

Parshat Teruma Menora Mystery

Summary by Channie Koplowitz Stein

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

Parshat Terumah discusses the building of the *Mishkan* and its vessels. What was so unique about the *Menorah* that it defied Moshe's ability to create it? The *Mishkan* represents the world in microcosm, and each vessel represents a different day of creation. For example, God's presence hovered over the Ark in the Holy of Holies, just as His spirit hovered over the face of the void at creation. The parochet/curtain separated that spiritual sphere from the more physical elements of the *Mishkan*. So too there is a separation between the upper spiritual realm and the physical world in which our bodies live. The lights of the firmament are represented by the *Menorah* which brings the light of *Torah* and *mitzvot* into man's life.

Rav B. Zaks z"tl notes that the vessels are meant to teach us to elevate our physical surroundings. The lights represent *Torah* study, while our own shulchan/table can be elevated by placing a *Torah* or seforim upon it to study, or by sanctifying the bread we put upon it with blessings and inviting guests. The *Menorah* exhorts us to recognize our uniqueness and bring light to the world of darkness. The *Menorah* stands higher than the other vessels, for *Bnei Yisroel* rises above the other nations to bring that light and clarity to the world.

Moshe was concerned how *Torah* study could reveal new insights since *Torah* already

contains everything. Hashem told Moshe to throw the gold into the fire. Just as the *Menorah* is already contained within the gold, so too all new insight is already hidden with the *Torah*. Rabbi Belsky points out that just as the *Menorah* came in three stages, so too does the acquisition of *Torah*. The revelation at *Sinai* parallels Hashem showing Moshe the image of the *Menorah*. Then the Angel Gavriel showed *Moshe* how to construct the *Menorah*, representing the learning and transmission of *Torah* from one generation to the next. Finally, just as the *Menorah* came down from heaven as a gift in complete form, so too is the attainment of *Torah* knowledge a gift from Heaven.

The *Menorah* represents the fire and passion one feels towards learning *Torah*. And since this cannot be measured and can continue to grow, the *Torah* provides no measurements to limit the size of the *Menorah*, writes Rabbi Pincus z"tl. Further, unlike the other vessels whose effect took place in a limited space, the light from the *Menorah* filled the entire sanctuary. So, must we too attempt to fill our homes completely with the light of *Torah*. While *Torah* is ultimately given as a gift, we must still put in our own effort and strive upward, as the flame strives to reach ever higher. We must do our part, in learning or in constructing holy vessels, but it is Hashem Who gives us ultimate success.

If we sincerely ask for the tools to do *mitzvot* Hashem will give it us. Our ratzon/desire creates the *tzinor*/conduit for Hashem's blessings to flow down to us. Before you blame God for your inability to perform a *mitzvah*, writes Rabbi Wolbe z"tl, ask yourself if you were truly completely committed. There is reciprocity, adds Rabbi Reiss. When we throw ourselves completely into the fire of passion, Hashem will respond and let it happen.

We find that Moshe had a similar problem with the half *shekel* that *Bnei Yisroel* were commanded to donate for the census. Here too the *Medrash* tells us that Hashem showed Moshe a fiery coin as an example. The *Mikdash* Halevi explains that like the *Menorah*, the half *shekel* was also meant to be a spiritual symbol in physical form. How could something so physical contain spirituality and how could it atone for sin? Fire is destructive but it is also a source of light and warmth. So too money can lead a person into the abyss of physicality or help him to do *mitzvot*. Everything in creation has this duality and it is our choice how to use it. When we use the physical for the performance of *mitzvot*, we elevate it and ourselves. We have the ability to infuse the physical world with holy energy or to drain it of holiness. That is the message of both the *Menorah* and the half *shekel*. We must strive to bring light to the world through our *Torah* and *mitzvot*.

Chulda: A Message of Hope Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

There were two other prophets, Yirmiyahu and Zefania, who lived in the time period of Yoshiyahu. Yirmiyahu spoke to the masses, Zefania to the scholars, and Chulda to the women. Why did Yoshiyahu choose to send messengers to Chulda?

