

# The Narrow Bridge

## גשר צר מאוד

### PARSHA PERSPECTIVES

#### Short Divrei Torah on Parshas Terumah

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רפואה שלמה פעסל בת גאלדא / לזכות חילינו

#### ACQUIRING BY GIVING

##### Malbim

*"Speak to the Children of Israel and they shall take for Me a portion."* (25:2)

Why does the text read "that they *take* for Me a portion" instead of "that they *give* Me a portion"?

Because people are in no position to give anything to G-d. Whatever we have belongs to G-d - "all of it is from You and it is only from Your hand that we give to You." Only through the act of using our possessions for performing a good deed for G-d's sake do we truly acquire them (the Sages said that it is by virtue of the blessing we recite when making use of a gift of G-d that "He gave the earth to mankind"), and if we make a gift of these possessions to G-d it is as if we had given of our own property.

The foregoing was true also in the case of the terumah. G-d asked the Jews to "take for Him" an offering, implying that through the act of dedicating their possessions to G-d they "take" or acquire it so that the property, which actually belongs to G-d, becomes as their own.

#### BECAUSE IT'S HIS WILL

##### Chiddushei HaRim

*"They shall take for Me a portion."* (25:2)

For me - for the glory of My Name. (Rashi)

This means that you shouldn't make the offering because you want your gifts to cause the Shechinah to dwell in your midst, but only for the glory of My Name, for no other reason but that it is G-d's will.

There is more merit in the resolve to obey G-d's command simply because it is His will that we do so than there is in any other high resolve, no matter how noble.

#### ETERNAL PLEASURES

##### Degel Machaneh Ephraim

*"They shall take for Me a portion."* (25:2)

The world is analogous to a wedding. Some people come for the joy of being at a wedding, which is its essence; others come to eat, drink, and be merry. The Torah comes to tell us not to subordinate the essence.

"Take to Me a portion" means take the desires and pleasures of the mundane, which are a momentary aspect, and transform them "for Me," for the soul, for the spiritual life, which is the essence of life.

#### A PIECE FOR HASHEM

##### Zanzer Rebbe

*"They shall take for Me a portion."* (25:2)

The Almighty asks that wherever one goes or whatever one does, let him separate a little bit in his heart for His sake.

#### ELEVATING OUR DESIRES

##### Toldos Yaakov Yosef

*"From every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion."* (25:2)

If a person is uncertain as to how he can best serve the Almighty, let him examine his basest desires and make use of them.

Thus, we can explain the pasuk: "From every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion." From the longings of the heart, the desires of This World, take Hashem's offering. It is precisely from these desires that a person can elevate himself in the service of Hashem.

## **THE TRUE RECIPIENT**

### **Rabbi Dovid Hoffman**

*“Speak to the Children of Israel and they shall take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion.” (25:2)*

The midrash states that the poor do more for the ba'al ha'bayis than the ba'al ha'bayis does for the poor (Rus Rabbah 4). How can that be? If someone provides a poor person with a meal, the physical gift is a rather temporary thing. However, when one looks at the whole picture from beginning to end, he sees that there is a lot more to it. By giving to a needy person, one is in fact gaining a share in Olam Haba. Therefore, his act causes a long-term effect for himself as well.

For this reason, writes Rav Shlomo Breuer zt'l, by the command to donate to the Mishkan the Torah employs the word vayikchu - “and you shall take,” rather than vayitnu - “and you shall give.” By “giving” something to another, whether physically or financially, we are in fact “taking” something for ourselves.

The same word is used regarding the first act of chessed mentioned in the Torah: Yukach na me'at mayim... v'ekchah pas lechem - “Let water be taken... I will take bread” (Bereishis 18:4-5). Shouldn't Avraham have said that he would “give” water and bread? The answer is that Avraham was teaching us an eternal lesson: When you help someone else, you are in fact not giving, but taking.

Similarly, the Aron was to be carried by the Leviim on two poles, each inserted through rings, one pole on each side. However, the Gemara tells us that, in actuality, the Aron didn't need carriers, for it really transported its bearers (Sotah 35a). A miracle occurred whereby the ark carried its own weight, easing the load of its bearers.

Rav Nosson Adler zt'l suggests that the same is true in a Yissachar-Zevulun partnership. The Zevulun appears to be “giving” by supporting the Yissachar, but in fact he is the one who is “taking.” This is a classic example of the “Aron supporting its bearers.” The Torah that the Yissachar learns is in fact supporting the Zevulun.

## **TORAH AND CHARITY**

### **Rebbe Nachman**

*“From every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion.” (25:2)*

The letters of the word Terumah (תרומה, portion) may be rearranged to spell Torah Mem (תורה מ), in which the mem (מ) is understood by its numerical value to mean “forty.” This alludes to the Torah, which was given after forty days (Zohar III, 179a).

Thus, “take My portion” means that in order for a person to be able to “take” G-dliness, he must engage in learning Torah. (See Likutey Moharan II, 60)

When one gives charity, he can come to see G-d's Pleasantness, or glory. This is alluded to in the word Terumah (תרומה, portion), which is an acronym for the final letters of the words lachzot b'noam YHVH u'levaker beheikhalo (ולבקר בהיכלו) בנעם ה', to see G-d's Pleasantness and enter His Sanctuary - Tehillim 27:4). (See Likutey Moharan II, 71)

In order to be charitable, a person must open his heart. Once his heart is open to give to others, it can also receive blessings and bounty from the Supernal Heart of the Noam HaElyon (Divine Pleasantness).

[When one opens his heart to charity and kindness, he enables his “open” heart to receive ever greater blessings from on high, from the Supernal Heart.] (See Likutey Moharan II, 71)

## **HELPING OTHERS EXCEL**

### **Rav Chanoch Zvi of Bendin**

*“Speak to the Children of Israel and they shall take for Me a portion.” (25:2)*

The midrash says that Moshe was anguished about not having brought a donation for the Mishkan. Hashem responded by telling him that his words were dearer to Him than the entire Mishkan.

Perhaps this can be understood with the dictum of Chazal: “The one who causes another to act is greater than the one who does the act” (Bava Basra 9a).

Why, indeed, did Moshe not donate? The answer is that since he knew that there was an exact amount of building materials required, by giving a donation he might cause another person's donation to not be used. (In the end, though, when he saw that there should have been leftover materials and Hashem performed a miracle so that all that was donated was incorporated into the Mishkan, he was then pained for not having given any donation.)

## **GLADLY GIVING**

### **Chasam Sofer**

*“From every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion... Gold and silver and copper...” (25:2-3)*

Actually, all the gold and silver on earth belongs to G-d, as it is written (Chagga'i 2:8): “‘Mine is the silver, and Mine the gold,’ says G-d.” Hence, when a person offers these things to G-d, the gift given is not the wealth, because that is not really one's to give away, but the willingness of one's heart, the good intention that motivated the person to make the offering. These qualities are truly one's own, and one offers them to G-d.

