



Wembley Synagogue

תְּרוּמָה

Insights from the commentators into the Sedra of Terumah

וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה - Speak to the children of Israel and they shall take a *terumah* (donation) for me (25:2) It is interesting to note that the Torah uses the term "take" when asking the people to make contributions for the purpose of building the Mishkan (Tabernacle) rather than the term "give". Why would the Torah refer to the donors as takers instead of calling them givers? Hashem, having created the universe, is the true owner of the world and all its contents. Whatever a person possesses does not belong to him for eternity. A person may use his possessions as a guest in his host's home does, but essentially they remain Hashem's property. A person's material wealth does not accompany him after death and therefore it cannot be considered his own in a permanent sense. Only a person's spiritual accomplishments are truly his own forever. If someone wishes to acquire something that is truly his own, the best way is to use it in the service of Hashem. The merit thus earned will be eternally his. Consequently, the torah refers to contributing to the holy cause of the Mishkan as "taking" donations for Hashem. The donors themselves would be the ones who stand to gain most; whatever they donate would earn them eternal benefits. By using the donated objects properly in the service of Hashem, it can truly be said that they "took" these items for themselves (Source: Darash Moshe)

Why did Hashem want everyone to contribute to the Mishkan? Surely Hashem could have provided Moshe with all the gold, silver and other materials that were necessary. One answer is that the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) will dwell with the Jewish people and show Its presence only if we show our desire to see it. Only through eager and generous donations of the Jewish people would the *Shechina* dwell in the *Mishkan*. For this reason Hashem did not command "And they shall give a donation." Instead, Hashem commanded "And they shall take for Me a donation." Although Hashem needs nothing, He wanted to see that Bnei Yisrael were willing to take from their possessions to build the Mishkan. Others explain that Hashem did not provide the materials because He wanted everyone to have a part in the Mitzvah.

זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנְחֹשֶׁת - Gold, silver and copper (25:3)

The Chatam Sofer found in these words a wonderful hint to all the days of the year on which we read from the Torah:

Zahav (ז) (Zayin –numerical value 7) – Shabbat the seventh day of the week.

(ה) **Hei** (numerical value 5) – Thursday, the fifth day (ב) **Beit** (numerical value 2) Monday, the second day

Kesef (כ) **Kippurim** (Yom Kippur) (ס) **Sukkot** (פ) **Purim** and **Pesach**

Nechoshet (נ) Nerot (candles) an allusion to Chanukah (יג) Rosh **Chodesh** (as well as Rosh Hashana which falls on Rosh Chodesh) (ש) **Shavuot**, **Shemini Atzeret** (ת) **Taanit** Tzibbur (a public fast day) (Source: A Shabbos Vort)

וַעֲצֵי שֵׁטִים - And acacia wood (25:5)

How did they obtain this wood in the desert? *Rashi* quoting the *Tanchuma* explained that Yaakov saw prophetically that the Jewish people were destined to build a Tabernacle in the desert, so he brought acacia trees to Egypt and planted them. He commanded his children to take the trees with them when they left.

Da'at Zekeinim says that there was a forest of acacia wood near Mount Sinai. Thus we find a place in the desert that was named שֵׁטִים presumably because acacia trees (וַעֲצֵי שֵׁטִים) were found there (see Bamidbar 25:6)

Be'er Yitzchak says that it is totally absurd to imagine that trees would grow in a desert, a place where even grass will not grow! Furthermore, later in the Sidra of *Vayakhel*, the Torah states explicitly that the Jewish people were carrying acacia wood with them in the desert – "...and everyone with whom there was acacia wood." (35:24)

Divrei David says that *Rashi's* comment appears, at first glance, to be unnecessarily complicated. Surely they could have bought acacia wood from local natives, as we find in the Gemara Yoma 75b that they did indeed buy produce from local merchants. However, *Rashi* was troubled by why the pasuk uses the expression "acacia trees" and not simply "acacia." This additional word (trees) indicated to *Rashi* that this was not

plain acacia which had been bought locally, but rather, "trees" which had a special significance unto themselves. (Source: Gutnick Chumash)

The Kli Yakar points out that the gematriya (numerical value) of the words הקרשים למשכן "The boards of the Mishkan" equals 1095 which is also the gematriya of the words "The boards of the Mishkan" equals 1095 which is also the gematriya of the words יַעֲקֹב אֲבִינוּ נָטַע לָהֶם אֲרָזִים בְּמִצְרַיִם "Yaakov our father planted cedars for them in Egypt."

