

# *Parshas Terumah*

Presented By Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky Shlita, Dean

## *1. The True Torah Sage*

The Torah states regarding the building of the Holy Ark, which was the repository that contained the Torah, “...**You shall cover it with pure gold, from within and from without you shall cover it, and you shall make on it a gold crown all around.**” The Gemara in Tractate Yomah explains that by specifying that the Ark should be covered with pure gold on the inside as well as on the outside, the Torah is communicating to us, “A Torah Sage (*Talmid Chacham*) whose inside is not the same as his outside is not a Torah Sage.” Meaning, in order for one to be classified as a true *Talmid Chacham*, his inner commitment and feelings should be consistent with his outer demeanor and appearance. A *Talmid Chacham* is not merely a repository of information. He must be genuine and sincere in his service of G'd in every aspect of his life. The classification of *Talmid Chacham* applies only to one who studies Torah for the sake of doing the Will of G'd and not merely for the sake of intellectualism. This is the symbolism of the Holy Ark being cast on the inside and outside in pure gold.

*Baal HaTurim* in his commentary tells us that the numerical value (*gematria*) of “...**pure gold, from within and from without...**” is the equivalent numerical value of, “**A Chacham will be one who is consistent on the inside and the outside.**” The understanding that a true Torah Sage is more than a repository of information, is not only a concept that is communicated to us by the Talmud, but rather, it is also inherent in the words themselves – through their numerical value, as explained by *Baal Haturim*.

The Mishna in *Pirkei Avos* (Ethics of our Fathers) states, “Who is the wise man (*Chacham*)? The one who can learn from everyone.” Rabbeinu Yonah in his commentary writes that if one who possesses an enormous amount of knowledge believes that it is unnecessary for him to learn from others, his classification is not Chacham. However if one knows nothing but has a desire to learn from everyone, his classification is “Chacham,” even before he learns from anyone. This is because ultimately he will develop into a knowledgeable and wise person. Wisdom is not solely based on knowledge; but rather, on one's desire to attain it. With this understanding of Rabbeinu Yonah, if one studies Torah and his behavior does not reflect his Torah knowledge, he is truly a fool. In addition, if one outwardly behaves as a Torah Sage but internally (feeling and emotion) he is not sincere, he also has no relevance to the classification of “Torah Sage.”

The Gemara in Tractate Berachos tells us that one is not permitted to discuss Torah in the presence of the remains of a Jew. If one does, he is considered to be, “mocking the impoverished and making him a disgrace.” Rabbi Ruderman z'tl once asked, “From where do we see in Tractate Berachos that when one hears another individual discussing Torah he must participate to some degree in that discussion?” He answered, “We see this from Rashi in his commentary on this particular Gemara which explains that it is considered “mocking” an impoverished person because Torah is being discussed and the Jew who passed away is not able to participate in the conversation. The Jew who passed away is “impoverished” because he cannot participate. If one has the ability to gain from the wisdom of another, regardless of who it is, and does not take the opportunity, his lack of interest causes him to be classified as a fool rather than a Chacham.”

The Gemara tells us that one's ability to grasp and process Torah concepts is based on Divine Assistance. The Gemara in Tractate Megillah tells us that if one claims to have toiled in Torah study but did not come upon it – he is not to be believed. Similarly, if one claims not to have toiled in Torah study but has come upon it – that individual should not be believed. It is only

the one who has truly toiled in Torah and has come upon it that can be believed. The acquisition of Torah is not based on one's intellectual capacity alone (genius). One must toil in its study in order to merit the Divine Assistance to come upon its truth.

Thus, the pursuit of Torah is not similar to any other pursuit. It is not merely the accumulation of information. It is not for the sake of intellectualism. The pursuit and acquisition of Torah must be based in one's sincere toiling and effort to attain its truth for the sake of adhering to and doing the Will of Hashem.

## ***2. The Mishkan- the Replication of Sinai***

The Torah states regarding the mitzvah of building the Mishkan (Tabernacle), **“They shall make a Sanctuary for Me (Hashem) - so that I may dwell in their midst.”** The Jewish people were given the mitzvah of constructing the Mishkan, which was to be the location of the Divine Presence in this world.

