

Potomac Torah Study Center
Vol. 9 #19, February 4, 2022; 4 Adar 1, 5782; Terumah 5782

NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z"l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his untimely death.

Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from www.PotomacTorah.org. Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah.

Terumah presents Hashem's instructions to Moshe for B'Nai Yisrael to build a structure of wood covered with another material to specific specifications. Once B'Nai Yisrael complete this assignment, God will dwell among the people. The structure will require two types of items from the people. In Terumah, Moshe appoints representatives to take specific items that the people bring voluntarily – free will gifts from the people. In Tetzevah, God commands Moshe to order specific people to give or make certain items to go into the sanctuary (more like a tax than a gift).

The fund raising campaign for the Mishkan connects to many other incidents and themes in Tanach. Last year I discussed Rabbi David Fohrman's insights into connections between Gan Eden and the story of Purim. (See my summary in the archives at PotomacTorah.org for Terumah 5781.)

As I mentioned last week, Mishpatim translates the Aseret Dibrot (Ten Statements) into specific laws, both positive and negative. A theme that connects many of these mitzvot is chesed – kindness to fellow humans (and to animals). Rav Kook (see below) observes that there are two goals of tzedakah – to provide for the needy, and to permit the giver to express chesed in concrete ways. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l, (below) adds that giving confers dignity, something that a person receiving a gift does not receive. When Hashem gave B'Nai Yisrael the ability to give, He thereby gave our ancestors the opportunity to experience chesed. God prepared for the former slaves to be able to donate rich gifts for the Mishkan – by having Moshe tell the people to ask their Egyptian neighbors to lend them valuable items to take with them into the Midbar. One exception was the heavy wood logs needed for the Mishkan and staves. Rashi teaches that Yaakov brought saplings to plant in the Midbar on the way to Egypt to ensure that B'Nai Yisrael would have the wood when the time came to build the Mishkan (see article below by Yossi Ives).

By giving voluntarily to create God's special place in the human world, B'Nai Yisrael worked toward becoming worthy for Hashem to live among the people (and became worthy once they built and dedicated the Mishkan). God would not live in the Mishkan – He would bring His presence among the people who contributed to building the Mishkan and lived around it.

Once Adam and Chava sinned and had to leave Gan Eden, they lost access to Etz Chaim, the Tree of Life. The Mishkan, God's sanctuary in the human world, was the closest that humans could come to experiencing Gan Eden again. Man's attempt to recreate the experience of Gan Eden is a frequent theme in Tanach.

Chesed, perhaps the most central theme of living properly, ties Terumah to the most outstanding characteristic of Avraham Avinu and to what I see as the primary theme of the Aseret Dibrot and Mishpatim in terms of inter-personal relations. My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, like Rav Kook and Rabbi Lord Sacks, emphasized chesed frequently in his teachings. Mishpatim is one of many places in the Torah where we shall see this lesson.

Shabbat Shalom,
Alan & Hannah

Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at www.alephbeta.org. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.

Please daven for a Refuah Shlemah for Yehoshua Mayer HaLevi ben Nechama Zelda, Leib Dovid ben Etel, Mordechai ben Chaya, Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, Dovid Meir ben Chaya Tzippa; David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha, Noa Shachar bat Avigael, Kayla bat Ester, Ramesh bat Heshmat, and Malka bat Simcha, who need our prayers. I have removed a number of names that have been on the list for a long time. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.
Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah & Alan

Drasha: Terumah: Support System

by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky © 1999

[Please remember Mordechai ben Chaya for a Mishebarach!]

The Aron Kodesh in the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, contained the most precious spiritual gift that was transmitted by Omnipotent to mortal – the two Luchos – the Tablets handed from Hashem to Moshe at Sinai. The receptacle had to be worthy of the insert. It therefore had to be intricately constructed with its symbolism as meticulously configured as its beautiful design. The Aron consisted of three contiguous boxes of gold, wood, and gold, each inserted in the other. It contained a golden crown bordering its edge and a golden cover adorned with cherubim. These angelic figures faced each other, their wings spread, as they represented the profound love of a nation and their Creator.

But a seemingly insignificant item which was connected with the Aron holds perhaps the most symbolic of all the many peripheral adornments. The Torah tells us that the Aron was to be fitted with gold plated wooden staves. Then Moshe is told, “You shall insert the staves in the rings on the ark, with which to carry the ark” (Exodus 25:13). The Torah goes on to state: “The staves shall remain in the ark; they shall not be removed” (Exodus 25:14). The sages explain that the Torah is thus meting a prohibition for anyone to remove the staves that were used to carry the ark from place to place in the Jewish sojourn in the desert and beyond. What needs examination, however, is the phraseology of the command. When referring to the staves, instead of commanding, “You shall not remove them,” the Torah is seemingly prophesizing, “they shall not be removed.” Why didn’t the Torah just command, “the staves shall remain in the ark; you shall not remove them”? By stating, “they shall not be removed” it seems that instead of talking to us – the Torah is talking to history. Can it be that the Torah is foreshadowing the relationship between the Holy Ark itself and the staves that carry it? What important symbolism do the staves bear that intrinsically connects them with the Holy Ark they are meant to support? Can insignificant staves actually become part and parcel of the ark’s very essence?

During World War II many young Jewish children were harbored by a myriad of monasteries throughout Europe. At the end of the war, the Vaad Hatzalah sent representatives to the monasteries to try and reclaim the orphaned children to their heritage. Many of the children who found refuge did so at a young age and they had but a few recollections of their birthright.

When Rabbi Eliezer Silver, who was the Rabbi of Cincinnati, Ohio and a very influential member of the Vaad, came to a particular hermitage in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France, he was met with hostility. “You can be sure, Rabbi, if we had Jews here we would surely hand them back to you immediately!” exclaimed the monk in charge. “However, unfortunately for you, we have no Jewish children here.”

Rabbi Silver was given a list of refugees and was told that they were all Germans. The monk continued, “the Schwartzs are German Schwartzs, the Schindlers are German Schindlers and the Schwimmers are German Schwimmers.”

Rabbi Silver had been told that there were definitely close to ten Jewish children in that hermitage and was not convinced. He asked if he could say a few words to the children as they went to sleep. The monk agreed. Rabbi Silver returned later that evening with two aides, and as the children were lying in their beds about to go to sleep, they entered the large dorm room.

He walked into the room and in the sing-song that is so familiar to hundreds of thousands of Jewish children across the globe he began to sing “Shema Yisrael Ado...” unexpectedly — in mid sentence — he stopped. Suddenly from six beds in the room the ending to that most powerful verse resounded almost in unison. “Hashem Echad!”

He turned to the priest. “These are our children. We will take them now!”

The children were redeemed, placed in Jewish homes, and raised as leaders of our community.

Perhaps the Torah is make a powerful prophecy in addition to a powerful regulation. The Torah talks about the peripherals that help bear the burden of the Torah in a unique way. “In the rings of the ark the staves shall remain – they shall never leave!” Perhaps it is a prediction in addition to a charge.

The wooden staves that are adapted to carry the message of Torah, the tunes, the customs, and the small nuances, are much more than gold-plated sticks. They may not be as holy as the ark, but they will never leave its sides. They will be remembered long after the Aron has been captured. They will be cherished long after the golden ark has been buried. And it may very well be that when the cherished handles of those staves, jutting ever so slightly from the ground, are pulled from the mire, the entire Torah is eventually raised with them.

Good Shabbos

Planting Seeds for the Next Generation

By Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg *

Shalom. This is Gabe Greenberg again, Rabbi and Executive Director of Penn Hillel. I’m excited to be learning Parshat Terumah with you this week.

In the Hillel world, we ask a very fundamental question. Given that we have access to our Jewish students for just a four-year window in their young adulthood, what do we want to teach them? What do we want to inspire them towards? What skills do we want them to gain during their short time on campus? This week’s parsha gives us the beginning of an answer to that question.

There is a midrash that Rashi cites which describes how Jacob planted acacia trees when he was in Egypt. He told his children and grandchildren that in generations from now, when his descendants leave Egypt, they will have use for these acacia trees. Indeed in our parsha, the Torah tells us to make the planks of the Tabernacle out of this very acacia wood (Ex. 26:15), which Jacob presciently planted generations earlier in Egypt.

That in many ways is what our Hillel work is about. It is about planting seeds, planting young saplings, which will grow, thrive for years to come. It’s not necessarily to give our students hard and fast answers or prepackaged visions of how to live a Jewish life. It’s to inspire them, to make sure they’re asking the right questions, to challenge them. So that later in their Jewish adulthood when they’re thinking about marriage, when they’re thinking about raising kids, when they’re

thinking about what professional lives they want to step into, they'll remember a conversation they had at Hillel. They'll remember a Shabbat dinner they attended. They'll remember a trip they took to Israel.

They'll then be able to harvest and use in their own lives those seeds that were planted. They'll be able to use those young acacia saplings that they encounter to build the holy structures they will need to thrive and grow in their own Jewish adulthood.

We should all be blessed to plant seeds for the next generations and to harvest those living trees that we need to build the structures of our own Jewish lives.

Shabbat shalom. I look forward to learning with you more next week.

* Executive Director at Penn Hillel, Rabbi Greenberg received semicha from YCT in 2012.

** From Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah: Friends, it has been my true privilege these many years to share with you my thoughts on the parsha, both in written form and more recently as videos. Now the time has come to pass the baton over to our amazing rabbis in the field. I know that we will be enriched by their insights and unique and distinct perspectives, as they bring the Torah, refracted through the lens of their rabbinates and the people they are serving, to all of us. We start with Rabbi Gabe Greenberg, executive director of Penn Hillel.

<https://library.yct Torah.org/2022/02/terumah22/>

Harvesting the Light of the Menorah by Rabbi Mordechai Rhine * © 2022

The Parsha of Terumah is a heartwarming Parsha describing the building of the Mishkan (Sanctuary) in the desert. The Mishkan can be described as a love palace for the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. Ultimately, the power of the Mishkan is that through it, the Jews themselves would become great. As the Torah states, "They shall make a Mishkan for Me, and I shall dwell within them." The verse does not simply state that Hashem will dwell in the Mishkan. Rather the full promise is that Hashem will dwell "in them," within every Jew.

Among the vessels in the Mishkan was the Menorah, which was lit daily and represented the light of Torah. Parallels to the beautiful Mitzva of the Menorah of the Mishkan are other examples of candle-lighting such as lighting the Shabbos candles and the lights of the Chanuka Menorah. Interestingly, the Talmud tells us that if people will "frequently light the lights" of Shabbos and of Chanuka, they will be blessed with wonderful children who illuminate the world with Torah. The lights that we light to honor Shabbos and on Chanuka can certainly be understood to parallel the light of the Menorah which represented Torah. But what does it mean to "frequently light the lights?" Shabbos only comes once a week; Chanukah comes only eight days a year. How can one fulfill the statement to light these lights frequently?

When Moshe was instructed to fashion the Menorah, he had significant trouble. He did not know how to hammer out one block of gold into the intricate details of flowers, cups, and knobs, as he was instructed. The commentaries wonder why he didn't simply fashion the Menorah out of a different metal, in which case those details would not be required. They answer that Moshe -- as could be imagined -- wanted to do the mitzva properly, in its ideal form. Therefore, it troubled him when he could not fashion it out of gold, even though some other solution could be found.

Similarly, in the story of Chanuka the Jews could have, perhaps, lit the menorah with defiled oil claiming that they were doing the best they could under the circumstances. But they did not. They lit with only the untainted oil and hoped for a miracle. So dearly did they want to observe the mitzva of Menorah in its proper way.

The Nesivos Shalom points out that upon the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, the Menorah was "hidden away." He compares the "hidden away" of the Menorah to the first light of creation, which is also described as being "hidden away." The Zohar says about that light, "It was hidden and planted." Apparently, although the first light of creation was hidden, it

is possible to harvest of its produce, and bring that light into our lives. This is true regarding the light of the Menorah as well.

Although one can only light the lights of Shabbos and Chanuka at their proper times, one can "frequently light these lights" in a conceptual sense, by living the message of the Menorah. When a person strives to do a mitzva in a proper way, even when a lesser observance might suffice, he has "harvested" the light of the hidden menorah. This can be done most frequently.

A while back, I took a graduate of a Hebrew Reading Course to a Sofer (scribe) to purchase a pair of Tefillin. The Sofer patiently explained how Tefillin are made, and then showed my friend different parchments with the sections from the Torah for Tefillin written on them. He assured my friend that they were all "kosher," acceptable for the mitzvah. But since they were priced differently, he wanted my friend to have the chance to choose.

My friend examined each sample and then said, "I know that everything you are offering is acceptable, but I would like to purchase the nicer, more expensive, set. You see, I am a Russian Jew, and I just finished learning to read Hebrew with Rabbi. The less expensive set is certainly ok, but I think it is a nicer mitzvah to buy a set in which the writing is so clear that even I -- a beginner -- can clearly tell the difference between the letters."

Indeed, although one can only light the lights at the appropriate times, it is possible to light the lights of Shabbos, Chanuka, and the hidden Menorah, in a most frequent way, by personifying their message of devotion to mitzvos in our daily lives.

With best wishes for a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Rhine, until recently Rav of Southeast Congregation in Silver Spring, is a well known mediator and coach. His web site, Teach613.org, contains many of his brilliant Devrei Torah. RMRhine@Teach613.org. **Teach613 recently started a new Shulchan Aruch Zoom class this week. For information or to join any Torah613 classes, contact Rabbi Rhine.**

Building a Sanctuary Within: Thoughts for Parashat Terumah

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

Some years ago, my wife and I attended a school performance of one of our grandchildren. The class put on a production that included songs and narration, costumes and dances. While we wanted to enjoy the program and cheer for all the children, we had to deal with a number of parents who had ideas of their own.

Quite a few parents/grandparents brought their i-pads and mobile phones and were busily making videos of their children on stage. These photographers stood up, moved around, and generally made it difficult for members of the audience — including us — to enjoy the program. Even when asked to sit down, a number of the parents kept right on with their photography.

Why were they making these video recordings? To save the memory of the event. And yet, they weren't experiencing the event itself! They were entirely devoted to aiming their cameras — probably on their own children. They were videoing something that was supposed to be a memory; but they didn't have a memory of the production itself, only a video that was supposed to preserve a memory.

This seemed to be a parable of modern life. Instead of experiencing the reality of the moment, people experience life mediated through cameras, cell phones, i-pads and other technology. People are so busy trying to record and remember everything that they miss the actual thing they're supposed to be trying to remember. Life isn't lived directly, but only through artificial lenses that focus on bits and pieces of experience, not on the whole picture.

The loss of real human experience and communication goes far beyond the technological revolution. Even when people are supposed to be conversing, they often seem to be talking at rather than speaking with. There are people who seem incapable of actually listening; they are so filled with themselves that they talk, talk, and talk some more. They think they are validated only if they have an audience to impress or entertain. They seem to be afraid of life, afraid of silence, afraid of authentic human interaction. They live as play-actors, not as real human beings. They are victims of, and manifestations of, a society that becomes increasingly de-humanized and de-personalized.

This week's Torah portion begins with God instructing Moses to call on the Israelites "that they bring Me an offering" for the sake of building a Mishkan, a sanctuary. God, of course, is Master of the Universe. He hardly is in need of any offerings of gold and silver. The instructions continue by saying that gifts should be received from each person whose heart inclines to donate. What God apparently is seeking is not material gifts, but gifts of the human spirit. He is looking for people with pure hearts, filled with generosity and honest religious devotion. The Mishkan, in fact, is a sanctuary that reflects human spiritual aspirations, not merely a physical place of worship. And so God states: "And they shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in them," i.e. in the hearts and souls of the people.

What is true for the building of a Mishkan is also true for the building of authentic lives. What is demanded is a generous and compassionate heart, an inner being filled with love of God, an authentic humaneness. The goal is not the external trappings of life, but the interior thoughts and emotions that make one's life ring true.

We live in a world where images often replace realities, where vicarious experience is valued more than experience itself, where people are so busy capturing memories that they miss the fullness of genuine life.

We are called upon to build a sanctuary to the Lord...within ourselves, so that He may dwell within us. We are called upon to live life in its fullness directly and thoughtfully.

And please, you standing up in the front row with your i-pod, please sit down and enjoy the program; and let the rest of us enjoy it too. There's a professional photographer in the back who can provide you with all the pictures you need after the program is over.

* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

<https://www.jewishideas.org/building-sanctuary-within-thoughts-parashat-terumah>

** The Angel for Shabbat column is a service of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, fostering an intellectually vibrant, compassionate and inclusive Orthodox Judaism. Please join our growing family of members by joining online at www.jewishideas.org

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Politicians or Statesmen: a blog by Rabbi Marc D. Angel

A Blog by Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

Henry Adams, a 19th century American historian and author, distinguished between a politician and a statesman. A politician is someone who listens to what people are saying, and then molds his/her agenda accordingly. A statesman is

someone who thinks carefully and arrives at intelligent conclusions — and then works to persuade the public to adopt his/her policies.

Politicians are essentially petty self-promoters who will say what people want to hear, who will pander to the whims of the masses. They say one thing today, another thing tomorrow; one thing to this audience and another thing to a different audience. They tell jokes, hug children, spout off truisms. Their goal is to be popular enough to get elected and stay in office. They can be bullies, buffoons, or big mouths: it doesn't matter to them as long as they can get people to talk about them and vote for them.

Statesmen are a much rarer breed. They actually take the time and trouble to think carefully. They have a long range vision of what is best for society. They espouse ideas and ideals that the masses may — or may not — readily understand or appreciate. They try to remain above the fray, and to guide people to a better, larger view of what is at stake. They are people who avoid sound-bites and photo ops.

Political campaigns of our time often seem to be in the province of politicians, not statesmen. People run to become President of the United States, but they sound as though they are running for president of their high school class. Instead of contests for who provides the soundest and most intelligent vision for the future of the nation, the political battles seem to be popularity contests.

Will Rogers once said: When I was a boy I was told that anyone could become President of the United States; now I'm beginning to believe it.

People in all generations complain that their political leaders are politicians rather than statesmen. But it is the people who elect them! Apparently, the public does not demand or need anything more than glib showmen for their leaders.

People deserve exactly the leadership that they choose for themselves, whether for good or ill. This applies not only to political leaders, but to leaders of all sorts. It's easy enough to complain that our leaders are mere politicians and panders; but we somehow seem to forget that we are the ones who have elected them or have allowed them to stay in office.

As long as the public will laugh at the politicians' jokes and rejoice in the politicians' one-liners, then the politicians will continue their reign. Until the public will demand more of their leaders and more of themselves, we will have politicians...not statesmen. And we will all be the worse for it.

* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

<https://www.jewishideas.org/blog/politicians-or-statesmen-blog-rabbi-marc-d-angel>

Terumah – The Lifeblood of a Jew by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer *

Torah is the essence of the Jewish people. This concept is clear throughout our literature, but perhaps it is most clearly seen in the construction of the Mishkan. The Mishkan sat at the very center of the Jewish camp as we traveled in the desert. In the main camp, there were three tribes on each side. Within that camp was the tribe of the Levi – with Moshe and Aharon and the Kohanim in front, and one of the three families of Levi on each of the sides. At the very center sat the Mishkan. When approaching the Mishkan, one first entered a courtyard where the altar was. The Tabernacle itself was a place of holiness where only Kohanim would enter. Within that Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies, where even Aharon – the Kohein Gadol – was only allowed to enter on Yom Kippur. In the Holy of Holies, at the very center of the Jewish camp was the Aron, the Holy Ark, with the Ten Commandments representing all of Torah. It was here where G-d's Presence rested among the people. Torah is the essence of our holiness – it is our identity and the lifeblood of our nation.

What makes Torah so unique? What is Torah and how does it change us? Why is it so essential? It is beyond the scope of a one-page dvar Torah to even begin to answer these questions. However, I would like to share a few thoughts to give some context to begin to understand why Torah is who we are.

Torah is far more than a book of laws. The first mitzvah given to the Jewish people is in Chapter 12 of the Book of Shemos. The entire Book of Genesis is devoted to teaching us philosophies, mores and responsibilities. Torah is the guidebook that teaches us the very purpose and goals of life itself. It teaches us who we are, where we belong in the bigger picture and what it is that G-d expects of us and wishes for us.

Rabbi Chaim Volozhin teaches us that when G-d wrote the Torah, He wrote out His purpose for the world and the design by which that purpose would be achieved. It is the essence of His Will. As such, Torah is an explanation of G-d's view of His relationship with us and of our purpose and significance in His eyes. It is a description of all that we can understand about G-d and about how He deals with us and the world. When we study Torah, we are studying G-d Himself and understanding His Will. This is the foundation of any true relationship – taking time to truly understand, appreciate and value the other. Therefore, when we study Torah we are laying the foundation for a true, deep and personal relationship with G-d. (Nefesh Hachaim 4:10)

He adds that our Rabbis teach us that G-d wrote the Torah two thousand years before He created the world, and then gazed upon the Torah, using Torah as the blueprint for creation. Every element of this physical world was created based upon the dictums of Torah. Rabbi Chaim Volozhin explains that Torah is more than just a blueprint – it is the driving force and purpose of creation. Therefore, when we engage in Torah study we are energizing the world, creating the spiritual sustenance that keeps the world going. In fact, our Rabbis teach us that if there would ever be a moment when no one was studying Torah anywhere in the world, then the entire world would cease to exist. When we engage in understanding and applying Torah to our own lives, we give the world purpose and meaning and literally keep the world turning. (Nefesh Hachaim 4:11)

Another profound element of Torah study is its power to keep us on the right path in life. The Gemara tells us (Kiddushin 30b) that when G-d created the evil inclination, He created Torah as the antidote. In this world, we are surrounded with temptations and challenges which constantly pull at us and subvert even the best of our intentions. Through the study of Torah, we fortify ourselves to see through these temptations and withstand these challenges. Torah is the only antidote which G-d created for the evil inclination.

We haven't even scratched the surface, but I hope these few words can help us begin to understand why Torah is so fundamental and how critical Torah study is for each and every Jew. Torah is truly our life's blood.

* Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD.

Parshas Terumah – G-d's Respect For Man

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer* © 2021

The Tabernacle in the desert and later the Temples are difficult for us to comprehend. We understand them in a general sense as places of elevated devotion, with many symbolic and mystical references to G-d and our subservience to Him. A more sacred version of a shul perhaps, where G-d's Presence is more present and we offer Him sacrifices, which we perhaps understand as an elevated form of prayer.

Yet, this concept remains difficult for us. How can G-d's Presence be housed in one building, no matter how grand or how much mystical significance its structure contains? Furthermore, what purpose does it serve? What meaning is there in our offering gifts to G-d? What need is there for our service?

The Medrash Yalkut Shimoni (Remez 365) tells us that Moshe himself asked these questions. Three commands overwhelmed and frightened Moshe in the magnitude of what they demanded, all dealing with the Tabernacle. When Hashem told Moshe we were to build a Tabernacle where Hashem's Presence would dwell, Moshe was overwhelmed. "The Heavens and the highest Heavens can't contain You, and You say, 'Make for Me a Tabernacle'?" Similarly, Moshe was astounded when told we were to bring a daily sacrifice as G-d's daily meal. "Were we to bring all of the animals in the world, would it be one offering? If we were to bring all of the wood in the world, would it be one pyre?" Moshe was again

astounded when told that we were to donate to the building of the Tabernacle as an atonement for our souls, an act in return for the gift of life. "Who can possibly give payment for his life?" The structure, the service and all the devotion, what could any of it mean?

Hashem responded to Moshe's questions with one message. The structure does not need to be large. "Twenty planks on the north, twenty planks on the south, and eight planks on the west." The sacrifice for G-d's daily meal does not need to be significant either, just lambs. "And not two at the same time, but one in the morning and one in the evening." The redemption also need not be so significant. Just a half shekel coin each.

The Medrash explains G-d's response with a parable of a king who had a young daughter. So long as she was young and not yet matured, the king would see her in the alleys and marketplaces and speak with her. However, once she began to mature and become a young woman, "It is not respectful for my daughter that I speak with her publicly. Rather make for her a private place where I can speak with her." As she matured, her conversations and her relationship with the king matured, as well. In respect for the deeper and more nuanced nature of their relationship, he wished for a private place to meet with her.

So, too, says the Medrash, was Hashem's relationship with us. In Egypt, we saw Hashem and we connected with Him as He passed throughout Egypt. As we passed through the sea, we saw Hashem. When we came to Har Sinai, we saw Hashem and connected with Him. All of these were outside and in the open. However, once we accepted the Torah and became G-d's nation, with a permanent, special and unique relationship, we had matured as a nation and our relationship and connection with G-d had matured. It was no longer appropriate for G-d to speak with us out in the open. Rather, said G-d "Make for Me a Tabernacle and I will dwell amongst them." G-d was telling Moshe that the Tabernacles were not structures which would enable anyone to properly show respect to G-d. Rather, they are structures to show G-d's respect for us. G-d is displaying His love and respect for us and how He cherishes our relationship.

The Medrash concludes beautifully, that this is our ultimate honor, even in the face of all persecution or claims that G-d has abandoned us. When we sinned with the Golden Calf, barely a month after receiving the Torah, G-d didn't destroy us. Rather, it was then after that grave sin, that G-d declared "Make for Me a Tabernacle." We had still accepted His Torah. We remained, and always will remain, His cherished nation.

* Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD. Note: Rabbi Singer's Dvar Torah was too late for my deadline last year, so I am including it here.

Terumah 5782

By Rabbi Moshe Rube *

[Rabbi Rube did not share a Dvar Torah for this week. Watch this space for his Torah insights in future weeks.]

* Rabbi, Knesseth Israel Congregation, Birmingham, AL. We joined KI when our son Evan lived in Birmingham while attending the University of Alabama Medical School.

Rav Kook Torah Terumah: Take for Me an Offering

In preparation for building the Tabernacle, God commanded Moses to collect the necessary materials:

"Speak to the Israelites and have them take for Me an offering. From every person whose heart inspires him to donate, you shall take My offering." (Ex. 25:2)

Why did God command Moses to take the donations? The verse should read that they must give an offering!

The language of “taking” might lead one to conclude that the materials could have been taken from the people by force. But this was not the case, for the Torah stresses that the offerings were donated freely — “from every person whose heart inspires him to donate.”

Why, in fact, did this collection need to be voluntary? The Talmud in Baba Batra 8b teaches that a community may force members of the community to support the poor and the needy. Using our money to help others is a trait that needs to be trained and developed. So why did God command that these gifts for the Tabernacle, the first act of tzedakah (charity) on a national level, be donated solely out of sincere generosity?

Two Goals of Tzedakah

The mitzvah of tzedakah is meant to accomplish two objectives. The first concerns the person receiving the charity. Through this mitzvah, the poor are provided with what they lack. The second objective concerns the one giving. By donating our time and money, we express our inner qualities of chessed and kindness in a concrete and tangible manner. The act of tzedakah actualizes our traits of generosity and contributes toward our own spiritual growth.

We can distinguish between these two objectives within the act itself. The first goal stresses the aspect of giving to the needy. The important factor here is that the poor person receives the assistance he needs. The second goal, on the other hand, stresses the aspect of taking from the benefactor. This is a special benefit of the mitzvah of tzedakah: by relinquishing our material possessions for the sake of others, we refine our character traits and elevate the soul.

Which of these two goals is the principal objective of tzedakah?

ג א

The Gimmel's Chase

The Sages in Shabbat 104a noted that the Hebrew letter Gimmel appears to be facing the next letter in the alphabet, the Dalet, with its left ‘leg’ stretched out toward the Dalet. Why is the Gimmel running toward the Dalet?

The Sages explained that the Gimmel is the benefactor (from the word gommeil, meaning one who gives or supports). The Gimmel is chasing after the impoverished Dalet (from the word dal, meaning ‘poor’ or ‘needy’) in order to help him.

Why is the benefactor running after the poor? Should it not be the other way around?

The Sages wanted to teach us that the principal aim of tzedakah is connected to the very foundations of the universe. The true goal of tzedakah is to elevate the soul of the giver. After all, if the purpose was to help the poor, God could have provided other means for their support without having to rely on the generosity of society. The shapes of the Hebrew letters — letters which God used to create the universe — hint at this fundamental truth. The Gimmels, the benefactors, need to pursue the Dalets, the poor, in order to grow and develop spiritually.

