

Potomac Torah Study Center

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Purim Katan next Friday 14 Adar 1; Shushan Purim Katan next Shabbat

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 more than 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 archives.

Hersh ben Perel Chana, cousin of very close friends of ours, has been confirmed as one of approximately 240 initial hostages to Hamas in Gaza. The Wall St. Journal featured Hersh and his family in a front page article on October 16. Chabad, OU, and many synagogues recommend psalms (Tehillim) to recite daily for the safety of our people. May our people in Israel wipe out the evil of Hamas, protect us from violence by anti-Semites around the world, and restore peace for our people quickly and successfully – with the help of Hashem.

One principle of our religion is that the Torah provides the cure for significant problems before mentioning the disease. In our parsha, the Torah presents the commandment to build a house for Hashem, along with detailed instructions, before relating Egel Zahav, the sin of the golden calf. We read the story of Egel Zahav and Moshe's argument with God not to destroy B'Nai Yisrael in chapter 32, two weeks from now, in Ki Tisa. Most commentators identify Egel Zahav as the reason that B'Nai Yisrael had to build the Mishkan, an essential part of obtaining God's forgiveness for that sin.

The most essential component of building the Mishkan is instructing the people to give what their hearts desire. Terumah constitutes voluntary gifts. (Next week, in Tetzaveh, God tells Moshe to command the people, including the Kohanim, to give specific items for the Mishkan. Tetzaveh items constitute a tax on the people, very different from the voluntary gifts in Terumah.)

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l, observes that the voluntary gifts for the Mishkan give the people a critical gift – the ability to give something back to Hashem. Giving is an essential part of human dignity. As Rabbi Yehoshua Gordon, z"l, put it, by identifying voluntary gifts that B'Nai Yisrael could give to Hashem, He permits us to be His partners in building a place for His presence in our world. Rabbi Label Lam notes that giving for the sake of Hashem is the most essential ingredient in building the Mishkan. Rabbi Yehoshua Singer adds that Torah study elevates a person. This elevation is unique to Torah study. Indeed, Rabbi David Fohrman reminds us that one meaning of "Terumah" is elevating, what we read that the waters of the flood do for Noach's teva (where the Torah uses "Terumah" for the effect of the flood water lifting the teva).

Rabbi Marc Angel notes how timely this parsha is, coming just before Presidents' Day. He quotes Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address with a message that could have come from a Torah commentary:

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for

him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations."

Rav Kook gives a similar message, that the purpose of the Beit Ha Migdash (the permanent replacement for the Mishkan) is to lengthen life, to be a world center of prayer and holy inspiration. President Lincoln's message adds the mitzvot from Yitro and Mishpatim that concern and care for others, especially the needy, is perhaps the central theme of true religion.

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander, President and Rosh HaYeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone, adds that Hashem desires to live within us, B'Nai Yisrael. God's ultimate real estate is not any sacred building, but it is within each of us. Our mission is to find a piece of Hashem within each of us and thereby make the world a better place. God wants to live within us out of love – He could easily remain in heaven. Our task is to find, feel, and strive for Hashem's presence always, and to make the world a better place both for Hashem and for all humankind.

Rabbi Mordechai Rhine reminds us that after God destroys the Beit HaMigdash, God remains with us wherever we go: *"Although I have [destroyed the Beis Hamikdash and] scattered you among the nations and foreign lands, I shall be for you a mini-sanctuary in the lands to which you go."* (Yechezkel 11) The synagogues and yeshivas of our people all over the world have been Hashem's place within us for the past two thousand years.

Our enemies are always waiting at our gates and frequently chasing us everywhere. Rabbi Moshe Rube reminds us that we all mourn during tragic or sad times and all Jews rejoice during happy times, such as earlier this week when the IDF rescued two of our holy hostages. Rabbi Brander reminds us that among the thousands of Ohr Torah Stone emissaries around the world, many face threats from anti-Semites, especially those in England. While Hamas is one of the most evil and dangerous threats to our people, it is far from the only one. Hamas and other evil followers of Amalek challenge the message of the Mishkan and separate us from Hashem's presence. As Rabbi Brander and other contributors remind us, our task is to come close to Hashem and do our part to make the world a better place. This task is the essence of the message of the Mishkan. May we work harder to carry forward Hashem's message.

My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, always found a way to make the Torah exciting, a trait that came through especially in legal sections of the Torah where the topics could seem very foreign to Americans in a modern world. The Mishkan section of the Torah certainly requires a reader's guide for us in the 21st Century. Hopefully some of the excitement of the sort that Rabbi Cahan brought to his Torah discussions comes through with the insights in the following Devrei Torah.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah and Alan

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 and since the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.

Please daven for a Refuah Shlema for Hersh ben Perel Chana (Hersh Polin, hostage to terrorists in Gaza); Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Reuven ben Basha Chaya Zlata Lana, Yoram Ben Shoshana, Leib Dovid ben Etel, Asher Shlomo ben Ettie, Avraham ben Gavriela, Mordechai ben Chaya, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha; Rena bat Ilsa, Riva Golda bat Leah, Sarah Feige bat Chaya, Sharon bat Sarah, Noa Shachar bat Avigael, Kayla bat Ester, and Malka bat Simcha, and all our fellow Jews in danger in and near Israel. Eliezer Tzvi ben David Hillel (Givati infantry brigade, lead IDF

force in Gaza) completed his called-up duty in Gaza and has now returned home safely. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.

Shabbat Shalom

Hannah & Alan

Terumah: Sanctuaries Are Built

By Rabbi Label Lam © 5767

“And they shall make Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them.” (Shemos 25:8)

They shall make Me a Sanctuary: They will make a house of sanctity dedicated to My name!
(Rashi)

The most critical ingredient in constructing the Tabernacle is that the actions should be done for the sake of HASHEM. Any other intention is clearly not a valid invite for the Divine Presence. It should be easy to understand why. Let's try!

The Talmud (Shabbos 30B) tells us that *“the Divine Presence only settles in the midst of the Joy -- Simcha of a Mitzvah.”* So the Sefer Charedim tells us that Rabbi Yitzchok Ashkenazi ztl. attributed his lofty spiritual attainments to *“Simcha Shel Mitzvah.”* The Sages also inform us that *“there is no joy – Simcha like the resolution of a doubt.”* Together these two statements educate about the need to gain clarity about the impact and import of the daily deeds we do.

A man who was held captive in a gulag for many years was made to push a heavy bar attached to a giant stone for hours each day and for many years. He was told that he was grinding wheat for the compound. That thought kept him going. When it was his time leave he asked to be shown how the turning of that giant wheel ground the wheat. The cruel guard laughed at him and told him that there was no connection and he had actually accomplished nothing. The man went insane from grief. See how defeated a person can be when he realizes all his labor is for naught. Not only would we like to feel, like some vague psychological balm, that all our strivings are for some grand and lasting purpose but it is worth plenty to be secure in the knowledge that it is so.

I remember when I was in Yeshiva and few of us wanted to make a movie to express and share with others our passion for Yiddishkeit. We gave up, perhaps too quickly, when it dawned upon us that the hardest and most important part to relay resides in the interior. What were we to show but some fellows with black hats swaying in prayer or swinging their thumbs? The invisible quotient would be conspicuously absent.

Moving seamlessly from the sublime to the ridiculous, it was told that Groucho Marx was invited to tour a wildly expensive mansion of some Hollywood celeb. As Groucho was led from room to room to the dismay of his host he kept that same wry expression on his face, showing no overt signs of being impressed. In desperation the host threw open the back-bay doors and there was the Pacific Ocean lapping the sand just a few feet from the magnificent villa. The host said to Groucho, “You know the three most important factors in real estate are location, location, and location. Well even if you’re not impressed with my house you can’t argue that this is not a great location with the Pacific Ocean within reach of my private beach.” To which Groucho, after tapping the ashes on his cigar replied in his typical sardonic tone, “Take way the ocean and what have you got?”

Obviously the ocean is going nowhere! It’s a fixture! The same applies to learning Torah and doing Mitzvos and building the Tabernacle. The three most important features are location, location, location. So King David states, *“Being close to G-d is what’s good for me!”* Take away HASHEM though and what have you got? How absurd! One of the names we use to refer to HASHEM is MAKOM – literally, place. HASHEM is the location of existence. It’s more reality than any ocean or notion our minds can conjure. If one is moved by the wave of “tradition” alone, that point of proximity is lost. It is with a single reality based thought and a simple action that sanctuaries are built.

Parshat Teruma: God Dwells Within Us

By Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander © 5784 (2024)
President and Rosh HaYeshiva, Ohr Torah Stone

Weeks have turned to months, and while we have been blessed with the release of two of the hostages, too many more are still languishing in Gaza, the number of heroic casualties continues to climb, and it feels difficult to envision an end to this war. The physical, emotional, financial, and social toll is felt heavily here in Israel. We seek inspiration to carry us from one day to the next.

Personally, I can think of no better dose of motivation at this time than the opening of Parshat Teruma. After the Torah is given, God instructs the Jewish people to construct the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, a portable house of God that would accompany the Jewish people along their journey to the Promised Land. It is puzzling, though, that in detailing the instructions for the Mishkan's construction, God says to Moshe, *"And they shall make for Me a temple, and I shall dwell within them."*

At face value, there would seem to be a mistake – certainly, the Torah meant to say that God will reside in 'it,' namely within the Tabernacle. But the classical commentators all agree that the verse is actually coming to convey a message that is deep and profound: God does not just dwell in the Tabernacle. God wishes to dwell *"in them"* – in us, within the Jewish people. As we face the trauma of this moment in Jewish history, undergoing what at this point is the longest war in the history of the State of Israel since the War of Independence, we need the reminder that God's ultimate real estate is not a sacred house or temple, but within each and every one of us.

Within our very essence is holiness, a spark of the Divine. As the Sfat Emet (Teruma 5631a) writes, *"for through a person's understanding that every word and action carries within it a Divine spark, one merits the revelation of 'and I shall dwell in them.'"* God invites us to find, within our everyday actions and within our unique personalities, an expression of Godliness. God wants us, appreciates us, and even needs us. Each one of us has something unique to offer to the world, and God is counting on us to do our part. On our darkest and lowest days, we must remember that in every one of us, there is God.

In Orot ha-Kodesh (II:5, 15 & 17), Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook writes that in an expression of partnership with humankind, God is in a divinely imposed state of growth! God becomes even *"greater,"* as our own souls, the piece of God within us, shine ever more brightly in the world.

It didn't have to be that way. God certainly could have made do without our worship and activity, sitting on the celestial throne in the perfect, flawless divine abode. The Midrash Tanchuma (Naso #19) describes the conversation between God and Moshe, introducing the instructions regarding the building of the Mishkan. *"Do not think,"* says God, *"that I am instructing you to build the tabernacle because I have nowhere to dwell, for I have in the heavens a temple built before the creation of the world. Rather, out of My love for you, I am deserting the supernal, timeless temple, in order to descend and dwell among you."*

For reasons that are far beyond our comprehension, God wants to be in this world with humanity and wants us to be His partners. Not up above in the heavens, where there is no trauma or strife or suffering, but down here with us, in this world with all its struggles, brokenness, and fear. God cherishes what we as individuals and as communities have to offer and wants us to know that we are not alone. This is the meaning of God's dwelling among us. What is left for us to do is to feel His presence and to strive continually to make society a better dwelling place not only for the Divine, but for all of humankind.

* I am honored to welcome Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander to our list of distinguished contributors. Ohr Torah Stone is a modern Orthodox group of 32 institutions and programs. Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin is the Founding Director, and Rabbi Dr. Brander is President and Rosh HaYeshiva. For more information or to support Ohr Torah Stone, contact ohrtorahstone@otsny.org or 212-935-8672. Donations to 49 West 45th Street #701, New York, NY 10036.

Special note this week from Rabbi Dr. Brander: Just this week, Ohr Torah Stone's emissaries at the University of Leeds in the UK, Rabbi Zecharia and Nava Deutsch, received heinous threats to their safety, as well as that of their two small children. In addition, the Hillel House on the campus was vandalized and graffitied with abhorrent antisemitic slogans. . . . Thousands of our students and alumni are serving on the frontlines of the war in Gaza and the North, as well as in positions around the globe working to confront hatred of Jews and the State of Israel. . . . Your continued support and friendship are so vital to our efforts, and take on even greater meaning at this unprecedented time. . . .]see above for where to donate.[

Terumah --The Rosh Yeshiva Responds: Using Ma'aser Kesefaim Money for a Shul's Building Fund

by Rabbi Dov Linzer
President and Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they shall bring to Me an offering: from every person who gives it willingly with his heart shall you take My offering.")Shemot 25:2(

QUESTION - Los Angeles, CA

Can I use my ma'aser kesafim, tithes from my income, to contribute to my synagogue's building campaign?

ANSWER

Giving money to the building of a house of God is the theme of this week's parasha, where the Israelites were called on to donate to the construction of the Tabernacle. In our post-Temple period, the synagogue stands in for the Temple, and there is no question that donating money to the building of a synagogue is an important mitzvah. But is it a legitimate use of ma'aser kesafim money?

To answer this question, we have to better understand the nature of the obligation of ma'aser kesafim. Poskim debate just how obligatory it is — whether it is a Biblical or Rabbinic obligation, or only a custom. The evidence all seems to point to the latter and for centuries it was practiced almost exclusively among Ashkenazic Jews; it was almost unknown in Sepharad.

There is also a debate as to the nature of ma'aser kesafim. Is it understood as a classic tzedakah obligation, which would mandate that it be given to the poor? Or is it more like the tithes that we find Avraham and Yaakov giving: gifts not to the poor, but to God? This type of tithing serves not primarily to help those in need, but to help us recognize that our material success, indeed, everything that we have in this world, comes from God, as is captured in Yaakov's vow: *"Whatever You will give to me, I will tithe from it to You."*)Breishit 28:22(. The key word here is not tzedakah, but terumah — the word that opens our parsha — something lifted up to God.

If ma'aser kesafim is a form of tzedakah, then it should be directed to those in financial straits and indeed the standard of 1/10th appears in Shulkhan Arukh and Rambam in the laws of tzedakah. But if it is a way of giving back to God, then giving to the building of a synagogue would be an ideal use of the funds!

Rema, following the ruling of Maharil)Teshuvot 56(comes down on the side of tzedakah: *"And one should not use his ma'aser for another(mitzvah, for example, to give candles to the synagogue or any other mitzvah, rather it must be given to the poor"*)YD 249:2(.

Many dispute Rema's ruling. Shakh YD 249:3(and Taz)YD 249:1(both rule that the money could be used for other mitzvah purposes, such as buying an aliyah or purchasing seforim, and this would certainly include donating to a synagogue. For them, this is a tithing to God, not to the poor.

The general consensus is that ma'aser kesafim money can be used for mitzvah purposes and not just tzedakah. A person can thus draw on her ma'aser kesafim money to make a donation to the shul's building fund)or to their favorite Torah institution!(.

* President and Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, Bronx, NY.

<https://library.yctorah.org/2024/02/ryterumah/>

The Persistence of Holiness

By Rabbi Michael Gordan *

With the beginning of Parashat Terumah, the book of Shemot puts behind it both the exodus and the civil laws of Mishpatim, and launches into its last great theme — the details of the Mishkan (Tabernacle), its furnishings and construction. The Mishkan will be an integral part of the camp of b'nei Yisrael, the children of Israel, as they move through the desert, and will continue to be a presence after they cross the Jordan into Israel.

Although we are familiar with the role the Mishkan played in the desert, its history after the Jews entered the land of Israel is less clear. Just as our parasha addresses the very beginnings of the Mishkan, I'd like to address the apparent end of the Mishkan's existence. The Gemara in Sotah 9a makes a comment on this point that deserves attention. It discusses David and Moshe, and claims that both were fortunate because enemies never ruled over their handiwork. As proof for King David it brings a verse that can be read to show that the gates of Jerusalem, which David built, were never destroyed but sunk by themselves safely into the sand. As proof for Moshe, the Gemara brings a rabbinic statement that when the First Temple was built, the Mishkan structure was hidden under the tunnels of the Sanctuary.

In the case of David, we can easily understand how the miracle prevented the invading Babylonians from destroying his handiwork, and why the Babylonians would be called David's enemies. In the case of Moshe, this terminology seems misplaced. The builders of the First Temple, Shelomo and Hiram, were by no means "enemies" of Moshe or the Jewish people. On the contrary, Shelomo believed his efforts marked a continuation of the Mishkan's purpose, and they were endorsed by God. Our rabbis emphasized this by linking many of the parashiot that describe the building of the Mishkan with haftarot that describe the construction of the Temple. Shelomo and Hiram's construction is understood as parallel to the construction of Moshe and Bezalel.

An additional question regarding the Gemara's language is some of the history of the Mishkan that we do know from the later books of the Bible. In particular, the unworthy sons of Eli famously served as priests in the Mishkan during its long sojourn in Shiloh. If Moshe is our model of piety and humility, surely having these priests serving in the Mishkan was an obvious case of "enemies" controlling Moshe' work. As much as we might like to spare Moshe the chagrin of having these unworthy successors serve in the Mishkan, it's odd that the rabbis would ignore this fact.

It seems likely that the strong language of the Gemara, describing the builder of the Temple as an "enemy" of Moshe, is intended to heighten the contrast between the stages of development that the Jewish people underwent, and how different the two eras were. The Mishkan in its portability reflected a people still in transition, who needed a God who could travel with them and address needs that would change as their environment changed around them.

With David and Shelomo, however, the Jewish people gained a permanent capital, and God gained a home in that capital in which his service would be formalized and centralized for all time. This represented a new model of Jewish life, one that

we can imagine Moshe would have been suspicious of, especially if we consider how Shemuel, who anointed the first king, warned so sternly about the risks that a monarchy presented.

We are not, however, left with an irreconcilable hostility between different eras of Jewish life and community. The Tosefta in Sotah 13:1 echoes the claim that the Mishkan was in fact hidden when the Temple was built. The Tosefta adds, however, that although Shelomo commissioned numerous menorot (candelabra) and shulchanot (tables) for the Temple, the priests of the First Temple only used the Shulchan and the Menorah that Moshe had constructed — and in fact, these did not need to be anointed with oil because their kedushah, holiness, was for all time.

It's not always easy for us to distinguish between the essential components of our religion and those that, however important, are contingent on time and circumstances. It may not even be possible for us to do so. However, the lesson in the transition from the Mishkan to the Temple is to trust that even in the face of change, holiness endures and can continue to illuminate and sustain us.

* Semicha, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, 2023. Founded Lechu Neranena, a partnership minyan at his law firm. Founding member and board member of Congregation Sha'arei Orah (both in Philadelphia, PA). Active in numerous worthy organizations, Jewish and secular, in Philadelphia.

<https://library.yctorah.org/2024/02/terumah5784/>

Real and Fake Religion: Thoughts for Parashat Terumah

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

A story is told of a man who stopped attending his usual synagogue and was now frequenting another minyan. One day he happened to meet the rabbi of his previous synagogue, and the rabbi asked him where he was praying these days. The man answered: *"I am praying at a small minyan led by Rabbi Cohen."*

The rabbi was stunned. *"Why would you want to pray there with that rabbi. I am a much better orator, I am more famous, I have a much larger following."*

The man replied: *"Yes, but in my new synagogue the rabbi has taught me to read minds."*

The rabbi was surprised. *"Alright, then, read my mind."*

The man said: *"You are thinking of the verse in Psalms, 'I have set the Lord before me at all times.'*

"You are wrong," said the rabbi, *"I was not thinking about that verse at all."*

The man replied: *"Yes, I knew that, and that's why I've moved to the other synagogue. The rabbi there is always thinking of this verse."*

Indeed, an authentically religious person is always thinking of this verse, either directly or in the back of his mind. Such an individual lives in the presence of God, conducts himself with modesty and propriety. The Rabbi Cohen of the story was genuine; he was a spiritual person seeking to live a godly life.

The other rabbi in the story was *"successful."* He had a large congregation and external signs of prestige. But he lacked the essential ingredient of being authentically religious: he did not have the Lord before him at all times. He was busy trying to make himself popular, get his name into the newspapers, rub elbows with celebrities. Even when he prayed, his mind was not on God, but on how he could advance himself in the world.

This week's parashah begins with God's commandment to Moshe: "*speak unto the children of Israel that they take for Me an offering* — *veyikhu li terumah*. Rashi comments that the word *li* implies *li lishmi* — that the offering must be given with pure intentions for the sake of God. One might think that donating to the construction of the Mishkan sanctuary was in itself a sign of piety. Rashi's comment reminds us: it is possible to show external piety while lacking true piety. It is possible to appear to be religious, but not conduct oneself with a religious heart and mind.

A kabbalistic teaching has it that we come closer to God through the power of giving — giving love, charity, kindness. A truly religious person is characterized by an overwhelming desire to share with others, to act selflessly with purity of heart. This is the essence of real religion.

On the other hand, we become more distant from God through the power of taking — trying to amass as much as possible for ourselves — more material goods, more honor, more egotistical satisfaction. We cannot exist without the power of taking, since we must fulfill our basic material needs. But when we exert this power excessively, we drift further and further from God. This is a sign of fake religion.

We all know individuals who are characterized by the power of giving. These are loving people who can be trusted, who are generous, compassionate and loyal. When we meet such individuals, we can sense the image of God in them. They genuinely want to help, to share, to be of service, to contribute. They are humble, and ask for nothing in return for their kindness.