Ramban explains in his commentary that the Mishkan itself was a replication of the Sinai event. At Sinai, Hashem had brought heaven to earth and His Divine Presence (*Shechina*) dwelt on the mountain. Consequently, the level of prophecy that the Jewish people had experienced at Sinai was “*panim el panim* – face to face.” Similarly the Mishkan created a setting that was identical to the Divine Presence at Sinai. Ramban continues to explain that just as the Torah states regarding the Sinai experience, “They (Jewish people) stood at the foot of the mountain...Hashem had descended upon it ...” it states regarding Hashem's Presence in the Mishkan, “Hashem's Glory permeated and filled the Mishkan.” The Glory of Hashem that was at Sinai was continuously present in the Mishkan when it was erected.

Ramban states, “In the Mishkan G'd communicated to Moshe from between the *Kruvim* (Cherubs). At Sinai the Torah states, “The words of G'd you heard from the fire...” The *Kruvim* that were situated on top of the *Aron* (Holy Ark) were fashioned from gold, which reflects the color of fire. Thus, just as the Voice of G'd came to Moshe at Sinai from the fire, so too did the Voice of G'd emanate from a comparable setting in the Mishkan. G'd wanted the experience of the Mishkan to be no less than that of the Sinai event.

Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk z'tl explains that the Divine Presence only descended upon Sinai when the Jewish people encircled the mountain. The Jewish people at Sinai were the equivalent of the *K'rashim* (vertical beams of the Mishkan). When the Mishkan was transported through the desert after it was dismantled, the *Shechina* was not present in it. However, after the vertical beams (*K'rashim*) were erected and circumscribed their location, the *Shechina* entered into the Mishkan. Similarly, the *Shechina*/Divine Presence only descended upon the mountain when the Jewish people totally encircled and enclosed the mountain. Thus, he concludes that where there are Jews living in a community that adhere to the precepts of the Torah, the *Shechina* enters into their midst because they are the equivalent of the *K'rashim*.

*Daas Zikainim Baalei Tosfos* explain that during the 40 day period when Moshe had

ascended to heaven to receive the Torah, G'd had commanded him to tell the Jewish people to create a setting in which His Presence could dwell in their midst. That location would house the Holy Ark, the Altar, etc. and be surrounded by the Jewish people in a manner that is similar to the way the angels in heaven encircle the Heavenly Throne. Before the sin of the Golden Calf there was no need for the *K'rashim* to encircle the location of the Mishkan. The Divine Presence would have literally been able to dwell in the midst of the Jewish people. Initially, the Mishkan was not intended to be the medium through which the G'd would dwell in their midst. However after the sin of the Golden Calf, the Jewish people were no longer qualified to accommodate the Shechina without the *K'rashim*. The Jewish people were no longer spiritually worthy to be the location for the Divine Presence on their own.

Hashem created all existence in order to accommodate the Torah and the Jewish people. As it is stated in the Midrash, "*Bereishis Bara Elokim...For the Sake of the Torah I have created heaven and earth and for the sake of the Jewish people I have created heaven and earth...*" The Prophet states, "For My Glory I (Hashem) have created it (the world) ..." When the Jewish people adhere to the Torah and thus do the Will of G'd, the purpose of creation is being fulfilled and the Shechina will dwell in their midst. Initially every Jew had relevance to having a direct relationship with the Shechina/G'd. However because of the sin of the Golden Calf, that level of relationship was no longer available to every Jew. Thus, the prohibition of "a stranger"/non-Kohen officiating came about. The Torah tells us that if one who is unqualified to be an officiant of G'd approaches the Divine Presence, he will be subject to death by heavenly decree. Contrastingly, at Sinai before the Golden Calf, every Jew was able to prophesize at the level of "*panim el panim* – face to face."

We pray every day that the Bais HaMikdash (Temple) should be rebuilt and the Divine Presence restored to Its location. However, the words of Reb Meir Simcha z'tl teach us that although the level of G'd's Presence in our midst is not what it had been during the time of the Mishkan, nevertheless, when a Jewish community adheres to the Torah and its principles, it becomes a setting in which the Divine Presence does dwell. The rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash (Temple), speedily in our time, will reinstate the Shechina at Its original level at Sinai.

### 3. *The Symbolism of the Ark*

The Torah tells us that there were two *Kruvim* (Cherubs) situated on the top of the Aron (Holy Ark) – each one was located at opposite ends of the golden cover facing one another. The Torah states, "**The Kruvim shall be with wings spread upward, sheltering the Cover with their wings with their faces towards one another; towards the Cover shall be the faces of the Kruvim...**" What is the symbolism of the posture of the Kruvim on the Ark?