But one who does not make an offering of silver and gold in this spirit really has given nothing, because the money is not really one's to give away and the spirit of willingness - which would have been the true gift - is lacking.

This is what the phrase “every man whose heart will motivate him” means: only from someone who gives with willingness of heart and with good intentions “shall you take My offering.” Do not take anything from someone whose heart does not seem willing to offer a gift to G-d.

## **LIGHT OF CHARITY**

### **Baal HaTanya**

*“From every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion... Gold and silver and copper...” (25:2-3)*

Just like lightning breaks through heavy clouds and gives light to the earth, so does giving charity give light and understanding to the soul.

## **ELEVATED BY SPEECH**

### **Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**

*“From every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion... Gold and silver and copper...” (25:2-3)*

We can interpret this verse based on the observation that the Torah introduces this command with the words “Speak to the Jewish people.” This is the first time after the Giving of the Torah that G-d said, “Speak to the Jewish people.” Why is that?

The answer seems to be as follows:

Our Sages relate (Yoma 9b) that “anyone with whom the Sage Reish Lakish conversed in the street could be given merchandise without witnesses.” [Since Reish Lakish was so trustworthy, anyone with whom he associated was also considered trustworthy and could conduct business transactions without being expected to produce witnesses to guarantee their honesty.]

The deeper meaning of this statement is that a tzaddik is very careful before speaking with just anyone, since conversation with an ordinary person can disrupt the tzaddik's attachment to G-d. The exception to this rule is when the tzaddik can elevate the person he is speaking with. Then the tzaddik may talk with him because then, on the contrary, by remaining attached to G-d while speaking with the person, the tzaddik makes an impression on him and he is drawn into holiness.

This was the case with Reish Lakish, who was a consummate tzaddik. He was wary of speaking with anyone unless the person could be elevated into the realm of holiness. This is why the Talmud says that anyone with whom Reish Lakish conversed in the street could purchase merchandise without witnesses. Such a person was certainly upright and decent.

Now, when the Jewish people sinned with the Golden Calf, they lost the holiness that had pervaded them when they received the Torah and reverted to an impure state (Zohar 1:52b). As such, Moshe was fearful of speaking to the Jewish people. This is why G-d now had to command him, “Speak to the Jewish people.” G-d told him: “They

are the offspring of Yisrael, i.e., the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yisrael. Consequently, when you speak with them, you will certainly be able to elevate them to the realm of holiness, and they will attach themselves to Me and to My Name.” For this reason, G-d told Moshe to speak with them.

## **ELEVATING THE SHECHINAH**

### **Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**

*“From every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion... Gold and silver and copper...” (25:2-3)*

Every individual must serve G-d with his actions and thoughts. Through devout intentions and holy thoughts, a person raises the Shechinah from the earth, and through deeds, he elevates and betters himself.

[In the imagery of the Zohar (1:191b), ever since the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the Shechinah is rolling on the ground, so to speak, from the pain of the destruction and the subsequent exile, because the Shechinah dwells with the Jewish people in their suffering. Fulfilling the Torah properly raises the Shechinah from this lowly place and subsequently elevates the one who performed the mitzvah.]

This is the deeper meaning of this verse. The phrase “Every man whose heart will motivate him” alludes to serving G-d with thoughts. By doing so, as the verse continues, “you shall take My elevated portion,” meaning, through this Divine service, the Shechinah is uplifted.

The phrase “This is the portion - literally, 'the elevation' - that you shall take from them” alludes to the elevation that the person himself “takes,” so to speak, through action, as the verse continues, “gold, silver, and copper,” which refers to the actual deed of contributing of gold, silver, and copper. Contemplate and analyze this well.

## **TAKING THE NECESSARY STEPS**

### **Rabbi Dovid Hoffman**

*“This is the portion that you shall take from them... tachash skins and acacia wood.” (25:3, 5)*

Where did the Jews find cedar trees in the desert with which to build the walls of the Mishkan?

The Medrash Tanchuma informs us that Yaakov Avinu beheld through Ruach Hakodesh that his descendants would build a sanctuary as they traveled on their way to the Holy Land, so he arranged to have cedars brought down and planted in Egypt. He then commanded his children, before he died, to take the cedars with them when they would depart from the exile of Egypt.

But was this absolutely necessary for Yaakov to do? Surely, Hashem would not have insisted that in order to complete the construction of the Mishkan, a particular type of lumber would have to be used, if that type of lumber could not be found in the wilderness!

Yaakov Avinu was teaching us a tremendous lesson, explains R' Eliyahu Meir Bloch zt'l. When it comes to the practical necessities of life, such as sustenance for oneself and family, shelter and clothing to keep oneself warm and safe from the harsh elements, etc., we have no one other than our Father in Heaven to rely upon, for of course, He will see to our needs. This is the basic principle of bitachon - trust in Hashem - to which every Jew, great and small alike, subscribes unquestioningly. However, it is in the area of tzarhei kedushah - spiritual (sacred) necessities, that a person must look ahead, take the proper precautions, and prepare in advance all that he needs to raise himself up spiritually. When Yaakov Avinu saw the eventual inevitability of a consecrated sanctuary for the Jewish people, where the presence of Hashem Himself would rest, he didn't disinterest himself with the particulars and simply trust that Hashem would take care of things. Instead, he took it upon himself to prepare the supplies needed to create this hallowed edifice.

## **TREASURED EFFORTS**

### **Rabbi Moshe Kormornick**

*"And this is the portion which you shall take from them: gold, silver, copper... oil for illumination... aromatic incense... Shoham stones, and filling stones for the Ephod and Choshen. (25:3-7)*

Parshas Terumah begins by detailing the funding campaign for the Mishkan. The verses mentioned above include the thirteen items that the Jewish People were requested to donate.

Usually, when a list is compiled in the Torah, the most important is stated first. Therefore, it is surprising that the precious Shoham stones and filling stones - which were so exquisite in their beauty that they were chosen to be placed in the Ephod worn by the Kohen Gadol - were placed at the end of the list, even after less expensive items like wood and incense. Surely they should have even been placed first?

The Ohr HaChaim answers this question from the Gemara which states that in Hashem's display of abundant love for the Jewish People, He showered them with precious stones, including the Shoham stones, bringing them down with the Clouds of Glory (Yoma 75a).

Therefore, explains the Ohr HaChaim, even though the precious stones were far more expensive and precious than everything else in the list, because they came with the least amount of effort and self-sacrifice, their donation value was inferior to the other materials which were hard-earned.

Based on this message, Rav Moshe Sternbuch said that in Hashem's eyes, someone who puts himself out to give a little bit of tzedakah can have more favor than a billionaire who donates a million dollars. For, while the million dollar contribution is very laudable and will go very far, if it comes with less self-sacrifice than a smaller donation of a poorer person, it remains secondary in Hashem's eyes.

