



Dvar Torah for Parshat Terumah Based on Rebbe Nachman's story "*The Sophisticate and the Innocent*"

"Well," his wife asked, "if your shoes are so beautiful, why does everybody else make a healthy profit from their shoes and you make a pittance?" "I'm not losing money, am I?" answered the Innocent. "And besides, why should we talk about others? This is their story and this is my story."

All sorts of materials were used in constructing the Mishkan (Tabernacle): wool, linen, animal hides, gold, silver and copper. Various instruments and parts were fashioned from these materials: the Menorah, the Table, the Torah Ark, beams, curtains, overhangs and more.

It's nice to be gold necklace and have everybody ooh-and-ah over you. It's nice to be silver candlesticks and sit as a centerpiece and be admired. It's rough being a copper pot, sitting on a hot fire half the time, and being dropped and banged around the other half.

It's quite an honor being a beautiful woolen curtain, announcing the entrance to God's inner chamber. It's a blast being the Altar, being in the center of all the action: people running up and around, bringing their sacrifices and gifts, laying some at your feet and others on your back (as it were). It's such a pain to be a socket serving as a base for one of the 15-foot cedar beams overlaid with gold. "Oy, I have such a crick in my neck. Do you have any idea how much those things weigh?!"

The beam has its own lament. Tall, handsome, strong and what's it doing? Sitting in the northwest corner covered by some linen curtain. "How's anybody going to know I'm here?"

You may not be gold or silver, neither particularly beautiful or talented. You may be carrying the weight of responsibility anonymously. You may be bursting with genius and energy—and no seems to appreciate it. All those flimsy "linen curtains" and the like get all the kudos and you get ignored. Frustration and jealousy can start to ruin you.

"This is their story and this is my story."

Think for a moment. If a beam is missing or a hook not properly fastened, the whole Mishkan fails to serve its function as a channel for Divinity. Your role, in all its details, is vital. No matter how seemingly small it may look to others—or to you—your job is mission critical. You are integral to this whole business of Creation. Appreciate your work and do it well.

A good, and joyous, month of First-Adar to you and yours.