*Kli Yakar* writes that the Covering of the Ark (Kapores) is an allusion to the hidden meaning of the Torah which can only be shared and communicated to individuals who are spiritually qualified. As it is stated, "One who is committed to spirituality remains hidden..." It is also stated, "The Glory of G'd is in a concealed state..." The two

Cherubs were shaped as angels and had the faces of young newborn children. This symbolizes that the teacher that one chooses to teach him Torah should have the characteristic of an angel and the purity of a newborn child who is free of sin. The purity of the teacher must be between himself and G'd, which is symbolized by the wings of the *Kruvim* spreading upward. He also must be pure between himself and his fellow, which is symbolized by the *Kruvim* facing one another. The *Kruvim* facing downward towards the Cover of the Ark symbolizes that the teacher/disseminator of Torah must be totally dedicated to the Torah itself – without any self-interest, unlike those who are wise in their own minds and disseminate Torah for their own glory and not for the sake of Hashem.

Sforno explains, “The symbolism of the *Kruvim facing* the Cover of the Ark is to teach us that the only way one could develop his perspective of truth is through the Torah itself.” The source of one’s perspective and position must only be the Torah.

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (Ethic of our Fathers) states, “The world stands on three principles: Torah, Avodah (service), and gemilas chasodim (acts of loving kindness)...” Each of these principles corresponds to one of the Patriarchs. Avraham was the Patriarch who personified Chesed (Kindness). Yitzchak was the Patriarch who is characterized by Avodah (service of G'd). Yaakov was the Patriarch who represents Torah study, as it is stated, “*Ish tam yosheiv ohalim* – the man of the tent (tent of Torah).” Reb Chaim of Volozhin z’tl writes in his commentary Ruach Chaim, “Since the three principles mentioned in the Mishna correspond to our three Patriarchs – Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, why did Judah the Prince, who is the redactor of the Oral Law, not state these principles in the chronological order of the Patriarchs? The Mishna should have stated, “The world stands on three principles: gemilas chasodim (Kindness/Avraham), Avodah (Service/Yitzchak), and Torah (Yaakov).” Reb Chaim of Volozhin explains that before the Sinai event, if one had the desire to serve G'd, one was permitted to build an altar in any location and bring an offering. This was considered a proper expression of “Avodah – service of Hashem.” However, after Sinai (the giving of the Torah), if one were to bring an offering outside of the context of the Mishkan or the Bais HaMikdash (Temple) the liability was spiritual excision. The same action that was considered a mitzvah before Sinai is considered a serious infraction post-Sinai (deserving spiritual excision). Before Sinai, an act of chesed (kindness) that was considered a mitzvah was lending money with interest - even if the lender was a usurer. However, after Sinai this became prohibited and thus is considered a serious breach of the Torah. As the Gemara in Tractate Bava Metzia states, “One who lends money with interest, his dust shall not be awakened to resurrection...”

Reb Chaim of Volozhin z’tl thus explains that Judah the Prince chose this sequence of the Mishna in order to communicate the vital principle that it is only when one’s perspective of value is predicated on Torah knowledge that it is considered correct and special. It is not constructive if actions are based on one’s own sense of correctness, and in fact might very well be destructive. Thus the Mishna presents Torah as the first principle in order to teach us that only after the Torah’s position has been established can one approach the service of G'd and perform acts of loving-kindness. The *Kruvim* being situated with their faces positioned towards the Ark (the repository of Torah) symbolizes that the Jew’s perspective in all aspects of life must emanate from the Torah.

#### *4. Man's Ultimate Objective in Life*

The Torah states, **“Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him...you shall take from them; gold, silver, and copper...”** After enumerating all the materials that were necessary for the building of the Mishkan (Tabernacle, the Torah continues **“They shall make a Sanctuary for Me – so that I may dwell in their midst.”** If the objective of the gathering of the materials was for the purpose of constructing the Mishkan, then why does the Torah not begin by explaining the objective **“They shall make a Sanctuary for Me ....”** and then enumerate the needed materials for the construction of the Mishkan?