This concept was repeated by Rav Yechezkel Sarna to his family when they questioned him on why he takes up a considerable amount of his time every Friday morning to welcome a widow into his home in order to accept the few pennies that she had managed to save for the yeshivah that week. "It is true that the yeshivah may not financially depend on her contribution," answered Rav Sarna, "but with the dry bread she deprives herself of every day in order to save those pennies to support Torah, she sustains the entire world!"

## **ONLY WHAT WE CAN HANDLE**

### **Rabbi Moshe Schochet**

*"And they should make a Sanctuary for Me and I will dwell among (lit. within) them." (25:8)*

There is a fascinating Medrash, quoted in the Pesikta D'Rav Kahana, which records a conversation between Hashem and Moshe. After hearing the instruction to build the Mishkan that will house the Shechinah, Moshe asked the obvious question: How is it possible to construct a building big enough to accommodate Hashem's presence when Hashem has no boundaries? Hashem responded to Moshe that He does not expect Moshe to create an edifice that a human being would be incapable of building. Rather, Hashem shared the measurements of the Mishkan that were feasible to build and explained that He would limit the size of the Shechinah to fit into the Mishkan.

The Chofetz Chaim points out that we see from this dialogue that Hashem does not impose unrealistic and impossible goals for us to achieve. Instead, He commands us to do things that we can handle and includes instructions so that we can meet those expectations. Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, understands what we are capable of doing and provides us with a clear manual of how to achieve it.

During times of difficulty, we wonder how we can be expected to fulfill Hashem's requests. Does Hashem really think we can overcome these seemingly insurmountable obstacles in front of us? The Chofetz Chaim is teaching us that Hashem knows us better than we know ourselves, and He knows what we are able to persevere through. It is important for us to realize that if Hashem has brought us to it, He will bring us through it. If we follow the road map of the Torah through life's ups and downs, then there is nothing that we can't achieve!

## **HOLY HOMES**

### **Amshinover Rebbe**

*"And they should make a Sanctuary for Me and I will dwell among (lit. within) them." (25:8)*

Rashi comments: "They will make a house of sanctity dedicated to My name." This means that it is the obligation of the Jew to bring holiness into his home and to develop a sense of holiness in his family.



## **HOSTING HASHEM**

### **Rabbi Moshe Schochet**

*“And they should make a Sanctuary for Me and I will dwell among (lit. within) them.” (25:8)*

The Slonimer Rebbe (Nesivos Shalom) quotes a powerful insight in the name of the Divrei Shmuel. He explains that the word mikdash comes from the word “designated” or “set apart.” For example, the Gemara (Kiddushin 2b) teaches that when two people get married, the man says to the woman, harei at mekudeshes li - “you shall be set aside for me.” Additionally, when it comes to food assigned to the Kohanim and Leviim, it is referred to as hekdesh. The Divrei Shmuel explains that the Torah is communicating to us that for Hashem's presence to dwell amongst us, we have to carve out a space for Him in which to reside. We have to make sure that our actions and behaviors are pure so that the Shechinah will feel comfortable amongst us.

As we progress through life, we are often confronted with difficult decisions, which can significantly impact our spiritual growth. When making tough choices, we need to ask ourselves if our decision will further our ability to host Hashem's presence and bring Him closer or, chas v'shalom, push Hashem farther away. If we approach life with this mindset, we are sure to make the right decisions, which will help ensure that we grow closer to Hashem.

## **HOLY PLACE, HOLY THOUGHTS**

### **Kozaizer Rebbe**

*“And they should make a Sanctuary for Me and I will dwell among (lit. within) them.” (25:8)*

The knowledge that today synagogues have taken the place of the Holy Temple should govern our behavior when we enter them. Just as the Kohen Gadol had to focus all of his thoughts for the sake of Heaven, every Jew upon entering a synagogue or a house of study should concentrate all his thoughts for the sake of the Divine - so that “I shall dwell among them.”

## **DO YOUR BEST, HASHEM WILL DO THE REST**

### **Rabbi Moshe Kormornick**

*“And they should make a Sanctuary for Me and I will dwell among (lit. within) them.” (25:8)*

Chazal tell us that Moshe was concerned how he could possibly build the Mishkan - a spiritual entity - using mere physical tools?

The Medrash speaks of Moshe's dilemma with a parable of an exceptionally handsome king who told one of his artists to paint a picture of him. The artist responded, “How could I replicate the splendor of Your Majesty's face on mere canvas?” to which the king replied, “You with your paint and me with my glory” (Medrash Rabbah 35:6).

So too, Hashem's response to Moshe was “Use the materials you have, and I will make sure that My glory rests there.”

The message here is that when we approach a daunting task that is necessary for us to do, we should put in all of our effort and not be discouraged by the difficulty of the task, for the outcome of our actions does not necessarily have anything to do with the effort we expend.

As the Mishna in Pirkei Avos (2:21) says, “It is not up to you to complete the task,” which the Tiferes Yisrael translates to mean that we should not give up on working on something just because we feel that we are incapable of finishing the job.

This message was exemplified in recent years by Rav Noach Weinberg. Rav Noach saw that the Jewish People were being lost to assimilation and he believed that he had an obligation to turn the tide. He would often quote Rav Shach as saying, “if one man can kill six million Jews, then one man can save six million Jews.” Being such a tremendous talmid chacham, when Rav Noach first decided to open a Yeshiva for Baalei Teshuva, he was ridiculed; “They used to call me crazy Noach” he would say, “but I knew what I had to do. I set up Yeshiva after Yeshiva - with each one a bigger failure than the other, but I knew what the Creator wanted from me. I had a mission to change the world.” And eventually, Rav Noach succeeded in his mission when Aish HaTorah was established, a world-famous organization which has literally changed the world.

Rav Noach saw an impossible task ahead of him. He even went against his society and peers because he knew what Hashem wanted from him. And despite setback after setback, he ploughed ahead, never falling prey to despair. This is exactly what Hashem was saying to Moshe, “You do your best to build My Sanctuary and do not worry about the outcome, that is for Me to deal with and when you do your very best then I will make sure that My glory rests there.”

Rav Doniel King, however, understands from the words, “use the materials you have, and I will make sure My glory rests there” that the Mishkan was never meant to be a purely spiritual entity, rather, it was built to be a physical reminder of the spiritual connection with Hashem that we achieved at Sinai.

To understand this, Rav Doniel gives the example of someone who visited the Statue of Liberty and purchased a miniature statue in the gift shop to remember the experience that he had there. Even though the physical value of this miniature statue is only worth a few dollars, its actual value is far greater, for it brings with it all of the emotions and feelings felt while he was there - it represents an eternal connection to that place!

So too, the Mishkan was built for us to relive our Sinai experience and continue our connection with Hashem by constantly reminding us of the relationship that we forged at Sinai and, thereby, allowing us to develop it further.

