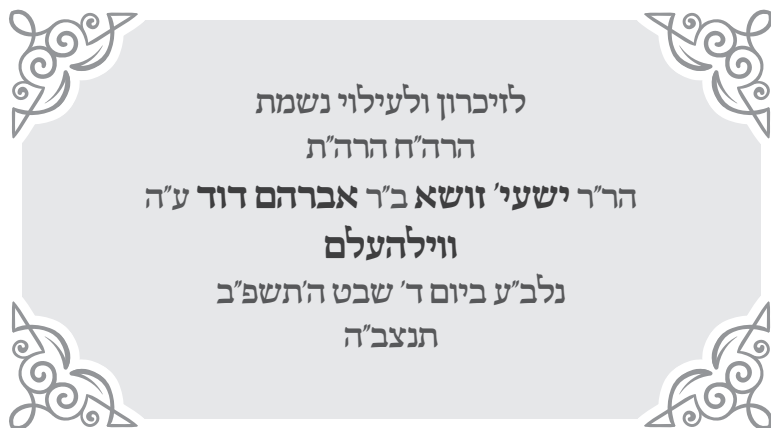


Terumah

THE WEISS EDITION

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION



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תרומה

Terumah

כה:ב | 25:2

דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה

Speak to Bnei Yisrael and have a contribution taken for Me.

Man's Highest Calling

The command to build the Mishkan, and Bnei Yisrael's donation of materials for its construction, took place immediately after the giving of the Torah, before the episode of the Golden Calf, according to one opinion in the Zohar. Because the Golden Calf was made from molten earrings¹ rather than from the plentiful supply of gold that Bnei Yisrael took from the Egyptians, we can deduce that they had already given most of their gold to the Mishkan.²

Per this chronology of events, when G-d commanded Bnei Yisrael to build the Mishkan they were in their most elevated,

1. Shemos 32:2–3.

2. Zohar 2:224a.

pure state, having just been spiritually cleansed at Mount Sinai.³ Yet at that very point G-d instructed them to build a physical Mishkan, demonstrating that use of our mundane possessions to create a home for G-d is man's highest calling, even if he is already perfect in all other areas.

Moreover, according to this opinion, had Bnei Yisrael not already consecrated the bulk of their gold for a higher purpose—for use in the Mishkan—all that gold would have contributed toward their most grievous sin, the Golden Calf. This teaches us that only by wholly dedicating the *material* aspects of our lives to the goal of creating a home for G-d can we ensure that we will remain anchored in our righteousness.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 6, pp. 153–155

3. See Talmud, Shabbos 146a.

 כה:ג-ה | 25:3-5

וְזֹאת הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֲתָם... וְעֵצֵי שִׁטִּים

And this is the contribution that you shall take from them... and acacia wood.

Plant a Tree from Israel

How did Bnei Yisrael have acacia wood in the desert? Some commentaries suggest that it grew in nearby forests, or perhaps it was available for purchase from merchants they encountered in the desert.⁴

Rashi, on the other hand, maintains that Bnei Yisrael left Egypt with a supply of acacia wood intended for use in the Mishkan. The source for this is a Midrashic account that Rashi cites in the name of Rabbi Tanchuma: “Our forefather Yaakov foresaw with Ruach Hakodesh, Divine intuition, that Bnei Yisrael were destined to build a Mishkan in the desert. He therefore brought cedars to Egypt and planted them, and instructed his sons to take them along when they left Egypt.”

Why did Yaakov go to the trouble of bringing trees with him from the Land of Israel and planting them in Egypt? Surely he knew that Bnei Yisrael would have other opportunities to obtain acacia wood. Why didn’t he rely on Bnei Yisrael’s simply buying the wood, or procuring it from a nearby forest? Evidently, Yaakov had additional reasons for bringing the wood with him.

Rashi alludes to these motives by citing the teaching in the name of Rabbi Tanchuma, whose name comes from the Hebrew word *tanchumin*—consolations.