Thus the Jewish people's very first philanthropic project emphasized that the central aspect of tzedakah is not giving to the needy, but taking from the donor. “Have them take for Me an offering.” God commanded that the contributions to the Tabernacle be given freely — “every person whose heart inspires him to donate” — since the soul and its traits are only refined when one donates willingly.

(Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Otzarot HaRe'iyah vol. II, pp. 189-190.)

<http://www.ravkooktorah.org/TERUMA64.htm>

What Do We Receive When We Give? (Terumah 5780)

By Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l, Former Chief Rabbi of the U.K.*

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Tell the Israelites to take an offering for Me; take My offering from all whose heart moves them to give." Ex. 25:1-2

Our parsha marks a turning point in the relationship between the Israelites and God. Ostensibly what was new was the product: the Sanctuary, the travelling home for the Divine Presence as the people journeyed through the wilderness.

But a case could be made for saying that even more than the product was the process, summed up in the word that gives our parsha its name, Terumah, meaning, a gift, a contribution, an offering. The parsha is telling us something very profound. Giving confers dignity. Receiving does not.

Until that moment, the Israelites had been recipients. Virtually everything they had experienced had been God-given. He had redeemed them from Egypt, liberated them from slavery, led them through the wilderness, and created a path for them through the sea. When they were hungry, He gave them food. When they were thirsty, He gave them water. Apart from the battle against the Amalekites, they had done almost nothing for themselves.

Though at every physical level this was an unparalleled deliverance, the psychological effects were not good. The Israelites became dependent, expectant, irresponsible and immature. The Torah chronicles their repeated complaints. Reading them, we feel that they were an ungrateful, querulous, petulant people.

Yet, what else were they to do? They couldn't have crossed the sea by themselves. They couldn't have found food or water in the wilderness. What produced results was complaining. The people complained to Moshe. Moshe turned to God. God performed a miracle. The result was that, from the people's perspective, complaining worked.

Now, however, God gave them something else entirely. It had nothing to do with physical need and everything to do with psychological, moral and spiritual need. God gave them the opportunity to give.

One of my early memories, still blazing through the mists of forgotten time, goes back to when I was a child of perhaps six or seven years old. I was blessed with very caring, and also very protective, parents. Life had not given them many chances, and they were determined that we, their four sons, should have some of the opportunities they were denied. My late father of blessed memory took immense pride in me, his firstborn son.

It seemed to me very important to show him my gratitude. But what could I possibly give him? Whatever I had, I had received from my mother and him. It was a completely asymmetrical relationship.

Eventually, in some shop I found a plastic model of a silver trophy. Underneath it was a plaque that read, "To the best father in the world." Today, all these years later, I cringe at the memory of that object. It was cheap, banal, almost comically absurd. What was unforgettable, though, was what he did after I had given it to him.

I can't remember what he said, or whether he even smiled. What I do remember is that he placed it on his bedside table, where it remained – humble, trite – for all the years that I was living at home.

He allowed me to give him something, and then showed that the gift mattered to him. In that act, he gave me dignity. He let me see that I could give even to someone who had given me all I had.

There is a strange provision of Jewish law that embodies this idea. "Even a poor person who is dependent on tzedakah (charity) is obligated to give tzedakah to another person." [1] On the face of it, this makes no sense at all. Why should a person who depends on charity be obligated to give charity? The principle of tzedakah is surely that one who has more than they need should give to one who has less than they need. By definition, someone who is dependent on tzedakah does not have more than they need.

The truth is, however, that tzedakah is not only directed to people's physical needs but also their psychological situation. To need and receive tzedakah is, according to one of Judaism's most profound insights, inherently humiliating. As we say

in Birkat ha-Mazon, "Please, O Lord our God, do not make us dependent on the gifts or loans of other people, but only on Your full, open, holy and generous hand so that we may suffer neither shame nor humiliation for ever and for all time."

Many of the laws of tzedakah reflect this fact, such that it is preferable that the giver does not know to whom they give, and the recipient does not know from whom they receive. According to a famous ruling of Maimonides the highest of all levels of tzedakah is, "to fortify a fellow Jew and give them a gift, a loan, form with them a partnership, or find work for them, until they are strong enough so that they do not need to ask others [for sustenance]."[2] This is not charity at all in the conventional sense. It is finding someone employment or helping them start a business. Why then should it be the highest form of tzedakah? Because it is giving someone back their dignity.

Someone who is dependent on tzedakah has physical needs, and these must be met by other people or by community as a whole. But they also have psychological needs. That is why Jewish law rules that they must give to others. Giving confers dignity, and no one should be deprived of it.

The entire account of the construction of the Mishkan, the Sanctuary, is very strange indeed. King Solomon said in his address on the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem, "But will God really dwell on earth? Even the heavens to their uttermost reaches cannot contain You, how much less this House that I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27). If that applied to the Temple in all its glory, how much more so of the Mishkan, a tiny, portable shrine made of beams and hangings that could be dismantled every time the people journeyed and reassembled every time they encamped. How could that possibly be a home for the God who created the universe, brought empires to their knees, performed miracles and wonders, and whose Presence was almost unbearable in its intensity?

Yet, in its small but human way, I think what my father did when he put my cheap plastic gift by his bedside all those years ago was perhaps the most generous thing he did for me. And lehavdil, please forgive the comparison, this is also what God did for us when He allowed the Israelites to present Him with offerings, and then use them to make a kind of home for the Divine Presence. It was an act of immense if paradoxical generosity.

It also tells us something very profound about Judaism. God wants us to have dignity. We are not tainted by original sin. We are not incapable of good without Divine grace. Faith is not mere submission. We are God's image, His children, His ambassadors, His partners, His emissaries. He wants us not merely to receive but also to give. And He is willing to live in the home we build for Him, however humble, however small.

This is hinted in the word that gives our parsha its name: Terumah. This is usually translated as an offering, a contribution. It really means something we lift. The paradox of giving is that when we lift something to give to another, it is we ourselves who are lifted.

I believe that what elevates us in life is not what we receive but what we give. The more of ourselves that we give, the greater we become.

Footnotes:

[1] Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Mattenot Aniyim 7:5.

[2] Ibid., 10:7.

* Note: because Likutei Torah and the Internet Parsha Sheet, both attached by E-mail, normally include the two most recent Devrei Torah by Rabbi Sacks, I have selected an earlier Dvar. For older Devrei Torah, footnotes are not always available.

<https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/terumah/what-do-we-receive-when-we-give/>

Why Read the Ketubah at the Wedding?

By Aharon Loschak * © Chabad 2022

Have you ever been to a Jewish wedding?

If you have, you may have noticed that one of the rituals performed under the chuppah is the reading of the ketubah, the marriage contract.

Many think it's a romantic notion. As the flowery document is unrolled and the ancient Aramaic words (hopefully) roll off the reader's tongue, the crowd can almost feel the bonds of love between the newly minted husband and wife.

The problem is that a ketubah is far from (just) a contract of love. In fact, it's pretty much the exact opposite.

Sure it contains a single line in which the husband commits to, "serve, honor, feed and support you ... faithfully." But if you actually read the tongue-twisting Aramaic, it states in no unclear terms that if the husband ever even dreams of divorcing his wife, he is on the hook for a very large sum of money.

The history of this document harks back to Talmudic times when marriages were much more convenience-based, and too many men were easily dismissing their wives on flimsy pretenses. As a protection against flippant men, the rabbis put measures in place that would make them think twice before kicking their wife to the curb. Thus, the ketubah was born.¹

Considering its contents, isn't the chuppah a bad place to read it? Why would we want to evoke scenes of divorce and hefty payouts during this moment of love and devotion, when the relationship is just being built with good feelings all around?

Why talk about destruction during construction?

There are halachic reasons,² but there's a deeper lesson here.

The Construction Project

Parshat Terumah opens with the fledgling nation's first construction project: the Tabernacle. "Make for Me a home,"³ G d requests, and in what's probably the first and last such occurrence, the people overwhelmingly respond to the fundraising campaign. Gold, silver, copper, and an array of other donations pour in. Before long, the project is well underway.

The rabbis see tremendous significance in every element of the Mishkan's construction: the materials used, the height of the walls, the way the furnishings were laid out — everything was designed to reflect different facets of Jewish life and meaning.

In this vein, the Midrash⁴ draws a connection between four materials used in the Mishkan's construction, and four eras in Jewish history. Using Biblical references, associations are made between gold, silver, copper, and the red-dyed ram skins and the four kingdoms of Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome. These are important nations in Jewish history, as they are responsible for the "four exiles" — the four periods of foreign rule to which we have been subjected.⁵

For more information, see *The Four Exiles of the Jewish People*:

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3671017/jewish/Discover-the-Four-Exiles-of-the-Jewish-People.htm

But, here again, we cannot help but ask: why talk about destruction during the construction? Why would the Midrash find references to the nations who destroyed our Temple in the very verses that speak of its construction?

A Compelling Story

What makes a compelling narrative?

Ask any scriptwriter worth their salt and they'll tell you: conflict. If there's no conflict, there's no character growth, no narrative arch — and it's profoundly uninteresting.

There's a reason we all love a good story, because that's what life's all about: navigating and resolving conflict, and more importantly, growing from it.

G d Wants It, Too

And you know what? A good story of overcoming conflict is what G d wants more than anything else as well.

There are all types of great places that G d could have chosen to call home. G d is perfect, and He could have chosen to remain alone with His perfect self. Or at the very least, to create a spiritually marvelous world full of angels and other celestial beings who recognize His glory and hallow His name.

In fact, G d did create such worlds, but He didn't stop there, opting to create this brute, physical world we call our universe — a place full of material objects and interesting creatures that haven't the faintest clue who or what G d is.

And defying all logic, it is this world that G d chose to be His home. The Torah that embodies His deepest will was not given to angels, nor did He keep it for Himself. Who did He give it to? To me and you — lowly humans in a very material world.

You know why?

Because it is only in this world that there is conflict, darkness, and confusion — and most importantly, courageous humans who do their best to overcome it all.⁶

De-Construction

And that is why the verses that speak of the Temple's construction allude to its destruction.

You see, the Temple was about constructing a home for G d. It was designed to be the spiritual epicenter in a physical world, the place where G d's presence would be most manifest on the terrestrial plane. And so, the people responded with gusto, eagerly pooling their resources to construct a magnificent structure that would shine with sanctity.

That's all well and good, but remember: a shining edifice with no challengers nipping at its heels doesn't make for a compelling story. The true construction of the Temple is only realized when there's destruction, when conflict is introduced. When the Jewish people are exiled and thrust into dark and challenging situations and nevertheless build a home for G d there too. Then the ultimate purpose and goal of the construction project is realized.

A Temple oozing G dliness is wonderful, and we hanker for such days. Better yet, though, is a people without a Temple, without overt G dliness, who nevertheless manage to introduce G d wherever they go.

When conflict is introduced and then resolved, that's interesting and satisfying.

A Compelling Life Story: Overcoming Conflict

A wedding is a construction project. It is when two people decide to build a life and a relationship together.

Under the chuppah, it's all smiles and roses. Starry eyed with love and infatuation, the relationship is effortless and oh-so-romantic; a shining edifice oozing with positivity.

But it's hardly compelling, and not yet that interesting.

The true test of the young couple's love will be when conflict arrives. And it will. To see how the two lovers navigate, resolve, and grow from that conflict — that makes for a compelling storyline. That is when their true love will be realized and a real relationship will be born.

And so, under the chuppah, during the construction, we talk about the destruction, the ketubah. “You’re going to face conflict, of that I’m sure,” intimates the ketubah-reader in those lilting Aramaic words. “Do not be dejected or afraid. On the contrary, embrace it! — for then you will be able to truly realize the depth and beauty of your flowering relationship.”⁷

FOOTNOTES:

1. Mishneh Torah, Laws of Ishut 10:7.

2. The simple reason is that under the chuppah two rituals are actually being performed: “kiddushin” and “nissuin,” loosely translated as “betrothal” and “marriage.” Historically, these two steps were conducted up to a year apart. In post-Talmudic times, however, that practice was abolished, and the present practice of doing everything together was instituted. To make a distinction between the two steps that occur in sequence, we “break it up” by reading the ketubah aloud. See Rama., Even Ha’ezer 61:9.

3. Exodus 25:8.

4. Midrash Tanchuma, Terumah 7:

The gold [used in the Mishkan] corresponds to the kingdom of Babylonia, of which the verse states, “You are the head of gold.”

The silver corresponds to the kingdom of [Persia/] Media, as the verse states, “[If it pleases the king, let it be written to destroy them,] and I will weigh out ten thousand silver talents....”

The copper corresponds to the kingdom of Greece, as it was the least powerful of them all.

And the red-dyed ram skins correspond to the kingdom of Edom, as the verse states, “And the first one emerged reddish...”

G d said: Though you witness four kingdoms boastfully dominating you, I will sow salvation for you from the midst of your servitude.

5. Slavery in Egypt, which took place before Jewish sovereignty had ever been established, is not included.

6. See Tanya ch. 36-37.

7. This essay is based on Likutei Sichot¹⁶, pp. 292-297.

* Writer, editor, and Rabbi, Brooklyn, NY. Editor of JLI's popular Torah Studies program.

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/5384427/jewish/Why-Read-the-Ketubah-at-the-Wedding.htm

Where Did All the Materials for the Tabernacle Come From?

By Yossi Ives *

When the Torah states that one of the main materials the Israelites contributed to the construction of the Tabernacle was cedar wood, Rashi feels compelled to explain how they attained it:

Now where did they have such wood in the desert? Rabbi Tanchuma explains that our forefather Jacob foresaw through Divine Inspiration that his descendants would one day construct a Tabernacle in the desert. He therefore brought cedar trees with him to Egypt [from the Land of Canaan] and planted them there. He commanded his children to take the wood with them when they left Egypt [as they would need it]. 1

What kind of question is this? Wood is a widely available commodity. Even in wilderness, trees grow. Beyond the wilderness, there would surely be traders or other suppliers who would quite readily provide construction materials for a fee. Indeed, many commentators² assume that this is exactly what happened: The Israelites bought the wood or obtained it locally. What problem, then, is Rashi trying to solve by citing this Midrash? Why would Rashi need to resort to a rather far-fetched tradition to explain something that easily makes sense using simple logic?

Clearly, something is amiss and we need to know what it is.

The Rebbe makes a simple but surprising point, through which the entire matter falls into place. Check the wording of the verses about donations to the Tabernacle, says the Rebbe, and something striking will appear.

In each and every case, the Torah talks about “taking the donation.”³ We never seem to read about “giving a donation.” How unusual. If we’re talking about donations, shouldn’t the focus be on giving? We read that the people were told to “set aside” a donation, but then that someone was instructed to “go take it,” not that the person was to “go give it.” How can this be?

Here comes the twist: The assumption is that whatever was donated was readily available, so all that was required was to have it “collected” or “taken.” If you ask me for ten dollars and I have it in my pocket, you can have it then and there. But if you ask me for an amount I don’t have on the spot, I will need to first go and get it before I can give it to you. If the Torah were to use the word to “give,” this would imply that people had to obtain the materials, rather than just hand them over.

Now we understand Rashi’s question. If all these items were supposed to be readily available for immediate collection, how would they have massive logs of cedar wood? Of course, there were ways to obtain wood, but that would have taken time. To solve this issue, Rashi cites Rabbi Tanchuma who tells us why the wood was available. Essentially, it was all planned in advance.

This clears up Rashi’s subsequent explanation regarding the other main materials donated. “Techeilet,” says Rashi, is “wool dyed with the blood of the chilzon fish and is a kind of green.” Regarding “argaman,” Rashi says that it is “a dyed wool in a color known as argaman.” As for “pishtan,” Rashi says that “it refers to linen.”⁴

These three explanations do not seem to add much to anyone with a basic command of Hebrew. Even the explanation that pishtan is linen is obvious from several previous appearances of that word in the Torah.⁵

True, we know that techelet is blue (greenish) dye, and argaman is purple, explains the Rebbe, but what Rashi is struggling to explain is why the Israelites would carry exotic dyes while traveling in the desert. And by the same token, why would they transport large quantities of flax, with which to spin and weave linen? They did not know there was going to be a Tabernacle. Yet we are led to believe that all these materials were readily at hand. How so?

Rashi explains that indeed they were not carrying around exotic dyes. Rather, they were carrying the wool already dyed in those colors, a very useful supply indeed. Similarly, they were not carrying pishtan – which normally translates as “flax,” but ready-made linen which most people would use on a daily basis.

With this awareness of why we must say that only ready-to-use materials were at hand, Rashi’s concerns and solutions fall right into place.

Adapted from Likkutei Sichot vol. 31, Terumah II (pg. 142-148.)

Footnotes:

1. Rashi, Exodus 25:5.
2. Such as Ibn Ezra, Chizkuni, Baalei Tosafot.
3. E.g., Exodus 25:2-3.
4. Exodus 25:4.

5. E.g., Genesis 41:42.

* Rabbi of Cong. Ahavas Yisrael of Pomona, N.Y. and founder and Chief Executive of Tag International Development, a charitable organization that focuses on sharing Israeli expertise with developing countries.

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/5040920/jewish/Where-Did-All-the-Materials-for-the-Tabernacle-Come-From.htm

Torah Thought

This year the joyous month of Adar will last for 60 days, as we are in a Jewish leap year (which requires an additional month to ensure that Passover is in the spring).

In 1992, which was also a leap year, the Rebbe compared these 60 days of joy to the halachic concept of “nullification by 60.” In certain cases, if a drop of non-kosher food falls into a pot of kosher food, as long as the offending material is less than 1/60th of the total volume of food, it is nullified, and the food remains kosher.

Since Adar is the month of Purim — the holiday when we celebrate the transformation from sorrow to joy — the entire month is a month of happiness, with the opportunity to transform the negative aspects of our lives into positive ones.

Sometimes the transformation still has remnants from the past, but in a year of two Adars, with 60 days of joy, we have the opportunity to completely nullify the negativity, leaving absolutely no remnant.

May the transformation and nullification of all negativity in our lives lead to the ultimate transformation—the coming of Moshiach the final Redemption!

Wishing you a joyous Shabbat.

Chabad of Greater Dayton, OH

The Inner Child

By Rabbi Moshe Wisniefsky * © Chabad 2022

You must make two golden cherubim. (Exodus 25:18)

The infant-like faces of the cherubim signified that our intrinsic bond with G d is akin to the essential bond between parent and child. Despite any fluctuations that might arise in their relationship, the bond between parent and child can never be broken. The fact that the cherubim were situated above the Tablets of the Torah and faced each other signified that by studying the Torah, we can reach the root of our Divine soul, allowing our consciousness to merge totally with G d.

The infant faces of the cherubim also alluded to the fact that the Torah as we know it is a diluted, simplified version of the heavenly Torah, G d's infinite wisdom. G d contracted His infinite wisdom into a form we can understand and digest, much as an expert teacher contracts his grasp of a subject in order to convey it to his pupils.

The fact that the cherubim's wings were spread protectively over the Ark alludes to the fact that the Torah-education of young children ensures the preservation and continuity of the transmission of the Torah.

* — from *Daily Wisdom*

Gut Shabbos,

Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman
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Volume 28, Issue 19

Shabbat Parashat Terumah

5782 B"H

Covenant and Conversation

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l

What Do We Receive When We Give?

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Tell the Israelites to take an offering for Me; take My offering from all whose heart moves them to give" (Ex. 25:1-2). Our parsha marks a turning point in the relationship between the Israelites and God. Ostensibly what was new was the product: the Sanctuary, the travelling home for the Divine Presence as the people journeyed through the wilderness.

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Many of the laws of tzedakah reflect this fact, such that it is preferable that the giver does not know to whom they give, and the recipient does not know from whom they receive. According to a famous ruling of Maimonides the highest of all levels of tzedakah is, "to fortify a fellow Jew and give them a gift, a loan, form with them a partnership, or find work for them, until they are strong enough so that they do not need to ask others [for sustenance]." [2] This is not charity at all in the conventional sense. It is finding someone employment or helping them start a business. Why then should it be the highest form of tzedakah? Because it is giving someone back their dignity.

Someone who is dependent on tzedakah has physical needs, and these must be met by other people or by community as a whole. But they also have psychological needs. That is why Jewish law rules that they must give to others. Giving confers dignity, and no one should be deprived of it.

The entire account of the construction of the Mishkan, the Sanctuary, is very strange indeed. King Solomon said in his address on the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem, "But will God really dwell on earth? Even the heavens to their uttermost reaches cannot contain You, how much less this House that I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27). If that applied to the Temple in all its glory, how much more so of the Mishkan, a tiny, portable shrine made of beams and hangings that could be dismantled every time the people journeyed and reassembled every time they encamped. How could that possibly be a home for the God who created the universe, brought empires to their knees, performed miracles and wonders, and whose presence was almost unbearable in its intensity?

Yet, in its small but human way, I think what my father did when he put my cheap plastic gift by his bedside all those years ago was perhaps the most generous thing he did for me. And lehavdil, please forgive the comparison, this is also what God did for us when He allowed the Israelites to present Him with offerings, and then use them to make a kind of home for the Divine Presence. It was an act of immense if paradoxical generosity.

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It also tells us something very profound about Judaism. God wants us to have dignity. We are not tainted by original sin. We are not incapable of good without Divine grace. Faith is not mere submission. We are God's image, His children, His ambassadors, His partners, His emissaries. He wants us not merely to receive but also to give. And He is willing to live in the home we build for Him, however humble, however small.

This is hinted in the word that gives our parsha its name: Terumah. This is usually translated as an offering, a contribution. It really means something we lift. The paradox of giving is that when we lift something to give to another, it is we ourselves who are lifted.

I believe that what elevates us in life is not what we receive but what we give. The more of ourselves that we give, the greater we become.

[1] Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Mattenot Aniyim 7:5.

[2] Ibid., 10:7.

The Person in the Parsha **Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb**

Happy and Proud of its Many Colors

It is an animal. But then again, some say it is a colored dye. Many translate it as a dolphin, whereas some render it "blue-processed skins."

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan in his *The Living Torah* offers this footnote to "clarify" the matter. Always one to do his "homework" thoroughly, Rabbi Kaplan offers us this dazzling variety of definitions of the term tachash, which is listed among the materials necessary for the construction of the Tabernacle near the very beginning of this week's Torah portion, Terumah (Exodus 25:1-27:19):

"Blue-processed skins—others have 'black leather;' that is, leather worked in such a manner as to come out dark and waterproof. Other sources identify tachash as a species of animal. Some say that it is the ermine, a member of the weasel family. Others state that it is a member of the badger family... Others say that it is a colorful one-horned animal known as a keresh. Some say that this is a species of wild ram, possibly an antelope, okapi, or giraffe. Some see the one-horned creature as the narwhal, which has its left tooth developed into a single long horn-like appendage. This animal, which can grow to be over 16 feet long, is occasionally found on the southern Sinai shores... In Arabic, tukhush denotes the sea cow or dugong, an aquatic mammal which is found on the shores of the Sinai. Some say that the tachash is a type of seal, since its skins were used for the Tabernacle's roof, and seal skins are often used for this purpose."

Suffice it to say that whatever the true identity of the tachash, it was such a multifaceted creature or object that it couldn't be

definitively identified by anyone who hadn't actually seen it.

As usual, I find Rashi's definition most reasonable. Here's Rashi on the verse in Exodus 25:5 where we first encounter the tachash:

"It was a type of wild animal which only existed for that moment in history. It had many different colors and is, therefore, translated by Targum Onkelos as sasgona, a composite of the Hebrew phrase 'she'sass u'mitpaer b'gavanim shelo,' 'which is happy and proud of its many colors.'"

In short, it is a multifaceted creature which rejoices in the range and diversity of its many colors.

Rashi's definition, with which I've been familiar since my early elementary school years, began to take on a special significance for me as I grew older. I came to know many teachers who were, in a sense, monochromatic. That is, they seem to have only one color to them. The color was often of a strikingly beautiful hue. But it was only one color, something I found limiting.

Sometimes, in Judaic classes, the "color" was scholarly expertise in specific tractates of the Talmud, with ignorance of, or deliberate neglect of, other tractates. Sometimes, in general studies classes, it was an obsession with math and experimental science, often accompanied by scorn for poetry, music, and art.

Eventually, I was fortunate to be blessed with educators who were more colorful and were able to draw from a wider scope of sources and areas of human experience.

I recall my seventh-grade general studies teacher, Mr. Zeller, who taught us math through baseball statistics and evoked in us an interest in fine literature by reading us tales from William Saroyan's "My Name is Aram." He even helped us draw parallels between our secular studies and our religious curriculum.

It was not until college that I was introduced to the writings of the great British philosopher, who had an impressive Jewish yichus, Isaiah Berlin.

He wrote a precious little book entitled *The Hedgehog and the Fox*. The title is drawn from a proverb of the ancient Greek poet, Archilochus, "A fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." The hedgehog has one means of defense, his quills. The fox, on the other hand, has countless ways to outsmart his pursuers.

Isaiah Berlin expands this distinction to writers and thinkers. He contrasts those whose work focuses upon one single defining idea versus those who draw on a wide variety of areas of

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knowledge and life experiences. He includes Plato and Dostoyevsky in the former category and Aristotle and Shakespeare in the latter. Note that he makes no claim that either of these writers and thinkers is superior to the other.

Throughout my life, I have encountered many great leaders of the Jewish community. Some have been "hedgehogs," and others have been "foxes." I have also found that many of my friends are attracted to, and prefer to identify with, those who "know one big thing."

My own tendency is inclined toward those "who know many things." Some might call me a fan of the "foxes", but I prefer to be considered a fan of the tachash.

During this past year, the year of the pandemic, we have suffered the loss of many great men and women who have "known one big thing," known it well, and taught it well. We have also suffered the loss of other men and women who have "known many things," known them well, and taught them well.

Not quite two weeks ago, we lost a man who was more than a mentor to me and more than a dear friend. I speak of Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, zecher tzaddik l'vracha, a "fox" in the best sense of the metaphor.

Named for ancestors who were called Avraham Yehoshua, and known informally as Reb Shia, he was a chasid in every sense of that often misused term. He was pious, devout, and meticulously observant of every ritual and every minor custom. He was a chasid in his dress, on the Sabbath and festivals and on every day of the week. He knew Hasidic tales and knew how to tell stories in an inimitable fashion and in a manner designed to reach the hearts and souls of every audience he addressed.

He knew well, better than almost everyone I have known, the "one big thing" that is Hasidism, Chasidus.

But he knew so many other things. He attended medical school and received tuition assistance from the famed non-Jewish comedian Danny Thomas. He was trained as a psychiatrist and went on to become a world-renowned expert in the fields of alcoholism and addictive behaviors. He founded one of the most prestigious centers in the world for the treatment of alcoholism. He worked closely with nuns and archbishops of the Roman Catholic faith.

His interests were far more colorful, to use the tachash analogy, than his faith and profession, although they too had plenty of "color" to them. He was an avid fan of the famous Peanuts cartoons and appreciated far more than their humor. He perceived their profound wisdom and eventually collaborated with the cartoonist himself, Charles Shultz.

He was the author of more than sixty books, and although he maintained that they were really all about "one big thing," namely self-esteem, I insist that they were about "many big things." I urge the readers of this column to sample but several of his works, and I am certain that you will agree with me.

There are many other "big things" that I could enumerate: his generosity, his openness, his authenticity, his friendliness, his ability to get along with his adversaries and often convert them to his side, and, perhaps above all else, his courage to confront the issues of abuse in the Jewish community.

I close my remarks with one other "big thing," his soulful musical compositions. How appropriate it was to have been escorted to his final resting place with a song he composed, Hoshea et Amecha.

How apt is that tune as an antidote for our ubiquitous despondency!

How apt are its words: "Deliver Your people, and bless Your heritage. Tend to them and uplift them, forever."

And how well do the words for the tachash describe the persona of Rabbi Dr. Twerski: "Happy, and proud of his many colors"!

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Mishkan Boards Trace Their Yichus to the Family Trees

The pasuk says "You shall make the beams of the Mishkan of shittim wood, standing erect" [Shemos 26:15]. Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded to make the boards of the Mishkan out of shittim wood. Rashi says that the wood used for the Mishkan came from special trees that Yaakov Avinu planted in Egypt. Just prior to his death, he commanded his children to remove these trees and take the wood with them when they left Egypt. He prophesized that the Holy One Blessed Be He would in the future command to make a Mishkan, and that the wood from these trees he planted would become the boards for that Mishkan.

