’s family had been invited to go for a walk with relatives visiting from abroad. However they left the man and his wife alone at home, claiming that it would be too difficult for them to come along. Needless to say, their hearts were broken, for they felt that nobody wanted them or even took them into consideration. In fact they were so dejected that they no longer wanted to leave the house.

The Rebbetzin’s visit proved to them that they were still important, and that someone was interested in them. This breathed new life into them, turning their sorrow into joy and transforming them into new people.

YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

Rabbi Alexander Zusha Ziskind of Plotsk

The gaon Rabbi Alexander Zusha Ziskind Zatzal was the son of Rabbi Avraham Kahana, one of the leading figures among the Mitnagdim, those opposed to the Chassidim. Like his father, Rabbi Alexander Zusha grew up as a Mitnaged, learning Torah with his great teacher the gaon Rabbi Yaakov of Lissa, the author of *Netivot HaMishpat*. However as the years passed, he tasted from the wellsprings of Chassidut, and with his friend Rabbi Shraga Feivel of Gritza (the founder of the Alexander dynasty, from the city of Alexander, Poland), he spoke of his holy Rav, the Chozeh of Lublin, and became one of his greatest disciples.

After the death of the Chozeh, Rabbi Alexander Zusha became one of the eminent disciples of Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Pshischa, and under his influence he became the Rav and Av Beit Din of the town of Schodlatz in Poland. One year he was unable to make it to his Rav for Rosh Hashanah, and so from Pshischa his Rav sent him a well-known letter, published in the book *Ramatayim Tzofim*. It is a letter that chassidim diligently study to the present day, for it contains allusions to the numerous paths of Chassidut and to Hashem's imminence. Rabbi Alexander Zusha would speak of Chassidut and Torah with great chassidic figures such as the Chiddushei HaRim of Ger. In Warsaw he also discussed matters with Torah geniuses among the Mitnagdim, such as the author of *Chemdat Shlomo* and the gaon Rabbi Leibush Charif of Plotsk. Rabbi Alexander Zusha was later appointed as the Rav of Plotsk, a position he occupied until his final day, Adar 7, 5597, and where his body was laid to rest. May the memory of the tzaddik be blessed.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

The Wise of Heart

It is written, "The L-RD gave wisdom to Solomon, as He had told him" (I Kings 5:26).

The reason why Hashem gave Solomon wisdom is explicitly stated earlier: "In Gideon the L-RD appeared to Solomon in a dream of the night. G-d said to him, 'Request what I should give to you.' Solomon said, '...may You grant Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, whom You have chosen, to distinguish between good and evil.' ... G-d said to him, 'Because you have requested this thing, and you have not requested length of days or riches... behold, I have given you a wise and understanding heart'" (I Kings 3:5-12).

This proves that Solomon was rewarded with wisdom solely because he had a great desire for it. In fact he yearned for it so much that he did not ask for wealth or longevity. Although happiness in life is more important than anything else, Solomon knew that life without wisdom has no value whatsoever, as the Rambam states: "Without Torah study, the life of those with wisdom or who ask for it is like death" (Hilchot Rotzeach 7:1).

This is why Solomon only asked for wisdom, and it is why he obtained it. From here we learn the meaning of being "wise-hearted." The desire for wisdom purifies those who possess it. A person must ask for wisdom, and if he truly wants it he will be called "wise-hearted." Thus in His Torah, the Holy One, blessed be He, states: "I have endowed the heart of every wise-hearted person with wisdom" (Exodus 31:6).

A TRUE STORY

A Father to Everyone

It is written, "Let them make a Sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

A witness to the actual event recounted that when Rav Moshe Pardo (the founder and director of the Ohr HaChaim Seminary in Bnei Brak) heard that one of his students had become engaged to a ben Torah, he got up and danced with joy. We certainly know of relatives who, upon hearing that a nephew or grandchild is getting married, react with great joy. But to the point of getting up and starting to dance? Rav Moshe was not an uncle or a grandfather. He was simply a father to his students, a loving father who suffered in their distress and rejoiced in their happiness, to the point of getting up to dance with joy! If that was the case for each of his students, present as well as former, how much more did he rejoice for an orphan girl! A seminary teacher once said, "One student, an orphan, became engaged to get married, and I took it upon myself to come up with the money for the wedding. One evening I heard a knock at my door, and when I opened it there was the Rav! 'I've come to contribute my share for the bride-to-be,' he said. I was stunned. 'Why did you go to all this trouble?' I asked. 'I'll be in seminary tomorrow. You could have given it to me then.'

"The Rav warmly replied, 'Now that I have the money, I can immediately participate in the building of the Sanctuary. Why put it off until tomorrow?'"

Like Moshe Rabbeinu before him, Rav Moshe was a true shepherd!

THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

Where Milk and Honey Flowed

When the Children of Israel do G-d's will, their land becomes blessed and overflows with good things.

The Sages say, "Rami ben Ezekiel once paid a visit to Bnei Brak, where he saw goats grazing under fig-trees. At the same time, honey was flowing from the figs and milk ran from [the goats], and these mingled with each other. He said, 'This [land] is indeed flowing with milk and honey'" (Ketubot 111b).

Rabbi Yehudah of Sechnin once said to his son, "Please go up into the attic, where you will find a barrel filled with dry figs. Bring me down a few." The son did as his father asked, but when he put his hands into the barrel, he didn't find any figs. Instead there was honey! He called out, "Father, there aren't any figs here. There's honey!" Rabbi Yehudah began to laugh. He said to his son: "Reach deep inside the barrel and you'll find some figs!" This is precisely what he did, but there was so much honey that it was difficult for him to find any fruit!

Another story involves Rabbi Yossi. While living in Tzipori, he said to his son: "We have some olives in the attic, under the roof. Climb up and bring me some from the barrel containing a jar of olives." His son quickly climbed up, but he returned almost immediately and explained, "I couldn't make it to the jar of olives because the whole attic is filled with oil!" The olives were so rich with oil that they began to seep out. In fact oil had filled the jar and dripped onto the floor, and it had to be cleaned up before the olives could be reached (Yerushalmi, Peah 7:3).