

Speak to Bnei Yisrael and let them take for Me a portion (25:2)

The well-known *Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 33:1)* begins with a quote from *Mishlei (4:2): Ki lekach tov Nasati lachem, Torasi al ta'azovu*; "The Torah is a *lekach tov*, good purchase—one that you should not forsake." *Chazal* continue, underscoring the unique character and function of this *mekach*: "A person may purchase an item which is comprised of either silver or gold. The *mekach* which Hashem gave us has both gold and silver." *Chazal* quote *Sefer Tehillim*, which describes the Torah as containing both silver and gold. The *Midrash* is enigmatic. Are there no items of value that contain both gold and silver? Many jewelry pieces are made up of both of these materials.

HoRav Isser Zalmen Meltzer, zl, cites *Chazal (Bava Metzia, perek Hazahav)*, who distinguish between gold and silver from a *halachic* perspective. Gold is a substance that is not a form of currency, like fruit and vessels, which we do not use as payment in a store. (For instance, if one wants to pay for an item, he does not barter with a basket of fruits or a set of dishes. Likewise, we do not use gold as a currency.) We use gold to create jewelry. It has intrinsic value in and of itself. In contrast, we do use silver as currency, to make coins that we use as currency to purchase items in a store.

Most items have a characteristic in common with either gold or silver. Either we use them as currency or we keep them at home to serve as jewelry, a showpiece. Gold remains at home; silver is out in the marketplace to serve as a medium for purchasing items. Rarely does an item have both *techunos*, characteristics, remaining in the house and serving outside in day to day affairs.

The Torah is unique in the fact that it maintains the attributes of both gold and silver. Torah is used as a medium for one to acquire spiritual qualities and character traits. Yet, it remains inherently his *Torah* in his possession. He can accomplish great achievements through the currency of Torah learning. Nonetheless, it remains his, never leaving his dominion.