We all also know individuals who are selfish and self-serving. They may act friendly and smile broadly, but we sense that their friendship is as counterfeit as their smile. They may pretend to be loyal and giving — but they are simply interested in advancing themselves. They try to take credit for work performed by others. They are seldom there when work has to be done, but are always there for photo-ops. They ingratiate themselves with those in power and calculate how they can take the most for themselves while giving the least of themselves. They pass themselves off as generous and kind, but they are only putting on an act. Their real goal is to take, not to give. Such people may fool some of the people some of the time, and even most of the people most of the time: but they never fool God.

In His command to the Israelites to contribute to the Mishkan, God specifies that He only wants contributions from those with generous hearts. He doesn't want contributions from those who are stingy; or who give in order to advance their own reputations and honor; or who give reluctantly or grudgingly. The Israelites were to build a sanctuary to the Lord — but it had to be constructed with "*the power of giving*," with selflessness and generosity of spirit. The house of God must be built with the finest, most idealistic human qualities.

The aspiration of a truly religious person must be to develop the power of giving; to be genuine, honest and kind. If we are to make our contributions to God's sanctuary — and to society — we must do so with purity of heart, selflessness and humility. We must aspire to real religion.

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

The Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals has experienced a significant drop in donations during the pandemic. The Institute needs our help to maintain and strengthen our Institute. Each gift, large or small, is a vote for an intellectually vibrant, compassionate, inclusive Orthodox Judaism. You may contribute on our website jewishideas.org or you may send your check to Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, 2 West 70th Street, New York, NY 10023. Ed.: Please join me in helping the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals during its winter fund raising period. Thank you.

<https://www.jewishideas.org/real-and-fake-religion-thoughts-parashat-terumah>

Remembering Abraham Lincoln: A Blog by Rabbi Marc D. Angel

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

Until 1968, Americans celebrated February 12 as Abraham Lincoln's birthday and February 22 as George Washington's birthday. These commemorations were then replaced with Presidents' Day on the third Monday of February. This was widely perceived as a downgrading of American veneration of Lincoln and Washington.

With the growing pressures for egalitarianism and multiculturalism, it was to be expected that great national heroes be cut down to size. After all, they were flawed human beings, not much better or different from ourselves.

In his perceptive book, *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era*, Dr. Barry Schwartz traces the dramatic drop in Lincoln's prestige, especially since the 1960s. He writes: "*Ours is an age ready to live without triumphal doctrine, an age in which absolutes are local and private rather than national, a post-heroic age in which national greatness is the epitome of the naive and outmoded.*" (p. 191). In the post-heroic era, it has become fashionable to focus on the flaws of American society and the evils of American history. Our heroes have now tended to be athletes and entertainers rather than singularly great political figures. Indeed, to identify a public figure as "great" is to invite a barrage of criticism from the politically correct opposition, stressing that person's numerous sins and shortcomings.

Those of us who spent our childhoods before the mid to late 1960s are still the biggest fans of Lincoln. Those whose childhoods were in the late 1960s and later were less likely to study about the great Abraham Lincoln that we knew: the common man born in a log cabin who went on to become one of America's great Presidents; the man of homespun wit and wisdom; the President who saved the Union; the President who emancipated the slaves; the President who was deeply religious in his own special way. As children, we learned not just to respect Lincoln, but to see in him a quality of excellence to which we ought to aspire. Lincoln's greatness was an inspiration; he represented the greatness of America and the American dream.

We need to remind ourselves: Greatness does not entail having all the virtues and strengths; greatness does not depend on external pomp and glory. Greatness, like the eternal light in our synagogues, needs to be steady, to give light, to inspire from generation to generation. It is futile to argue that Abraham Lincoln – or any human being – was absolutely perfect and without shortcomings. Yet, this does not negate the possibility of human greatness, any more than it would be to negate the greatness of the eternal light because it was not a larger, stronger light. A great human being is one whose life offers a steady light and inspiration to the generations, whose words and deeds have had profound positive impact on others, whose existence has helped transform our world into a better place.

Abraham Lincoln was a great man with a lasting legacy to his country and to the world. His spirit is well captured in the closing words of his second inaugural address, delivered on March 4, 1865:

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations."

It is a pity that Presidents' Day is simply treated as a day off from school or work; or a day for special sales. Wouldn't it be far more valuable for our society if children actually stayed in school and learned about Washington, Lincoln and other great Presidents? Wouldn't it be more sensible for all Americans to spend some time during the day to learn about, read about, think about the Presidents who helped make the United States a bastion of liberty? To squander the significance of Presidents' Day is to further erode respect and appreciation of the Presidents...and the highest values of American life.

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

<https://www.jewishideas.org/blog/remembering-abraham-lincoln-blog-rabbi-marc-d-angel>

Terumah: Creating a Sanctuary

By Rabbi Mordechai Rhine *

It was just after Yom Kippur, just after the Jews in the desert were informed of the atonement on the Eigel (golden calf). Hashem instructed the people to build a Mishkan, a Sanctuary. *“Build for Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell within them.”* Relationships have ups and downs. Relationships can have moments of terrible distancing. But, following the Eigel and its Teshuva process, Hashem beckoned us to refocus and build the relationship to even greater heights.

The Mishkan of the desert was the forerunner of what would eventually become the Beis Hamikdash built in Yerusholayim. The Beis Hamikdash was the love palace between Hashem and the Jewish people. It was built on the sacred location of Akeidas Yitzchak, where Avraham essentially said, *“I am willing to give up my everything, if it is the will of G-d.”* It is the location at which heaven kisses earth — the place from which Hashem’s Shefa (blessing) emanates to the world. In fact, even today, when the Beis Hamikdash is not standing, we continue to face towards that sacred location during our prayers.

Although the Mishkan, and the Beis Hamikdash after it, were the quintessential places of communion between Hashem and His people, there are, by extension, additional obligations to create sanctuaries in our daily lives. The Novi describes how, upon the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, the Jewish people were terribly confused. Hashem responded, *“Although I have [destroyed the Beis Hamikdash and] scattered you among the nations and foreign lands, I shall be for you a mini-sanctuary in the lands to which you go.”* (Yechezkel 11) Jewish tradition maintains that the “mini sanctuary” refers to the dynamic of the shuls and yeshivos that we build wherever we live. Hashem assured the people that although the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, He would still be available to us in the sacred places of our communities.

To the Jew, yearning for the times of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash are not abstract themes that we mindlessly pay tribute to. By building the houses of Kedusha (holiness) in our communities we express a very practical yearning for a greater level of relationship with Hashem. That yearning will eventually segue into the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash. This is true regarding our dedicated financial support to build Torah institutions and support them, as well as our personal involvement to attend regularly and experience the mini sanctuary, the taste of holiness that is available to us.

Rav Chaim Volozhion (Nefesh Hachaim 1) points out that the destruction and ultimate rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash are not arbitrary points in time. Both reflect the level of holiness of the Jewish people. When the Jewish people distanced themselves from Hashem and Torah, the Beis Hamikdash was a falsehood, as it did not reflect the level of the people. So, it was destroyed. Likewise, when we want to rebuild the Beis Hamikdash, the primary work is in building ourselves, to raise our level of closeness and genuine yearning so that the Beis Hamikdash will reflect who we truly are.

Rav Chaim Volozhion points out that on a very personal level, when a person thinks of doing a Mitzva, he activates an aura of holiness around himself. That holiness is like a mini-sanctuary and enables the person to proceed and do the Mitzva. As Rav Chaim describes it, *“He is enveloped in a veritable Gan Eden.”*

Thus, our task in creating a Beis Hamikdash is not limited to the Beis Hamikdash in Yerusholayim, a Mitzva that is not currently available to us. Our task includes creating mini-sanctuaries and even personal sanctuaries in our homes and wherever we go.

In the early days of the State of Israel, Ben Gurion had in his cabinet a minister who was a very religious fellow. One day, a particular meeting started in the morning and continued towards evening. As the time for sunset approached, this religious fellow, quietly stepped away from the table and walked to a corner of the room to daven Mincha. He davened as quickly as he could and returned to the meeting table. His prayers were apparently so quick that Ben Gurion commented with a touch of Mussar (rebuke), *“You call that a Mincha?”*

The man replied, “No, I do not consider that a proper Mincha. But I do that every day of my life so that sometimes I experience a very meaningful one.”

Ben Gurion said wistfully, “If I knew that sometimes I would have a meaningful one, I would do it too.”

I heard this story from my Rebbe, Rabbi Wein, close to forty years ago. When he said it, he added with gusto, “It is too bad I wasn’t there in the room with Ben Gurion when he said that. If I was, I would have guaranteed him that if he davens Mincha every day he will have some meaningful experiences with Hashem.”

The Mitzva to create a Sanctuary is not limited by time or location. All of us, wherever we find ourselves, have this precious Mitzva to create a Sanctuary. As a community we work together. As individuals we stay strong and steady in our relationship with Hashem. Our intent and action surround us with holiness, like a mini sanctuary. One day — it is a guarantee — we will rise to be a reflection of what the Beis Hamikdash is meant to be. Then the Beis Hamikdash will be restored to us — may it be speedily and in our days.

With best wishes for a wonderful Shabbos!

* Rabbi Mordechai Rhine is a certified mediator and coach with Rabbinic experience of more than 20 years. Based in Maryland, he provides services internationally via Zoom. He is the Director of TEACH613: Building Torah Communities, One family at a Time, and the founder of CARE Mediation, focused on Marriage/ Shalom Bayis and personal coaching. To reach Rabbi Rhine, his websites are www.care-mediation.com and www.teach613.org; his email is RMRhine@gmail.com. For information or to join any Torah613 classes, contact Rabbi Rhine.

Terumah – The Commodity of Torah

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer * (© 5783)

This week’s parsha begins the instruction and detail of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle in the desert. Hashem begins by telling Moshe to instruct the Jewish people to donate the necessary materials for the Mishkan and its vessels. This mitzvah is worded with an unusual phrase, “*and they shall take for Me a tithe*,” rather than a simple command of, “*and they shall tithe for Me*.” (Shemos 25:2) The Medrash Yalkut Shimoni explains that this wording indicates a second meaning, as the words can also be read to mean, “*and they shall take Me as a tithe*.” Hashem was hinting to us that we needed to build a Mishkan as a home for G-d within our camp, because we had merited to take G-d Himself, as it were.

The Medrash continues and explains that “*taking G-d*” is a result of the greatness of Torah. King Solomon refers to Torah as a good commodity, “*For I have given you a good commodity, My Torah, do not forsake it.*” (Mishlei 4:2) If two merchants selling different goods choose to swap goods, each one still has only one commodity. Yet, if two Torah scholars share their Torah learning with each other, then each one now has twice the Torah. One who buys a commodity and takes it on a trip has to worry about bandits. Yet, if one acquires Torah he has no such fear – the bandits can’t take the Torah he learned away from him. Our Rabbis say one who had acquired Torah was once traveling with merchants. They asked him what merchandise he carried. He told them it was hidden away, but he would show them when they docked. They searched the boat but didn’t find any hidden merchandise, so they began mocking him. As they left the boat, the customs officials took all the merchants’ merchandise. The rabbi went to teach and study in the local Yeshiva. The local Jews recognized his Torah and began to honor him and support him. The merchants then understood that it was the Torah hidden in his heart that had saved him. If a person borrows and travels, the borrowed funds can be lost. Yet, if one learns one chapter from one person and a second from another, those chapters can sustain and support him.

The Medrash concludes that Hashem said to the Jewish people, “*The Torah was Mine, and you took it. Take Me with it.*” This is the verse, “*And they shall take Me as a tithe.*” (Yalkut Shimoni Remez 363)

The Medrash implies that G-d values the Torah simply as a means of financial support. Yet, this concept surely has no meaning for G-d. Worse, this seems to cheapen the Torah as nothing more than a means to an end. Furthermore, the distinction between Torah and other merchandise doesn't appear to be unique to Torah. Any knowledge a person acquires is his and can never be taken from him. Why can't we say the same about any and all knowledge?

I believe the key to this Medrash is found in the story of the Rabbi on the boat. When the rabbi arrived in the yeshiva, he wasn't paid for his teaching. He didn't use his Torah learning as a means for support. Rather, the people in the yeshiva heard his teachings and began on their own to honor him and support him. As they listened to and studied his words, they recognized that he was an elevated human being. His Torah study had changed him. It was in respect for his elevated state that they honored and supported him.

The "commodity" of Torah is not the concepts and words of Torah that one learns. Rather, it is the fact that Torah has become a part of him. Through the study of Torah, one becomes an elevated and refined human being. It is this commodity which can never be stolen nor lost. It is this elevation of self which is unique to Torah.

Hashem is teaching us that there is an aspect of G-dliness inherent within the study of Torah. When we study the laws of mitzvos, monetary law, ritual purity or any other aspect of Torah, the study itself changes our perspective and elevates our souls. This elevation of Torah belonged to Hashem. Yet, He has gifted it to us. It is indeed a great gift, a good commodity, which we must be sure to never forsake.

* Savannah Kollel; Congregation B'nai Brith Jacob, Savannah, GA. Until recently, Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD. Rabbi Singer will become Rosh Kollel next year.

Terumah

by Rabbi Herzl Heftter *

]Rabbi Heftter did not send a new Dvar Torah for Terumah. Watch this space for further insights from Rabbi Heftter in future weeks.[

* Founder and dean of the Har'el Beit Midrash in Jerusalem. Rabbi Heftter is a graduate of Yeshiva University and was ordained at Yeshivat Har Etzion. For more of his writings, see www.har-el.org. To support the Beit Midrash, as we do, send donations to America Friends of Beit Midrash Har'el, 66 Cherry Lane, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

Terumah

By Rabbi Haim Ovadia * © 2024

]I do not have a new Dvar Torah from Rabbi Ovadia for Terumah. Watch this space for more insights from Rabbi Ovadia most coming weeks.[

* Torah VeAhava. Rabbi, Beth Sholom Sephardic Minyan)Potomac, MD(and faculty member, AJRCA non-denominational rabbinical school. **New: Many of Rabbi Ovadia's Devrei Torah are now available on Sefaria.** The Sefaria articles include Hebrew text, which I must delete because of issues changing software formats.

Dvar Torah from Rabbi Ovadia this year come from an unpublished draft of his forthcoming book on Tanach, which Rabbi Ovadia, who has generously shared with our readers. Rabbi Ovadia reserves all copyright rights to this material.

All Jews Mourn and Celebrate Together

By Rabbi Moshe Rube *

We and the entire Jewish world celebrate this week over the rescue of two of the Israeli hostages, Fernando Simon Marman and Louis Har.

Of course I personally don't know all the details of the operation, but it looks like it was a complex one requiring a lot of intelligence, coordination between different branches of the IDF and bravery from our heroic soldiers.

What's further inspiring is the reaction from Jews all over the world. In shules and yeshivot, we see videos of dancing and joy over the release of our brethren. When one Jew is in pain, we all feel it. When one Jew is freed, we all feel it.

Our portion of Terumah talks about the collaborative project of the Mishkan, the mobile Jewish Temple in the desert. One of the requirements is that all Jews must take part. God tells Moshe to divide up the responsibility so that all have an opportunity to participate in the construction. When Jews work together in unity, we achieve great things.

This brings to mind our move to our new Remuera site. It was and still is a collaborative effort.

But it also brings to mind the state of Israel and the IDF. Our Jewish state is the greatest Jewish collaborative effort since the building of the Temple. Jews in Israel and out of Israel bind themselves together with our identification with Israel. We mourn and celebrate with it as one. On October 7th we mourned as one, but now we can celebrate with it as one.

May we merit to celebrate with the rescue and release of all the hostages.

Shabbat Shalom,

* Senior Rabbi of Auckland Hebrew Congregation, Remuera)Auckland(, New Zealand. Formerly Rabbi, Congregation Knesseth Israel)Birmingham, AL(.

Rav Kook Torah

Terumah: The Iron Wall

The Torah describes in great detail the vehicle for bringing God's Presence into our world: the Mishkan)Tabernacle(, the forerunner of the holy Temple in Jerusalem.

The Beit HaMikdash, the holy Temple in Jerusalem, was a focal point of Divine service, prayer, and prophecy; a vehicle to bring the Shechinah into the world. The current state of the world, without the Beit HaMikdash, is one of estrangement from God. When the Temple was destroyed, the Talmud teaches, the gates of prayer were locked and a wall of iron separates us from our Heavenly Father (Berachot 32b)

Why did the Sages describe this breach of communication with God as a "wall of iron"? Why not, for example, a "wall of stone"?

A World Ruled by Iron

The metaphor of an iron wall, Rav Kook explained, is precise for several reasons. A stone wall is built slowly, stone by stone, layer by layer. An iron wall is more complex to construct; but when it is erected, it is set up quickly. The Temple's destruction and the resultant estrangement from God was not a gradual process, but a sudden calamity for the Jewish people and the entire world, like an iron gate swinging shut.

But there is a deeper significance to this barrier of iron. The fundamental aim of the Temple is the exact opposite of iron. Iron is a symbol of death and destruction; implements of war and slaughter are fashioned from metal and iron. Iron is a material used to shorten life. The Temple, on the other hand, is meant to lengthen life. Its purpose is to promote universal peace and enlightenment — “*My House will be called a house of prayer for all the nations*”)Isaiah 56:7(. The incompatibility between iron and the Temple is so great that iron could not be used to hew the stones used in building the Temple)Deut. 27:5, Middot 3:4(.

With the Temple’s destruction, the sweet music of prayer and song was replaced by the jarring cacophony of iron and steel, reaping destruction and cutting down life. At that tragic time, the spiritual and prophetic influence of the Temple was supplanted by the rule of iron. Only when justice and integrity will be restored, when the world will recognize the principles of morality and truth, will this wall of iron come down, and the Beit HaMikdash will once again take its place as a world center of prayer and holy inspiration.

)*Silver from the Land of Israel*. Adapted from *Ein Eyah* vol. I on Berachot 32b)5:76(.(

<https://ravkooktorah.org/TERUMA60.htm>

Terumah: The Labour of Gratitude (5775, 5782)

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

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.]emphasis added[

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. 25:2

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.

FOOTNOTES:

]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.

AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

]1[What need did the Mishkan address, and how do we provide for that need today?

]2[Why do you think the act of giving is critical to achieving human dignity?

]3[How can we “*give back to God*” today in a similar way to the voluntary contributions to the Mishkan seen in this week’s parsha?

<https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/terumah/the-labour-of-gratitude/> 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.

The Benefit of Sacrifice

By Yehoshua B. Gordon, z"l * © Chabad 2024

The parshah of Terumah kicks off a series of five Torah portions dedicated to the construction of the Tabernacle. Given its prominence, it is important for us to delve into the concept of the Tabernacle — exactly what it is, its purpose, and its significance.

Let’s begin by examining the opening verses of our Torah portion:

The L-rd spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and have them take for Me an offering; from every person whose heart inspires him to generosity, you shall take My offering. And this is the offering that you shall take from them ... 1

Rashi explains that since the word “*offering*” appears three times in the verse, it signifies three specific offerings:

- The half Shekel contributed by every Jew — rich and poor alike — which was used to construct the sockets forming the foundation of the Tabernacle walls.
- Another half Shekel, which financed the communal sacrifice fund. This fund, to which every individual contributed equally, ensured that each person had a stake in every communal sacrifice.
- The third offering comprised 13 materials listed at the start of our parshah — gold, silver, and copper; blue, purple, and crimson wool; linen, goat hair, and so on. This offering had no fixed amount; each person contributed according to their goodwill.

A fundamental question arises: If G d desired a Tabernacle, why didn't He provide the materials and funds Himself? Why did G d turn Moses into a fundraiser?

I am reminded of the adorable story of the rabbi who gets up before his congregation and says, *"I have good news and bad news. The good news is we've located all the money we need for the building campaign. Mazal tov! The bad news is it's in your bank accounts."*

Why was it so important for every Jew to contribute a half Shekel to the sockets and communal sacrifice fund? And why did every Jew need to contribute to the general building campaign?

Divine Partnership

The answer to these questions lies in the theme of the Chassidic discourse *"Basi LeGani."* The Sixth Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, had this discourse published on the day of his passing, the 10th of Shevat, 5710 (1950). Every year thereafter, the Rebbe would expound upon this discourse, providing additional explanations and insights.

The central theme is G d's desire to dwell within each and every Jew. When instructing Moses about the Tabernacle, G d states, *"And they shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in them."*² Not in "it," (as one might expect, but in "them," meaning within each and every one of us.

The Talmud relates that Tineius Rufus famously challenged the great sage, Rabbi Akiva, arguing, *"By giving charity to the poor, are you not going against G d's plan? G d obviously wanted this fellow to be poor, otherwise He would have granted him wealth!"*

"How foolish!" countered Rabbi Akiva. *"G d created the world and created humankind to partner with Him. The act of assisting the poor is one of many ways we partner with G d in the ongoing process of creation."*³

Every Jew contributed to the construction and operation of the Tabernacle because G d allows us to be His partners. To fulfill G d's desire to dwell in the physical world, we create a physical Tabernacle. Simultaneously, to fulfill G d's desire to dwell within each and every Jew, we must become spiritual Tabernacles.

Upon completing the construction of the Holy Temple, King Solomon eloquently declared, *"Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; much less this Temple that I have erected!"*⁴ How can the infinite G d dwell in a physical edifice in a material world? The answer is that this is G d's will, His desire. G d desires to be within the most physical component of creation, because the ultimate intent of creation is the physical world.