This Rashi is based on a Medrash in Sefer Bereshis, on a pasuk in Parshas Vayigash [Bereshis 46:1] On his way down to Egypt, Yaakov stopped in Beer Sheva. The Medrash says he went there to gather cedar wood that his grandfather Avraham had planted there many years earlier. This wood has a very long history. The Torah says that Avraham planted an Eishel in Beer Sheva [Bereshis 21:33]. He made his "hotel" there, and at that time he planted these trees. Yaakov, on his way to Mitzrayim, stopped in Beer Sheva and cut down those trees, taking them with him to Egypt, where he replanted them.

So, these trees from which the wood of the Mishkan was taken, come with a pedigree. Not

only do they go back to Yaakov Avinu, they go all the way back to Avraham Avinu.

With this background, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky explains the above cited pasuk [Shemos 26:15]. What is the meaning of the term "Atzei Shitim Omdim"? The Gemara [Succah 45b] explains that Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded to use wood that would last forever. They would not burn or be destroyed. They would never be captured. They would never warp or rot. Moshe was told "You will need the type of trees that will stand forever (that would be "omed l'olam u'l'olmei olmaya").

Moshe wondered, "How am I supposed to do that? How am I supposed to build with boards that I know for sure will never be destroyed and never be captured? It depends. If Klal Yisrael will behave, then the Mishkan will last. If they misbehave, the Mishkan will meet the same fate that the Batei HaMikdash met!" It appears that Moshe was being given a Mission Impossible!

The answer is that Moshe was being told: Do not take just any trees. Take the trees that Yaakov planted, which he received from Avraham Avinu. Those trees will last forever and ever. Since those trees were originally planted and used for a matter of mitzvah, they were used for Kedusha, they will last forever and ever. Something that is made "al taharas haKodesh", which is built from the beginning with the most pure and pristine of intentions, exists forever and ever.

This explains the famous Gemara in Maseches Bava Metzia [85b] that Rav Chiya stated that he was going to ensure that "Torah will not be forgotten from Israel." This was a bold statement. The reason we are here today learning Torah is because Rav Chiyah made a statement that he was going to do something that would ensure the eternity Torah. What did he do? He taught young children Torah. He taught children the five Chumashim and the six orders of the Mishna and they taught it to others, and that is how Torah lasted.

But what guarantee did he have? Maybe the children or grandchildren or great grandchildren of these students he taught would not carry on the tradition! The Gemara explains that Rav Chiya did not merely sit down with these children, open up a Chumash and teach them. Rather, he planted flax from which he made nets with which he caught deer. He then skinned the deer and he made hides. On the hides he wrote the Chamisha Chumshei Torah. Now, why did he go through all that trouble? He was not merely satisfied with buying parchment and writing the Torah scrolls himself. That was not good enough! He planted the flax to make the nets to catch the deer to procure the hides. That was the guarantee that this Torah would last forever. His motives were pure from the get-go. When

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that type of intense Kedusha is invested in a person's efforts, the results last an eternity.

There is a famous saying from the Gaon of Vilna: If the wood used in the ax handle used to chop down trees used to build a Beis HaKeneses came from a tree planted by a Shomer Shabbos Jew, people would never recite a prayer without Kavannah (intense devotion) in that shul. This is exactly the same concept. If something is pure and holy and pristine and infused with kedusha from the very beginning, it lasts forever and ever.

This, says Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, was the message to Moshe to build the Mishkan from Atzei Shittim OMDIM (that stand forever). You need to obtain the type of wood that will last forever and ever. From where can he obtain such wood? It is very simple. Do not go to the lumber yard and buy wood. Get the trees that Yaakov Avinu planted in Egypt after having first cut down the trees Avraham Avinu had planted by his Eishel in Be'er Sheva. Those trees, already used by Avraham to provide hospitality for wayfarers in his hotel, have been infused with kedusha from the beginning. They used those trees to build the Mishkan, and the fact is that the Mishkan was never destroyed. The First Beis HaMikdash was so much more glorious than the Mishkan, but it was built by non-Jews. Chiram, King of Tyre, contributed and sent workers. It was not pure, pristine, and unadulterated holiness. Certainly, the Beis HaMikdash had great Kedusha, but if you want to create something that will last forever, sanctity must be put into the structure from the very beginning.

That is why—this is not the custom here, but it is the custom in Yerushalayim and other places—when they take a child to Cheder for the first time to learn, they wrap him in a Tallis and bring him to the Cheder. Some Yerushalmi Jews go one step further, and they cover the child's eyes on the way to Cheder so that he should not see anything impure on the way to Cheder. Why? It is because you want that moment to be pristine, pure and holy. That can affect the child for the rest of his life.

Nothing Happens on Its Own

The pasuk "You shall make a Menorah of pure gold – miksha shall the Menorah be made" (Shemos 25:31) uses the passive language (tey'aseh – shall be made) rather than expressing the more common direct command (ta'aseh – make). Rashi comments on this: The Menorah was made on its own because Moshe had difficulty visualizing its appearance. The Menorah was so intricate with its flowers and cups and buds that Moshe could not figure out how to make it. Hashem finally told him to throw the ingot of gold into the fire, and it was miraculously made by itself. Moshe threw the gold into the fire and presto, out came the elaborate candelabra.

The Maharal in his Gur Aryeh asks a question on this Rashi from the Medrash Tanchuma.

The truth is that the Medrash Tanchuma internally has the same problem. On the pasuk in Parshas Beha'aloscha "V'zeh ma'aseh ha'Menorah..." (This is the workmanship of the Menorah...) [Bamidbar 8:4] the Medrash notes that every time the word "zeh" (this) appears in Chumash, it indicates pointing with a finger. On the pasuk "Zeh K-eli v'Anveyhu" (This is my G-d and I will glorify him) [Shemos 15:2] Chazal say that a handmaiden at the Red Sea could see things that the great prophet Yechezkel himself could not see. They were able to point: This is my G-d.

Here too, the Medrash states, the use of the word "V'Zeh" by the Menorah indicates that HaKadosh Baruch Hu pointed out to Moshe the exact appearance of the Menorah. The Maharal points out that this Medrash in Bamidbar seems to contradict what Rashi says here in Parshas Teruma. Our Rashi says that Moshe could not figure it out and the Menorah emerged from the fire by itself. The Medrash Tanchuma seems to indicate differently – that Hashem clearly pointed out the appearance of the Menorah to Moshe, so Moshe would know how to make it himself. Perhaps then Moshe tried and still had difficulty so he finally threw the gold into the fire and a menorah came out. However, from Rashi it sounds like it was totally "presto". There was not even an initial attempt by Moshe to make it, as implied by the Medrash.

The Maharal explains that there was a process. Moshe Rabbeinu needed to look at the Menorah, study it, and try to understand its structure. Then he tried to make it. But it did not work. At that point, Hashem told him – "Okay, throw it into the fire," and the finished product emerged without further effort.

The Maharal says there is a big lesson here: Nothing happens on its own. Even when a task seems hopeless, the person must make an effort by himself. Once the person makes the effort, then the Ribono shel Olam can give Siyata d'Shmaya (Help from Heaven). But if a person sits back with folded hands and just waits for a miracle to happen – it is not going to happen!

Rabbi Hartman, in his commentary on the bottom of the Maharal, cites the pasuk "...And the L-rd your G-d will bless you in all that you do." (Devraim 15:18) and quotes the Sifrei: I might think (that the blessing will come) even if the person sits and does nothing – therefore the Torah emphasizes: "All that you do." This means you need to make the effort.

The concept is the same when Moshe was commanded to count the Levi'im. Unlike the other tribes, Levites were counted from the time they were thirty days old. Moshe complained to the Ribono shel Olam: Do you want me to go into the tents of the nursing mothers with their new babies to count them? The Ribono shel Olam said, "No. Go to the

door of the tent. Once you get there, I will tell you how many babies are inside."

Why did Moshe need to go to the doors of the tents? He could have sat by the Mishkan, and Hashem could have given him a figure and he would have the number! The answer is that a person needs to make the effort. Even though it may be Mission Impossible, but the person needs to make the effort.

If there is one lesson that we learn in bringing up our children, it is this. Sometimes we feel that it is an impossible effort. How can we do it? The answer is we need to put in the effort and then the Ribono shel Olam will bless us with Divine Assistance.

One Story: Two Lessons

While we are on the subject of educating our children, I will relate a story someone recently told me. He asked me not to use the name of the individual. I happen to know the individual, and it is a beautiful story.

There was a Jew who passed away in his nineties. This Yid was responsible for Yiddishkeit, and specifically Torah Yiddishkeit, in a small town somewhere in America. He was the "go to" person for all matters of Torah communal life in that town. He built the shul, the Day School, not only financially but administratively. He was the layman that took care of everything. Today this community is a flourishing Jewish community because of his efforts decades ago.

He was not originally from that town. He was originally from another town. He told his children what motivated him to become this "Askan" (community leader), assuming the responsibility with all that it implies to build Torah in a small community. He said it is something that happened at his Bar Mitzvah. This person died in his nineties. This means his Bar Mitzvah was over eighty years ago in a small town in America.

Eighty-plus years ago in a small town in America, a Bar Mitzvah consisted of the following: You were called up for Maftir, you read the Haftarah, and that was it! There was no leining the whole parsha, there was no 'pshetel' in Yiddish, there was no 'pshetel' in English, there was no "Bo Bayom" (special celebration on the exact calendar day of his 13th birthday). The expression "Bo Bayom" did not enter the dictionary until the 1990s! That was a Bar Mitzvah in small town America circa 1930.

This Bar Mitzvah boy received Maftir in shul that day. After davening, he overheard two of the congregants talking to one another. One said – "the Bar Mitzvah boy did a really good job." The other one said back – "Yeah, he did a really good job, but let's see whether he comes back for Mincha!"

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In those days, you had a ceremony in the shul in the morning, but very few came back for Mincha in the afternoon. The first congregant said "He will come back for Mincha, because this boy is different!"

This Bar Mitzvah boy told his own children, decades later, that those words he heard that day "This boy is different" kept ringing in his ears his entire life. He always told himself "I am different! People expect more from me." It was these words that he heard when he was 13 years old which motivated him his entire life!

I happen to know the family – his siblings were not religious. This boy went off to Yeshiva, which was not a common practice in those days. Why did he do it? Because "this boy is different." He married a frum woman. Why? It was because "This boy is different!" He assumed the responsibility of building a community. Why? Because "This boy is different!"

Four words: THIS BOY IS DIFFERENT. They made a difference in a person's lifetime that changed a city. It changed a family. It changed generations. I know his children. I know his grandchildren. All Shomrei Torah u'Mitzvos. Bnei Torah.

The other lesson from this story goes back to the Jew in shul who made that comment. When he passed away and he went to Heaven, he was shown all the merits he accrued during his sojourn in the world below. This surely included the shul in this other fellow's town, and the school there, and all the people who were made from there. They will tell him: These are your zechusim (merits). He will say "What are you talking about?" I never stepped foot in that city! How can I get credit for those institutions? There must be a computer glitch here. You have the records mixed up!"

The Ribono shel Olam will tell him "I do not mix up records!" He will be told – it was the words you said at so and so's Bar Mitzvah "This Boy Is Different." They made all the difference in his life and in all that he accomplished.

These are the two important lessons of this story. (1) If a child knows he is different, it can make an impression and (2) saying even the smallest complement can change a person's life.

Dvar Torah

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

If you turn away from the needs of another person, you're turning away from the will of God. This is an important message emerging from Parshat Terumah. The Torah introduces us to the concept of the keruvim, the cherubs, angelic-styled three-dimensional figures emerging from the lid of the aron, the Holy Ark in the Sanctuary in the Wilderness. And the Torah tells us, "Ufeneihem ish el achiv," –

“Each one was facing the other,”

It was face to face contact. However, in the temple of Solomon as is described in the second book of Chronicles, Chapter 3, the Bible tells us,

“Ufeneihem labayit,” – the cherubs, the keruvim were both facing towards the inside of the Temple. They weren’t facing each other. Why this difference?

The Gemara in Masechet Bava Batra 99a explains that within the Sanctuary in the Wilderness, it was a time when the people of Israel were mostly keeping to the will of God, and this is represented by the keruvim facing each other. However during the days of the reign of King Solomon in general the people were rebelling against the word of God, and this is represented by the keruvim not facing each other.

So what emerges for us is that it is the will of Hashem that we should turn our faces towards others: we should be filled with compassion, live altruistic existences, ask what we can do for those who are in need. In the event however that we don’t face each other, that we turn our backs to each other, that is a time when we’re rebelling against the word of Hashem.

In the yevarechecha prayer, the Priestly Blessing, our Cohanim say, “Yisa Hashem panav eilecha,” – “May the Lord turn His face towards you. If you turn your face toward somebody, if you look that person in the eye, it means that you are relaxed in their presence, you’ve got nothing to hide, you feel comfortable with them and you are there for them in the way that you would expect them to be for you.

That is the blessing that the Cohanim give to us: that Hashem should look us in the eye, be comfortable with us, be proud of us and shower us with His blessings. Therefore, the keruvim in the wilderness represent a time when we face others, when we build our relationships with others, when we’re concerned for them and always try to do whatever we can to assist. That is a time when we are performing the will of Hashem. In the event however that we turn our backs on other people, that is a sure sign that we are going against the will of our Creator.

Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel **Encyclopedia of Jewish Values***

Terumah – the Unique Mitzvah of Tzedaka

Until now, in the Torah, Jews, as individuals and as a nation, have generally been on the receiving end from God. At the beginning of this Parsha, for the first time, God asks (requires?) Jews to give, rather than receive. And they generously give, donating the objects which helped create the Mishkan-Tabernacle. This is the first demonstration of the specific Mitzvah of Tzedaka, which the Jewish people have

always taken seriously, as well as the general obligation to give to, rather than take from, their society. It may still be true that Jews as a group give a higher percentage of Tzedaka-charity than any other group in the Western world. In addition to giving (10-20% of income) to a needy individual or organization, and the myriad of Jewish laws connected with this Mitzvah, of all 613 in Judaism, the Mitzvah-Commandment of Tzedaka-Charity is unique in certain of its attributes, which will demonstrate Tzedaka the most unusual of all the commandments.

Performing a Mitzvah-Commandment for an Ulterior Motive

In describing the verse instructing the Jew to give ten percent of produce to the poor, the Torah repeats in the verse the verb for tithing: “*Aser Ta-aser*” (Deuteronomy 14:22). On this extra, unnecessary verb, the Talmud states (Ta’anit 9a) that one should tithe to the poor for the purpose of becoming rich (since the letters of tithing and wealth are identical - *Ayin, Shin-Sin, Resh*), and the verse can then be read “tithe so that you can attain wealth”. This seems to imply that one’s motivation in giving charity in Judaism is not to please God or follow His commands, but, rather, in order that God reward monetarily the person fulfilling this commandment, and the Jew receives back from God much more than was donated. This notion contradicts the overarching attitude to serving God and performing commandments: a person should function as a servant (to God) without expectation of reward (Mishne Avot 1:3). And yet, the Talmud clearly says that one’s motivation in giving Tzedaka-charity can be for material gain and expected wealth.

The idea of ulterior motives in giving Tzedaka becomes even more pronounced in God’s own words to the people through the prophet Malachi (Malachi 3:10). God tells the Jews that if they bring the tithe, they can test God through this act and God promises that great wealth will follow. Thus, the verse actually encourages Jews to test God in performing this Mitzvah. Based on this unusual verse, the Talmud in several places (Rosh Hashana 4a, Bava Batra 10b, Pesachim 8a,) states that if a person conditions his Tzedaka-charity donation upon God’s response that his son will be cured of serious sickness and live, or upon his achieving the World to Come, then this person is considered a fully righteous individual. This implies that a person can withhold giving the promised donation until one’s son is healed and if the son’s health does not improve, a person’s promise to give Tzedaka is no longer obligatory. If a person were to condition performance of any other Mitzvah based on this kind of “deal” with God, it would be considered improper, blasphemous, and contrary to Jewish law. For example, if a man were to say, “I will only put on Tefillin after God makes me a rich man” or a woman were to say, “I will keep the Shabbat only once God gives me 5 healthy children,” that would be considered heretical! And yet,

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regarding the singular commandment of Tzedaka, that is not only acceptable, but the person is considered wholly righteous! It is totally legitimate, for example, to condition giving Tzedaka to an institution only if the building will be named in memory of one’s parents. Why this is legitimate only by Tzedaka is beyond the scope of this article (see the chapter in my book for possible explanations).

Chinuch (Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvah 424), a post-Talmudic commentary, reiterates that it is forbidden to test God in one’s actions in this world. He then continues to state categorically that the one exception to this rule is Tzedaka-charity, where one’s giving can indeed be provisional upon God’s compliance with a certain condition the giver specifies. Jewish law follows Chinuch, even though this idea remains counter-intuitive to the system of commandments. Tzedaka is an extremely powerful force in the world, writes the Shulchan Aruch. And while it is forbidden to test God and do a Mitzvah-commandment conditionally, Remah (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 247:4) states that the tithing for Tzedaka is the one area where a Jew can test God and give conditionally.

Priorities in Tzedaka-Charity

In every other area where the Jew is mandated to give something from his or her possessions, each Jew has the flexibility in choosing which individual to give to. Regarding the gifts of produce that went the Kohen-Priest or Levite, each Jew could decide which Kohen or Levite to give it to (Bartenura commentary on Mishna Demai 6:3). Similarly, concerning fines that went to the Kohen-priest in the Temple, the offending Jew could decide which specific Kohen to give to (Bartenura commentary on Mishna Challah 1:9). When an Israelite brought a sacrifice to the Temple, and certain parts of the animal were forbidden to be eaten by the Israelite but permitted to the Kohen-priest, the person who brought the sacrifice decided which Kohen would receive those parts of the animal due him (Tosefta, Pesach 2:13, Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 61:28). Even regarding the poor in ancient times, disbursement of what we today would call “Tzedaka-charity” was relatively straightforward. In an agrarian society, the Torah mandates that one corner of the field be set aside for the poor and produce that was dropped or forgotten in the field had to be left for the poor people to collect on their own (Leviticus 23:22, Deuteronomy 24:19). However, if given from the home, the owner could decide which poor person to give the produce to (Maimonides, Hilchot Matnot Aniym 6:7, 9, 10, 12). It was a simple and very orderly system of Tzedaka-charity.

Today, on the other hand, we no longer speak about distributing produce to the poor. Rather, we give money. And yet, the laws about whom to give first, which institution gets priority in Jewish Tzedaka-charity, or which group of

poor people has precedence, can confuse even a Torah scholar. The sources within Jewish law seem contradictory, unlike most other areas of Halacha. Part of the confusion about how to properly satisfy the obligation to donate funds in the Jewish community is that there are numerous statements in Jewish law, each stating that “this” cause or institution is the most important and takes priority over everything else in the distribution of Tzedaka.

They are:

Both Maimonides and Shulchan Aruch state that the most important Mitzvah in apportioning charity funds is to redeem those who were kidnapped (Maimonides, Hilchot Matnot Aniyim 8:10, Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah, 252:1.). This takes precedence over the hungry poor. The most important Tzedaka, states the Shulchan Aruch in a different place (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 249:15), is to donate funds to poor single girls so that they can have enough money to get married. In the next paragraph, the same Shulchan Aruch states (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 249:16) that some believe that donating to the community synagogue is more important than poor girls and is the greatest reason for giving charity in the Jewish community. Then the Shulchan Aruch quotes another opinion (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 249:16) that says that donating money to enable poor boys to learn Torah is the highest form of Tzedaka-charity. OR, continues Shulchan Aruch, donating to the poor who are sick is the highest Tzedaka.

So, we are left wondering which cause is indeed the most pressing. If a person has limited funds for Tzedaka donations, which cause takes precedence above all others -- redeeming captives or supporting the synagogue, poor girls needing to get married or poor boys needing to learn Torah? Or is the most essential need to donate to sick poor people so that they can regain their health (since there were no hospitals or medical insurance in Talmudic times or when the Shulchan Aruch was written)?

You and Your Family Come First

The verse (Deuteronomy 15:7) speaks about when poverty exists “within you.” Based on this verse and the Talmudic discussion, Rema (Rema on Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 61:28) in the Code of Jewish law rules that you (and your family) come first. If you are poor, then you come before anyone else and you give to yourself first, to get remove yourself and family from poverty. Mishne Berurah (Mishne Berurah commentary to Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 156:2), however, is quick to add that it is forbidden to rationalize in this area, and be lenient with your own needs, to give yourself more funds than you are entitled to. You are only permitted to give yourself enough funds for subsistence and to remove yourself from abject poverty before you are obligated to begin giving to others.

Final Priorities According to One Modern Decisor

Rabbi Asher Weiss discusses each category outlined above at length (Minchat Asher, Parshat Re-ah 21), and then tries to simplify the process by outlining a clear list of rules regarding priorities in giving. He concludes that supporting Torah learning takes precedence over supporting poor that are sick. But supporting the poor person that is sick takes precedence over supporting the synagogue, which takes precedence over supporting the poor in general. Rabbi Weiss then lists the six categories of Tzedaka support in order of importance: 1. Anything that involves possible loss of life is the first priority. This includes sick poor people who may die and redeeming captives. 2. Supporting the learning of Torah is the next priority. This includes supporting a Beit Midrash-House of Learning and buying any needed Torah books. 3. Poor who are ill are the next priority. This includes not only medical expenses but also all other expenses necessary to get them back to health. 4. Building and maintaining a synagogue is the next priority. However, Rabbi Weiss mentions that the Vilna Gaon and others disagreed. 5. Marrying off orphans is next. He says that with the enormous expenses today for a wedding and beginning a family, this priority may apply to any poor that cannot afford to get married. 6. Sustaining the poor of the Jewish people. The priority and order of precedence within this category should be followed according to the hierarchy outlined by the Shulchan Aruch as explained above.

*** This column has been adapted from a series of volumes written by Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel "The Encyclopedia of Jewish Values" available from Urim and Amazon. For the full article or to review all the footnotes in the original, contact the author at nachum@jewishdestiny.com**

Ohr Torah Stone Dvar Torah

Finding Happiness in Siberia

Rabbi Dr. David Rozenson

In the late 1990s, while still a student at Yeshivat Hamivtar, I had the unique privilege of traveling to the former Soviet Union to teach and lead educational seminars for the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and for Rabbi Adin Even Israel Steinsaltz obm.

As a part of my work, I headed an initiative in far-flung communities in Siberia where there were many Jews but few possibilities for Jewish education. Crossing the great expanse of Siberia in planes, trains and in old, creaky Soviet cars together with Russian-speaking educators, we created a Jewish studies program where participants on a monthly basis received newly written materials on different areas of Jewish thought. The educational program was buttressed by four annual seminars in which hundreds of program participants came together for a week of study that included Shabbat and a separate program for children.

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It was at one of these seminars that took place in an old soviet retreat center in the city of Irkutsk (those of us old enough may remember the odd sounding city name from playing Risk) that I spent Shabbos of parashat Teruma.

Friday morning, the sun had still not fully risen as I join a circle of young to middle-aged men and women, already sitting with brown-colored notebooks, the kind with narrow blue squares instead of lines, pens in hand. The Soviet education system at work.

Its freezing cold outside, but the central heating inside the large room with brown-colored couches, thick double windows, and an odd set of leafy plants in large white plastic pots placed strategically to cover up cracks in the padded and water-stained wallpaper, caused the room to be stifling hot. Open up a small window, and the wind would attack; keep it closed and you begin to sweat. It was a constant battle. Despite it all, we somehow managed to meet and study for hours, with breaks for strong coffee and thick-dough pastries filled with cabbage (I think) in-between.

Before beginning to introduce and learn the parasha, we spoke about the month of Adar and I quoted the Talmud in Ta'anit 29a (a page of which, together with some Rashi's, I had translated into Russian):

Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel ben Shilat, said in the name of Rav: Just as when the month of Av begins we diminish our happiness, so too, when Adar begins, we increase in our happiness.

We then read Rashi, who clarifies that the reason that we increase our happiness is that these are days that represent miraculous times for the Jewish nation, referring to the miracles of Purim and Pesach, a time that will always shine with goodness for the Jewish people.

Dima, a young man with an aged cap pulled over a full head of hair, who was following the reading with a pencil moving over each word, looked up at me in surprise. Dressed in an oversized striped denim jacket on top of a nylon blue tracksuit with white stripes running along the sides and the words “Made in the USA” emblazoned on one pant leg, Dima was a man with questions.

“Wait, Purim is Purim” he said, “but how can I rejoice? I have all these problems, all these worries, how can I be told to increase my joy?” I looked at Dima and knew I needed an answer that would speak to him. The Jewish nation could wait.

I took a deep breath, looked up at the eyes waiting for a response, and said, Dima, let us look at this week's parasha. Through Moshe, Hashem speaks to the children of Israel and commands them, “וְיִקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה” (“they should collect for Me, or on My behalf, a gift”) –

Hashem doesn't say, "give me a portion" but "take for me a portion."

Why the odd manner of speech? Perhaps what the Torah is teaching us is that when a person does something for another, helps another, in truth what he is doing is "taking for himself!"

There are people, I tried to explain to Dima and his thick plastic glasses and Made in America tracksuit, for whom happiness is getting something. If a person buys a new car, a new dress, a new tracksuit, then happiness will come. Unfortunately, this kind of happiness is not long lasting. Tomorrow, there will be a new car model, the next day, a new American-made tracksuit, the next day, another new toy.

There are people who have many things, but that does not mean that they are happy. There are others, who live in modesty but are happy people. Happiness, the Torah is teaching us, is not what one has, but what one gives. When we think of others, care for others and for society around us, we get back far more in return.

The month of Adar is the month of joy for us all. It is a time when we give presents to others – and we discussed the laws and meaning of mishloach manot – and that is precisely the message. By enabling others to have joy, we bring happiness to ourselves.

But, I added, it is not the Marxian or communist-type of giving. Rashi immediately points out that the words "For Me" means that the portion has to be collected in the name of Hashem. The person who does the collecting, has to do it for a higher purpose, not for himself. That is when we experience true happiness.

Years later, I would see the commentary of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks obm: Hence the unusual Hebrew word for contribution, Terumah, which means not just something we give but something we lift up. The builders of the sanctuary lifted up their gift to God, and in the process of lifting, discovered that they themselves were lifted.

This was my answer to Dima and the group of Russian Jews in Siberia. In his inquisitive manner, Dima then asked me whether when we give to others, we make a blessing like we do over tefillin or other mitzvot. And again, when we give, can we do so with an ulterior motive? He asked me many questions, including the best one I got that weekend: where, in my opinion, is the best place to invest? My answers to these questions, all of which are connected to our parasha, I will leave for another time...

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Rabbi Daniel Stein

Our Core Values

Parshas Terumah discusses the construction of the Mishkan and all of its utensils, but undoubtedly the centerpiece of the entire project was the aron. The Mishkan is referred to as the "Mishkan of testimony" (Shemos 38:21) by virtue of the fact that it housed the "tablets of the testimony" (Shemos 31:1) which were contained within the aron. The Ramban writes that the entire purpose of the Mishkan was to provide a resting place for the aron, and thereby recreate on an ongoing basis the divine interaction experienced at Har Sinai. This is perhaps alluded to in the letters of word "terumah" itself which the Zohar Hakadosh (Parshas Korach) rearranges as "Torah - M" or "Torah - 40," because by entering into the Mishkan a person was meant to encounter the Torah which was received over a period of forty days at Har Sinai.

However, the pasuk (Shemos 25:10 - 11) states, "they shall make an aron of acacia wood etc. and you shall overlay it with pure gold from inside and from outside." Rashi explains that the aron consisted of three parts. It had a golden shell on the inside, a golden shell on the outside, and a wooden core. If in fact the aron was the focus and purpose of the entire Mishkan compound, why was the aron designed primarily out of wood and not solid gold like so many of the other items found in the Mishkan, such as the shulchan or the menorah?