Chulda is described as the wife of Shulam ben Tikva, the son of Charchas, who was in charge of the clothing. The messengers spoke to her and she gave over her prophecy, "Hashem's anger will flare in this place and will not be extinguished. The *beit hamikdash* will be destroyed. Yet since Yoshiyahu subjugated himself to Hashem he will die in peace and not see this difficult time." On a superficial level this prophecy seems only for Yoshiyahu. Why is it recorded for all generations? Yoshiyahu fell at the hands of the Kasdim. How is this considered dying in

peace?

The sages tell us that both Chulda and Shulam were descendants of Rachav and Yehoshua. Rachav is associated with the word *Tikva*. She had to tie a thread to her window so the Jews wouldn't kill her and the thread was called *tikvat hashani*, the thread of hope. Yehoshua is referred to as Charchas because he was buried in Cheres. Chazal tell us that Shulam was one of the leaders of the generation. He was a very great person who performed daily acts of kindness. He would stand at the gates of Jerusalem and offer water to people and in his merit Chulda received prophecy. Chulda was a worthy partner to Shulam if not in action then in appreciating it. His merit became her merit.

Yoshiyahu sent messengers to Chulda

because women are naturally compassionate. He hoped that the message of Hashem would be transmitted in a softer way. In addition, he wanted her to pray when she would hear the words of Hashem and woman pray more passionately.

When Shlomo built the *beit hamikdash* he built a tunnel under the holy of holies for a time that it might be necessary to hide the aron. As a result of the prophecy of Chulda, Yoshiyahu commanded the leviim to hide the aron. He said, if it goes into exile with the people it means the destruction will be forever and you'll never come back. This is the message Chulda gave Yoshiyahu. Do something that you'll die in peace, that will make you not see the destruction. The *aron* although hidden is still with us and will be revealed with the ultimate redemption.

Ruach Hakodesh and the Human Soul

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

Humans are a composite of two forces, earth and soul, passivity and continual dynamism. The *nefesh* is the great spiritual conductor, the aspect of self that will issue commands to the brain. All of this life force creates instinctive emotion and intellect. Each animal has its own sort of *nefesh*. A beaver knows how to make dams, an owl doesn't. Even instinctive human intellect is still *nefesh*. Our ability to imagine and envision which is where creativity comes from, our ability to remember and figure things out, our primitive will, all come from the powers of the soul. Each of these powers has its own limitations. Your imagination, memory, intellect, and even will is limited. But there is something in you that's very exalted and wants connection and meaning. It also wants you to do deeds that have meaning. This is the *neshama* and it is very delicate. We aren't always sensitive to its presence yet it affects the *nefesh* and the body. One's ability to experience the *nefesh*

and *neshama* varies from era to era. A baby is born completely physical with no desire to look for meaning. A six year old can begin to sense his *neshama*. Your ability to experience your *neshama* depends on how much connection you make with it and how much you use it. Man has two souls, the higher and the lower soul. The *neshama* comes down to the body through the *nefesh*. Although the *neshama* is very high, it's stuck within the body and cannot have contact with other spiritual forces because it's limited by its existence within the person. You can experience the *neshama* by letting it move you to use your body to make a connection with Hashem. Conversely in your search for meaning you can also turn aside from the *neshama* and find yourself seeking attachment through the power of defilement. It all depends on where you're looking for perfection. The *neshama* leads the lower soul - the *nefesh* and uses the imagination and the mind to generate thoughts. But here too it will

depend on what you choose. Are you taking it to Hashem or are you taking it elsewhere?

When we talk about *neshama* we speak about it being one thing. Picture a necklace made up of many beads strung on one string. The *nefesh* is like a chain, a string of various beads. It has many aspects but there's one thing that holds it together. The *neshama* has many aspects and each one of them has to be understood. Each one is like a link and they are all aware of each other. If I raise part of my necklace, the first links are higher than the lower links although they still remain one thing. So too the highest links of the *neshama* are very exalted. The lowest links have to do with the *nefesh* yet it is still one entity. As you change, the *neshama* could be expressed in different. Yet one can sense it when one chooses right over wrong. One can feel the relationship one has to one's higher self to the degree one is worthy of it.