When the Tabernacle was erected, G d was pleased and said, *"I have come to My garden."* The term *"My garden,"* as explained by the Rebbe in his annual discourses, implies that G d had returned to His favorite spot, His place of delight. This is because when G d created the world, the mainstay of the Divine presence was here on earth.

Self-Sacrifice

While the central service in the Tabernacle (and later in the Temple) involved animal sacrifice, the Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad, taught that it is not enough to bring animal sacrifices — we need to offer our very selves.

*“When a man from among you brings a sacrifice to the Lord, from animals, from the herd, or from the sheep shall you bring your sacrifice.”*⁵ The wording of this verse indicates that a proper sacrifice to God must come from you — meaning we must offer a part of ourselves. In the Tabernacle, physical animals were sacrificed. In our personal Tabernacles, that translates to sacrificing our own inner “animals” — our passions, desires, delights, and pleasures.

In this context, all men are not created equal. Some people’s animal souls are like oxen — goring, violent, possessive, and out of control. For others, their animal souls are like sheep — calm and quiet, content with very little. Nevertheless, regardless of one’s spiritual disposition, everyone must offer and sacrifice their animal soul for God.⁶ This, indeed, is the very purpose of creation.

Gold-Standard Giving

The first of the 13 required materials listed in our parshah are gold (*zahav*), silver (*kesef*), and copper (*nechoshet*). These materials represent three types of contributors.

Zahav, or gold, symbolizes the gold standard of charity — the highest level of giving. The word *zahav* is an acronym for “*zeh hanotein bari*,” meaning *“This is someone who donates while healthy.”* He’s fine; he has no challenges, problems, or emergencies. Such a person gives charity because it’s the right thing to do.

Kesef, or silver, is an acronym for *“kisheyeshakanahpodeh”*, signifying a contributor who turns to charity when facing a difficult situation. While it is commendable to give charity in times of challenge, it does not reach the gold standard of giving.

The third contributor is nechoshet, or copper, which stands for *“nidvatcholehsheamar tenu.”* This refers to someone who is very ill and wants to bequeath money as a merit for himself in the Next World.⁷

While all charity is noble, we should aspire to give at the highest level — with sacrifice. Why? Because the greatness of charity lies in the fact that no activity demands a person’s full investment like the process of earning money. People invest their proverbial blood, sweat, and tears into making a living. When we take our hard-earned money — funds that could have been used to purchase food or some other vital necessity — and contribute it to God, there is no greater act of generosity.

Pillars of Jewish Life

The four primary vessels in the Tabernacle were the Ark, the Menorah, the Table, and the Altar. If we are to live as Jews, if we are to survive as a nation and bring about the next generation, we must prioritize these four key components.

The Ark. The Ark contained the Tablets with the Ten Commandments. (There’s an opinion that the Ark also contained a Torah scroll.) For God to dwell within us, we need the Ark, we need Torah. We need to study, acquire and transmit its teachings. How do we do that? Like the cute line they used to say when I was a kid, *“How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, practice, practice!”* How do you acquire Torah? Study, study, study!

The Menorah. What does the Menorah symbolize? King Solomon says in Proverbs, *“For a mitzvah is a candle.”*⁸ To embody the Menorah, we must perform mitzvot. Simply discussing mitzvot is not enough; the act itself is critical.

A poignant story emphasizes this point. Many years ago, a rabbi was encouraging an individual to put on tefillin. *“I’m not sure,”* the fellow said to the rabbi. *“I need to do my research first. If I’m convinced after I study and understand the mechanism behind the mitzvah, then I’ll put them on.”*

"Let me share a parable," countered the rabbi. "Consider someone who, G d forbid, develops an infection. His doctor tells him he needs to take antibiotics, but the guy says, 'Whoa! Wait a minute, doctor! Not so fast. First, I'm going to enroll at UCLA. I'm going to go to medical school and pharmaceutical school. I'm going to study all the ins and outs of antibiotics, and I'm going to see exactly what they do and how they work. When I'm convinced that antibiotics are good for me, only then will I consider taking them.' Every doctor will of course tell this man to start with taking the antibiotics and then study them, because if he doesn't take the medicine, he may not live long enough to take any classes."

To really live as a Jew, we must actually perform mitzvot. This is the Menorah – the light of the mitzvah.

The Golden Table that held the Showbread. This represents the home, the table of a Jew, which must be holy. How do we keep our table holy? By surrounding it with guests. When we are hospitable — feeding those who are needy materially, spiritually, or emotionally — this uplifts the entire home and brings tremendous blessing.

The Altar. The significance of the Altar, as mentioned, is the idea of sacrifice. The key component to Jewish survival is sacrifice. We cannot survive — and we certainly cannot thrive — by doing only what is pleasant or convenient. We must sacrifice.

And so, let us always remember that G d could have provided all of the funding and materials for the Tabernacle Himself, but He wanted our participation. He wanted our partnership, our gift — the gift of us.

The word terumah is also related to the Hebrew word for *"uplifting."* Contributing to G d's Tabernacle, sacrificing for G d's ultimate plan of Basi LeGani, of dwelling in this world, uplifts us. It elevates our homes and our lives. How do we contribute? How do we sacrifice? By constructing a Tabernacle within ourselves and enriching our lives with Torah, mitzvot, hospitality, and light.

May we indeed merit to see the fulfillment of the many promises G d gave us: that this bitter exile will come to an end, Moshiach will finally arrive and bring about an end to poverty, an end to war, an end to strife, an end to terror, an end to disease, and an end to cruelty.

May we experience it speedily in our days. Amen.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Exodus 25:1-3.
2. Exodus 25:8.
3. Bava Batra 10a.
4. I Kings 8:27.
5. Leviticus 1:2.
6. Likkutei Torah, Vayikra 2b.
7. Baalei Tosafot on the opening lines of Terumah, and Rosh loc. cit.
8. Proverbs 6:23.

* Rabbi Yehoshua Gordon directed Chabad of the Valley in Tarzana, CA until his passing in 2016. Adapted by Rabbi Mottel Friedman from classes and sermons that Rabbi Gordon presented in Encino, CA and broadcast on Chabad.org.

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https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/6309199/jewish/The-Benefit-of-Sacrifice.htm

Terumah: Spiritual Time Travel

by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky *

Spiritual Time Travel

There must be 15 cubits of nettings on one side, with their three pillars and three bases.)Ex. 27:14(

The Tabernacle was the earthly embodiment of Divine consciousness. By entering the Tabernacle – even its Courtyard – one was transported from his or her usual, mundane consciousness into an awareness of Divinity so intense that mundane consciousness seemed to fade into the background, or even disappear completely. In this sense, the Tabernacle was a foretaste of the Messianic future, in which *"the earth will be filled with the awareness of G-d as water covers the seabed."*

This taste of the future was alluded to in the entrance to the Tabernacle, which was flanked by two sets of nettings, each 15 cubits wide. Two times 15 is the numerical value of the word for "will be" (יְהִי) in the verse, "On that day, G-d will be one, and His Name will be one."

Similarly, when we enter our personal "Tabernacle" – our set times for prayer and Torah study – we taste something of the Divine consciousness that will pervade reality in the Messianic future.

— from *Daily Wisdom 3*

May G-d grant a decisive victory over our enemies.

Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman
Kehot Publication Society

* Insights from the Rebbe.

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Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
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Covenant and Conversation

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l

The Gift of Giving

It was the first Israeli house of worship, the first home Jews made for God. But the very idea is fraught with paradox, even contradiction. How can you build a house for God? He is bigger than anything we can imagine, let alone build.

King Solomon made this point when he inaugurated another house of God, the First Temple: “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain You. How much less this house I have built!” I Kings 8:27

So did Isaiah in the name of God Himself: “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. What house can you build for Me? Where will My resting place be?” Is. 66:1

Not only does it seem impossible to build a home for God. It should be unnecessary. The God of everywhere can be accessed anywhere, as readily in the deepest pit as on the highest mountain, in a city slum as in a palace lined with marble and gold.

The answer, and it is fundamental, is that God does not live in buildings. He lives in builders. He lives not in structures of stone but in the human heart. What the Jewish Sages and mystics pointed was that in our parsha God says, “Let them build Me a sanctuary that I may dwell in them” (Ex. 25:8), not “that I may dwell in it.”

Why then did God command the people to make a sanctuary at all? The answer given by most commentators, and hinted at by the Torah itself, is that God gave the command specifically after the sin of the golden calf.

The people made the calf after Moses had been on the mountain for forty days to receive the Torah. So long as Moses was in their midst, the people knew that he communicated with God, and God with him, and therefore God was accessible, close. But when he was absent for nearly six weeks, they panicked. Who else could bridge the gap between the people and God? How could they hear God’s instructions? Through what intermediary could they make contact with the Divine Presence?

By the Isen family
on the occasion of the 30th yahrzeit
of Milton Isen, a"h, (Moshe ben Mordechai Yitzhak)
and the 17th yahrzeit of Adele Isen, a"h (Chaya bas Hinda Faiga)

That is why God said to Moses, “Let them build Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.” The key word here is the verb sh-ch-n, to dwell. Never before had it been used in connection with God. It eventually became a keyword of Judaism itself. From it came the word Mishkan meaning a sanctuary, and Shechinah, the Divine Presence.

Central to its meaning is the idea of closeness. Shachen in Hebrew means a neighbour, the person who lives next door. What the Israelites needed and what God gave them was a way of feeling as close to God as to our next-door neighbour.

That is what the patriarchs and matriarchs had. God spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah intimately, like a friend. He told Abraham and Sarah that they would have a child. He explained to Rebecca why she was suffering such acute pain in pregnancy. He appeared to Jacob at key moments in his life telling him not to be afraid.

That is not what the Israelites had experienced until now. They had seen God bringing plagues on the Egyptians. They had seen Him divide the sea. They had seen Him send manna from heaven and water from a rock. They had heard His commanding voice at Mount Sinai and found it almost unbearable. They said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.” God had appeared to them as an overwhelming presence, an irresistible force, a light so bright that to look at it makes you blind, a voice so strong it makes you go deaf.

So for God to be accessible, not just to the pioneers of faith – the patriarchs and matriarchs – but to every member of a large nation, was a challenge, as it were, for God Himself. He had to do what the Jewish mystics called tzimtzum, “contract” Himself, screen His light, soften His voice, hide His glory within a thick cloud, and allow the infinite to take on the dimensions of the finite.

But that, as it were, was the easy part. The difficult part had nothing to do with God and everything to do with us. How do we come to sense the presence of God? It isn’t difficult to do so standing at the foot of Mount Everest or seeing the Grand Canyon. You do not have to be very religious, or even religious at all, to feel awe in the presence of the sublime. The psychologist Abraham Maslow, whom we encountered in parshat Va’era, spoke about “peak experiences,” and saw them as the essence of the spiritual encounter.

But how do you feel the presence of God in the midst of everyday life? Not from the top of Mount Sinai but from the plain beneath? Not when it is surrounded by thunder and lightning as it was at the great revelation, but today, just a day among days?

That is the life-transforming secret of the name of the parsha, Terumah. It means “a contribution.” God said to Moses: “Tell the Israelites to take for Me a contribution. You are to receive the contribution for Me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give” (Ex. 25:2). The best way of encountering God is to give.

The very act of giving flows from, or leads to, the understanding that what we give is part of what we were given. It is a way of giving thanks, an act of gratitude. That is the difference in the human mind between the presence of God and the absence of God.

If God is present, it means that what we have is His. He created the universe. He made us. He gave us life. He breathed into us the very air we breathe. All around us is the majesty, the plenitude, of God’s generosity: the light of the sun, the gold of the stone, the green of the leaves, the song of the birds. This is what we feel reading the great creation psalms we recite every day in the morning service. The world is God’s art gallery and His masterpieces are everywhere.

When life is a given, you acknowledge this by giving back.

But if life is not a given because there is no Giver, if the universe came into existence only because of a random fluctuation in the quantum field, if there is nothing in the universe that knows we exist, if there is nothing to the human body but a string of letters in the genetic code, and to the human mind but electrical impulses in the brain, if our moral convictions are self-serving means of self-preservation, and our spiritual aspirations mere delusions, then it is difficult to feel gratitude for the gift of life. There is no gift if there is no giver. There is only a series of

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meaningless accidents, and it is difficult to feel gratitude for an accident.

The Torah therefore tells us something simple and practical. Give, and you will come to see life as a gift. You don't need to be able to prove God exists. All you need is to be thankful that you exist – and the rest will follow.

That is how God came to be close to the Israelites through the building of the sanctuary. It wasn't the quality of the wood and metals and drapes. It wasn't the glitter of jewels on the breastplate of the high priest. It wasn't the beauty of the architecture or the smell of the sacrifices. It was the fact that it was built out of the gifts of "everyone whose heart prompts them to give" (Ex. 25:2). Where people give voluntarily to one another and to holy causes, that is where the Divine Presence rests.

Hence the special word that gives its name to this parsha: Terumah. I've translated it as "a contribution" but it actually has a subtly different meaning for which there is no simple English equivalent. It means "something you lift up" by dedicating it to a sacred cause. You lift it up, then it lifts you up. The best way of scaling the spiritual heights is simply to give in gratitude for the fact that you have been given.

God doesn't live in a house of stone. He lives in the hearts of those who give.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"And they shall make Me a mishkan, that I may dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8) What is the significance of the mishkan (tabernacle) to Judaism, the Jewish people, and the world? Two perspectives from our tradition offer answers that I believe provide insights that will imbue our daily lives with additional meaning and spread the light of Torah to all of humanity.

The great commentator Nahmanides [13th Century Spain and Israel] maintains that the primary purpose of the mishkan is to perpetuate the Sinaitic revelation, a central temple from which the Divine voice would continue to emanate and direct the Jewish people. This is why the very first aspect of the mishkan that the Bible describes is the Ark, the repository of the sacred Tablets of Stone, over which is the Ark-cover [kapporet] with its two cherubs. The Torah testifies in the name of God: "And I shall meet with you there, and I shall tell you from above the kapporet, from between the two cherubs, which is on top of the Ark of Testimony, everything which I will command you [to communicate] to the People of Israel" (ibid. 25:22).

Similarly, Moses articulates this idea in describing the revelation at Sinai: "God spoke these words to your entire assemblage from atop the mountain amidst the fire, the cloud and the fog, a great voice that never ceases" (Deuteronomy 5:19 and Targum Onkelos ad

loc.). It therefore is quite logical that throughout the Second Temple—in the absence of the sacred Tablets and the gift of prophecy—the Great Sanhedrin sat within the Holy Temple. From the Sanctuary [mishkan] must emanate the word of God!

Since the function of the Oral Torah is to keep God's word alive and relevant in every generation, Nahmanides maintains that the primary purpose of the mishkan was to teach and inspire Israel and humanity with the eternal word of the Divine. From this perspective, after the destruction of the Second Temple, synagogues and study halls—our central institutions of Torah reading, learning and interpretation—are the spiritual heirs to the mishkan.

Mystical and Hassidic interpretations see in the mishkan yet another goal: the building of a home in which the Almighty and Israel (and ultimately, all of humanity) will dwell together. The revelation at Sinai symbolizes the betrothal-engagement between God and Israel, with the marriage contract being the tablets of stone, the biblical laws. The commandment to construct a mishkan thus means a need to build the nuptial home in which the Almighty "bridegroom" unites with His bride, the Jewish people.

Hence, the accoutrements of the mishkan are an Ark (a Repository, or Closet, as it were, which encased the tablets), Menorah-Candelabrum, and a Table for the showbread—the usual furnishings of a home—as well as an Altar, which expresses sacrifice. Therefore, if the Almighty created a world in which humanity can dwell, the Jews must return the compliment and create a mishkan so that God will feel comfortable with us and be enabled, as it were, to dwell in our midst here on earth. From this perspective, the heir to the destroyed Holy Temples is the Jewish home.

And it is because Judaism sees the home as a "miniature mishkan" that home-centered family ritual celebrations bear a striking parallel to the religious ritual of the Holy Temple even to this day.

A striking example of this notion is the weekly Friday Night Shabbat meal. Even before the sun begins to set, the mother of the family kindles the Shabbat lights, reminiscent of the priests' first task each day to light the Menorah. The blessing over the Kiddush wine reminds us of the wine libations accompanying most sacrifices, and the carefully braided loaves of challah symbolize the twelve loaves of Temple showbread.

Moreover, parents bless their children with the same priestly benediction with which the High Priest blessed those in the Temple, and the ritual washing of the hands before partaking of the challah parallels the hand ablutions of the priests before engaging in Temple service. The salt in which we dip the challah before reciting

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the blessing over bread is based upon the biblical decree, "With all of your sacrifices shall you offer salt." (Leviticus 2:13), since salt, which is an external preservative, is symbolic of the indestructibility of God's covenant with Israel.

The analogy continues to the zemirot (songs) that we sing and the Torah that we speak about during the meal, which will hopefully further serve to transport the family participants to the singing of the Levites and the teachings of the priests in the Holy Temple. Such a Shabbat meal links the generations, making everyone feel part of the eternal people participating in an eternal conversation with the Divine.

Ultimately, whether in the synagogue or the home, we are blessed by God with ample opportunities to perpetuate the revelation at Sinai every day. Through the sanctification of our lives in each of these places of holiness, may we merit to witness the rebuilding of the Holy Temple itself, and the restoration of the full glory of God as experienced at Sinai, speedily and in our days.

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

When We Did Not Have the Kosel, We Still Had #12 Ibn Shaprut

In the beginning of Parshas Teruma, the pasuk says, "And you shall make for Me a Sanctuary and I shall dwell in their midst." (Shemos 25:8). Rashi comments: "And you shall make for My Name a House of Holiness." That is the essence of the Beis HaMikdash – a House of Holiness!

Two years ago, Reb Yossi Goldstein sent me an e-mail relating the following incident: Rav Yosef Buxbaum, who was the founder of Machon Yerushalayim (an institution in Yerushalayim which puts out wonderful seforim), was once walking in Yerushalayim, when he passed the house of the Tchebiner Rav. The Tchebiner Rav was Hagaon HaRav Dov Berish Weidenfeld (1881-1965). The terminology 'world class scholar' and 'great personality' are not sufficient to describe who he was.

Going back to my youth (circa 1960), before my Bar Mitzvah, my shul Rabbi, Rav Sholom Rivkin, z"l, told me that "the Tchebiner Rav is the Gadol HaDor!" (literally 'greatest person in the generation'). That was a time when Rav Aharon Kotler was alive, Rav Moshe Feinstein was alive, Rav Eliezer Silver was alive, Rav Henkin was alive. Nevertheless, Rabbi Rivkin told me that the Tchebiner Rav was the Gadol HaDor! Now, at that time I did not know what the term "Gadol HaDor" meant! But it always remained in my mind that the Tchebiner Rav was the Gadol HaDor. He was a Rosh Yeshiva. He was a Posek. He was a Tzadik. I can go on and on describing who the Tchebiner Rav was.

Rav Buxbaum was once walking past the Tchebiner Rav's house, which was at Rechov Ibn Shaprut #12 in the Shaarei Chessed

neighborhood of Yerushalayim. He saw that Rav Aryeh Levin (1885-1969), the Tzadik of Yerushalayim, was standing and crying in front of the Tchebiner Rav's house. Rav Yosef Buxbaum walked over to Rav Aryeh Levin and asked why he was crying. "Are you in pain? Why are you standing in front of the Tchebiner Rav's house, crying?"

Rav Aryeh told him that one of his children was sick. "If I could go to the Kosel Ma'aravi (Western Wall), I would go. (This was pre-1967, when the Jews did not have access to the Old City of Yerushalayim or the Kosel Ma'aravi) Since I cannot get to the Kosel, I need to pray in another makom kadosh (holy place). The Tchebiner Rav's house is that makom kadosh."

This is what Rashi means here "You shall make for me a Sanctuary" – a House of Holiness! If someone thinks of all the Torah that was learned in the house of the Tchebiner Rav and the chessed that was done there and the tzidkus that was practiced there – the Tchebiner Rav's house was a makom kadosh. If the Kosel Ma'aravi was not available, a person could at least go to this makom kadosh to pray.

Rav Buxbaum was so impressed with what Rav Aryeh Levin told him that he went and related the conversation to the great sage Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, who also lived in the Shaarei Chessed neighborhood. Rav Shlomo Zalman reacted without astonishment "Certainly that is appropriate. I, too, whenever I pass by that holy dwelling place, lift my eyes heavenward in prayer." Rav Shlomo Zalman also used the opportunity of being in the proximity of such a makom kadosh to petition the Almighty in prayer. Which person does not say a Tefilla when he goes to the Kosel. Religiously sensitive individuals considered the holy home of the Tchebiner Rav a similarly holy place.

This gives us practical insight into Rashi's comment "And you shall make Me a Sanctuary" – a House of Holiness.

The Power of Torah to Transform a Person Such That His Inside Matches His Outside
The Torah says to build of the Aron from atzei shitim – two and a half amos in length, one and a half amos in width, and one and a half amos in height. "And you shall cover it (the wood) with pure gold, on the inside and on the outside, it should be overlaid..." (Shemos 25:11).

Over the years, we have commented many times that each of the keylim (vessels) of the Mishkan is symbolic. The Aron, in which the Luchos (Tablets of the Covenant) are placed, is symbolic of a talmid chochom. The Torah resides within a talmid chochom, and so too the Luchos reside within the Aron. The fact that the Torah says that the Aron needs to be covered with pure gold on both the outside and

the inside is symbolic of the concept of "tocho k'baro" (a person's inside must match his outside). In short, a talmid chochom cannot be a faker. He needs to be of sterling character – as pure on the inside as he is on the outside.