Rav Simchah Shepps (Moresches Simchas HaTorah) explains that while gold is certainly more precious than wood, wood is more stable than gold. Any metal when heated become flexible and pliable. Under the right circumstances it can be bent and reshaped depending upon the will and imagination of the sculptor. However, wood is stiff and rigid, while it can be cut and broken it does not bend. The aron had a wooden core in order to demonstrate that the moral and ethical principles of the Torah do not bow to the winds of time or to the whims of society. The mitzvos of the Torah represent empirical truths that just like wood can't be manipulated or bent even when exposed to heat or extreme pressure. This is so critical, because without the anchor of yiras shamayim and a commitment to the core values of the Torah and mitzvos, almost anything can be justified when it furthers a political purpose or social agenda.

In Parshas Shemos, after Pharaoh decreed that all of the Jewish baby boys should be drowned in the river, the pasuk states (Shemos 1:17), "the midwives, however, feared Hashem, so they did not do as the king of Egypt had spoken to them, but they enabled the boys to live." The Torah indicates that the Jewish midwives defied the orders of Pharaoh out of a profound sense of yiras shamayim. However, why does one have to possess yiras shamayim to realize that it is wrong to kill innocent

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babies? What could be more abhorrent and repugnant than murdering children in cold blood? Rav Mordechi Gifter (Pirkei Torah) observes that in the absence of yiras shamayim, without a firm commitment to the core values of the Torah, even the worst atrocities can be explained and misrepresented as a necessary evil, when it aligns with a preferred political agenda or social narrative.

In fact, this lesson was already taught to us by Avraham Avinu earlier in Parshas Vayeira. When Avraham arrived at the home of Avimelech in Gerar he presented Sarah as his sister and not as his wife. After discovering the truth, Avimelech was incredulous and asked Avraham to explain his actions and why he felt compelled to lie about Sarah's identity. Avraham responded, "for I said, surely, there is no fear of Hashem in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife." The Malbim writes that Avraham was making the argument, that in a world of moral relativism, where there are no absolutes, and the line between right and wrong is flexible and fluid, even an otherwise moral and ethical people can be pressured into justifying criminal activity when it is expedient.

Similarly, at the beginning of Parshas Shemos, the pasuk describes Pharaoh as (Shemos 1:8) "a new king arose over Mitzrayim who did not know about Yoseph." According to one opinion in the Midrash it was in fact the very same Pharaoh but he had a change of heart and adopted "new" policies. The Midrash proceeds to record the reason for his transformation and new perspective. When the Egyptian people initially asked Pharaoh to enslave the Jews, he refused, because he sincerely had gratitude to Yosef for all that he contributed to Egyptian society. He acknowledged that without Yosef, Egypt would likely not have been able to persevere and prosper throughout the seven years of famine, and therefore, he was unwilling to mistreat Yosef's descendants. However, the Egyptian people threatened to replace Pharaoh with a "new king" who would comply with their demands, and indeed they succeeded in removing Pharaoh from office for a period of three months. Ultimately, in order to remain in power, Pharaoh relented. His moral fortitude caved and he quickly became the merciless and evil despot the people had hoped and cheered for.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (Darash Moshe) derives from here that without an uncompromising dedication to yiras shamayim and the moral compass of Torah values, everything is negotiable and everything is up for discussion, even basic human decency. Therefore, as frum Jews, above all other political and social considerations and priorities, we must pledge our allegiance to the principle of yiras shamayim and the eternal and immutable morals and values of the Torah, which are relevant to all situations and circumstances, and do not bend even under intense pressure.

The Gemara (Shabbos 104a) states that one of the miraculous aspects of the luchos was that they were legible on both sides, as the pasuk says (Shemos 32:16), "tablets inscribed from both their sides, on one side and on the other side they were inscribed." The Talmud Yerushalmi (6:1) even quotes one opinion that the luchos were not actually tablets but rather cubes, and all of the Ten Commandments were written on all four sides of each cube. This is perhaps hinted to in the language of the pasuk, "meezeh u'meezeh heim kesuvim - on one side and on the other side they were inscribed", which could alternatively be read as, "mem bazeh u'mem bazeh - forty on this one and forty on that one." Rav Yechezkel Abramsky (Chazon Yechezkel) suggests that the Ten Commandments were legible from all directions and at all angles, in order to indicate that the mitzvos of the Torah apply equally in all times and in all places.

It seems that Klal Yisrael failed to appreciate this fully during the times of Megillas Esther. The pasuk (Esther 4:5) states that Esther summoned Hasach "ladaas mah zeh v'al mah zeh - to know what this was and why this was." The Gemara (Megillah 15a) understands from the language of the pasuk that Bnei Yisrael at time of the Megillah ignored the fact that the luchos were legible from both sides and "meezeh u'meezeh heim kesuvim." In what way did the Jews of that time violate this unique aspect of the luchos?

The answer can be found in the Gemara (Megillah 12a) and Medrash (Shir Hashirim 7) which state that the Jews at the time of the Megillah were punished because they attended the party of Achashveirosh where they enjoyed food that was prohibited because it was prepared by non-Jews (bishul akum). How could they have deliberately eaten food which they knew was bishul akum? Rav Yosef Salant (Be'er Yosef) suggests that the Jews of the time reasoned that it was simply not possible for them to create the political alliances and strategic relationships they needed without attending affairs and functions where bishul akum would inevitably be served. They felt that the prohibition of bishul akum was meant for a different time and place, and was not relevant to their political climate and current situation. Therefore, by eating at the meal of Achashveirosh, they disregarded one of the central messages of the luchos. They failed to recognize that the luchos were legible on both sides because the mitzvos of the Torah are axiomatic truths which speak to us equally in every generation, and must not be bent or manipulated for the sake of political or social aspirations.

Bayamim haheim baseman hazeh, in our times as well we need to internalize the lesson of the luchos, that mitzvos of the Torah are axiomatic truths that apply equally in all times and situations. And just like the Aron was made out of wood which can't be bent or twisted even when heat or external pressure are applied, so

too our commitment to the core values of the Torah must be consistent and uncompromising even when confronting the most significant challenges of our time.



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to: ravfrand@torah.org

date: Feb 2, 2022, 11:47 AM

subject: Rav Frand - Once It's Your Money, It Is Hard to Part With It
Parshas Terumah

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1194 Your Father's Nussach Or Your Grandfather's Nussach. Good Shabbos!

On the pasuk "Speak to the Children of Israel that they may take for Me an offering..." (Shemos 25:2) the Yalkut Shimoni asks: How is it that the Creator of Heaven and Earth, who created and owns everything that exists in the universe, needs man to offer him anything? The Yalkut answers that He clearly does not need our gifts but rather the words here, "Speak to the Children of Israel (Daber el Bnei Yisrael) are similar to the words elsewhere in the famous Haftorah of Parshas Nachamu (Yeshaya 40:2). Dabru al Lev Yerushalayim v'Kir'u eileha - Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call upon her - which are words of appeasement. The connotation of Daber in our pasuk is not a stern commandment, but rather it implies appeasement—cajole them into giving money to the Mishkan.

Apparently, the expression Dibur can also imply piyus (appeasement). The striking fact about this Yalkut Shimoni is that after the Destruction of the Bais Hamikdash (the time period that the prophet Yeshaya addresses in that Haftorah), Klal Yisrael certainly needed to be spoken to in a soft and encouraging voice. They had just lost everything. The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed and exiled. They were in galus and they were starving. They needed words of nechama (consolation). So, we understand Dabru al Lev Yerushalayim v'Kir'u eileha

to be words of appeasement.

But over here in Parshas Teruma, why does the Medrash say that Moshe needed to speak to them softly, to mollify them and appease them? What is the comparison between merely asking people for money and offering them comfort after an unprecedented national tragedy?

The Tanna d'Bei Eliyahu shares the same concept. "Once Bnei Yisrael accepted the Dominion of Heaven with joy by saying 'All that Heaven speaks, we will do and we will listen' - the very next parsha is "Speak to the Children of Israel and take for Me an offering." Here too, one of the most glorious moments in the history of the Jewish people—their utterance of the famous pledge "Na'aseh v'Nishmah"—is seen as a trigger for the Almighty giving them yet a further opportunity to draw close to Him: Now that they are inspired and they are rearing to go - now is the opportune time to ask them that they should take for Me a Teruma offering. As if to say, "Strike while the iron is hot."

What is the interpretation in both of these teachings of Chazal?

The answer is that we see from here one of the great truths of life: It is very hard to get people to part with their money. This does not come as a surprise to anyone who has ever tried to raise money for anything. People like their money, and they don't want to part with it. Therefore, the short answer to this question is that the reason they needed appeasement (piyus) is because they were being asked for money. Likewise, the reason Moshe was told "chap arayn" (e.g. — Act now! They just said Na'aseh v'Nishma, quickly go ask them now for money) is because if that mood of enthusiasm and spiritual elevation is allowed to dissipate, it will be much harder to get them to part with their gold and silver.

This nugget of wisdom is encapsulated by Shlomo HaMelech in Mishlei (19:22): "Longing for a person is his kindness (ta'avas adam chasdo), but a pauper is better than a (rich) man who deceives (v'tov rash m'ish kazav)." The commentaries explain this pasuk. Many times, we think that if we had tons of money, how generous would we be! Oh how much money would I give to every needy institution in the world!

Every once in a while, a Power Ball lottery reaches \$300,000,000 or \$350,000,000. Have you ever fantasized what you would do with that money? I have! I would not quit my job. I love my job. I would still work because there are certain things I like to do. But I would like a Learjet because I hate going through TSA and having to take my shoes off each time I board a commercial flight. Beyond the Learjet, I am not sure what I would want. Perhaps, an apartment in Eretz Yisrael, perhaps in a prime location in the Old City. Maybe a couple of other things, but that is basically it.

Let us take off \$20,000,000 for these few items. I am still left with \$330,000,000. What am I going to do with that? Everyone thinks, "I would build for every Mosad in town the kind of building they would like to have. I would pay all the Rebbeim fantastic salaries. I would give away huge sums of tzedaka. I would have my own gabbai tzedaka to distribute my wealth appropriately."

Shlomo HaMelech says that the Ribono shel Olam knows that whenever someone has something in the abstract—the 350 million dollars that he is GOING TO WIN—then he is a great baal tzedaka. But when people actually have the 350 million dollars, something happens to them. This is what the pasuk testifies: ta'avas adam chasdo. Everyone pretends that his desires are to dispense chessed (if and when they had the wherewithal), but the Almighty says "I would rather have an honest poor man than a rich man who has hallucinated prior to obtaining his windfall." Once you get it, then it becomes YOURS and it becomes very hard to part with.

On the one hand, we could think - why would it be so hard for Klal Yisrael to part with their money? Did they earn it? Did they work for it? They received the silver and gold as presents. They all left Egypt with donkeys laden with gold and silver. They were fabulously wealthy from the spoils of Egypt and the spoils of the Yam Suf. Furthermore, for what did they need money? Their garments did not wear out. They did not need to buy clothes and they did not need to buy food. They didn't need to pay health insurance, rent or tuition. For what did they need the money?

The answer is that “It is my money now.” Maybe it was just a gift from Hashem, but “It is my money now.” Once it is YOUR money, it is hard to part with it.

This is an apocryphal story, but the story goes that Stalin, the dictator of the Soviet Union, was trying to inculcate his comrades into the concepts of Communism—everyone needs to share. He would ask them “If you had two cows, what would you do with the two cows?” They had to say “I would take one for myself and give one to Comrade Stalin.” “If you had two houses, what would you do with them?” “One for myself and one for Comrade Stalin.” “If you had two cars, what would you do with them?” “One for myself and one for Comrade Stalin.” “And if you had two planes...?” “One for myself and one for Comrade Stalin.”

Finally, he asked, “And if you had two chickens what would you do?” The response was “I would keep both chickens.” Stalin asked, “You were willing to give me the cows, the houses, the cars, and the planes, but not the chicken not! Why is that?” The comrade answered: “True. Because I don’t have a cow, a house, a car, or a plane, but I have two chickens!” If you have the two chickens, you don’t want to part with the two chickens because you have it, and once you have it you can’t part with it.

Someone once sent five hundred rubles in cash to the Yeshiva of the Chofetz Chaim in Radin. I assume that the Polish Postal Service was no more reliable than the United States Postal Service. A fellow put five hundred rubles into the mail and sent it to the Chofetz Chaim. This was not a check, not a money order – CASH!

The Chofetz Chaim asked the secretary to find out what the story was behind this donation. The secretary investigated and contacted this donor based on his return address and asked him why he sent five hundred rubles through the mail. He said, “I was about to make a deal and I thought to myself, “If this deal goes through, I am going to give five hundred rubles to the Yeshiva in Radin.” The deal went through, but it was already late in the evening when the deal went through. The banks were closed. I could not get a money order. I could not get a check. At first I figured I would wait until the next morning to send the money in the normal fashion. But then a little voice went off in my head: “And if you gave fifty rubles to the Chofetz Chaim’s Yeshiva, they would not be happy?” I started thinking that fifty rubles is a lot of money. Why do I need to give five hundred? I saw myself weakening. I saw that if I waited until the next morning, it would not even be fifty rubles, it would be five rubles. So, I took the cash and put it all in an envelope and sent it.”

He knew that if he waited any longer, he would not be able to part with his money because that is the way human beings are. It is hard to part with your money.

That is what the Medrash says: Speak to the Children of Israel—Lashon piyus, a language of appeasement and mollification, as it is written, “Speak to the heart of Jerusalem”.

Rav Aharon Kotler zt”l once commented that (according to Chazal) the pasuk in Tehillim refers to those who observe Shmittah as Giborei Koach (Tehillim 103:20), mighty people. The Torah promises that if someone keeps Shmittah, then in the sixth year he will see a bountiful crop that will last him for the sixth year, the seventh year, and even the subsequent year. If he just had a major windfall in his sixth year’s crop, why is it so hard to take off the seventh year, such that one who does so is called a mighty person?

Rav Aharon said that this is human nature. The farmer will say, “Yes I had a windfall last year – double and triple my normal income, but imagine if I work the seventh year also. How much larger an income will I have then?” It is very difficult to walk away from that. That is why the Shomrei Shevi’is are called Giborim.

This is what Shlomo HaMelech meant when he said those words “Ta’avas adam chasdo” – A person can talk big, but “v’tov rash m’ish kazav” – the Ribono shel Olam prefers the poor person, rather than the rich person who talks big, but when he writes the check, he suddenly becomes a deceitful man.

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This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion.

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to: targumim@torah.org

date: Feb 3, 2022, 10:41 AM

subject: **Reb Yeruchem** - Hiddenness Is Not Only Divine

Parshas Terumah

Hiddenness Is Not Only Divine

Make an Aron of shitim-wood[2]

Apparently puzzled[3] (as Bezalel was!) by the directive to make an Aron before the mishkan that was meant to house it was commanded, Chazal[4] find a powerful lesson about contraction. Iyov, they tell us, had reminded his friends that all their praise of Hashem could not do justice to Him; they merely reflected “the far edges of His ways.”[5] Elihu, one of Iyov’s companions, observed, “Sha-dai – we have not found Him to be of such great strength.”[6] Reading those words should elicit a gasp. They sound blasphemous!

Rather, Chazal continue, what Elihu meant is that we do not find that He uses His full strength in dealing with human beings who would be overwhelmed by it. He does not deal oppressively against people, asking them to do the impossible. Instead, He relates to them according to the strengths and abilities of each individual.

At Matan Torah, HKBH did not overpower the Bnei Yisrael gathered at the foot of the mountain. “The voice of Hashem is spoken with power.”[7] With power – but not His power. The power of His voice was appropriate to the listener, but hardly an indication of His real strength.

Similarly, add Chazal, when Hashem made known His decision to establish a place for His Shechinah on earth, Moshe was puzzled. The cosmos cannot possibly contain Him. How could a small mishkan? “He who sits hidden, He is elevated over all His creatures!”[8] Hashem answers him: “Indeed, ‘in the shade of Sha-dai He will dwell.’” He agreed to limit Himself – consistent with the Name Sha-dai, or the One who limits Himself by saying dai/enough – not only to a mishkan, but to a single square amah, upon which the Aron stood.

What does it mean that His dwelling on earth is with the Name Sha-dai? It means that Hashem reveals Himself with a strict measure. He reveals Himself according to need, and according to the preparedness and ability of a person to receive. Nothing more. While His Kavod fills the earth, it is not where most of it can be found. The rest remains hidden. All that shows is according to this measure. He restrains Himself – He says dai/enough to the rest.

We have said before that descriptions of Hashem’s midos are meant to instruct us how to live. What is the takeaway from His selective self-revelation? The gemara[9] tells us that a rebbi should utilize concise

language to teach his students. Rashi says that this is for the benefit of the students, whose memories will have an easier time preserving the lessons. This is certainly true, but not the end of the story. It is even more important for the rebbi! To him as well applies the maxim “He who sits hidden, is elevated.” He should reveal only as much of his knowledge as is necessary for his students. The rest should remain within.

The rebbi whose words flow on and on without real need, is not the elevated one, who sits hidden. There is something profoundly wrong about his inability to say “Enough!” And that means that his Torah is not really Torah!

1. Based on Daas Torah, by Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, Shemos pgs. 258-260
2. Shemos 25:10 ↑ 3. See Yefei Toar to Shemos Rabbah 34:1 ↑ 4. Shemos Rabbah 34:1 ↑ 5. Iyov 26:14 ↑ 6. Iyov 37:23 ↑ 7. Tehillim 29:4 ↑ 8. A reinterpretation of Tehillim 91:1 ↑ 9. Pesachim 3b ↑ Reb Yeruchem © 2020 by Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209 <http://www.torah.org/learn@torah.org> (410) 602-1350

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date: Feb 3, 2022, 8:34 PM

The Labour of Gratitude

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

There is an important principle in Judaism, a source of hope and also one of the structuring principles of the Torah. It is the principle that God creates the cure before the disease (Megillah 13b). Bad things may happen but God has already given us the remedy if we know where to look for it.

So for instance in Chukat we read of the deaths of Miriam and Aaron and how Moses was told that he would die in the desert without entering the Promised Land. This is a terrifying encounter with mortality. Yet before any of this, we first hear the law of the red heifer, the rite of purification after contact with death. The Torah has placed it here to assure us in advance that we can be purified after any bereavement. Human mortality does not ultimately bar us from being in the presence of Divine immortality.

This is the key to understanding Terumah. Though not all commentators agree, its real significance is that it is God's answer in advance to the sin of the Golden Calf. In strict chronological terms it is out of place here. It (and Tetzaveh) should have appeared after Ki Tissa, which tells the story of the Calf. It is set here before the sin to tell us that the cure existed before the disease, the tikkun before the kilkul, the mending before the fracture, the rectification before the sin.

So to understand Terumah and the phenomenon of the Mishkan, the Sanctuary and all that it entailed, we have first to understand what went wrong at the time of the Golden Calf. Here the Torah is very subtle and gives us, in Ki Tissa, a narrative that can be understood at three quite different levels.

The first and most obvious is that the sin of the Golden Calf was due to a failure of leadership on the part of Aaron. This is the overwhelming impression we receive on first reading Exodus 32. We sense that Aaron should have resisted the people's clamour. He should have told them to be patient. He should have shown leadership. He did not. When Moses comes down the mountain and asks him what he has done, Aaron replies:

“Do not be angry, my lord. You know how prone these people are to evil. They said to me, ‘Make an oracle to lead us, since we do not know what happened to Moses, the man who took us out of Egypt.’ So I told them, ‘Whoever has any gold jewellery, take it off.’ Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this Calf!”

Ex. 32:22-24

This is a failure of responsibility. It is also a spectacular act of denial (“I threw it into the fire, and out came this Calf!”).[1] So the first reading of the story is of Aaron's failure.

But only the first. A deeper reading suggests that it is about Moses. It was his absence from the camp that created the crisis in the first place.

The people began to realise that Moses was taking a long time to come down from the mountain. They gathered around Aaron and said to him, ‘Make us

an oracle to lead us. We have no idea what happened to Moses, the man who brought us out of Egypt.’

God told Moses what was happening and said:

“Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have wrought ruin.”

Ex. 32:7

The undertone is clear. “Go down,” suggests that God was telling Moses that his place was with the people at the foot of the mountain, not with God at the top. “Your people” implies that God was telling Moses that the people were his problem, not God's. He was about to disown them.

Moses urgently prayed to God for forgiveness, then descended. What follows is a whirlwind of action. Moses descends, sees what has happened, breaks the tablets, burns the Calf, mixes its ashes with water and makes the people drink, then summons help in punishing the wrongdoers. He has become the leader in the midst of the people, restoring order where a moment before there had been chaos. On this reading the central figure was Moses. He had been the strongest of strong leaders. The result, though, was that when he was not there, the people panicked. That is the downside of strong leadership.

But there then follows a chapter, Exodus 33, that is one of the hardest in the Torah to understand. It begins with God announcing that, though He would send an “angel” or “messenger” to accompany the people on the rest of their journey, He Himself would not be in their midst “because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.” This deeply distresses the people. (See Ex. 33:1-6)

In verses 12-23, Moses challenges God on this verdict. He wants God's Presence to go with the people. He asks, “Let me know Your ways,” and “Pray let me see Your glory.” This is hard to understand. The entire exchange between Moses and God, one of the most intense in the Torah, is no longer about sin and forgiveness. It seems almost to be a metaphysical inquiry into the nature of God. What is its connection with the Golden Calf?

It is what happens between these two episodes that is the most puzzling of all. The text says that Moses “took his tent and pitched it for himself outside the camp, far from the camp” (Ex. 33:7). This must surely have been precisely the wrong thing to do. If, as God and the text have implied, the problem had been the distance of Moses as a leader, the single most important thing for him to do now would be to stay in the people's midst, not position himself outside the camp. Moreover, the Torah has just told us that God had said He would not be in the midst of the people – and this caused the people distress. Moses' decision to do likewise would surely have doubled their distress. Something deep is happening here.

It seems to me that in Exodus 33 Moses is undertaking the most courageous act of his life. He is, in essence, saying to God: “It is not my distance that is the problem. It is Your distance. The people are terrified of You. They have witnessed Your overwhelming power. They have seen You bring the greatest empire the world has ever known to its knees. They have seen You turn sea into dry land, send down food from heaven and bring water from a rock. When they heard Your voice at Mount Sinai, they came to me to beg me to be an intermediary. They said, ‘You speak to us and we will hearken, but let not God speak to us lest we die’ (Ex. 20:16). They made a Calf not because they wanted to worship an idol, but because they wanted some symbol of Your Presence that was not terrifying. They need You to be close. They need to sense You not in the sky or the summit of the mountain but in the midst of the camp. And even if they cannot see Your face, for no one can do that, at least let them see some visible sign of Your glory.”

That, it seems to me, is Moses' request to which this week's parsha is the answer.

“Let them make for Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst.”

Ex. 25:8

This is the first time in the Torah that we hear the verb sh-ch-n, meaning “to dwell,” in relation to God. As a noun it means literally, “a neighbour.” From this is derived the key word in post-biblical Judaism, Shechinah, meaning God's immanence as opposed to His transcendence, God-as-One-who-is-

close, the daring idea of God as a near neighbour.

In terms of the theology of the Torah, the very idea of a Mishkan, a Sanctuary or Temple, a physical “home” for “God’s glory,” is deeply paradoxical. God is beyond space. As King Solomon said at the inauguration of the first Temple, “Behold, the heavens, and the heavens of the heavens, cannot encompass You, how much less this House?” Or as Isaiah said in God’s name: “The heavens are My throne and the earth My foot-stool. What House shall you build for Me, where can My resting place be?” (Is. 66:1)

The answer, as the Jewish mystics emphasised, is that God does not live in a building, but rather in the hearts of the builders: “Let them make for me a Sanctuary and I will dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8) – “among them,” not “in it.” How, though, does this happen? What human act causes the Divine Presence to live within the camp, the community? The answer is the name of our parsha, Terumah, meaning, a gift, a contribution.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying ‘Tell the Israelites to bring Me an offering. You are to receive the offering for Me from everyone whose heart moves them to give.’

Ex. 25:8

This would prove to be the turning point in Jewish history. Until that moment the Israelites had been recipients of God’s miracles and deliverances. He had taken them from slavery to freedom and performed miracles for them. There was only one thing God had not yet done, namely, give the Israelites the chance of giving back something to God. The very idea sounds absurd. How can we, God’s creations, give back to the God who made us? All we have is His. As David said, at the gathering he convened at the end of his life to initiate the building the Temple:

Wealth and honour come from you; you are the ruler of all things ... Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

I Chronicles 29:12, 29:14

That ultimately is the logic of the Mishkan. God’s greatest gift to us is the ability to give to Him. From a Judaic perspective the idea is fraught with risk. The idea that God might be in need of gifts is close to paganism and heresy. Yet, knowing the risk, God allowed Himself to be persuaded by Moses to cause His spirit to rest within the camp and allow the Israelites to give something back to God.

At the heart of the idea of the Sanctuary is what Lewis Hyde beautifully described as the labour of gratitude. His classic study, *The Gift*,^[2] looks at the role of the giving and receiving of gifts, for example, at critical moments of transition. He quotes the Talmudic story of a man whose daughter was about to get married, but who had been told that she would not survive to the end of the day. The next morning the man visited his daughter and saw that she was still alive. Unknown to both of them, when she hung up her hat after the wedding, its pin pierced a serpent that would otherwise have bitten and killed her. The father wanted to know what his daughter had done that merited this Divine Intervention. She answered, “A poor man came to the door yesterday. Everyone was so busy with the wedding preparations that they did not have time to deal with him. So I took the portion that had been intended for me and gave it to him.” It was this act of generosity that was the cause of her miraculous deliverance. (Shabbat 156b)

The construction of the Sanctuary was fundamentally important because it gave the Israelites the chance to give back to God. Later Jewish law recognised that giving is an integral part of human dignity when they made the remarkable ruling that even a poor person completely dependent on charity is still obliged to give charity.^[3] To be in a situation where you can only receive, not give, is to lack human dignity.

The Mishkan became the home of the Divine Presence because God specified that it be built only out of voluntary contributions. Giving creates a gracious society by enabling each of us to make our contribution to the public good. That is why the building of the Sanctuary was the cure for the sin of the Golden Calf. A society that only received but could not give was trapped in dependency and lack of self-respect. God allowed the people to

come close to Him, and He to them, by giving them the chance to give.

That is why a society based on rights not responsibilities, on what we claim from, not what we give to others, will always eventually go wrong. It is why the most important gift a parent can give a child is the chance to give back. The etymology of the word Terumah hints at this. It means not simply a contribution, but literally something “raised up.” When we give, it is not just our contribution but we who are raised up. We survive by what we are given, but we achieve dignity by what we give.

[1] In Deuteronomy 9:20, Moses discloses a fact which has been kept from us until that point: “God also expressed great anger toward Aaron, threatening to destroy him, so, at that time, I also prayed for Aaron.”

[2] Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006).

[3] Maimonides Hilchot Shekalim 1:1, Mattenot Ani'im 7:5.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ztz"l was a global religious leader, philosopher, the author of more than 25 books, and the moral voice for our time. Until 1st September 2013 he served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, having held the position for 22 years. To read more from Rabbi Sacks, please visit www.rabbisacks.org.

from: **Rabbi Chanan Morrison** <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>

date: Feb 3, 2022, 9:37 AM

subject: **Rav Kook on Terumah:** "I Will Dwell in Their Midst"

Terumah: "I Will Dwell in Their Midst"

Why did God command us to construct a Temple?

When introducing the Temple and its vessels, the Torah states the purpose for this holy structure:

“Make for Me a Sanctuary - and I will dwell in their midst” (Exod. 25:8).

The goal of the Temple was to enable God’s Presence to dwell in the world. The Mikdash was meant to “open up” channels of communication with God: enlightenment, prophetic inspiration (ruach hakodesh), and prophecy (nevu'ah).

Three Channels

Rav Kook distinguished between three different channels of Divine communication. Each of these channels corresponds to a particular vessel in the Temple.

1. The first conduit relates to the holiest vessel in the Temple: the Holy Ark in the Holy of Holies, which housed the luchot from Mount Sinai. From the Ark emanated the highest level of prophetic vision, the crystal-clear prophecy that only Moses was privileged to receive. As God told Moses:

“I will commune with you there, speaking to you from above the ark-cover, from between the two cherubs that are on the Ark of Testimony” (Exod. 25:22).

This unique level of prophecy is the source of the Torah’s revelation to the world.

