

A SPECIAL COLLECTION FOR THE SOCKETS?

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

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Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #272: Chazakah B'Mitzvos: Is This
Maftir Yonah Mine?
Good Shabbos!*

**Dedicated This Year Le'eluy Nishmas Chaya Bracha Bas R. Yissocher Dov - In memory of Mrs.
Adele Frand**

Why Was A Special Collection Needed for the Sockets?

Our reading begins with, "[And G-d spoke to Moshe, saying,] Speak to the children of Israel and they shall take for me an offering..." [Shemos 25:1-2]. Rashi cites a teaching of the Rabbis to the effect that the pasuk [verse] is alluding to 3 different offerings. The first collection was called the "Collection for the Sockets," which raised funds for the receptacles into which the boards of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, were placed.

The second collection was a collection for the altar and its associated needs. Today we would call that an "operating budget". Money was required to run the Mishkan: they needed to buy animals and flour for sacrifices, and to purchase various accompanying libations -- all of which required money.

The third collection is the "Terumah" that we all associate with Parshas Terumah -- the collection to pay for the construction of the Mishkan. This is what we would call a "capital building campaign."

The latter two out of these three collections are readily understandable. But why was it necessary to have a special collection for the Adanim [Sockets]? Why weren't the Adanim included like any another item within the overall building campaign? The Adanim were not even a particularly glorious item within the Mishkan -- perhaps we could understand a special campaign for those who wanted

to earmark funds for the Ark or the Menorah. However, there were probably not a lot of people who would want to have a special plaque, as it were, for their contribution to the lowly Adanim.

The Beis Av writes that the Torah is delivering a very important message. It is a message that bears repeating even if we are familiar with it.

Building the Mishkan required the highest level of intent and motivation. If we want a place where the Divine Presence of G-d will dwell, it must be proper and holy and pure from the word 'Go.' We are dealing with nothing less than G-d Himself showing His Presence in that building. That is why the Adanim needed a special collection. The Adanim were the foundation of the entire structure, crucial to its vitality and viability. No matter how magnificent or glorious a structure a person can erect, if the foundation is rotten or weak -- the structure will collapse.

The Torah is hinting at the fact that the fund collection for the Adanim had to be done in a most fitting and appropriate manner, even though they were one of the least glorious and exotic of the Mishkan's components. The foundation of a structure must be built properly!

The rule that no building is stronger than its foundation is a particularly important lesson to remember when we are trying to raise children. We hope that our children will grow up properly and go on to erect their own buildings, so to speak. We must realize that if the way we raise them is not correct, we will have a detrimental effect not only on their lives, but also on the lives of future generations.

Our Sages tell us that Doeg HaAdomi was a great man and a wise scholar. But if we read Tanach, we see that he was an evil, plotting, and very sinister person. Despite his scholarship, he had very imperfect character traits (Midos). He was a jealous person. He was a hateful person. His foundations were not good. Consequently, as glorious as the building of his scholarship became -- such that he was the premier Talmid Chochom [scholar] of his generation -- it nevertheless all collapsed. The sockets were not right.

If the foundation is not good, the whole building is not good.

Torah Is The Foundation of Everything

The Torah gives us a general charge to build the Mishkan [Shemos 25:8-9]. Then the Torah specifies the details of the components. The first component that is mentioned is the Ark. The Medrash comments that the reason why the Ark is first is because the Ark represents the Torah - the Two Tablets of the Covenant. Torah must precede everything else.

The Medrash comments further that we see a similar phenomenon in Creation. The first thing created was Light. Light also symbolically represents Torah, and on that basis it preceded everything else.

Look at the history of Jews in Exile. The very first time that we as a people went into Exile (in Egypt),

the Patriarch Yaakov sent his son Yehudah ahead of the rest of the family. The Medrash comments that the purpose of Yehudah going ahead was to prepare a house of learning before the arrival of the rest of the family. The institutions of Torah had to precede the Jewish people going into Exile. Without such institutions, there would have been no survival.

Likewise, when the Jews were exiled to Babylonia, our Sages tell us that 11 years prior, there was an earlier relocation of the elite members of the community. They set up Torah institutions in the Babylonian communities where the Jews would ultimately reside.

Throughout our history, our survival in Exile has been conditioned on Torah preceding us in Exile. Torah must be there as a foundation.

There has been one notable exception to this rule: The 'Galus of America'. When the first significant waves of immigration came over from Europe in the 1890s and early 1900s, there was no prior arrival of Torah. The entire city of New York had only one Yeshiva. Bigger Yeshivos did not exist until the 1920s or even the 40s. The first generation of immigrants were not greeted by a pre-existing infrastructure of Torah institutions.

We lost that generation. The people who came over and had no place to send their children to receive a Torah education -- for the most part -- 'lost' their children. If Klal Yisroel [the Jewish People] do not prepare the proper foundation, we cannot survive in Exile. This is the lesson of history. It is the lesson of the Mishkan -- that the Ark comes first, and that the sockets must be set in place correctly.

It was only in the 20s and 30s and 40s when, with tremendous self-sacrifice, people built Torah institutions on these shores and a new beginning was made, fortifying and guaranteeing the survival of the future generations of the American exile.

Transcribed by [David Twersky](#); Seattle, Washington.
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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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