

| PORTION | DATE | HEB DATE | TORAH | NEVIIM | RENEWED |
|---------|---------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Terumah | 17 Feb., 2018 | 2 Adar 5778 | Exod. 25:1-27:19 | 1 Kings 5:12-6:13 | Mark 12:35-44 |

This week's parashat comes right after Mishpatim which is about justice. It starts with an offering that consist of gold, silver, and brass. When we give to others, we are actually receiving. We have discussed about this last year, so I will just cover the basics. When we give a gift to someone, you are unwittingly expecting a gift in return because the receiver is affluent. Because you received back something from the receiver, you have been rewarded at this world rather than the World to Come.

However, if you give to someone who are poor and you are not getting anything in return, you are still receiving for the good deed you have done in the World to Come. For this reason, when we help those in need, we should not expect anything in return. When you do expect a return, then you lose everything that you have built in the World to Come. So, when we give willingly without regret, we are actually gaining in return. It may not be this world we live in now, but we will be rewarded in the World to Come.

There are two types of offering. They are *tzadikah* and *korban* offering. The *tzadikah* offering is higher than *korban* offering. The difference is that the *korban* offering has the ability to erase unintentional sin only, whereas the *tzadikah* offering can change the verdict already given by Hashem. The Sages also says that one hour of Torah study is greater than 1,000 *korbanot* offering.

Today, we use currencies to donate. The money you donate has to be kosher (clean). What does this mean? The money you give has to be earned legally and rightfully. If the money is unkosher (unclean), then such donation is not accepted. The best example is that if a thief gets \$50 for a computer he stole, and donates it for charity, then the donation becomes unkosher and not acceptable to Hashem and to the receiver.

Now, Hashem wants the Israelites, first of all, to donate with gold, silver, and copper. They represent three types of people. Gold alludes to those who has risen above the natural, physical world and overcame the stranglehold of its materialism. Silver represents people who are righteous. He is not concerned by the spiritual darkness of this world, instead he channels Divine consciousness into it. Copper represents those of us who are continuously struggling to overcome the materialism or emotions of this world.

The Hebrew word for copper is *nachashet* which is related to the word, "snake" (*nachash*), and "stubborn" (*nachush*). So, a copper is a stubborn impudence of the primordial snake's denial of Hashem.¹ The Torah requires all three metals be used for the construction of the Tabernacle.

The lesson is that those who think of themselves as "gold" or "silver" and even as "copper" has a role in this world Hashem created. The "silver", instead of occupying only with spiritual matters, cannot shy away from involving ourselves in the physical world. If we do not infuse them together, it can hinder our basic needs which could lead and undermine spiritual focus. Even the "gold", who overcame materialism and feels that he is immune to its danger, are not exempt from elevating the physical world. As for "copper" who believes that he has to refine themselves first before elevating this physical world, the Torah says otherwise. Because of their ongoing struggle qualifies to spiritualize this world. If, we, the "gold" or the "silver" turn our homes for

¹ Shemot, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, p. 180

Hashem's presence, we must value the contribution of those of us who are still only "copper."² For they are the sockets and the stakes which provides stability of the division between the realms of holiness and mundaneness.

When Hashem created this world, He did so by gradually reducing His manifestation of Himself. This process produces a descending series of spiritual realms called as "worlds" in Kabbalah. There are four levels of Divine consciousness: *Atzilut* (Emanation), *Beriah* (Creation), *Yetzirah* (Formation), and *Asiyah* (Action). We live in the world of *Asiyah*.

The "inner chamber" or "Holy of Holies" is the intellect of that world. It is a place where the Torah shines itself, not as a processed energy through *malchut*. For this reason, His presence is felt. Because the Divine presence resided in the "inner chamber" was not processed through the cascading descent of creation.

When the Ten Commandments were written on two tablets, the Divine energy from the world of *Atzilut* had to be diminished as it is one with Hashem for it is too abstract to manifest physically. Therefore, the intellect of *Atzilut* passed through *malchut* of *Atzilut* and was revealed within the intellect of *Beriah* as it is the beginning of self-awareness. Once the revelation had reached this point, it could shine directly into the physical Tabernacle, resulting in the Ten Commandments being engraved on the physical tablets.³

Exodus Chapter 25:8 says, "And let them make Me a *Kadosh*-Place; that I may dwell among them." The idea of making a place to dwell for the Creator seems absurd. Even King Solomon said, "but will Elohim indeed dwell on the earth? See, the *shamayim* and the *shamayim* of *shamayim* cannot contain You; how much less this *Bayit* that I have built?"⁴

Why does Hashem need a "dwelling place"? After all, isn't He everywhere? He is indeed everywhere. However, He is hidden, which means His presence is not revealed and we don't feel Him. We can say that our "wavelength" is for the most part out of its range and cannot properly "tune in" to Hashem.