2. The second conduit corresponds to the vessels outside the Holy of Holies, especially the Menorah, a symbol of enlightenment and wisdom. This conduit for disseminating the wisdom of Israel extended beyond the inner sanctum and encompassed the Kodesh area of the Temple.

3. The final conduit relates to the Altar of Incense. This is the channel of ruach hakodesh. The phenomenon of prophetic inspiration - which originates in the innermost depths of the soul - parallels the inner service of incense, which was performed in secret within the Sanctuary (דָּבָר שֶׁבְּהַשְׂאִי - see Yoma 44a).

The Atonement of Yom Kippur

The special Temple service performed on Yom Kippur seeks to attain complete atonement. It aspires to cleanse and purify all three levels of communication between man and God.

For this reason, the High Priest would sprinkle blood from the Yom Kippur offerings on precisely these three locations in the Temple:

Between the poles of the Holy Ark;

On the parochet-curtain that separated the Kodesh - including the Menorah - from the Holy of Holies;

On the Incense Altar.

(Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. I, pp. 167-168). Illustration image: "The Prophecy of the Destruction of the Temple" (James Tissot, 1886-1894)

from: Rabbi Kaganoff <ymkaganoff@gmail.com>

to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com

date: Feb 1, 2022, 4:35 PM

subject: Taking out the Sefer Torah attached

Taking out the Sefer Torah

Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

The Mishkan surrounds the Aron, which contains the Torah...

Question #1: Confused genealogist asks: Which?

Which Keil erech apayim should I say?

Question #2: Caring husband/son asks: Who?

My wife is due to give birth shortly, and I am saying kaddish for my father.

On the days that the Torah is read, should I lead the davening ("daven in front of the amud"), open the aron hakodesh, or do both?

Question #3: Concerned davener asks: When?

When do I recite Berich She'mei?

Background

Prior to taking the sefer Torah out of the aron hakodesh, various prayers are recited, all of which have been part of our liturgy for many hundreds of years. This article will discuss the background and many of the halachos of these prayers.

Introduction

Reading the Torah, which is a mitzvah midrabbanan, is actually the earliest takkanas chachamim that was ever made. It was instituted by Moshe Rabbeinu in his capacity as a community leader, which placed on him the responsibility of creating takkanos when necessary. As a matter of fact, one of Moshe Rabbeinu's names is Avigdor, which refers to his role as the one who created fences to protect the Jewish people (see Midrash Rabbah, Vayikra 1:3). In this instance, after he saw what happened at Refidim (see Shemos 17:1), he realized that three days should not go by without an organized studying of the Torah. Therefore, he instituted that the Torah be read every Monday, Thursday and Shabbos (Bava Kamma 82a; Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah 12:1).

Over a thousand years later, Ezra expanded this takkanah to include a reading on Shabbos Mincha, in order to provide those who did not study Torah regularly an extra boost of Torah learning. Ezra also instituted that when the Torah is read, three people are called up, each aliyah contains at least three pesukim, and the entire reading should be a minimum of ten pesukim. (There is one exception to this last rule -- on Purim, we read the story of Vayavo Amaleik that is exactly nine pesukim. This is because the topics both before and after this section have nothing to do with the Amaleik incident, and it is therefore better to keep the reading focused rather than add an extra posuk.)

Keil erech apayim

On weekdays, prior to removing the sefer Torah on days that tachanun is recited, we say a short prayer that begins with the words, Keil erech apayim, "Hashem, You who are slow to anger and are full of kindness and truth, do not chastise us in Your anger! Hashem, have mercy on Your people (Israel), and save us (hoshi'einu) from all evil! We have sinned to You, our Master; forgive us, in keeping with Your tremendous compassion, O, Hashem." The prayer Keil erech apayim should be said standing, because it includes a brief viduy, confession, and halacha requires that viduy be recited standing (Magen Avraham, introduction to Orach Chayim 134).

Am I German or a Pole?

In virtually every siddur I have seen, two slightly variant texts are cited, the one I quoted above, which is usually recorded as the "German custom" or "German version" and a slightly variant version described as the "Polish version." Some siddurim provide greater detail, presenting the "first" version

as the "custom of western Germany, Bohemia and parts of 'lesser' Poland," and the "second" version, as the "custom of 'greater' Poland." In one siddur, I saw the an even more detailed, halachic explanation, describing the "first" version as the custom of the areas in and near "western Germany, Prague, Lublin and Cracow," and the second text for the areas around "Posen and Warsaw."

But, if your family came from somewhere other than Germany, the Czech Republic (where Bohemia and Prague are located) or Poland, which one do you recite? Many people are bothered by this question, myself included, since my father was born in Ukraine, as were all my grandparents and greatgrandparents on his side of the family, and my mother's side of the family was from Lithuania.

Eidot hamizrah

A more intriguing question is that both versions of this prayer are in eidot hamizrah siddurim, and their custom is to recite both, "German" version first. I found this or a similar custom mentioned in several rishonim from very different times and places -- in the Machzor Vitri, of 11th century France, the Kol Bo of 13th century Provence, and the

Avudraham of 14th century Spain. Some rishonim record a custom of reciting both versions, but having the chazzan recite the first and the community respond with the second (Machzor Vitri). According to either of these approaches, the question is why recite both prayers, since they are almost identical. The answer given by the Machzor Vitri is that the first version uses the word hoshi'einu whereas the second uses the word hatzileinu. Both of these words translate into English as "Save us." However, their meaning is not the same; hoshi'einu implies a permanent salvation, whereas hatzileinu is used for a solution to a short-term problem. The Machzor Vitri, therefore, explains that the first prayer is that Hashem end our galus. After asking for this, we then ask that, in the interim, He save us from our temporary tzoros, while we are still in galus.

Ancient prayer

The facts that these prayers are in both Ashkenazic and Eidot hamizrah siddurim, and that rishonim of very distant places and eras are familiar with two different versions, indicate that these prayers date back earlier, presumably at least to the era of the ge'onim. Clearly, although our siddur refers to a "German custom" and a "Polish custom," both versions were known before a Jewish community existed in Poland -- earlier than when the words "Polish custom" could mean anything associated with Jews!

Atah hor'eisa

In some communities, reading of the Torah is introduced by reciting various pesukim of Tanach, the first of which is Atah hor'eisa loda'as ki Hashem Hu Ha'Elokim, ein od milevado, "You are the ones who have been shown to know that Hashem is The G-d, and there is nothing else besides Him" (Devorim 4:35). The practice among Ashkenazim is to recite the pesukim beginning with Atah hor'eisa as an introduction to kerias haTorah only on Simchas Torah. However, in eidot hamizrah practice, Atah hor'eisa is recited every Shabbos, just before the aron is opened, and a shortened version is recited any time that tachanun is not said. (Essentially, these pesukim are said instead of Keil erech apayim, which is only recited on days that tachanun is said.)

According to the ruling of the Ben Ish Chai, as many pesukim should be recited as people who will be called to the Torah that day. Therefore, on Shabbos, the posuk, Atah hor'eisa, is the first of eight pesukim; on Yom Tov, the first two pesukim, including the posuk that begins with the words Atah hor'eisa, are omitted (Ben Ish Chai year II, parshas Tolados, #15). On weekdays when no tachanun is recited, only three pesukim are recited, beginning with the posuk, yehi Hashem Elokeinu imanu ka'asher hayah im avoseinu, al yaaz'veinu ve'al yi'tesheinu (Melachim I 8:57). The Ben Ish Chai emphasizes that, apparently because of a kabbalistic reason, it is incorrect to recite more pesukim than the number of people who will be called to the Torah that day. Most, but not all, eidot hamizrah communities follow this approach today.

Opening the aron

Having completed the recital of either Keil erech apayim, Atah hor'eisa, neither or both, the aron hakodesh is opened. The poskim rule that the aron hakodesh should not be opened by the chazzan, but by a different person, who also removes the sefer Torah. (In some minhagim this is divided between two honorees, one who opens the aron hakodesh and one who takes out the sefer Torah.) The chazzan himself should not remove the sefer Torah from the aron hakodesh, as it is a kavod for the sefer Torah that someone else remove it from the aron and hand it to the chazzan. The honor is in that the extra people involved create more pomp and ceremony with which to honor the reading of the Torah (Aruch Hashulchan, Orach Chayim 282:1, based on Mishnah, Yoma 68b).

The opener

A minhag has developed recently that the husband of a woman who is in the ninth month of pregnancy should open the aron hakodesh and close it, afterward. The idea that opening the aron is a segulah for a smooth and easy opening of the womb is recorded in eidot hamizrah kabbalistic authorities (Chida in Moreh Be'etzba 3:90; Rav Chayim Falagi in Sefer Chayim 1:5). To the best of my knowledge, this custom was unheard of among Ashkenazim until the last thirty or so years. As I see it, this custom has value in that it might ameliorate a husband's feelings that he is at least doing something to assist his poor wife when she goes through highly uncomfortable contractions. And, it also makes his wife feel that he did something for her, so there may be a sholom bayis benefit. As to whether there is any segulah attached to this practice, I will leave that for the individual to discuss with his own rav or posek.

Caring husband

At this point, let us address the second of our opening questions:

"My wife is due to give birth shortly, and I am saying kaddish for my father. On the days that the Torah is read, should I lead the davening ("daven in front of the amud"), open the aron hakodesh, or do both?"

Let me explain the question being asked. Well-established practice is that an aveil davens in front of the amud (leads the services) on days other than Shabbos or Yom Tov as a merit for his late parent. (There are many variant practices concerning which days are considered a "Yom Tov" for these purposes; discussion of this issue will be left for another time.) Based on the above information, our very caring husband/son is asking: since he should not take both honors of leading the services and of opening the aron hakodesh, which honor should he take?

In my opinion, he should lead the services, which is a custom going back hundreds of years, whereas the custom of taking the sefer Torah out of the aron hakodesh is mentioned much more recently, and was not even practiced by Ashkenazim until a few years ago. However, I will leave it to the individual to discuss this issue with his rav or posek.

Berich She'mei

At this point, we can discuss the third of our opening questions: "When do I recite Berich She'mei?"

The Aramaic words of Berich She'mei comprise a prayer that is recorded in the Zohar (parshas Vayakheil). When we trace back the customs on which days this prayer is recited, we find many different practices:

1. Recite it only before Shabbos Mincha reading.
2. Recite it on Shabbos at both morning and Mincha readings.
3. Recite it not only on Shabbos, but also on Yom Tov.
4. Recite it on Shabbos, Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh, but not on weekdays or fast days (other than Yom Kippur).
5. Recite it whenever the Torah is read.
6. A completely opposite custom -- never recite it at all.

Allow me to explain the origins of these various practices.

1. Only Shabbos Mincha

Although I saw different sources mention this practice, I did not see any explanation.

I can humbly suggest two possible reasons for this custom. One is that since the kerias hatorah of Shabbos Mincha was not part of the original takkanah of Moshe, but was established subsequently to provide those who did not

learn Torah during the week the opportunity to study some extra Torah while they were in shul for davening, the kerias hatorah represents the entire Jewish people studying Torah together, creating a level of kedusha that justifies recital of the beautiful prayer of Berich She'mei.

Another option: Shabbos has three levels of sanctity, Friday evening, Shabbos morning and Shabbos afternoon. There are several ramifications of these differences, including that the central part of the three shemoneh esrei tefilos of Shabbos -- Maariv, Shacharis and Mincha -- are three completing different prayers (as opposed to all other days when the main parts of these three tefilos are identical). These three tefilos represent three historical Shabbosos and their spiritual ramifications:

(1) Maariv, or, more accurately, the Friday evening part of Shabbos, represents the Shabbos of creation.

(2) Shabbos morning represents the Shabbos of the giving of the Torah.

(3) Shabbos afternoon represents the future Shabbos of the post-redemption world.

These three aspects manifest themselves also in the three meals of Shabbos, and, for this reason, seudah shelishis is traditionally approached as having the pinnacle of spirituality. This explains why Shabbos Mincha is the time that the prayer, Berich She'mei, specifically addresses.

2. Only Shabbos, but both morning and Mincha

This approach is quoted in the name of the Arizal -- presumably, it has to do with a level of kedusha that exists only on Shabbos. (See also Magen Avraham, introduction to 282).

3. Only Shabbos and Yom Tov

4. Only Shabbos, Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh

These two customs are both based on the concept that Berich She'mei should not be recited on a weekday, but is meant for a day when there is special sanctity. This is based on the words in Berich She'mei, Berich kisrach, "May Your crown be blessed." In kabbalistic concepts, we praise Hashem in this special way only on Shabbos and Yomim Tovim, and that is why the kedusha in nusach Sefard for Musaf begins with the words keser yitnu, which refers to Hashem's crown.

I saw this practice quoted in the name of the Arizal and the Chida, and most eidot hamizrah siddurim include Berich She'mei prior to the Shabbos and Yom Tov readings, but not prior to weekday reading.

Many authorities note that those who follow this practice regarding Berich She'mei should also recite it on Rosh Chodesh, since the practice is to recite the words keser yitnu also as part of the kedusha of Rosh Chodesh (Ben Ish Chai year II, parshas Tolados, #15).

5. Always

This is the common practice among Ashkenazim and in nusach Sefard (Elyah Rabbah, 141; Be'er Heiteiv, Pri Megadim, Machatzis Hashekel, Mishnah Berurah; all at beginning of 282).

The Seder Hayom, an early Sefardic kabbalist, mentions the laws of reciting Berich She'mei when he discusses the laws of reading the Torah on weekdays. From this, the Elyah Rabbah (134:4) notes that the Seder Hayom appears to hold that Berich She'mei should be recited whenever the sefer Torah is taken out of the aron hakodesh. In other words, he disagrees with the approach followed by the other mekubalim mentioned, the Arizal and the Chida.

6. Not at all

In some communities in Germany, the practice was not to recite Berich She'mei at all. There appears to be a historical reason why not, based on the words of the prayer Berich She'mei itself, which states, lo al bar elohin samichna, "We do not rely on the 'sons of G-d.'" Apparently, some of Shabsai Tzvi's proponents claimed that the term "sons of G-d" alluded to Shabsai Tzvi, and, for this reason, it was decided to omit the entire prayer. Several sources quote this position in the name of the Noda BeYehudah, although I have been unable to find any place where he wrote this. It is certain that the Noda BeYehudah was strongly opposed to the introduction of kabbalistic ideas into our tefilos; for example, he attacks very stridently the custom, which he refers to as "recently introduced and very wrong," of

reciting lesheim yichud prior to fulfilling mitzvos (Shu't Noda BeYehudah Orach Chayim 2:107; Yoreh Deah #93).

Those who do recite Berich She'mei assume that this term bar elohin refers to the angels, and they certainly exist, just as it is certain that it is prohibited to pray to them.

When to say it?

When is the best time to recite the prayer Berich She'mei? In a teshuvah on this subject, Rav Moshe Feinstein notes that the Zohar prayer does not mention specifically whether it should be said before the Torah is removed from the aron hakodesh or afterward. However, the Sha'ar Efrayim, authored by Rav Efrayim Zalman Margolios, one of the great early nineteenth century poskim, rules that the optimal time to recite Berich She'mei is after the sefer Torah has been removed from the aron hakodesh, and this is the conclusion that Rav Moshe reaches. In other words, it is preferred that the person being honored with taking the sefer Torah out of the aron hakodesh should do so as soon as practical, and then hold the sefer Torah while Berich She'mei is recited. Someone who was unable to recite Berich She'mei then, can still say it until the sefer Torah is opened to lein (Seder Hayom, quoted by Elyah Rabbah 134:4).

Conclusion

In the introduction to Sefer Hachinuch, the author writes that the main mitzvah upon which all the other mitzvos rest is that of Talmud Torah. Through Torah learning, a person will know how to fulfill all of the other mitzvos. That is why Chazal instituted a public reading of a portion of the Torah every Shabbos, twice, and on Mondays and Thursdays. Knowing that the proper observance of all the mitzvos is contingent on Torah learning, our attention to kerias haTorah will be heightened. According to the Torah reading the great respect it is due should increase our sensitivity to the observance of all the mitzvos.

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Weekly Parsha TERUMAH 5782

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

It is interesting to note the choice of verbs used by the Torah, regarding the collection of materials that will be necessary in the building of the Mishkan in the desert of Sinai. The Torah places emphasis on the collectors and takers of the donations and does not emphasize the intent on the part of the givers. It is true that the Torah instructs Moshe that he should take from those who have a heart that is willing to voluntarily give.

The emphasis in the verse is that everything should be taken on behalf of God and the holy noble project which is being undertaken – the building of a physical Tabernacle that will have within it the ability to somehow capture the spiritual and moral greatness of the Torah and of the people of Israel.

I have been in Jewish public life for well over 65 years. In those years, I have been engaged in building schools, synagogues, Torah learning platforms, book publishing and film production. I can testify that without raising funds and collecting money from others to sponsor and facilitate these projects, it would be impossible to see any to fruition. So, one must learn and train oneself to become a taker.

For many years, I foolishly dreamt that, somehow, I would win the lottery or otherwise become wealthy enough to sponsor the projects that I had in mind to accomplish with my own funds. I would never have to ask anyone for money to fulfill my ambitions and complete my projects. As you can well understand, Heaven has mocked my dreams of personal wealth, as all projects have required intensive and continuous fundraising on my part. Since, by nature, I never have liked to ask people for favors or donations, all of this has been a trying experience.

However, the great Rabbi Yosef Kahaneman taught me a valuable lesson during the years that I was able to accompany him in Miami Beach on his

fundraising visits and forays. He taught me that the taker who was asking for the money was really the one that was doing the ultimate favor for the giver who was writing the check. He used to tell me every morning before we journeyed to visit people, that we were going to do a great favor today for these Jews, by requesting their help in building Torah in the land of Israel. And he said this to me in sincerity. Even when we were rebuffed, and for various reasons left empty-handed, he would remark to me that some people just did not know how to grasp an opportunity and appreciate the favor that is being done for them.

Heaven instructs Moshe to help others participate in projects of eternity and holiness. And I imagine that this is the proper attitude that all who raise funds for noble causes should possess.

Shabbat shalom

Rabbi Berel Wein

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Parshas Terumah - Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Moises ben Daniel and Estrella bat Freja. Sponsored by Jose Moreno.

Mi Casa es Su Casa

Speak to Bnei Yisroel and they shall take for Me a portion from every man whose heart will motivate him [...] (25:2).

The first Rashi (ad loc) in this week's parsha makes a cryptic comment on this verse: "for Me" means dedicated to My name. Many of the commentators (e.g. Maharal in the Gur Aryeh etc.) wonder what exactly Rashi is clarifying. In other words, what in this possuk bothered Rashi to the point where he felt it necessary to say that taking something for Hashem means dedicating it to His name?

There is a fascinating Gemara (Pesachim 112a) that lists the seven directives by which R' Akiva charged his son R' Yehoshua to abide. One of those directives is to never enter one's own home suddenly. Rashbam (ad loc) quotes the Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 21:8) that R' Yochanan would make his presence known before entering his own home (presumably by knocking or making some other sound to announce his arrival and intent to enter).

The Midrash says we learn this from next week's parsha, which describes the vestments of the Kohen Gadol. One of these garments was the me'il (a robe-like article of clothing), which had seventy-two bells sewn onto its bottom hems. The Torah explains: "It shall be on Aharon to minister; its sound shall be heard when he enters the sanctuary before Hashem..." (28:35). That is to say, the bells ringing announced the Kohen Gadol's presence as he entered the sanctuary. The Midrash says that from here we see that upon entering a home one has to announce his presence. This would also explain R' Akiva's directive to his son.

However, this requires further clarification: Obviously if one is entering another person's home one cannot simply barge in, and this can readily be seen from the Kohen Gadol being required to wear ringing bells as he entered Hashem's "house" via the sanctuary. But how can Rashbam see from this Midrash that one must knock on the door when entering one's own home?

From here we see that the Mishkan isn't Hashem's house; it is our house. Yes, the Mishkan is designated to be used as the place for the presence of the Shechina to occupy, but the Shechina is coming to stay in our house. Thus, the Shechina is actually a guest in the house we built for it. This is similar to homeowners who add an "in-laws quarters" onto their property designated for the use of their family. They may be called "in-laws quarters," but ultimate ownership stays with the homeowner.

From here we now understand a fundamental principal of being a host; anyone who is an invited guest to our home is entitled to his own privacy and space. That is, in order for a guest to feel completely comfortable I must

relinquish some of my space and designate it as theirs. Therefore, when entering one's own home – while there are others inside – you must honor their presence and their space by making your presence known before entering.

This is the same message that Rashi is teaching us at the beginning of this parsha; the gifts collected to build the Mishkan weren't to acquire a house for Hashem nor to buy a piece of property for Hashem. These gifts were for us to build a home within our community that was designated for Hashem's presence.

Emotional Dissonance

You shall make an Aron of shittim wood [...] and you shall make a golden crown all around (25:10-11).

You shall make a Shulchan of shittim wood [...] and you shall make a golden crown all around (25:23-24).

You shall make a Mizbeach on which to bring the incense [...] and you shall make a golden crown all around (30:1-3).

The three holy vessels mentioned above, the Aron, Shulchan, and Mizbeach, were ringed with a golden "crown." In Hebrew, this crown is referred to as a "zeir." The Gemara (Yoma 72b) poses an interesting question: "Rabbi Yochanan asked, the word is read as zeir (crown) yet it is written as zar (stranger)!" In other words, the proper way to have written the word zeir is with a yud between the zayin and the reish, without a yud the word could be read as zar. So, R' Yochanan wants to know, why did the Torah choose to spell it differently than it was meant to be read?

R' Yochanan answers the question with a somewhat cryptic statement: "If one merits (to properly study) the Torah it becomes a crown (zeir) for him, but if he does not merit it then it becomes estranged (zar) to him." R' Yochanan's statement is a bit puzzling. In general, when one receives something he then has it, and if not then he just doesn't have it. For example, if someone were to get a promotion then he has it and it may even be a "crowning" achievement. But if he doesn't get a promotion then the only result should seemingly be that he wasn't promoted. Why does R' Yochanan say that if one doesn't merit the Torah then it becomes estranged to him?

We find a similar statement by marriage: The Gemara (Yevamos 63a) says, "R' Elazar said 'What is meant by the verse 'I will make him a helper opposite him (Bereishis 2:18)'?' If man merits it she will be a helpmate, if not she will oppose him."

We see from this Gemara an interesting lesson: when something is intrinsic to who you are and a part of your very being – like a wife – and you merit a proper relationship, then you have something amazing. When you don't merit a proper relationship it is far, far worse than not having a relationship at all. A terrible marriage damages the very core of both the husband and the wife.

The same is true by the Torah. The Torah is meant to be intrinsic to who we are. If we don't merit the Torah it becomes estranged to us and we begin to fight it. Anyone who has worked in Jewish communal affairs knows how true this really is. For example, most cities that have issues with putting up an eruv or establishing a new shul find little opposition from the non-Jewish populace. It is almost always the virulently anti-religious segment of the Jewish population who puts up the biggest fight and court challenges.

The reason for this is exactly what the Gemara is teaching us; the Torah is meant to be an intrinsic part of us and it isn't possible to have a non-relationship with it. You either have an amazing and fulfilling life with it or you, God forbid, have a terrible and antagonistic relationship to the Torah without it. This, by its very definition, means you will fight it every opportunity you have. Hashem wants each and every one of us to be crowned by the Torah; as the Gemara in Yoma (ibid) says, the crown of the Torah is there waiting for anybody who wants to pick it up and make it their own.

1 – Topic – The GR"A's Pshat in the Ketores

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Terumah. The Vilna Gaon in his Pirush on Shir Hashirim talks much about topics related to the Mishkan and today I would like to share with you three thoughts that come from the Gaon. One regarding the Ketores, one regarding the Kerashim and one regarding the Keruvim. Three thoughts. The GR"A's words are like K'torah Mi'sinai, really very clear and revealing thoughts.

Let us start with the Ketores. 25:6 (בְּשָׂמִים לְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה, וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים). Many Meforshim ask why it mentions the Besamim for the (קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים). The Ketores after all is a type of Korban. Items brought as a Korban are not listed. The beginning of Parshas Terumah lists things which are needed for the building of the Mishkan and not for the use of the Mishkan. Therefore, when it mentions the (שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה) we understand the (קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים) is for the building, the (קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים) needs an explanation.

The GR"A in his Pirush on Shir Hashirim says the following. I should be Makdim that it should say Samim Lik'tores Hasamim, why Besomim Lik'tores Hasamim? At any rate the GR"A says the following. In Parshas Ki Sisa we have the Parsha of the Ketores which I hope you say every morning. (וַיֹּאמֶר ר' אֵל מֹשֶׁה קַח לָךְ סַמִּים נְטֹף וְשִׁחַלְתָּ וְהִלְבֵּנָה סַמִּים וְלִבְנָה זָכָה בְּדֹבֶד יִהְיֶה) 30:34. It mentions the different parts of the Ketores.

We know that there are 11 ingredients in the Ketores, yet the Torah mentions only 4 (נְטֹף וְשִׁחַלְתָּ וְהִלְבֵּנָה סַמִּים וְלִבְנָה זָכָה). The Siman is an abbreviation Shulchan – (הִלְבֵּנָה), (לִבְנָה), (שִׁחַלְתָּ) and (נְטֹף). Those are the four that are mentioned. The question is why does it mention 4 and it doesn't mention all 11. The Gemara learns from a Ribui that there are 11, but the Torah only mentions specifically 4.

The GR"A explains the following as Poshut Pshat in the Ketores. The Ketores is made out of 11 ingredients. ((א) הַזָּרִי. (ב) הַצִּפּוּרָן. (ג) הַתְּלִבְנָה. (ד) הַלִּבְנָה)). The first four are seventy portions (measures) each which total 280. Those four form the bulk of the Ketores. The entire Ketores is 280 Maneh of those four and 88 Maneh of the other seven. Says the GR"A there is a major difference. You know why the Torah mentions 4? Those 4 are the Samim (ק) (לך) סמים נטף ושחלת והלבנה סמים וליבנה זכה. It is not Besomim but Samim. Sam is the essence of different plants or whatever particular item it is made from. The Sam is the essence of it. Those 4 says the GR"A that is the Ketores. Those 4 are the Samim of the Ketores, the Etzem Ketores, the core Ketores. Then there are seven other ingredients, the other 7 parts that are added and they are added to give a proper pleasant fragrance and to enhance the Ketores. Meaning to say, you need all 11 but the 4 are the core Ketores. Those are the 4 mentioned in the Torah. The other 7 are meant to enhance and improve on the Ketores. Mimeila says the GR"A the Torah only mentions 4, the 4 that we call Samim.

Coming back to Parshas Terumah, it says (בְּשָׂמִים לְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה, וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים). The four that are the core Korban, they are not mentioned. The seven that are Machshirin, they are things that make the Ketores be good, they are mentioned. Just like everything else here they are the Machshirin, they are the things that adorn or develop the Ketores.

So now we have an understanding. Every morning you should be saying at the very least even if you don't say all of the Korbanos, the 8 Pesukim of the Korban Tamid and the 5 Pesukim of the Ketores which begin Shemos 30:34 (וַיֹּאמֶר יְרֵנָה אֵל-מֹשֶׁה קַח-לָךְ סַמִּים, נְטֹף וְשִׁחַלְתָּ וְהִלְבֵּנָה, סַמִּים, וְלִבְנָה זָכָה: בְּדֹבֶד, יִהְיֶה). (30:35). You can learn it by heart it is not hard, those 5 Pesukim. Notice that it only mentions 4 of the 11. That is the GR"A's insight, the Pshat in the Ketores.

2 - Topic – The GR"A's Pshat in the Kerashim

An amazing insight of the GR"A. Rashi brings that Yaakov Avinu prepared the wood for the Kerashim and the way Rashi brings it Yaakov Avinu planted the Arazim in Mitzrayim so that when the Yidden leave they would have wood ready to go. Of course it needs an explanation why Yaakov Avinu planted it as opposed to just having the Jews buy wood like they bought other things. Well maybe wood was not available in the Midbar. Still you can prepare wood in Mitzrayim?

