

# GUARANTEED DIVIDENDS

*by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch*

## Parshas Terumah

### Guaranteed Dividends

#### Rabbi Pinchas Avruch

This week's parsha introduces the construction of the Mishkan (Tabernacle), commencing with the assembly of the vessels. The first is the Holy Ark, in which was stored the tablets of the Ten Commandments. "And they shall make an Ark of acacia wood..." (Shemos/Exodus 25:10). This command is striking in its dissimilarity with all of the other vessels, which start with the command "You shall make..." ("you" in the singular) (25:17, 23, 31; 26:1, 7, 14).

Midrash Rabbah expounds that it was G-d's wish that all of the Children of Israel participate in the manufacture of the Ark, for all those who contributed to the building of the Ark would merit a greater acquisition of Torah knowledge and Torah consciousness. But the Jewish people were a nation of some three million people, with over 600,000 adult men between the ages of twenty and sixty. How many of them could actually participate in the construction? What small percentage would actually be able to play a role in this, the holiest project of the effort?

Nachmanides (R' Moshe ben Nachman, 1194-1270, of Gerona, Spain, one of the leading Torah scholars of the Middle Ages; successfully defended Judaism at the dramatic debate in Barcelona in 1263) clarifies that the participation of the masses was manifest in each person's contribution of one object of gold, one of countless items melted down for the layer of gold that plated the acacia wood inside and out; others would assist in the actual manufacture in some small fashion; and even those who would not be able to actually participate in any way, but sincerely wanted to contribute, would also merit. We can appreciate the profound impact of being able to play a role in such a magnificent project as building the Holy Ark. Even a small role, while but a "drop in the bucket", is an essential piece to the completion of the task. But how do we understand that someone who played no actual role, who did not do ANYTHING, merited the same acquisition in Torah?

Rabbi Alter Henach Leibowitz (Rosh Yeshiva/Dean of Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim in Forest Hills, Queens, New York) explains that the merit to growth in Torah of those who did participate was borne in the

their physical toil for the glory of the Torah; their physical investment spawned an increased appreciation for the Torah, which in turn fed their efforts to grow in Torah knowledge and consciousness. So, too, one who could not actually participate and knew he would not participate could create such an emotional fervor and spiritual investment in his desire to help that the intensity of the "thinking" experience impacted him equally as if the investment and effort were physical.

It is known that anything in which one has a great investment - whether that investment is financial, emotional or spiritual - the more he strives for the success of that investment. But for financial and emotional investments to yield dividends, success is essential. The Holy Ark demonstrates the power and the beauty of a genuine spiritual investment: the ability to generate eternal spiritual dividends and growth, regardless of the success of the physical effort.

Have a good Shabbos!

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