

Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

פרשת תרומה

דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו לי תרומה מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי
“Speak to the Children of Israel and they shall take to Me a portion, from every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion” (25:2)

Tana D'vei Eliyahu writes that immediately after the Bnei Yisrael said "na'aseh v'nishma", Hashem gave the commandment to build a Mishkan. There seems to be a connection between these two events. The sefer Yakar Mipaz explains that the purpose of the Mishkan is to allow Hashem to dwell amongst people. For the Divine Presence to rest near a person, he must get over himself. Hashem looks to a person with a humble spirit and only chooses to reveal Himself to such a person. This echoes the posuk in Yeshaya (66:2): "My hand made all these and thus they came into being, says Hashem - but it is to this that I look: to the poor and broken-spirited person who is zealous regarding my word." This is what the statement of "na'aseh v'nishma" was all about. It meant that the people vowed to listen to Hashem, not because it made sense to do so and because they understood everything, but because they recognized that Hashem is the Creator of the World and following His will and command was more important than comprehending the reasons beforehand. The Bnei Yisrael overlooked themselves and placed Hashem first. When they truly felt this way, Hashem wanted to dwell among them. This is how the construction of the Mishkan was a direct result of the declaration of "na'aseh v'nishma."

On the subject of humility, the Orchos Tzadikim (Chapter 2) writes: "Humility is the ladder by which one ascends to the ways of Hashem... and by means of humility, one acquires fear of Hashem... The Divine Presence rests on the humble... R' Yehoshua ben Levi said: Come and see how great are the lowly of spirit before Hashem. For in the time of the Bais HaMikdash, if one brought a burnt offering, he would gain the reward for a burnt offering; if one brought a meal offering, he would gain the reward for a meal offering. But if one is possessed of a lowly spirit, the Torah considers it as if he had brought all of the sacrifices, as it is written: 'The sacrifices of Hashem are a broken spirit' (Tehillim 51:19). And what is more, his prayers are not despised, as it is written (ibid.): 'A heart that is broken and contrite Hashem shall not despise.' (Sotah 5b)"

Today, when we no longer have the Bais HaMikdash, we can still achieve the results of the service performed in it when we conduct ourselves in the manner that led to its construction. A humble person is considered to have brought all the sacrifices because he is worthy of Hashem's closeness and brings the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash closer. Furthermore, his prayers, which are today's substitute for sacrifices, are not turned aside because he is worthy of bringing actual sacrifices in the Bais HaMikdash.

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם

“They shall make Me a sanctuary so that I may dwell among them” (25:8)

The Kli Yakar in Parshas Vayakhel points out that when Hashem commanded Moshe to build a Mishkan, he detailed the particulars of its construction and only spoke about keeping Shabbos at the very end. When Moshe relayed these instructions to the Bnei Yisrael, he began with the commandment of Shabbos and only then discussed building a Mishkan. Why did Moshe teach these laws in a different order? The answer is that the Mishkan brings honor to the Jewish people. It is a sign that Hashem wishes to dwell among us out of all the nations of the world and that we are his chosen people. Shabbos, on the other hand, brings honor to Hashem. When we keep Shabbos, we show that Hashem created the world and that He still governs all

that happens in it to this very day. When Hashem taught Moshe, He deferred His own honor before that of the Bnei Yisrael. He first discussed the Mishkan, which would bring honor to the Jewish people, and only then taught about Shabbos, which would bring His own honor. Moshe gave precedence to Hashem's honor and first relayed the concept of Shabbos and only then spoke of the Mishkan.

We can learn from this idea that it is important to honor others and give them precedence. This can be manifested in simple actions that allow others to go first, such as holding doors for people, serving others before oneself, greeting others before being greeted, etc. Even a great person can do these things for others if Hashem, the Creator of the world, gave his own creations precedence to Himself. Allowing others to go first makes them feel special. This is a good trait that one can develop fairly easily over time and it has a tremendous impact on his overall character.

