

# THE IMPORTANCE OF TZEDDAKAH BEFORE PRAYER AND TORAH STUDY (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

## The Path To Follow TERUMAH

# 173

February 24<sup>th</sup> 07

6 Adar 5767

Publication  
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## GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

### Hashem Watches Over the Honor of Torah Scholars

The Jerusalem Talmud recounts that when Rabbi Zeira ascended to the land of Israel, he had himself bled. He then went to buy some meat from a butcher in order to regain his strength. He asked, "What is the price of this measure?" The butcher replied, "Fifty pieces of money, and a blow which you must receive." Rabbi Zeira said, "I will give you sixty, but spare me the blow." The butcher refused, and Rabbi Zeira then offered 70, 80, 90, and even 100 pieces of money, but the butcher still refused! Finally Rabbi Zeira said, "Well then, do according to your custom."

Towards evening Rabbi Zeira went to the house of prayer, and there he said: "Rabbis, what strange customs there are here! A man cannot eat a measure of food without receiving a blow." They replied, "What makes you believe that?" Rabbi Zeira said, "A certain butcher."

The butcher was summoned that very night, but the messengers discovered that he was already dead. "How could this be?" Rabbi Zeira asked. "I swear that I felt no anger towards him, and that I submitted to what I thought was a local custom!"

As it turned out, Heaven had avenged the butcher's offense to Rabbi Zeira. – From Berachot 2:8

In this week's parsha we read of the orders regarding the construction of the Sanctuary and its vessels. In examining this account, we see that the Sanctuary represents a lesson for the entire Jewish people, one meant to teach them how to live, for man is a miniature Sanctuary destined for prayer, Torah study, and the performance of mitzvot. We may add that the Holy One, blessed be He, alludes to a great principle in our parsha, namely how to prepare ourselves for prayer and Torah study. When someone is about to address Hashem, he should truly prepare himself in holiness and purity. He must cleanse his thoughts of all concerns and pray in a fitting way.

Our Creator is teaching us that when a person is getting ready to pray, he must first fulfill the verse, "Let them take for Me an offering...[of] gold and silver" (Exodus 25:2-3). This means that a person must take all his financial worries, as well as everything else he is concerned with, and entrust them to Hashem. Everyone must check to see that his concerns about making a living and all his other problems are solely in Hashem's hands. Everything originates from Hashem, Who is the only One Who can give a person what he needs. That being the case, when the time comes to pray we must purify our thoughts and verify that we indeed trust the Creator to give us everything we need so we will lack nothing!

It is only when a person conducts himself in this way that he will be able to commence, with a tranquil and trusting heart, the building of a sanctuary through prayer. This is because prayer actually consists of constructing a sanctuary for Hashem. One who prays wholeheartedly and concentrates on what he is saying will draw the presence of the Shechinah upon him, and in this way he will make a sanctuary of himself for his Creator. The word mishkan ("sanctuary") is composed of the same letters as nimshach ("drawn"). This means that preparation before prayer draws holiness to him from above. He then becomes a sanctuary for Hashem, for the Shechinah will truly dwell in him. Thus after properly preparing himself, a person can engage in prayer and build a sanctuary.

Let us expand upon this concept. It is not only with regards to preparing for prayer that a person must build a sanctuary for Hashem. In Torah study as well, a sanctuary can be built in the Name of Hashem through preparation that is worthy of such a name. This means that one who enters the Beit Midrash for Torah study must also suitably prepare himself in order to build a sanctuary for Hashem. In fact the Beit Midrash also draws the presence of the Shechinah and prepares a place for the Creator. At each instant that a person studies Torah, he builds yet another row of bricks and sets up still another crossbeam in the house of Hashem. Hence even when a person gets ready to construct this edifice, meaning to enter the Beit Midrash for study, he must prepare himself in holiness and purity. He must turn his mind away from the concerns of this world and "take for Me an offering...[of] gold and silver." He must take all his concerns regarding everything comparable to silver and gold, and he must entrust them to Hashem. We must be certain in our minds and our souls – certain in a clear and uncontested way – that only the Creator sees to all our needs, both now and in the future. Once we are clear on that, we will no longer have any worries.

