

Potomac Torah Study Center

Vol. 12 #19, February 28 - March 1, 2025; 30 Shevat - 1 Adar, 5785; Terumah 5785;
Rosh Hodesh; Shabbat Shkalim; Rosh Hodesh Adar is Friday and 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.

Dr. Erica Brown, Scholar-in-Residence for the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, is the guest scholar **this Shabbat at the 22nd Annual Herbert Lieberman & Ruben D. Silverman Memorial Shabbaton at Beth Shalom Congregation in Potomac, MD. The Lieberman and Silverman families dedicate this week's Devrei Torah in memory of Herbert Lieberman and Ruben D. Silverman.**

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

May Hashem protect Israel and Jews everywhere during 5785. May Hashem's protection shine on all of Israel, the IDF, and Jews throughout the world. May the first phase of the agreement continue with the remaining hostages coming home, hostilities ending, and with a new era of security and rebuilding for both Israel and all others who genuinely seek peace.

Shiri, Ariel and Kfir Bibas, kidnapped by Hamas terrorists in Gaza, were murdered at some point during their captivity. Ariel and Kfir, both very young children were the two youngest kidnapped Israelis. I am quoting part of AIPAC's statement:

"The murder of Shiri and her children is a horrific reminder of Hamas' true nature: It is a genocidal terrorist group that wants to wipe Israel off the map and murder every Jewish man, woman and child living there. "

Four of the last five parshiot in Sefer Shemot provide very detailed instructions on raising funds, collecting specific items, and reciting specifications for building the Mishkan, the portable home that God directs Moshe to have B'Nai Yisrael build so He can dwell among the people. All the details seem to be of most interest to building contractors. Indeed, most of the commentaries spend little time on the construction details and focus instead on the meaning of the process to B'nai Yisrael.

Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander identifies two types of donations for the Mishkan and other Jewish communal funds. On the Shabbat closest to Rosh Hodesh Adar, Shabbat Shemayim, all Jews would pay a flat rate (a "head tax") of half a shekel to cover the costs of daily maintenance of the Mishkan and the costs of the animals to be korbanot. For special occasions and large fund raising projects, communities rely on voluntary donations, such as the donations to cover the

cost of building the Mishkan and items to be kept there. (In Tetzaveh, next week, we encounter another form of tax, specific items God has Moshe request that certain individuals and groups donate for the Mishkan. Since God directs these items be donated, they are required payments and therefore in kind taxes.) Rabbi Brander observes that these sorts of giving for Jewish communal items transform the benefactors. He applauds the tremendous response of the Jewish community all over the world after October 7, including more than a billion dollars from Jews in North America within a few weeks, to help Israel cover the tremendous costs of defending the country against Hamas and other enemy nations.

Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Dov Linzer elaborates that not every Jew is able to donate money or fine items used in a Mishkan or shul. For some of us, physical labor (building, making craft items, and creating religious music or art) or helping with ritual could be our contributions, and all of these items for our community can help make our world a better place.

When Moshe relays Hashem's order to the people, to collect donations of coins, jewelry, cloth, and other valuable items, the people respond extremely generously – Moshe must soon close off the donations because he collects more than needed to complete the project. Terumah represents voluntary donations, and for the only time in recorded history, a Jewish communal fund raising campaign generates surplus funds. As Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l, reminds us, one meaning of "terumah" is something we lift up. Our voluntary donations to help build homes for Hashem, such as synagogues and yeshivot, make us partners with God in lifting us up to make the world a better place. Rabbi Sacks adds that the greatest gift we can offer to others is the opportunity to create, to turn the recipient of a gift into a giver, and enable more of our people to participate in tikkun olam. Experimental economics research shows that those who create even simple items (such as making origami models) place significantly higher values on the finished projects than do those who did not make the items. In short, participating in projects of value transforms the giver and builds value.

Rabbi Yossi Goldman, who started the first Chabad in South Africa, adds that we learn from the Mishkan that a home for Hashem does not need to be large or fancy. The Mishkan was small enough for a few adult men from Levi to carry on wood poles – although our tradition tells us that the Mishkan carried itself on the poles (terumah). The key to the Mishkan being a terumah is that Betzalel followed Hashem's specifications exactly – with this care in following directions, Hashem ensured that the Mishkan, despite the heavy weight of the gold and stone tablets, carried itself so there was no danger of the men dropping it.

My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, taught us the importance of surrounding ourselves with Judaic items of beauty – religious pieces such as shofar and candle sticks, beautiful music, and Sefarim – and he loved to bring back examples on his frequent trips to Israel. During the period before Judaica was readily available on the Internet, Rabbi Cahan's office was the best place to purchase Judaic books, religious items, and art. We still cherish many of these items years later and remember how he brought them back for us from Israel.

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 Moshe Aaron ben Leah Beilah (badly wounded in battle in Gaza but slowly recovering), Daniel Yitzchak Meir HaLevy ben Ruth; Ariah Ben Sarah, Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Reuven ben Basha Chaya Zlata Lana, Avraham ben Gavriela, Mordechai ben Chaya, David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha; Miriam Bat Leah; Yehudit Leah bas Hannah Feiga; Miriam bat Esha, Chana bat Sarah; Raizel bat Rut; Rena bat

Ilsa, Riva Golda bat Leah, Sharon bat Sarah, Kayla bat Ester, and Malka bat Simcha, and all our fellow Jews in danger in and near Israel. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.

Shabbat Shalom

Hannah & Alan

Haftarat Parshat Shekalim/Terumah: Giving and Receiving

By Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander * 5785 / 2025
President and Rosh HaYeshiva, Ohr Torah Stone

Dedicated in memory of Israel's murdered and fallen, for the refuah shlayma of the wounded, the return of those being held hostage in Gaza, and the safety of our brave IDF soldiers.

*This week's learning has been dedicated for the refuah shleimah of
Moshe Kranzler – Moshe Ben Maryam Yehudit*

When I was a student at Yeshiva University, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin was honored at the annual RIETS (rabbinical school) dinner for his leadership as the founder of Ohr Torah Stone and the Israeli community of Efrat. In presenting the award, YU President Rabbi Norman Lamm praised Rabbi Riskin as a leader of the Jewish community, comparing him to none other than Moshe Rabbeinu. Upon accepting the award, Rabbi Riskin took to the stage, and with his characteristic smile remarked to Rabbi Lamm that he was not entirely like Moshe Rabbeinu who, when collecting funds for the construction of the Mishkan (Tabernacle), was able to declare that he had enough funds. *"I have never been able to achieve that feat,"* Rabbi Riskin remarked.

This topic of funds is addressed in this week's portion, Terumah, as well as in the special maftir reading for Shabbat Shekalim, and in the Haftarah. From these, we learn that there is more than one way to give.

At times we structure public collections at a flat rate, like the giving of the half-shekel, whose funds were directed towards the *Trumat haLishka*, responsible for Temple daily maintenance and purchase of animals, wine and the omer and loaves used for sacrifices, as well as the upkeep of the city (Shekalim 4:1).

In this way, these public necessities were supported through the collective efforts of the entire community, with each individual taking part in their maintenance and each individual benefiting from equal representation. While each half-shekel on its own had limited impact, the combined contributions of the Jewish people ensured the sustainability of these communal institutions, granting everyone an equal share. Furthermore, enabling both the rich and the poor to give equally shows our interdependence as a people and reinforces the message that everyone has a role in making a difference.

And yet, there are moments when we ask individuals to open up their hearts, and to give as they are able. We see this in our Parsha, regarding the construction of the Mishkan, and in the Haftarah which describes the necessary capital repairs for the Beit HaMikdash (Temple). These texts inspire us to invite everyone to consider their personal connection to the cause at hand and to demonstrate their commitment by giving in accordance with their means.

This form of philanthropic giving serves two functions. First, it is often a more effective mechanism for raising significant funds than the tax model of the half-shekel. But there is something more significant. Philanthropy not only leaves a mark on the beneficiary, but it also transforms the benefactor. Donating to a cause is an active and meaningful demonstration of affiliation and commitment. It's the way we solidify for ourselves, and pass on to our children, what matters to us most.

As Ben J. Genet, a renowned Jewish American philanthropist and entrepreneur develops in his forthcoming book, *A Virtuous Cycle*, the act of giving has been demonstrated to increase feelings of optimism and satisfaction. Generosity leads to a deeper appreciation of everything around us, from our families to our professional accomplishments, ultimately creating positive momentum in all aspects of life.

I find it profoundly moving to watch how much the international Jewish community, affiliated and those we previously thought were “assimilated” have done to support Israel, both financially and through volunteering their time and skills. . For the North American Jewish community, through JFNA, to raise a billion dollars in a matter of weeks after Oct. 7 – and for solidarity missions spanning all sectors of the Jewish world to come join us at such difficult moments in Israel – was both physically and emotionally sustaining.

As always, Shabbat Shkalim, with its focus on giving, falls just as the month of Adar is about to begin. Collections will soon be underway for *Matanot La-evyonim* and *Kimcha d'Pischa*, the annual fundraising campaigns observed throughout the Jewish world to make sure that every Jewish family has the necessary provisions to take part in the festivities of Purim and Pesach. This is the perfect time for each of us to reflect on our own giving habits, considering when, how, and to whom we give, what we have received, and the motivations that inspire us.

Let this Shabbat Shekalim be a moment for introspection and discussion with our spouses, our children and our friends, about what giving looks like for each of us, so we can receive and offer inspiration in this most important act that allows us to transform the world around us.

* President and Rosh HaYeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone, a modern Orthodox group of 32 institutions and programs. Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin is the Founding Director, and Rabbi Dr. Blander 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.

Terumah: A Real Story in the Making

By Rabbi Label Lam © 2014 (5774)

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

It's a big wonder that the Torah spends so much ink on the description of the construction of the Tabernacle, which was a one-time event in history that seems to have little relevance or practicality for us today. Yet we recite nightly, *“It is our life and the length of our days...”* There are many other important details about Shabbos or the construction of Tefillin that would be much more valuable, seemingly, for us to know about and yet they are relegated to the Oral Torah after an abbreviated phrase. Why does the Torah take almost 4½ Parshios to tell us how the Mishkan was built?

The Chofetz Chaim remarked that on a map of the world you'll find the names of big cities like New York, Paris, Tokyo, etc. shown in large print on the map. In Heaven, G-d has His map of the world and there are Jerusalem, Vilna, Radin, etc. in his day and Jerusalem, Brooklyn, Queens, Lakewood, Bnei Brak, and Monsey in our time. These are the special places where The Almighty has His people who are quietly learning, and praying, and carrying out His will ever so discretely within the four cubits of Hallacha.

By extension, perhaps we can say that there is a newspaper on earth, and we know already what's in the worldly paper. It's a constant recycling of the most sensational combination of jealousy, appetite, and glory seeking. We don't have to guess about the heavenly map either. The Torah is a record of that which catches the Almighty's attention. Whatever is most treasured is most often repeated, like the story of Eliezer the servant of Avraham, loving the convert, and the Exodus from Egypt.

Now we get to a practical point. In a parenting class, my wife and I received a most useful piece of advice. If ever children are acting up during meal time, rather than attending immediately to the trouble maker(s), turn attention to the ones acting civilly. "Look how nice Sara is sitting!" "See how Eli is eating so carefully!" etc.

