

## דרכים בפרשה תרומה

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### אבני שהם ואבני מלאים לאפוד ולחשן

*Shoham stones and filling stones, for the Eiphod and for the Choshen (25:7)*

The Torah lists the many different materials that were donated and used for the construction of the *mishkan*. The last two items that are mentioned are the priceless Shoham stones and Miluim (filling) stones for the *eiphod* and *choshen*.

The Ohr HaChayim wonders why these were mentioned last if they carried such a high value? The gemara in Masechta Yoma (75) explains that these stones could not be purchased anywhere because they had fallen from heaven. There was no effort involved in procuring these stones. However, the gold, silver and copper listed in these pessukim came to them through great toil and self-sacrifice. These were washed up onto the shores of the sea and subsequently gathered together by the people as payment for their many years of slave labor at the hands of the Egyptians. These were a people that had absolutely none of their own possessions for centuries. For them, the gold and silver represented their very first earnings and they willingly gave it away for the *mishkan*.

Mesiras nefesh (self-sacrifice) carries a far greater weight in *shomayim* than something that just comes with no effort at all. While it's true that these precious gems and stones have a tremendous value down here in this world, in the world of truth the only mark on the report card that counts is the one found in the effort column.

Shlomo Hamelech writes, "אשת חיל מי ימצא ורחוק מכרה מפנינים - A good wife, who can find? Where can one find a woman of valor? Her sale price is very distant from that of pearls. Can such a woman even be found?" But then, towards the

end of the same paragraph, he writes "רבות בנות רבות בנות - many women have excelled to become such a woman, but you far surpass them all." Which one is it? Is Shlomo Hamelech telling us that such a woman cannot be found at all, or that there are many and this particular one is unique because she is the cream of the crop?

I heard from Rabbi Zev Leff shlita the following answer. The comparison drawn over here is to pearls. In order to find pearls, one must dive into the ocean collecting oysters. There are times when the diver's efforts will net him no results for days and even weeks, and other times one diving trip can be a complete success. It is essentially pot luck whether the precious pearl will be found or not.

Shlomo Hamelech tells us, "Do you think that an eishes chayil is just found?" They don't just fall from the heavens and are certainly not the pot luck of finding a precious pearl. A good wife doesn't just happen! She is the product of a home, a school and a community, and even that is not enough. She must still put in her own efforts and make the right decisions. This cannot be found.

However, many daughters have in fact succeeded in working hard and becoming such women. *Rabos banos asu chayil*- they worked hard and excelled, strove and eventually succeeded in becoming such great women. This is not found at all but rather developed.

The *avnei shoham* and *avnei miluim* fell from the sky, but that is not what true greatness is. It is the gold, silver and copper which they gave of themselves. Those are the ones that are deemed to be mentioned first on the list. That self-sacrifice, *that* is where true greatness lies.

**מרדכי אפפל, Good Shabbos,**