At that point, when our hearts are completely free

from worry, we can begin studying Hashem's holy Torah in joy, holiness, and purity. We can build a sanctuary at each instant, a miniature Sanctuary that will serve as the Creator's abode. The Sages have said that in our time, the Beit Midrash is called a miniature Sanctuary (Megillah 29a). In essence Hashem has said: Remember that all the silver and gold belong to Me, which is why you have nothing to worry about, for I will see to all your needs. Simply remain studying, for in this way you will fulfill, "Let them make a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

In reflecting upon this concept, we may add yet another idea regarding the preparation required for prayer and Torah study, one derived from the words of the Chiddushei HaRim on the beginning of the parsha. That is, when Hashem asked the Children of Israel "to take for Me an offering," He was imploring them to give Him tzeddakah, much like a poor man asking for money. We need to understand why Hashem would actually be asking for an offering like a poor man asking for money.

Let us try and explain. The offering in our verse represents the tzeddakah that we give before we engage in prayer or Torah study. If a poor person were to come to us just before this time and ask for tzeddakah, we would do well to reflect a little on the fact that if the Creator of the world, to Whom the entire universe belongs, asked for an offering from the Children of Israel – much like this poor person who is asking us for tzeddakah – we should obviously take pity on him. We should listen to his request and give him something. By doing this, we will truly be ready to proceed to prayer or Torah study, thereby erecting a sanctuary. We know the importance that the Sages attached to giving tzeddakah before prayer (see Bava Batra 10a), as it is written: "B'tzedek [Through charity] shall I behold Your face" (Psalms 17:15).

Thus the verse, "Take for Me an offering" must be understood in the following way: Give tzeddakah to Me, to the poor person who represents Me, for every man is made in the image of G-d, as it is written: "For in the image of G-d He made man" (Genesis 9:6). Thus when a poor person knocks at the door, it is as if G-d Himself were there, and so we have to act. By giving to the poor, we are actually fulfilling the verse, "Take for Me an offering," an offering that is truly for the Holy One, blessed be He! After this we can fulfill, "Let them make a Sanctuary for Me," as explained above.

We may add something more: The poor person alludes to Hashem's Name, for the term adam ("man") has a numerical value of 45. Thus when the poor person is standing at the door, the holy Name [i.e., the Tetragrammaton when "filled" with three alephs, two vavs, and one dalet, yielding a numerical value of 45] is also standing at the door. Thus give Me an offering! In this way we fulfill the verse, "Take for Me an offering," one truly for Hashem, and afterwards we can build an edifice of Torah and prayer. If we are correct in this regard, we can understand why the Holy One, blessed be He, asked for an offering from the Children of Israel in the same way that a poor person asks for money, as opposed to commanding it as a mitzvah.

May everyone learn to give tzeddakah to the poor before praying, and not only that, but may everyone help his fellowman. It is only after we have readied ourselves that we should pray and study Torah – with a good heart and the right attitude – meaning only after we have thoroughly focused our thoughts and given tzeddakah to the poor. We will then be "built" as we should, worthy of the Shechinah itself. We will merit to erect the Sanctuary within ourselves and make the Shechinah rest upon us.

# MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

## The Journalist's Question

It is written, "Take for Me an offering" (Exodus 25:2).

Rashi explains there are three offerings here: One offering of a beka (half-shekel) per person from which the sockets of the Sanctuary were made; another offering of a beka per person for the communal sacrifices offered on the Altar; and a third offering for the Sanctuary, the donation of each person.

In his Torah commentary entitled *Oznaim LaTorah*, Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin Zatzal recounts the following story: During the time that poverty was prevalent among the yeshivot of Polish Lithuania, I traveled to Warsaw with the great men of the generation in an attempt to help save the yeshivot. During a fundraiser that we organized, I gave a speech on the situation of the yeshivot. Afterwards one of the journalists present (having been invited to draw attention to our fundraising efforts) asked me how Rabbi Meir Shapira had succeeded in building such a magnificent yeshiva in Lublin and collected so much money for it. Would it not have been better to fund some already existent yeshivot with the money, since its students were actually going hungry? By asking this question, the journalist intended to publicly disparage our fundraiser. I answered him according to the words of the Sages, asking him why Hashem had asked for an offering to be taken for the Sanctuary only from those individuals whose heart wanted to give, whereas for the public sacrifices one beka was taken from everyone, even from the poor. "Why did the Torah not just take the money for the public sacrifices only from generous people? Let them give what was required, just as they had given for the construction of the Sanctuary!

