

**MORASHAH**  
**THE RABBINIC FELLOWSHIP OF THE UTJ**  
 668 American Legion Drive, Teaneck, NJ 07666  
[www.utj.org](http://www.utj.org) 201.801.0707

Rabbi Eugene Shafir

*Parashat HaShavuah Series*

**Parashat Terumah**

How do you remember the moment when you realized that you were in love? If you close your eyes, what do you see? A smile? A place? The eyes looking at you? Do you remember the smell? Do you see yourself in the picture or is it the other person only? Do you remember what you said? And did you say anything at that time?

I am sure there is something very particular, very specific in your memory that, when you think about it, makes you re-live the moment anew.

It might not be immediately obvious, but Parashat Terumah is that memory. In that memory, we do not talk. We are not even there! We remember the smell of oils and spices for anointing; we are looking at the bright colors of the yarn: blue, purple, and crimson. We see the shine of silver and gold. We can feel the wool, linen, and leather. It's not the memory of an individual – it's the memory of a nation. So each person remembers his or her little detail, the detail that was important to him/her, which made that moment special. While for some it was the curtains, for others it was the rings of the ark, and for some it was the cherubim on the top of the cover of the ark.

The cherubim, the symbol of love between Israel and God: (B. Yoma54a):

"אמר רב קטינא בשעה שהיו ישראל עולין לרגל מגללין להם את הפרוכת ומראין להם את הכרובים שהיו מעורים  
 זה בזה ואומרים להן ראו חבתכם לפני המקום כחבת זכר ונקבה"

"Said R. Qattina: whenever Israel would come up [to Jerusalem] for a Festival, the curtain would be removed for them, and they would be shown the cherubim, whose bodies were intertwined with one another, and they would be addressed as follows: Look! Your love before God is like the love between a man and a woman."

This was a long time ago. Many generations have passed since then, but every one of them had a chance to go back in time and re-live that moment. Today, it is our chance to look into the Torah, to read the words, and find our own little detail that will trigger that memory, so that we, too, can be there when Israel realized that they were in love.

*Shabbat Shalom!*

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*Rabbi Shafir coordinates the UTJ/ITJ Distance Learning program. He is a musmakh of the ITJ.*

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