Is the "Tabernacle" in verse 9 the same thing as the "Sanctuary" in verse 8?

Rashi says that it was and that verse 9 is directly connected to verse 8.

Ohr Hachayim says that they are not connected. The term "sanctuary" מקדש in verse 8 refers generally to the concept of a house of Hashem, and includes the mitzvah of building the Bet Hamikdash in Jerusalem. The term "Tabernacle" מִשְׁכָּן in verse 9 refers specifically to the Tabernacle in the desert.

וַעֲשׂוּ אֲרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים אֲמֵתִים וְחָצִי אַרְכּוֹ וְחָצִי רָחְבוֹ..... - And they shall make an Aron, two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half shall be its height (25:10)

The measurements of the Aron of the Torah are given in fractional figures (two and a half and one and a half) rather than in whole figures to remind Torah scholars that even they have not attained perfection and "wholeness" in their knowledge. (Source: Rabbi Nosson ben Shimon HaKohen Adler quoted in Ma'ayna Shel Torah)

The half cubits also reflect the concept that humility is a precondition to the comprehension of Torah. One who considers himself whole lacks the basic prerequisite to knowledge of the Torah. Therefore, it was Moshe, the humblest of men, who merited receiving the Torah at Sinai, which was the lowliest of mountains (Source: The Torah Treasury)

וְהִבַּאתָ אֶת הַבַּיִתִּים בְּטֹבְעַת - And you shall insert the poles into the rings alongside the Ark, to carry the Ark with them (25:14)

When the Levites carried the Ark by its poles, it appeared to observers that they were transporting the Ark using their own strength. In reality, however, this was not so. The Talmud Sotah 35a tells us that the Ark transported its bearers. Although by natural law the bearers should have borne the weight of the Ark, the miraculous providence which governed the Ark dictated otherwise. (Source: The Parsha Anthology)

וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל אָחִיו - And their faces shall look one to another; towards the Ark-cover the faces of the *keruvim* (cherubs) shall be. (25:20) The *Gemara Bava Batra* 99a asks why in the *Mishkan* the *keruvim* faced each other, whereas in the *Beit Hamikdash "ufeneihem labayit"* — their faces were to the walls of the house" (II Chronicles 3:13). The *Gemara* answers: When the Jews fulfilled Hashem's wish, the *keruvim* faced each other. When they conducted themselves contrary to His will, then the *keruvim* faced the wall.

What is the connection between the direction of the *keruvim* and the will of Hashem?

The *Gemara's* explanation of the direction the *keruvim* faced may be explained as a metaphor: "Each man facing his brother" (the literal translation of "*ish el achiv*") can be taken as a symbol of the brotherly relationship between one Jew and another. This complies with the will of Hashem, who desires that a Jew always be concerned for a fellow Jew.

"Facing the walls of the house" means that one turns his back on the other and is totally preoccupied with what takes place within the walls of his home. Such behaviour is contrary to G-d's will.

וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל אָחִיו - And their faces shall look one to another. (25:20) Every person should try to emulate the characteristics that are represented by the posture of the *Keruvim*. On the surface, we can derive two lessons. The first lesson is directed at the relationship a person has with Hashem (G-d). The *keruvim's* wings spread above their bodies. In a symbolic way, we also have wings. They represent our ability to soar to higher spiritual levels. Thus, a person should strive to reach greater spiritual heights. The second lesson is directed at the relationship a person has with his fellow. The *keruvim* faced each other. This represents the duty that everyone has to be concerned with his fellow. (Source: Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor - P'ninim Mishulchan Govoha)

Shabbat Shalom!



Shabbat starts 5.15pm



Shabbat ends: 6.19pm