There has been much discussion, dating all the way back to the time of the Talmud, as to whether someone may teach a student who is NOT "tocho k'baro". In Avos D'Reb Nossen, this is an argument between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel. Beis Shammai were very restrictive in who they accepted into their school. They forbade teaching a student who was not of sterling character. Beis Hillel were less discriminating. They favored an "open enrollment" policy.

The well-known Gemara in Brochos (28a) says that Rabban Gamliel, who was the Head of the Yeshiva, had a policy that any student who was not "tocho k'baro," was not admitted into the Beis HaMedrash (Study Hall). When they changed the leadership of the Yeshiva because of an incident mentioned there, Rabbo Elazer ben Azariah became the Rosh Yeshiva. They then removed the guard from the door of the Beis HaMedrash. The Talmud notes that on that day they added 400 benches (or according to another version 700 benches) to the Beis HaMedrash in order to accommodate the influx of new students.

The Gemara relates that when Rabban Gamliel saw what transpired, he became depressed out of fear that his policy had inhibited the study of Torah in Yisroel. The Gemara says that he was shown containers full of embers in a dream. This dream appeased him, as he interpreted it to mean that the new students were like ashes, meaning that they were really not high caliber students.

The Gemara says that this was not really the case. He was merely shown this dream to appease him, but in truth the policy of Rav Elazer ben Azariah was correct and the policy of Rabban Gamliel was wrong.

Someone once told me an interpretation of this Gemara in the name of Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik, zt"l. Rav Yoshe Ber asked – what is the interpretation of this Gemara? In other words, was Rav Elazar ben Azariah right or was he not right to remove the guard? Was Hashem merely fooling Rabban Gamliel by showing him this dream?

Rav Yoshe Ber explained the significance of Rabban Gamliel being shown containers of embers. When someone views embers, it appears that the fire has been extinguished. Nothing can happen from them. But within the embers may still be little flames. If someone blows on them, he may, in fact, relight the fire. This is what Rabban Gamliel was shown in his dream. They were not trying to "fake him out." They were showing him that these new students who showed up in the Beis HaMedrash were like embers. He took it to

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mean – "Ahhh! They are nothing!" But the real message was just the opposite. The sparks within the embers contain great potential. If they are blown on correctly, they can in fact become blazing flames.

The Zohar relates that Rabbi Abba announced "Whoever wants to become wealthy and live a long life should come to the Beis Medrash and occupy himself with Torah study." A fellow named Yossi heard this announcement and came in front of Rabbi Abba and told him that he would like to become rich so he came to learn. Rabbi Abba took him into the Beis Medrash.

The Zohar says that this Yossi was given the nickname "Yossi the Baal Tayvah" (as if to say "Joe the Money Grubber" or Yossi, the person who wants to become rich). Yossi learned for a long time but he did not become rich. He went back to Rav Abba and complained, "You told me that if I came to learn Torah in your Yeshiva, I would become rich. I came to learn, but I did not become rich."

Rav Abba was so disgusted with the fellow's attitude that he wanted to throw him out of the Yeshiva, but a bas kol came out from Heaven and said not to throw the student out – to have patience with him, because one day he would become a great talmid chochom.

Time went on and a wealthy man came to the Yeshiva to visit Rabbi Abba. The man had a golden chalice with him. He told Rabbi Abba that he was a wealthy man and he would like to support a young man who is involved in Torah study by giving him this valuable golden chalice. Rabbi Abba called in the Baal Tayvah and gave him the golden chalice. He said, "Okay. Now you have it. You learned Torah and you became rich."

The Zohar continues that years later this Yossi in fact became a very big talmid chochom. Rav Abba came into the Beis Medrash one day and saw that this Rav Yossi was crying. He said, "Why are you crying now – you got your money!" Yossi said "I am crying that I was willing to give up Torah for just a gold chalice. How could I have made such a silly mistake?"

The Zohar concludes that this Yossi became none other than the Amora Rav Yossi ben Pazi (cited in Yerushalmi Shekalim 9a). Paz means fine gold (Shir HaShirim 5:11; 5:15). Yossi was "Ben Pazi" (son of fine gold). He ultimately recognized how foolish he had been for having been willing to give up a world of eternity (Torah) for a transient world (of wealth). In the end, he realized "Better for me is the Torah of Your Mouth than thousands of pieces of gold and silver" (Tehillim 119:72).

The upshot of this Zohar and the upshot of the Gemara in Brochos is the same. Why did Rabban Gamliel become depressed when so many students came to the Yeshiva after they took away the gatekeeper? He knew that he

could have had an additional 400 or 700 applicants if he waived his entrance standards! He made a decision that he wanted only students who were tochom k'barom. It was a legitimate decision. Why then was he depressed when these additional students came in?

The Chidushei HaRim says a beautiful idea. Rabban Gamliel became depressed because after those 700 students came into the Beis Medrash, he saw what the Torah did for them. He saw that the Torah had the power to flip them from being people who were NOT tochom k'barom into people who WERE tochom k'barom. Just like this Yossi the Baal Tayvah, who became Yossi ben Pazi because the power of Torah changed him, so too, the same thing happened to new students who entered the Beis Medrash when the gatekeepers were removed.

This is what upset Rabban Gamliel. He knew why he rejected these people – because he did not want students who were not tochom k'barom. But now he saw that after spending time in the Yeshiva, through the power of Torah they BECAME students who were tochom k'barom.

This is what the Medrash Eicha means when it says “If only they would have abandoned Me and kept my Torah, as a result of their preoccupation with it (i.e. — with Torah), the light within it would have returned them to the proper way.” Torah has an amazing mystical power to change a person. It happened to Yossi ben Pazi and it happened to the hundreds of students in the Beis Medrash of Rav Elazar ben Azarya. The Torah flipped them from being people who were not tochom k'barom to people who indeed possessed that quality.

Dvar Torah: Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

It's the most extraordinary custom I've ever heard of. I'm referring to a comment by Rabbeinu Bachaye, the great 13th Century commentator, who mentions a practice of the Chassidim of Medieval France. When someone in their family sadly passed away, they would take wood from the person's dining room table and with it, they would make the coffin. The idea here is that the merit of everything that we do around our tables accompanies us into the world to come.

The Shulchan - Rabbeinu Bachaye mentions that this is all based on a passage in Parshat Terumah. There the Torah introduces us to the shulchan, the holy table which was used in the sanctuary and later on, in the temple, and it was upon that table that the shetei halechem, the showbread, would be brought as an offering before Hashem. That table was made of ‘atzei shittim,’ acacia wood, and Rabbeinu Bachaye quotes a midrash explaining that the four letters of the word ‘shittim’ (שִׂתִּים) stand for the attributes of that table. The shin (שׂ) stands for shalom meaning peace, the tet (תׂ) for tova, goodness, the yud (יׂ) for yeshua, salvation and

the mem (םׂ) for mechila, forgiveness.

Our Tables - Indeed, this is exactly what we find with regard to our tables today. First of all, the table is a place for family togetherness. There, we have shalom – shalom bayit, serenity – our tables bond us together as families and give us many memorable experiences.

There, we have tova – so much goodness happens around the table thanks to hachnassat orchim, hospitality, and bringing needy people to have their meals with us.

All of this then contributes towards the yeshua, the salvation of our people.

Finally, mechila, atonement: it was through the shulchan, the table, in the sanctuary and later the temple, that God gave mechila, forgiveness, to our people, and so too it is thanks to the precepts we perform, the blessings we recite before and after we eat, the special mitzvot relating to food which we have at the table and the kedusha, sacred nature, of our meals, all of this will hopefully prompt God to forgive us for our sins. And all of these precepts accompany us well into the afterlife. Therefore, while we readily recognise that we cannot take any of our worldly possessions with us when we go into the world to come, one thing we can ensure – all of our good deeds around our table and wherever we are will never depart from us.

Ohr Torah Stone Dvar Torah

Giving as a Basis for a Robust Community

Rabbi Moshe and Chava Bloom

God demands of the People of Israel to open their hearts and contribute to the building of the Mishkan. “Speak unto the Children of Israel, that they take for Me an offering; of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take My offering” (Shemot 25:2). In the portion of Vayakhel we see that the Children of Israel do indeed harken to the calling and bring all the necessary materials, so much so, that there was a great excess of donations and the People had to be told to stop bringing more: “And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they wrought. And they spoke unto Moses, saying: ‘The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make’” (Shemot 36:4-5).

The way in which the People of Israel set themselves to the task and engaged in infinite giving is heartwarming, and attests to the fact that the People understood how important it was for them to have a spiritual center in the desert, at the heart of which would dwell the Shechinah, enveloped by the Israelite camp on all sides.

One of the greatest challenges of any rabbi in the Diaspora is creating a spiritual center that will serve as a haven to all those who seek it.

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How does one turn the synagogue and other Jewish institutes into places that draw to them all Jews, even those that are not observant?

One way to build such a spiritual center is to turn people into active partners who are required to give of themselves. When people engage in giving to a community, they feel it is theirs and are therefore present. If the rabbi and his wife do all the work while all others are passive, any success reaped will be short-lived. However, if the leaders of the community are able to cause people to give and contribute – the people will keep coming.

During the four years of our shlichut in Warsaw, Poland (2013-2017), we came to understand that the Jewish community of Poland was different from other well-established communities around the world, mainly because of Poland's unique history. The Holocaust, with all its horrors, annihilated more than 90% of Polish Jewry, and following the war most of the survivors left the country – some to Israel, others to western Europe or other countries. The emigration from Poland took place in a number of waves: The first took place between the years 1945-46; the following one transpired between the years 1956 and 1960 and was known as the Gomulka Aliya, and the final wave of emigrants left Poland right after the Six Day War, in 1968. In fact, those who wished to hold onto their Jewish identity did not remain in Poland. However, tens, or maybe even hundreds of thousands of Jews still chose to remain in Poland. These were largely communist Jews who decided to relinquish their Jewish identity and keep their Polish one. This stemmed largely from the fact that they had experienced the atrocities of the Holocaust, and their subsequent resolution to never have to undergo another similar catastrophe. For their own sake and that of their children, they decided to start a completely new life in Poland, stripped of their Jewish identity, such that even their spouses and children were clueless as to their Jewish ancestry.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, the situation suddenly changed. It was suddenly okay to acknowledge one's Jewishness. Slowly but surely, more and more people came out with the secret of their Jewish roots, and infused new life into the Jewish community of Poland, much like the phoenix that is reborn from the ashes.

But this situation does have its drawbacks. Most of these newly-emerging Jews did not grow up as Jews, and so had no Jewish tradition to fall back on. They were also completely clueless about what it means to live a Jewish life (be it a religious one or not). I remember an incident in the Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw (the city's central synagogue and the only one which survived the Holocaust), when one of the worshippers said to me: “This is the tradition here in our synagogue.” I could only chuckle to myself at this statement. After

all, the synagogue had no age-old traditions whatsoever. All the practices and customs could not have been around for more than 30 years, since they had all been introduced by non-local rabbis who had come to serve the community during the last three decades. When a more Hasidic-oriented rabbi took position, the synagogue's customs were more Hasidic in nature; when a misnaged rabbi arrived on the scene, the "Polish traditions" got a Lithuanian flavor.

Another central problem we witnessed in Poland evolved around the concept of "giving". In any normal community, the members know that in order to receive, one has to give in return. This can be done by means of membership fees and other forms of monetary contributions which enable the robust existence of the community and its upkeep (maintenance of the synagogue, salaries for workers, cost of activities etc.); or by taking on honorary positions (such as synagogue manager, treasurer, board member, committee member etc.); sending one's children to study in the Jewish school even if it's further away from one's home; or by attending social activities organized by the community and so forth.

In the Jewish community of Poland, the concept of "giving" hardly existed. Membership fees were never paid, and the community was somehow able to upkeep itself financially thanks to the property it had owned before World War II, and which it retrieved following the war. Just to give a sense of the situation, annual membership fees were set at 50 Zloty (the equivalent of 50 Shekels or \$15), a negligible sum, and yet people still complained. Most of those holding various positions in the community worked for pay, and there were hardly any honorary positions. Many of the activities were financed and put into motion by Jewish organizations from around the world and not by local bodies. Members of the community received a great deal; however, the need and desire to give, to be active and to be committed was not ingrained in them at all.

How does one create a community when its members have no sense of giving? How does one cause individuals to congregate around a spiritual center, when those same individuals take on zero responsibility and expect the rabbi or board members (who are all salaried workers) to do everything for them? How does one convey to people that the Mishkan became rooted in the hearts of the Israelites precisely because they were fully conscious of the fact that all the materials necessary for the Tabernacle's construction were donated either by themselves or their parents? The Mishkan belonged to the people in all senses of the word – it was built with objects and materials that had actually belonged to individuals, and upon its completion it belonged to the entire People of Israel.

The Jewish community of Poland continues to be one which is neither big nor strong, although it bears a burden oh so heavy: a millennium of Jewish existence, on the one hand, and its traumatic destruction during the Holocaust, on the other. The community is in dire need of external help (in the form of rabbi emissaries, for example), but is slowly beginning to understand that the responsibility for its welfare lies in the hands of its own members, especially the younger ones. Only by not shying away from responsibility, committing to the community and engaging in giving can the future of Jewish life be vouchsafed.

Dvar Torah: TorahWeb.Org

Rabbi Mordechai Willig

Happiness: Resolving Doubt and Walking Straight

I. "Just as when Av arrives we decrease joy, so too when Adar arrives we increase joy" (Ta'anis 29a). While many detailed halachos apply to Av, commonly known as the restrictions of the Nine Days, nothing is specified for Adar. While some engage in various forms of merriment, a better approach is to delve into what enables one to be truly happy, and focus on it to better prepare for Purim.

The Metzudas David (Mishlei 15:30) states, "there is no happiness in the world as great as the resolution of doubts." Doubts can agonize a person and prevent him from experiencing true happiness. Adar is described as the month that was transformed from agony (yagon) to joy (simcha) for Jews (Esther 9:22). On the thirteenth of Adar, the very day that Haman planned to destroy us, a great turnaround resulted in the Jews destroying our enemies instead (9:1).

Haman descended from Agag (3:1), King of Amalek (Shmuel I; 15:7,8). Amalek's first attack (Shemos 17:8) was preceded by the doubts of Am Yisrael who said "Is Hashem among us or not?" (ibid. 17:7). Their doubts, according to Rashi, led to Amalek's attack. The numerical value of Amalek is the same as safek - doubt. The way to overcome Amalek is to resolve doubt and to establish absolute faith in Hashem and His Torah. To doubt is normal and acceptable, but if doubts are not resolved there can be no joy.

Questions about Hashem's providence have arisen when the righteous suffer, even on high. The angels asked Hashem when R' Akiva was cruelly martyred, "this is the reward for a life of Torah?!" (Menachos 29b). Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem a similar question, "why is there a righteous person who suffers?" (Berachos 7a). The angels and Moshe received answers from Hashem and accepted them, resolving their questions and doubts. We do not receive direct communication from Hashem, but we must reach the same conclusion: "Perfect is Hashem's work, for all His ways are just" (Devarim 32:4). This is the opening

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passuk of tzidduk hadin, the acceptance of judgment, when a person passes away. We must have perfect faith that Hashem is perfect.

Similarly, questions about Hashem's Torah arise when its laws seem unfair and even cruel. In every generation challenges reflect the mores of society which are ever changing. Torah leaders respond that the Torah is perfect (Tehillim 19:8) and human reasoning is not. Therefore, even if one is not satisfied with the answer he receives, he must resolve his doubt by acknowledging the perfection of Hashem's Torah. We must exclaim with absolute faith that the Torah is immutable - "ani ma'amin be'emuna sheleima she'soz haTorah lo tehei muchlefs". Hashem gave the leading Torah scholars of every generation the right to interpret and to innovate in response to changing realities and events, but only within the eternal halachic system. Doubts about laws that clash with human values must be resolved by recognizing that the Torah is perfect, but human actions and reasoning are not.

When Adar enters we increase joy by resolving any doubts that may have entered our minds about Hashem's Providence or His Torah. Doing so represents a victory over Amalek who attacks when we have unresolved doubts, and attempts to create safek - doubt. The joy reaches its peak on Purim with the joy of our salvation via the Providential turnaround, as well as our reacceptance of Hashem's perfect Torah (Shabbos 88a).

II. The prevailing culture in large portions of American society is known as postmodernism, which reject any notion of absolute truth. Postmodernists are skeptics and relativists, and reject any objectively rational knowledge. They criticize ideas of objective reality, morality, and truth (see, e.g., Wikipedia on Postmodernism). In other words, for postmodernists, everything is a safek - doubtful, and resolution of doubt is impossible. After rejecting moral truth for decades, postmodernism now even rejects scientific and factual truth, such as biological facts. This makes for confusion over even the most basic facts of life. While progressives applaud the removal of all barriers to personal choice as a gateway to happiness, when there is non-resolution there is no joy, as the Metzudos David taught. Clearly, postmodernism cannot coexist with Orthodox Judaism, which believes in the absolute truth of the Torah.

In their book *Life in the Balance*, Rabbi and Dr. Pelcovitz quote words of the Metzudos David (p. 29), and continue with the following insight of Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair: The letters of Amalek also spell me'ukal - twisted. Happiness requires a straight line in the direction of achieving one's goals. In Rabbi Sinclair's words:

"In a straight line, every step in that line is a product of the one that precedes it. A straight line will never stop. A line that twists and turns

must eventually falter and end. It has lost its connection to what preceded it. It expresses neither history nor purpose. The world is random. There is no purpose. No beginning. And no end."

Purpose is a prerequisite for happiness. Religion, the ultimate purpose, is a transgenerational line. "Hashem fights against Amalek from generation to generation" (Shemos 17:16). Pachad Yitzchak (Purim p. 65) interprets this to mean that Amalek seeks to exploit a generation gap to ensnare one's children. We fight Hashem's battle when we transmit our parents' Torah legacy to our children, in a straight line. This sense of purpose, more than wealth, yields happiness.

When Adar arrives we increase joy by eliminating the doubt - *safek*, which Amalek represents, by joyfully continuing the straight path of the Torah, and by exuberantly passing the immutable truth of Torah to the next generation. We avoid the twisted - *me'ukal* path of Amalek, and win the war against Amalek by eliminating the generation gaps.

Hashem made man straight (*yashar*) but they sought many sinful thoughts (Koheles 7:29 with Rashi). Sadly, progressivism and postmodernism has misled many away from the straight path, i.e. the traditional and accurate understanding of Orthodoxy. By reinforcing our commitment to the perfection of Hashem and His Torah, we will resolve doubt and relive a month that is transformed from *yagon* to *simcha*, from sadness to joy.

Mizrachi Dvar Torah

Rav Doron Perez

Transforming the Giver

One of the most revolutionary ideas in all of Judaism is the power of *tzedakah*, how we give loving-kindness and charity. And nowhere is it clearer, says Rav Kook, than in the beginning of this week's parasha.

We get it wrong – we think that the purpose of charity is to give to someone else, to enhance the lives of others, the recipient. Rav Kook says it is equally, if not more, important the impact not on the lives of others, but how it transforms the giver. That people in the world are not only giving to others, but are becoming more giving people.

Less selfish, more selfless. Less self-centered, more other-centered.

That's why, says Rav Kook, it says "take for me a contribution," as opposed to 'give a contribution.' 'Giving' a contribution focuses on the recipient, 'taking' means it's on the giver. The impact of taking what we have and giving it to others transforms not only the lives of others, but also transforms ourselves.

This same transformation of the giver, says the Midrash, which explains the order of what

people gave. The fifteen materials that were given begin with precious ones such as gold and silver, goes on to wood, oils, spices, and at the end are the precious stones. Why are all the less expensive materials given before the precious stones at the end? The Midrash says that many of the precious stones belonged to the wealthier people, and they struggled to give, but the poorer people gave whatever they had. Therefore, the act of transformation on the giver was more profound, even though the recipient would much rather prefer the precious stones because *tzedakah* is not only about how much is received, but the transformative power on the giver.

May we all be able to enhance the lives of others, but know that Hashem judges us not only how much we give, but how much we give relative to what we have, the ease in which we give, and how the giver is transformed through giving to others.

Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm's Derashot Ledorot

Chutzpah – A Religious Analysis*

Our tradition paints a very gloomy picture of the frightening and catastrophic days preceding the coming of the Messiah. In addition to all the world upheavals and bloodshed and immorality expected in the *ikveta deMeshiha*, in the era preceding *Mashiah*, our Rabbis (Sota 49b) predicted that "chutzpah *yasgei*," that chutzpah will abound, that there will be an unnatural increase of brazenness and effrontery and arrogance. And one may well wonder if the excessive haughtiness and obnoxious chutzpah we find so common in our world today is not the very thing our Sages were talking about. Perhaps if indeed chutzpah is to herald the coming of the Messiah, then the Golden Age cannot be far off.

What is chutzpah? It is a universal quality, but a uniquely Jewish word. It is essentially untranslatable. You might say: boldness, effrontery, arrogance. It is all these things but more too. Chutzpah, a great sage of the Talmud once said (Sanhedrin 105a), is "malkhuta beli taga," "kingship without a crown"; it is authoritativeness without authority, dominion without dignity, ruling without right, arrogance without warrant, dogmatic opinionation without basis – in short, a man acting the part of a king when he has never been entitled to the crown, "malkhuta beli taga."