## **CREATING A HOME FOR HASHEM**

### **Alshich HaKadosh**

*“and I will dwell among (lit. within) them.” (25:8)*

Shouldn't the text read: “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell within *it* (i.e., the sanctuary)”?

“That I may dwell within them” refers to the Jews, and implies that it is the duty of each and every Jew to make a sanctuary within his or her own heart - a place in which the Holy Presence may dwell.

If all the Jews build such a tabernacle within their hearts, G-d would dwell within the heart of every one of them.

(The Malbim adds: For this reason, too, the text specifies “Accordingly... so shall you make it” (Shemos 25:9). To this, Rashi comments: “This means for all the generations to come,” because such a sanctuary, built within our hearts, can be reared at any time and in any age.)

## **REVEALING THE HIDDEN**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*“And they should make a Sanctuary for Me and I will dwell among (lit. within) them.” (25:8)*

Not “within *it*” but “within *them*”: G-d told us to make a sanctuary so He may dwell within us. There are three types of sanctuaries included in this commandment: the physical Tabernacle that the Jews built in the desert; the personal, inner sanctuary that each of us must construct out of our lives and our sphere of influence in the world; and finally, the world at large, which we must transform into G-d's home.

In all three cases, the task is possible only because we are simply revealing the hidden, true nature of reality. The world at large and everything in it exists only because of the Divine energy pulsing within them, so making the world into a place where Divinity is revealed is simply a matter of removing the obstructions that hide this reality. Similarly, the essence of every one of us is our Divine soul, so making our lives into a Tabernacle for G-d is nothing more than allowing our inner essence to shine through the excess material baggage we have accumulated during our journey through life. (HaYom Yom, 21 Tamuz) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

## **ALWAYS ROOM FOR GROWTH**

### **Rabbi Noson Adler**

*“And they shall make an Aron... two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height.” (25:10)*

The measurements of the Aron of the Torah are given in fractional figures (two and a half and one and a half) rather than in whole figures to remind Torah scholars that even they still have not attained perfection and “wholeness” in their knowledge.

## **IT'S WITHIN REACH**

### **Binah L'Ittim**

*“And they shall make an Aron... two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height.” (25:10)*

The depth of the Aron was less than its length, to teach us that the Torah is not so deep as to be inaccessible.

## **CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS**

### **Rabbi Moshe Kormornick**

*“And you shall cover it with pure gold - on the inside and on the outside you shall cover it [with gold].” (25:11)*

The Gemara (Yoma 72b) tells us that Betzalel made three Arks - a golden Ark for the outside, another golden Ark for the inside, and a wooden Ark in the middle.

What was the point in putting wood in the middle? Since there was gold on the inside and gold on the outside, surely the Ark could have been made of one big solid gold piece?

The Daas Zekeinim answers very simply that if it would have been totally made of gold, it would have been too heavy to carry.

From here we see an incredible insight into Hashem's attitude towards holiness. The Ark, which was the holiest object in the Mishkan and contained the broken tablets that Hashem Himself had created, together with the tablets that Moshe carved, was constructed with a layer of wood instead of gold to avoid causing undue difficulty to those who would have to carry it. The message from this is clear; even when it comes to holiness and religious devotion, one must always consider how his actions will affect the people around him.

This message was truly epitomized in the latter years of Rav Yisrael Salanter's life when he was too ill to supervise the city's matza baking before Pesach. He sent some of his best students to supervise the entire process. Before they departed for the bakery, they asked their teacher which religious stringencies they needed to be careful about in their task. Rav Yisrael just answered them as follows: “The woman who cleans the floors in between each baking is a widow, be careful how you speak to her.”

## **SUPPORTING THE SCHOLARS**

### **Alshich HaKadosh**

*“The staves shall remain in the rings of the Aron; they shall not be removed from it.” (25:15)*

According to the Sages, the Aron denotes the “crown of the Torah,” implying that all those who want to can acquire the Torah for themselves through study (which is likened to a “crown”). For this reason, the text (Shemos 25:10) reads “*they* shall make an Aron” rather than “*you* shall make an Aron.”

But even as the Aron had to have staves by which it could be transported from place to place, so too, students of the Torah must have supporters who can provide them with sustenance. Accordingly, the Torah specifies that the Aron's staves must always be kept in the rings and never be removed from there to teach us in symbolic terms that those who provide the sustenance for Torah students must never withdraw their support, not even for a moment, for without their aid scholars would not be able to continue their studies.

## **ETERNAL BOND**

### **Koznitzer Rebbe**

*"The staves shall remain in the rings of the Aron; they shall not be removed from it." (25:15)*

Tabor (rings) means the ring of marriage (taba'as kedushin). When a Jew performs the mitzvos and recites the blessing "Who has sanctified us with His Commandments," he betroths himself to the Almighty.

Badim (staves) represent "am l'vadad yishkon" (Bamidbar 23:9), a people separated from others because of their observance of mitzvos. "They shall not be removed" means that because of their observance, Hashem will never neglect or leave His people.

## **TESTIMONY OF TORAH**

### **Reb Noson of Breslov**

*"Place the Testimony that I will give you in the Ark." (25:16)*

The Torah is called "Testimony" - it is testimony to G-d. For whoever has a brain in his head can understand with his intellect the fact of the Reality and Unity of G-d.

From whence does such a Torah emanate? A Torah that begins with the Act of Creation and concludes with Devarim, with all of its laws and bylaws; all the Books of the Prophets and Hagiography; the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, the Kabbalah and all the dialectics that accompany these works - how it all fits together with precision.

One who possesses even a small awareness of the Torah and its contents realizes that it is not a man-made presentation, but testimony to our Creator, from Whom the entire Torah emanated. Thus, the Torah is testimony to the Reality and Unity of G-d. (Likutey Halakhot VI, p. 30)

Throughout the Bible, the Torah is referred to as a "witness" - e.g., "the Ark of Testimony." Indeed, anyone who examines the Torah - the Written Law, the Oral Law, the Talmud, the Midrash, the Kabbalah, and the commentaries of the great tzaddikim and Chassidic masters - will admit that it could not have been "made up" by man. Everything in Torah meshes with everything else and is part and parcel of the other parts. Thus, the Torah testifies to the One G-d, Who gave it.

## **ENVELOPED BY LOVE**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*"You shall make a cover of pure gold [for the Ark]." (25:17)*

The tablets housed in the Ark signify the union with G-d that we achieve by studying the Torah. The Cover of the Ark signifies G-d's grace from above, which we require in order to maintain Divine consciousness at all times - even while uniting with Him through studying the Torah. G-d grants us this assistance in virtue of our intrinsic connection to Him, which exists independent of the connection that we forge with Him through studying the Torah and observing the commandments.

This intrinsic bond is alluded to by the fact that word for "Cover" (kaporet) is related to the word for "atonement" (kaparah). Atonement for sin is possible only when we invoke and evoke G-d's essential love for us, which overrides the deficiencies in our relationship to Him that we cause when we disobey the Torah's instructions.

