



Parshas Terumah 2022, impostor syndrome

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna and Shaul Ben Berta.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with G-d telling Moshe to solicit donations from the Jewish people to construct the Mishkan, a sanctuary for G-d. They were asked to donate precious stones, gold, silver, and copper. Specialty red, blue, and purple wool, linen, animal skins, and acacia wood.

On the summit of Mt. Sinai, G-d gave Moshe the exact instructions on how the Mishkan was built. It was made to be readily disassembled and transportable to accompany the Jewish nation during their journeys throughout the desert.

The second half of the Parsha and the following few Torah portions go through the design and construction of the Mishkan. This takes up the last third of the book of Shemos.

However, a question comes to mind: The first holy vessel G-d instructed Moshe to construct was the most sacred of all, the Aron Hakodesh, the Ark of the Covenant. Aside from the wooden box between the two gold boxes, the Aron was made almost entirely of gold.

As the Pasuk details (25:10-11), "*They shall make an Ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. —Overlay it with pure gold—overlay it inside and out—and make for it a gold molding around the top.*" But why did G-d instruct Moshe to insert a wooden box between the Aron's gold? Many other Mishkan vessels were made entirely out of gold, like the Menorah, which was carved out of a single block of gold. What was the purpose of the acacia wood in the Aron HaKodesh?!

The Chizkuni (*the famous French Rabbi, Chezekiah ben Manoah*) gives a simple answer. He writes that if the Aron were built entirely out of gold, it would be too heavy to carry. While many of the Mishkan's vessels were transported on wagons, the Aron and a few others were taken on the shoulders of the Kehos family. Therefore, G-d instructed that it be built lighter to make it easier on their shoulders.

Another vessel that was carried was the golden Altar used for the Ketores - incense offering; it was hollowed out and filled with earth to make it easier to carry.

That being said, according to most opinions, the Aron held itself rather than actually being carried. This would explain how only four people could carry on their shoulders 78,000 lbs, which according to many estimates, was how much the Aron weighed.

However, the Rabbeinu Bachya (*Rav Bachya Ben Asher, a Spanish commentary*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He quotes the Talmud in Yoma (72b) that the gold on the outside and inside the Aron HaKodesh represents what Torah scholars are meant to be like.

They are supposed to be wise and intelligent **AND** pure and holy on the inside, as they display on the outside. The Talmud writes harsh words about those who show one way and feel the opposite in their hearts.

The Rabbeinu Bachya explains that the Acacia wood between the gold symbolizes that every person can acquire a profound level of Torah knowledge. Just as the wood comes from the ground and is obtainable, we can become great Torah scholars if we work hard enough.

We can grow and become a pillar of the Torah whose inner purity inspires others to do the same. To be an Aron Kodesh, a person whose internal holiness awakens the yearning soul of our fellow Jew.

We may encounter the dreaded imposter syndrome in our daily lives and on the road to success. It is a feeling that we are not worthy of the accomplishments and achievements that we worked so hard to obtain.

Besides the depression and rollercoaster of emotions, the worst side effect is the actual loss of our hard work. Many stop growing and take their eye off the ball losing their hard-fought successes.

Aaron, the Kohen Gadol and Dovid Hamelch suffered from these feelings before realizing they were worthy of such holiness and responsibility. They were uniquely positioned to impact the world in an unparalleled manner, Aaron with the priesthood and Dovid with the kingship.

The first step in overcoming imposter syndrome is recognizing we are placed on this earth for a unique and singular purpose that no other can accomplish. Our effect and influence over friends, family and society directly correlate with our soul, the one of one part G-d within our hearts.

**“Life lives in the tension between
our physical smallness and our spiritual greatness.**

Life is short, but when we lift our eyes to heaven, we stand tall.”

-Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks of blessed memory

*Have a meaningful Shabbos and a joyous Adar,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*