Chutzpah is, of course, an unpleasant characteristic. When we speak of a man as a chutzpahnik we pass an unfavorable judgment upon him. And yet chutzpah has a positive side too. Our Rabbis meant to praise Israel when they attributed to it the greatest amount of chutzpah from amongst all nations. There are times that chutzpah makes for survival, times that it expresses a profound loyalty to values which transcend ordinary politeness and courtesy, and even life itself. The chutzpah of

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the Jew in refusing to settle down and assimilate, his insistence that Torah must survive at all costs and in all environments, his persistence in the face of great odds that he is a member of God's chosen people – that is a constructive and desirable chutzpah.

How then are we to understand chutzpah, and discriminate between its legitimate and illegitimate uses, between its positively offensive aspect and that quality which is not necessarily objectionable?

The answer is that in Hebrew we have two terms that correspond to the two component parts of effrontery or chutzpah, and each one must be treated differently for they mean different things. These two are called *azut metzah* and *azut panim*, being strong-headed and being bold-faced.

Azut metzah literally means "strength of the forehead" or headstrongness. This is an intellectual or ideological chutzpah, an effrontery of the mind. It means that I am totally convinced of the rightness of my opinion and that I will therefore not yield one inch to your argument no matter what you do or say. It is a most irritating quality – but it is restricted to the realm of ideas, and involves no sneering or mocking or scoffing. It can be good or bad. When a young man is headstrong and refuses to yield to the pressure of his friends who see nothing wrong with immorality and looseness as long as everyone else is doing it – that is *azut metzah*; an annoying and frustrating headstrongness, but a wonderful and admirable kind of chutzpah. But when a man sees God's miracles and goodness before his very eyes and refuses, unreasonably, to be convinced that "Hashem hu haElohim" – that is the wrong kind of *azut metzah*, a negative and sinful headstrongness.

Azut panim, however, is always and forever a detestable and obnoxious feature. Literally it means "strength of face" – bold-facedness or brazen-facedness. This is more than ideological stubbornness. It involves more than *metzah*, the head or mind. It is *azut panim*, the boldness of the whole face, the effrontery of the whole personality – the supercilious glance of the eye, the haughty sniff of the nose, the sneer of the lips, the vulgarity of the mouth, the closing of one ear to all reason and the opening of the other to all malicious tale-bearing. That is *azut panim* – the boldness of the face, the vulgarity and detestable arrogance of the warped personality. This *azut panim* is what makes chutzpah so chutzpahdik.

And that is why our Rabbis said, on the one hand, that "im ra'ita kohen ba'azut metzah, al teharher aharav" (Kiddushin 70b) – *azut metzah* in a kohen should not shock you. For a religious leader, be he a kohen or rabbi or scholar, must be a source of ideological strength and firmness which may at times be irritating towards others. But this is the *azut metzah* aspect of chutzpah, and it is therefore

above suspicion. On the other hand, azut panim deserves no such consideration. "Azut panim nikra rasha" (Numbers Rabba 18:12) – it is a sign of wickedness. Headstrongness is not always to be condemned, while bold-facedness is always an evil.

That is why on Yom Kippur we include in the list of sins for confession, "al heit shehatanu lefanekha be'azut metzah." To be headstrong against God and Torah is a sin, for which we apologize and hope to be excused. But in the preface to that very viduy, we say "ein anu azei panim..." We may be gossips and thieves and liars and azut metzah; but God, azut panim – that we never are, for we know that that is unforgiveable. Hold us guilty for anything, God, but not for azut panim.

Until now, we have defined the two types of chutzpah, and attempted to illustrate them and clarify their differences. Now let us proceed to a further analysis of this objectionable aspect of chutzpah called azut panim. Why should Judaism place so much weight on it? Why, in the very confession of the greatest sins do we deny that we are guilty of this one fault? Why does our great tradition react so violently to this one specific character flaw?

The deeper understanding of this quality of azut panim may be found not in the great ethical works of our sacred literature, but in the Halakhah. The Talmud (Ketuvot 18a) discusses the prosaic and mundane problem of modeh bemiktzat: Reuben appears before a court and demands that Simon pay him back the \$100 he lent him. Simon concedes in part – he is modeh bemiktzat, he says: yes, I owe him money, but only \$60. What is the decision of the Halakha? The \$60 to which Simon admitted must, of course, be returned to Reuben. But the other \$40, while it cannot be collected without witnesses, nevertheless requires Simon to take a solemn oath before Bet Din. Simon must go through the extremely serious procedure of denying loan of the extra \$40 under oath. Why is this so? Why do we not say that if Simon were a liar that he would deny the entire \$100, and that therefore if he admitted to \$60, to miktzat, that he must be telling the truth? Here the great Rabba explains: Because "ein adam me'iz panav bifnei ba'al hovo," no man will ordinarily be that bold-faced, that much of an azut panim, that he will deny the entire amount to the face of the creditor. That is why he feels forced to admit to the \$60.

Whatever the legal ramifications of that statement, and whether or not we are able to follow the short explanation that I have just given, this fact emerges clearly: no ordinary human being will ordinarily act with azut panim against one to whom he is indebted. If I feel that someone has done me a great favor, if I feel beholden to him, then I will never exercise azut panim towards him. This is the Halakha's psychological principle with regard to azut panim. One who feels beholden and

indebted will hold his peace and act respectfully. Otherwise, he is guilty of the most brazen, arrogant, inhuman, and detestable kind of azut panim – chutzpah. There can be no worse.

What we learn from the Halakha, therefore, is that a man who acts brazenly, with azut panim, towards his fellow men, he who is not only headstrong but vulgar and unreasonable and arrogant and mocking towards all they are and stand for – such a man acts that way because he does not recognize a power to whom he is indebted; such azut panim can be explained only as a feeling of complete independence, of being a self-made man. When a man recognizes the fact that there is no such thing as complete independence, that his clothing comes to him by grace of God, that his food and his health and his money and his family are all temporary gifts granted to him by God, and that he is therefore indebted to God for his very existence, that God is his ba'al hov, then that person will never develop azut panim of any kind in any situation. It is only when a man has deluded himself as to his own powers and greatness and self-sufficiency and forgotten his essential weakness and inadequacy and helplessness, when he has forgotten that he owes many a debt to God, that he becomes an azut panim. That is why Judaism is so concerned with the quality of azut panim. It is because the azut panim rejects God offhandedly. Bold-facedness is rebellion against the Lord. Brazenness against anyone is automatically a denial of all religion. "Haughtiness against men," wrote the great Ramban in his letter to his son, "is rebellion against God." Certainly, for "ein adam me'iz panav bifnei ba'al hovo" – to accept God is to be indebted to Him; and to be indebted and to know it is to make azut panim impossible.

Where can we find the cure for azut panim? Surely in the synagogue, if no place else. The mikdash me'at, the miniature sanctuary, not only should be a place where azut panim is never practiced, but should be the place where people learn to rid themselves of this scourge. In today's sidra we read of the construction of the very first synagogue – the Mishkan, or Tabernacle. And if you read carefully the measurements the Torah prescribes for the holiest part of the Mishkan, the aron, you will notice that in all three dimensions the measurements are not full units, they are not integers or complete numbers. Instead they are partial numbers: the length is two and a half cubits; the width one and a half cubits, and the height is one and a half again. Why so? Because, answers the saintly Rabbi Nathan Adler, the teacher of the famed Hatam Sofer, the Torah wanted to teach the people of the aron, the people of the synagogue, that they must never consider themselves complete – they are always to believe themselves only half-done. Their pride must be broken in half. They are never to imagine themselves complete and sufficient and independent. And people who remember that they are only heitzi,

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only half of what they should be, people who recognize their great indebtedness to the Lord of all creation, such people will never be guilty of azut panim, for such vile chutzpah comes about only when one thinks he is complete in and of and to himself.

We who are close to the aron hakodesh, to whom the synagogue is meaningful not only as another organization but as the place of Torah and the sponsors of the study of Torah, we must ever remember the debt we owe God Almighty, and thus forever remain free of the ineradicable taint of azut panim. If we are to use chutzpah, then let us make the proper use of azut metzah, for the greater glory of God and Torah. But let us never be guilty of azut panim, of the sin of spiritual vulgarity for which our tradition did not even provide an al het on Yom Kippur. Let us always say "ein anu azei panim," say what You will God, You cannot accuse us of that crime.

May our association with our beloved synagogue bring us that moral sensitivity and nobility of character, which, based on our indebtedness to God for our very lives, will cause us to become ambassadors of God to an unreconstructed world, bringing the light of Torah to all Israel and all the world, so that, in a manner of speaking, God will say to us: My children, now I am indebted to you.

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Rav Soloveitchik on Teruma: The Temple in Our Midst

Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider (Excerpted from Torah United, Teachings on The Weekly Parashah From Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, and The Chassidic Masters (Ktav, 2023))
Parashat Terumah

The Temple in Our Midst -

Nearly two millennia have passed since the Second Temple, the focal point of Jewish life, was reduced to rubble. Nevertheless, God promised "I shall be a minor Temple (בְּמִזְבֵּחַ נָמָת) for them" (Ezekiel 11:16) in exile. What does this mean? The Sages tell us it refers to the synagogues and study halls that thankfully heavily dot the map of the Jewish Diaspora.¹ The Rambam understood this to be no mere homily but a halachic reality. He notably extended the biblical prohibition against destroying the Temple recorded in Deuteronomy 12:4 to synagogues and study halls.² Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik deduced from this that there is indeed a profound link between the ultimate house of worship and our own humble houses of worship, a link reflected in Halachah.

The Source of the Temple's Sanctity – The first step in precisely defining the nature of the synagogue's sanctity is to understand the source of the Temple's own holiness. According to the Ramban, "the main intent of the Mishkan was to have a place for the divine presence to rest, namely, the ark, as it says, 'I shall meet with you there and speak to you from on top of the cover' (Exodus 25:22)."³ The difficulty is that according to tradition the ark was absent from the Second Temple, so did it lack the full sanctity of the First Temple? The Rambam wrote: "When Shlomo built the Temple and foresaw that it would eventually be destroyed, he built a chamber below, in the labyrinthine depths, in which to hide the ark."⁴ The Rav explained that while the ark did not rest in the Holy of Holies during the Second Commonwealth, it was still physically located at the Temple Mount, albeit deep beneath the ground. Therefore, it continued to radiate its holiness onto

the magnificent structure above.⁵ The ark as the Temple's true source of sanctity has halachic implications for the "minor Temple" today. A synagogue without an ark containing a Torah scroll, the Rav argued, does not possess the full status of a synagogue.⁶ Praying with a quorum where there is no Torah scroll, such as outdoors, discharges the obligation of tefilah be-tzibur, public prayer, but lacks the framework of holiness provided by the synagogue.

A Temple in Miniature - The sanctity of the synagogue being modeled on that of the Temple leads to a number of halachic requirements governing its structure and ambiance: (1) Location of the bimah: The Chatam Sofer ruled that the platform on which the Torah is read, the bimah, must be in the middle of the synagogue rather than at the front, as was the contemporary practice of nascent Reform: "Since our bimah is like the inner altar, it is fitting to place it in the middle of the synagogue to make it as similar to the Temple as possible. One should not change our miniature Temple."⁷ (2) Hanging of the ark curtain: In today's synagogues, the Torah scrolls in the ark are separated from the rest of the room by a curtain that is usually lavishly embroidered with a verse or images. Since our ark represents that of the Mishkan and Temple, it requires the same dividing curtain: "you shall cover the ark with the curtain" (Exodus 40:3).⁸ (3) Necessity of gender separation: Although we often associate gender separation in the synagogue as necessary for modesty and appropriate decorum for prayer, there is another fundamental reason for it. The Rambam states: "The women's courtyard [of the Temple] was surrounded by balconies, so that women could look from above and the men from below without intermingling."⁹ The Maharam Schick adds that what was true of the Temple must apply to the synagogue.¹⁰ The Rav appealed to history (in addition to Halachah) when declaring the mechitzah, the barrier separating the sexes, an absolute requirement, in contrast to those denominations of Judaism who were doing away with it: [T]he separation of the sexes in the synagogue derives historically from the Sanctuary, where there were both a Court of Women and a Court of Israelites. ...the people of Israel have never violated this sacred principle. [...] It would seem to me that our remembrance of history alone should keep us from imitating today the practice of primitive Christianity almost 1900 years ago.¹¹ (4) Elevated modesty: Many observant, married women who do not usually cover their hair do put on some covering upon entering the synagogue for prayer. Rabbi Hershel Schachter explains that there is a real basis for this practice. As a miniature Temple, the synagogue is a place designated for the resting of the Shechinah, the divine presence, and thus entails a heightened regard for modesty. Parashat Terumah says that the curtain at the entrance of the Mishkan was folded over (Exodus 26:9). Rashi likens this to "a modest bride whose face is veiled."¹² This seems to indicate that modesty is essential for God's presence to be manifest.¹³ (5) Planting trees in the courtyard: The Rav cites the position of the great Talmudist Rabbi Akiva Eger, which prohibits the planting of trees on the premises of a synagogue based on the biblical prohibition against planting trees in the Temple precincts: "You shall not plant for yourselves an Asherah tree—any tree—near the altar of Hashem your God" (Deuteronomy 16:21).¹⁴ (6) Strolling in the synagogue: Rabbi Yosef Caro rules in his Shulchan Aruch that one may not act frivolously in a synagogue. One example is "do not stroll in them."¹⁵ In the synagogue, one must maintain not only decorum but reverence for its sanctity. Apparently staying put is a perennial problem, as Rav Chaim Brisker made the following remark about one of the miracles associated with the Temple: "They stood crowded, yet prostrated with ample space."¹⁶ Even the first part, the standing still, quipped Rav Chaim, was miraculous.

Not Quite a Temple - Though it is clear that the synagogue is like the Temple in many respects, of course the two should not be conflated. The Rav captures the qualitative distinction in the following evocative manner. God refers to the Temple as "My house" (Isaiah 56:7), and David ha- Melech likewise calls it "the house of God" (Psalms 27:4). If the Temple is God's palatial home, when we cross its threshold awe and dread should overpower us. God instructs us to "fear My Temple" (Leviticus 26:2). The synagogue,

on the other hand, is our communal home. The Talmud makes the comparison explicit: “[The synagogue] is like one’s house. Just as one objects to walking through the house as a shortcut but not to spitting or wearing shoes, the same is true of the synagogue.”¹⁷ It is into this communal home that we invite God, so to speak. “When the Holy One enters a synagogue and does not find ten men there, He immediately becomes angry.”¹⁸ The synagogue therefore deserves our respect, but not fear. In a lecture, Rabbi Menachem Genack presented this distinction of the Rav and mentioned an intriguing practical ramification. Both Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and the Rav were asked their opinion regarding bringing a seeing-eye dog into a synagogue during prayer services. Since the Talmud says that Rabbi Imi permitted scholars to enter the study hall with a donkey, Rabbi Feinstein felt it would be certainly permitted in this circumstance.¹⁹ The Rav argued that just as we do not bring a dog into a Jewish home, we should hold to the same standard for a synagogue. Apparently, the Rav could not fathom that a Jewish home would welcome a dog.²⁰ However, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, the Rav’s son-in-law, taught that the Rav permitted bringing a guide dog into the synagogue because a person would allow such a dog to enter one’s home when accompanying a blind man.²¹ In both versions of the Rav’s ruling, one can see that the analysis rests on a comparison between the synagogue and the home, and what constitutes proper respect for both.

Exploring the Rav’s Insight - Regarding the practice of nefilat apayim, resting the head on the arm when reciting the tachanun supplication, the Rema rules: “Some say that we only do nefilat apayim in a place where there is an ark containing a Torah scroll... and this is the accepted practice.”²² Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky recorded an exception to this: In Jerusalem, the custom is to do nefilat apayim even in a structure that does not contain a Torah scroll, and even in a place that is not regularly used for prayer. Doing nefilat apayim only in a place that contains a Torah scroll is based on a biblical allusion, “And he fell on his face toward the ground before the ark of God” (Joshua 7:6). Since Jerusalem’s holiness is everlasting, it is tantamount to being in the presence of God’s ark.²³ Applying the Rav’s logic, if the ark beneath the Temple Mount infused the Second Temple with its sanctity, perhaps its presence at the spiritual center of Jerusalem extends its sacred presence to the entire city. Moreover, according to the Rambam the entire city of Jerusalem is considered to be the machaneh, the camp that surrounds the Temple Mount.²⁴ When one prays in Jerusalem, then, one can be said to be praying in the presence of the original ark, and one must do nefilat apayim. The beautiful notion that the entire city of Jerusalem is an extension of the Temple appears in a verse recited during the Hallel prayer: “In the courts of the House of God, in your midst, Jerusalem, Hallelujah” (Psalms 116:19). Commenting on this verse, both the Radak and Don Yitzchak Abarbanel suggest that because the holiness of the city of Jerusalem results from the ark’s presence, it is most appropriate that God be praised in the midst of this holy city.

Notes 1 See Megilah 29a. 2 Minyan ha-Mitzvot ha-Katzar, *lo ta’aseh* §65. 3 Ramban on Exodus 25:2. 4 Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit ha-Bechirah, 4:1. 5 Schachter, *Eretz ha-Tzevi*, 91. 6 Genack, *Shi’urei ha-Rav*, 314. 7 Shut Chatam Sofer, *Orach Chayim*, §28. 8 Chumash Mesoras Harav, 2:347. 9 Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit ha-Bechirah, 5:9 10 Quoted in Schachter, *Eretz ha-Tzevi*, 93. 11 Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant and Commitment*, 134. 12 Rashi on Exodus 26:9. 13 Schachter, *Eretz ha-Tzevi*, 96. 14 Genack, *Shi’urei ha-Rav*, 300. Interestingly, Rav Chaim Brisker, the Rav’s grandfather, permitted such planting in Brisk. 15 Shulchan Aruch, *Orach Chayim*, 151:1. 16 Pirkei Avot, 5:7. 17 Berachot 63a. 18 Berachot 6b. 19 Igerot Moshe, *Orach Chayim*, vol. 1, §45. 20 Rabbi Menachem Genack, “*Chidushei Torah on the Approach of Rav Soloveitchik zt”l* to the Sanctity of *Beit Haknesset* and *Beit HaMedrash*,” <https://outorah.org/p/33420/> (accessed March 14, 2021). 21 Rabbi Howard Jachter, “*Halachic Perspectives on Pets*,” *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* XXIII (Spring 1992; Pesach 5752), http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/english/halacha/jachter_1.htm (accessed March 14, 2021). 22 Rema on Shulchan Aruch, *Orach Chayim*, 131:2. 23 *Eretz Yisrael*, 1:9. 24 Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit ha-Bechirah, 7:11.

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Rav Frand Parshas Terumah

Torah Is Like Both Gold and Silver

There is an interesting Medrash Rabbah in the beginning of Parshas Terumah. The Medrash links the pasuk at the beginning of the parsha about taking gold and silver (Shemos 25:3) with the pasuk in Mishlei “For I have given you a good teaching, do not forsake My Torah.” (Mishlei 4:2) The Medrash states: Do not ever abandon this great acquisition that I gave you. A person can buy a golden item, but not have silver. He can buy something of silver but not have gold. However, the acquisition I gave you (Torah) has both. Torah has within it silver, as it is written “The words of Hashem are pure words – like purified silver...” (Tehillim 12:7) (Here, Dovid Hamelech refers to Torah as silver). And the acquisition I gave you has within it gold, as it is written “They are more desirable than gold, than even much fine gold...” (Tehillim 19:11) Torah is both gold and silver; there is no other such acquisition.

We must ask, if someone has gold, why does he need silver? Gold is more valuable than silver! What is the advantage that the Medrash is boasting about, that Torah is compared to both gold AND silver? The Abir Yosef answers by referencing an insight from Rav Chaim Soloveitchik on the Hagaddah. The author of the Hagaddah writes: Baruch HaMakom, baruch Hu, baruch shenasan Torah l’amo Yisrael, Baruch Hu, which introduces the “four sons about which the Torah speaks” – the wise son, the wicked son, the simple son, and the son who does not know how to ask. Everyone asks why this section of the Hagaddah begins with the expression “Blessed is He who gave Torah to His nation, Israel.”

The answer is as follows: By almost all disciplines in the world (Chemistry, Physics, Math, English, etc.), a curriculum that is appropriate for a six-year-old child is not appropriate for a sixty-year-old. If I take a basic arithmetic book ($2+2 = 4$, $4+4 = 8$) and show it to a professor of math, he does not need to learn that and he does not learn it. It is the same with all endeavors. But this week – and so it is every week – our children or our grandchildren will come home from school and share what they learned about the parsha... the story of the Mishkan and all the events in Parshas Teruma. Likewise, great talmidei chachomim will discuss the same parsha.

In the great Yeshivos of the Torah world, the world famous roshei yeshiva will say over their weekly Torah lessons this week on Parshas Teruma. Every rabbi will be speaking about Parshas Teruma. Every little child will be talking about Parshas Teruma. How can the same parsha, which works for a six-year-old, work for a sixty-year-old? What other discipline is like that? Perhaps the only other discipline that this can be remotely compared to is music. Music can be appreciated on a very basic level and on a very sophisticated level. That is why Torah is compared to song: “And now write for yourselves this Song...” (Devorim 31:19) A great musicologist appreciates great music on his level and a little child may appreciate it at his level. So too, a great rosh yeshiva can give a deep shiur on Mishnayos Bava Kamma at the same time that his eight-year-old grandson learns those Mishnayos in cheder.

