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# א ביסל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

ז' אדר א' תשפ"ד-2/16/2024

תרומה

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## משכן The Hidden Symbolisms Within the

By Nathan Weinstock

This week's פרשה is פרשת תרומה. We are introduced to the building of the משכן in the beginning of the פרשה, where it says, "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם", "And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." Before we ask about the specificities of the משכן, we may ask why do we have the building of and donation to, the משכן in this פרשה right after משפטים? And why does the תורה spend so much time describing the משכן in 4½ פרשיות?

תהי' answers the first question saying that the תורה is making a qualification for our donations, especially to such a great cause. These donations that we give are only valuable when they come from honest business. Money that was gained from fraud, stealing or embezzlement is not welcome to Jews and especially the משכן. תהי' therefore gave us the laws and judgements of how to be fair and righteous people and businessmen, and now He is showing us good ways to use that honest and fair money. Rav Avigdor Miller, a 20th century American Rabbi and author, gives a nice thought to answer the second question. He says that we must first acknowledge that the משכן was made by צדיקים. Rav Miller then explains that in מסכת כתובות it says the work of צדיקים is greater than the work of the heavens and the earth. This little building, although quite complex, can be very simple, yet תהי' is showing us how crucial the work of צדיקים is to us. תהי' gave so much attention and detail to the צדיקים of the מדבר in order to teach us that it should be the forefront of our attention and focus as well. We should not let the amazing work of צדיקים go unnoticed. However, now actually addressing the משכן itself, what is its purpose? Why do we have it? רמב"ן answers this question by explaining the common understanding that it demonstrates תהי's constant presence with us. He builds on that saying that the משכן was a permanent form of the revelation on סיני. The משכן made the שכינה portable (even though תהי' is everywhere) and constant, similar to הר סיני, where משה could continue to speak with תהי'.

Not necessarily disagreeing, Rav Shalom Noach Berezovsky, author of the נתיבות שלום, says that the משכן is a representation of humans in our ideal representation, teaching us about ourselves. He says the קדש represents a piece of שמים inside of us, and just like the הקדשים, we cannot actually enter that part of ourselves. He then adds that the היכל (sanctuary) is what maintains the more physical beauties of ourselves. Rav Berezovsky explains that the מנורה which emanates light, correlates to the light of our eyes, and our ability to see and absorb the light of תורה through our eyes. He finishes by explaining the שולחן to represent our mouths and the spiritual potential it contains. When used properly our mouths can change lives and be used for so much Torah study.

The משכן has and forever will be a staple in Judaism and our history. I hope that this gave a glimpse into the amazing complexity and versatility of it.

## משכן and the צדקה

By Ephraim Fischer

In the beginning of this week's פרשה, an important commandment is given to the Jews. 'ה commands "דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לָבוֹא תִקְחוּ אֶת-תְּרוּמָתִי", "Tell the Jews to take for Me Terumah, you should take this Terumah from anyone whose heart wants to give." (שמות כה:ב) Keep in mind that this תרומה isn't the תרומה that כהנים eat. This was a one time commandment to give charity for the משכן. This language of "וְיָקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה" is very confusing. Why doesn't 'ה just tell משה to tell the Jews that they should give תרומה, rather than take תרומה for Him?

There are many different ways of interpreting this language, one of which is brought down by ספורנו. He brings down that this commandment wasn't given to all of the Jews. Rather, it was only given to certain people whose job it was to collect this תרומה from the Jews. The reason why the Jews were not allowed to give their possessions straight to the משכן, was because they were so eager to donate that they all immediately started to flood משה with donations. There needed to be some form of structure to this, so 'ה commanded that certain people were to collect this תרומה. This is why it says "You should take for me", because they were not giving their own possessions. They were only taking other people's possessions to give to the משכן. This teaches us that the person who gives צדקה isn't the only important person in the צדקה process. The person who collects, and manages the צדקה holds a vital role in the מצוה, in ensuring that the צדקה makes it to the right places, and gets to as many people as possible.

Another understanding of this פסוק, is that giving צדקה not only benefits the person you give it to, but it also benefits yourself. The חפץ חיים says, that a person's worth is determined by how much צדקה they give. Therefore, when one gives צדקה, they are also taking, as it increases their "net worth". Furthermore, the reward for giving צדקה is very great. It is one of the greatest מצוות that someone can do, and it benefits them in עולם הבא greatly. The word תרומה here is used for a specific reason. אפיקורוס translates תרומה as "אֶפְרָשׁוּתָא", something which is separated. This separateness is similar to that of the more familiar תרומה, the one that the Kohanim eat, which is considered holy, and separate from other food. In Judaism, separateness is often associated with holiness. The word קדוש itself means separate. This shows us that צדקה, although it is a מצוה, is still a very holy מצוה. The language used in this פסוק shows us how צדקה benefits everyone involved.

The פסוק later on says that this תרומה should only be given by people who want to give it. This shows us another important principle about צדקה: That צדקה which is given very begrudgingly, is the worst kind of צדקה. רמב"ם brings down that there are eight levels of צדקה. The lowest of these levels, is one who gives צדקה with annoyance, out of obligation rather than out of kindness. This kind of צדקה is not what 'ה wanted in the משכן. Jews should have been donating to the משכן out of love for 'ה, not out of an obligation to build the משכן. Donations made begrudgingly are not wanted in the משכן. Therefore, the פסוק qualified the commandment, saying that only people who wanted to give should actually give to the משכן.

We learn many lessons about צדקה from just the second פסוק of the פרשה. May we all try to be as charitable as we can be, and give at any opportunity that we come across out of love.

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