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh points out that regarding the Mishkan, the Torah continuously states, **“and you shall make... (in the singular),”** which refers to Moshe, rather than **“and they shall (in the plural) make...”** referring to the Jewish people. He explains that the reason individual aspects of building the Mishkan are discussed by the Torah in the singular – **“you (Moshe) shall make...”** is because Hashem wanted Moshe to be the beneficiary of the reward for building the Mishkan. Based on the principle of **“Shaliach shel adam k'moso – an agent is the equivalent of the one he represents.”** In essence, Moshe then appointed the Jewish people as his agents to build the Mishkan. Thus, although the Jewish people were the ones who actually built the Mishkan, it was Moshe who had appointed them with this task. The Mishkan, in the words of Chazal, is referred to as, **“Mishkano shel Moshe - the Mishkan of Moshe.”**

The Torah states in the Portion of Shelach regarding the *meraglim* (spies), **“Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, ‘Send for yourself men and let them spy out the Land of Canaan that I give to the Children of Israel...’”** Rashi cites the Midrash which explains that the term **“men”** chosen to identify the spies indicates that they were tzaddikim (righteous). At the time Moshe sent them they were tzaddikim; however, after they had embarked on their mission they became rashaim (evil). They had misinterpreted their experience in the Land and thus slandered G'd.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh asks- if the spies were all initially righteous when they were chosen by Moshe, what caused them to become corrupted? He explains the answer with a profound principle which explains the concept of agency. When one is chosen as an agent to represent another individual or group of people, he is affected by the mindset of the one he represents. Within a halachic (Jewish law) context the agent is in the stead of and the equivalent of the one who he represents. Since the reason for the Jewish people to send spies emanated from their lack of faith/trust in G'd, their representatives (the spies) were impacted negatively by the shortcomings of those who they represented. Although the spies did have free choice, their mission became more tenuous because they were tainted by the lack of faith of the Jewish people. We learn from the episode of the spies that the functionality of an agent is directly linked to one who he represents. With this understanding we can appreciate at a more profound level why Hashem wanted Moshe to be the one obligated to build the Mishkan and in turn appoint the Jewish people as his agents.

Hashem wanted the Jewish people to be Moshe's agent in order to allow Moshe's intent to affect the spiritual quality of the Mishkan. The Mishkan was the dwelling location of the Shechina (Divine Presence) and thus needed to be infused with the most pure and advanced level of spirituality. The Jewish people themselves, relative to Moshe, were considered ordinary. Nevertheless they were the ones who were needed to build the Mishkan. Therefore, just as the mindset of the Jewish people negatively impacted the spies who were their representative, the mindset of Moshe Rabbeinu positively affected the purity of mind of the Jewish people in the building of the Mishkan. Thus, the building of the Mishkan was developed in the purest context.

Despite the fact that the Torah communicates the obligation of the building of the Mishkan in the singular, it initially chooses to use the plural – “they shall make for Me a Sanctuary...” This is to communicate that although the significance of the building was considered as if Moshe had participated in every facet of its development, nevertheless, in actualizing the reality of the Mishkan, all Jews were required to participate.

If the Jewish people were to be the agents of Moshe Rabbeinu, who was the most special Jew who ever lived, what determined that they were qualified to be his agents? If an agent is lacking in certain abilities, he cannot execute the charge of the one who he is representing.

Before the Torah states the obligation of the building of the Mishkan, **“They shall make a Sanctuary for Me...”** it enumerates all of the materials that the Jewish people must give for the building of the Mishkan- **“Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him...”** The Torah specifies that every man whose heart “motivates him” should give a portion to Hashem. The Jew who participated in selflessly giving a portion to Hashem because his heart motivated him was qualified to be the agent of Moshe in the building of the Mishkan. It was only after the Jewish people met the qualification of giving selflessly to G'd, that the Torah states, **“They shall make a Sanctuary for Me...”**

The Gemara has a question whether the Kohen is the agent of G'd when he officiates or is he the agent of the individual on whose behalf he is officiating? There are halachic (legal) implications which result based on how this question is resolved. For example, if the Kohen had made a vow that a certain individual could not benefit from him, is he permitted to officiate on his behalf- (when that individual brings an offering)? If the Kohen is considered an “agent of G'd” then he is permitted to officiate because he is not acting on behalf of that individual. However if the Kohen is considered the agent of

the individual, then he would not be permitted to perform the service.

Based on the principle of the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh that one's actions assume another level of value depending on one's agency, if one's involvement in his mitzvah activity is motivated by his own interests (*shelo l'shmah*), then he is not acting as G'd's agent. Consequently, the value of the mitzvah is at a deficient level. However if one's performance of a mitzvah is for the sake of G'd (*l'shmah*), then Hashem's unlimited and infinite capacity is associated with it; Thus, the dimension of the mitzvah takes on infinite value.