Our constant opportunity to repair and renew our relationship with G-d (represented by the Cover of the Ark) transforms our study of the Torah (represented by the tablets within the Ark) from a purely intellectual pursuit to a springboard for spiritual growth. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 26, pp. 180-182) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

## **THE INNER CHILD**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*"And you shall make two golden Keruvim." (25:18)*

The infant-like faces of the Keruvim signified that our intrinsic bond with G-d is akin to the essential bond between parent and child. Despite any fluctuations that might arise in their relationship, the bond between parent and child can never be broken.

The fact that the Keruvim were situated above the Tablets of the Torah and faced each other signified that by studying the Torah, we can reach the root of our Divine soul, allowing our consciousness to merge totally with G-d.

The infant faces of the Keruvim also alluded to the fact that the Torah as we know it is a diluted, simplified version of the heavenly Torah, G-d's infinite wisdom. G-d contracted His infinite wisdom into a form we can understand and digest, much as an expert teacher contracts his grasp of a subject in order to convey it to his pupils.

The fact that the Keruvim's wings were spread protectively over the Ark alludes to the fact that the Torah-education of young children ensures the preservation and continuity of the transmission of the Torah. (Torah Ohr 79d; Reshimot 108; Sichot Kodesh 5741, vol. 2, pp. 395-397; Likutei Sichot, vol. 26, pp. 180-182) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

## **GOLDEN EDUCATION**

### **Rabbi Dovid Hoffman**

*“And you shall make two golden Keruvim, hammering them out of the two ends of the [Ark] cover.” (25:18)*

The Mechilta at the end of Parshas Mishpatim notes that although the Torah prescribes the use of gold in the construction of most of the vessels of the Mishkan, other metals may be used if gold is unavailable.

This applies to all vessels, except for the Keruvim which were unique in that no other substance besides gold was acceptable.

The question is: what is different about the Keruvim that Chazal were insistent that it shall be made only from pure gold? Why, unlike all the other vessels - the spoons, pans, utensils and even the Menorah and the Shulchan - which were permitted to be constructed from other metals, were the Keruvim prohibited to be made from any metal other than gold?

The Lubliner Rav, R' Meir Shapiro zt'l, provides us with a beautiful and telling explanation, one that applies to every Jewish home in every day and age. The Keruvim, with their faces formed like those of children, are symbolic of the young and impressionable children of Bnei Yisrael. Our children are our most precious asset, and therefore in addition to caring for their physical needs, the most important consideration that every parent must ensure, is the need to provide them with an uncompromising Jewish education.

Indeed, the position of the Keruvim on top of the holy Ark symbolizes the concept that our children's Torah education is to be placed in our highest regard. It is symbolic, therefore, that no other metal besides for pure unadulterated gold may be used to make the Keruvim, just as our children's education must be pure and unadulterated. For when it comes to teaching children Torah and supporting Jewish education for our youth, only our very best - golden - efforts will do.

## **STAYING YOUNG**

### **Rabbi Efreim Goldberg**

*“And you shall make two golden Keruvim.” (25:18)*

The Aron, the most sacred article in the Mishkan, was covered by the kapores which included two keruvim - images of young children.

If we would have been asked to choose which images to place above the ark, we might have chosen pictures of people like Rav Soloveitchik and Rav Moshe Feinstein, or perhaps Rav Chaim and Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky. We would have assumed that the most fitting images for the covering over the Aron would be the greatest tzaddikim. Why did Hashem want the holy Aron, which was kept in the holiest place on the planet, to be covered by the images of young children, who have yet to learn or accomplish anything?

The Alter of Kelm explains that the keruvim over the Aron teach us that Torah life requires the vigor, enthusiasm, and energy of youth. Children are naturally driven, energetic, curious, adventurous, open to new ideas and new experiences, and eager to accomplish and do lots of different things. Adults, however, are typically more fatigued, more set in their ways, more resistant to change, more reluctant to take on something new. They usually feel that they're finished growing and are now the final product. We are to approach Torah with the excitement and energy of children, with a sense that we are still only in the beginning, that we have so much more to accomplish, and so much more to grow. This is the symbolic meaning of the keruvim above the Aron.

We have here in our shul people who are around 100 years old, but they are still youthful. They are still eager and excited to grow and to achieve. On the other hand, I have met people in their twenties who are already old. They live with fatigue, with apathy, without any drive or ambition, without excitement and without an interest in growing. Youthfulness has to do far less with age than with mindset. We can - and should try to - be “young” at every age.

The Alter of Kelm notes in this context that we refer to a great Torah scholar not as a חכם (“wise person”), but rather as a תלמיד חכם - “wise student.” The moment a scholar no longer sees himself as a תלמיד, as a student who still has so much more to learn, who is still in the beginning of his educational journey, he becomes nothing. We consider someone a חכם, an accomplished scholar, only if he still regards himself as a תלמיד, a student who is still learning and growing.

## **EMULATING THE CHILD**

### **Chida**

*“And you shall make two golden Keruvim.” (25:18)*

The Sages relate that the Keruvim had the form of a child's face. Thus, the two Keruvim on the Aron were to remind those who study the Torah that they must be like a child in two respects: They must accept the Torah's authority like an obedient child who has not yet begun to study, and they must be pure and innocent of sin just like a child.

## **MINDFUL OBSERVANCE**

### **Kli Yakar**

*“The Keruvim shall spread their wings upward... and the Keruvim shall face one another.” (25:20)*

The positioning of the Keruvim on top of the Aron teaches us how a Torah-observant Jew must behave at all times.

He must be among those who “spread their wings upward,” always mindful of the mitzvos between Hashem and man. At the same time, he must ensure “their faces face one another,” that he is considerate and careful in mitzvos between man and his fellow man.



## WHAT HASHEM DESIRES

### Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

*"The Keruvim shall spread their wings upward... and the Keruvim shall face one another." (25:20)*

The Torah here describes the two keruvim as extending their wings upward - פורשי כנפיים למעלה - and facing one another - ופניהם איש אל אחיו.

The Gemara in Maseches Bava Basra (99a) notes that a different pasuk, in Sefer Divrei Hayamim (3:13), indicates that the keruvim were facing outward, away from one another. To reconcile these two pesukim, the Gemara explains that בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום, when Am Yisrael are fulfilling G-d's wishes, then the keruvim face one another, symbolizing Hashem's love for His nation. But when Am Yisrael do not fulfill Hashem's wishes, the keruvim turn away from each other, expressing distance and tension.

The Beis Yisrael (the fourth Gerrer Rebbe) developed this idea further. When the Gemara speaks of Am Yisrael failing to fulfill Hashem's wishes - אין עושין רצונו של מקום - it means that they are turning away from one another, that they fail to care for one another, to pay attention to each other's needs, to show sensitivity and respect to their fellow Jews, as symbolized by the keruvim's faces turned away from another.