Rather than noticing the rebels and thereby and inviting others too, ignore them. Encourage the good quiet behavior. Give proper attention to those who are doing what they are supposed to be doing. It works like this in class daily and at assemblies as well. Just point out the how much you appreciate some display of good behavior, and suddenly there is a contagion of cooperation that spreads like whipped butter on warm bread. It works! Just try it!

By the way, by failing to do this, the news media is complicit in and even responsible for promoting terrorism and other miscreant behavior in the world by giving free advertisement and attention to their ruinous causes.

When it comes to the construction of the Tabernacle in the dessert, we have a unique event in human history. There is a group of people, a whole nation in fact, working in cooperation, setting aside egos, personal opinions, and political agendas while using their unique talents and resources to create a place for G-d in this world and all according to Divine specs. That action is newsworthy in Heaven. The Torah focuses enormous attention on the good news!

During the time when these Torah events actually occurred, there were no doubt presidential scandals, wars, and social upheaval, but that's not new, and it's not news. What's new and what's really news is not the child shouting at the dining room table and disrupting. It's natural to rant and rave, setting the whole house into a state of chaos, and it's not unusual for the parent to obsess only on that.

What would be new and news worthy is the wisdom of a parent who fixes his or her gaze of love on the good one with only a few spots on his shirt and the one who is quietly contributing to the harmony of the family orchestra.

There is a great temptation to be distracted by only the sensational and the silly. If one can remember to search for better behavior and highlight that, there is a real story in the making.

Good Shabbos!

Jeditor's note. When our older son was in second grade, the boys in his secular class made teaching miserable for the teacher. She called in the Principal. His reaction: he instituted a new monthly prize – Mench of the Month. The best behaving child in each class was Mench of the Month for that class (one for secular and one for Hebrew and religious studies). Behavior problems ended immediately. By the end of the year, each student in the school won Mench of the Month at least once. My family has seen Rabbi Lam's method in person![

<https://torah.org/torah-portion/dvartorah-5774-terumah/>

From Promise to Practice

By Rabbi Dov Linzer

Rosh HaYeshiva and President, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah © 2016, 2019

During the events of the Giving of the Torah, the Children of Israel have been pretty passive. When asked for their assent to the Torah before and after it was given they responded, "We will do." and they participated in a ceremony marking their covenant with God. But they had not yet had a chance to do anything to demonstrate their commitment in practice.

That all changes in this week's parasha, which opens with a focus on the doing: "Speak to the Children of Israel, and they shall take for me an offering ... And they shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst" (Shemot, 25:2,8). This phrasing carries through the rest of the parasha, opening each new section:

“And they shall make an ark...” (25:10)
“And you shall make a table...” (25:23)
“And you shall make a menorah...” (25:31)
“And the tabernacle you shall make...” (26:1)
“And you shall make a curtain...” (26:31)
“And you shall make an altar...” (27:1)
“And you shall make the court of the tabernacle...” (27:9)

The opportunity to do was enthusiastically embraced. Donations poured in from all people: men and women, laity and leaders. When it came to actually doing the work, everyone brought his or her special talents to the enterprise. Moshe selected Betzalel, Ahaliav, and all those who are blessed with the ability *“to do all manner of work, of the engraver, of the craftsman of the embroiderer ... and of the weaver”* (35:35). And not only men got involved, but women as well: *“And all the women who were wise-hearted spun [wool] with their hands ... and those who were wise-hearted spun the goat’s hair”* (35:25-26). It is a flurry of activity. The people could finally do, and they did with passion and zest.

The importance of all of this doing is twofold. First, it is the translation of the commands and the covenant into the real world. It is one thing to make a commitment; it is another to act on it. Such action is not only evidence of the sincerity of our commitment; it is its reification and its embodiment. To be in a covenant with God is to act on that covenant, and such action is transformative. It reinforces and internalizes our convictions so that they become real to us on the experiential level. We identify with it – the action and the commitment – and we own it.

This translation of commitment to action is nicely reflected in the custom to begin building our sukkah as soon as Yom Kippur comes to an end. At this moment, we have just spent an entire day – or, ideally, a period of ten days or even forty days – in the process of repentance, of drawing close to God, committing to be better Jews, better people, in the future. If we do nothing at this point, all of the work, while heartfelt and sincere, will evaporate and be as transitory as the day itself. If we want it to be real we must act upon it, taking that newfound passion and translating it into action in the world.

Let us not forget that the sukkah is itself a tabernacle, a type of a mishkan, a place where we remember God’s protection and feel God’s presence, and that Yom Kippur is the day that Moshe brought down the tablets for the second time. This custom, then, is a reenacting of the building of the tabernacle that followed the second giving of the Torah. Building the sukkah – building the mishkan – is taking our connection to God and finding concrete ways to bring it into the world. It is about creating a space in which God’s presence can be felt and may dwell within the people and the world. It is the covenant made real.

But this action is important in another way. For the ability to act is also the ability to bring the wholeness of ourselves, our talents and our personality, into the world and into the service of God. We see in Terumah and in the parshiyot that follow an emphasis on people’s artistic ability, their craftsmanship and creativity. And we see it put to religious use as a way of connecting to God and serving God.

This may be very different from our familiar Judaism. The Judaism many of us grew up with taught that one’s religious expression, outside of the observance of mitzvot, was to be found in the beit midrash, in the intellectual realm of Torah study. That was where one’s passions should be directed and where one might engage their personality and creativity. Sometimes – particularly for women – doing acts of chesed is presented as an alternative to Torah study. But that’s about it; that’s how one brings his or her passion to the service of God. For some people that works beautifully, but it does not work well for everyone. Many people’s creativity and talents lie elsewhere: in music, art, poetry, building, or engineering. But it is rare that such people are given the opportunity to bring their creativity, the fullness of their selves, into the service of God.

It has not always been this way. The Middle Ages saw great rabbinic figures writing religious – and even romantic! – poetry. There has been Jewish art, Jewish illuminated manuscripts, and Jewish music throughout the ages, but society that have encouraged these other creative areas as forms of religious expression have been rare. How many children over the last 2,000 years grew up dreaming of becoming a Jewish artist or a Jewish musician? How many communities have seen the flurry of creative activity we saw when the mishkan was being built? The answer, of course, is very few.

Things are improving. Over the last few generations, and especially in the last decade, we have seen an explosion of Jewish religious creativity taking place in Israel. In a society where religion and Jewish identity is part of the very warp and woof of daily life, where there are so many possible spheres of religious and creative activity, where creative endeavors can be part of a larger community and not just individual pursuits, in such a society, religious creative expression can truly begin to flourish, and it has.

In a particularly moving passage in Adar HaYakar (30-33), Rav Kook critiques the Judaism of the exile, where religious expression had been so limited, so enervated:

If the religious abundance of Israel were to come to the world at a time when the nation was living in the fullness of its natural state that suffused its inner soul, then it never would have accepted upon itself the religious character of those nations that most of our people have lived among, that dark, morose character, that shrivels life and shrinks the soul...

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart" – which the Rabbis have interpreted to mean "with your two inclinations (your evil inclination – your passions – and your good inclination), (Berakhot 54a) was not able to be fulfilled in its fullest sense...

He concludes with the wish that this might be reversed in the current State of Israel:

If so, this is the obligation of Israel now, at the time when the desire of the nation has bestirred itself to renew its national energies: to inhale once again, anew, the power of the original divine abundance, that until now has only come to the world in a weak and diminished state and in opposition to life – to inhale it with a soul that is strong, courageous and life-affirming...

This is what it means to translate thought into action, commitment into deed, and to build a place for God in this world. But to build such a place, we need to engage all our talents and abilities; we must engage our entire selves. Perhaps the reason religion does not speak to so many people is that we have so narrowed the scope of what religious action is and can be. If we can remember how many chapters and verses the Torah devotes to the building of the mishkan, then we can hopefully begin to expand our definition of what it means to serve God, what it means to do for God. Let us pray that the creative flourishing that has begun continues to grow and spread so that the entirety of each person, and the entirety of our people, can work to create space for God in this world.

Shabbat Shalom!

From my archives.

A Purim Miracle: Thoughts for Purim

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

Esther the Jewess marries King Ahashverosh. Her Uncle Mordecai tells her not to reveal that she is Jewish. The Jews throughout the 127 provinces of the Empire know Esther is Jewish. But not one of them gives away the secret. Ahashverosh, Haman and the entire royal court are kept in the dark about the Queen's true identity.

This, commented Rabbi Haim David Halevy (late Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv), was an amazing phenomenon, a veritable miracle. Not one Jew in the entire empire betrayed the secret. The Jewish people were united, discreet, and disciplined to an extraordinary degree.

Let us imagine how this story would play out if it occurred today.

Jewish reporters would fiercely try to out-scoop each other to report about a Jewish Queen.

Wikileaks would put an image of Esther's birth certificate on the internet, with the indication that she was born Jewish.

The Hareidim would demonstrate worldwide at the travesty of a Jewish woman marrying a non-Jewish king, a wicked one at that.

The Chief Rabbinate of Israel would issue a statement that Esther's Jewishness was in question, and that she would need a "giyyur le-humra" (a conversion to be on the safe side) if she wanted to be considered Jewish for purposes of aliyah.

The Zionists would point to Esther and say: you see, the Jews of the diaspora are assimilating; they all should make aliyah before they totally disappear.

The zealous Litvaks would say: Esther is merely a Persian Jewess and doesn't have our fine Ashkenazic pedigree. We wouldn't want our sons to marry such a woman.

Chabad would send another shaliyah to Shushan, to re-enforce the staff already there at the Chabad House. Cholent (Persian style) would be dished out each Shabbat morning along with prayers for the Queen's prompt release from bondage in the palace.

The Sephardi Federations around the globe would glow with quiet satisfaction that one of their own made the big time.

The peaceniks would say: this whole crisis could have been avoided if Mordecai simply bowed to Haman and would not have been so stubborn. If Jews simply gave everything away, we wouldn't have to worry about anti-Semitism.

The kabbalists would manufacture a new batch of red strings for bracelets, and sell them at a suitable price to those who wanted to provide mystical salvation to Esther and the Jewish people.

The secularists would blame the fanaticism of the religious community; the religious would blame the secularists for their innumerable sins which surely brought on God's wrath.

Jewish newspapers would be filled with spicy attacks and accusations, op ed pieces and letters to the editor. Everyone would have an opinion, invariably wrong. All the commotion within the Jewish community would catch the attention of the non-Jewish media.

It would not take too long for Queen Esther's hidden identity to be revealed. Esther would have then been ejected from the throne; Haman would have had full sway; the Jews would have had no powerful person to intercede on their behalf. The Purim story would have ended in disaster. The joyous holiday of Purim would never have come to be.

The Jews of the ancient Persian Empire demonstrated remarkable intelligence and restraint. They understood what was at stake and they rose to the occasion with admirable self-control. They surely had differing opinions and ideologies among themselves; but when faced with national crisis, they knew enough to set their differences aside, to refrain from destructive gossip and back biting.