The answer is that the Torah knows how generous people give, for they are quick to donate for the construction of buildings, yet they refuse to donate money for their upkeep. If anyone was asked what was more important in G-d's eyes – the edifice in which sacrifices were made, or the sacrifices themselves – he would certainly reply that the goal is more important than the means. The proof is that the public offerings [the daily burnt-offerings and additional offerings] had priority over Shabbat, whereas the construction of the Sanctuary did not. Yet for the construction of the Sanctuary, people brought more gold and silver in a single day than was needed, to the point that a proclamation was required to tell them to stop. The One Who understands the drives of all His creatures knew that people would give a great deal for the construction of the Sanctuary. Hence there was no reason to obligate them to give. This is in fact what happened. However for the very purpose behind the Sanctuary's construction – the public offerings – the people did not give until they had been obligated to. It is the same for the yeshivot, their goal being the study of Torah, whereas the yeshiva buildings are but the means by which Torah study can take place. Despite this, people donate a great deal of money for buildings, yet little for the House of Hashem, for feeding the talmidei chachamim who study the Torah within. I am certain that when the edifice for the Lublin yeshiva will have been completed, the gaon of Lublin will have difficulty in covering the yeshiva's operating costs." This in fact is what happened, which is why people must look at what is essential, and to allocate funds there.

## The Constantly Turning Wheel: Tzedakah Returns to Him Who Gives It

It is written, "Speak to the Children of Israel, and let them take for Me an offering" (Exodus 25:2).

A well-known question asks: Why is it written, "Let them take" instead of, "Let them give"? Sometimes we see that pious individuals are prepared to give a great deal of money in order to merit driving their Rav to a certain event, for they consider this a great honor, not an expense. This can help us to understand the statement of our parsha: Who received our money? It was the Holy One, blessed be He. If Hashem is prepared to accept the money of a Jew, should this Jew be considered as having taken or given?

The Chafetz Chaim once spoke of a wealthy man who had many pos-

sessions. He also amassed various kinds of currency from all around the world. Before his death, he asked his children to bury him along with all his coins, paper currency, and diamonds, for who knew what kind of money was accepted in the next world? He warned them, "Don't forget the diamond that I wrapped in some old paper! Bury that one with me too!" Upon arriving in the next world after his death, thirst overcame him and he began looking for water. He came to a stall and asked an angel for something to drink. After thoroughly quenching his thirst, the man proceeded to pay with the money he had, but the angel refused to accept it. The angel said that his money was not accepted as currency there. The man proceeded to get out his pound sterling, but that too was not accepted as currency. Trembling, the man took out an enormous diamond that was wrapped in some old paper. "Will this do?" he asked. "Oh yes, that's perfect," said the angel. "That's the only form of currency we accept here." The angel stretched out his hand towards the diamond, but instead he took the paper in which it was wrapped – an old charity receipt for a donation the man had once given! That the angel did accept! May the wise take heed and learn.

## Who's Carrying Who?

It is written, "You shall put the poles into the rings by the sides of the Ark, so that the Ark may be carried with them" (Exodus 25:14).

The Ark of the Covenant carried those who transported it, even though it was made with carrying poles. In fact the Kohanim held onto the poles in order to be carried by the Ark, as during the passage across the Jordan River. Once all the people had made their way across (with the Kohanim marching behind), the water began to flow again. However the Ark carried the Kohanim through the air above the river. The pact between Issachar and Zebulun also raises the question of just who is supporting who. We must realize that although Zebulun believes that he is supporting Issachar, in reality it is Issachar who is supporting Zebulun. When Rabbi Eliezer of Telshe was a young avrech, his father-in-law supported him financially while he studied Torah. One time a rabbinical position became available in a nearby city, but Rabbi Eliezer's father-in-law told him to remain at home and continue studying. After a few years their economic situation drastically worsened, and Rabbi Eliezer's mother-in-law told her husband to let the avrech depart: "How long is he going to continue living with us? There are jobs out there, and from time to time he receives offers for rabbinical positions." Her husband said, "I don't know who's supporting who. Am I supporting him, or is he supporting me?"

This conversation took place several times, and eventually Rabbi Eliezer's father-in-law conceded. He therefore told Rabbi Eliezer that perhaps he might want to become the rav of a city and perfect himself in the practical aspects of Torah, since in this way he could progress further. Rabbi Eliezer replied, "I'll accept the next position that's offered to me." One such offer eventually arrived from the city of Telshe, which he promptly accepted. Thus Rabbi Eliezer departed from his father-in-law's home and headed for Telshe. While still on the road, however, he was intercepted by a horseman who told him the bad news: His father-in-law had died, and Rabbi Eliezer was to return immediately for the funeral. His mother-in-law said a few words at the funeral and asked her husband for forgiveness, since he had told her that he didn't know who was supporting who.