Jews can have their "wings" spread "heavenward," they can be very "frum," insisting on only the strictest standards of kashrus and reciting the longest shemoneh esrei in shul, but still be considered אין עושין רצונו של מקום, failing to fulfill Hashem's will, if they do not "face" their fellow Jew, if they do not show empathy and extend kindness to their fellow, or shower their fellow Jews with love. The keruvim's faces turned toward one another when Am Yisrael were "facing each other," were caring for one another and treating each other respectfully - and this is רצונו של מקום, what G-d wants from us.

## PROTECTED BY THE YOUTH

### Tzvor HaMor

*"The Keruvim shall spread their wings upward, sheltering the Aron's cover with their wings." (25:20)*

The Keruvim on the Aron containing the Torah had the form of a child's face, implying that the Torah study in which children engage in the cheder serves as a shield of merit for the entire Jewish community, protecting it from evil ("sheltering the Aron cover with their wings").

The Sages said: "The world survives only by the merit of the children in the house of study, as it is written: 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You established strength because of Your adversaries, so that You might silence the enemy and the avenger'" (Tehillim 8:3).

## PREREQUISITE OF LOVE

### Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

*"The Keruvim shall spread their wings upward... and the Keruvim shall face one another." (25:20)*

The Gemara (Yoma 54b) teaches: "When the heathens entered the Temple to destroy it, they saw the Keruvim in embrace."

This concept seems to be perplexing. The "embrace of the Keruvim," is an expression of Hashem's closeness and love for Klal Yisrael. How is it possible that at the very moment of severe punishment and destruction, the Keruvim would be in embrace?

The Maharsha, R' Shmuel Eidels zt'l, suggests that it is because Bnei Yisrael were being so severely punished that there had to be this manifestation of utter closeness and love. It is a testament to the pure and total righteousness of the Ribono shel Olam that when He metes out Divine justice through punishment, He is first and foremost filled with compassion and love.

Therefore, only at the moment when the Keruvim were locked in an embrace of love, could the Almighty decree the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and Bnei Yisrael's subsequent exile.

## THINKING OF OTHERS

### Pardes Yosef

*"...and the Keruvim shall face one another." (25:20)*

Yet another verse (Sefer Divrei Hayamim 3:13) says: And their faces to the House. How so? One way is if they do the Omnipresent's will and the other way if they will not do the Omnipresent's will. (Bava Basra 99a)

In seeking to do the Omnipresent's will, "each person's face must be turned to the other"; i.e., individuals must think not only of themselves but also of other Jews. We must take care that our siblings also remain true to Judaism, and that our siblings children, too, should be able to study the Torah.

If a person's "face is turned to the house," if we are concerned only with the spiritual needs of our own house, it is proof that we are not doing the Omnipresent's will.

## CONSTANT AWARENESS

### Vizhnitzer Rebbe

*"You shall place the showbread upon the table, before Me at all times." (25:30)*

When does one's eating - his lechem - have a panim - an acceptability and fulfillment? When he does it לפני תמיד - when he is continuously aware of Hashem's presence in front of him at all times.

## **PRIDEFUL SINCERITY**

### **Rabbi Dovid Hoffman**

*“You shall place the showbread upon the table, before Me at all times.” (25:30)*

Mashal: In the city of Tzefas, during the times of the Arizal, R' Yitzchak Luria zt'l, there lived a sincere fellow who once heard a shiur in shul about the importance of the lechem ha'panim. He became very excited. Inflamed with passion, he raced home and informed his wife that she should bake twelve challos each week, which he would then bring to shul on Erev Shabbos and offer up as a gift to the Ribono Shel Olam.

Each week, his wife would bake the challos, and he would deliver them to the shul. With a heartfelt prayer, he would silently place them inside the Aron Kodesh and then leave before anyone knew he had been there.

Unbeknownst to him, the shamash would come into the shul each Friday and see twelve challos neatly arranged inside the Aron Kodesh. Intrigued, he thought that perhaps someone was being kind to him and his family, as food was hard to come by on his meager salary. So each Friday, he took the challos home and used them for his Shabbos table.

This went on for quite some time until one Friday, when the rabbi of the shul happened to come in early and noticed the sincere fellow placing his gift of twelve challos inside the Aron Kodesh. Thinking the man had gone insane, he loudly berated him. “What do you think you're doing? Giving Hashem lechem ha'panim? Are you crazy?”

That very same day, the holy Arizal came across this rabbi and told him, “You should know that what you did was wrong. You had no right to berate this man; since the time of the destruction of the holy Temple, Hashem has not enjoyed such spiritual pleasure as from that sincere man's lechem ha'panim!”

Nimshal: We don't always know what we're doing or if our actions are having the proper effect. But one thing is certain: If we approach our Avodas Hashem with true sincerity and generosity of heart, this is sure to bring about a nachas ruach to our Father in Heaven.

## **REQUIRING HASHEM'S ASSISTANCE**

### **Rabbi Moshe Kormornick**

*“And you shall make the pure-gold Menorah, hammered out, the Menorah shall be made...” (25:31)*

Since the verse says that the Menorah “shall be made” in the passive form instead of repeating “you shall make,” we are being taught that initially Moshe was instructed to make the Menorah, but since he found it too difficult, the Menorah was made “by itself” (see Rashi and the Mizrachi).

Why would Hashem show Moshe how to create the Menorah if it would still be too hard for him to make?

The Sefas Emes (Parashas Terumah, 5631) answers that Hashem did this in order to teach us that no one - not even Moshe - can perform a mitzvah without Hashem's help. Instead, we have to put in all of our effort and rely on Hashem to do the rest. This message corresponds to Pirkei Avos which tells us that it is “not our duty to complete the work,” since it is beyond us, but at the same time, we are “not at liberty to neglect it,” because all Hashem wants from us is to apply our best effort; whether or not the mitzvah is actually accomplished is only in His hands (Avos 2:16 with Tiferes Yisrael).

Although we may feel disheartened at the thought of not being able to achieve greatness by ourselves, we should in fact be filled with great excitement at the knowledge that, with Hashem's help, we can achieve greatness way beyond our natural-born talents. We do not need to be the biggest genius to become great in Torah, for instance, because it is our effort that Hashem rewards with success. Similarly, if we wholly dedicate ourselves to fulfill a mitzvah despite the difficulty we anticipate facing, we will undoubtedly receive tremendous Divine assistance to help us succeed.

## **LIGHT WITHIN THE DARKNESS**

### **Reb Noson of Breslov**

*“And you shall make the pure-gold Menorah, hammered out, the Menorah shall be made...” (25:31)*

Moshe had difficulty understanding how the Menorah should be made; he had learned yet forgotten how to make it.

G-d told him, “Go to Betzalel; he will show you.” Moshe went to Betzalel, who immediately crafted the Menorah. Moshe exclaimed, “Betzalel (בצלאל), you must have been b'tzeil Kel (בצל א-ל, in G-d's shadow). G-d showed me and I could not grasp how. But you, you did it immediately.” (Yalkut Reuveini)

This episode raises many questions. If Betzalel, who was in G-d's shadow, knew how to make the Menorah, surely Moshe, who had been taught directly by G-d, should have known how to make it? And how could it be that Moshe had such a difficult time understanding, yet Betzalel grasped it immediately?