While we modern Jews cannot hope to achieve the unity and self-control of the ancient Persian Jewish community, we can strive to act and speak with discretion, courtesy, and respect for the views of others. We can avoid vitriolic attacks on

those with whom we disagree. We can focus on the really big issues which confront the Jewish people, and think how each of us can be constructive members of our community. We can know when to speak and when to remain silent. We can know when action is necessary and helpful, and when action is counter-productive and misguided.

Rabbi Halevy thought it was miraculous that the Jews of ancient Persia acted so wisely and so discreetly. Perhaps it is too much to expect such miraculous behavior from us. But perhaps — with intelligence, compassion, discretion and respectfulness — we can be part of a new Purim miracle for our generation.

* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals and rabbi emeritus of the historic Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of New York City. Reprinted from 2012.

<https://www.jewishideas.org/article/purim-miracle-thoughts-purim>

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"The Bread of Shame" – Thoughts for Parashat Terumah

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

"Tell the Israelite people to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts for Me from every person whose heart is so moved" (Shemot 25:2).

For the construction of the Mishkan, Moses was to collect donations on a voluntary basis from those who gave with full heart. Generous people would understand that it was a privilege to participate in the building of the sanctuary. Their hearts would be moved to do the right thing. No coercion was necessary.

But what about those whose hearts did not move them to contribute? Were they to be excluded from the services of the Mishkan? No, they would enjoy the benefits of the sanctuary even if they did not share in the expenses of constructing it. So did the non-givers win?

Although they might seem to have come out ahead financially, in fact they lost a great deal more than they gained. They lost the mitzvah of sharing in a sacred communal undertaking. They lost the respect of others who participated with full hearts. They lost personal dignity.

In kabbalistic thought, it is taught that when people take or receive something that they did not earn, they are guilty of eating "*the bread of shame*." We avoid the "*bread of shame*" when we strive to give commensurate with what we receive. This isn't only a matter of financial outlays; we also "*repay*" others with kindness, thoughtfulness, even a simple thank you.

This lesson applies to many aspects of life. We should not simply be "*takers*" who receive goods and services from others. We also should be "*givers*" who do our share to repay the many benefits we enjoy.

This is true on a personal level. We should not exploit the kindness of friends and acquaintances but should return their kindnesses gladly and generously. This is true on a communal level. We should not expect synagogues and schools and other institutions to be there for us, but we should be members and supporters so as to carry our own weight to the best of our ability. This is true on the national and international level. We should not expect others to provide for us, without our willingness to provide for their needs as well.

Sometimes people think they come out ahead if they take something without having given anything in return. They think they have *"beaten the system."* Actually, such people humiliate themselves because they are eating *"the bread of shame."* They do not realize that taking something without giving back to the best of their ability is demeaning.

Good-hearted, thoughtful and generous people are the ones who sanctify life. They do not eat *"the bread of shame."*

* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals and rabbi emeritus of the historic Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of New York City.

The Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals 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 current fund raising period. Thank you.

<https://www.jewishideas.org/node/3325>

Terumah -- A Two-Way Street

By Rabbi Mordechai Rhine *

*Dedicated in Memory of Mr. David Rhine Sholomo Dovid ben Avraham Yitzchak z.l.
May this Dvar Torah be a Zechus Refuah Shileima for Cholei Yisroel*

The fundraiser to build the Mishkan was a most wonderous experience. Within days of the announcement, so much had been donated that Moshe had to ask people to stop donating. The campaign began with Hashem's words, *"Take for Me a tithe."* The commentaries wonder about the expression, *"Take for Me."* Wouldn't it have been more appropriate to say, *"Give to Me?"* The commentaries suggest that Hashem's words imply that when one gives to such a noble cause they are not just giving but also receiving.

This follows the theme of the Medrash (Vayikra Rabboh 34) which states, *"More than the homeowner does for the poor man, the poor man does for the homeowner."* When the homeowner gives Tzedaka, the homeowner receives protection for health and wealth, for himself and his family.

We find this theme as well in Parshas Ki Sisa, where the Torah describes the donations for the Mishkan with the word *"Vinosnu,"* which means *"They shall give."* The word is spelled וּנוּסְנוּ, which makes it a word that can be read both forward and backwards. In English such a word is called a palindrome. Examples in English include, civic, kayak, Madam, and rotator. But, whereas in English such words are just a curiosity, in Hebrew such a word contains a message. The Baal HaTurim explains that the word וּנוּסְנוּ represents that what a person gives to Tzedaka will reap great dividends that will be granted to him. He will not lose out because of his giving. Although at face value we think we know who the giver is and who is the taker, on a deeper level the giver is an even greater recipient of blessing.

For the most part we recognize this principle as a spiritual dynamic of how Hashem runs His world. Regarding a person's health, Shlomo declared, *"Tzedaka saves from death."* (Mishlei 10 and 11) Similarly, regarding a person's wealth our tradition is, *"Give the tithe so that you will become wealthy."* (Talmud, Shabbos 119) Tzedaka gives a person merit; therefore, he gets a reward.

On a deeper level there is something even more profound that is happening. When a person gives to a needy person or a noble cause, a relationship develops. That relationship can sometimes be even greater and more relevant than the value of the merit earned.

I once heard a story of a Rosh Yeshiva who was interviewing a boy for admission into his Yeshiva. The boy's father was a wealthy man and knew that there was a long waiting list. So, when the interview was concluded and the Rosh Yeshiva stated the classic words, *"Your son passed the exam, but there is a long waiting list,"* the man slid a very significant check across the table to the Rosh Yeshiva suggesting that his son be pushed to the top of the list. The Rosh Yeshiva politely slid the check back to the man and said, *"Had you been a supporter in any amount over the past few years there would be room to prioritize your son's application, as the son of a supporter. We would have had a relationship. But to prioritize now due to a large donation is inappropriate."*

Tosfos (Shabbos 55) explains that this is how our relationship with Hashem works. The merit of our forefathers might eventually be used up, Tosfos writes, but their merit forged a relationship. Relationships are not limited to the amount of merit earned and how much was paid up. Relationships are a two-way street that last forever.

With heartfelt blessings 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 Lifeblood of a Jew

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer * (5782)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Co-founder of the Rhode Island Torah Network in Providence, RI. Until recently, Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD., and associated with the Savannah Kollel.

Terumah

By Rabbi Haim Ovadia *

]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.[

Shabbat Shalom.

* Judaic faculty, Ramaz High School, New York; also Torah VeAhava. Until recently, Rabbi, Beth Shalom Sephardic Minyan)Potomac, MD(. Faculty member, AJRCA non-denominational rabbinical school(. **Many of Rabbi Ovadia's Devrei Torah are now available on Sefaria: <https://www.sefaria.org/profile/aim-ovadia?tab=sheets>**. The Sefaria articles usually include Hebrew text, which I must delete because of issues changing software formats.

Many Devrei Torah from Rabbi Ovadia this year come from an unpublished draft of his forthcoming book on Tanach, which Rabbi Ovadia has generously shared with our readers. Rabbi Ovadia reserves all copyright protections for this material.

Jews and Mobile Education Part 2: From Farmers' Markets to Stopping Anti-Semitism

By Rabbi Moshe Rube *)5782(

On my Uber ride back from the MLK Unity breakfast at the Birmingham]Alabama, USA[JCC, my driver told me all about his former career as a truck driver. He told me how he used to drive all across the country. He told me how he now works more on the managerial side of the business, hiring and dealing with all the drivers under him.

I thanked him for his work and asked him what he thought about the current hiring and supply chain crisis I keep hearing about on the news. Does he have any trouble finding people willing to drive a truck? He answered yes and that many

companies now offer up to a \$15,000 signing bonus plus competitive salaries that can start at \$50,000 and reach up to \$100,000.

This floored me. Six figures for driving a truck!? Why weren't people running towards this? College graduates now dream of such an offer, and truck driving does not even require a degree.

The full socioeconomic answer to this may be outside the purview of this email. But we can make a suggestion and connect it to the broader world of the purposes of education and its consequences that we were talking about last week.

To get there though we will have to travel through farmers' markets, Publix, and a theory on the source of anti-Semitism. But I promise we will end with hope.

A gut reaction we can have when thinking about the truck driving profession is that it's unglamorous. One major element of truck driving that contributes to this is that it's a middleman profession. Truck drivers do not make anything in their work. They transport items that other people have made. Many of us have a desire for work that allows us to see and feel the results at the end of the day. Truck drivers have less of that.)Our Sages relate that one of the worst elements of the slavery in Egypt was that Pharaoh forced us to build on Pisom and Raamses. These were places that had quicksand so whatever the Jews built went to pieces quickly after. We suffered more by not seeing the results of our work. (

Also, think about this. Which method of shopping strikes you with an immediate shot of spiritual warmth? Shopping at Publix or shopping at a farmers' market? I thought so.

It may be the same produce. But buying directly from the person who produced the product makes it feel more real. This also leads us to forgive and feel empathy for a farmer even if he raises his prices, because we assume it's due to factors beyond his control. But if Publix, the great corporate middleman, raises prices, even if it has the very reasonable explanation that it's due to the supply chain, we're more willing to blame and attack the corporation.

This middlemen bias may not only affect our shopping or job preferences, but also be a basis of some of the worst expressions of hate in human history. In Thomas Sowell's essay "Are Jews Generic?", he zooms in on what he calls the "*middleman minority*." The overarching argument of the essay is that while anti-Semitism comes from many motivations like ethnic hatred, racism, and anti-Zionism, it achieves its most horrifying expression)like pogroms and outright genocide(in societies where Jews work or have a historic reputation for working in the middleman professions like shopkeepers, peddlers, porters, moneylenders and traders.

Professor Sowell states, "*Other kinds of minorities, have of course suffered violence, but the scale of lethal mass violence against middleman minorities has been unequalled.*"

He proves this by looking at the violence that has happened throughout history to people of other cultures like the Armenians in Turkey, the Ibos in Nigeria or the Lebanese in Sierra Leone. All involved groups who were minorities in a culture and worked in middleman positions.

Like the Jews, these people were immigrants and chose these professions because that's the only work they could find.)Newcomers in a country rarely have enough capital to buy land and start farming or start a factory.(Like the Jews, they were good at it and worked from the wee hours of the morning to late at night to make ends meet in their new home and eventually acquired success. Like the Jews, the majority culture around them saw them as redundant, parasitic and as thieves from the authentic dwellers of that land who worked in production rather than trade.

Redundant and parasitic? Hardly. Middleman jobs like distribution, truck driving, trading, and facilitating connections among people, while lacking the pastoral romance of the land, is one of the most essential jobs we have in human society. How many of us live near a farmer to be able to buy our food? How many of us rely on home delivery to receive the mailings and items we need? How many of us could have received the vaccine except of course for those who live near Moderna's and Pfizer's headquarters?

Thank you to all our middlemen who perform these necessary functions in our lives. Whatever grief you receive from taking on these professions is too much.

With this information, what do we make of our Jewish nation's remarkable abilities in mobile education that we discussed last week? In our entry to countries, and throughout our history, we have taken on the role of middleman)like peddling or moneylending(in our efforts to adapt, evolve and make the best of our situation. We're good at it. We've succeeded at it beyond our wildest expectations everywhere we've traveled. And yet, it may be this ability that has invited the most lethal ire against us.