This allows us to understand why the Gemara interprets the verse, "To you, O men, do I call" (Proverbs 8:4) as meaning: "These are the talmidei chachamim, who resemble women and do mighty deeds like men" (Yoma 71a). In his book *Ben Yehoyada*, Rabbi Yosef Haim of Baghdad explains that talmidei chachamim sit in the Beit Midrash studying Torah; they do not occupy themselves with business or have a trade. As such they resemble women who sit at home and receive their sustenance from their husbands. Although talmidei chachamim are supported from the money given to them by wealthy individuals, in reality they are the mighty ones because they are not influenced by the wealthy, whereas women are influenced by their husbands. In fact talmidei chachamim exert an influence on the wealthy, for in supporting them financially they merit success in all things, as the above story demonstrates.

## It All Depends on Education

It is written, "You shall make a cover of pure gold, two and a half cubits its length, and a cubit and a half its width. You shall make two cherubim of gold – hammered out shall you make them – from both ends of the cover" (Exodus 25:17-18).

What are cherubim?

Rashi states that cherubim have the face of a child. The Temple is a holy place for the Jewish people. The holiest place within the Temple is called the Holy of Holies, with the pinnacle of holiness being the cherubim. The voice by which Hashem communicated to Moses passed between the two cherubim on the Ark cover, cherubim having the face of children. In the book of Genesis, however, it is stated that the cherubim were angels of destruction.

That being the case, what are the cherubim really like? Do they have the face of children, or are they angels of destruction?

The gaon Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein Zatzal said, "Children are our future, but everything depends on their education. If we educate them correctly, they can reach the greatest heights. However if we allow them to grow on their own, they will become angels of destruction." This means that if the cherubim are standing upon the holy Ark, standing by the Torah, then all is well. However if they are far from Torah, they will turn into angels of destruction!

– Aish Dat

## Rigid and Pliable – All for the Sake of Holiness

It is written, "You shall make the planks...of acacia wood, standing erect" (Exodus 26:15).

The Midrash states, "The world was unworthy to avail itself of cedar trees, and they were created solely for the sake of the Sanctuary and the Temple" (Shemot Rabba 35:1). Cedar wood is very hard and symbolizes strength and power, a fact that the Sages affirmed by saying: "A man should always be gentle as the reed and never unyielding as the cedar" (Taanith 20a).

As a result, rigidity would never have existed if not to serve in the Sanctuary and Temple, the sacred edifices of Judaism. Here being rigid and sturdy are good qualities, meaning that we must not allow ourselves to be influenced by mockers, nor to deviate from the path of Judaism because of those who tempt or provoke us.

– Avnei Ezel

## Overview of the Parsha

Once the Jewish people were formed by the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah and its laws, they were told in Parsha Terumah to prepare a place where Hashem would reside within Israel. In such a place Hashem would be represented first and foremost by the Tablets of the Covenant, which in turn represented His Torah. The Sanctuary is like a royal palace, the abode of the king, yet without a concrete representation of the king that makes his presence real.

Hashem asked the Children of Israel to take an offering for the Sanctuary. They were to make the Ark of the Covenant and its cover as a testimony, the cherubim to maintain its honor, the Table for the showbread, and the Menorah with its lights that illuminated the Table. They were told to fashion the curtains and hangings to give the Sanctuary its outer shape, the beams for the walls to the west, north, and south, and the partition to separate the Holy of Holies from the Most Holy Place. Offerings to Hashem would be brought outside the tent, and thus the Altar was built as well as a courtyard surrounding both it and the tent.

## REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

The Words of the Wise and their Riddles

It is written, "The length of the courtyard, a hundred cubits; the width, fifty by fifty" (Exodus 27:18).

In the writings of the Sages we find many teachings that were given as riddles, lessons that later scholars attempted to decipher. What follows is an example of such a riddle, as well as its explanation.

In the Gemara it is stated, "There was an assiduous student at Yavneh who with 150 arguments proved that a [dead] creeping thing was clean. Said Rabina: 'I could also logically prove it to be clean. If a snake, which kills and thereby causes much uncleanness, is itself ritually clean, how much more should a [dead] creeping thing, which does not kill and consequently causes no uncleanness, be ritually clean'" (Eruvin 13b).

