

## Shabbat 13 February - Terumah

### **The Golden Rim by Rabbi Yehudah Black**

A Zer Zahav, a golden rim, fashioned like a crown was secured to three exceptional items of the Mishkan; The Ark in which the two tablets of stone were located; the mizbeach - the altar upon which the sacrifices were offered and the Shulchan on which the Lechem Hapanim, the show bread was presented. Ask our Sages; what was so special about these three objects that warranted that only they should merit to be adorned with this crown?

The answer from the Talmud in Yoma is that these three objects symbolised three different aspects of Judaism; First and foremost is the Ark which represented a constant reminder to live our lives in accordance with the Torah, because the Torah is the starting point of Judaism. Perhaps that is the reason, says Rabbeinu Yonah that the Ark was set apart in the Kodesh Hakodoshim, behind the Curtain in the Holy of Holies accentuating its value, but at the same time all Israel were instructed to build the Ark because everybody has a share in the Torah. Then there was the Altar which signified the sacrifices and the role of the Kohanim, stressing the importance of commitment for the good of the community. Finally the Shulchan - the Table with the Show bread representing the royal majesty of the Jewish home.

What is interesting to note is the dictum of Rabbi Shimon in Pirkei Avot (4:17). There are three crowns; the crown of Torah, Crown of Priesthood and the Crown of Kingship - but the Crown of a good name excels them all.

According to the Mishneh there are not three but four crowns, and the fourth crown, that of a good name outshines the previous three. Where was the fourth golden crown to be found in the Tabernacle?

The answer from Rabbi Moshe Alasker is that there isn't really another crown. That in order to achieve the crown of the previous three there has to be the Crown of a good name riding on top of the other crowns. Achievement in life is important but the Crown of the good name - a good personality and character has to be at the heart of everything we do.

In the Torah when they were told to attach this gold crown to the appurtenances, it is called a *Zer Zahav*. The Gemorra says that when it is written without vowels, as it is in the Torah it can be pronounced two ways; Either *Zer* with a *tzere*, which means a crown or *Zar* with a *Kamatz* which means a stranger. "If a man is deserving, it is like a crown for him, if he is undeserving, it becomes estranged from him." The message is simple; in order to attain the crowns of Torah, priesthood and kingship, the crown of the good name and reputation must be paramount.