



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Terumah

February 28, 2020

A Taste of Torah

Material Difference

by Rabbi Shmuel Halpern

Most people tend to think that making a donation to a worthy cause entails giving of one's wealth or assets. Indeed, an initial examination of a verse at the beginning of this week's parsha seems to bear this out. "Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him, you shall take my portion." (Terumah 25:2) The Torah's mention of "whose heart motivates him" can be understood simply to mean that while one donates gold, silver, or the like, the heart is what motivates the donation.

Rabbi Gedalia Schorr (1910-1979), however, interprets the verse differently. He explains that the real donation is the heart itself; the gold and silver are merely the vehicle through which one donates his heart. The love and devotion that were contained within each donation was the spiritual substance of the *Mishkan* which created its true strength and value.

This idea is illustrated by an interpretation of a verse in Shir Hashirim (Song of Songs 3:10), "Its pillars he made of silver... its inner side was decked with love." Rabbi Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lissa (1760-1832), in his commentary to Shir Hashirim titled *Tzror Hamor*, understands the verse as alluding to the *Mishkan*. He explains that the Hebrew term for "decked," *ratzuf*, can also mean a burning coal. He explains that the double meaning of the word in the verse indicates not just love, but a burning love. This love bound the Jews to Hashem and linked the

Jews to one another.

There are thirteen different materials mentioned in the collection for the building of the *Mishkan*. The numerical value of *ahava*, love, and *echad*, one, is thirteen. While the individuals who contributed to the *Mishkan* may not have given the same materials - some people gave gold, some copper, others wool dyed in various colors, or any of the other goods listed in the Torah - they all poured their hearts into the donation. Paradoxically, when the Jewish People tapped into their deepest expression of self, they found no separation between themselves and their fellow Jews. The metals, the fabrics, the precious stones, they all joined to form one, united *Mishkan*.

One might assume that there would be a natural feeling of resentment between the donors of different types of materials. After all, doesn't every person wish he was the one providing the most important materials, such as the gold? Yet, as noted, only unity emerged from the process of collecting the materials for the *Mishkan*. Jealousy only rears its head when there's self-interest involved. When the Jewish People united for the highest calling, the service of Hashem, it made no difference where they stood in relation to others. If my contribution is copper, and that's where I can make a difference, then that's precisely what I want to donate. A CEO of a large non-profit related that a fellow was hired by the organization to perform a specific job. However, all he was interested in was

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Stories for the Soul

A Wealth of Torah Study

A wealthy man once came to Rabbi Aharon Leib Steinman (1914-2017), the *gadol hador* (leading Torah sage of the generation), and asked him a question: "Why are there so many kollels and so many people immersed in full-time Torah study in today's world? In Europe, there were never this many people studying Torah full-time! People worked for a living, and set aside time to study Torah."

Rabbi Steinman replied, "Let me ask you a question: Why are there so many wealthy Jews nowadays? Back in Europe, there were never so many Jews with such wealth."

"The answer," explained Rabbi Steinman, "is that Hashem wants these wealthy Jews to use their money to support the study of Torah! If there were fewer people studying Torah, and fewer kollels, there would be less money among the Jewish People!"

In this week's parsha, Hashem asks the Jewish People to contribute toward the construction of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). The materials used for the *Mishkan* came from the wealth the Jewish People had obtained from the Egyptians during the Exodus. Initially used for the Golden Calf, they now rectified that error by using it to build a sanctuary for Hashem. Understanding what to do with the wealth one is blessed with is of paramount importance, for its proper use is the entire purpose it was given in the first place.

Kollel Happenings

KOLLEL 22ND ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION ON MARCH 24

The Kollel will mark 22 years of bringing Torah to Denver Jewry with its annual Celebration, 2020 Vision, on March 24 at Aish of the Rockies. Kerry and Mindy Berman will be honored with the Aish Tamid Award for their steady and unwavering dedication to Torah and the Denver Jewish community.

WHEN AN AGENT EXCEEDS AUTHORITY AT MAR. 4 T4T

Join Bob Weiss, Owner & President of Business Operations & Development, LCM Property Management, and Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman, Kollel Scholar, as they explore this fascinating subject. March 4th, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

COMMUNITY-WIDE PURIM CELEBRATION

The Kollel invites the community to join its annual Purim Seudah to be held on Purim, Tuesday, March 10, 5:15 pm at the Ethel A. Beren Auditorium, 1261 Zenobia. Cost: \$18 per person/\$60 family max. The entire community is invited to join in Simchas Purim (no charge!) following the seudah at approximately 7:00 pm until... To reserve and for more info, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

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|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Plant for the future | 4) Through the middle |
| 2) Baby face | 5) Forgive chutzpah |
| 3) Center-facing | 6) A hairsbreadth away |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk - Part XIV

To resolve this issue, Reb Meir Simcha proposed that the real rabbanim learn Russian and learn basic secular knowledge that would meet the requirements of the government. This would allow the actual rabbi to be recognized by the government. Reb Meir Simcha was backed by many of the rabbanim there. Reb Meir Simcha also brought a letter from Reb Dovid of Karlin, one of the senior rabbis of that time, endorsing this position. However, his proposal was opposed by more conservative

elements, who feared that giving an inch to the Russian government and the anti-religious Jews would open the door to further compromises and erosion of traditional Judaism. The move was also opposed by more "progressive" elements at the meeting who wanted the Torah leadership to obtain a broader secular education. Two of the main opponents from the more conservative group of rabbanim were Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik and Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn of Chabad.

A Taste of Torah

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another task, one that the organization didn't need him to do. Obviously, this created great stress within the organization. This type of issue can arise from a lack of appreciating the abovementioned point. An excessive focus on self didn't allow this employee to be truly productive. However, when a Jew is filled with love for his Creator, his focus isn't on satisfying his own needs for self-fulfillment, but on carrying out Hashem's will. This is, in fact, the only way to reach a deep level of self-fulfillment. Only by forgetting about oneself can one find his true self!

The Tanya (Ch. 37) explains that the

mitzvah of *tzedaka* is the one mitzvah that allows a person to express all his energy. Typically, a person expends a great deal of energy earning a livelihood. When a person transfers the money and assets he has earned to the service of Hashem, all of that energy is now transformed into a mitzvah. In the case of the *Mishkan*, contributing to its construction brought together and united all of that energy and invested it in a mitzvah. It thus emerges that the mitzvah of *tzedaka* unites the Jew with Hashem. It unites the Jew with his fellow. And finally, it unites the Jew with himself.

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| 1) Plant for the future 25:4 s.v. arzel shitim | 6) A hairsbreadth away 27:5 s.v. karkov |
| 2) Baby face 25:18 s.v. keruim | 5) Forgive chutzpah 27:2 s.v. vitzpisa |
| 3) Center-facing 25:37 s.v. vithetr | 4) Through the middle 26:26 s.v. chamisha |

Parsha Quizzers - Answers