Several questions arise. First, what exactly were the 150 arguments of the "assiduous student," and why were none of them described?

Second, in what way did Rabina add to our understanding of the subject? He only offered a single argument to prove the same point, whereas the student had given 150 of them!

The Vilna Gaon explains that this student was speaking figuratively. He did not really mean that he had 150 arguments. Instead, he was referring to the same argument offered by Rabina, the one involving the serpent. The concept behind this argument involves the verse, "The length of the courtyard, a hundred cubits; the width, fifty by fifty" (Exodus 27:18). Here the words *meiah va'amah* ("a hundred cubits") are punctuated with *te'amim* (cantillation symbols): *kadma* and *azla*. Furthermore, the words *chamishim ba'chameshim* ("fifty by fifty") are punctuated with two other *te'amim*: *munach* and *revii*. These symbols allude to what happened to the serpent in the Garden of Eden: At first the serpent was *kadma* and *azla* – advancing and walking quickly – because it walked on four legs and was the swiftest of the animals before the sin. Yet after the sin it became *munach* and *revii* – it rested on the earth and began to crawl – as in the expression *archi ve'revii* ("the path and where I lie down" [Psalms 139:3]).

This means that there was an assiduous student at Yavneh who could give 150 *te'amim* (reasons) for why a dead creeping thing was clean. This was not to be understood literally, but rather it pointed to the argument that Rabina used to make the same point, the proof involving the serpent. The student alluded to this by the expression "150 *te'amim*," a reference to the terms "a hundred cubits" and "fifty by fifty" in Exodus 27:18, which are all punctuated with *te'amim*. However the Sages of Israel who came afterwards did not know how to decipher this remark, until Rabina finally came and said, "I could also logically prove it to be clean." In other words, he would explain what this student really meant, which is exactly what he did.

## EISHET CHAYIL

### Rabbi Chanina's Daughter

Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa once noticed that his daughter was upset one Friday afternoon. "My daughter, what is the matter?" he asked her. "Shabbat is approaching, so you should be happy!" The girl said to her father, "How can I not be sad? I made the mistake of putting vinegar in the oil container for the Shabbat lights. Now the lights won't burn! What's Shabbat without light?" The tzaddik said to her, "My dear daughter, Who commands the oil to burn? It is obviously the Creator! Therefore He Who commands the oil to burn will also command the vinegar to burn."

In fact this righteous girl witnessed the Shabbat lights burning in vinegar during the entire day, continuing to burn even after Shabbat ended and Rabbi Chanina returned from the Beit Midrash. It was only once he used it to make *Havdalah* that they went out. In Rabbi Chanina's home, it was clear that there was no difference between miracles and natural events, since both were governed by Hashem (the difference being that nature is Hashem's permanent way of governing the world). Thus the One Who commanded the oil to burn also commanded the vinegar to do the same!

– From Taanith 25a

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

### The Wise of Heart

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

The reason that Hashem gave Solomon wisdom is mentioned 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 replied, ‘May You grant Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, whom You have chosen, to distinguish between good and evil’ ” (ibid. 3:5,9).

G-d answered him, “Because you have requested this thing, and you have not requested length of days and have not requested riches...behold, I have given you a wise and understanding heart” (vv.11-12). It is obvious from these verses that Solomon was rewarded with wisdom 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, important as they are. This is because Solomon knew that life without wisdom has no value, 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). In the account of the Sanctuary’s construction, we often come across the expression *chacham lev* (“wise of heart”). What is the idea behind being “wise of heart”? After all, wisdom resides in the brain, not in the heart! The answer is that the heart is the seat of man’s will, the center of his aspirations. One who is “wise of heart” is therefore a person who has a powerful thirst for knowledge. Scripture states, “I have endowed the heart of every wise-hearted person with wisdom” (Exodus 31:6), meaning that Hashem will put wisdom into the heart of a person who readies his heart to receive it.

## YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

### Rabbi Yosef David Sintzheim – The Av Beit Din of Strasbourg

Rabbi Yosef David Zatzal was a great man, a gaon in Torah who also possessed profound wisdom in secular matters. He was the son of the gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Sintzheim, the Av Beit Din of Trier and one of the great Torah scholars of his generation. At first Rabbi Yosef David served as the Rosh Yeshiva of Rabbi Naftali Herz’s yeshiva in Vichy. However when war broke out in France, his yeshiva was severely affected. He therefore went to live in Strasbourg, where he was named as the Rav and Av Beit Din of the Jewish community.