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Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Terumah 5782

Here the GR"A says an incredible thing. One piece of the GR"A is well-known but there is more to it. This GR"A is in his Likutim in the beginning of Bi'urai Hazohar (his Biurim to the Zohar) and the GR"A asks that Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and his Talmidim they went out to fields to connect to HKB"H. What they call Tachal Tapuchim, an apple orchard. Why did they go out to fields, why weren't they in the Beis Medrash or Beis Hak'neses, why did they go outdoors? The Ari went outdoors to greet the Shabbos. Why outdoors why not indoors?

The GR"A says the following. He says Chok Hu B'teva. G-d put a rule into the world that a place that has Kedusha, a place that is going to be a place of elevating people in Kedusha has to have walls that are made B'kedusha. The place has to be prepared for Kedusha.

The GR"A says that the influence on those who make the building that you are in when you sit and learn has an influence on the ability of those that are inside to be able to grow. Most famously, the GR"A says this about Rav Chiya in the Gemara in Bava Metziah where he says that he would plant flax and make nets to catch deer to use their skin to make Chumashim for children to learn. Why the whole process? We want the whole process to be B'kedusha V'tahara. When a process is done with Kedusha V'tahara then the learning is a purer learning.

In Even Shlomo Perek Daled, Rav Chaim Volozhin brings that Sefarim should be printed in a printing press of an Adam Kasher because that is Mashpia that the learning should go well. The more Kosher the physical part of the building you are in, the physical Sefer that you are learning, the more Kosher it is the more there is growth and ability to learn. Therefore, says the GR"A they went outside to connect. Rav Shimon Bar Yochai's highest level of Kedusha was outdoors. It wasn't in a building where he would be limited by the lack of Kedusha in those who put up the building.

This GR"A opens our eyes to a Pele. In Melachim Beis we find that Elisha and his Talmidim building a Beis Medrash to learn in. Building with axes and chopping wood. A Davar Pele! Why didn't they hire workers to do it while they were sitting and learning? The answer is this answer. Elisha was a Navi, they were on a Madreiga of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai plus. They wanted a building so they built it themselves and that building is the building that is able to give the proper Kedusha to the people that are inside.

Of course it goes without saying, people have to be careful not to G-d forbid have money which maybe stolen or maybe gotten improperly and use that to build a Shul to build a Beis Medrash, it is not going to be Matzliach. There won't be Kedusha in something which is improper. It has to be done in the best Ofen.

There is a Sefer Shiras Dovid from Rav Dovid Heksher who brings this GR"A and he adds and explains that is why Shidduchim are outdoors at a B'air. We know Chazal say in a number of places in the Torah where we find Shidduchim. We find it in Parshas Shemos 2:15. Rashi brings (למד מיעקב) שמואל הלך לו וזוגו על הבאר that Moshe went to the (באר) for a Shidduch because that is where Shidduchim are found.

The Maharal on that Posuk says Sham Makom Shefa. It is a place of a Shefa of Beracha. Why? According to the GR"A we understand it is outdoors where there is a natural Shefa, it is a Makom that is not inhibited by what people do. People didn't even dig the Bor, it is a (באר), it is a natural source of water. HKB"H's building so to speak and it brings Beracha.

I don't understand. Chazal say this. Why when people go out on dates, why don't they think of going to the places where there is water. I would think that that would be the normal thing to do. I remember my first date I went to the Ferry. I took the person who would ultimately be my Kallah and my wife, but I took her on the Ferry to Liberty Island and that was our date. We went to water. Why did we go to water? Chazal say go to water so I went to water. It definitely beats a lounge in a hotel.

I know. It is in middle of the winter and it is cold and you can't do it. Okay. But when you could do it, it is what Chazal say to do. Why isn't everybody doing it? I don't know. Such a strange thing. The one piece of advice on dating we find in Chazal and we find it in Rashi in Chumash about where to go on dates and it is ignored. Anyway, it is not a Chiyuv. You can do what

you like but Chazal say (שנזדווג לו זוגו על הבאר) and the Shiras Dovid says it fits with this GR"A.

3 – Topic - The GR"A's Pshat on the Keruvim

This GR"A I don't where it is in its Mekor but I saw it in the Pachad Yitzchok on Pesach in the section called Kuntres Rishimus, Maimar Vav, Os Beis (Page Shin Lamed). Rav Hutner brings from the GR"A something quite fascinating. We know that Moshe Rabbeinu had two Keruvim that were on the Aron. We also know that Shlomo Hamelech built two Keruvim besides those two that were in the Kodesh Hakadashim. Moshe's two Keruvim were on top of the Aron. Shlomo Hamelech's two Keruvim stood in the Kodesh Hakadashim and also their wings were spread out over the Aron. So there were two sets of Keruvim.

When it says in the time of the Churban the two Keruvim were M'urav Zeh Im Zeh, people are aware of Chazal saying that at the time of the Churban they saw the Keruvim hugging each other. The Kasha is the Aron wasn't there. Melech Yoshiahu already hid the Aron so how were there Keruvim? The answer is that Moshe's Keruvim were hidden but Shlomo Hamelech's Keruvim were still there.

The GR"A has a wonderful insight into why Shlomo Hamelech built two Keruvim and he says the following. The Keruvim were not just decorative, not just a Cheftza Shel Mitzvah, they were the source of Torah She'baal Peh. We know that Moshe Rabbeinu got Nevua everywhere, but the Nevua that was instruction of Halachos of Torah She'baal Peh he got Mi'bain Shnei Hakeruvim as it says B'feirush in the Posuk. That is why the Keruvim were the source of Ahava, when Klal Yisrael behaved they were hugging each other and looking towards each other. When Klal Yisrael didn't behave G-d forbid it was different. Because the source of Ahava, the Kodesh Hakadashim is called the source of Ahava, it is called the Bais Hamittos, the private bedroom of Klal Yisrael and the Ribbono Shel Olam. It is a source of Ahava and from there Torah comes forth. Says the GR"A that Shlomo Hamelech built in the Beis Hamikdash a source for the Ahava of the Avodah that he was building in the Beis Hamikdash.

Chazal say that (שאלו כדאי ביום שניתנה בו שיר השירים לישראל--שכל) This is in Mishnayos Yadaim 3:5. There was no time that was K'dai (ביום שניתנה בו שיר השירים). Zag Rav Hutner what is (ביום שניתנה בו)? Which day? He brings that it was the day that the Aron was built and brought into the Kodesh Hakadashim by Shlomo Hamelech and then he gave forth Shir Hashirim. What does the Aron have to do with Shir Hashirim? The Aron is the source of Ahava. Just like Moshe Rabbeinu's Keruvim were the source of Ahava that dealt with the Torah, so too Shlomo Hamelech who built the Bais Hamikdash was the source of the Ahava of the Avodah of Klal Yisrael and that is why there were two more Keruvim.

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date: Feb 1, 2022, 4:35 PM

subject: Taking out the Sefer Torah attached

Taking out the Sefer Torah

Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

The Mishkan surrounds the Aron, which contains the Torah... Question #1: Confused genealogist asks: Which?

Which Keil erech apayim should I say?

Question #2: Caring husband/son asks: Who?

My wife is due to give birth shortly, and I am saying kaddish for my father. On the days that the Torah is read, should I lead the davening ("daven in front of the amud"), open the aron hakodesh, or do both?

Question #3: Concerned davener asks: When?

When do I recite Berich She'mei?

Background

Prior to taking the sefer Torah out of the aron hakodesh, various prayers are recited, all of which have been part of our liturgy for many hundreds of years. This article will discuss the background and many of the halachos of these prayers.

Introduction

Reading the Torah, which is a mitzvah miderabanan, is actually the earliest takkanas

chachamim that was ever made. It was instituted by Moshe Rabbeinu in his capacity as a community leader, which placed on him the responsibility of creating takkanos when necessary. As a matter of fact, one of Moshe Rabbeinu's names is Avigdor, which refers to his role as the one who created fences to protect the Jewish people (see Midrash Rabbah, Vayikra 1:3). In this instance, after he saw what happened at Refidim (see Shemos 17:1), he realized that three days should not go by without an organized studying of the Torah. Therefore, he instituted that the Torah be read every Monday, Thursday and Shabbos (Bava Kamma 82a; Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah 12:1).

Over a thousand years later, Ezra expanded this takkanah to include a reading on Shabbos Mincha, in order to provide those who did not study Torah regularly an extra boost of Torah learning. Ezra also instituted that when the Torah is read, three people are called up, each aliyah contains at least three pesukim, and the entire reading should be a minimum of ten pesukim. (There is one exception to this last rule -- on Purim, we read the story of Vayavo Amaleik that is exactly nine pesukim. This is because the topics both before and after this section have nothing to do with the Amaleik incident, and it is therefore better to keep the reading focused rather than add an extra posuk.)

Keil erech apayim

On weekdays, prior to removing the sefer Torah on days that tachanun is recited, we say a short prayer that begins with the words, Keil erech apayim, "Hashem, You who are slow to anger and are full of kindness and truth, do not chastise us in Your anger! Hashem, have mercy on Your people (Israel), and save us (hoshi'einu) from all evil! We have sinned to You, our Master; forgive us, in keeping with Your tremendous compassion, O, Hashem." The prayer Keil erech apayim should be said standing, because it includes a brief viduy, confession, and halacha requires that viduy be recited standing (Magen Avraham, introduction to Orach Chayim 134).

Am I German or a Pole?

In virtually every siddur I have seen, two slightly variant texts are cited, the one I quoted above, which is usually recorded as the "German custom" or "German version" and a slightly variant version described as the "Polish version." Some siddurim provide greater detail, presenting the "first" version as the "custom of western Germany, Bohemia and parts of 'lesser' Poland," and the "second" version, as the "custom of 'greater' Poland." In one siddur, I saw the even more detailed, halachic explanation, describing the "first" version as the custom of the areas in and near "western Germany, Prague, Lublin and Cracow," and the second text for the areas around "Posen and Warsaw."

But, if your family came from somewhere other than Germany, the Czech Republic (where Bohemia and Prague are located) or Poland, which one do you recite? Many people are bothered by this question, myself included, since my father was born in Ukraine, as were all my grandparents and great-grandparents on his side of the family, and my mother's side of the family was from Lithuania.

Eidot hamizrah

A more intriguing question is that both versions of this prayer are in eidot hamizrah siddurim, and their custom is to recite both, "German" version first. I found this or a similar custom mentioned in several rishonim from very different times and places -- in the Machzor Vitri, of 11th century France, the Kol Bo of 13th century Provence, and the

Avudraham of 14th century Spain. Some rishonim record a custom of reciting both versions, but having the chazzan recite the first and the community respond with the second (Machzor Vitri). According to either of these approaches, the question is why recite both prayers, since they are almost identical. The answer given by the Machzor Vitri is that the first version uses the word hoshi'einu whereas the second uses the word hatzileinu. Both of these words translate into English as "Save us." However, their meaning is not the same; hoshi'einu implies a permanent salvation, whereas hatzileinu is used for a solution to a short-term problem. The Machzor Vitri, therefore, explains that the first prayer is that Hashem end our galus. After asking for this, we then ask that, in the interim, He save us from our temporary tzoros, while we are still in galus.

Ancient prayer

The facts that these prayers are in both Ashkenazic and Eidot hamizrah siddurim, and that rishonim of very distant places and eras are familiar with two different versions, indicate that these prayers date back earlier, presumably at least to the era of the ge'onim. Clearly, although our siddur refers to a "German custom" and a "Polish custom," both versions were known before a Jewish community existed in Poland -- earlier than when the words "Polish custom" could mean anything associated with Jews!

Atah hor'eisa

In some communities, reading of the Torah is introduced by reciting various pesukim of Tanach, the first of which is Atah hor'eisa loda'as ki Hashem Hu Ha'Elokim, ein od milevado, "You are the ones who have been shown to know that Hashem is The G-d, and there is nothing else besides Him" (Devorim 4:35). The practice among

Ashkenazim is to recite the pesukim beginning with Atah hor'eisa as an introduction to kerias haTorah only on Simchas Torah. However, in eidot hamizrah practice, Atah hor'eisa is recited every Shabbos, just before the aron is opened, and a shortened version is recited any time that tachanun is not said. (Essentially, these pesukim are said instead of Keil erech apayim, which is only recited on days that tachanun is said.) According to the ruling of the Ben Ish Chai, as many pesukim should be recited as people who will be called to the Torah that day. Therefore, on Shabbos, the posuk, Atah hor'eisa, is the first of eight pesukim; on Yom Tov, the first two pesukim, including the posuk that begins with the words Atah hor'eisa, are omitted (Ben Ish Chai year II, parshas Tolados, #15). On weekdays when no tachanun is recited, only three pesukim are recited, beginning with the posuk, yehi Hashem Elokeinu imanu ka'asher hayah im avoseinu, al yaaz'veinu ve'al yi'tesheinu (Melachim I 8:57). The Ben Ish Chai emphasizes that, apparently because of a kabbalistic reason, it is incorrect to recite more pesukim than the number of people who will be called to the Torah that day. Most, but not all, eidot hamizrah communities follow this approach today.

Opening the aron

Having completed the recital of either Keil erech apayim, Atah hor'eisa, neither or both, the aron hakodesh is opened. The poskim rule that the aron hakodesh should not be opened by the chazzan, but by a different person, who also removes the sefer Torah. (In some minhagim this is divided between two honorees, one who opens the aron hakodesh and one who takes out the sefer Torah.) The chazzan himself should not remove the sefer Torah from the aron hakodesh, as it is a kavod for the sefer Torah that someone else remove it from the aron and hand it to the chazzan. The honor is in that the extra people involved create more pomp and ceremony with which to honor the reading of the Torah (Aruch Hashulchan, Orach Chayim 282:1, based on Mishnah, Yoma 68b).

The opener

A minhag has developed recently that the husband of a woman who is in the ninth month of pregnancy should open the aron hakodesh and close it, afterward. The idea that opening the aron is a segulah for a smooth and easy opening of the womb is recorded in eidot hamizrah kabbalistic authorities (Chida in Moreh Be'etzba 3:90; Rav Chayim Falagi in Sefer Chayim 1:5). To the best of my knowledge, this custom was unheard of among Ashkenazim until the last thirty or so years. As I see it, this custom has value in that it might ameliorate a husband's feelings that he is at least doing something to assist his poor wife when she goes through highly uncomfortable contractions. And, it also makes his wife feel that he did something for her, so there may be a sholom bayis benefit. As to whether there is any segulah attached to this practice, I will leave that for the individual to discuss with his own rav or posek.

Caring husband

At this point, let us address the second of our opening questions:

"My wife is due to give birth shortly, and I am saying kaddish for my father. On the days that the Torah is read, should I lead the davening ("daven in front of the amud"), open the aron hakodesh, or do both?"

Let me explain the question being asked. Well-established practice is that an aveil daven in front of the amud (leads the services) on days other than Shabbos or Yom Tov as a merit for his late parent. (There are many variant practices concerning which days are considered a "Yom Tov" for these purposes; discussion of this issue will be left for another time.) Based on the above information, our very caring husband/son is asking: since he should not take both honors of leading the services and of opening the aron hakodesh, which honor should he take?

In my opinion, he should lead the services, which is a custom going back hundreds of years, whereas the custom of taking the sefer Torah out of the aron hakodesh is mentioned much more recently, and was not even practiced by Ashkenazim until a few years ago. However, I will leave it to the individual to discuss this issue with his rav or posek.

Berich She'mei

At this point, we can discuss the third of our opening questions: "When do I recite Berich She'mei?"

The Aramaic words of Berich She'mei comprise a prayer that is recorded in the Zohar (parshas Vayakheil). When we trace back the customs on which days this prayer is recited, we find many different practices:

1. Recite it only before Shabbos Mincha reading.
 2. Recite it on Shabbos at both morning and Mincha readings.
 3. Recite it not only on Shabbos, but also on Yom Tov.
 4. Recite it on Shabbos, Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh, but not on weekdays or fast days (other than Yom Kippur).
 5. Recite it whenever the Torah is read.
 6. A completely opposite custom -- never recite it at all.
- Allow me to explain the origins of these various practices.

1. Only Shabbos Mincha

Although I saw different sources mention this practice, I did not see any explanation. I can humbly suggest two possible reasons for this custom. One is that since the kerias hatorah of Shabbos Mincha was not part of the original takkanah of Moshe, but was established subsequently to provide those who did not learn Torah during the week the opportunity to study some extra Torah while they were in shul for davening, the kerias hatorah represents the entire Jewish people studying Torah together, creating a level of kedusha that justifies recital of the beautiful prayer of Berich She'mei.

Another option: Shabbos has three levels of sanctity, Friday evening, Shabbos morning and Shabbos afternoon. There are several ramifications of these differences, including that the central part of the three shemoneh esrei tefilos of Shabbos -- Maariv, Shacharis and Mincha -- are three completing different prayers (as opposed to all other days when the main parts of these three tefilos are identical). These three tefilos represent three historical Shabbosos and their spiritual ramifications:

(1) Maariv, or, more accurately, the Friday evening part of Shabbos, represents the Shabbos of creation.

(2) Shabbos morning represents the Shabbos of the giving of the Torah.

(3) Shabbos afternoon represents the future Shabbos of the post-redemption world.

These three aspects manifest themselves also in the three meals of Shabbos, and, for this reason, seudah shelishis is traditionally approached as having the pinnacle of spirituality. This explains why Shabbos Mincha is the time that the prayer, Berich She'mei, specifically addresses.

2. Only Shabbos, but both morning and Mincha

This approach is quoted in the name of the Arizal -- presumably, it has to do with a level of kedusha that exists only on Shabbos. (See also Magen Avraham, introduction to 282).

3. Only Shabbos and Yom Tov

4. Only Shabbos, Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh

These two customs are both based on the concept that Berich She'mei should not be recited on a weekday, but is meant for a day when there is special sanctity. This is based on the words in Berich She'mei, Berich kistrach, "May Your crown be blessed." In kabbalistic concepts, we praise Hashem in this special way only on Shabbos and Yomim Tovim, and that is why the kedusha in nusach Sefard for Musaf begins with the words keser yitnu, which refers to Hashem's crown.

I saw this practice quoted in the name of the Arizal and the Chida, and most eidot hamizrah siddurim include Berich She'mei prior to the Shabbos and Yom Tov readings, but not prior to weekday reading.

Many authorities note that those who follow this practice regarding Berich She'mei should also recite it on Rosh Chodesh, since the practice is to recite the words keser yitnu also as part of the kedusha of Rosh Chodesh (Ben Ish Chai year II, parshas Tolados, #15).

5. Always

This is the common practice among Ashkenazim and in nusach Sefard (Elyah Rabbah, 141; Be'er Heiteiv, Pri Megadim, Machatzis Hashekel, Mishnah Berurah; all at beginning of 282).

The Seder Hayom, an early Sefardic kabbalist, mentions the laws of reciting Berich She'mei when he discusses the laws of reading the Torah on weekdays. From this, the Elyah Rabbah (134:4) notes that the Seder Hayom appears to hold that Berich She'mei should be recited whenever the sefer Torah is taken out of the aron hakodesh. In other words, he disagrees with the approach followed by the other mekubalim mentioned, the Arizal and the Chida.

6. Not at all

In some communities in Germany, the practice was not to recite Berich She'mei at all. There appears to be a historical reason why not, based on the words of the prayer Berich She'mei itself, which states, lo al bar elohin samichna, "We do not rely on the 'sons of G-d.'" Apparently, some of Shabsai Tzvi's proponents claimed that the term "sons of G-d" alluded to Shabsai Tzvi, and, for this reason, it was decided to omit the entire prayer. Several sources quote this position in the name of the Noda BeYehudah, although I have been unable to find any place where he wrote this. It is certain that the Noda BeYehudah was strongly opposed to the introduction of kabbalistic ideas into our tefilos; for example, he attacks very stridently the custom, which he refers to as "recently introduced and very wrong," of reciting lesheim yichud prior to fulfilling mitzvos (Shu't Noda BeYehudah Orach Chayim 2:107; Yoreh Deah #93).

Those who do recite Berich She'mei assume that this term bar elohin refers to the angels, and they certainly exist, just as it is certain that it is prohibited to pray to them.

When to say it?

When is the best time to recite the prayer Berich She'mei? In a teshuvah on this subject, Rav Moshe Feinstein notes that the Zohar prayer does not mention specifically whether it should be said before the Torah is removed from the aron hakodesh or afterward. However, the Sha'ar Efrayim, authored by Rav Efrayim Zalman Margolios, one of the great early nineteenth century poskim, rules that the optimal time to recite Berich She'mei is after the sefer Torah has been removed from the aron

hakodesh, and this is the conclusion that Rav Moshe reaches. In other words, it is preferred that the person being honored with taking the sefer Torah out of the aron hakodesh should do so as soon as practical, and then hold the sefer Torah while Berich She'mei is recited. Someone who was unable to recite Berich She'mei then, can still say it until the sefer Torah is opened to lein (Seder Hayom, quoted by Elyah Rabbah 134:4).

Conclusion

In the introduction to Sefer Hachinuch, the author writes that the main mitzvah upon which all the other mitzvos rest is that of Talmud Torah. Through Torah learning, a person will know how to fulfill all of the other mitzvos. That is why Chazal instituted a public reading of a portion of the Torah every Shabbos, twice, and on Mondays and Thursdays. Knowing that the proper observance of all the mitzvos is contingent on Torah learning, our attention to kerias haTorah will be heightened. According to the Torah reading the great respect it is due should increase our sensitivity to the observance of all the mitzvos

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PARSHAT TERUMA

Had it not been for **chet ha-egel** [the sin of the Golden Calf], would Bnei Yisrael have needed a **mishkan**?

Many claim that the answer to this 'philosophical' question lies in the famous 'exegetical' controversy between **Rashi** and **Ramban** concerning **when** the commandment to build the mishkan was first given, **before** or **after** the sin of the golden calf.

In this week's shiur, as we study this controversy and its ramifications, we will show how the answer to this question is not so simple. While doing so, we will also try to make some sense out of the thorny issue of 'ein mukdam u-me'uchar ba-Torah'.

INTRODUCTION - FOUR UNITS

To understand the source of this controversy between Rashi and Ramban, we first divide the last half of Sefer Shmot into **four** distinct units. In last week's shiur, we defined and discussed the first of these four units - chapters 19-24, the unit we refer to as **Ma'amad Har Sinai**.

Chapters 25-31 [i.e. parshiot Teruma, Tetzaveh, and the first half of Ki Tisa] also form a distinct unit, as this section includes a set of laws whose sole topic is God's commandment to build the mishkan.

Similarly, Chapters 32-34 [the 2nd half of Parshat Ki Tisa] also form a distinct unit, as they contain a narrative that describes the incident of chet ha-egel.

Lastly, chapters 35-40 [parshiot Vayakhel/Pekudei] form the final unit in Sefer Shmot, as they describe the mishkan's actual construction.

The following table reviews these four units:

CHAPTERS	TOPIC	PARSHA
(A) 19-24	Ma'amad Har Sinai [the first luchot]	Yitro/Mishpatim
(B) 25-31	The commandment to build the mishkan	Teruma/Tetzaveh/ 1st half of Ki Tisa
(C) 32-34	Chet Ha-egel [the second luchot]	2nd half of Ki Tisa
(D) 35-40	Building the mishkan	Vayakhel/Pekudei

The above table can help us better understand the basic controversy between Rashi and Ramban. While Ramban keeps Chumash 'in order' [A-B-C-D], Rashi claims that God ordered the mishkan's construction [unit 'B'] only after the events of chet ha-egel [unit 'C'], and hence the order would be A-C-B-D. [See Rashi on 31:18.]

At first glance, Ramban's opinion appears most logical. To understand and appreciate Rashi's opinion, we must first explain more fully the basis of Ramban's approach.

THE FIRST FORTY DAYS - FOR WHAT?

Recall that at the conclusion of Parshat Mishpatim [the end of Unit A], Moshe ascended Har Sinai to receive the "**luchot, torah, & mitzva**" (see 24:12). As we know, the **luchot** are the tablets (upon which God inscribed the Ten Commandments). It is unclear, however, to what the words **torah & mitzva** refer. [Note how many different opinions are found among the commentators on 24:12!]

However, when we study the above chart, it may provide a simple answer to this question. If we simply follow the simple order of narrative in Chumash, then the **torah & mitzva** mentioned in 24:12 must be the mitzvot that follow, i.e. - **unit B**!

In other words, 24:12-18 tells us that Moshe ascends Har Sinai to receive the **torah & mitzva**, and then 25:1 continues by explaining what God told Moshe. Those commandments continue until the end of chapter 31.

[For those of you familiar with computers, this is similar to the

concept of 'WYSIWYG' - What You See Is What You Get. What the Torah records when Moshe goes up - is exactly what Moshe received at that time.]

Furthermore, Moshe ascends Har Sinai first and foremost to receive the **luchot** (see 24:12) - the symbol of the covenant at Har Sinai (see 19:5, 24:7). Considering that these **luchot** are to be housed in the **aron**, then it is only logical that the **torah & mitzva** refer to the laws of the **mishkan**.

Finally, considering that God informs Moshe that once the mishkan is assembled he will continue convey His mitzvot from above the 'kaporet' (see 25:21-22), it stands to reason that the laws of the **mishkan** are not only the first - but also the **only** mitzvot transmitted to Moshe during those forty days. Once the mishkan is built, the remaining mitzvot can be transmitted to Moshe via the kaporet!

[In fact, note that once the mishkan is assembled (see Shmot chapter 40), immediately afterward God transmits an entire set of mitzvot to Moshe from the 'kaporet' in the ohel mo'ed - better known as Sefer Vayikra! (See 1:1.)]

Despite the simplicity of this approach, not a single commentator advances it, for two very good reasons:

- * First of all, it would not require **forty days** for God to teach Moshe just the laws of the **mishkan**. There must have been something else as well.
- * Many other sources later in Chumash imply that Moshe Rabeinu learned many other mitzvot on Har Sinai. See, for example, Parshat Behar (see Vayikra 25:1) and the mitzvot in Sefer Devarim (see 5:1-28 and 6:1).

For these reasons, the commentators must explain why specifically the laws of the mishkan are recorded at this point in Sefer Shmot, even though many other mitzvot were also given to Moshe during those forty days.

Ramban (see 25:1) offers a very comprehensive and emphatic 'pro-mishkan' approach. Drafting both textual and conceptual arguments, Ramban claims that the mishkan serves as a vehicle to perpetuate the experience of **Ma'amad Har Sinai**; it is therefore the **first** mitzva that Moshe receives when he ascends Har Sinai. Even though Moshe received other mitzvot at that time as well (see Ramban on 24:12), Sefer Shmot focuses specifically on the mishkan because it reflects the unique level that Bnei Yisrael attained when they accepted God's covenant at Har Sinai.

Furthermore, at the focal point of the mishkan lies the **aron**, which contains the **luchot** - the symbol of that covenant at **Har Sinai**. [Hence the first mitzva is to build the **aron**.]

To summarize Ramban's approach, we will quote a few lines from his commentary [though it is highly recommended that you read the entire Ramban inside]:

"After God had given the Ten Commandments **directly** to Yisrael and instructed them with a sampling of the mitzvot (i.e. Parshat Mishpatim)... and Bnei Yisrael accepted these laws and entered a covenant (24:1-11)... behold they became His nation and He became their God, as was originally stipulated [at brit mila and Har Sinai]... Now they are worthy to have a house - His dwelling - in their midst dedicated to His Name, and there **He will speak with Moshe** and **command Bnei Yisrael**... Now the 'secret' ('sod') of the mishkan is that God's **glory** ('kavod') which dwelled on **Har Sinai** will now dwell [instead] on the **mishkan** 'be-nistar' [in a more hidden manner, in contrast to Har Sinai]..." (see Ramban 25:1).

RASHI'S APPROACH

Despite the beauty and simplicity of Ramban's approach, Rashi claims exactly the opposite (see 31:18): that the commandment to build the mishkan came not only **after**, but actually **because** of, chet ha-egel. In other words, Rashi posits that the parshiot are not presented according to their chronological order. Rashi goes even further, claiming that during the first forty days Moshe received **all** the mitzvot of the Torah

except the laws of the **mishkan**!

At first glance, such an interpretation seems untenable. Why should the Torah record at this point specifically the mitzvot that Moshe **did not** receive at this time, while omitting all the mitzvot which he **did** receive at this time? What could possibly have led Rashi to this conclusion?