Then Hashem say, "That I may dwell among them." Hashem is telling us to make a sanctuary so He may dwell within us. There are three types of sanctuary included in this commandment. First is the physical Tabernacle that the Israelites built in the desert. Second is a personal sanctuary that each of us must build in our lives: And finally, we must transform the world into Hashem's home.

Rashi says that Hashem commanded the Israelites to build the Tabernacle at the end of Moses' third stay on Mount Sinai on the 10th of Tishrei (September to October). Moses then told them on 11th of Tishrei, the day after his descension. The Midrash follows Rashi's view that the instruction was given after the sin of the Golden Calf, on Yom Kippur. By commanding the Israelites to build Him a dwelling, He was showing that He had forgiven the sin of the Golden Calf.

The Zohar has two views. The instructions and the construction took place immediately after the Matan Torah before the sin of the Golden Calf. That was the reason the Israelites donated only their golden earrings for the Golden Calf, because they contributed the rest for the construction of the Tabernacle previously. Another view is that Moses heard the instruction before the sin, but told the people only after Yom Kippur.

On the physical level, only one view is correct. However, spiritually, all three views can coexist as "gold, silver, and copper" as previously discussed. In other words, we are revealing the hidden, true nature of reality. The world exists because of the Divine energy pulsing through them. The Divinity is revealed by removing the

² Likutei Sichot, vol. 6, pp. 152-160

³ Shemot, The Lubavitcher Rebbe, p. 182

⁴ First Kings 8:27

obstruction that we all have in this reality. The essence of every one of us is our Divine soul. We are allowing our inner essence to shine through when we remove such obstructions during our journey through life.

The Ark being built in verse 10 shows that “two cubits and a half” in length, “a cubit and a half” in width, and “a cubit and a half” in height. This alludes that the study of Torah will break our ingrained habits and any negative traits we have. There is a lengthy discussion about the Ark in the Babylonian Talmud.⁵

The Sages teach that the cherubim had a face of an infant, and the Torah as we know today is reduced, simplified version of the heavenly Torah. Hashem contracted the Torah to a form that we can understand and digest. The wings of the cherubim represent parents are to teach their children of the Torah for preservation and continuity.

There is in Mishnah Berachot that says, “We should not be slaves to our master for the sake of seeking a reward.” It means we should not serve Hashem like a slave trying to get a reward from his master. For example, you cannot have an ulterior motive. When we do the mitzvah, do it for the sake of Hashem instead of seeking a reward now for keeping the mitzvah.

There is a story of Baal Shem Tov (1700-1760 CE) who traveled to Turkey with his daughter. One of his habit was not to have any money before he went to bed. So, when they arrived to a city in Turkey, they had no money, no bread, or a place to stay just before Pesach. Then a rich man who wanted to meet him for several years heard Baal Shem Tov was in his town. He bumped into his daughter and invited them to his house. Of course, he wanted to ask Baal Shem Tov a question. Baal Shem Tov being high level of tzadik, he had an angel on his shoulder who would tell him everything about other people, such as desires, hope, even problems.

Baal Shem Tov, even before the man asked for blessing said, “You will have a son by the end of this year.” Immediately, the heavenly voice said, “You just lost all your reward in the Olam Haba. Because this man was destined not to have any child. But now you blessed him with a child.” If you were in his shoes, would you have cried and ask Hashem to reinstate his place in the Olam Haba?

Baal Shem Tov began to jump up and down and started to dance with joy. The man, puzzled asked him, “You just lost everything in the Olam Haba. Why are you dancing?” Baal Shem Tov said, “Because, now, I can serve Him for His sake.” The heavenly voice said, “Because you wanted to serve Me for My sake, I will reinstate your place in the Olam Haba and double it.”

This is the attitude we all need to have. As most of us a “copper”, we are continuously struggling to serve Hashem and at the same time, we are trying to serve this world. Of course, Hashem will reward you in this world for the mitzvot you keep despite our ulterior motive. However, when we serve Hashem willingly because of our love for Him, then the reward is greater in the World to Come. Isn’t this what we need to pursue?

⁵ Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 54a,b; 72b, 77a, etc.