This week, we read about the giving of the Torah at Sinai. The Talmud tells us that the mountain name symbolizes that the Torah causes "*Sinah*" or hatred against us from others. What does this mean? It means the things that make Jews special and necessary, our Torah and our ability to learn, educate, and adapt, can be the very things that cause others to hate us.

What about you? What makes you special? Have you found that the everything that sets you apart is often the thing that invites the most disdain?

So what can Jews do? Never work as middlemen again? Not go into the professions available to us when necessary because we're scared? Of course not.

But I have hope and it comes from observing the current events that surround us.

With the emergence of the global economy, middlemen are no longer a minority. So much trade goes on between people, states, and countries that humanity is slowly realizing how necessary middlemen are. All the Amazon Prime members can speak to that. The latest crisis with the supply chain and the truck driver shortage compounds this realization tenfold.

Maybe we can see this as a worldwide training ground for appreciation of the middleman. If it's true that this is the source of the worst types of violence, then maybe we will see it fade away in the coming years. Hatred will end because we're realizing how much we need each other

Granted this will take time. Anti-Semites, especially terrorists, still use the language of a "*Jewish world conspiracy*" born from the idea that Jews control all the money due to our historical prominence in middleman professions. But with the changing state of the world, we can hope.

So the next time you get a delivery from UPS, Amazon, or Shipt, give that middleman a smile.

Shabbat Shalom.

* Senior Rabbi of Auckland Hebrew Congregation, Remuera)Auckland(, New Zealand. Formerly Rabbi, Congregation Knesseth Israel)Birmingham, AL(. I reprinted part 1 last week for Mishpatim.

Rav Kook Torah Terumah: Betzalel's Wisdom

The Torah reading of Terumah begins the section dealing with building the Mishkan)Tabernacle(and making the priestly clothes. These chapters are among the few in which the Torah places great emphasis on external beauty — art, craftsmanship, and aesthetics.

Of particular interest is the protagonist of this unique construction: the master craftsman, Betzalel. The Midrash weaves many stories about Betzalel's wisdom and skill. In particular, the Sages noted the significance of his name, which means, "in God's shadow":

"Betzalel's name reflected his wisdom. God told Moses, 'Tell Betzalel to make the tabernacle, the ark, and the vessels.'

When Moses relayed the message to Betzalel, however, Moses changed the order, mentioning first the ark, then the vessels, and lastly, the tabernacle.

Betzalel turned to Moses.

"Moses, our teacher, usually one first builds the house, and then places the furniture inside. Yet you said to make the vessels and then the tabernacle. These vessels that I will make — where shall I put them? Perhaps God told you, "tabernacle, ark and vessels"?

Moses replied in amazement, 'You must have been in God's shadow and overheard!')Berachot 55a(

Betzalel was certainly sharp to be able to reconstruct the original divine message. Why did Moses change the order that God had told him?

The Scholar and the Artist

One way in which we can distinguish between the scribbles of a five-year-old and a masterpiece by Rembrandt is the degree to which the work of art reflects reality. A true artist is acutely sensitive to the finest details of nature. He must be an expert in shading, color, texture, and composition. A great artist will be disturbed by the smallest deviations, just as a great musician is perturbed by a note that is not exactly right in pitch, length, and emphasis.

There is a difference between the natural order of the world as perceived through the trained eye of an artist, and the proper order as understood through the wisdom of a scholar. The artist always compares the subject at hand to reality. The scholar, on the other hand, organizes topics according to their ethical and spiritual significance.

When Moses heard God command that Betzalel build the "tabernacle, ark, and vessels," he did not know whether the order was significant. Since the tabernacle was in effect just the outer building containing the ark and the other vessels, Moses knew that the ark and vessels were holier. Therefore, when relaying the command to Betzalel, he mentioned them in order of importance, starting with the most sacred.

Why then did God put the tabernacle first? Moses decided that the original command started with the general description — the Tabernacle, the overall goal — and then continued with the details, the ark and vessels.

Betzalel, an artist with a finely tuned sensitivity to physical reality, noticed the slight discrepancy in Moses' description. He realized that the word tabernacle did not refer to the overall construction, but to the outer building. As such, it should have come first, just as in the building of any home. The order was not from the general to the detailed, nor from the less holy to the holier, but from the outside to the inside.

Moses then comprehended the significance of Betzalel's name, "in God's shade." Why shade? Wisdom may be compared to light, while artistic talent is like shade. Light is certainly greater and brighter than shade; but if we want to perceive an object completely, we need to see all of its aspects, both light and shade. In order that the Tabernacle could achieve its purpose, it required the special artistic insight of Betzalel.

)Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 144-146. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. II, p. 262.(

Terumah: Why We Value What We Make)5778(

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

The behavioural economist Dan Ariely did a series of experiments on what is known as the IKEA effect, or “*why we overvalue what we make.*” The name comes, of course, from the store that sells self-assembly furniture. For practically-challenged people like me, putting an item of furniture together is usually like doing a giant jigsaw puzzle in which various pieces are missing, and others are in the wrong place. But in the end, even if the item is amateurish, we tend to feel a certain pride in it. We can say, “*I made this,*” even if someone else designed it, produced the pieces, and wrote the instructions. There is, about something in which we have invested our labour, a feeling like that expressed in Psalm 128: “*When you eat the fruit of the labour of your hands, you will be happy, and it will go well with you.*”¹[1]

Ariely wanted to test the reality and extent of this added value. So he got volunteers to make origami models by elaborate folding of paper. He then asked them how much they were prepared to pay to keep their own model. The average answer was 25 cents. He asked other people in the vicinity what they would be prepared to pay. The average answer was five cents. In other words, people were prepared to pay five times as much for something they had made themselves. His conclusions were: the effort that we put into something does not just change the object. It changes us and the way we evaluate that object. And the greater the labour, the greater the love for what we have made.²[2]

This is part of what is happening in the long sequence about the building of the Sanctuary that begins in our parsha and continues, with few interruptions, to the end of the book. There is no comparison whatsoever between the Mishkan – the holy and the Holy of Holies – and something as secular as self-assembly furniture. But at a human level, there are psychological parallels.

The Mishkan was the first thing the Israelites made in the wilderness, and it marks a turning point in the Exodus narrative. Until now God had done all the work. He had struck Egypt with plagues. He had taken the people out to freedom. He had divided the sea and brought them across on dry land. He had given them food from heaven and water from a rock. And, with the exception of the Song at the Sea, the people had not appreciated it. They were ungrateful. They complained.

Now God instructed Moses to take the people through a role reversal. Instead of His doing things for them, He commanded them to make something for Him. This was not about God. God does not need a Sanctuary, a home on earth, for God is at home everywhere. As Isaiah said in His name: “*Heaven is My throne and the earth My footstool. What house, then, can you will build for Me?*”³[3] Is. 66:1(. This was about humans and their dignity, their self-respect.

With an extraordinary act of tzimtzum, self-limitation, God gave the Israelites the chance to make something with their own hands, something they would value because, collectively, they had made it. Everyone who was willing could contribute, from whatever they had: “*gold, silver or bronze, blue, purple or crimson yarns, fine linen, goat hair, red-dyed ram skins, fine leather, acacia wood, oil for the lamp, balsam oils for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense,*” jewels for the breastplate and so on. Some gave their labour and skills. Everyone had the opportunity to take part: women as well as men, the people as a whole, not just an elite.

For the first time God was asking them not just to follow His pillar of cloud and fire through the wilderness, or obey His laws, but to be active: to become builders and creators. And because it involved their work, energy and time, they invested something of themselves, individually and collectively, in it. To repeat Ariely’s point: We value what we create. The effort that we put into something does not just change the object. It changes us.

Few places in the Torah more powerfully embody Rabbi Yochanan saying that “*Wherever you find God’s greatness, there you find His humility.*”³[3] God was giving the Israelites the dignity of being able to say, “*I helped build a house for God.*”

The Creator of the universe was giving His people the chance to become creators also – not just of something physical and secular, but of something profoundly spiritual and sacred.

Hence the unusual Hebrew word for contribution, *Terumah*, which means not just something we give but something we lift up. The builders of the sanctuary lifted up their gift to God, and in the process of lifting, discovered that they themselves were lifted. God was giving them the chance to become “*His partners in the work of creation*,”⁴ the highest characterisation ever given of the human condition.

This is a life-changing idea. The greatest gift we can give people is to give them the chance to create. This is the one gift that turns the recipient into a giver. It gives them dignity. It shows that we trust them, have faith in them, and believe they are capable of great things.

We no longer have a Sanctuary in space, but we do have Shabbat, the “*sanctuary in time*.⁵ Recently, a senior figure in the Church of England spent Shabbat with us in the Marble Arch Synagogue. He was with us for the full 25 hours, from Kabbalat Shabbat to Havdallah. He prayed with us, learned with us, ate with us, and sang with us.⁶ “*Why are you doing this?*” I asked him. He replied, “*One of the greatest gifts you Jews gave us Christians was the Sabbath. We are losing it. You are keeping it. I want to learn from you how you do it.*”

The answer is simple. To be sure, it was God who at the dawn of time made the seventh day holy.⁷ But it was the Sages who, making “*a fence around the law*,” added many laws, customs and regulations to protect and preserve its spirit.⁸ Almost every generation contributed something to the heritage of Shabbat, if only a new song, or even a new tune for old words. Not by accident do we speak of “*making Shabbat*.” The Jewish people did not create the day’s holiness but they did co-create its hadrat kodesh, its sacred beauty. Ariely’s point applies here as well: the greater the effort we put into something, the greater the love for what we have made.

Hence the life-changing lesson: if you want people to value something, get them to participate in creating it. Give them a challenge and give them responsibility. The effort we put into something does not just change the object: it changes us. The greater the labour, the greater the love for what we have made.

Footnotes:

[1] On the pleasures of physical work generally, especially craftsmanship, see Matthew Crawford, *The Case for Working with your Hands*, Viking, 2010; published in America as *Shop Class as Soul Craft*. Among the early Zionists there was a strong sense, best expressed by A. D. Gordon, that working on the land was itself a spiritual experience. Gordon was influenced here not only by Tanach but also by the writings of Leo Tolstoy.

[2] Dan Ariely, *The Upside of Irrationality*, Harper, 2011, 83-106. His TED lecture on this subject can be seen here.

[3] Megillah 31a.

[4] Shabbat 10a, 119b.

[5] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

[6] He was not, of course, obeying all the Shabbat laws: both Jews and Christians agree that these are imperatives for Jews alone.

[7] As opposed to the festivals, whose date is dependent on the calendar, that was determined by the Sanhedrin. This difference is reflected in the liturgy.

[8] Halachically, this is the concept of Shevut, that Ramban saw as essentially biblical in origin.

LIFE-CHANGING IDEA #19: The effort you put into something does not just change the object: it changes you. The greater the labour, the greater the love for what you have made.

<https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/terumah/why-we-value-what-we-make/> 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.

Terumah: Great and Grand or Small and Simple?

By Yossi Goldman * © Chabad 2025

Can human beings really build a House for G d? King Solomon himself questioned this when he built the very first Holy Temple in Jerusalem. *"The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this house I have built!"*¹

And yet, the Almighty Himself instructs us to do just that: *"And they shall make Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell among them."*² How are we to understand that the Infinite Creator can be contained in a physical house built by finite men and women?

