

TORAH THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

PARSHAS TERUMAH

Copied from AISH HATORAH

“In Proportion to Exertion”

“Shoham stones and stones for the settings, for the Ephod and the Breastplate.” (Ex. 25:7)

The people were asked to contribute materials for the construction of the Mishkan. The Parsha lists the 13 materials that were donated. Why was the Shoham stones listed second to last if it was one of the most expensive materials donated?

Ben was hired to do construction. Excited, he woke up extra early so that he would be well prepared for his job. He gathered all his building tools and then drove an hour and a half until he reached the house, unloaded all the materials and tools and carried them inside. Suddenly his face turned white. He had forgotten his drill! He was handicapped without his drill... What a waste of a day; all this time invested and he would not get paid a cent!

In spiritual matters payment works differently. The Mishnah states, "L'fum Tzara Agra"- the reward is in proportion to the exertion (Avos 5:23). The reward for observing G-d's commandments increases in proportion to the effort and difficulty needed for their performance. As long as you put in effort you will be rewarded.

The Talmud(1) states that the Shoham stones were brought by the clouds, without any physical or monetary effort on the part of the Jews. Therefore the Shoham stone is listed towards the end, since the materials that were brought with effort and hard work were considered more important, even though they were worth less.(2)

G-d's reward for Torah study and other spiritual matters is not in proportion to the degree of one's success, but to the amount and quality of effort that one puts into it. If one toils hard at what he does he will be amply rewarded for the work, even if he does not accomplish a great deal.

NOTE:

1. Yoma 75a.

2. Ohr Hachaim