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(718) 544-5213
JEPQueens@gmail.com

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

HOLD THE POLES AND SOAR TO THE HIGHEST HEIGHTS!

PARSHAS TERUMAH

Last year I visited Eretz Yisroel. I spoke with a rav who shared a fascinating, personal story. When he first got married, he was planning to learn in Kollel for a number of years. This was at a time when learning in Kollel was not a common practice. His father, knowing that he would need a means of support, offered to support him for five years even though it was not a common practice in those days. True to his word, the father supported the son for five years. The father died very shortly thereafter. The father had survived a heart attack right before he began supporting his son in Kollel and had a fatal heart attack right after ending his support. The son was told that it was likely that his father had been granted an extra 5 years of life in the merit of having supported his son's Torah learning, during that time.

The **Alshich** (Shmos 25:8) says that Hashem wanted the Jewish people to build a *Mishkan* in order that Hashem's Holy Presence could dwell amongst them. The *Mishkan* was only a symbol for **the true resting place of the Holy Presence, namely in the heart of every Jew**. The **Ba'al HaTurim** (Shmos 25:2) says that we can make our heart a *Mishkan* for Hashem's Holy Presence by devoting our heart to Torah and Hashem's service. (The Midrash Says, on Shmos)

Learning Torah and doing mitzvos is our *raison d'etre*, our reason for living.

The **Shulchan Aroch** (Yorah Deah, Siman 246) states that every Jew is obligated to learn; be he rich or poor, healthy or suffering, young or old, rich or poverty stricken. All are obligated to set aside time for learning, both day and night. The **Talmud** (Megillah 10B) says that the Aron, the Holy Ark, miraculously took up no space in the Holy of Holies in the *Bais Hamikdash*. I believe that **Rav Herschel Welcher** said that one thing this teaches us is that when we set aside time to learn Torah, it does not

"The poles shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it." (Shmos 25:15)

take time out of our day. In the merit of our learning Torah, Hashem helps us to accomplish the other things we need to, more quickly than we would have otherwise been able to. Thus, our Torah learning doesn't take away

our time as Hashem facilitates our accomplishing more, in the same time.

Nowadays, even one who does not understand Hebrew can still learn Torah. There are many Torah classes given in English both live and on the internet (such as on Torahanytime.com). There are also many Torah books translated from Hebrew.

At times, there are extenuating circumstances which make it difficult for one to learn as much Torah as he would want to. The **Chofetz Chaim** zt"l (Shem Olam, perek 14) says, if that would be the case, then one should support others who are learning. That will help him acquire his share in Torah and it will be considered as if himself had learned Torah.

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It says in our parsha (Shmos 25:15) that the poles that were “used to carry the Aron were to remain and never be removed”. When the Jews were camped and not travelling, the poles were not needed to carry the Aron. Yet, it was forbidden to remove them. The **Chofetz Chaim** zt”l (Shem Olam, 1:17) says this teaches us that the poles which were used to transport the Aron acquired the holiness of the Aron. It merited to be together with the Aron forever, even when it was no longer needed. Similarly, says the **Chofetz Chaim** zt”l, when you support someone who is learning Torah, you will merit to be alongside him in a very special place, in Olam Haba, the World to Come (quoted in Be’eru Chofetz Chaim on the Torah by Rabbi Yisroel Yosef Braunstein). Not only that, but when you support

someone who is learning Torah, you will also understand the depth of learning just like the Torah learner, in the yeshiva *shel malah*, the Heavenly yeshiva.

When the Leviim carried the Aron by its poles, it appeared that they were carrying the Aron. The **Talmud** (Sotah 35A) says that actually, the Aron carried its bearers. **Rabbi Nosson Adler** zt”l says, this is similar to two people who make a Yissachar-Zevulun pact. In that pact, the “Zevulun” works and shares his salary with the “Yissachar” who devotes his time to learning Torah. Outwardly, it seems as if the “Zevulun” is supporting the “Yissachar”. That is not so. In actuality, the Torah of the “Yissachar” supports the “Zevulun”, just as the Aron carried its bearers. (Talelei Oros by Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rubin)

We are in this world for the sole purpose of learning Torah, doing mitzvos, and perfecting our character.

It is a tremendous merit to support those who are occupied with learning Torah.

We also personally gain great benefits, by doing so.

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Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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