Let's do what Jews have always done and answer this question with another one.

Why is the Sanctuary described in this week's reading so small? One would imagine that the very first House of G d would have been spectacular. Yes, it was a portable temple which needed to be erected and dismantled regularly over 40 years in the wilderness, but still. It was smaller than a starter home! A roof of animal skins, held together with bolts and nuts, hooks, pegs and sockets. And while it was, admittedly, covered in gold, it was a far cry from the magnificent palaces and citadels of others.

The moral of the story? G d does not require spectacular spires or museums to house His holy presence. Where is He found? In the nitty-gritty nuts and bolts of a simple synagogue.

Back in 1983, I was the founding rabbi of the Torah Academy Shul in Johannesburg. The school had purchased a large tract of land which had previously housed a Catholic institution, and our new synagogue was going to be situated in what was previously the chapel. Many of my congregants asked whether we needed to do any particular ceremony before we could move in.

At the time, Rabbi Betzalel Zolty, a respected halachic authority and former Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem was visiting our community, so I put the question to him. *"Do we need to do anything special to convert the chapel into a shul?"*

His sharp and simple reply? *"Make a minyan!"*

A minyan, a quorum of Jews praying together, is all that was needed to inaugurate and consecrate our synagogue.

And that is exactly how we invite G d into our synagogues and make Him feel welcome. Sometimes we think we must conquer the cosmos to bring heaven down to earth, but all we need to do is make a simple minyan.

You don't have to solve the Middle-East crisis, but you can say a prayer for Israel. You don't need to become a rabbi, but you could attend a weekly Torah class. You needn't give away billions like Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, but you can give a little more tzedakah than feels comfortable. And you're not expected to settle every family feud, but you could smile at your difficult brother-in-law once in a while.

The Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad chassidism, once said:

Avodah — true service of G d — does not imply, as some think, altogether erroneously, that one must pulverize mountains and shatter boulders, or turn the whole world upside down.

No!

The absolute truth is that any act is perfectly satisfactory when performed with authenticity and true intent. A blessing pronounced with concentration, a word of prayer as it should be with awareness of “before Whom you stand,” a passage in Chumash while being aware that it is the word of G d, a verse of Psalms, an act of kindness and compassion expressed in befriending another person with love and affection.

It is precisely the small things that build the Sanctuary of G d and bring heaven down to earth. G d is not looking for grandeur or opulence, but the ordinary acts of sanctity and spirituality, goodness and kindness that make our world a better, more G dly place — a holy house where He feels most comfortable.

Let us make Him our own little sanctuaries and He will dwell among us.

FOOTNOTES:

1. 1 Kings 8:27.

2. Exodus 25:8.

* Founding Director of the first Chabad in South Africa; Life Rabbi Emeritus of the Sydenham Shul in Johannesburg; and President of the South African Rabbinical Association.

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/5824649/jewish/Great-and-Grand-or-Small-and-Simple.htm

Terumah: Divine Tapestry

by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky *

You shall make a Screen for the entrance of the Tabernacle,]out of[turquoise, purplinen.)Ex. 26:36(

The Tabernacle itself represents the realm of total Divine consciousness — the state we attain when absorbed in the study of the Torah, in prayer, or when preparing to perform one of G-d's commandments. In contrast, the Courtyard surrounding the Tabernacle represents the arena of self-consciousness — the state of mind we return to after these Divine pursuits, when we are once again aware of ourselves.

In order that the Divine consciousness we experience when “*inside the Tabernacle*” remain with us when we are outside of it, there has to be a Screen demarcating the two realms. The Screen was opaque enough to conceal the intense Divine consciousness that leaves no room for self-awareness, but translucent enough for a glimmer of it to radiate to the outside. Allegorically, it could be compared to a parable, which conveys an idea without expressing it explicitly.

The fact that the Tabernacle included a Screen teaches us that, on the one hand, we cannot remain “*inside the Tabernacle*” at all times; we must venture out of it in order to elevate the world. On the other hand, we must not cut ourselves off from our spiritual moments completely; we must ensure that their inspiration illuminates our mundane lives, as well.

— from *Daily Wisdom 3*

* An insight by **the Lubavitcher Rebbe** on parshat Va'eira from our *Daily Wisdom* Vol. 3 by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky.

May G-d grant strength and peace in the Holy Land.

Gut Shabbos,

Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman
Kehot Publication Society

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Covenant and Conversation

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l

Building Builders

As soon as we read the opening lines of Terumah we begin the massive shift from the intense drama of the Exodus with its signs and wonders and epic events, to the long, detailed narrative of how the Israelites constructed the Tabernacle, the portable sanctuary that they carried with them through the desert.

By any standards it is a part of the Torah that cries out for explanation. The first thing that strikes us is the sheer length of the account: one third of the book of Shemot, five parshiyot – Terumah, Tetzaveh, half of Ki Tissa, Vayakhel and Pekudei, interrupted only by the story of the Golden Calf.

This becomes even more perplexing when we compare it with another act of creation, namely God's creation of the universe. That story is told with the utmost brevity: a mere thirty-four verses. Why take fifteen times as long to tell the story of constructing the Sanctuary?

The question becomes harder still when we recall that the Mishkan was not a permanent feature of the spiritual life of the Children of Israel. It was specifically designed to be carried on their journey through the wilderness. Later, in the days of Solomon, it would be replaced by the Temple in Jerusalem. What enduring message are we supposed to learn from the construction of a travelling Sanctuary that was not even designed to endure?

Even more puzzling is that fact that the story is part of the book of Shemot. Shemot is about the birth of a nation. Hence Egypt, slavery, Pharaoh, the Ten Plagues, the Exodus, the journey through the sea, and the covenant at Mount Sinai. All these things would become part of the people's collective memory. But the Sanctuary, where sacrifices were offered, surely belongs to Vayikra, otherwise known as Torat Kohanim, Leviticus, the book of priestly things. It seems to have no connection with Exodus whatsoever.

By the Isen family
on the occasion of the 31st yahrzeit
of Milton Isen, a"h,
(Moshe ben Mordechai Yitzhak)
and the 18th yahrzeit
of Adele Isen, a"h (Chaya bas Hinda Faiga)

The answer, I believe, is profound.

The transition from Bereishit to Shemot, Genesis to Exodus, is about the change from family to nation. When the Israelites entered Egypt, they were a single extended family. By the time they left they had become a sizeable people, divided into twelve tribes plus an amorphous collection of fellow travellers known as the *erev rav*, the "mixed multitude."

What united them was a fate. They were the people whom the Egyptians distrusted and enslaved. The Israelites had a common enemy. Beyond that they had a memory of the patriarchs and their God. They shared a past. What was to prove difficult, almost impossible, was to get them to share responsibility for the future.

Everything we read in Shemot tells us that, as is so often the case among people long deprived of freedom, they were passive and they were easily moved to complain. The two often go together. They expected someone else, Moses or God Himself, to provide them with food and water, lead them to safety, and take them to the Promised Land.

At every setback, they complained. They complained when Moses' first intervention failed: "May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us." Ex. 5:21

At the Red Sea they complained again. They said to Moses: "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt, that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" Ex. 14:11-12

After the division of the Red Sea, the Torah says: "When the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and believed in Him and in Moses His servant." Ex. 14:31

But after a mere three days they were complaining again. There was no water. Then there was water but it was bitter. Then there was no food.

The Israelites said, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death." Ex. 16:3

Soon Moses himself is saying: "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." Ex. 17:4

By now God has performed signs and wonders on the people's behalf, taken them out of Egypt, divided the sea for them, given them water from a rock and manna from heaven, and still they do not cohere as a nation. They are a group of individuals, unwilling or unable to take responsibility, to act collectively. Their first response is always to complain.

And now God does the single greatest act in history. He appears in a revelation at Mount Sinai, the only time in history that God has appeared to an entire people, and the people tremble. There never was anything like it before; there never will be again.

How long does this last? A mere forty days. Then the people make a Golden Calf. If miracles, the division of the sea, and the Revelation at Mount Sinai fail to transform the Israelites, what will? There are no greater miracles than these.

That is when God does the most unexpected thing. He says to Moses: speak to the people and tell them to contribute, to give something of their own, be it gold or silver or bronze, be it wool or animal skin, be it oil or incense, or their skill or their time, and get them to build something together – a symbolic home for My Presence, a Tabernacle. It doesn't need to be large or grand or permanent. Get them to make something, to become builders. Get them to give.

Moses does so. And the people respond. They respond so generously that Moses is told, "The

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people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done" (Ex. 36:5), and Moses has to ask them to stop giving.

During the whole time the Tabernacle was being constructed, there were no complaints, no rebellions, no dissension. What all the signs and wonders failed to do, the construction of the Tabernacle succeeded in doing. It transformed the people. It turned them into a cohesive group. It gave them a sense of responsibility and identity.

Seen in this context, the story of the Tabernacle was the essential element in the birth of a nation. No wonder it is told at length; no surprise that it belongs to the book of Exodus; and there is nothing ephemeral about it.

The Tabernacle did not last forever, but the lesson it taught did. It is not what God does for us that transforms us, but what we do for God. A free society is best symbolised by the Tabernacle. It is the home we build together. It is only by becoming builders that we turn from subjects to citizens. We have to earn our freedom by what we give. It cannot be given to us as an unearned gift.

It is what we do, not what is done to us, that makes us free. That is a lesson as true today as it was then.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

The Primary Purpose of the Sanctuary?

"According to the way I show you the pattern of the Sanctuary and the pattern of its vessels, so shall you make them." (Exodus 25:9)

What is the real purpose of the Sanctuary – the forerunner of the Holy Temple – and its significance to Judaism and the Jewish people? Our question is a crucial one, especially when we take note of the fact that the last five of the eleven Torah portions of the book of Exodus deal with the details and precise architectural plans of the Sanctuary and its accoutrements.

Moreover, for the desert generation, the Sanctuary was literally erected at the center of the formation of the tribes, symbolizing its place as the center of the Jewish people. Indeed, the Western Wall of the Temple, and even the Temple Mount itself, continue to inspire and excite Jews from all over the world as the foremost religious shrine of Israel reborn. Hence our understanding of the message of the Sanctuary will go a long way in helping us to understand the message of Judaism itself.

Nahmanides, noting that the commandment to build the Sanctuary directly follows the revelation at Sinai (the portion of Mishpatim is

a continuation of the Ten Commandments, according to the Midrash), maintains that the very function of the Sanctuary was to continue the revelation, to build a central temple from which the divine voice would continue to emanate and direct the Israelites. Therefore, the very first aspect of the Sanctuary that the Bible describes is the ark, (aron), repository of the sacred tablets of stone, over which is the 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 children of Israel." (Exodus 25:22)

Moses even reiterates this notion of an ongoing revelation when he reviews the historical event at Sinai in his farewell speech to the Israelites :"God spoke these words to your entire assemblage from on the mountain amidst the fire, the cloud and the fog, a great voice which never ceases." (Deuteronomy 5:19 and Onkelos ad loc).

