

“They shall make an Ark of shittim/acacia wood.” (25:10)

The commentators note the Torah's emphasis on the “they,” plural form of “v'asu” – “They shall make.” This implies that the building of the *Aron HaKodesh*, the symbol of Torah among the Jewish People, is a collective, general command. Everybody is to be included. *Horav Tzvi Hirsh Ferber, z.l.*, explains this idea further. We find paradoxical statements made by *Chazal* in regard to the relationship of full time Torah study vis-à-vis earning a livelihood. On the one hand, we are instructed to study Torah “always”: *V'hagisa bo yomam va'laila*, “Rather you should contemplate it day and night” (*Yehoshua* 1:8) is the standard by which Torah study is measured. Furthermore, *Chazal* in *Pirkei Avos* (2:6) state, *Lo kol hamarbeh bisechorah machkim*, “Anyone excessively occupied in business cannot become a scholar.” Yet, elsewhere (3:21) they teach, *Im ein kemach ein Torah*, “If there is no flour (sustenance) there is no Torah.” Apparently, the relationship between Torah and *parnassah* is understood. How is this apparent contradiction resolved?

Rav Ferber feels the latter is alluding to the Yissachar-Zevulun relationship whereby one studies full-time, while his partner – who is earning a livelihood – supports and sustains him. The merit of Torah study applies to both. This is the meaning of the *brachah*, blessing, *Borei nefashos rabbos v'chesronan...l'ha'chayos bahem nefesh kol chai*, “Who creates numerous living things with their deficiencies...with which to maintain the life of every being.” Hashem created the various “groups” with their individual deficiencies: the *lomdei Torah* are in need of sustenance; and those who toil in the field of commerce, etc. need to avail themselves of the opportunity for Torah study. Why did Hashem do this? *L'ha'chayos bahem nefesh kol chai*, so that all life will be maintained. He who studies Torah relies on the *baal parnassah* to help him continue his studies. Similarly, he who is out there living by the “sweat of his brow” needs the support of the *lomeid Torah*.

Chazal teach us that when a person leaves his earthly abode, he is not accompanied with gold and silver, only his Torah study and good deeds. Why would anybody think that his money and silver accompany him to the *Olam HaEmes*, World of Truth? *Rav Ferber* explains that *Chazal* are teaching us that the only gold and silver coins that one takes with him are that which were spent for the support and maintenance of Torah and *mitzvos*.

Thus, the Torah says ‘v'asu’ – “They shall make an Ark.” “They” is a reference to the Torah which was ensconced in the *Aron*. It takes a partnership to acquire it. We may add that while Yissachar may need the support of Zevulun, Zevulun has a greater need for Yissachar's support.

The Torah instructs us to see to it that the *Aron* is covered “with pure gold, from within and from without, shall you cover it.” This, says *Rav Ferber*, hints that the Torah scholar must be supported in an appropriate manner – within and without. There has to be sufficient funds for him and his *bayis*, house/family, to live as human beings. What greater degradation is there than a *talmid chacham* who is relegated to beg for his upkeep?