It was in Strasbourg that Napoleon Bonaparte convened a “Sanhedrin,” one composed of two-thirds rabbis and one-third ordinary citizens. Rabbi Yosef David was chosen as the head of the Sanhedrin. On Napoleon’s birthday, Rabbi Yosef David gave a lecture in honor of the Emperor, who greatly admired his speech and knew enough to respect and esteem the Rav’s character. Napoleon even sought his advice on various issues.

The French parliament officially recognized the Strasbourg Sanhedrin, and the government took counsel from its rabbis, their decisions being ratified by the government. At the same time, Rabbi Yosef David was a gaon in Torah and had many disciples who came to him in order to acquire Torah in all its domains. He was like an overflowing spring, giving classes from early in the morning until late at night to those yearning for Torah. In fact it was said that in his time, the glory of Israel could be seen in the exile. On Adar 4, 5570, Rabbi Yosef David left this world for the celestial academy. May the memory of the tzaddik be blessed.

## A MATTER OF EDUCATION

### The Value of Practical and Theoretical Education

The command to “make an Ark” (Exodus 25:10) came before the command to build the Sanctuary. This is despite the fact that, as Rashi points out, on a practical level the Sanctuary was to be built first, followed by everything that it was to contain (see Rashi on Exodus 38:22). The command to make the Ark came first because “the main purpose of the Sanctuary was to contain a place in which the Divine Glory rests, this being the Ark” (Ramban on Exodus 35:1). Thus even when occupied with building the Sanctuary (which began with the tent), the thoughts of the Children of Israel were always to be directed towards the Sanctuary’s goal, namely the Ark of the Covenant.

In the area of education as well, there are always two levels: The practical and the theoretical. In order to teach, it is necessary for action to be accompanied by an awareness of the idea constituting the objective of that action. True, in order to acquire the correct social conduct for the community to live in peace, the practical component of behavior is the main thing. With regards to the community, it is important that people not steal, regardless if they avoid stealing because they regard it as repugnant or because they are simply afraid of being punished. Insofar as the individual is concerned, however, education is not meant to produce robots who simply avoid disrupting society. The goal of education is to produce noteworthy individuals, people who are righteous and upright due to their vision of the world. Because the term “we will do” comes before “we will hear,” the gaon Rabbi Povarsky said that greatness resides in the fact that “we will hear” – which comes after “we will do” – is a completely different kind of hearing, one that penetrates to the depths of a person who takes action by demonstrating the way of the practical choice.

Although it is possible to use the concept of *lo lishma* (unselfishness) as an intellectual incentive for the one who needs it, such an approach is only secondary to educating towards the truth that action must contain. For example, at first we teach a child to respect others because they rightfully deserve it, and only then do we add that he will be rewarded for it.

The story is told of someone who arrived home one Friday night and saw that the covering over the challah was not properly arranged. He began to give his wife an entire lecture about the honor of Shabbat and the respect due to the challah. He told her that we must not shame the challah before the wine, meaning that it must be properly covered. The man’s guest tugged on his sleeve and said to him, “Excuse me, but you’re explaining the honor due to the bread, which feels nothing, yet to that end you’re shaming your wife? Her honor should come before your own!” The fact that he became angry over how the bread was covered means that he had lost sight of how to properly respect the various parts of Creation.

## A TRUE STORY

### The Gates That Weren’t Changed

It is written, “You shall make the courtyard of the Sanctuary” (Exodus 27:9).

Just as the Sanctuary had a courtyard, so too did the Temple have a courtyard, one equipped with seven gates (Midot 1:4).

The Gemara describes the great devotion involved in bringing the doors of the courtyard’s eastern gate to Jerusalem: “It was reported that when Nicanor went to retrieve doors from Alexandria in Egypt, on his return a gale arose in the sea to drown him. At that point they took one of the doors and cast it into the sea, but the sea would not stop raging. When they prepared to cast the other [door] into the sea, he arose and clung to it, saying: ‘Cast me in with it!’ Thus the sea immediately stopped raging. He was deeply grieved about the other [door]. As he arrived at the harbor of Akko, it broke through and came up from under the sides of the boat. Others say: A monster of the sea swallowed it and spit it up onto dry land.... Therefore all the gates in the Sanctuary were changed for golden ones, with the exception of the Nicanor gates, because of the miracles that occurred with them” (Yoma 38a). Hence these doors recalled that the Holy One, blessed be He, performs miracles for those who are ready to give their lives for His glory.