This is likewise emphasized in our classical blessing over the Torah:

"Blessed are You... Who has chosen us from all the nations and has given [past tense] us His Torah. Blessed are You O Lord who gives [present tense] the Torah." (Siddur, Morning Service)

The place where the revelation continued was originally between the cherubs above the ark of the Sanctuary; 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, sage interpreters of God's word for every generation, sat within the Holy Temple in the office of the "hewn stone" or the "decisions" (the Hebrew word "gazit" means to cut or decide, to chisel a stone or to decisively cut through a problem). It is after all the function of the Oral Torah to keep God's word alive and relevant in every time and in every situation. Apparently Nahmanides would insist that the main purpose of the Sanctuary 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, it is the synagogues and the study houses – our central institutions of Torah reading, learning and interpretation – which are the legitimate heirs to the Sanctuary.

The mystical and Hassidic interpretations see in the Sanctuary another purpose altogether: 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

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God and Israel, with the marriage contract being the tablets of stone, the biblical laws. The commandment to erect a Sanctuary enjoins us to build the nuptial house in which the Almighty "bridegroom" unites with His bride – Israel.

Hence, the accoutrements of the Sanctuary are an ark-closet (repository for the tablets), a menorah-candelabrum and a table for the shewbread – the usual furnishings of a home – as well as an altar. Everyone knows that it is impossible to establish a family without every member being willing to sacrifice for another: each spouse for his or her partner, parents for children, and even children for the family unit. And if the Almighty created a world – albeit an incomplete, imperfect one – in which humanity can dwell, we Jews must create a more perfect Sanctuary so that God will feel more comfortable with us and be enabled to dwell in our midst here on earth.

From this perspective, the heir to the destroyed Holy Temples is the Jewish home, wherever it may be. It is because Judaism sees the home as the "mother of all religious institutions" that home-centered family ritual celebrations bear a striking parallel to the religious ritual of the Jerusalem Temple even to this day. The most obvious example of this is that mystical and magical evening known as the Passover Seder, modeled upon the Pascal meal in Jerusalem during Temple times, when every parent becomes a teacher whose primary task is to convey – through songs, stories, explication of biblical passages and special foods – the most seminal experience in Jewish history: the Exodus from our Egyptian servitude.

And every Shabbat and festival meal is a mini-Passover Seder. Even before the Friday 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 challot, loaves of bread, symbolize the twelve loaves of shewbread which were changed in the Temple every Friday just before dusk. Parents bless their children with the same priestly benediction with which the High Priest blessed the congregation in the Temple, and the ritual washing of the hands before partaking of the challa parallels the hand ablutions of the priests before engaging in Temple service.

The salt in which we dip the challa before reciting the blessing over bread is based upon the biblical decree, "You shall place salt on all of your sacrifices" (Lev. 2:13), since salt, which is an external preservative, is symbolic of the indestructibility of God's covenant with Israel. The songs that are sung and the Torah that is taught during a Friday night meal 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.

I believe that both views, the Sanctuary as continuing revelation, and the Sanctuary as the nuptial home between God and Israel, together express the fundamental significance of our Holy Temple.

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

“Neither More nor Less”

This essay requires two introductory clarifications. First of all, this Shabbat, we supplement the regular weekly reading with a brief passage from the beginning of parshat Ki Tisa (Exodus 30:11-16). Why?

Because this Shabbat is the first of a series of Shabbatot that mark several significant events on the Jewish calendar. This week, we recall the ancient requirement that each of us must contribute one half-shekel to the Holy Temple at this time of year to help fund the communal sacrifices. Therefore, we read the passage in Ki Tisa which alludes to this mitzvah.

Secondly, a phrase in this passage evokes within me the image of the seventh-grade teacher who introduced me to the Mussar Movement, a nineteenth century social and educational phenomenon that emphasized ethical behavior and advocated the study of biblical and talmudic texts from ethical perspectives.

His name was Rabbi Simcha Zissel Levovitz, of blessed memory. He had studied in the famed Lithuanian yeshivot, witnessed their destruction, and escaped the Holocaust. He reached the shores of America just a few years before I was privileged to experience his tutelage.

I must confess that, to say the least, I did not then appreciate the wisdom that he tried to teach me. He spoke in broken English. He was understandably totally ignorant of the interests and preoccupations of a twelve-year-old Brooklyn boy in the early 1950s. Somehow, however, he was able to leave a lasting impression upon me, an impression which expands and deepens with every passing year.

There was an important fact about his origins that he never shared with our class but which I discovered much later in my life. He was the son of one of the most brilliant proponents of the teachings of the Mussar Movement. His name was Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz, of blessed memory. He reached the apex of his long career while serving as mashgiach, or

spiritual guide, of the Yeshiva of Mir in pre-Holocaust Lithuania. He passed away shortly before the Holocaust and left scant published writings in his lifetime.

It was left to his son, my seventh grade rebbe, to publish several volumes of his teachings, compiled from his father's notebooks, from his own notes, and from the notes and recollections of his father's numerous disciples.

These several volumes, well-edited and enriched by my Rebbe's thorough hand and insightful intellect, have a prominent place on my own bookshelves and remain a cherished source of moral teaching for me. My own interests in psychology help me especially appreciate Rav Yerucham's insistence that in order to be a moral and ethical person, one must know oneself well.

This brings us to this week's "supplemental" passage. It begins with the command that all who are counted in the census must give a half-shekel as a terumah, a donation, to the Lord. "The wealthy must not give more, nor may the poor give less, than the half-shekel..."

Rav Yerucham, in the first volume of his Da'as Chochmah U'Mussar, finds this sentence challenging. He underscores the fact that the great medieval commentator Ramban insists that these are strict prohibitions, technical violations of biblical commands. No matter how destitute, the poor man sins if he does not manage to scrounge for the required funds. More puzzling, the rich man sins if he donates more than the half-shekel.

Rav Yerucham wonders about this. He first attests to a fundamental premise of the Mussar Movement. All Torah prohibitions are meant to challenge our self-control, to test our ability to deny our temptations, to refrain from activities that we desire, whether they are forbidden foods, insulting others, or avoiding illicit relationships. What is the challenge to the rich person? Is he tested by being told that he may not give more? Even the richest of men, unless excessively stingy, would be upset if he was instructed not to write a check!

Rav Yerucham responds by clarifying the psychology of the rich man. The rich man seeks acclaim, adulation, power. He wants people to know how wealthy he is because that is how he can attain high positions in society. He wants to achieve positions of power even if he is totally unqualified to occupy those positions. Consider how many high positions in political and institutional life are filled by those whose only qualifications are their bank accounts!

Yes, argues Rav Yerucham, the rich man is indeed tempted to donate much more than a

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half-shekel to the Temple. He must, therefore, be instructed to control his impulse and to recognize limitations, be they intellectual, spiritual, or physical.

Rav Yerucham builds upon this insight by quoting another Medieval rabbinic sage, Rabbeinu Yonah, who remarked, "The wise must guard his wisdom as the philanthropist guards his wealth." As Rav Yerucham explains, "Just as the philanthropist must not be deluded into thinking that his wealth qualifies him to speak on matters that are beyond his ken, so must one who is wise in many respects not think that he knows it all."

I would go further than Rav Yerucham, if that's acceptable. For his reflections, profound and vital as they are, are limited to the rich and wise. But I maintain that just as the wealthy and the wise are prone to overestimate their capabilities, so are the poor prone to underestimate theirs.

Therefore, the Torah tells the poor person, "You are not as poor as you think. You can earn more, you can improve your position in life, you are encouraged to donate a half shekel just as your rich neighbor is required to donate."

And so too, to those who are not considered wise: the message is that you are wiser than you think. You are capable of studying, of growing beyond what you believe are your limitations.

These are the lessons of the Mussar Movement. To those who are likely to think too much of themselves: don't tread beyond your very real limitations. Be honest with yourself! Know your place. And to those of you who are too humble, too self-deprecating: know that you have untouched potential. You can go much higher than you can now imagine.

I close by changing "channels" from the Mussar approach to a Chassidic teaching of the great scholar, author of Avnei Nezer, Admo"r Rebbe Avraham of Sochatchov, of blessed memory, a near-contemporary of Rav Yerucham.

He sees great significance in the fact that the public announcement that the half-shekel is due is declared just prior to the month of Purim and the month of Pesach. It is at this time of year that we all want to reconnect to the Jewish people and to the Almighty. But for the past many months, we may have distanced ourselves from our Jewish community and may have alienated ourselves from the Lord. With the half-shekel, suggests the Sochatchover, we "buy our way" back into the community of Israel and thereby regain our membership in His people. That's how we

reconnect to the Almighty. That's how we approach the holy days that lie ahead in the coming months.

Not a bad deal for a half-shekel!

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

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)

Dvar Torah: Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Did you know that there are seven words in our tradition for a gift? They are 'Bracha', which means blessing, 'Matana', present, 'Shai', which is a gift.

'Nedava', a contribution, 'Doron', a presentation, and 'Mincha' which is a heartfelt present to somebody in a time of distress.

But the seventh term is the name of this week's portion, 'Terumah'.

Terumah is when I am approached with a request, "please will you contribute towards a cause of great significance" and I respond with deep generosity.

The root of Terumah is 'ram', which means to be on high.

Terumah therefore elevates a person.

It elevates the recipient, because we give it in an empathetic way, never to embarrass, often in secret and it most definitely elevates the giver.

It enhances our lives, to be of a giving nature.

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The Torah has within it quite a number of palindromes. The longest single word palindrome is 'Venatnu', in the book of Shemot. 'And they shall give', 'vav, nun, taf, nun, vav'.

It is the same forwards and backwards because when you give, you receive in turn.

The greatest way in which one can receive satisfaction and fulfillment in life, is through giving of oneself to others.

And the longest two-word palindrome is in the book of Bereishit: 'vayavei leaviv'.

When Eisav brought a portion of food to his father Yitzchak, 'vayavei leaviv', he gave it to his father, again it's a palindrome.

The greatest palindromes are rooted in giving and that is the message of the term 'Terumah'.

When we give, it elevates us, we receive satisfaction, and it certainly makes this world into a much better place.

Ohr Torah Stone Dvar Torah

Do the Mishkan and the Shechina Require Partners? - Yonat Lemberger

The most important structure built in the desert was the Mishkan, the Tabernacle. A nation that was used to worshipping God in no particular place or specific sanctuary, is suddenly instructed to converge into one place of worship – albeit a wandering structure – that contains the holy items and is designated for sacred service.

However, this prominent structure would not have existed if it weren't for the donations and contributions offered by the People of Israel. And, indeed, our portion opens with the words:

"And Hashem spoke unto Moshe, saying. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they take for Me an offering; of every man whose heart makes him willing you shall take My offering." (Shemot 25:1-2)

Both the act of giving a donation, as well as the act of building the Mishkan are ostensibly voluntary, i.e. based on one's free will. And yet, God gives a direct commandment to do both. One might go so far as to say that the latter is contingent upon the former. In other words, the Mishkan cannot come into existence without donations. And yet this wasn't a congregation of philanthropists that was ordered to build the Mishkan. Rather, it was a nomadic people wandering through the desert. Still, every single person had to offer a contribution.

It follows then that this the Mishkan was literally built by the people. Some gave more,

some gave less – but all had a part in the Mishkan.

Midrash Rabbah on Shemot (33:8) says: “When the Holy One blessed be He told Moshe about the matters pertaining to the Mishkan, he said before Him: ‘Master of the universe, is Israel capable of crafting it?’ The Holy One blessed be He said to him: ‘Even one member of Israel is capable of crafting it.’”

