

## INSIGHTS from the SEDRA

*Insights from the Sedra is a project of the Scholar's Kollel of Great Neck. It aims to provide several questions and answers about the Sedra, culled from various commentaries, including the following: Baal Haturim, Darash Moshe, Vedibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Torah Treasures by Dov Furer, Wellsprings of Torah by Alexander Friedman, and Kol Dodi by Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Great Torah Lights by Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman, Something To Say by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, The Vilna Gaon, Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin and The Call of the Torah.*

### ויקחו לי תרומה

**“And let them take for Me a gift...” (25:2)**

Since all of Israel were included in this command, wouldn't “*Let them give?*” have been more appropriate? In reality, however, when we give charitable tithes, we are really taking. As Chazal said, “*Take a tithe (עשר) so you can become wealthy (תתעשר).*” The prophet Malachi explained, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house...I will pour out for you immeasurable blessing” (3:10). The Torah thus writes “Let them *take,*” to express that through their gift they will take a blessing for themselves. (Rav Zalman Sorotzkin)

What is the significance of the phrase ויקחו לי תרומה appearing first, followed by the phrase ועשו ארון עצי שטים? *Shemot Rabbah* explains just as the Torah came before everything else, so too with the building of the *Mishkan*, the command of building the *Aron* preceded that of all the other vessels. Just as the creation of light preceded the rest of Creation, so too with the *Mishkan*. The Torah is referred to as “light” as it states, “*A mitzvah is a candle and the Torah is light.*” Therefore, the making of the *Aron* preceded that of all the other vessels.

This *Midrash* points out that the primacy of *limud HaTorah* and stresses that it must precede everything else. It was certainly laudatory that the first Jews who came to the United States invested in building beautiful houses of worship. However, it would seem that they should have placed a higher priority on building *yeshivot*, as *limud HaTorah* should be the community foundation. One must certainly wonder as to how many souls were lost due to this mistaken priority.

The *cherubim*, with their childlike appearance, also remind us that we must place the educational needs of our young people at the very forefront, ahead of all else. (Rabbi Nisson Alpert)

### ועשו ארון...ועשית שלחן...ועשית מנרת זהב טהור

**“They shall make an ark...You shall make a Table...You shall make a Menorah of pure gold.”**  
(25:10,23,31)

The order of the Torah's description of the *Mishkan's* utensils teaches us a great deal about the relationship between Torah and its supporters. The Table, symbolizing financial prosperity, precedes the *Menorah*, representing Torah, to indicate that an adequate financial base is a prerequisite for Torah study. However, the *Aron*, also symbolizing Torah, precedes the Table. This

suggests that the fundamental observance of Torah and *mitzvot*, as depicted by the *Luchot* and *Sefer Torah* housed in the *Aron*, is not contingent upon a secure financial base. It is only the sophisticated, in-depth learning of Torah, represented by the *Menorah*, that requires freedom from financial worries. Certainly, the basic commitment to Torah applies equally to all Jews.

(Chasam Sofer)

### שנים כרבים

**“Two cherubim...” (25:18)**

The *Cherubs* were in the form of a young child, to teach us that childhood education should be grounded in Torah. Rather than emphasizing other disciplines, with an hour or two reserved for “religion,” the “*Cherub*” should be hammered out of the same block as the Ark cover itself. For a *Cherub* could not be added to the top of the Ark. It had to be formed as a whole.

The voice of prophecy was heard from between the two *Cherubs*. Likewise, the link between the Jewish people and G-d stems from Jewish children studying Torah. The *Cherubs* also hint that even when prophecy ceased from the Jewish people, it would still exist among Jewish children studying Torah. This was acknowledged even by non-Jews, as in the case of Titus, who would predict future events by asking a Jewish child what verse he had studied that day. (*Bava Basra* 12a)

(Oznaim LaTorah)

### ועשית מנרת זהב טהור

**“You shall make a Menorah of pure gold...” (25:31)**

Few of the *Mishkan's* utensils were as difficult to construct or to understand as the *Menorah*. In fact, *Moshe* himself required Hashem's assistance to create the *Menorah*, as indicated by the term *תיעשה*, *shall the Menorah be made* (v. 31). In particular, he experienced difficulty hammering out a multifaceted *Menorah* – replete with cups, knobs, and blossoms – from one sheet of gold. Symbolically, one could say that *Moshe* experienced difficulty in grasping that the multiple facets of Torah (represented by the *Menorah*), full of sophisticated and complicated disputes, could emanate from one source, Hashem's word at *Sinai*.

Although Hashem created the first *Menorah*, the portion concludes with the positive commandment, *וראה ועשה*, *see and make* (v. 40). Growth in Torah, while certainly requiring Hashem's assistance, is largely the result of one's own tireless efforts.

The *Menorah's* knobs and blossoms must be hammered from the *Menorah* itself. This seemingly small detail conveys a deep message: All the techniques used to comprehend Torah must stem from the Torah itself; they must be acceptable from a Torah perspective. One cannot interpret Torah using a technique borrowed from alien sources.

(Chasam Sofer)

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