

## A Thought on Parashas Terumoh 'Signs of Redemption'

By Jeremy Richards

In Memory of my Dear Parents, a"h

L'ilui Nishmos Yitzchok Ben Nachman Halevi a"h and Yenta Bas Yisroel a"h

לעלוי נשמת יצחק בן נחמן הלוי ע"ה ולעלוי נשמת יענטע בת ישראל ע"ה



וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת הַקְּרָשִׁים לְמִשְׁכַּן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים עֹמְדִים (שמות כ"ו: ט"ו)

"And you shall make the planks for the Mishkon of acacia wood, upright." (Shemos 26:15)

רש"י:

וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת הַקְּרָשִׁים: היה לו לומר ועשית קרשים, כמה שנאמר בכל דבר ודבר, ומהו הקרשים, מאותן העומדין ומיוחדין לכך. יעקב אבינו צפה ברוח הקדש ונטע ארזים במצרים, וכשמת צוה לבניו להעלותם עמהם כשיצאו ממצרים, אמר להם, שעתיד הקב"ה לצוות אתכם לעשות משכן במדבר מעצי שטים, ראו שיהיו מזומנים בידכם: [מדרש תנחומא ט']

Rashi [from Midrash Tanchuma, 9]:

**And you shall make the planks:** It should have said, "And you shall make planks" (without the definite article, 'the'), as it is said concerning each thing (i.e., each part of the Mishkon). What is the meaning of "the planks"? (The answer is, make the planks..) from those (particular planks) that were standing (ready) and designated for this (purpose). Our patriarch, Yaakov, planted cedars in Egypt, and when he was dying he commanded his sons to bring them up with them when they left Egypt. He told them that the Holy One, blessed is He, was destined to command them to make a Mishkon of acacia wood in the desert. "See that they should be ready in your hands."

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, in his 'Emes leYaakov,' writes that Yaakov could simply have instructed Bnei Yisroel to take cedars with them when they left Egypt. (**Question 1:**) Why did he decide to plant trees specially for this purpose? Furthermore, Rabbi Kamenetzky asks (**Question 2:**) why, according to the Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 94:4), Yaakov had taken these trees from Be'er Sheva, from those that had been planted by his grandfather, Avrohom Avinu. Why did he not simply take them from where he was living? A third question Reb Yaakov addresses is, (**Question 3:**) what is the purpose of the word "עֹמְדִים" in the posuk above? What were these 'standing' planks of acacia wood that Moshe was being instructed to use?

Reb Yaakov explains that there was a certain psychology at play here. He notes the assurance that Hashem gave to Yaakov when he was on his way to join Yosef in Egypt:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי הִקְלֵ אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ אֶל-תִּירָא מִרְדָּה מִצְרַיִמָּה  
כִּי-יִלְגֹּוּ גְדוֹל אֲשִׁימָךָ שָׁם: אֲנֹכִי אֶרְדָּ עִמָּךְ מִצְרַיִמָּה וְאֲנֹכִי אֶעֱלֶה גַם-עִלָּיךָ...

(בראשית מ"ו: ג-ד)

... "I am Hashem, the G-d of your father. Do not be afraid of going down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up..." (Bereishis 46:3-4)

**(Answer 1:)** The Emes leYaakov writes that Yaakov was afraid his descendants would become comfortable and feel settled in Mitzrayim. He knew, further, that in order for this to be avoided, the oral promise (Shemos 13:19), "פֶּקֶד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם" - "Hashem will surely remember you," would not be sufficient. Rather, Yaakov felt the need to provide his descendants with something tangible and visible that would be a constant reminder of Hashem's promise to redeem them. Therefore, Yaakov brought cedars for them, which would always serve to reassure the Jewish people in Mitzrayim through the knowledge that these very trees would one day help to form the Mishkon, following the redemption.

Reb Yaakov adds, this same idea applies to the reciting of the pesukim relating to the korbonos, the offerings, at the beginning of Shacharis. He expands on this link in his commentary on Parashas Vayigash (on Bereishis 46:1). Avrohom asked Hashem what the Jewish people should do to ensure they would not be destroyed as a consequence of their sinning. Hashem answered that the offering of sacrifices would atone for them. Avrohom then asked, but what about at a time when the Beis Hamikdash would not be standing? Hashem answered that, for such a time, He had already enacted the daily recitation of the Torah passages relating to the korbonos. Reciting these would guarantee

Hashem's forgiveness for all transgressions. The "סדר אמירת הקרבנות"- the daily order of reciting the korbonos is intended, then, to effect an atonement for transgression, in place of the actual offering of the sacrifices.

Rabbi Kamenetzky takes this a step further, based on his explanation of Yaakov's motivation for planting cedar trees as a reminder and assurance of the future redemption from Mitzrayim. He writes that there was deeper meaning running through the above exchange between Hashem and Avrohom Avinu. Avrohom was saying, writes Reb Yaakov, that as long as the Beis Hamikdash was standing and the Jewish people were living in Eretz Yisroel, with the Holy Shechinoh dwelling in their midst, there was a strong connection between the people, their land and their nationhood. Once they would no longer be in their Land, exiled and dispersed among the nations, how would they be able to maintain their connection with their origins, and their hopes for a future redemption?