That is the meaning of the Medrash. Torah is both gold and silver. Someone who appreciates the deeper mysteries of Torah appreciates it as gold. The little school child who comes home with a picture of the Menorah with its knobs and flowers appreciates Torah on his level, at least like silver. “*Ki lekach tov no’ sati lachem; Torasi al ta’azovu*” (For I have given you a good teaching, do not forsake My Torah) (Mishlei 4:2)

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<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/1089173/>

The Three Wars

Rabbi Moshe Taragin

The world around us is swirling in confusion. Our people and our land were brutally attacked by barbarians bent on murder, rape, and destruction. A war of survival has been involuntarily thrust upon us. Predictably, our enemies have seized the opportunity to falsely accuse us of ghastly and baseless crimes. The ugly monster of anti-Semitic hatred has been reawakened. Just when we thought we had entered a new, modern period of enlightenment and tolerance, we were dealt a harsh lesson: the struggle for Jewish destiny continues. Our homeland witnessed horrors we thought were relics of our tortured past, living in exile. Wanton violence against defenseless Jews could not possibly occur in Israel. Unfortunately, it did, and the pogrom reminded us that we haven't fully redeemed our people or our land. The struggle for Jewish destiny continues. Alongside the military battle in Azza, our enemies are waging a war of hatred and historical denial, protesting our rights to live in our homeland. Astonishingly, minority groups, whose own legitimate rights we have traditionally championed, have turned their backs on us. Regrettably, many in the African-American Community as well as many in the LGBTQ community, are spewing venomous and inciteful hatred against us. There is a shadow war being fought, both on the campuses of America and on the promenades of Europe. Surprisingly, there is a third front to this war. Over the past three decades disturbing cultural narratives have upended many of our sacred traditional values. Many modern perspectives upon human identity, religion, family, and community are corrosive to Jewish values. Unexpectedly, many of these post-modern narratives are surfacing in protests against Israel and in the endless discussions about our rights to our homeland. We have a nagging sense that the modern cultural wars have become entangled with the war in Azza. This threading of cultural wars with our war in Azza is confusing. What does the war in Azza have to do with Wokism or with post-modernism? They seem to be completely unrelated. However, as with everything in Jewish history, nothing is random.

The Sun Rises for All - Jewish redemption is pivoted upon a people and a land. We were meant to inhabit the land of Hashem, but repeatedly failed Him, and were banished to a two-thousand year odyssey of wandering this Earth. We are slowly climbing our way back to peoplehood and back to historical relevancy, but redemption will only conclude when we are resettled in our homeland, living under the eye of Hashem. Redemption is national, and it is geographical. Though redemption is pivoted upon a people and their land it isn't a phenomenon limited to Jews. Judaism is unique, in that its redemption radiates outward to all of humanity. As we reconvene back in our homeland, all of humanity recognizes Hashem, accepts His authority, and enjoys widespread prosperity. Jewish redemption is a microcosm for a broader redemption. Chazal applied a series of metaphors to describe the texture of redemption. As redemption hasn't ever occurred, we don't know its specific details, or, to paraphrase the Rambam, we will only know that Moshiach has arrived after he has arrived. Seeking to describe the unknown world of redemption, Chazal generated a rich array of metaphors. One popular metaphor for redemption is the rising sun. The Yerushalmi in Yoma (3:2) documents two Tana'im who witnessed the sun rise above the Kinneret lake. They commented that a sunrise mirrors redemption: just as the sun rises gradually or קִמְעָנָה, similarly, redemption unfolds in stages. Additionally, the sunrise metaphor accentuates the universal nature of Jewish redemption. The sun rises above the horizon and provides light and life for all of humanity, not just for Jews. Redemption is a universal event, powered by a nationalistic experience. As redemption is universal, Moshiach will heal all social illnesses and repair all human failings. War will cease, poverty will be eliminated, and social strife will abate. The great advances of the past few centuries are all part of the leadup to redemption. The political, industrial, technological, and economic revolutions of the past four hundred years are harbingers of Moshiach. As humanity surges toward a better state, the whisper of Moshiach can be heard.

The Moral Cost Progress though, has come at a steep moral cost. Human experience has been enhanced and individual freedom has been extended, but moral values and ethics have each declined. With its emphasis upon individualism and personal expression, modernity has thrown core elements

of human identity into question. Fundamental social hierarchies have been abandoned while the basics of human identity are no longer self-evident. We are more comfortable than ever, but feel morally adrift. Just as redemption must advance human material prosperity, it must also repair moral decline. Moshiach must deliver moral clarity.

Part of the Redemptive Process - It is obvious that this war isn't a local geopolitical skirmish, but part of the historical battle to advance Hashem's presence in our world. Though we are left with many perplexing question marks, we know that this war is part of the redemptive arc and that, one day, the mystery of Oct. 7 will become clear. If this historical war is part of a Messianic trajectory, it must also begin to repair the toxic cultural narratives which afflict humanity. Any war which is part of redemptive Jewish history must also advance moral clarity. Therefore, it is totally expected that the war in Azza be interlocked with the cultural wars. We are designated by Hashem to defeat evil. We defend humanity against its darker self. We are placed on this earth to defeat evil and to help repair broken cultural narratives.

Post-modernism - This war has showcased the perils of post-modernism which asserts that that truth isn't absolute or objective, but subjective. Post modernism claims that truth is merely a social construct and that different communities or cultures may "construct" different truths. This counterfeit ideology has obliterated any abiding notion of a fixed and factual truth. Every fact can be manipulated, and every narrative can be justified based on falsifications masquerading as socially constructed truth. Throughout the war we continually faced baseless accusations, as casualty figures were glibly falsified and pictures from Azza doctored and photoshopped. No sane or civil conversation is possible, since there isn't a baseline of truth and fact. Everything is up for grabs in the post-modern swirl of confusion. A former dean of a major US college clarified to us that rabid and violent calls for the murder of Jews must be understood in the "context" in which they were stated. Truth, we are taught, is always contextual. Our battle, in part, is to restore the concept of truth. Hashem is the ultimate הָשֵׁם and any forgery or counterfeit blocks His presence in this world. Our battle for truth is a battle for His presence. Intersectionality Intersectionality theory asserts that all forms of oppression or discrimination are interconnected. Therefore, all marginalized groups with grievances must support one another in their respective battles for equality. The battle for freedom and equality for an African American has become fused to the war in Azza. An ignorant world, intoxicated with intersectionality and seething with antisemitic fury, has thoughtlessly adopted a colonialist narrative, recasting the war in Azza as a battle between an indigenous population and their foreign occupiers. Depicting Jews as white male occupiers, criminalizes us in the eyes of every underprivileged group. We have nothing to do with bigotry or discrimination. We have built one of the most liberal democracies in the world, which grants freedom of worship to every religion. Intersectionality, though, blinds its naïve victims into hating whoever they deem to be the "oppressor". It leaves no room for facts, education, or nuance. The weak must hate the strong. We are fighting three concurrent wars. We will defeat the evil murderers of Azza. We will defy antisemitism. Slowly but surely, we will help humanity recover its senses, and repair its broken cultural narratives.

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Rabbi Mordechai Willig
The Joy of Adar I

I From when Adar enters, we increase joy (Ta'anis 29a). Is this true for the first Adar in a leap year as well? The Mishna (Megillah 6b) states that there is no difference between the first and second Adar except reading the Megillah and gifts for the poor. This implies that the increased joy applies to both Adars. Furthermore, R' Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev (Kedushas Levi, Parshas Ki Sisa, s.v. ta'am) writes that it is known that the twelve months correspond to the twelve tribes (see Tur, Orach Chaim 417). The mazal of Adar is dagim, fish (Esther Rabba 7:11), which corresponds to Yosef who is

compared to fish that the evil eye does not harm. Rashi (Bereishis 49:22), cites the Gemara (Berachos 20a) that the evil eye does not affect Yosef or his descendants. When Yaakov blessed Menashe and Efrayim he said (48:16), "may they reproduce abundantly like fish", over which the evil eye has no effect, presumably because they are hidden underwater. [See Kedushas Levi, Tetzave, s.v. oh.] The Kedushas Levi concludes: Yosef fathered two tribes, Menashe and Efrayim, and therefore, there are two Adars [perhaps this is why the mazal is dagim, plural, not dag, singular like the mazalos all the other months] both of which have the mazal of dagim and increased joy (Nitei Gavriel, Purim 11:1, fn 2). The Chosam Sofer (Orach Chaim 163) agrees that the first Adar has increased joy as well.

He cites Rashi (Ta'anis 29a) on, "when Adar enters" who says, "Purim and Pesach were days of miracles for Yisrael." Rav Yaakov Emden (She'elas Yaavetz II:88) asks, why does Rashi include Pesach? It must be to teach us that increased joy applies only to the Adar that is close to Pesach, namely Adar II in a leap year.

Indeed, in determining which Adar the Megillah should be read in, the Gemara (Megillah 6b) rules that it is read in the Adar which is adjacent to Nisan, namely Adar II. The Gemara explains the reason for this is that it is preferred to "juxtapose redemption to redemption", which Rashi explains to mean juxtapose Purim to Pesach.

II A deeper understanding of Rashi's inclusion of Pesach can refute the proof of Rav Yaakov Emden. There are two types of miracles, hidden and supernatural. Purim commemorates a hidden miracle in which no laws of nature were broken, while Pesach celebrates a series of supernatural miracles. Joy increases when we recognize Divine Providence in the hidden miracles as well, and seeing Divine Providence everywhere equally applies to Adar. Rashi mentioned Pesach to equate the two types of miracles as sources for increased joy.

The Ramban (Shemos 13:16) writes:

From the great and famous miracles (i.e. the supernatural ones of the Exodus), a person acknowledges the hidden miracles which are the foundation of the entire Torah. A person has no portion in the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu unless he believes that all our things and happenings are all miracles, not natural and the [unguided] custom of the world, whether communal or personal.

The realization that nothing in our lives is left to chance yields the greatest possible joy. The connection of Purim to Pesach does not limit joy to Adar II, rather it explains the joy of both Adars. Adar II celebrates the hidden miracles of the Megillah, while Adar I goes further and acknowledges everyday events as reflections of Divine Providence. As the Mishna teaches, the two Adars are identical except for the Megillah and the gifts for the poor, which focus exclusively on the hidden miracles of Purim.

The connection to the mazal of dagim and to Yosef who is not subject to the evil eye may be explained as follows: fish are hidden from the human eye as Adar commemorates hidden miracles. Yosef merited the blessing of protection from the evil eye when he hid his mother Rachel from Esav's wanton gaze (Bereishis 33:7, Rashi there and 49:22).

III What about Purim Katan, 14 Adar I? In the final section of Orach Chaim (697:1), the Rama states that some say that one is obligated to increase "mishteh v'simcha" (see Esther 9:22) on the 14th of Adar I. This is not our custom, but one should increase his se'uda a bit to satisfy the strict view; "a good-hearted person is always feasting - mishteh tamid" (Mishlei 15:15).

The Taz (697:2) invokes the aforementioned Mishna (Megillah 6b) in equating the two Adars regarding feasting on the 14th of Adar I, and endorses the Rama's conclusion of "mishteh tamid." The Birkas Yosef (2) cited in the Shaarei Teshuva (2) lauds the Rama's wisdom in concluding Orach Chaim similar to how he opened it: he began (1:1) "I have set Hashem before me always - tamid" (Tehilim 16:8), and ended with "mishteh tamid", thus two "temidim".

The passuk in Mishlei (15:15) begins: "All the days of a poor person are bad." The Vilna Ga'on cites the Mishna (Avos 4:11) "who is rich? One who

is happy with his potion." If so, a poor person is one who has a greedy soul. All his days are bad, because he can never attain all that he desires. By contrast, one who is satisfied with what he has, his heart is always as happy as one who has a mishteh in his house. A person at a feast is very happy when he is a shasuy yayin, intoxicated by fulfilling mishteh literally with excessive wine. But his happiness is temporary and ends when the influence of alcohol subsides. The happiness of one who has a good heart is always as great as the momentary happiness of one who is intoxicated.

This interpretation leads to an opposite understanding of the Rama's conclusion. One who has a good heart has no need to drink wine. He is always happy, without artificial stimulation. This level of constant joy described in 697:1 reflects the opening of the Rama in 1:1. One who constantly sets Hashem before him realizes that his portion comes from Hashem and is satisfied with it. He thereby attains constant joy, equivalent to the temporary high of alcohol, without drinking.

In this way, the heightened joy of Purim Katan is based upon the joy of the entire month. Adar teaches that the hidden miracles of Purim are from Hashem just as the supernatural ones of Pesach are. The extension of the Ramban to everyday occurrences governed by Divine Providence is a source of constant joy. This makes drinking on Purim Katan superfluous.

IV Am Yisrael is entering Adar reeling from the crisis in Eretz Yisrael.

The realization that these tragic events are also manifestations of Divine Providence must lead us to teshuva which will bring the crisis to an end (Rambam, Hilchos Ta'anisos 1:1). Even during this crisis, we increase joy in Adar by recognizing that all of our experiences, individual and especially communal, are miracles governed by Divine Providence, as the Ramban emphasizes.

"My anger will flare on that day, I will forsake them and conceal My face from them and they will become prey" (Devarim 31:17). The otherwise inexplicable events of October 7th, when over a thousand of our brothers and sisters became prey of vicious invaders, can only be a result of Hashem's decree. The passuk continues: "many evils and distresses (tzaros) will afflict [Am Yisroel]. They will say on that day, 'Because Hashem is not in our midst these evils have afflicted me.'" The declaration we will reportedly make mentions evils but not tzaros. Why the omission of tzaros?

There is a remarkable introduction (Avi Ezri, Nashim, Kedusha), written in a besieged Yerushalayim exactly one week after the state of Israel was declared. In it, Rav Shach describes the situation, "on the outskirts the sword kills, indoors there is dread" (Devarim 32:25), a terrible, evil plight. He asks, why does the passuk begin with ra'os (evils) and tzaros (distresses), and end with ra'os alone? Rav Shach answers that tzara, from tzar, narrow, is not the evil itself, but the despair it triggers. One feels pressed and depressed. However, when one says that it comes from Hashem, it is still evil, but it is no longer a tzara.

Knowing that everything, good and bad, is Divine Providence, enables a measure of consolation, and even joy in Adar I, even in times of suffering. We pray that Hashem will increase the joy of Adar by saving us from Hamas, the Amalek of today, just as he saved us on Purim from Amalek, Haman, of old.

from: Rabbi YY Jacobson <rabbiiyy@theyeshiva.net> reply-to: info@theyeshiva.net date: Feb 15, 2024, 3:31 PM

In a Dark Exile, Whispering Trees

A Father Plants Saplings 210 Years Early, Offering Solace to His Children

By Rabbi YY Jacobson

Dedicated by Nancy Miller in honor of my parents' yartzheits: Moshe ben Elezar on 6 Adar (22nd yarzheit), Tzeril bas Dovid on 6 Adar 1 (16th yartzheit). May they continue to be good interbeters for their family and all Klal Yisroel. Graciously dedicated by Rina Persiko to her mother נ"ו Brina Sara bas Chaim Zeev on her birthday and to her father נ"ו Moshe Mendel ben Pinchas Okunieff

The Smuggler

Tony comes up to the Mexican border on his bicycle. He's got two large bags over his shoulders. Joe, the border guard, stops him and says, "What's in the bags?"

"Sand," answers Tony.

Joe says, "We'll just see about that. Get off the bike." Joe takes the bags and rips them apart; he empties them out and finds nothing in them but sand. He detains Tony overnight and has the sand analyzed, only to discover that there is nothing but pure sand in the bags.

Joe releases Tony, puts the sand into new bags, hefts them onto the man's shoulders, and lets him cross the border.

The next day, the same thing happens. Joe asks, "What have you got?"

"Sand," says Tony.

Joe does his thorough examination and discovers that the bags contain nothing but sand. He gives the sand back to Tony, and Tony crosses the border on his bicycle.

This sequence of events is repeated every day for three years. Then Joe runs across Tony one day in a cantina in Mexico.

"Hey, buddy," says Joe, "I retired. I know you are smuggling something. It's driving me crazy. It's all I think about ... I can't sleep. Just between you and me, what are you smuggling?"

Tony sips his beer and says, "bicycles."

Cedar Trees

One of the most employed materials in the building of the Tabernacle—discussed in this week's portion, Terumah—was cedarwood ("atzei shitim.") Much of the structure and many of the vessels of the Tabernacle were fashioned from cedar.

Says Rashi, quoting the Midrash:

How did the children of Israel obtain [cedar wood for the construction of the Sanctuary] in the desert? Rabbi Tanchuma explained: Our father Jacob foresaw with his holy spirit that Israel was destined to build a Sanctuary in the desert; so he brought cedars to Egypt and planted them [there], and instructed his children to take them along when they left Egypt.[1]

This seems strange. Why carry trees from the Holy Land to plant in Egypt for use in a building to be constructed centuries later? Surely, there is no dearth of wood in wealthy Egypt, and, in any case, it could always be obtained for a price wherever their descendants might find themselves. Even the Sinai desert was not far from populated areas from where the Jews could obtain cedarwood.[2]

From the day Jacob descended to Egypt till the Exodus, 210 years passed. In life, it is good to plan long-term. I know people who pack for a trip one week before the flight. It is not my style, but I can respect them. Yet to pack up 210 years before a journey, seems like going overboard. Did Jacob feel that he needs to prepare the cedar wood 210 years before it was needed? Could he not have told his children to obtain cedars in or around Egypt?

Imagine, a fellow by the name of Jacob Isakson (son of Isaac) is relocating from Russia to the US in 1810. He brings with him cedar saplings to plant in America. He tells his children that one day in 2020 they might leave America to go build a sanctuary in the desert and they will need cedarwood. It would be strange; we could buy the wood in America!

It is not like Jacob came to Egypt empty-handed, so he had nothing to take along, but some cedar trees. Jacob, at the age of 130, was relocating his entire life, family, livestock, and his enormous wealth, to Egypt. The last thing he needed to add to the wagons were cedar trees!

Finding Comfort

The answer to this question I heard from the Lubavitcher Rebbe at an address on Shabbos Parshat Terumah, 6 Adar, 5747, March 7, 1987.[3] I can still vividly recall the profound emotion with which the Rebbe shared this insight—and it moves me deeply to this day.

The answer, the Lubavitcher Rebbe suggested, is intimated in the name of the Sage who transmitted this tradition: Rabbi Tanchuma. As a rule, Rashi rarely quotes the authors of the teachings in Talmud and Midrash he quotes in his commentary. Here is one of the exceptions. Because it is the name of the rabbi who shared this teaching, Tanchumah which explains why Jacob

would engage in this seemingly unnecessary toil, two centuries before his descendants would need the cedar.

The name "Tanchuma" means to comfort and console. Jacob our father knew that one day the very country which has been so hospitable to him and his family, the country saved by his son Joseph, would turn its back on the Hebrew tribe and transform their lives into purgatory. Egypt would impose one of the most torturous conditions upon the young Hebrews. Jacob knew that the people of Israel would need something to hold on to, something tangible to remind them that they don't belong here; something concrete to imprint upon their tormented hearts that they come from somewhere else, and they will one day leave this hellish concentration camp and return home.

A promise? Yes. He and Joseph promised the family that they would leave Egypt one day. But a verbal promise is insufficient. People can't live on words alone. Jacob needed to give them something tangible that could comfort them and offer a measure of relief as they walked in a valley of tears and watched their infants plunged into a river.

Whispering Trees

Hence, the cedar trees. Jacob transported from the Land of Canaan young, tender saplings of cedar and lovingly planted them in the soil of Egypt, instructing his children, that one day, when they depart from this country, they must take these trees with them.

Jacob dies. Joseph dies. All the siblings die. Then all the grandchildren die. The first generations of Jews who still knew Jacob and his children passed on. A new Pharaoh began to enslave the young nation. Brutal labor and the extermination of Jewish babies began to become the Jewish plight.

And throughout this entire horrific ordeal, the crushed Hebrew slaves watched these cedars grow. And with it, their hope grew. They harbored the knowledge that long before their enslavement by the Egyptians, these trees had grown in the soil of Holy Land—the land promised to them as their eternal heritage. Each generation of Jews pointed out these cedar trees to their children, transmitted to them Jacob's instructions to take these trees along when they would leave Egypt, to be fashioned into a Sanctuary for G-d.

And so, throughout their long and bitter exile, these cedars had whispered to the Jewish slaves: This is not your home. You hail from a loftier, holier place. Soon you will leave this depraved land behind, to be reclaimed by G-d as His people. Soon you will uproot us from this foreign land and carry us triumphantly to Sinai, where you will construct of us an abode for the Divine presence, which shall once again manifest itself in your midst.

These cedar trees stood as a permanent, tangible, silent but powerful, and tall symbol of courage, dignity, and hope in a bright future. They gave a nation of tormented, wretched slaves something to "hold on to" in a very concrete way, as they struggled under the yoke of their Egyptian oppressors. These trees offered the Jews some measure of "Tanchumah," of solace and fortitude, during their darkest moments.

When the Jewish people held on to Jacob's "prehistoric" cedar trees, for a brief moment, they felt free. And that's what you need in order to endure. It reminded them that in their essence they were not slaves, they did not deserve to be beaten and oppressed; they were inherently free and one day they would see that freedom.

