

INSPIRATION NEEDS TO BE TRANSLATED INTO PHYSICAL ACTION

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 #494: Bima in the Center of the Shul. Good Shabbos!

Inspiration Needs To Be Translated Into Physical Action

Parshas Terumah follows Parshas Mishpatim, in which we read the famous words "na'aseh v'nishma" ["We will do and we will listen"]. [Shemos 24:7]. Those words were recited by the Children of Israel at the time of the Giving of the Torah. Immediately following this section, the Torah says "Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion..." [Shemos 25:2].

The Baal Shem Tov comments on this juxtaposition: Whenever a person is spiritually aroused, it is very important that he or she concretize that inspiration by practical action to channel the arousal and give it tangible physical manifestation. The Baal Shem Tov interprets the pasuk "Let us lift our hearts with our hands to G-d in Heaven" [Eicha 3:41] in just this manner. When our hearts are inspired, we must take that inspiration and put it into our hands, so to speak, via concrete action.

In the same vein, a beautiful Chassidic interpretation is quoted in the name of Kedushas Levi (Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev) on the pasuk "mah ta'iru, u'mah te'oreru es ha'ahava ad she'techpatz" [Shir HaShirim 8:4]. Rav Levi Yitzchak interprets this pasuk (homiletically) to mean that when a person is inspired (experiences his-ororus) he needs to concretize that inspiration, as symbolized by relating the word techpatz [literally desire] with the word chefetz [meaning object]. A person should take his inspiration and put it into something tangible, rather than letting it dissipate.

There are many times when we hear things or we go places or we participate in events that inspire us. Unfortunately, however, human nature is such that most of the time, nothing becomes of such inspiration. Whenever someone IS inspired, he should remember the teaching of "ad she'techpatz" and channel that inspiration into something concrete and physical. Accept upon yourself to give charity, to learn, to visit the sick -- whatever it is -- just do something!

The Sockets Required A Special Collection

Rashi elaborates on the parsha's opening pasukim and explains that the Children of Israel were actually commanded to offer three distinct Terumah offerings. One offering was the Terumas HaMizbeach -- to pay for the ongoing functioning of the Altar. A second offering - according to the simple reading of the pasuk -- was the Terumas HaMishkan used for the construction of the Tabernacle and its vessels. However, according to Rashi, there was a third offering: the Terumas HaAdanim. This was a donation earmarked to cover the costs of the metal sockets in which the boards forming the walls of the Mishkan were placed.

There was no special collection for the Aron [Ark]. There was no special fund for the Menorah [Candelabra] or for the Shulchan [Table]. Funding for these items all came from the "General Fund", even though we would consider these items far more "glamorous" than the sockets. Why, we must understand, was there only a special fund for the "lowly sockets" of all the components of the Mishkan?

I saw an insight on this question from Rav Elyakim Schlessinger. Rav Schlessinger suggests that the Torah is hinting that the sockets have a significance that the other items or facets of the Mishkan do not have. The sockets represent the foundation of the building. Chazal are teaching that foundations must always be done just right. They required a special collection and a special contribution for the foundation (yesod). No building is stronger than its foundation. The foundation may not be glamorous and might not be something people admire when they enter the building, but the foundation is critical. Everything rests upon it.

That which is true for a building is true for many other things - be it a child's education, be it a marriage, be it an institution. The foundation must be special. No structure, human or otherwise, is ever stronger than the foundation upon which it rests.

We See Things From The Wrong Perspective

The final insight I wish to share, I saw quoted in the name of Rav Dovid Feinstein, shlit"a. The Torah specifies the placement of the various vessels that were used in the Mishkan [Tabernacle]: "You shall place the Shulchan outside the Partition, and the Menorah opposite the Shulchan on the south side of the Mishkan and the Shulchan you shall place on the north side." [Shemos 26:35]

The Kodesh Kadoshim [Holy of Holies] containing the Aron [Ark] with the Luchos [Tablets] was on the western side of the Mishkan. When a person left the Kodesh Kadoshim, the northern side (with the Shulchan) would be on his left and the southern side (with the Menorah) would be on his right. In Judaism in general and in the Bais HaMikdash [Temple] ritual in particular, something on the right side has priority. The right side has greater holiness and greater significance than the left side.

Therefore, the Menorah representing Torah/Wisdom was appropriately on the right and the Shulchan representing Sustenance/Livelihood was on the left. This is echoed by the words of Shlomo [Solomon]: "Length of days in its right, and on its left wealth and honor" [Mishlei 3:16]. Length of days (Orech Yamim) represents the world-to-come, true eternity. This is on the right side. On the

left side -- less important, less significant, less holy - is wealth and honor.

However, it seems problematic that a person ENTERING the Mishkan (facing the west) will have the reverse perception. He will see the Menorah on his left (the south side) and the Shulchan on his right (the north side). This is the reverse of what should be. "Length of days" (Torah/Menorah) is on his left and "wealth and honor" (Sustenance/Shulchan) is on his right.

Rav Dovid Feinstein explains that this configuration contains a message for us: We as human beings do not have the right perspective. We are not sitting in the Kodesh Kadoshim. We do not view the world from the perspective that it is really supposed to be viewed. It appears to us that "wealth and honor" are on the right side and that they have ultimate priority. It appears to us that Torah is on the left side, of lower priority. That is because we have got it wrong. We are viewing life incorrectly. We have a skewed perspective.

The proper way to view life is from the perspective of the Almighty. When looking from the perspective of the Kodesh Kadoshim, everyone knows that "Length of days" (Torah/Eternity) is on the right side and wealth and honor are on the left side."

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 Teruma are provided below:

- Tape # 044 - Changing Nusach: Ashkenaz vs. Sephard
- Tape # 087 - Microphone on Shabbos.
- Tape # 135 - Living Above a Shul
- Tape # 182 - Davening Towards Mizrach
- Tape # 228 - Selling a Shul
- Tape # 272 - Chazakah B'Mitzvos: Is This Maftir Yonah Mine?
- Tape # 318 - Taking Out Two Sifrei Torah
- Tape # 362 - The Mechitza -- How High?
- Tape # 406 - Shul Elections
- Tape # 450 - Bais Hakeneses & Bais Hamikdash -- Differences & Similarities
- Tape # 494 - Bima in the Center of the Shul
- Tape # 538 - Preventing the Building of a Shul
- Tape # 582 - Silk in Halacha
- Tape # 626 - The Po'roches
- Tape # 714 - The Beis HaMedrash Is Not a Chat Room
- Tape # 758 - An Atara For a Talis?

Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit

<http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

Text Copyright © 2006 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and **Torah.org**.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington.

Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Yerushalayim.