Hashem answered Avrohom, "כבר תיקנתי להם סדר קרבנות" - "I have already established for them the Order of the Offerings." With these words, Hashem meant that when the Jewish people recite the korbonos each morning they will achieve a deep faith in the arrival of Moshiach, a strong connection with Yerusholayim and a propensity to confidently look forward to the future redemption. This is what will protect the Jewish People from destruction.

We have explained that Yaakov Avinu believed it was necessary for Bnei Yisroel to have the cedar trees during their centuries in Egypt as tangible signs of the future redemption; but why had Yaakov taken them from those that Avrohom had planted in Be'er Sheva? (**Answer 2:**) Rabbi Kamenetsky writes that the Bnei Yisroel would certainly have been able to find cedars other than those that Avrohom had planted, so there must have been a particular quality in these trees that made them particularly suitable for their eventual use.

Reb Yaakov cites a Gemoro in Bovo Metzia (85b) in order to make his case:

Once, when R. Chanina and R. Chiya were in a dispute, R. Chanina said to R. Chiya: 'Would you dispute with me? If, Heaven forbid! the Torah were forgotten in Israel, I would restore it by my argumentative powers.' R. Chiya said back to R. Chanina: 'Would you dispute with me, for I make sure that the Torah should not be forgotten in Israel (in the first place)!? What do I do? I go and sow flax, weave nets (from the flax cords), trap deers, whose flesh I give to orphans, I then prepare scrolls of parchment (from their skins), upon which I write the five books (of the Torah). Then I go to a town (which contains no teachers) and teach the five books to five children, and the six orders (of the Mishnah) to six children; and then I tell them: "Until I return, teach each other the Chumash and the Mishnah;" and thus I preserve the Torah from being forgotten in Israel.' This is what Rabbi referred to when he said, "How great are the deeds of Chiya!"

Rabbi Kamenetzky notes the explanation of the Vilna Gaon on this piece of Gemoro. The Vilna Gaon explains that Rabbi Chiya's greatness lay in his desire that the whole process, from beginning to end, should be in holiness and purity, and that no trace of impure intention should creep in at any stage. Rabbi Chiya therefore performed every part of the process himself, and only in this way could he be sure that the Torah he was to teach to those children would endure forever.

It appears that it was for this reason, writes Reb Yaakov, that the cedar trees had to be taken from those that Avrohom had planted, rather than any old trees from the marketplace. The very planting and tending of these trees had been לשם שמים, 'for the sake of heaven' (for holy purposes). Therefore, only these trees from Be'er Sheva could be used for the Mishkon. So, what was so special about that place and those trees?

וַיִּטַע אֵשֶׁל בְּבְאֵר שֶׁבַע וַיִּקְרָא שְׁם בְּשֵׁם ה' קַל עוֹלָם

"And he (Avrohom) planted an eishel in Beer-Sheba, and he called there in the name of the L-rd, the G-d of the world" (Bereishis 21:33)

**Rashi explains:** an eishel - [There is a dispute between] Rav and Samuel:

one says that it was an orchard from which to bring fruits for the guests at the meal, and one says that it was an inn for lodging, in which there were all sorts of fruits.

**and he called there, etc:** By means of that "eishel," the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, was called "God of the whole world." After they would eat and drink, he would say to them, "Bless the One of Whose [food] you have eaten. Do you think that you have eaten of my [food]? [You have eaten of the food] of the One Who spoke and the world came into being!" - [from Sotah 10a, Gen. Rabbah 54:6]

Whether this 'eishel' was an orchard or an inn, its purpose was to provide hospitality to guests and teach them to thank Hashem for the food they had enjoyed. Therefore, writes Rabbi Kamenetzky, the trees

in that place, the eishel in Be'er Sheva, had been planted for the purposes of "מצוה וחסד" - "mitzvoh and chessed" - and these were the trees that Yaakov Avinu had decided were the best choice of trees to take with him to Mitzrayim, to one day be used in the building of the Beis Hamikdosh.

Finally, **(Answer 3:)** this is the meaning of the words, "עצי שטים עמדים" - "standing planks of acacia wood." "Standing" refers not to the physical nature or position of the planks, but rather to their intrinsic eternal quality: "יעמדו לעד ולעולמי עולמים" - "They will endure forever and ever," as a result of their entire planting and nurturing having been for chessed. Upon planks from such trees will the Shechinoh rest.



Of the many lessons for us in these thoughts, I think we need to begin by asking ourselves:

*What flax are we planting?*

*What nets are we weaving?*

*Are we preparing scrolls of parchment for ourselves, our children and grandchildren?*

Be'Ezras H.' – we can also aspire to Rabbi Chiya's greatness through performing all of our endeavours לשם שמים and so lay the groundwork for our own achievements, and those of our children, to endure in Kedushoh and Taharoh, in holiness and purity.



Wishing everyone a Good Shabbos,

Jeremy