Staves of Faith

"The Tzaddik shall bloom as a palm," sings the Psalmist, "as a Cedar of Lebanon, he shall flourish." [4] Jacob planted cedars in Egypt, and G-d plants exactly such cedars in our midst throughout our long and turbulent history. [5] These are the Tzaddikim, the Rebbe, the spiritual giants, defined in Psalms as "cedar trees," providing us with a link to the past and hope for the future.

The Tzaddik is a soul that towers above the transience and turbulence of exile; a soul that is rooted in Israel's sacred beginnings and pointed toward the ultimate Redemption—a soul whose two feet stand on earth, but whose head touches heaven. When our subjection to the temporal and the mundane threatens to overwhelm us, we need only look to the cedars implanted in our midst. In these timeless staves of faith, we find guidance and fortitude,

comfort, and encouragement. We remember who we are and what we are capable of becoming.

Above Exile

This is the function of every Rebbe, every leader among our people—and in today's age, who of us is not in a position to influence one or more of our brothers and sisters. The Rebbe is the Jew who by his sheer presence and love reminds us that we are “higher,” that we must never surrender to a life of quiet desperation; that we are Divine ambassadors of love, light, hope, and redemption.

When we connect to a Rebbe, a Tzaddik, we too become, at least for a moment, free. We are all exposed to challenges, obstacles, and pressures; we must face trauma, darkness, pain, addiction, depression, disappointment, filth, and degradation. We can become apathetic, cynical, and indifferent. But when we gaze at the cedars in our midst, and at the cedar inside each of our souls, we remember that we are fragments of infinity, sent to this world to transform its landscape. We remember that we are on a journey from Sinai to Moshiah; that as beautiful as America is it is not our true home; it is but a temporary stop in our journey toward Moshiah. As comfortable as this great country is and as much as we cherish it, it is not the place we call home. A child who has been exiled from the bosom of his father, even if he is living in the Hilton, is living in exile.

That is the function of every spiritual “cedar tree” teacher in Judaism: [6] To remind all of us that even as we are in exile, our souls can soar on the wings of eternity.[7]

Notes: [1] Rashi to Exodus 25:6 [2] Indeed, this is the view of some of the commentators. See Divrei David (Taz), Ibn Ezra, Baalei HaTosfos and Chizkuni on the verse (Exodus 25:6). [3] Part of the address was published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 31 Terumah pp. 142-148. [4] Psalms 92:13 [5] The Hebrew word Nassi (“leader”) is an acronym of the phrase nitzotzo shel Yaakov Avinu, “a spark of Jacob our father.” The soul of every leader of Israel is an offshoot of the soul of Jacob, father of the people of Israel (Megaleh Amukot, section 84). [6] See Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5752, 1992—explaining why the first idea Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said as a leader was that we are obligated to mention the Exodus of Egypt also during nighttime. This captures the role of the leader: To help people experience Exodus even when night prevails, and darkness overwhelms. [7] My thanks to Rabbi Yanki Tauber for his rendition of this address. I used some parts from his essay: www.meaningfullife.com/prehistoric-cedars/

From: **Alan Fisher** <afisherads@yahoo.com>

The Internet Parsha Sheet, an outstanding compilation, posts after midnight. You may download it by Friday morning at parsha.net. Alan BS”D February 16, 2024 Potomac Torah Study Center Vol. 11 #19, February 16-17, 2024; 7-8 Adar 1 5784; Terumah Purim Katan next Friday 14 Adar 1; Shushan Purim Katan next Shabbat

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 more than 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 archives.

Hersh ben Perel Chana, cousin of very close friends of ours, has been confirmed as one of approximately 240 initial hostages to Hamas in Gaza. The Wall St. Journal featured Hersh and his family in a front page article on October 16. Chabad, OU, and many synagogues recommend psalms (Tehillim) to recite daily for the safety of our people. May our people in Israel wipe out the evil of Hamas, protect us from violence by anti-Semites around the world, and restore peace for our people quickly and successfully – with the help of Hashem.

One principle of our religion is that the Torah provides the cure for significant problems before mentioning the disease. In our parsha, the Torah presents the commandment to build a house for Hashem, along with detailed

instructions, before relating Egel Zahav, the sin of the golden calf. We read the story of Egel Zahav and Moshe's argument with God not to destroy B'Nai Yisrael in chapter 32, two weeks from now, in Ki Tisa. Most commentators identify Egel Zahav as the reason that B'Nai Yisrael had to build the Mishkan, an essential part of obtaining God's forgiveness for that sin.

The most essential component of building the Mishkan is instructing the people to give what their hearts desire. Terumah constitutes voluntary gifts. (Next week, in Tetzaveh, God tells Moshe to command the people, including the Kohanim, to give specific items for the Mishkan. Tetzaveh items constitute a tax on the people, very different from the voluntary gifts in Terumah.)

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z”l, observes that the voluntary gifts for the Mishkan give the people a critical gift – the ability to give something back to Hashem. Giving is an essential part of human dignity. As Rabbi Yehoshua Gordon, z”l, put it, by identifying voluntary gifts that B'Nai Yisrael could give to Hashem, He permits us to be His partners in building a place for His presence in our world. Rabbi Label Lam notes that giving for the sake of Hashem is the most essential ingredient in building the Mishkan. Rabbi Yehoshua Singer adds that Torah study elevates a person. This elevation is unique to Torah study. Indeed, Rabbi David Fohrman reminds us that one meaning of “Terumah” is elevating, what we read that the waters of the flood do for Noach's teva (where the Torah uses “Terumah” for the effect of the flood water lifting the teva).

Rabbi Marc Angel notes how timely this parsha is, coming just before Presidents' Day. He quotes Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address with a message that could have come from a Torah commentary: “With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.”

Rav Kook gives a similar message, that the purpose of the Beit Ha Middash (the permanent replacement for the Mishkan) is to lengthen life, to be a world center of prayer and holy inspiration. President Lincoln's message adds the mitzvot from Yitro and Mishpatim that concern and care for others, especially the needy, is perhaps the central theme of true religion.

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander, President and Rosh HaYeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone, adds that Hashem desires to live within us, B'Nai Yisrael. God's ultimate real estate is not any sacred building, but it is within each of us. Our mission is to find a piece of Hashem within each of us and thereby make the world a better place. God wants to live within us out of love – He could easily remain in heaven. Our task is to find, feel, and strive for Hashem's presence always, and to make the world a better place both for Hashem and for all humankind.

Rabbi Mordechai Rhine reminds us that after God destroys the Beit HaMiddash, God remains with us wherever we go: “Although I have [destroyed the Beis Hamikdash and] scattered you among the nations and foreign lands, I shall be for you a mini-sanctuary in the lands to which you go.” (Yechezkel 11) The synagogues and yeshivas of our people all over the world have been Hashem's place within us for the past two thousand years. Our enemies are always waiting at our gates and frequently chasing us everywhere. Rabbi Moshe Rabe reminds us that we all mourn during tragic or sad times and all Jews rejoice during happy times, such as earlier this week when the IDF rescued two of our holy hostages. Rabbi Brander reminds us that among the thousands of Ohr Torah Stone emissaries around the world, many face threats from anti-Semites, especially those in England.

While Hamas is one of the most evil and dangerous threats to our people, it is far from the only one. Hamas and other evil followers of Amalek challenge the message of the Mishkan and separate us from Hashem's presence. As Rabbi Brander and other contributors remind us, our task is to come close to Hashem and do our part to make the world a better place. This

task is the essence of the message of the Mishkan. May we work harder to carry forward Hashem's message.

My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, always found a way to make the Torah exciting, a trait that came through especially in legal sections of the Torah where the topics could seem very foreign to Americans in a modern world. The Mishkan section of the Torah certainly requires a reader's guide for us in the 21st Century. Hopefully some of the excitement of the sort that Rabbi Cahan brought to his Torah discussions comes through with the insights in the following Devrei Torah.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah and Alan Fisher

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Twilight

Rabbi Yirmiyahu Kaganoff

Question #1: Why then?

"After sunset on a Friday evening, may I ask a non-Jewish person to turn on the lights?"

Question #2: Until when?

"May I toivel dishes, glasses and silverware during the same twilight period?"

Question #3: Challah

"May I separate challah during bein hashemashos?"

Introduction: Twilight laws

As we are all aware, the halachic day begins and ends at nightfall. But at what exact moment does one day march off into history and its successor arrive with its banner unfurled? Is it before sunset, at sunset, when the stars appear, or dependent on some other factor? And, if a day begins when the stars appear, which stars and how many? Does the amount of time after sunset vary according to longitude and/or season of the year? And does it, perhaps, vary according to the amount of humidity in the atmosphere?

There is much discussion in the Gemara and the poskim concerning many of these issues, some of which I have written about previously. This article will discuss the halachic rules that apply during the period of time called bein hashemashos, which is the term used to refer to the twilight interval when we are uncertain whether it is still day or already night. Of particular concern is what is the halacha of this time on Friday evening, when it is unclear whether or not Shabbos has already begun. Does bein hashemashos have the exact same halachic status as the time that is definitely Shabbos, or does its questionable status allow any lenience? The answer is that, under extenuating circumstances, some lenience is allowed. We will see that the definition of "extenuating" for these purposes is rather moderate.

The earliest sources

In several places, the Mishnah, the Gemara and the poskim explain that certain activities that are prohibited on Shabbos are permitted during bein hashemashos of Friday evening. We will begin our research with a Mishnah (Shabbos 34a) that many recite every Friday evening in shul, as the last passage in Bameh Madlikin. There, it teaches: If it is in doubt whether nightfall has already arrived, it is forbidden to separate maaser from produce, when we are certain that it was not yet separated. (Such untithed produce is referred to as tevel.) It is also prohibited to immerse vessels to make them tahor. (Unfortunately, since we are all tamei today, this question is not relevant, but we will soon discuss whether immersing vessels used for food that were previously owned by a non-Jew is permitted during bein hashemashos.) The Mishnah also prohibits kindling lights during bein hashemashos. However, it permits separating maaser from demai produce, about which it is uncertain whether this separation is required. It is permitted during bein hashemashos to make an eiruv chatzeiros, which allows carrying from one's house to a neighbor's house on Shabbos. The Mishnah also permits insulating food, hatmanah, using something that does not increase heat (such as clothing), notwithstanding that this is prohibited on Shabbos.

As we will see shortly, there is much discussion among rishonim and early poskim whether we rule according to the conclusions of this Mishnah, or whether we rule more leniently. But first, we need to understand each of the halachic issues that the Mishnah mentions. For example, what is wrong with separating maasros, even on Shabbos itself? Which melacha of Shabbos does this violate?

Maasering

The Mishnah (Beitzah 36b) prohibits separating maasros on Yom Tov, and certainly on Shabbos. The reason for this prohibition is that, since it makes the food edible halachically, it is viewed as a form of forbidden "repair work."

Demai has an in-between status. What is demai? In the times of Chazal, observant but poorly educated Jews observed the mitzvos, although some of them would occasionally "cut corners," violating details of halachos that involve major expense. These people, called amei ha'aretz, were lax predominantly regarding three areas of halacha – the laws of shemittah, the laws of tumah and taharah, and the laws of separating maasros. Although most amei ha'aretz indeed separated maasros faithfully, Chazal instituted that produce purchased from an am ha'aratz should have maaser separated from it, albeit without first reciting the brocha for taking maaser. This produce was called demai, and the institution of this takkanah was because it was difficult to ascertain which amei ha'aretz were separating maasros and which were not. Thus, we treat this produce as a type of safek level. For this reason, the brocha for separating maasros was omitted prior to separating maaser from demai because, indeed, most amei ha'aretz separated maasros. In addition, because most amei ha'aretz separated maasros, Chazal allowed other leniences pertaining to its use; for example, they permitted serving demai produce to the poor or to soldiers in the army.

Because there is a great deal of reason to be lenient relative to demai, the Mishnah permitted separating maasros from it during bein hashemashos (Shabbos 34a). The reason this is permitted is because this separation may not actually be "fixing" anything – it is more than likely that the maasros were already separated.

Immersing utensils

During bein hashemashos, the Mishnah permitted immersing vessels and other items that had previously become tamei. This immersion is prohibited on Shabbos or Yom Tov, itself, as mentioned in Mesechta Beitzah (Mishnah 17b and Gemara ad loc.). There, the Gemara (Beitzah 18a) cites a four-way dispute why it is prohibited to immerse vessels to make them tahor on Shabbos or Yom Tov. The four reasons are:

1. Someone immersing vessels on Shabbos may inadvertently carry them through a public area. According to this opinion, immersing vessels on Yom Tov was prohibited as an extension of the prohibition of Shabbos.
2. Clothing and cloth that became tamei, and was then toiveled on Shabbos or Yom Tov, could cause someone to squeeze out the water. According to this opinion, immersing pots, plates, silverware and other items that do not absorb water was prohibited as an extension of the prohibition to immerse cloth and other squeezable items.
3. Knowing that someone has time to toivel vessels on Shabbos or Yom Tov, the owner might delay toiving them until then. This procrastination might then result in foods or other vessels becoming tamei. Banning the immersions on Shabbos or Yom Tov would cause people to immerse the vessels at an earlier opportunity.
4. Immersing vessels to make them usable is considered "repairing" them on Shabbos or Yom Tov.

The rishonim disagree how we rule in this dispute: in other words, which of the four reasons is accepted (see Rif, Rosh, etc.). There are halachic ramifications of this dispute. Although immersing vessels to make them tahor is not a germane topic today, since we are all tamei anyway, the question is raised whether vessels acquired from a non-Jew, which require immersion in a mikveh prior to use, may be immersed on Shabbos and Yom Tov. When we look at the reasons mentioned by the Gemara why Chazal forbade immersing tamei vessels on Shabbos and Yom Tov, we can conclude

that some of the reasons should definitely apply to the immersing of vessels for this latter reason, whereas others might not. The Rosh concludes that it is prohibited on Shabbos and Yom Tov to immerse vessels acquired from a non-Jew. (See, however, Shaagas Aryeh #56.) We will discuss shortly whether one can immerse them during bein hashemashos.

Kindling lights

During bein hashemashos, any Torah prohibition cannot be performed because of *safeik de'oraysa lechumrah*, the rule that cases of doubt regarding Torah prohibitions are treated stringently. The Mishnah's example of this is kindling lights, which is certainly forbidden during bein hashemashos.

Hatmanah -- Insulating food

The Gemara explains that the Mishnah's last ruling, insulating food, is permitted bein hashemashos because of a specific reason applicable only to its case. Since explaining the details of this rabbinic injunction, called *hatmanah*, would take us far afield, we will forgo that discussion in this article.

Rebbe and the Rabbanan

Up until this point, I have been explaining the Mishnah in *Bameh Madlikin*. However, elsewhere, the Gemara (Eruvin 32b) cites a dispute between Rebbe and the Rabbanan, in which Rebbe contends that all rabbinic prohibitions may be performed during the bein hashemashos period, whereas the Rabbanan prohibit this. The obvious reading of the Mishnah in *Bameh Madlikin* is that it follows the approach of the Rabbanan who prohibit performing most rabbinically prohibited acts during the bein hashemashos period, and, indeed, this is how Rashi explains that Mishnah. However, the Gemara (Eruvin 32b-34b) demonstrates that the Mishnah there in *Eruvin* follows the opinion of Rebbe. On its own, this is not a halachic concern, since there are instances in which different Mishnayos follow the opinions of different *tana'im*. The practical question that needs to be decided is whether we indeed rule according to the Rabbanan's position as stated in the Mishnah in *Bameh Madlikin*, or whether we follow Rebbe's more lenient ruling. The conclusion of the Gemara in *Eruvin* implies that the halacha follows the opinion of Rebbe, and not that of the Rabbanan.

Among the *rishonim*, we find variant halachic conclusions regarding this question (Rashi, *Shabbos* 34a s.v. *safeik*; Rambam, *Hilchos Shabbos* 24:10 and *Hilchos Eruvin* 6:9; *Tur Orach Chayim* 342; *Beis Yosef Orach Chayim* 261 and 342). The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 342) concludes according to the Rambam's opinion, ruling that during bein hashemashos Chazal did not forbid anything that is prohibited because of a rabbinic injunction, provided that there is some mitzvah involved or that there were extenuating reasons why it was not performed on *erev Shabbos*. The *Shulchan Aruch* mentions, specifically, that it is permitted during bein hashemashos to climb a tree on *Rosh Hashanah* to get a shofar in order to perform the mitzvah, although it is prohibited to climb a tree on *Yom Tov* itself even if, as a result, you will be unable to blow shofar. Returning to our first question ("After sunset on a Friday evening, may I ask a non-Jewish person to turn on the lights?"), the *Shulchan Aruch* also permits asking a non-Jew to kindle a light during bein hashemashos. The Mishnah *Berurah* 261:17 permits asking him, even if you already accepted *Shabbos*.

Similarly, the Magen Avraham (261:6) permits separating *maasros* during bein hashemashos, if you do not have enough food ready for *Shabbos*. (The *Ketzos Hashulchan* [75:5, 6 in *Badei Hashulchan*] explains that the situation is such that he does not have enough fruit or vegetables to have an enjoyable *Shabbos* meal.) It is very interesting that the Magen Avraham permits this, because the Mishnah at the end of *Bameh Madlikin* that we quoted above expressly prohibits separating *maasros* during bein hashemashos.

Nevertheless, the Magen Avraham permits this separating of *maasros*, since we rule according to Rebbe, not like the Mishnah.

Toiveling during bein hashemashos

With this background, let us examine the second of our opening questions: is it permitted during the bein hashemashos period to *toivel* dishes, glasses and silverware purchased from a non-Jew? Assuming we conclude, like the Rosh does, that it is prohibited to *toivel* these items on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*,

which is the common practice, someone who has no others to use on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov* may *toivel* them during bein hashemashos (Magen Avraham 261:6).

Separating challah

There is much discussion among halachic authorities whether it is permitted to separate challah during bein hashemashos, if you realize that you forgot to do so before. As we will see shortly, the Magen Avraham (261:2) prohibits separating challah bein hashemashos, whereas other authorities qualify this. To explain their halachic conclusions, we need to provide some background to the laws of separating challah.

Although people are often surprised to discover this, challah is categorized under the *mitzvos ha'teluyos ba'aretz*, the agricultural *mitzvos* that apply *min haTorah* only in *Eretz Yisroel*. The requirement of separating challah from dough made in *chutz la'aretz* is a rabbinic requirement. However, when implementing this requirement, Chazal instructed that the *mitzvah* be performed in a different way from how it is observed in *Eretz Yisroel*. Dough made in *Eretz Yisroel* that has not yet had its challah portion separated has the halachic status of *tevel* and may not be eaten. Dough made in *chutz la'aretz* does not become *tevel*. There is a *mitzvah* to separate challah, but this *mitzvah* can be fulfilled even after most of the dough has been eaten.

Therefore, should one realize on *Shabbos* that challah was not separated from dough made in *Eretz Yisroel*, the bread cannot be eaten because it is *tevel*. However, if the dough was made in *chutz la'aretz*, the bread can be eaten on *Shabbos*, and the challah separated after *Shabbos*. To do this, you must make sure that you keep some of the bread until after *Shabbos*, and then separate challah from what was set aside.

Reverse the law

The result of this halacha is that dough produced in *chutz la'aretz* does not require that its challah is separated in order to permit eating it on *Shabbos*, whereas dough produced in *Eretz Yisroel* does. We therefore have an anomalous conclusion regarding whether the challah may be separated during bein hashemashos. Challah may not be separated from dough made in *chutz la'aretz*, because you can wait to separate the challah until after *Shabbos*. The later authorities explain that this is the intention of the ruling of the Magen Avraham (261:2). However, when the dough was prepared in *Eretz Yisroel* and challah was not taken, it will be forbidden to eat the bread on *Shabbos*. Therefore, when you realize that you forgot to separate challah, and you are relying on that bread for your *Shabbos* meals, you may separate the challah during bein hashemashos (Machatzis Hashekel 261:2; *Pri Megadim*, *Eishel Avraham* 261:2; Mishnah *Berurah* 261:4).

We can now address the third of our opening questions: "May I separate challah during bein hashemashos?" The answer is that if the dough was mixed in *chutz la'aretz*, I may not, but I may eat the baked bread during *Shabbos*, as long as I leave some of it for after *Shabbos* and then separate challah retroactively. On the other hand, if the dough was made in *Eretz Yisroel*, I may therefore not eat it without first separating challah, and I may separate the challah during bein hashemashos.

In conclusion

The Gemara teaches that the rabbinic laws are dearer to Hashem than the Torah laws. In this instance, we see that Chazal provided lenience to permit otherwise prohibited activities to be done during the bein hashemashos period.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch (*Shemos* 20:10) notes that people mistakenly think that work is prohibited on *Shabbos*, in order for it to be a day of rest. He points out that the Torah does not prohibit doing *avodah*, which connotes hard work, but *melachah*, activities or actions which bring purpose and accomplishment. *Shabbos* is the day on which we refrain from constructing and altering the world for our own purposes. The goal of *Shabbos* is to allow Hashem's rule to be the focus of creation, by refraining from our own creative acts (*Shemos* 20:11).

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha Parshas Terumah

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Ark of Inclusion

In this week's portion, Hashem commands the Jewish nation to build the Mishkan. Each one of the utensils is specified as to how it should be constructed, its width, its length, and its height. The type of material whether it was gold, silver, or copper, is enumerated and the details of its ornaments are provided.