Moshe's difficulty lay in grasping how it was possible to create a Menorah that would continually give forth light, despite the darkness of this world and the obstacles that face man in his spiritual quest. But Betzalel, Moshe's student, grasped right away that the light would shine forever.

Moshe's inability to understand stemmed from his deep humility. Although he had always nullified himself before G-d, which helped him attain the level of Divine Will and the ability to draw it down for all mankind, he believed himself unworthy of making the light shine for all. But Betzalel knew that Moshe was worthy, and immediately made the Menorah. (Likutey Halakhos I, p. 131a)

## **FUELING OUR FIRE**

### **Rabbi Dovid Hoffman**

*“And you shall make the pure-gold Menorah, hammered out, the Menorah shall be made...” (25:31)*

Rashi quotes the Medrash: “The Menorah shall be made on its own. Because Moshe was perplexed by the way in which it was supposed to be made, the Holy One blessed be He told him, ‘Throw the block of gold into the fire, and it will be made by itself.’”

The Menorah, with its seven branches emanating from a single stem, formed in its entirety by a single block of gold, is symbolic of the wisdom of the Torah, as well as the seven wisdoms of the world, which all emanate from one single Divine source. Everything emerges from the Torah, for the sake of the Torah.

And this, in essence, was Moshe's problem: How can a mortal human being possibly grasp the profundity and complexity of incorporating all the wisdom of the world into one physical object - the Menorah? Thus, Hashem told him to throw the block of gold into the fire, and it would be made by itself. But how did this resolve Moshe's concerns?

R' Nison Alpert zt'l provides a wonderful understanding. The pasuk states, “Halo koh devarai k'aish - behold, My word is like fire” (Yirmiyahu 23:29). The Torah is compared to fire. A unique property of fire is that it destroys physical substances while also incorporating them into its flame. The more physical material that is added to the fire, the larger the flame becomes. So, too, is a man's relationship with Torah. When a person delves into the Torah and becomes one with it, the Torah becomes akin to a flame that engulfs him entirely, purifying him, and, in a sense, making him into a torch which rises to Hashem. In the process, the person grows, just as a fire grows when it is fed with fuel. This lesson was implicit in Hashem's command to Moshe to throw the block of gold into the fire.

## **LIGHTING UP THE WORLD**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*“And you shall make the pure-gold Menorah... Its stem, its goblets, its spheres, and its flowers must be an integral part [of it].” (25:31)*

The stem of the Menorah alludes to the Written Torah, and the six branches that extend from it allude to the six orders of the Mishnah, the basic compendium of the Oral Torah.

In this context, the spheres and flowers on the Menorah's branches allude to the extra-mishnaic teachings of the sages, which were later recorded and discussed in the commentary on the Mishnah known as the Gemara. The Mishnah and Gemara together are known as the Talmud.

The goblets on the Menorah's branches allude to the Torah's “wine” - its inner, mystical dimension.

The spiritual light of the Menorah - the Written Torah, the Oral Torah, and the Torah's inner dimension - are the means through which we acquire Divine consciousness and disseminate it throughout the world. (Torah Ohr 88b; Ohr HaTorah, Shemos, pp. 1486, 1491) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

## **HASHEM'S HELPING HAND**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*“And you shall make the pure-gold Menorah... Its stem, its goblets, its spheres, and its flowers must be an integral part [of it].” (25:31)*

We are taught that Moshe did not understand all of G-d's instructions how to make the Menorah, so G-d showed him an image of a fiery Menorah.

But even so, the Menorah was still too complicated for Moshe to envision, so G-d told him to simply throw the gold into a fire and the Menorah would miraculously take form.

Besides the Menorah's physical construction, what Moshe found most difficult to grasp was how such a physical object could spread the light of Divine consciousness to the outside world.

By showing Moshe the fiery Menorah, G-d affirmed his hesitations. He informed him that indeed, using physical objects to spread Divine awareness in the world is impossible for us to do on our own. He therefore told Moshe to cast the gold into the fire and that the Menorah would take form by itself.

Similarly, G-d requires us to transform all our material pursuits and possessions into sources of Divine light, but He also knows that we cannot do this on our own. All He asks is that we cast it all into the fire of our hearts - i.e., to let our love for Him permeate all we do - and He will miraculously do the rest. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 1, p. 174) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky

## **UNDERCOVER TZADDIK**

### **Premishlaner Rebbe**

*“You shall make curtains for a tent over the Mishkan.” (26:7)*

There are two kinds of tzaddikim: On the one hand, there is a tzaddik who is the same on the outside as on the inside. When you look at him, you know he is a tzaddik.

On the other hand, there is a tzaddik whose righteousness is hidden. To the casual observer, this tzaddik is nothing special, a “regular” person.

Which way is preferable?

The pasuk states: “You shall make curtains for a tent over the Mishkan.” This teaches us that a tzaddik should try to “cover” himself, for it instructs us to make a curtain to cover our inner Mishkan - our inner holiness.

## **STANDING STRONG**

### **Avnei Ezel**

*"And you shall make the boards for the Mishkan of acacia wood, standing up." (26:15)*

The world was unworthy to have the use of cedars, and the cedars were created solely for the Mishkan and subsequently for the Beis HaMikdash. (Midrash)

Cedar wood, which is quite hard, symbolizes firmness and toughness ("man should always be tender as a reed and not hard as a cedar"). The character trait of hardness should not exist in the world at all except for use for those holy purposes symbolized by the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash.

In such matters, firmness and inflexibility are imperative, since these qualities will guard us against the influence of scoffers and seducers and keep us from being lured away from the path of Judaism.

## **OVERTURNING FALSEHOOD**

### **Reb Elimelech Lizhensk**

*"...twenty boards for the south side southward." (26:18)*

The letters of the Hebrew word keresh ("board") can be rearranged to spell sheker ("falsehood"), indicating that if you succeed in overturning falsehood you will achieve the highest level of holiness - you will be worthy of becoming a part of the Sanctuary.

## **FORMS OF CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*"You must have them make forty silver bases..." (26:19)*

The ten-cubit-high planks forming the walls of the Tabernacle allude to the three facets of our intellect (wisdom, understanding, and knowledge) and our seven emotions (love, fear, compassion, confidence, sincerity, loyalty, and humility). The coverings forming the roof of the Tabernacle allude to our enveloping powers of will and delight. The bases, in contrast, allude to our ability to enforce the Torah's code of behavior upon ourselves. Raw self-discipline is the lowest rung on the ladder of self-refinement, since it is devoid of any feeling or intellect. Nonetheless, just as the bases were the foundation that kept the Tabernacle's structure standing firmly, self-discipline is the foundation of the character-structure in a well-built life.

