

Parshas Teruma

This week's Parsha is Teruma. Midrash explains that the pesukim at the beginning of the Parsha serve as a model of how the universe and the Mishkan are part of the foundation of the world. In fact, the purpose of everything that was created was for the development of the Beish Hamikdash and to be used for the service of Hashem. Gold, such a precious metal, was put on earth for the purposes of the Beis Hamikdash, and now, for the service of Hashem. The contributions, which are from free-will donations, are for the service of Hashem to build a sanctuary where Hashem can dwell in them (as explained by the Shaloh, that Hashem dwells in every one of us). Beis Hamikdash was a physical building in Yerushalayim, but Hashem, especially now in Golus, still lives in each one of us through how we use our physical possessions in the service of Hashem. As we say in Shema, "Vahavta Eis Hashem Elokech, Bichol Livavcha, uvechol Nafshecha, Uvechol Meodecha" (you should love Hashem your G-d, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.) In order to love Hashem, you can do that with your heart and soul, because those two levels exist whether a person has means or not. But, in the event you have steered your heart and soul toward Hashem, then you are asked to love Him with all your might, that is in a physical manifestation. As it says later in the Shema, V'Haya Im Shomoa (When

you will listen to the words of Hashem)... what happens, you will be blessed with rain in its time. That is, we will be blessed with material blessings. The point is that once your lenses and entire existence are pointed toward Hashem, then you will see the blessings and experience the blessings from Hashem, because everything comes from Hashem. Even if material blessings are on a spectrum, some people have more or less; each person will know and feel blessed. In recognizing this, one then achieves the existence of "V'Shaachanti B'Socham" that Hashem will be dwelling within you. That is, you will have made out your existence a space for Hashem to exist. The achievement of this level is a level of revelation, that on Masse would be the revelation of Mashiach, in some way, that we can feel and know there is a real space for Hashem to exist. A lot of the parsha evidences the metaphor that in the absence of a physical location of the Mishkan, or the Beis Hamikdash, we have an obligation to turn our physical dimension to the service of Hashem, such that we turn ourselves into mini temples. As the Gemara in Yoma 72b says on Posuk 25:11, that one must overlay the Ahron with gold, a torah scholar who is not the same on the outside as he is on the inside is not truly called a torah scholar. That means one must strive to achieve symbiosis and harmony between what is being learned and practiced and their reality. Later in the Parsha, when the materials used for the pillars are

discussed, it is Shittim, which, as the Rebbe Rashab explains in various mamarim, is a metaphor for the way the angels stand. But more importantly, Shittim is in the same vein as Shtuyot (Shtusim), that is, frivolity; the Mishkan's purpose is to take frivolity and turn it into holiness. As I stated earlier, the purpose is to take everything from our hearts and souls, might, and means and turn it toward holiness, and to take the Shtus from the world and make them holy.

My final note is that this past week, on 2 Adar, was my grandmother's funeral. One critical point about her life that I wish to convey is that she ensured every person who helped her or was in her service was valued, whether by paying them on time or tipping them. This exuded fairness and greatness by using her physical world to bring happiness and worth to others. In this way, she built her own sanctuary and temple. May her Neshama have an aliya.

Good Shabbos