From the various interpretations on this portion, and all the more so from the detailed description of the building of the Mishkan rendered by the Torah itself, it is clear that there is a direct call to the people to become partners in the making of this sacred structure. Consequently, the Mishkan belongs to all, irrespective of position in society or importance.

The Abarbanel, in his exegesis on Shemot 25:10, says: “The Mishkan is one example of a place built entirely upon the willingness of the heart. The reason for this being that the Mishkan was built to reflect the whole of the Cosmos, as is written ‘And they shall build for me a Mishkan, so that I may dwell in their midst. According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the Mishkan, and the pattern of all the vessels within, even so shall you make it’, as previously explained. Hence, God commanded that the Mishkan be made of the donations offered out of pure goodwill, not by force nor coercion, but out of a sincere desire to give. In this very manner, the Cosmos, too, was created: by God’s willingness to create it with His great kindness and benevolence, and not by any form of compulsion as some philosophers wish us to believe. Accordingly, emphasis is placed on the manner in which the action [of the building the Mishkan] must be carried out. As is written in Tehillim (89): ‘The world is built upon kindness.’”

It follows then that an important lesson is taught us pertaining to the building of the Mishkan: without a joint effort and a sincere partnership, the Mishkan cannot come to be. This is not a superficial partnership, but one founded upon chessed, loving kindness, and the sincere desire to give. Without this inner desire, there cannot be a true worship of God.

The donations made towards the building of the Mishkan, were not just contributions per se. Rather, they are described by the Torah as “willingness of the heart”. Put more simply, this would mean that the donor feels a deep spiritual connection to the Mishkan; his or her heart is deeply connected and engaged. This is also in keeping with the fact that the Hebrew roots for “bring”, “offer”, “desire” are mentioned time and time again in our portion.

Moreover, the emphasis on the Hebrew word for “heart” [“yideveno libo”] clearly expresses the sincere nature of the contributions offered. These were not contributions made by force, but voluntary acts of kindness stemming from a real desire to take a part in the building of the Mishkan, which is a structure made by man for God’s Shechina, His Divine Presence, to dwell therein. The latter is only made possible if the people building this dwelling place for God feel a true spiritual connection to it. The verse which conveys this notion best of all, reads thus:

“And they shall build for me a Mishkan, so that I may dwell in their midst.” (ibid. 25:8).

The Kuzari (part III, essay 23, translated by Yehuda Ibn Tibon) explains that two conditions must exist for the Divine Presence to dwell within the Mishkan. The first is the fulfillment of all the commandments pertaining to the building of the Mishkan, down to their finest details. The second is the principle which states that “God desires the heart”, which means to say that what is required for the building of the Mishkan and for the Shechina to rest upon it is the “willingness of the heart” of the People of Israel.

The Kuzari also points out that the People of Israel’s desire by choice to contribute to the building of the Mishkan is of extreme significance. For the Shechinah to dwell in the midst of the nation, the People’s inner devotion is crucial. Without this, the Mishkan will be void of Shechinah which will defeat its ultimate purpose.

Moreover, the vessels of the Mishkan and the materials of which it is built are rendered meaningless if there is no desire or intent on the part of the people.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk phrased it thus: “Where can one find God? Wherever you let Him in.”

We might then ask: What is the significance of this connection between man and his Creator? Must the connection be absolute and unwavering, or might even a looser bond suffice to connect one to God?

The Malbim on Shemot 25:8 writes: “And He commanded us saying ‘and so you [plural form] shall do ‘to teach us that each and everyone must build a sanctuary inside his own heart, by preparing himself to be a dwelling place for God and His Shechinah... and prepare an altar upon which he would be willing to sacrifice every part of his soul to God, so much so that he would be willing to sacrifice himself entirely for the glory of God at any moment.’”

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The Malbim’s interpretation highlights the importance of building a Mikdash, a sanctuary for God, in one’s own heart as well.

Our mission, then, is to bring down the Shechinah to our mundane world, and to create an ongoing dialog between the individual and the Shechinah.

How can this be achieved? Maintaining high moral values, engaging in social justice, displaying mutual trust and love for others – these are the things that can connect mankind to the Shechinah. In a world in which people live by such values, purity prevails, and God desires to establish His abode therein.

An educational question that has always concerned me is whether spiritual connection is something we should demand, or whether this should be left to choice, such that those who take part [in maintaining the spiritual connection with God] are only those who possess that “willingness of heart”.

My personal educational doctrine contends that even those who do not feel fully connected but still wish to take some part in the great partnership between Man and God have a place in the Mishkan. In fact, not only do such unconnected or semi-connected individuals have a place in the Mishkan, but the Mishkan is specifically intended for them as well. I will go so far as to say that perhaps the Mishkan needs all types of people to become truly whole.

During this current war we have been witness to deep connections that exist between soldiers with very different worldviews. This is because their shared destiny and joint mission created one single Mishkan within them.

Our soldiers, who come from every walk of life and represent every sector of Israeli society, are fighting shoulder-to-shoulder as one people. They have taught us that loss and pain spare no one, and it is because of our shared destiny that disputes must be set aside at this time. Through their extraordinary bravery of spirit and willingness to sacrifice their very lives, our soldiers have exemplified the very essence of the Mishkan, as mentioned above: Every individual must take part in the building of the Mishkan. Taking this notion to our own times, only when every single person contributes can our State continue to exist.

Indeed, reality has shown us that with true partnership and generosity of the heart, we can prevail and be victorious, because the Mishkan which belongs to all, is part of our shared destiny. Moreover, the desire to give and forge a true partnership leads to the Shechina dwelling in our midst.

As we say in our prayers daily: "Hamachazir shechinato LeTziyon, may He bring back His Shechinah to Zion."

Mizrachi Dvar Torah

Where G-d Dwells

By Rabbi Binny Freedman

This week's portion of Terumah introduces a new concept: a sanctuary, a tabernacle, designed to create a space for G-d in the world.

But how and why would we be commanded to create a physical space for G-d? Shlomo HaMelech asked at the dedication of the first Temple:

"But will G-d really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain You. How much less this temple I have built!" (Melachim I 8:27)

Interestingly, while the Tabernacle is the predecessor to the Beit HaMikdash, the Temple, there is a fundamental difference between the two: The Temple stood in a fixed place at the center of the Jewish universe, in Jerusalem, whereas the Mishkan (the Tabernacle) traveled with the Jewish people without a set location.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook was once asked why a Jew could travel through the Sinai Desert when he might walk on the site where the Mishkan once stood. He responds that the sanctity of the Mishkan was temporary; when the Jewish people moved there was no lasting sanctity to the places where it once stood.

This is in direct contrast to the Temple on whose direct site all the authorities agree no Jew can traverse today.

Rashi suggests that the commandment to build a Mishkan resulted from the sin of the Golden Calf. When the Jewish people felt the need to create a physical manifestation of G-d's presence as a reminder that G-d is with them, always.

So G-d gave us a Mishkan, a place that would travel with us. It was less about where it stood than about where we stood. A call to the Jewish people to create holy space wherever we are. For a nation destined to wander, this was the secret to our survival. The predecessor of the Jewish synagogue.

The synagogue is called a beit knesset, which means a house not of worship but of gathering. The Hebrew word kanes means to collect or gather, as Esther suggests to Mordechai in the Purim story: "Lech knos et kol haYehudim..., Go and gather all the Jews..."

Judaism teaches us we can create an environment of sanctity that can impact us by gathering together, and we create this space not by where we are, but by who we are.

And for thousands of years of exile, we created our synagogue spaces wherever we are, and more than we maintained the synagogue, the synagogue space maintained us. And we learned that what we can create alone will never match what we can create together.

The Beit HaMikdash (Temple in Jerusalem) was designed to create an environment the way it was meant to be, and the Mishkan was designed to teach us that we could start working on creating such environments wherever we were.

This is why the verse commanding us to build such a sanctuary alludes to this :

"Ve'asu li mikdash ve'shachanti be'tocham, They shall make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell in them (be'tocham)."

The verse should have said "I will dwell in it" not "I will dwell in them."

The Torah teaches us that Hashem does not dwell in a building; Hashem lies deep inside each and every one of us; the Mishkan and the synagogue are just a taste of that experience as it is meant to be.

The Legacy of the Acacia Tree: Planting Seeds of Redemption

Rabbanit Shani Taragin

In the heart of the Torah's narrative of the construction of the Mishkan to be read in the upcoming weeks, one seemingly humble material is chosen to form the very foundation of this sacred space: the acacia trees, atzei shittim. Mentioned repeatedly in Shemot chapters 25 and 26, the acacia wood was to be used for the beams, boards, and even the Ark of the Covenant itself. Despite its modest appearance, the acacia tree serves as a profound symbol of foresight, faith, and the eternal message of Jewish resilience.

The Midrash reveals an extraordinary insight: These acacia trees didn't simply grow in the desert by chance. Rather, our forefather Ya'akov, with prophetic vision, planted these trees in Egypt, instructing his children to take them when they would eventually leave (Tanchuma, Terumah 9). This seemingly simple act of planting trees carries deep significance, particularly as we approach Tu BiShvat, the New Year of Trees.

What inspired Ya'akov to plant these particular trees? The Midrash teaches that Ya'akov saw through divine inspiration that his descendants would build a Mishkan in the desert. Rather than leaving this crucial material to chance, he

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took action generations before it would be needed. This act of planting wasn't merely practical preparation; it was a powerful statement of faith in the fulfillment of Divine promises of redemption.

The Kli Yakar elaborates on this theme, noting that the word "shittim" (acacia) is related to the word "shtut" (foolishness). In planting these trees, Ya'akov was engaging in what appeared to be an act of foolishness to his contemporaries. Who plants trees for a future temple while in exile? Yet this apparent "foolishness" was actually the highest wisdom – the wisdom of hope and unwavering faith. Rav Ovadia Sforno adds another layer of meaning to the choice of acacia wood. Unlike other trees, the acacia is known for its extraordinary durability and resistance to decay. This quality mirrors the eternal nature of the Jewish people's relationship with the Divine. Just as the acacia stands firm in harsh conditions, the Jewish people have demonstrated remarkable resilience throughout history.

Rabbi Soloveitchik explains that the Torah details that the planks for the Mishkan must be constructed from acacia wood, upright – omdim, "to teach the rule that the planks for the Mishkan must be cut from the acacia tree parallel to the direction of the tree's original growth (derech giduloh)" (Sukkah 45b). If derech giduloh is absent, the object itself is invalid. My former high-school principal, Rav Eliyahu Safran, elucidates that this was reason enough for Ya'akov Avinu to bring the shittim trees with him to Egypt and not leave them in the wilderness for his children to find on their own. It was important for them to see how the trees grew – standing and upright – so that they could see how they too should grow derech giduloh, with pride and confidence.

This message resonates particularly strongly as we celebrate Tu BiShvat. The holiday, occurring in the depths of winter when trees appear lifeless, celebrates the hidden renewal stirring beneath the surface. Like Ya'akov's acacia trees, which waited generations to fulfill their purpose, the seemingly dormant trees contain within them the promise of spring's renewal. The Rebbe of Kotzk taught that the acacia trees, planted with pure intention and nurtured through years of exile, carried within them the tears and prayers of generations. These weren't merely construction materials; they were living testimonies to the power of Jewish hope and perseverance.

