

TAKING - NOT GIVING

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 228, Selling A Shul. Good Shabbos!

You Shall Have A Dream

At the end of the description of the Menorah, the pasuk [verse] says, "(U'Re-ay v'asay..." -- "And see and construct according to the pattern that you were shown on the mountain" [25:40]. The Baal HaTurim has a very cryptic and enigmatic comment on this pasuk: "There are only 3 times in all of Tanach that a pasuk begins with the word 'u'Re-ay' ['And see']".

The other two occurrences are both in Tehillim -- "And see sons to your children, peace on Israel" [128:6] and "And see if I have an evil way; and lead me in the way of Eternity" [139:24]. The Baal HaTurim seems to provide us with a "Jewish Crossword Puzzle". The trick is to find the connection between these three pasukim [verses]. The Baal HaTurim himself suggests a common thread, but I will discuss an alternate explanation from the Shemen HaTov.

Rash"i on our verse comments that Moshe was puzzled about the appearance of the Menorah, until HaShem [G-d] showed him a replica of the Menorah made out of fire. Moshe was able to conceptualize all of the other Kaylim [vessels] of the Mishkan, but somehow he had difficulty conceptualizing the complex shape and structure of the Menorah. Therefore, HaShem formed a Menorah out of fire and showed Moshe exactly what the Menorah looked like. However, even that did not help. We know from another statement of the Sages that even after Moshe saw the image of the Menorah, he still could not construct it. Finally, HaShem instructed Moshe to (have Betzalel) throw the gold into the fire, and the Menorah was created miraculously.

The question must be asked: HaShem knew Moshe's capabilities. If, ultimately, HaShem knew that Moshe would not be able to construct the Menorah on his own, why did HaShem ask him to do something that he could not do?

The Shemen HaTov answers: it was vital and crucial for Moshe to see the shape and form of the Menorah -- even if he would not be able to duplicate it. A person must have a vision of what is

required and expected. If one does not have the vision, he can not even begin. One must have a dream, whether that dream can be realized and become a reality or not. The minimum that is absolutely necessary is the perception of a direction and goal.

The initial image that HaShem showed to Moshe was the vision of the Menorah. Moshe was then at least aware of the dream -- the ultimate goal. If later, Moshe could not construct the Menorah himself, then HaShem would help, but at least Moshe knew what he was trying to accomplish.

There are many things in life that are beyond our capabilities. We need the Help of Heaven to accomplish them. However, in order to be able to invoke the Help of Heaven and reach that dream, we must first possess the dream and the vision. This is what we learn from the pasuk, "See and construct, according to the image that I showed you on the mountain."

Our Sages tell us that children, life and sustenance are dependent upon 'Mazal' [fortune]. We can do very little about how many children we will have; what type of children we will have; how our life will turn out; how our livelihood will go. These are things that are up to HaShem. But we must have the dream on our own.

The Shemen HaTov explains that this is what Dovid HaMelech [King David] is saying in the second pasuk in Tehillim "And see..." [139,24]. HaShem, I do not know what You have in store for me, but if it is not the type of productive life that I dream for, please fill it in, in accordance with those dreams. The dreams, however, are mine.

In addition, the Shemen HaTov explains that this is the connection that the Baal HaTurim is making to the first pasuk, "And see children to your children; peace on Israel". We never know what we will see from our children. Who knows? There are so many factors. One can try, put in efforts, pray, do everything within his power. But who knows what will happen? There are so many factors that mold and affect a child. But we must have dreams for our children. I, like you, want to see children from my children. I want to see my grandchildren sharing my values. I want to see my children committed to Torah. I want them to be G-d fearing, honest Jews. I want to see from them, children who share those values as well. That is the definition of "Peace upon Israel".

These things are not always up to us or under our control to carry out but we must have the dreams and the wishes. We must always have the proper directions and goals.

Sources and Personalities

Ba'al HaTurim -- (1268-1340) Commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, also authored the Tur, one of the early codes of Jewish Law. First published in 1514 in Constantinople.

Shemen HaTov -- Rabbi Dov Weinberger - contemporary author, Rabbi in Brooklyn, NY

Rash"i -- (1040-1105) Rabbi Sh'lomo ben Yitzchak; Troyes and Worms, France; "Father of all Torah

Commentaries."

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington.
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Yerushalayim.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Terumah are provided below:

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