4. See Ibn Ezra and Divrei David ad loc.

The acacia trees that Yaakov planted in Egypt were a *visible* symbol of his prophecy that one day G-d would free Bnei Yisrael from Egypt and command them to build a Mishkan for Him in the desert. In the most dark and difficult moments of their slavery, these trees served as a source of hope and comfort. Seeing the trees from the Land of Israel reminded and reassured Bnei Yisrael that they would not remain exiled forever; G-d would soon bring them home, back to the Land of Israel from which they—and the trees—originated.

Although he knew that Bnei Yisrael could obtain the acacia wood through other means, Yaakov bought them along from the Land of Israel to provide solace to his descendants throughout their bitter exile.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 31, pp. 142-147*

 כה:טו | 25:15

בְּמִבְעַת הָאָרוֹן יִהְיוּ הַבָּדִים לֹא יִסָּרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ

*The poles of the Ark shall be in the rings;
they shall not be removed from it.*

Have Poles, Will Travel

To ensure that the Aron, the Holy Ark, is always ready for travel, its poles are not allowed to be removed. The Sefer Hachinuch elaborates:

In the event that we'll need to urgently transport the Aron, and in the hurry of the moment we might not verify that the poles are properly secured, the Aron might, G-d forbid, slip from our hold... But if they are made with no intention of ever being removed, they will be firmly fastened in place.⁵

The Torah's concern for the Aron to be readily mobile teaches us an important lesson.

The Aron contained the Luchos, inscribed with the Ten Commandments, which our Sages explain comprise all 613 mitzvos.⁶ Thus, the Aron, which housed the Luchos, is a metaphor for Torah study, through which one's mind and heart become a home for the Torah's wisdom.

To succeed in the study of Torah requires intense concentration, removing oneself entirely from outside distractions. This, too, is comparable to the Aron hidden away in the Kodesh Hakodashim, the holiest chamber in the Temple, off

5. Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvah 96.

6. See Azharos of Rav Saadiah Gaon.

limits to everyone but the Kohen Gadol, the high priest—and even *he* could only enter once a year!

Nevertheless, the poles of the Aron teach us that even while wholly engrossed in Torah study, we must always be *readily mobile*. Our immersion in Torah must be accompanied by the awareness and willingness to embark at any time, to any place, to do whatever it takes to bring the Torah to another Jew.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 16, pp. 334–335*

 כה:טז | 25:16

וְנָתַתְּ אֶל הָאָרֶן אֶת הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ

*And you shall place into the Ark the testimony,
which I will give you.*

The People's Mishkan

The Talmud teaches that the Ark contained both the broken remnants of the first set of Luchos and the complete and unbroken second Luchos.⁷

The first Luchos were given to Moshe immediately after the revelation at Sinai, before Bnei Yisrael sinned and worshipped the Golden Calf. At that point, they were spiritually perfect;⁸ thus, the remnants of the first Luchos represent the *tzaddik*—the Jew in his most perfect and elevated state.

The second set of Luchos were given to Moshe on Yom Kippur, after G-d pardoned Bnei Yisrael for the sin of the Golden Calf. These Luchos represent the *baal teshuvah*—a person who may have strayed from the Torah's ways in the past, but has since repented.

Both the *tzaddik* and the *baal teshuvah* were thus represented in the Aron, by the first and second Luchos, respectively. There is, however, a third possible state in which a Jew may find himself: having transgressed the Torah but not yet made amends. The first Luchos, the Luchos of flawlessness, no longer represent him. The second Luchos, the Luchos of repentance, do not yet represent him either. But this Jew,

7. Berachos 8b.

8. See Talmud, Shabbos 146a: "At the giving of the Torah, their filth departed."

too, is represented in the Aron—by *the broken state* of the first Luchos.

By representing all three categories of Jews in the Aron, the Torah highlights that the commandment to build a Mishkan—and likewise, the eternal lesson we learn from this mitzvah—applies to every Jew equally. Regardless of your current spiritual state, whether perfect or far from it, you must endeavor to elevate your material life to serve exclusively as a home for G-d.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 6, pp. 156-157*

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