To answer this question, we must first explain the exegetical principle of 'ein mukdam u-me'uchar ba-Torah' [literally: there is **no order** in the sequence of parshiot in the Torah]. Despite the common misunderstanding to the contrary, this principle does not imply that Chumash progresses in random sequence. Rather, it simply means that the arrangement in which Chumash records its parshiot does not necessarily reflect their chronological order.

[Most commentators, and especially many of the Midrashim quoted by Rashi, employ this approach. **Ramban**, however, consistently disagrees with this assumption, arguing that Chumash **does** follow in **chronological** order. Unless a certain technical detail 'forces' him to say otherwise, he will assume that the order in which Chumash is written corresponds with the precise chronological order of the events as they took place.]

The principle of ein mukdam u-me'uchar implies that when Moshe wrote down the Torah in its final form in the fortieth year (see Devarim 31:25-26), its parshiot were organized based on thematic considerations, and hence not necessarily according to the chronological order of when they were first given. By doing so, the Torah conveys its message not only by the content of each parshia, but also by intentionally juxtaposing certain parshiot next to one another.

[See Chizkuni on Shmot 34:32 for an important insight regarding this explanation.]

Rashi, following this approach, assumes that Chumash (at times) may prefer a conceptual sequence over a chronological one. Therefore, Rashi will often explain that a certain parshia actually took place earlier or later when the progression of theme implies as such.

With this background, we can better understand Rashi's approach in our context. Employing the principle of ein mukdam u-me'uchar, Rashi always begins with considerations of theme and content in mind. He therefore cannot overlook the glaring similarities between the construction of the mishkan and **chet ha-egel**. It cannot be just by chance that:

- * Bnei Yisrael must collectively donate their gold to build the mishkan (compare 25:1-2, 32:2-3);
- * Betzalel, Chur's grandson, is chosen to build the mishkan; [Rashi follows the Midrash which claims that Chur was killed because he refused to allow Bnei Yisrael to build the **egel**. (See Chizkuni 31:2.)]
- * The opening pasuk concerning the mishkan - "and they shall make for Me a **mikdash** and I will **dwell in their midst**" (25:8) - appears to rectify Bnei Yisrael's situation in the aftermath of chet ha-egel, when Moshe must move his tent (called the **ohel mo'ed**) far away - outside the camp (33:7);
- * Aharon must bring a **par** (a bull / an **egel** is a baby bull) for a **chatat** offering during the mishkan's dedication ceremony. [The requirement of a **chatat** implies the committal of a sin; see Rashi 29:1.]

Rashi therefore explains that the commandment to build the **mishkan** came **after** chet ha-egel (during the last forty days), for it served as a form of atonement for that sin.

[Nevertheless, it remains unclear according to Rashi **why** the Torah chose to record these parshiot out of chronological order. We'll return to this question later in the shiur.]

LECHATCHILA or BE-DI'AVAD?

It is very tempting to consider this dispute between Rashi and Ramban a fundamental argument regarding the reason behind the mishkan.

Clearly, according to Ramban, the mishkan is 'lechatchila' [ideal]. In other words, even had chet ha-egel never occurred, it

still would have been God's desire that Bnei Yisrael build a **mishkan**, for it serves as a physical representation of God's presence in their midst.

How should we understand Rashi? Can we infer from his interpretation that the mishkan is 'be-di'avad' [a compromise]? In other words, had it not been for chet ha-egel, would there never have been a commandment to build a **mikdash**? Was the mitzva to build the mishkan simply an 'after-thought'? Was it only in the aftermath of Bnei Yisrael's sin that God realized the people's need for a physical representation of His presence?

Despite the temptation of this conclusion, we must first prove that, even according to Rashi's interpretation, one **can** (and **must**) agree that God had originally intended that at least some form of physical symbol be used to represent Him.

TEMPLE TERMINOLOGY

To reconcile Rashi's interpretation with Ramban's explanation of the mishkan, we must differentiate between two concepts:

- (1) **MISHKAN** and
- (2) **MIKDASH**.

Although both words describe a **sanctuary** dedicated to the worship of God, for the sake of clarity, each word (in our explanation that follows) will be given a more specific meaning.

- * The **mishkan** is a **temporary** sanctuary (a Tabernacle), a portable, tent-like structure. [Good for travel.]
- * The **mikdash** is a **permanent** sanctuary (a Temple), such as the massive stone structure built by King Solomon.

We posit that both Rashi and Ramban must agree that the concept of a Sanctuary, a symbol of God's **Shchina** (the divine presence) dwelling with Bnei Yisrael, is lechatchila and in fact comprises a fundamental theme throughout the entire Tanach. To prove this, we must return to some basic concepts previously discussed in our shiurim on Sefer Breishit.

Recall that we first encountered the theme of **mikdash** when Avraham Avinu builds a **mizbeiach** in **Bet-El** and "calls out in God's Name" (see 12:8 & 13:4). Later, at this same site, Yaakov Avinu awakes from his dream and exclaims:

"Alas, this is the site for a **Bet Elokim**, for it is the gate to the heavens" (Br.28:17).

Yaakov then erects a 'matzeva' (monument) and vows that upon his return to Canaan he will establish the site of his matzeva as a **Bet-Elokim** - a House for God. [See Breishit 28:17-22.]

Thus, the very concept of a **Bet-Elokim** clearly preceded the golden calf.

Furthermore, even in 'shirat ha-yam', the song that Bnei Yisrael sung after they crossed the Red Sea, we already find an allusion to the establishment of a **mikdash** immediately upon their arrival in the land:

"Teveimo ve-titaemo be-**har** nachalatcha, machon le-shivtecha... - **mikdash**, Hashem konanu yadecha..."
(See Shmot 15:17, and its context!)

Finally, in Parshat Mishpatim we find conclusive proof that the basic concept of a **Bet-Elokim** is totally unrelated to the events of chet ha-egel. Recall that even according to Rashi, the laws recorded in Parshat Mishpatim were certainly given **before** chet ha-egel. [See Rashi on 31:18, where he explains that these laws were given to Moshe Rabeinu during his first forty days on Har Sinai.]

Recall as well that within that set of laws we find the mitzva of 'aliya la-regel' - to '**visit** God' three times a year:

"Three times a year you shall celebrate for Me... Keep chag ha-matzot... and do not **visit me** empty-handed... Three times a year all your males **shall appear before me**..."
(23:14-17).

First of all, the very existence of a mitzva to 'be seen by God' implies that there must be some type of sanctuary that would represent Him! Hence, without some sort of a **mikdash**, this mitzva of aliya la-regel could not be fulfilled.

However, the next pasuk provides conclusive proof that this sanctuary corresponds to the concept of a **Bet-Elokim**:
"Your first fruits must be brought to **bet Hashem Elokecha** - the **house** of Hashem your God..." (23:19).

This commandment to bring the 'bikurim' to the Bet Elokim clearly implies that there would have to be some sort of 'sanctuary' that will serve as God's House.

Hence, even Rashi must agree that there would have been a need for a **Bet-Elokim** even had Bnei Yisrael not sinned at chet ha-egel.

Furthermore, there is no reason why Rashi would have to argue with Ramban's explanation that the primary function of the mikdash was to perpetuate Bnei Yisrael's experience at Har Sinai.

Instead, we posit that the dispute between Rashi and Ramban stems from a less fundamental issue - concerning the need to construct a **temporary** sanctuary before Bnei Yisrael entered the Land of Israel.

According to Rashi's interpretation, we can assume that God's original intention was for Bnei Yisrael to build a mikdash only after they conquered the Land of Israel. However, because of their sin, conquest of the Land would now be delayed. Therefore, God ordered them to build a **temporary** mikdash [= mishkan] while they remained in the desert.

Ramban would argue that even had Bnei Yisrael not sinned, it would still have been necessary for them to build a temporary **mikdash** before they embarked on that journey.

Let's attempt to explain why.

THE WAY IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN

Rashi's position may be based upon God's original plan that Bnei Yisrael would conquer the land through supernatural, divine intervention (see 23:20-28). Assisted by God's miracles, Bnei Yisrael would have needed only a very short time to complete at least the first wave of conquest. Had that actually occurred, there would have been no need to build a temporary mishkan, for within a very short time it would have been possible to build a permanent mikdash instead.

However, in the aftermath of chet ha-egel, the entire situation changes. As God had removed His **Shchina**, Bnei Yisrael must first bring the **Shchina** back to the camp **before** they can conquer the Land. Hence, according to Rashi, the actual process of building the mishkan could be considered a form of 'spiritual rehabilitation'. Furthermore, the mishkan would now provide Aharon and Bnei Yisrael with the opportunity to offer korbanot and thus achieve atonement for their sin.

One could also suggest that due to chet ha-egel and the 'lower level' of the 'mal'ach' that will lead them into the land (see Shmot 33:1-5 and shiur on 13 midot), it may now take much longer for Bnei Yisrael to complete the conquest. Therefore, a temporary mikdash [= mishkan] is required, until a more permanent mikdash can be built.

A CONCEPTUAL JUXTAPOSITION

According to this interpretation, we can now suggest (according to Rashi) a beautiful reason for why the Torah places the commandment to build the mishkan out of chronological order:

Even though the mitzva to build the 'temporary' mishkan should have been recorded **after** the story of chet ha-egel, the Torah intentionally records it earlier - immediately after Ma'amad Har Sinai - to emphasize its thematic connection to that event! In other words, Rashi, like Ramban, can also understand that the primary function of the mikdash was to perpetuate Ma'amad Har Sinai. In fact, had Bnei Yisrael not sinned, the laws of the 'permanent' mikdash may have been recorded at this spot in Chumash. However, now that a mishkan was needed (due to the events of chet ha-egel), the laws of this temporary mikdash are recorded at this point in Chumash, to emphasize the very same thematic connection that Ramban describes in great detail!

Now that Rashi makes so much sense, why wouldn't Ramban agree? To answer this question, we must return to our

discussion of the differing approaches to 'mukdam u-me'uchar'.

Ramban prefers his principle that Chumash follows chronological order. Despite the similarities between the mishkan and the story of chet ha-egel (as listed above), they are not convincing enough to warrant, in Ramban's view, a distortion of the order of these parshiot. Therefore, Ramban maintains that even had it not been for chet ha-egel, there still would have been a need for a temporary mishkan.

In fact, one could suggest a very simple reason for the immediate need of a temporary sanctuary. As we explained earlier, Bnei Yisrael must still receive many more mitzvot from God. A mishkan - with the **aron** and **keruvim** at its center - is therefore necessary as the medium through which God can convey the remaining mitzvot to Moshe. Furthermore, once the **Shchina** descended upon Har Sinai, some sort of vehicle is necessary to 'carry it' with them as they travel from Har Sinai towards Eretz Canaan.

[Accordingly, Ramban explains that most of all the mitzvot recorded in Sefer Vayikra and Sefer Bamidbar were actually given from the ohel mo'ed (mishkan). See Ramban Vayikra 1:1 & 7:38. In regard to Sefer Devarim, see Ramban on 24:1 & 24:12.]

To summarize, the dispute between Rashi and Ramban stems from their different exegetical approaches and pertains only to **why** a **temporary** mishkan was necessary. However, both would agree that a **permanent** mikdash would have been necessary even had Bnei Yisrael not sinned at chet ha-egel.

In our shiur on Parshat Tetzaveh, we will analyze the internal structure of this unit of chapters 25->31 in order to uncover additional parallels between the **mishkan** and the events of Ma'amad Har Sinai. Till then,

shabbat shalom
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN:

A. In the shiur we argue that even according to Rashi, the concept of a required mikdash for serving Hashem existed even prior to the worship of the golden calf. Along similar lines, Rav David Pardo, in his supra-commentary on Rashi entitled, "Maskil le-David", writes that even in Rashi's view, the general command to build a mishkan was transmitted to Moshe during his first forty days atop the mountain. Only the details of the construction, as presented in parshiyot Teruma & Tetzaveh (and the beginning of Ki Tisa), were transmitted later. Rav Pardo proves this from the repeated reference in parshat Teruma to Hashem's having shown Moshe the appearance of the mishkan "on the mountain" (25:40; 26:30; 27:8). In the final two of these three references, Hashem employs the past tense ("you have been shown"), suggesting that Moshe viewed the image the mishkan before receiving these detailed instructions. Apparently, as Rav Pardo argues, Moshe learned of the mishkan - albeit only the generalities - during his first forty days on the mountain, even before the calf. Thus, Rashi clearly did not view the mishkan as necessary only in response to the sin of the egel ha-zahav.

B. RAMBAN / RASHI - earlier sources

The argument as to whether Hashem ordered the construction of the mishkan before or after the sin of the golden calf predates Rashi and the Ramban; conflicting views appear already in the Midrashim. Rashi's view, that the parshiyot appear out of order, is the position of the Midrash Tanchuma (Teruma 8, Pekudei 6), Yerushalmi (Shkalim 1:1) and Midrash Hagadol to Shmot 25:17. The Ramban's opinion is found in Seder Eliyahu Rabba 17, which states explicitly that Hashem ordered the construction of the mishkan after Bnei Yisrael declared 'na'aseh ve-nishma'. Ibn Ezra (25:1) adopts the Ramban's approach, as do the Abarbanel (31:18) and the Netziv (29:20). Despite his general affinity for the Ramban's commentary, on this issue Rabbenu Bechayei adopts Rashi's approach (25:6)

C. Mikdash Before Chet Ha-egel: Midrashic Sources

Several Midrashic passages support our contention that a mikdash would have been necessary even had it not been for the golden calf. Bemidbar Rabba 12:12 compares the world before the mishkan to a chair with two legs, which cannot stand; the construction of the mishkan added the third leg, so-to-speak, which enabled the world to stand independently. However one understands the image of the chair, it clearly points to the indispensability of the mishkan - regardless of chet ha-egel. Similarly, Bemidbar Rabba 13:6 describes that from the time of creation, Hashem wished ('kivyachol') to reside on earth. When the mishkan was consecrated, Hashem announced that on that day the world was created. Once again, we see that the construction of the mishkan marked a critical stage in the history of the world and was necessary since the dawn of creation. In the same vein, Bemidbar Rabba 13 writes that when Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, Hashem wished to "bring them into His quarters", and thus instructed them to build the mishkan. This Midrash makes no mention of the incident of the golden calf as necessitating a mikdash. A similar passage appears in the Tanchuma Yashan - Bechukotai 65.

We suggested in the shiur that according to Rashi, the Torah presents Parshat Teruma immediately following Matan Torah - despite its having occurred later, after the egel - to emphasize the thematic relationship between the mishkan and Matan Torah. Rabbenu Bechaye (25:6), however, explains that the Torah rearranged the sequence in order to demonstrate how Hashem is "makdim trufa le-maka" (recall that, as cited earlier, Rav Kasher reads this explanation into the Midrash Lekach Tov). Rav Zalman Sorotzkin (Oznayim La-Torah) mentions this explanation without quoting Rabbenu Bechaye. A different answer was suggested by the late Lubavitcher Rebbe ("Be'urim Le-perush Rashi al Ha-Torah" - Shmot 31:18). The Torah specifically wanted to juxtapose the tzivuy ha-mishkan with the end of Parshat Mishpatim - the formal establishment of the 'brit' between Bnei Yisrael and Hashem. As the residence of the Shchina in the mishkan marked the complete fulfillment of that brit, it is only fitting that the parsha of the mishkan immediately follows that of the covenant. (This explanation, too, seems to point to the fact that the mishkan is lechatchila even according to Rashi.)

D. SEFORNO

The Seforno takes a particularly extreme approach to the concept of the mishkan. Already in his comments to 19:6, he notes that as a result of the egel, Bnei Yisrael forfeited "all the goodness of the future" promised to them before Matan Torah. As we will see in his comments elsewhere, this refers to God's direct revelation, which was supplanted by the mishkan. In his commentary to the final psukim of Parshat Yitro (20:20-22), the Seforno interprets these psukim as informing Bnei Yisrael that they have no need to construct a sanctuary to God. Matan Torah demonstrated that Hashem would descend, as it were, and reside among them even without any physical mediums. Commenting on 25:9, Seforno writes that after the incident of the golden calf Bnei Yisrael were required to construct a sanctuary; the direct communication experienced at Har Sinai could no longer be maintained. Seforno expresses his position even clearer in 31:18, where he describes more fully Bnei Yisrael's spiritual descent as a result of the golden calf, as a result of which they did not achieve the divine plan initially intended at Matan Torah. In this passage, he alludes to an interesting interpretation of the promise in 19:6 that Bnei Yisrael would be a 'mamlechet kohanim' (a kingdom of priests): that they would have no need for kohanim to serve as intermediaries. God had originally intended for all of Bnei Yisrael to serve God directly as kohanim. (Curiously, however, this is not how the Seforno explains the term in his commentary to 19:6 - "ve-tzarich iyun".) He develops this idea even further in Vayikra 11:2. There he explains that in response to the golden calf, Hashem decreed that He would remove His Shchina entirely from Bnei Yisrael. Moshe's intervention succeeded in restoring a very limited measure of 'hashra'at ha-Shchina', by which God would reside among Bnei Yisrael only through the structure of the mishkan. (In this passage, Seforno spells out more clearly what he meant by "the goodness of the

future" of which he spoke in his comments to Shmot 19:6 - the direct presence of the Shchina, without the need for a physical representation.) Later in Sefer Vayikra, in his commentary to the brachot of Parshat Bechukotai (26:11-12), Seforno describes the ideal condition of God's constant presence among Bnei Yisrael without it being confined to any specific location and without requiring any specific actions on Bnei Yisrael's part. In direct contradistinction to the Ramban, Seforno there reads the pasuk in Truma, "Ve-asu li mikdash ve-shachanti betocham", as a punishment, confining the presence of the Shchina to the mishkan. Seforno's most elaborate development of this notion appears in his treatise "Ma'amar Kavanot ha-Torah" (published as a separate volume by Rav Yehuda Kuperman in 5754; the relevant material for our topic is found primarily in chapter 6 in Rav Kuperman's edition).

This position of the Seforno, of course, requires some explanation in light of the proofs mentioned in the shiur to the necessity of a mikdash even prior to the egel. In fact, the Seforno himself identifies Yaakov's Bet Elokim (Breishit 28:17) and the mikdash in the Shirat Ha-yam (Shmot 15:17) as the beit ha-mikdash. How could the concept of a mikdash be discussed before chet ha-egel - if it was never to have been necessary?

The Seforno does not address this question, but in at least two instances he alludes to what may be understood as a moderation of his approach. Commenting on the pasuk "be-chol ha-makom asher askir et Shmi avo eilecha" ("every place where I will have My Name mentioned I will come to you" - Shmot 20:21), the Seforno explains, "[Every place] that I will designate as a meeting place for My service". He then adds, "You will not need to draw My providence to you through mediums of silver and gold and the like, for I will come to you and bless you". Apparently, even according to this original plan, there would still be a place designated as a mikdash of sorts, only Bnei Yisrael would not need to invest effort in its lavish and intricate construction. In Ma'amar Kavanot ha-Torah, Seforno makes a somewhat similar comment in explaining this same pasuk: "In any place that will truly be called a Bet Elokim, such as batei midrash and the like - I will come to you and bless you." Here, too, he implies that there would be a special location - or perhaps several or many special locations - for avodat Hashem, only not what we know as the mishkan or mikdash. However, in his commentary to Parshat Bechukotai (Vayikra 26:12), the Seforno strongly implies that in the ideal condition Hashem reveals Himself anywhere, without any need for an especially designated location - 've-tzarich iyun'.

E. RAMBAM - Review Devarim chapter 12. Note the repeated use of the phrase "ha-makom asher yivchar Hashem" and its context. Pay special attention to 12:5-12, noting when is the proper time to build the mikdash. Relate this phrase to the concept of a **permanent** mikdash, as discussed in the above shiur. Considering that Sefer Devarim contains the mitzvot that God originally gave Moshe at Har Sinai (before chet ha-egel), explain why Sefer Devarim makes no mention of the **mishkan**, yet mentions "ha-makom asher yivchar Hashem" numerous times.

Although the Rambam did not write a commentary on Chumash, we can infer his understanding of certain psukim based on his psak halacha in Mishneh Torah.

The opening Rambam in Hilchot Beit Ha-bechira (Sefer Avoda) defines the source of the commandment to build a **mikdash** (see 1:1). Read that Rambam (and, if you have time, the first five halachot). What is difficult about the Rambam's wording in 1:1? What is the source of our obligation to build a **mikdash**? Why, according to the Rambam, is the phrase "ve-asu li mikdash" (25:8) insufficient as a source for this obligation?

Why does the Rambam include the criteria, 'ready to offer upon it korbanot' and 'to celebrate there **three** times a year'? Can you relate these phrases to Shmot 23:14-19 and this week's shiur? Why does the Rambam quote the pasuk from Devarim 12:9-11? Read those psukim carefully!

Parshat Terumah: Moshe's Mishkan

by Rabbi Eitan Mayer

HOW SEFER SHEMOT IS "BUILT":

The first half (chaps 1-24) of Sefer Shemot (Exodus) recounts:

- 1) The story of the enslavement and exodus.
- 2) The establishment of a covenant between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael through the Decalogue (known affectionately and inaccurately as "The Ten Commandments") and the laws of Parashat Mishpatim.

The second half (chaps 25-40) of the sefer (book) recounts Hashem's instructions for building a movable Temple (the "Mishkan") and the implementation of these instructions by Bnei Yisrael.

This week, we stand at the opening of this second half. This part of the sefer contains five parshiot: the first two and last two focus on the Mishkan, while the middle parasha (or at least the middle of the middle parasha) tells the infamous story of the Egel (Golden Calf):

- 1) Parashat Teruma: Mishkan
- 2) Parashat Tetzaveh: Mishkan
- 3) Parashat Ki Tisa: Egel
- 4) Parashat Va-Yak'hel: Mishkan
- 5) Parashat Pekudei: Mishkan

Or, divided by perakim (chapters):

25-31: Hashem commands Moshe to build the Mishkan and its contents, create clothing for the Kohanim (priests), and anoint the Kohanim.

- 31: a) Hashem tells Moshe to command Bnei Yisrael to observe Shabbat.
b) Moshe receives the Luhot ("Tablets") while the people create and worship the Egel.

32-34: Aftermath of the Egel: punishment, forgiveness, a new covenant (including Shabbat).

- 35: a) Moshe commands Bnei Yisrael to observe Shabbat.
b) Moshe commands Bnei Yisrael to build the Mishkan, Kelim, clothing, etc.

36-39: All of the work is done as instructed and brought to Moshe for inspection.

40: Assembly of the completed parts of the Mishkan, and investiture of the Shekhinah (divine presence).

THE TWO HALVES OF SEFER SHEMOT:

The first half of Sefer Shemot progresses from the arrival of Ya'akov's family in Egypt to their enslavement there, then to the birth and rise of Moshe, the plagues, the exodus, the miracles at the sea, the people's complaints, the visit of Yitro, the revelation at Sinai, and finally the laws of Parashat Mishpatim. Although what unites all these components of the story is the development of the nation and its relationship with Hashem, these events are all independent narrative/legal units.

For instance, while the story of Moshe's birth and development into adulthood is related, to some to degree, to the account of the plagues, and both of these are related to the splitting of the sea, and all of these themes are related to Hashem's increasing level of Self-revelation (climaxing at Sinai), and all of these have some connection to the visit of Yitro and the laws of Mishpatim, we can see that despite the connections between these units and the larger themes toward which they contribute, they are all distinct units.

In contrast, the second half of Sefer Shemot is unified and tightly cohesive, narrowly focused on one topic: how and whether Hashem will maintain an intimate Presence among Bnei Yisrael in the movable Temple, the Mishkan. Instead of looking at this unit piece by piece, parasha by parasha, this week we will take a bird's-eye view of the whole Biblical terrain before us.

THE MISHKAN PLAN -- AND THE EGEL:

In the end of Parashat Mishpatim, Moshe ascends Har Sinai to receive instructions from Hashem. In extraordinary detail, spanning Parshiot Teruma, Tetzaveh, and the beginning of Ki Tisa, Hashem lays out for Moshe the plan for His residence within the camp of Bnei Yisrael. All of these details come together to accomplish a fantastic (as in "fantasy") goal: "They shall make a Temple for Me, and I shall dwell in their midst" (25:8). Hashem plans to pitch His tent among the people's tents; He will be their next-door Neighbor.

HERE WE GO AGAIN!

Many people have wondered (some of them great biblical commentators, some of them bored shul-goers who can't believe they're hearing all of the innumerable details of the Mishkan, which they heard in Teruma and Tetzaveh, repeated almost word for word in Va-Yak'hel and Pekudei) why the Torah repeats all of the descriptions of the Mishkan and its peripherals. Is it not enough for us to "listen in" on Hashem's conversation with Moshe in Teruma and Tetzaveh, in which He goes through all of the details? What need is met by the nearly verbatim repetition of these details in Va-Yak'hel and Pekudei, where we hear that the Bnei Yisrael did all that Hashem had commanded? Why not just tell us, "Bnei Yisrael built the Mishkan exactly as Hashem had commanded Moshe at Har Sinai. They assembled the parts, and then Hashem's glory filled the Mishkan" -- end of sefer?

One oft-quoted answer is that the Torah wants to contrast the people's total obedience to the instructions for building the Mishkan with their disobedience in building and worshipping the Egel. There is some textual support for this idea in Parashat Pekudei: every time the Torah reports that the people finish working on a particular piece of the Mishkan, it ends by saying that they did the work "as Hashem had commanded Moshe." Some examples:

(39:1) . . . they made the holy clothing for Aharon, JUST AS HASHEM HAD COMMANDED MOSHE.

(39:5) . . . gold, blue, purple, and red, and fine-twisted linen, JUST AS HASHEM HAD COMMANDED MOSHE.

(39:7) . . . on the shoulders of the Efod as a reminder of Bnei Yisrael, JUST AS HASHEM HAD COMMANDED MOSHE.

This refrain appears so many times in Pekudei -- fifteen times! -- that one begins to feel that it cannot be incidental, and that the Torah is using this device to contrast the people's complete obedience to Hashem's commands with their earlier "Egel behavior."

This is a tempting reading, but there are at least two reasons why it is not a satisfying explanation for why the Torah repeats the intricate descriptions of the Mishkan and its contents:

1) All of the "just as Hashem had commanded Moshe" formulations appear only in Parashat Pekudei; none of them appear in Parashat Va-Yak'hel, where the Torah begins to repeat all of the Mishkan descriptions. If the purpose of the repetition of the descriptions is to drive home the "just as Hashem had commanded Moshe" point, this phrase should be hammered to us again and again starting in Parashat Va-Yak'hel, where the Mishkan repetition starts, not 118 pesukim (verses) later, when Parashat Pekudei begins.

2) If the point of the "just as Hashem had commanded Moshe" formulations is to emphasize the *people's* obedience, it is strange indeed that of the fifteen times the phrase appears, seven of its appearances refer to action done by *Moshe* himself, not the people. If the Torah is emphasizing *Bnei Yisrael's* obedience, this makes little sense.

While the "just as Hashem had commanded Moshe" is an important pattern and surely communicates something, it is difficult to use it to explain the repetition of the Mishkan's details. (Next week I will offer an explanation of this pattern which I believe works better than the above idea.)

THE EGEL AND THE MISHKAN:

Our question -- why the Torah repeats the Mishkan instructions in Va-Yak'hel and Pekudei -- may be answered by examining the relationship between the two poles of the second half of Sefer Shemot and the fulcrum between these poles; or, to put it in English, if the second half of Sefer Shemot is a sandwich, with Mishkan Description #1 (Teruma and Tetzaveh) and Mishkan Description #2 (Va-Yak'hel and Pekudei) as the "bread" sandwiching the Egel Disaster (Ki Tisa) between them, what is the relationship between the "bread" and the "filling" of this sandwich? How does the Egel disaster affect the Mishkan plans?

While Hashem is communicating the plans to Moshe, Bnei Yisrael are busy worshipping the Golden Calf. Hashem, of course, becomes infuriated; first He threatens to destroy the people completely, but then, somewhat appeased by Moshe, He spares them. But He refuses to accompany the people on their journey to Canaan:

SHEMOT 33:2-3 --

"I will send an angel before you -- and I will drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites -- to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked nation, and I might destroy you on the way!" The people heard this evil news and mourned.