Inasmuch as the norms of religious behavior ensured by self-discipline are the same for everyone, the bases were made out of the one contribution everyone gave equally. In contrast, since each of us relates to G-d differently via our delight, will, intellect, and emotions, the components of the Tabernacle alluding to these aspects of our personalities were made out of the contributions the people gave according to their individual means and desires. (Likutei Sichot, vol. 1, pp. 162)

## **TRANSCENDING INTELLECT**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*"The Curtain will separate for you between the Holy and the Holy of Holies." (26:33)*

The outer chamber of the Tabernacle contained three furnishings: the Menorah, the Table of twelve loaves (both of which are discussed in this section of the Torah), and the incense Altar (which is discussed in the next section). The Holy of Holies, in contrast, contained only one furnishing: the Ark of the Covenant.

The two chambers of the Tabernacle signify the two stages of achieving Divine consciousness. In the Tabernacle's outer chamber, we begin to orient our consciousness toward Divinity by focusing our intellect on G-d. This is why there were three furnishings in the outer chamber; they signify the three components of the intellect: the ability to gain insight (chochmah, in Hebrew), the ability to comprehend (binah) the meaning of that insight, and the ability to make what we comprehend relevant to our own lives (da'at).

Once we arrive at an intellectual consciousness of G-d, we can proceed to the next level, supra-rational consciousness of Him. This is the consciousness of the inner chamber and the Ark contained within it. At this level, not only our intellect but our entire being is engulfed in Divine consciousness. (Reshimot 108) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky

## **INTELLECT VS. EMOTION**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*"The Curtain will separate for you between the Holy and the Holy of Holies." (26:33)*

The outer and inner chambers of the Sanctuary correspond respectively to the emotions and intellect of the Divine soul. The Curtain dividing these two chambers corresponds to the quantum leap of consciousness that characterizes the difference between emotion and intellect.

Emotions require us to be quite aware of ourselves; otherwise, we cannot react emotionally to anything. In contrast, when we are absorbed in thought, we often lose all consciousness of ourselves. In fact, in order to fully grasp an idea, we practically must lose our self-awareness - if not, our preconceived notions will likely prevent us from experiencing and comprehending the new insight truthfully.

Thus, the Divine consciousness we experience when our intellect is absorbed in contemplating any given G-dly idea is entirely different than the Divine consciousness we experience when feeling some G-dly-oriented emotion. Realizing this difference can help us open ourselves up to new insights and thereby climb the ladder of spiritual growth. (Ohr HaTorah, Shemos, vol. 6, p. 2121) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisnefsky



## **REFINING AND CONSECRATING**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*"You must make the [Outer] Altar." (27:1)*

The Outer Altar was used for offering three types of animals: cattle, sheep, and goats. The animal sacrifices we offer up in our personal, inner sanctuaries are the various facets of the "animal" side of our personalities.

Our inner "cattle" are our impulses to be confrontational, to oppose the directives of the Divine side of our personalities. Our inner "sheep" are our impulses to conform, to follow the crowd in pursuit of creature comforts because we are too weak to assert our Divine nature. Our inner "goats" are our impulses to be stubborn, brazenly refusing to budge from our preconceived notions.

We "slaughter" our inner animal by renouncing our animalistic orientation toward life. We "sprinkle its blood" and "place its fat" on the Altar by re-orienting our enthusiasm (warm blood) and sense of delight (fat) toward G-dliness. We "burn up" our inner animal on the Altar by allowing the Divine side of our personality to consume our animal drives.

The fact that the sacrificial Altar was situated outside the Tabernacle, in the Courtyard, teaches us that refining the animal side of our personalities is prerequisite to entering the realm of holiness and Divine consciousness, represented by the Tabernacle itself. (Reshimot 108) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

## **RETURNING TO THE GARDEN**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*"You must have them make [the Altar] a hollow structure." (27:8)*

We are taught that G-d created Adam out of the earth located at the future site of the Altar (Bereishis Rabbah 14:8; Yerushalmi, Nazir 7:2), indicating that the possibility for atonement and repentance is an intrinsic aspect of our humanity. This notion is also alluded to by the fact that the Altar was filled with earth, for the name of the original human being, Adam, means "earth." Metaphorically, then, just as humanity was formed from Altar-earth, the Altar was constructed out of the very humanity for which it was built to atone.

Similarly, when Adam was banished from the Garden of Eden, the Torah says that he was sent "to work the earth from which he was taken" (Bereishis 3:23). We use the earth to cultivate the food that powers our lives, to produce the clothes that protect our bodies, and to build the homes that shelter us from harm. When we do all this in order to devote ourselves to our Divine mission, we elevate the earth. This is how we restore the world's lost harmony and return to the Garden of Eden. (Ohr HaTorah, Shemos, vol. 3, pp. 1024-1025) - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

## **FLAX OF MONOTHEISM**

### **Lubavitcher Rebbe**

*"You shall make the Courtyard of the Tabernacle... [by enclosing with] nettings made of twined linen." (27:9)*

These nettings were made of linen because flax, from which linen is made, differs from other plants in that only a single stalk grows from each seed (Zevachim 18b). One of the words for "linen" in biblical Hebrew (bad) reflects this attribute, since it also means "alone." Inasmuch as the Jewish people are distinguished from other nations by virtue of our absolute monotheism, it is appropriate that the curtain separating the Tabernacle from the surrounding world was made of linen. (Likutei Torah 2:28b)

In addition, the flax plant alludes to our mission to spread of the knowledge of G-d's oneness to the world at large. Our sages tell us that "flax depletes the land," meaning that it drains the soil of its nutrients more than other crops do (Bava Metzia 109a). Allegorically, the "land" signifies the earthly, materialistic consciousness that opposes faith in one G-d. Thus, by "cultivating flax" - by spreading the knowledge of G-d's oneness throughout the world, we "deplete the land" - we help cure the world of its materialistic outlook.

Thus, while the linen nettings indeed functioned as the border between the holy and the mundane, they also expressed the ideal of refining the entire world with the perspective of holiness. - Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniefsky

## **HAFTORAH**

### **STURDY MATERIALS**

#### **Kochav M'Yaakov**

*"As for this house that you are building, if you will walk in My statutes and execute My decrees and keep all My commandments..." (Melachim I 6:12)*

G-d said to Shlomo HaMelech: Don't think that the house that you built became a Beis Hamikdash just because you have made generous use of gold and silver in its construction. Only "if you will walk in My statutes and execute My decrees" can you build a place in which the Shechinah will dwell and thus turn that place into a Beis HaMikdash.

"My statutes and ordinances" these, and not silver and gold, are the true building materials for the Beis HaMikdash. If the Jews have these materials, they can have a Beis HaMikdash even though the visible edifice has been destroyed, and we have the assurance from G-d that He shall "dwell therein among the Children of Israel and will not forsake My people Israel."

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