ועשית שנים כרבים זהב מקשה תעשה אתם משני קצות הכפרת
“You shall make two cherubim of gold - beaten shall you make them - from both ends of the lid” (25:18)

The Mechilta writes that all the vessels in the Mishkan could be made from other metals if there was no gold available. The lone exception is the keruvim which must always be of gold. Rashi explains that the keruvim had the faces of small children. R' Meir Shapiro writes that the placement of children on top of the Aron HaKodesh in the Holy of Holies teaches us the importance of educating Jewish children. This is a task that stands in the holiest place. The education of children must be the best, of "gold," at all times, regardless of the circumstances. A child must be educated properly in the manner that he needs, both at home and at school. He cannot be given a second-rate education. The Gemara writes that a person's income is set on Rosh Hashana with the exception of what he spends on Shabbos, Yom Tov, and expenses toward his child's Torah education. This expense is not a loss, but an extra stipend that does not affect the rest of a person's income. It is also important not to settle for a mediocre Torah education for our children but to give them the gold standard. The children are our future. Chazal tell us that when the time comes for the building of the third Beis HaMikdash, everyone will go to help with the construction except for the children, who will remain learning Torah. What a child learns in his youth will remain with him forever. Chazal tell us that this is because the world is maintained by the Torah study of young children. Similarly, the Tzror HaMor writes that the keruvim had their wings protectively spread over the Aron just as the Torah study of children protects the Jewish people.

The Nachal Kedumim writes that the placement of children on the Aron, which represents Torah study, shows that we must approach Torah with a freshness, like children learning for the first time. We should attempt to preserve the enthusiasm of youth and maintain it throughout our lives. Another meaning of this comparison to children is that we must feel as if we know nothing. A child who is just beginning to learn has a tremendous thirst to know all that there is to know. This desire for Torah should remain with us even as we grow older.

ועשית את הקרשים למשכן עצי שטים עמדים
“You shall make the planks for the Tabernacle, shittim wood standing erect” (26:15)

The midrash states that Hashem only created cedar trees so that they could be used in the Mishkan and the Bais HaMikdash. Cedars are known to be very tough trees with wood that is strong and inflexible. The gemara in Taanis 20b states: "A person should always be as soft as a reed and not as hard as a cedar tree." Avos D'Rabbi Nosson (41:1) elaborates: "When a strong

wind comes, a reed bends in the direction of the wind. Because of its ability to bend, it does not become uprooted. A cedar tree does not bend at all. A soft wind that may move the reed has no effect on it. But when there is a powerful wind, the cedar tree breaks and falls."

A person needs to be strong in order to remain true to the Torah. It requires the strength and inflexibility of a cedar tree to remain steadfast among the swirling winds of negative influences. However, cedar wood was really only created for use in the Mishkan, in matters pertaining to Torah. When dealing with other people, one must be like the reed. He must be soft and flexible and accommodating to those around him. Even though this pliability gives the illusion of being weak, that is not the case at all. The reed withstands even the strongest winds and can outlast the cedar tree in difficult situations. The gemara in Taanis concludes that because the reed is soft, it was chosen to be made into quills which are used to write sifrei Torah, tefillin and mezuzos. Hashem wants a person to be soft as the reed. It is those who are drawn closer to Him. A stubborn will is good to have in some spheres of life, but not in others.

**ושמת את השלחן מחוץ לפרכת ואת המנרה נכח השלחן על צלע המשכן תימנה
והשלחן תתן על צלע צפון**

“You shall place the table outside the partition, and the menorah opposite the table on the south side of the Tabernacle; and the table you shall place on the north side” (26:35)

The gemara in Bava Basra 25b says that if one wants to get rich, he should pray facing north. If he wants to become wise, he should face toward the south. This is because the Shulchan, representing material wealth, was on the north side of the Mishkan and the Menorah, symbolic of toil in Torah study, was placed on the south side.

The posuk in Shir Hashirim (4:16) says: "Awake from the north and come from the south." The Or Pnei Moshe interprets this posuk in line with this symbolic understanding of north and south. Just as a person arouses himself in order to make money, he should have a tremendous enthusiasm to learn Torah. The same desire that comes naturally for parnassa should be channeled into Torah study. Another possible explanation of the posuk is that one should take his monetary possessions and uplift them by using them for Torah. The Shulchan faced the Menorah to remind us that money is not an end by itself but its value must be always seen through the light of the Menorah which was opposite it.

Kesharim Baruch College/NYU Parsha Shiur

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