The procedure for the construction of each vessel is preceded by a command stated in the singular form: "And you shall make" "And you shall make a show bread table." "And you shall make a Menorah." "And you shall make an Altar."

The command is directed toward Moshe to delegate the construction. The Aron Kodesh, the Holy Ark is different. Its command is not stated in the singular form, rather in the plural. The Torah does not say and you shall make a Holy Ark, it states, "And they shall make a Holy Ark." The commentaries ask, why was the command to build the Ark the only one that was given to a group?

In a small shul in Yerushalayim, a daily Daf HaYomi shiur (Talmudic folio class) was held each morning before Shacharis. An elderly Russian immigrant attended the shiur. Quiet as he was, his behavior in the shiur intrigued the lecturer. He would never ask a thing. Often he would nod off. Sometimes, when the Rabbi quoted a particular Talmudic sage, the old man's face would light up – especially when the Rabbi mentioned an opinion from a obscure Talmudic personality.

This behavior continued throughout the summer. Always quiet, the man would sometimes nod off, and at other times he would perk up. Then winter came. The group of men would gather around the table in the frigid mornings huddled close as they would warm to the strains of the Talmud and the straining heater in the old synagogue. The old man never missed a class. One morning a rare snow blanketed Jerusalem. No one showed up to the shiur except the Rabbi and the elderly Russian Jew. Instead of giving his usual lecture, the Rabbi decided he would ask the old Jew a little bit about himself.

"Tell me," he inquired, "I watch you as I say my shiur. Sometimes you look intrigued but at other times you seem totally disinterested. The trouble is I would like to make the shiur more interesting for you during its entirety, but I can't seem to make out what perks you up and makes you doze?"

The old man smiled. "I never had a Jewish education. I can barely read Hebrew. I do not come to the shiur for the same reasons that the other men come." He paused as his eyes pondered his past. "You see, I was a soldier in the Red Army during World War II. Every day our commander would herd us into a room and put a gun to our heads. He commanded us to recite the names of every member of the Politburo. And we did. We learned those names backwards and forward. I come to this class to hear the names of every rabbi in the Talmud. If I cannot learn at least I will know the names of all the great sages! "That." he smiled "is my Daf HaYomi!"

Although the show bread table, the Menorah, and the Altar can be constructed by individuals — the Ark that holds the Torah is different. One man cannot make it alone. It must be a communal effort. Just as the Torah cannot be learned by one man alone, its Ark cannot be built by an individual either.

The Torah is given for everyone to learn and to experience – each one according to his or her own level and ability. Lighting a Menorah is a clear-cut ritual delegated to the Kohain. The Altar is used for the sacrifices brought by the kohanim. The Torah is for everybody. And each individual has his own Shas and Daf HaYomi. Each person has his share in Torah Yisrael. Everyone extracts something holy from the Torah. To some it may be extrapolative halachic theory, while for others it may be the refinement of character. And still for others it may be the names of Abayai and Rava.

In memory of Ruth Gleicher by Ben Lipschitz (Chaya) Rivka Bas haRav Yoel

Good Shabbos!

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subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Terumah

פרק טרומה תשפ"ז

ויקחו לי תרומה

And let them take for Me a portion. (25:2)

Chazal (*Midrash Rabbah Shemos* 33:1) expound on the *pasuk*'s expression, *V'yikchu Li*, "They shall take for Me." The *Midrash* compares the Torah to a good acquisition (*mekach*) of which people are unaware of its value. When they consider how much the buyer paid the broker, however, they realize the value of the purchase. Likewise, how does one determine the true value of the Torah which we received? We look at the payment made to Moshe *Rabbeinu*: the skin of his face becoming otherworldly radiant. The *Midrash* further expounds, discussing an acquisition during which the seller sells himself along with the item he is selling. Likewise, Hashem says, "I sold you My Torah; I myself was sold along with it." This may be compared to a king who had a one and only daughter. One of the other kings came and took her for a wife, planning to return to his far-off land. The father of the bride said, "My daughter is my only daughter; I am unable to part from her. I cannot tell you not to take her from me. After all, she is your wife. I ask one favor of you: In any place in which you choose to live, prepare a room for me, so that I may dwell near you." Likewise, Hashem said, "I gave you My Torah. I am unable to part from it. I ask that you make for Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell in it, thus remaining near to My Torah" (whose repository is the *Aron HaKodesh* in the *Mishkan*).

Chazal teach how important the Torah is to Hashem, how He values it so much that He had us make the *Mishkan* to house the Torah in its Ark. We should make note of this caveat: Hashem comes along with the Torah.

Horav Yosef Zundel, zl, m'Salant (Be'er Yosef), supplements this with an insightful comment. A king is willing to live together with his daughter and son-in-law only if his son-in-law treats his daughter respectfully. Only then is the king pleased, as he sees the love and harmony that exists in his daughter's home. If, however, his son-in-law ignores his wife, treating her indifferently, rejecting her for other diversions, and, as a result, humiliates her, the father will surely not be their guest. He will be in too much pain to witness such boorish treatment of his daughter. Likewise, Hashem comes along with his daughter – the Torah, only when He observes that the treatment she receives from *am Yisrael* is respectful. If, in contrast, Hashem sees that His Torah is treated with scorn and derision, He wants no part of this relationship. When we treat the Torah in an unbefitting manner, we are, by extension, driving away Hashem. The flipside is that when we treat the Torah with respect, we merit having the *Shechinah* in our presence. This is why, when one learns Torah, he should be *b'simchah*, filled with joy. After all, Hashem is present with him.

Chazal (*Shabbos* 30b) teach that the *Shechinah* does not rest upon a person (or an entity, i.e., home) when he/it displays *atzvus*, sadness. When a house is filled with joy, the *Shechinah* permeates the home. In his *hesped*, eulogy, for *Horav Shmuel Vosner, zl, Horav Yisrael Zicherman, Shlita* (Rav of Achuzas Brachfeld), related the following story. He was on the rabbinical board of Maaynei Ha'Yeshua Hospital in Bnei Brak. As such, he had occasion to visit with the patients. One day, he was summoned to the bedside of a man who was paralyzed over most of his body. When *Rav Zicherman* entered the room, the patient struggled to position himself. "Rebbe," he asked, "am I still permitted to recite the *brachah* of *She'asah li kol tzarki*, 'Who has provided my every need?'" *Rav Zicherman* replied, "*Rav Vosner* is scheduled to visit the hospital today. Why not ask him?"

Rav Vosner visited, and the patient presented his case. He was unable to do much of anything. Did the *brachah* have any real meaning? The *Rav* replied with a story, “When I was younger and a student in *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin*, I accompanied my venerable *Rebbe*, *Horav Meir Shapiro*, *zl*, to visit one of the *yeshivah* students who was gravely ill. He was in acute pain with, very little hope for relief. It was, thus, surprising to see this young man *b’simchah*, in a joyful, serene mood. *Rav Meir* was taken aback by this young man’s attitude, and he asked, “What is motivating your sense of joy?” The young man’s response was a stunning revelation.

“With regard to my present situation, I am unable to do anything for myself. I asked myself, ‘Why is Hashem keeping me alive? What purpose is served with me laying here in excruciating pain and unable to do anything?’ I then reminded myself of *Chazal*’s statement (*Shabbos* 12b), ‘The *Shechinah* rests above the head of a sick person.’ This means the purpose of a *choleh*, sick person, is to bring the *Shechinah* down to this world. Due to my illness, the *Shechinah* is down here above my head. I think this alone is an important and qualifying reason for living.

“However, *Chazal* also teach (*Shabbos* 30b) that the *Shechinah* does not reside where *atzvus*, sadness/depression, exists. Thus, I gather whatever emotional strength I have to enliven myself, so that the *Shechinah* will remain above my head.”

When *Rav Zicherman* heard the young man’s story, he commented, “This thought should be saved for generations.” *Rav Vosner* then looked deeply into the eyes of the sick man and said, “How can you say that your life serves no purpose in the world? On your shoulders rests the *Shechinah*, made possible by you! Can one have any loftier purpose for living than being the medium for bringing down the *Shechinah* and providing a resting place for Him?”

יעצי שיטים

And *shittim* (acacia) wood. (25:5)

Rashi quotes *Midrash Tanchuma* that Yaakov *Avinu*’s foresight (through *Ruach HaKodesh*, Divine Inspiration) was the reason that *Klal Yisrael* had *shittim* wood available for the *Mishkan*. Yaakov knew that his descendants would one day erect a Sanctuary in the wilderness. This edifice would require wood. Therefore, he planted trees when he arrived in Egypt, using seeds that he had brought with him from *Eretz Yisrael*. He commanded his sons (who obviously commanded it to their sons) that, when they would finally leave Egypt, they should cut down the trees and take them along. *Horav Eliyahu Meir Bloch*, *zl*, derives a powerful and practical lesson from *Chazal*. Yaakov *Avinu* did not seem concerned about the nation’s ability to put food on the people’s table.

As far as material sustenance is concerned, the people should be *mishtadel*, endeavor, when necessary and trust in Hashem that He will provide for them when necessary. With regard to *ruchniyos*, spirituality, however, we do not wait for miracles to occur. One must do everything within his means to set up and provide spiritual sustenance for himself and the community. The Jewish People left Egypt with no prospects for food. They trusted in Hashem to provide for them, as He did for the next forty years. With regard to the *Mishkan*, however, which was the spiritual dimension of their journey, Yaakov made sure that they had provisions.

An obvious lesson that can be derived from here regarding spiritual needs is that we must plan, work and worry. We do not rely on miracles when it comes to building religious institutions. We do everything within our power, from raising funds to scouring for students. Nothing happens by itself. The founding fathers of Torah in America – of whom *Rav Elya Meir Bloch* was among its leadership – understood this. The religious component was their primary focus. The building, food, and day-to-day maintenance were all parts of their *bitachon*. They trusted that Hashem would provide once they established the institution.

Horav Chaim Mordechai Katz, *zl*, who was co-founder of *Telshe Yeshivah* – together with his brother-in-law, *Rav Elya Meir* – would comment concerning the well-known *Mishnah* at the end of *Pirkei Avos*. A man met

Rabbi Yose ben Kisma and asked him, *Fun vanet kumt a Yid?* “From where do you hail?” The *Tanna* replied that he came from a city in which Torah reigned supreme, with *Roshei Yeshivah*, *rabbanim*, *sofrim* and many students of Torah. The man countered, “I will give you a sizable amount of money and jewels to relocate.” *Rav Yose* replied, that he could give him all the money in the world, but he would only live in a place of Torah. The man asked, “Why not take the money and build a *yeshivah* which would attract the finest mentors and students?” He explained that it does not work that way. One does not build Torah with money. Torah is built with blood, sweat and tears. An institution whose focus is money will not succeed. Its leaders require *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice.

If I were to select a paradigm of *mesiras nefesh* for building Torah, an example of what it means to negate material and physical accoutrements for the purpose of building Torah in its most pristine foundation, I would focus on the *Novarodok Yeshivah* movement. Every movement revolves characteristically around its founder. *Novarodok* was no different. To characterize the *Alter*, *zl*, of *Novarodok*, *Horav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz*, one must delve deep into this *mussar* approach of self-abrogation, soul-searching and introspection, as the precursor for developing oneself into a Jew truly devoted to serving and glorifying Hashem. He felt that one must first conquer his character deficits before he can improve. As long as the dross which is the work of one’s *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, infects a person, he cannot successfully strive for greatness in Torah. Perhaps one of the *Alter*’s aphorisms might aptly describe his approach to character development, which is a primary goal of *mussar*: “Man wants to achieve greatness overnight, and he wants to sleep well that night, too.” When someone is gravely ill, it is necessary to treat him with numerous medicines until one finds the key to his cure.

In many ways, the *Alter* was a loner, his approach to spiritual growth too demanding and radical for others to emulate. There were also those who opposed his approach. He succeeded, however, in training Torah giants in Torah and *mussar* whose goal it was to spread out and save as many Jewish brothers as possible. The *Alter*’s first *yeshivah* was established in *Novarodok*, quickly reaching an enrollment of 300 students and a *kollel* of 60 married men. He single-handedly performed all the customary functions of a *Rosh Yeshivah/maggid shiur*, administrator and executive director. His family remained in *Slabodka*, with the *Alter* returning home twice a year – for *Succos* and *Pesach*. His wife supported the family by selling pastries. He subsisted on the barest necessities of life while in the *yeshivah*. He was a brilliant *Rosh Yeshivah*, organizing his students into groups, with older students mentoring the younger ones, while he remained involved with everyone.

If not for the failed Russian Revolution of 1905, the *Novarodok Yeshivah* would have remained on site. Young *yeshivah* students became enchanted by the anti-Czarist rhetoric, and, suddenly, the young men who had no interest in anything but Torah and *mussar* began espousing the communist manifesto. The *Haskalah*, Enlightenment, dealt a terrible blow with their campaign against Jewish observance. *Rav Yosef Yoizel* responded with intensified learning. These were turbulent times, and those associated with his *yeshivah* would have to spread out and reach the masses of Jewish young people who were quickly becoming contaminated with the diseases of Communism and atheism.

The *Novarodok* students were instructed to spread out throughout Russia and its environs to the far outposts, the tiny rural communities, to find the children and establish *chadorim* and *yeshivos* for them. They had no money, just the tattered clothes on their back. They had, however, a fiery drive to spread Torah and feared nothing but failure. The economic challenges were acute, especially following World War I and the Great Depression. Food and shelter were commodities that were in great demand, but were subject to severe shortages.

Living in Eastern Europe during periods of political upheaval was especially dangerous. The authorities had no love for the Jews in general, and these young men who were spreading religious rhetoric would especially

undermine their plans for a godless Russia. These factors, together with the isolation and deprivation that accompanied living in remote places far from their families and the basic conveniences of life, intensified the challenges they faced. In some instances, the students had to learn a new language and navigate the cultural changes. Despite these hardships, these young men persevered in their commitment to spreading the teachings of the Novarodok *Yeshivah* throughout Eastern Europe. Their sacrifice played a critical role in the preservation and continuation of the movement's values and educational philosophy, even in the face of overwhelming adversity.

I conclude with another of the *Alter's* aphorisms: He was wont to say, "I have never concerned myself whether I can do something, but only whether it must be done. If it must be done, with Hashem's help, one will be able to accomplish it."

וְאֶל הָרוֹן תִּתְנַצֵּע אֶת הַעֲדָה אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה אֲלֵיךְ

And into the Aron you shall put the Testimony that I shall give you.

(25:21)

This *pasuk* (21) seems redundant. In *pasuk* 16, the Torah writes, "You shall place in the Aron the Testimonial Tablets that I shall give you." Two *pesukim* – same message. *Rashi* explains that we derive from this redundancy that it was prohibited to place the *Kaporet*, Cover, on the Aron unless the *Luchos* were already in there. There is no such thing as an empty Aron in the Sanctuary. If there are no *Luchos*, the Aron is incomplete; hence, no *Kaporet* is placed over it. *Chezkuni* explains that the first *pasuk* refers to the first *Luchos*, while the second *pasuk* refers to the second *Luchos*, which were fashioned by Moshe *Rabbeinu*.

In his commentary to *Bava Basra* 14:b, *Rashi* writes that the second *Luchos* were placed above the first *Luchos*. Others contend that they were on the side, because the first *Luchos*, having been fashioned by Hashem, had greater sanctity than their replacement. *Malbim* explains that *Rashi's* dispensation is due to the fact that the letters flew off the Tablets prior to Moshe shattering them. (If, indeed, the letters had been there): A) How could Moshe shatter them? One does not break something that Hashem creates. B) It would be impossible to break something that Hashem made. As such, their intrinsic *kedushah* was diminished, allowing for them to be placed beneath the second *Luchos*.

The idea of the second *Luchos* being placed on top of the first set of *Luchos* finds purchase in the message that the "new" must be built on the foundation/principles of the old/past. The basis for the second *Luchos*, which Moshe crafted, was the original *Luchos* which Hashem formed. Even the shards of the old can teach us something. We do not discard the past, but we can build on it. The lessons and examples we receive from the past are invaluable for incorporating into the present. Otherwise, our future might leave much to be desired.

Rambam (*Sefer HaMitzvos Asei* 20) identifies *V'asu Li Mikdash*, "They shall make for Me a Sanctuary" (25:8), as the source for the *mitzvah* of building the *Mishkan/Bais Hamikdash*. He says that this *mitzvah* includes all of the *klei HaMishkan*, vessels, used in the Sanctuary. He lists seven vessels, which include: two *Mizbeichos*, Altars; the ramp; the *Kyor* for washing the *Kohanim*'s hands and feet, with the base upon which it was placed; the *Shulchan* and *Menorah*. Noticeably, the *Aron* is not included. The *Aron* symbolizes the Torah which is contained within it. One would have expected it to be included among the vessels of the Sanctuary.

The *Brisker Rav*, zl, quotes his brother, *Horav Moshe*, zl, who explains that the above-mentioned vessels play a role in the functioning of the Sanctuary. The *avodah*, service, in the *Bais Hamikdash* is executed through the agency of these vessels. The *Aron HaKodesh* is not involved in any given *avodah*. It is present to serve as the repository for the *Luchos/Torah*. As such, it is different from the other vessels which are intrinsic to the Sanctuary. They serve the *Mikdash* and are, therefore, included in the *mitzvah* of *V'asu Li Mikdash*. The *Aron* serves the *Luchos*, superseding the other vessels.

The Torah holds a central role in the life of a Jew. It is not only the foundational text of Jewish law; it is our ethical and moral guide. Indeed, it preceded the creation of the world. We conform to the Torah's teachings and principles – not vice versa. Without the Torah, we are no different than any other human species. Thus, it is no wonder that the *Luchos* and the *Sefer Torah* (scroll) stand above all else. Jews throughout the world would rather die than deface a Torah scroll. They would risk their lives to save a scroll. The Nazis who murdered six million of our brothers and sisters understood the significance of the Torah. Sadly, some Jews are so distant, so indifferent, so alienated, so angry, that the Torah's pre-eminence eludes them.

The Nazis hunted for Torah scrolls, knowing that to defame them would be adding indignity to whatever pride the Jews had. One who reads the stories of the Jewish heroes who, despite the most heinous persecution and death, remained steadfastly committed to *Yiddishkeit* will invariably discover hundreds of recorded incidents in which *Yidden* were prepared to undergo the most brutal suffering just to hold on to and spare the Torah any indignity. They knew that, ultimately, their actions would result in an untimely, miserable death for them. In the end, the Torah would be destroyed, but they would not abandon the Torah.

Those sent on transports to Auschwitz were not permitted to take any religious articles, such as *sefarim*, with them. One Jew stubbornly refused to part with his *Sefer Torah*. He held onto it even as he was herded into the cattle car for transport to Auschwitz. The enemy ignored him – at least he was not smuggling anything. When they arrived in the infamous death camp, the Jews were instructed in no uncertain terms that they must leave all of their possessions on the train. This Jew was the first to exit the train, his *Sefer Torah* ensconced in his arms, held close to his chest. He was not parting with his Torah. The Nazis cursed, reviled and beat him mercilessly, but he would not let go of his Torah.

At this point, a Nazi officer came over and pointed his gun at the man's heart and said, "Let go of the scroll, or I will shoot you dead right now!" The man was not frightened. He ignored the Nazi. He was prepared to die holding his Torah. The Nazis looked at him as if he had lost his mind and left him alone. He held on to his Torah all the way to the gas chambers, where he died holding on to his beloved scroll.

A Jew who had years earlier severed his relationship with *mitzvah* observance watched all of this and was moved to the point that he exclaimed, "I now understand the Orthodox fanatics. Their love of Torah supersedes their life. They will not deviate one iota from the Torah, because of their love for it. I ask forgiveness from Hashem and, from this day on, I accept upon myself to return to *mitzvah* observance with deep-rooted pride, love and devotion."

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 parsha (or at least the middle of the middle parsha) 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 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 Cana'an:

SHEMOT 33:2-3 --

"I will send an angel before you -- and I will drive out the Cana'ani, Emori, Hiti, Perizi, Hivi, Yevusi -- 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 Cana'an 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 Cana'an]": they should not make a Mishkan, for I will not dwell among Bnei Yisrael.

THE "OHEL MO'ED" -- AND THE OTHER "OHEL 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 Cana'an. 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 "OHEL MO'ED." Anyone who sought Hashem would go to the "OHEL 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 Cana'an. 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-Shamayyim 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 cliched 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 fiance 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

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.]

LECHATCILLA 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 'lechatcilla' [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 lechatcilla 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 **mizbe'ach** 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 the establishment of a **mikdash** immediately upon their arrival in the land:

"Tevieimo ve-titaeimo 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 of 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 Bechayei (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 Bechayei. 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 Seorno 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 Seorno 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, Seorno 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. Seorno 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 Seorno 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, Seorno 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), Seorno describes the ideal condition of God's constant presence among Benei Yisrael without it being confined to any specific location and without requiring any specific actions on Benei Yisrael's part. In direct contradistinction to the Ramban, Seorno 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. Seorno'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 Seorno, 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 Seorno 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 Seorno 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 Seorno 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, Seorno 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 Seorno 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!

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 Moshe Rabbeinu 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'nahk, 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'nahk.

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'loyot 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'venon 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. (Shof'tim 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 Shof'tim); Nachalah, to Yerushalayim. (BT Zevahim 119a)

Haza”I 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've'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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