EVERYBODY OUT OF THE POOL:

Hashem's decision to not accompany the people on their trip to Eretz Canaan is not simply a moment of discomfort in the developing relationship between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael; it brings the relationship screeching to an emergency stop. In response to the people's rejection of Him through their worship of the Egel, Hashem 'recoils,' completely cancelling the plan for the Mishkan! All of the intricate blueprints we have traced through Ki Tisa become, well, doodling paper. Since He refuses to dwell ("shokhen") among people who worship idols, what purpose would a dwelling ("Mishkan") serve? If there will be no "ve-shakhanti," then obviously there can be no "Mishkan." Ibn Ezra makes this point explicit:

IBN EZRA, SHEMOT 33:3 --

"I [Hashem] will not accompany you [to Canaan]": they should not make a Mishkan, for I will not dwell among Bnei Yisrael.

THE "OHHEL MO'ED" -- AND THE OTHER "OHHEL MO'ED":

That the sin of the Egel spells the end of the Mishkan is not only logical and intuitively suggestive, it is also implicit in the way the Torah refers to the Mishkan throughout these parshiot. The Mishkan is referred to by several different names; one of the most prominent names is "Ohel Mo'ed," "The Tent of Meeting," which appears thirty-two times in Sefer Shemot in reference to the Mishkan. (Despite the fact that some people *do* go to shul in order to meet their friends, the "meeting" meant here is the meeting between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael.)

The word "mo'ed," "meeting," shares the same root as the words "no'adti" and "iva'ed," a word which Hashem uses in sentences like, "I will meet you ["ve-noadti"] there [in the Mishkan] and speak to you from atop the Kaporet [covering of the Ark], from between the two cherubs on top of the Ark of the Testament . . ." (25:22). The name of the movable Temple communicates its function: a place to meet with Hashem and stand before Him in worship and communication.

But then the people worship the Egel. Moshe descends the mountain, smashes the Tablets, punishes the chief offenders, and chastises Aharon for his role in the catastrophe. Hashem spares the people's lives but refuses to accompany them on their journey to Canaan. Then the Torah reports (in Ki Tisa) that Moshe creates a new "Ohel Mo'ed":

SHEMOT 33:7 --

Moshe took the tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the "OHHEL MO'ED." Anyone who sought Hashem would go to the "OHHEL MO'ED" outside the camp.
In place of the real "Ohel Mo'ed,"

- a) a structure of beauty, grandeur, and complexity, with gold and silver, exquisite weavings, coverings, and architecture,
- b) intended as a national center to meet with Hashem and
- c) located in the center of the camp,

there is now instead

- a) a plain tent where
- b) only individuals, not the nation as a group, can seek Hashem,
- c) far outside the camp.

Moshe does not name this tent "Ohel Mo'ed" by accident. He is chastising the people, showing them what they must live with (or without) now that they have lost the Mishkan.

But the people do teshuva, and Moshe pleads their cause before Hashem. In several incredible scenes in Ki Tisa (which we will examine in microscopic detail when we get there), Moshe intercedes with Hashem and "convinces" Him to return His presence to the people and lead them "personally" to Canaan. Hashem's agreeing to once again accompany the people means that the plan for the Mishkan is restored: His agreement to maintain His presence in their midst means that He will "need" the Mishkan to live in. (For some elaboration on whether Hashem needs a Temple or not, see this past week's haftara, "Ha-Shamayim Kis'i," Yeshayahu 66:1-2.) The next two parshiot, Va-Yak'hel and Pekudei, detail Moshe's instructions to the people about the Mishkan and their faithful obedience to the instructions. And since Hashem has forgiven the people and restored His Presence, the Torah returns to using the term "Ohel Mo'ed" to refer to the grand Mishkan where He will reside (the term appears 15 times post-Egel in Sefer Shemot as a reference to the Mishkan) rather than the forlorn tent of the period of His anger.

WHY THE REPETITION?

With the understanding that the second half of Sefer Shemot is a cohesive "Mishkan unit" with the Egel at its core and "Mishkan sections" on both sides, we may have an explanation for why Va-Yak'hel and Pekudei repeat Teruma and Tetzaveh: the details of the Mishkan are repeated in order to powerfully communicate to us the total restoration of the plan of infusing the camp of Bnei Yisrael with Hashem's presence. If the audience of the Torah (i.e., us) were emotionless, purely intellectual beings, it might have sufficed to say simply, "Hashem forgave the people for the Egel at Moshe's behest and reinstated the plan to build the Mishkan. The people built the Mishkan, assembled it, and Hashem moved in." But the Torah's audience is people, emotional beings; we need more reassurance than just the stated fact of Hashem's return.

To illustrate with a clichéd joke about Jews: a middle-aged Jewish couple come to see a marriage therapist. They have been married for thirty years. "What seems to be the trouble?" asks the therapist. "My husband doesn't love me anymore," the wife complains. "Ridiculous!" barks the husband, "of course I still love you! How could you say such a thing?!" The wife turns to her husband in surprise: "You still love me? You never tell me you love me!" The husband raises his finger in the air and says indignantly, "Thirty years ago, on our wedding night, I told you I loved you. If anything had changed, don't you think I would have told you?!"

It is not enough to just be told. Having read of the Hashem's murderous fury at Bnei Yisrael, then the severing of the close connection between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael, we need powerful reassurance to feel that He has truly forgiven us for our rebellion, that He has truly come back. The way the Torah communicates that Hashem is with Bnei Yisrael once again is by offering the Mishkan again in all of its detail. In a sense, we have 'lost our faith' in the first rendition of the Mishkan command; that command was taken away when we were unfaithful. We need to hear it again to believe that Hashem is again willing to live among us.

If this still seems far-fetched, perhaps an illustration will help. In Tanakh (the Bible), the relationship between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael is often compared to a relationship between a man and a woman. Midrash Tana de-Vei Eliyahu Zuta, chapter 4, offers the following parable to convey the impact of the Egel on this relationship:

"... To what is this comparable? To a king of flesh and blood who had betrothed a woman and loved her completely. What did the king do? He sent for a man [i.e., Moshe] to serve as an intermediary between him and her. He showed him all of his marriage canopies, all of his rooms, all of his secret places [i.e., all the divine secrets revealed to Moshe during his seclusion with Hashem atop Sinai], and then he said to the intermediary, 'Go to the woman and tell her that I do not need anything of hers; except that she should make for me a small marriage canopy [i.e., the Mishkan] so that I can live with her, and all of my servants and the members of my household will know that I love her completely.' While the king was still busy commanding the intermediary about the marriage canopies and preparing to send many gifts to the woman, people came and said to him, 'Your fiancée has committed adultery with another man!' [i.e., the Egel]. Immediately, the king put

everything aside, and the intermediary was thrown out and left in haste from before the king. And so it was with the Holy One, Blessed be He, and Yisrael, as it says, 'Go down now, for your nation has strayed . . .' (Shemot 32)."

To summarize and extend this mashal: Hashem sits in private (Har Sinai) with his closest confidant, telling his friend (see 33:11) how he plans to make permanent his relationship with the 'woman' he loves. He talks in great detail about his plans for the home in which they will share their relationship and excitedly shows his friend drawings of the home and the furnishings he has designed for it (Parashat Teruma and Tetzaveh). But while he is eagerly sharing this dream with his friend, the woman he loves is in someone else's arms (Ki Tisa). A messenger interrupts the man's conversation with his friend to report his lover's betrayal. In a flash, his love turns to rage. He shreds the plans for the home they were to share.

Slowly, over time, the man's friend succeeds in convincing him to forgive the woman (latter half of Ki Tisa); he is also moved by her regret for what she did in a moment of weakness and insecurity ("We have no idea what happened to Moshe . . ."). But she is overcome by guilt; she cannot forgive herself, cannot believe that he has truly forgiven her. In order to convince her that he has forgiven her, the man re-draws for her all of the intricate drawings he had made of the home they were to share and all the things with which they would fill it (Va-Yak'hel and Pekudei). He presents her with the images in all of their detail and intricate beauty -- and now she can believe it.

This may be why the Torah repeats the details of the Mishkan: we need to see the "drawings" again in all of their detail in order for us to believe that despite our infidelity, Hashem can forgive us when we do teshuva.

If you are one of the bored shul-goers, wondering at all this repetition, maybe thinking about the Mishkan in this way will help. Besides the repetition, we may be put off by the 'ritualistic' tone of the sections of the Torah which describe the korbanot (sacrifices, coming up mainly in Leviticus/VaYikra) and the technical-sounding sections of the Torah which describe the structure and contents of the Mishkan. But the essence of the Mishkan is not the ritual/technical, it is the place where Hashem 'goes' to be near us and where we go to be near Him. This is not a "modern" theme we are reading into a ritual/technical text, it is explicit in several places in the plans for the Mishkan, where Hashem articulates the theme that the Mishkan in general and the Aron (ark of the covenant) in particular are where "I will meet with you": see Shemot 25:22, 29:42, 29:43, 30:6, and 30:36. Obviously, then, both parties (Hashem and us) should be deeply caught up in the details of the encounter we experience when we visit Hashem at 'home.' Next week we will examine some of the technical details -- the special clothing of the kohanim -- and consider how this clothing contributes to the relationship between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael.

Shabbat Shalom

Emphasis added

Parshas Tetzaveh: A Continual Offering

By Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

“THEY SHALL MAKE FOR ME A MIKDASH”

Hashem spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the people of Israel, that they bring me an offering; from every man that gives it willingly with his heart you shall take my offering. And this is the offering which you shall take from them; gold, and silver, and bronze, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, And rams' skins dyed red, and goats' skins, and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for sweet incense, Onyx stones, and stones to be set on the ephod, and on the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all its utensils, so shall you make it. (Sh'mot 25:1-9)

Rambam (MT Beit haBechirah 1:1), quoting what is arguably the most famous verse in our Parashah, sees in it the Toraic command to construct the Beit haBechirah (Beit haMikdash):

It is a Mitzvat 'Aseh to build a house for Hashem, constructed to bring offerings; we congregate there for celebration three times a year, as it says: “They will build for Me a Mikdash”. The Mishkan constructed by Mosheh Rabbenu was already explicated in the Torah – and it was only temporary, as it says...

Rambam's adumbration clearly presents the Mishkan as being the forerunner of the Mikdash. This can be stated in one of two ways:

The Mishkan was the “temporary” Mikdash OR
The Mikdash is the permanent Mishkan.

While there are significant distinctions between these approaches – chiefly, which of the two abodes is seen as the “essential” one – both assessments share a common premise: That the Mishkan and the Mikdash are essentially, functionally and teleologically one and the same. This is, by and large, the conventional understanding, prevalent both in classical Rabbinic writings and more recent homiletic literature.

I would like to suggest that a closer look at the Mishkan and Mikdash, as they are presented in T'nakh, reveal a different relationship between the two, one that, if properly assayed, can help us appreciate the significance of each structure in its own right, as well as clarifying a number of troubling textual and extra-textual difficulties relating to these edifices.

Before continuing, it is prudent to point out that it is not a consensus in the exegetical tradition to interpret our verse as referring to the Beit haMikdash:

Granted that Mikdash is called Mishkan, for it is written: And I will set My Mishkan among you; but whence do we know that Mishkan is called Mikdash? Shall we say, because it is written: And the Kohathites, the bearers of the Mikdash set forward? This refers to the Ark, Well then, from this verse: And let them make me a Mikdash, that I may dwell among them; and it is written: According to all that I show thee the pattern of the Mishkan. (BT Shavuot 16b)

First of all, I'd like to point to several difficulties which the “conventional” approach generates within T'nakh.

II. THE QUESTIONS

A: AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE 480TH YEAR...

The first glaring problem raised by the “Mishkan=Mikdash” approach is one of timing. If the Mishkan is simply the “temporary solution” to the Mikdash, i.e. that until the B'nei Yisra'el are settled in their land, they need a portable “mini-Mikdash”, then why isn't the Beit haMikdash constructed as soon as they enter the Land. We see that the B'nei Yisra'el began implementing those commands which are Land-dependent (Mitzvot haT'luyot ba'Aretz – see Kiddushin 1:9) immediately, or as soon as it was feasible. For instance, as soon as the B'nei Yisra'el entered the Land, they performed the Pesach (see Yehoshua 5 – see also Sh'mot 12:25). Why, then, did they not construct the Mikdash immediately? Note how long it took:

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the B'nei Yisra'el came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Sh'lomo's reign over Yisra'el, in the month Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of Hashem. (I M'lakhim 6:1)

In other words, it took four hundred and forty years after entering the Land before the Mikdash was built.

The immediate and nearly visceral defense to this challenge is one of specific location – although they had entered the Land, they had not yet arrived at Yerushalayim – thus prolonging the reality adumbrated by Mosheh:

For you are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which Hashem your God gives you. (D'varim 12:9)

And yet, this defense does not stand up well to the testimony of the text. Among the first wars fought by Yehoshua (perhaps, as I argued in the essay in Parashat Beshalach this year [V'shinantam 3/16], his first real war of conquest), the king of Yerushalayim, who organized the "southern alliance" of five kings, is vanquished. One might counter that even though he was defeated, that doesn't mean that the city was conquered – but the text is quite clear in the summary of wars (Yehoshua 12):

And these are the kings of the country whom Yehoshua and the B'nei Yisra'el struck on this side of the Yarden on the west, from Ba'al-Gad in the valley of L'vanon to the Mount Halak, that ascends to Se'ir; which Yehoshua gave to the tribes of Yisra'el for a possession according to their divisions... The king of Jerusalem... (Yehoshua 12:7,10)

Yerushalayim was in Yisra'eli hands as early as the first all-out war fought in the Land – and it remained a Yisra'eli town throughout the period, as indicated by the verse at the beginning of Shoftim:

And the sons of Binyamin did not drive out the Yevusi who inhabited Yerushalayim; but the Yevusi live with the sons of Binyamin in Yerushalayim to this day. (Shoftim 1:21)

The next counter-argument is that since Yerushalayim was not totally under Yisra'eli control – and rid of any foreign citizens – the Beit haMikdash could not yet be built. This argument rests on three questionable premises:

1) The situation changed in the times of David or Sh'lomo; i.e. that David drove the Yevusi out of the city such that it was a totally Judean city. Every indication of the text, up to and including the purchase of Aravnah the Yevusi's granary (the future site of the Mikdash) by David (II Sh'mu'el 24:24) points to a continued Yevusi presence in the city.

2) Absolute control of the city is necessary in order to build the Mikdash. Again, the testimony of the text clearly refutes this. We need go no further than the rebuilding of the Mikdash by Zerubavel and Yehoshua (c. 518 BCE), when the city itself, inhabited by Cutean enemies and controlled by the Persian empire, was still a valid location for construction of the Mikdash. Even if one were to posit that this is only true once the first Mikdash was constructed (following the argument that the first sanctity was eternal – see MT Beit haBechirah 6:15-16), we still come back to the presence of the Yevusi, as a significant population in the city, during the times of David.

3) Yerushalayim was always destined as the place of the Mikdash. This is the conventional way of explaining the oft-repeated reference to "The place that I will choose to place My Name", which is nearly anthemic in Sefer D'varim (12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21; 14:23, 24, 25; 15:20; 16:2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16; 17:8, 10; 18:6; 26:2; 31:11). It is generally understood as a veiled reference to Yerushalayim. For instance, Sifri identifies The place which Hashem will choose (12:18) as "Yerushalayim". This is consistent with the Rabbinic interpretation of a key verse which appears in the earliest context of "the place that I will choose":

For you are not as yet come to the Menuchah (rest) and to the Nachalah (inheritance) (D'varim 12:9) – Our Rabbis taught: Menuchah alludes to Shiloh (the site of the Mishkan from Yehoshua's time until the end of the period of the Shoftim); Nachalah, to Yerushalayim. (BT Zevachim 119a)

Haza"l understand that the presence of the Mishkan in Shiloh was merely a "rest"; whereas the arrival in Yerushalayim was the "inheritance" i.e. final settlement. It is prudent to note that there are four opinions regarding the interpretation of these two terms, only one of which is quoted by Rashi (and thus is the "famous" one):

a) R. Yehudah: Menuchah = Shiloh; Nachalah = Yerushalayim

b) R. Shim'on: Menuchah = Yerushalayim; Nachalah = Shiloh

c) The school of R. Yishma'el: Menuchah = Shiloh; Nachalah = Shiloh

d) R. Shim'on b. Yohai: Menuchah = Yerushalayim; Nachalah = Yerushalayim

However we may wish to understand these four divergent interpretations, one thing seems clear and unanimous: that Yerushalayim is the proper understanding of "the place that I will choose". I would like to suggest that this is not necessarily the case – that these Midrashim reflect the historical reality that Yerushalayim was chosen as the site of the Mikdash. In other words, instead of reading these Midrashim as "the place that I will choose means Yerushalayim", we should understand them as "the place that I will choose turns out to be Yerushalayim". This idea will be explicated further down.

In any case, the argument that the Mikdash could not be built immediately after Yehoshua's conquest due to the "foreign" presence in the city of Yerushalayim is a difficult one.

One final argument might be mustered to explain the delay in building the Mikdash.

The Halakhah clearly states that the B'nei Yisra'el were given three commands which took effect upon their entry into the Land:

R. Yose said: Three commandments were given to Yisra'el when they entered the land;

to appoint a king;

to cut off the seed of Amalek;

and to build themselves the chosen house [i.e. the Temple]

and I do not know which of them has priority. But, when it is said: The hand upon the throne of Y-H, Hashem will have war with Amalek from generation to generation, we must infer that they had first to set up a king, for throne implies a king, as it is written, Then Sh'lomo sat on the throne of Hashem as king. (BT Sanhedrin 20b)

Since they could not (or perhaps were not obligated to) build the Mikdash until a king was anointed, the delay is now understandable – but is it?

First of all, this Halakhah itself begs the question – especially if we accept the underlying premise that the Mikdash is the "permanent Mishkan". Why would the Mitzvah of building a Mikdash be dependent on the prior anointing of a king? We do not find that other "Land-dependent" Mitzvot require a monarch and his throne to activate obligation or allow fulfillment – why does making the temporary Mishkan a permanent edifice have this prerequisite?

We have already addressed the second question raised by this Halakhah – why it took so long for the B'nei Yisra'el to appoint a king (see V'shinantam 1/27).

If we are to understand the role of the Mikdash, we must also find a solution to this "Halakhic sequencing" – something we will endeavor to do in this essay.

In sum, the first set of problems we have encountered if we accept that the principle of identity applies to the Mishkan and the Mikdash is the lengthy delay in building that great building.

B: THE ARON

It is abundantly clear that the Aron (ark), which houses the Edut (testimony – the tablets of the covenant) is the central "vessel" in the Mishkan. It is the first item listed in the order of building (Sh'mot 25:10-16) and, more significantly, it is the base of the Keruvim, from where God will communicate with Mosheh:

And there I will meet with you, and I will talk with you from above the cover, from between the two Keruvim which are upon the ark of the Testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment to the people of Yisra'el. (25:22)

In addition, the Aron (with attendant Kapporet and Keruvim) is the only vessel which sits in the Kodesh Kodashim, that most intimate and holy of locations.

If the Mikdash serves the same function as the Mishkan and is its permanent housing, we would expect the Aron to play a similarly central and significant role in the Mikdash. The text is quite clear on this point – the significance of the Aron changes dramatically (yet subtly) and its role is diminished once the Mikdash is constructed. This can be most easily seen from Rambam's description of the building of the Mikdash and its appurtenances (MT Beit haBechirah 1-4). Whereas Rambam lists the Shulchan (table), Menorah, incense altar, copper (outer) altar etc., there is no mention of the Aron. Rather, Rambam relegates the Aron to a somewhat historical presentation:

There was a rock in the west of the Kodesh Kodashim upon which the Aron rested. In front of it stood the vessel with the Mahn (see Sh'mot 16:32-34) and Aharon's staff (see Bamidbar 17:25). When Sh'lomo built the House and he knew that it would ultimately be destroyed, he built a place to hide the Aron, underneath in a deep and crooked hiding place and Yoshiyahu the king commanded and hid it in the place that Sh'lomo built as it says: And he said to the L'vi'im who taught all Yisra'el, who were holy to Hashem, Put the holy ark in the house which Sh'lomo the son of David king of Yisra'el built; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders; serve now Hashem your God, (II Divrei haYamim 35:3) Along with it, Aharon's staff, the vessel which held the Mahn and oil of anointment were hidden – and they were never retrieved for the second (rebuilt) House... (MT Beit haBechirah 4:1)

Why was the Aron hidden? We understand Sh'lomo's concern – that when the Mikdash would be plundered, the Aron would not fall into enemy hands. Yet the practical implementation of this is difficult – how could a king (or anyone else) take it upon himself to remove (or pre-arrange for the removal of, as in Sh'lomo's case) the central vessel of the Mikdash? Aren't we commanded to maintain a proper Mikdash – and if God allows the enemy to plunder, so be it? How can we remove the central vessel from its place?

Our second question relates, then, to the Aron and its role. If the Mikdash is the “settled” Mishkan, why doesn't the Aron play the same prominent and central role in Yerushalayim as it did in the desert – and in Shiloh?

C: DAVID'S REQUEST

The key passage relating to the initiative to build the Mikdash is found in Sefer Sh'mu'el:

And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and Hashem had given him rest from all his enemies; That the king said to Nathan the prophet, See now, I live in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in your heart; for Hashem is with you. And it came to pass that night, that the word of Hashem came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell My servant David, Thus said Hashem, Shall you build Me a house for Me to dwell in? Because I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the people of Yisra'el out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places where I have walked with all the people of Yisra'el spoke I a word with any of the tribes of Yisra'el, whom I commanded to feed my people Yisra'el, saying, Why do you not build Me a house of cedar? And therefore so shall you say to My servant David, Thus said Hashem of hosts, I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Yisra'el; And I was with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from your sight, and have made you a great name, like the names of the great men who are in the earth. And I have appointed a place for my people Yisra'el, and have planted them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; nor shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as formerly, From the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Yisra'el, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also Hashem tells you that He will make you a house. And when your days are fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who shall issue from your bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with such plagues as befall the sons of men; But My mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Sha'ul, whom I put away before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you; your throne shall be established forever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak to David. (II Sh'mu'el 7:1-17)

This selection raises a number of difficulties:

1) At the beginning of Nathan's prophecy, God seems to reject the notion of a dwelling place – “spoke I a word...saying, Why do you not build Me a house of cedar?” Yet, further on, God acceded to David's request. Does the Mikdash have Divine approval or not?

2) When God approves of David's initiative, He promises that the house will be built – by David's son. Why isn't David allowed to build it himself? Keep in mind that this prophecy occurs during the early part of David's career as "full monarch" (post-Sha'ul) – a career which spans 40.5 years. The commonly assumed reason for this generational delay is found in a passage in Divrei haYamim:

And David said to Sh'lomo, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of Hashem my God; And the word of Hashem came to me, saying, You have shed abundant blood, and have made great wars; you shall not build a house to My Name, because you have shed much blood upon the earth in My sight. (I Divrei haYamim 22:7-8)

This is, however, not found anywhere in the contemporary texts (Sh'mu'el/M'lakhim) and reflects the overall perspective of Divrei haYamim (composed during the Second Temple era – see BT Bava Batra 14a), which heightens the "spiritual/religious" nature of the Yisra'eli monarchy. If this is a piece of the reason for prohibiting David from building, it is certainly not the whole story – for, if it were, why would it not be mentioned either by Nathan, by David (to Sh'lomo – see I M'lakhim 2) or by Sh'lomo (in his words to Hiram [I M'lakhim 5:17, 19] and to the nation [ibid. 8:17-19])

Why is David prevented from building the house himself?

D: URIM VETUMIM

An ancillary question, one which does not – at first blush – seem relevant to our discussion, revolves around the role of the Kohanic breastplate – the Hoshen – more commonly and directly known as the Urim veTumim.

Through the first post-Mosaic eras, the Urim veTumim played a central role in leading the nation – whenever the leader (be he Kohen, Navi or Melekh) had to resolve a crucial military or political matter, he would turn directly to God through the office of the Urim veTumim. (Indeed, it was the lack of response from the Urim veTumim [I Sh'mu'el 28:6] that drove Sha'ul to go- incognito – to the sorceress at Ein-Dor).

Here are a few examples of the use of this direct form of Divine guidance through the early political and military history of settlement:

1) The apportionment of the Land by Yehoshua and Elazar was accomplished through the breastplate (Bava Batra 122a, interpreting "Al Pi Hashem" in Yehoshua 19:50).

2) And it came to pass, after the death of Yehoshua, that the people of Yisra'el asked Hashem, saying, Who shall go up for us against the K'na'ani first, to fight against them? And Hashem said, Yehudah shall go up; behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. (Shof'tim 1:1-2 – see Ralbag and Rabbenu Yeshaya ad loc.)

3) And Sha'ul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the P'lish'tim? Will you deliver them into the hand of Yisra'el? (I Sh'mu'el 14:37)

4) And he inquired of Hashem for him, and gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. (I Sh'mu'el 22:10 – see, however, the animadversion of R. Yeshaya ad loc.)

5) Therefore David inquired of Hashem, saying, Shall I go and strike these P'lish'tim? And Hashem said to David, Go, and strike the P'lish'tim, and save Keilah. (I Sh'mu'el 23:2)

6) And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of Hashem, saying, Shall I go up to any of the cities of Yehudah? And Hashem said to him, Go up. And David said, Where shall I go up? And He said, To Hebron. (II Sh'mu'el 2:1)

Curiously, the Urim veTumim – or any direct address to God for this type of guidance – disappears during David's career.

Our final question, then, seems to be unrelated to the analysis of the relationship between the Mishkan and Mikdash: Why are the Urim veTumim "put to rest" during David's career?

It should be noted that Haza"l maintain the continued use of the Urim veTumim throughout the First Commonwealth (see, inter alia, Sotah 9:12 and Shavu'ot 2:2 and the Bavli ad loc.), nonetheless, they were used in a different fashion than earlier. Whereas in the pre-Davidic and Davidic examples noted above, the individual leader approached God via the Urim veTumim on his own, the Rabbinic description of the use of Urim veTumim necessitates the participation of the king and

the Beit Din haGadol (Sanhedrin).

Regardless, the T'nakh makes no mention of their use after this period – and this certainly is a sea change in the relationship with God and in His direct leadership of His people. How can we understand this change?

E: SH'LOMO'S TEFILLAH

This, again, is a question which may not seem to relate to our question but its resolution is most certainly a piece of this puzzle.

In the beautiful T'fillah offered by Sh'lomo at the dedication of the Mikdash (I M'lakhim 8), Sh'lomo describes the apparent futility of attempting to “house God”. He goes on to (apparently) describe the future function of the Mikdash, pointing out how His people will face His house in prayer when in need, at war etc. What is curiously missing from this T'fillah is any mention of offerings (Korbanot) – although that is certainly a most central and critical function of the Mishkan. How can we explain this omission?

III. SUMMARY

We noted that conventional wisdom holds that the Mishkan was the temporary forerunner to the Mikdash – or that the Mikdash was the permanent version of the Mishkan. Although these two formulations are not identical and reflect distinct understandings of the focal point of the Mishkan/Mikdash, they share a perspective which raises difficulties in several passages in T'nakh.

We asked why there was such a delay (nearly half a millenium) between entering the Land and the construction of the Mikdash – and that Yerushalayim, the eventual site of the Mikdash, was already in Yisra'eli hands during the early parts of Yehoshua's career. We also questioned whether Yerushalayim was the pre-determined location of the Mikdash, a topic we will expand upon next week, and pointed out that there was never a requirement of absolute Yisra'eli control over the town in order to build the Mikdash.

We then noted that the Aron seems to lose its role as the centerpiece of the Sanctuary within the context of the Mikdash – a role which is unquestioned and clear in the Mishkan.

We further pointed out the difficulties arising from David's request to build the Mikdash – and God's response through the prophet Nathan. It is unclear whether the “House of God” is even a desideratum, and once God agrees to David's request, he delays the construction until David's son will ascend the throne.

We concluded our questions with two apparently unrelated issues in T'nakh – the dramatic shift in the use of the Urim veTumim after the Davidic period and the omission of offerings from Sh'lomo's prayer at the dedication of the Mikdash.

In next week's essay, we will analyze the distinct functions of the Mishkan and the Mikdash, clarifying each and thereby responding to these difficulties.

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