### **5. The Value of Uninterrupted Torah Study** (from Parshas Mishpatim)

The Torah states regarding the mitzvah of Shmitta (Sabbatical year), **“Six years shall you sow your land and gather in its produce. And in the seventh year (Sabbatical year), you shall leave it untended and unharvested...”** In the Sabbatical year, one is not permitted to engage in agricultural activities and must leave all the produce of the field ownerless. After the Torah discusses the mitzvah of *Shmitta*, it states, **“Three Pilgrimage festivals (*aalias ha'regel*) shall you celebrate for Me during the year...Three times during the year shall all your men folk appear before the Lord, Hashem.”** During the Three Pilgrimage festivals a Jew is obligated to travel to the Bais HaMikdash (Temple). There, he must bring an *olah* (*burn*) offering to Hashem. Rashi cites Chazal who explain that the reason the Torah needs to tell us that the mitzvah of *aalias ha'regel* is in effect even during the Sabbatical year is because one could have thought that since it is the Shmitta year, that it would have no application. Thus, the Torah needs to tell us that despite the fact that it is the Shmitta year one must nevertheless travel to the Bais HaMikdash. Chazal explain **“...all your men folk appear before the Lord, Hashem”** to mean that one must give his *olah* offering (burnt offering) to acknowledge Hashem. Why would one think that the mitzvah of *aalias ha'regel* has no relevance during the Sabbatical year? Why would the restriction of not engaging in agricultural activities absolve one from the mitzvos of the Pilgrimages?

Clearly, the Torah is giving us insight as to what the Shmitta year truly is, and how that year needs to be invested. The Torah states in the Portion of Behar regarding the Seventh Year (Shmitta), **“...For six years you may sow your field and for six years you may prune your vineyard; and you may gather in its crop. But the seventh year shall be a complete rest for the land, a Sabbath for Hashem (*Shabbos l'ashem*)...”** The Commentators explain, **“*Shabbos l'ashem*”** means that the Sabbatical year should be invested in *tefillah* (Prayer), *avodah* (service) and Torah study. It should be a year dedicated to one's spirituality and its development.

When one travels to the Bais HaMikdash to bring his *korban olah* (burnt offering), the *korban* brings about an intimacy between the individual and Hashem. The Commentators explain that word “*korban*” is derived from the word “*karove* - to be close.” Thus the value of the *korban olah* is to bring about a level of closeness and intimacy between the Jew and G'd. Since the offering is completely consumed by fire and not eaten, there is no self-interest in bringing the offering other than being close to G'd. Seemingly the Torah is telling us that if one invests the Sabbatical year properly through proper Torah study, meditation, and *tefillah*, as he is meant to do it will bring about a closeness and intimacy with Hashem that is the equivalent of bringing the burnt offering to the Temple. Therefore the Torah must tell us that despite the intimacy generated from Torah study, one must present himself before G'd three times a year in the Bais HaMikdash (Temple).

On Shabbos, the day that is a testament that G'd is the Creator of existence, one must refrain from all creative activity (the 39 classifications of creative activity). However on the Festivals and Holidays (Yom Tov), one is permitted to engage in food related activities on behalf of the day. As the Mishnah in Tractate Megillah states, "There is no difference between Shabbos and Yom Tov, except food related activities." Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk z'tl writes in his work *Meshech Chachma* that one's focus on Yom Tov must be different than that of Shabbos. The focus of Yom Tov is to perfect and strengthen the bond "*bein adam l'chaveiro* – between man and his fellow man." On Yom Tov one is permitted to prepare fresh food and transport it from domain to domain. The interaction with one's fellow is less restrictive. The visiting of the Temple on the Festivals also brings about a relationship between a Jew and his fellow. However on Shabbos where one is not permitted to engaged in food related activities, one's focus must be on his relationship with G'd "*Bein Adam l'Makom* – between man and G'd." Shabbos is a day when one removes himself from the mundane – both in action and in mind – to perfect his relationship with Hashem.

Shmitta is referred to as "Shabbos l'ashem," which is a time when one focuses on and advances his relationship with G'd through Torah study and tefillah. Since the Torah must tell us that one is not absolved from *aalias ha'regel* during the Sabbatical year – despite the year being dedicated for Hashem, gives us an inkling of understanding of the true value of Torah and tefillah.