In our own times, as we face periods of darkness and uncertainty, the message of Ya'akov's acacia trees becomes ever more relevant; they remind us that even in war, we must plant seeds of triumph, and even in winter, we must prepare for spring. Just as he

planted for a future he would not personally see, we too are called upon to act with faith and hope in the future redemption. Each positive action we take, each mitzvah we perform, each kindness we share, is like planting an acacia tree – an investment in the future that may bear fruit in ways we cannot yet imagine!

Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm's Derashot Ledorot

Living Up to Your Image

We read in this morning's sidra of the instructions given to Moses to build the Tabernacle. Among other things, he is commanded to build the Ark, containing the Tablets of the Law. This aron, Moses is told, should be made of wood overlaid with "zahav tahor," "pure gold," both on the inside and the outside of the Ark: "mibayit umifutz tetzapenu" (Exodus 25:11).

Our Rabbis (Yoma 72b) found in this apparently mundane law a principle of great moral significance. Rava said: From this we learn that "kol talmid hakham she'en tokho kevaro eno talmid hakham," "a scholar whose inner life does not correspond to his outer appearances is not an authentic scholar." The Ark, or aron, as the repository of the Tablets of the Law, is a symbol of a talmid hakham, a student of the Law. The "zahav tahor," "pure gold," represents purity of character. And the requirement that this gold be placed "mibayit umifutz," both within and without the Ark, indicates the principle that a true scholar must live in such a manner that he always be tokho kevaro, alike inwardly and outwardly.

Thus, our Rabbis saw in our verse a plea for integrity of character, a warning against a cleavage between theory and practice, against a discontinuity between inwardness and outwardness, against a clash between inner reality and outer appearance. A real Jew must always be tokho kevaro.

Now that sounds like a truism, but it is nothing of the sort. As a matter of fact, at a critical juncture of Jewish history this requirement was the occasion for a famous controversy. The Talmud (Berakhot 27b) refers to the time when the Patriarch of Israel, Rabban Gamliel, the aristocratic descendant of Hillel, was deposed from his office as the head of the Sanhedrin, and Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria was elected in his place. Rabban Gamliel had always been strict about the requirement of tokho kevaro: he declared that any students who could not say unhesitatingly that they possessed the quality of tokho kevaro were not permitted to enter the academy. When Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria ascended to this office, he cancelled the requirement that every student should have attained this balance between inner life and outer life. As a result, many more students

were attracted to the academy, and from four to seven hundred new benches had to be placed in the study hall. In other words, the question was: Does a failure to achieve tokho kevaro disqualify someone? Rabban Gamliel answered "yes." Rabbi Eliezer said "no." The latter maintained that the absence of tokho kevaro invalidates his credentials as a talmid hakham, a scholar, but not as an average ethical personality. Even if one has not yet attained this ideal of character, let him study Torah and eventually he will learn how to achieve tokho kevaro.

At any rate, both these Sages agree that tokho kevaro is a great and worthy Jewish ideal.

But if so, we are confronted by a problem in Jewish ethics. There are times when Jewish law does distinguish between private and public conduct. There is, for instance, the famous halakhic concept of marit ayin, that is, that we must avoid even the semblance of wrong-doing. Thus, for instance, the Talmud tells of a man who walks in the fields on the Sabbath and falls into water or is caught in a downpour and is drenched. When he removes his clothing, the Talmud tells us (Shabbat 146b) he should not place them in the sunlight to dry, for fear that his neighbors, not knowing of his accident, will assume that he had laundered his clothing on Saturday and thus violated the Sabbath. Or, as another example, the Shulhan Arukh (Yoreh De'a 87:3) prohibits drinking coconut milk at a meat meal lest an onlooker assume that the law against eating meat and milk together is being violated. Therefore, a coconut shell should be placed on the table to eliminate any chance for such misinterpretation. Similarly, in the context of our own lives, even completely non-dairy margarine should not be used during a meat meal, unless the carton is on the table, thus avoiding the possibility of imputing to us the transgression of the law against eating milk with meat.

Now is not this law of marit ayin in violation of the concept of tokho kevaro? If in his heart a man knows that he is doing no wrong, should he not act the same way outwardly, ignoring others and their suspiciousness?

In addition to marit ayin, there are other instances where the Halakha distinguishes between inner and outer life. Thus, hillul Shabbat, the violation of the Sabbath, is at all times a most serious infraction of the Halakha. Yet hillul Shabbat befarhesya, violating the Sabbath in public, is considered far worse than doing so in the privacy of one's own home. Or, to take another example, hillul Hashem, the profanation of the divine Name, is considered a dreadful sin; to disgrace God is always disgraceful. But to perform hillul Hashem berabbim, to desecrate God's Name in public,

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is not only disgraceful but totally unforgiveable.

Do not these instances also reveal that the Jewish tradition does not always maintain the principle of tokho kevaro? Does it not lend religious support to this deep gulf between the two aspects of every human life, the inner reality and the image in the eyes of others?

In order to understand what our tradition meant, it is important to read carefully the specific idiom that the Talmud uses. It recommends that we always strive for tokho kevaro, that our "inside" be similar to our "outside," but it does not ask us to develop baro ketokho, an outer appearance that conforms to an inner reality. There is no demand that our external image be reduced to the dimensions of what we really are like within ourselves; there is, instead, a demand that we keep up the appearances of decency and Jewishness and honor, and then strive for tokho kevaro, for remaking our inner life to conform to the image that we project.

It often happens that the tokh, the inner life of man, is cruel and filthy and corrupt, whereas the bar, the outer image he projects in his circle and in his society, is clean and compassionate. Inwards, he is ruthless and crude; outwards, he is polite and delicate and considerate. Modern man has learned well the lesson that Freud taught: even infants, apparently so innocent, are seized by inner drives that are destructive and grasping. Of course, our grandparents, less modern and less sophisticated than we, knew the same principle from a more ancient and more reliable source than Freud. The Bible had already taught at the very beginning that "yetzer lev ha'adam ra mineurav," "the inclination of the heart of man is evil from his very earliest youth" (Genesis 8:21).

Hence the Rabbis, contemplating this inner perversity and outer glitter, demand consistency – but in one direction only – tokho kevaro! Do not destroy your outer image; in fact, preserve it through the observance of marit ayin. Enhance it – and then live up to it! Develop a great outer life, and thereafter transform your inner life in order to equalize your whole existence. Those who reverse the procedure, and act with crudeness and vulgarity because they think that this is being consistent with their real thoughts, because it shows that they are "sincere," are ignorant – and worse. There is a certain tyranny in such sincerity which is used as the rationalization for being a bully.

It is therefore naïve and dangerous for a man to act the way he is; he should try to be as decent as the way he acts. It is not so important that I say what I mean; it is more important that I mean what I say.

Thus we may understand the significance of the concept of *marit ayin*. It protects my public image and the social model that I project, and I then have something to live up to as I strive for the realization of *tokho kevaro*. Even as the Ark containing the tablets must be placed with pure gold “*mibayit umifutz*,” “inside and outside,” so too man must live up to the highest ideals both in his inner life and his outer appearance.

Unfortunately, some otherwise good Jews act lightly with regard to the principle of *marit ayin* and dismiss it offhand. Worse yet, some flippantly regard it as a kind of hypocrisy. But this attitude only shows their confusion and insensitivity. Hypocrisy is a conscious misleading of people, an acting out of a role I didn’t believe in. In Hebrew, hypocrisy is “*tzeviut*,” which literally means “painting”; for I purposely and consciously project an image which I do not want to be my reality. I pretend to be what I don’t even care to be. A man who comes to synagogue services regularly because it is good for his business, but who does not really care about religion at all, is a genuine hypocrite. But if one comes to shul despite his non-observance at home or in the office because he desires to learn, or wishes to be instructed, or hopes to be inspired, or if he is confused and he is looking for a way out of his dilemma – then his approach is not only intelligent but honorable. The next step, one which qualifies an ordinary human being as a scholar, is – *tokho kevaro*! It is important, therefore, to build up your image and then live up to it.

To reject the principle of *marit ayin* is to commit three fundamental mistakes. First, it is a reduction of the *kavod hatzibur*, the honor of the community, for by giving the appearance of wrong-doing, I lower the level of public observance of the laws of decency and the Torah in general. Second, it is a diminution of the *kevod haShekhina*, the honor due to God, for by giving the impression that I do not care about His laws, I have committed *filul Hashem*, the desecration of the divine Name. Finally, a flippant attitude towards *marit ayin* represents a self denigration, a lapse of *kevod atzmo*, of the honor due to one’s self – for I have given myself a petty image, and therefore I must remain with a trivial inner self.

But let us take that argument one step further. Not only must I observe the principle of *marit ayin*, which is negative, in the sense of not harming my image, but in a positive sense that I must undertake a conscious creation of a greater image even if it is only in my own eyes, and then proceed to *tokho kevaro*.

Thus, to take one example: In the technopolitan culture in which we live, with its busyness and its glitter and its gadgetry, we

often fail to experience the emotional dimension of religion. One of the greatest commandments in the Torah is *ahavat Hashem*, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God” (Deuteronomy 6:5). But how many of us can experience such love? What does one do if he feels that his inner resources have dried up, that he is incapable of any deep experience or feeling? Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of the Habad movement of Hasidism, recommends a solution (*Tanya, Likutei Ma’amarim* 15): Act as if you are possessed of *ahavat Hashem*, not in the eyes of others but in the eyes of your own self. Live as if you were possessed of a passionate love of God – and sooner or later, the outer appearance will evoke an inner love, the image will create the reality, and by the process of *tokho kevaro* you will indeed arrive at a level of genuine love. Otherwise, we are left only with despair and never can make any progress.

The same is true of one’s social relations. Just as we are commanded to love God, so do we have a commandment of *ahavat rei’im*, the love of neighbor or fellow. Yet this commandment is much easier to advocate than to practice, for what if one has unlovable neighbors? What if one has not the ability to love his fellow men as he thinks he ought to? An insight to the solution is provided by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, who points to the peculiar grammatical construction of this commandment. The Torah says (Leviticus 19:8): “*ve’ahavta lere’akha kamokha*,” “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Actually, the normal Hebrew should be “Thou shalt love *et re’akha*,” rather than “*lere’akha*.” The way it is written, the verse should be literally translated as “Thou shalt love to thy neighbor as thyself.” What does this mean? Rabbi Hirsch answers: Genuine love of one’s neighbor must come later; first one must love to him, i.e. one must act in a loving manner to him, one must play the role of the loving fellow man – and then ultimately he will indeed come to love him. First we must build up the image, and then, by the process of *tokho kevaro*, we come to achieve a new inner transformation.

As a final example, let us take the matter of joy or happiness. This week we welcomed the Hebrew month of Adar, about which our tradition teaches: “*mi shenikhnas Adar marbim besimha*,” when the month of Adar comes one must increase his happiness or joy. A beautiful idea; however, what if I am miserable? How can one command a person to be happy? I often talk to people who are deep in the doldrums, and the answer I usually receive – and a very genuine one – is: How can you encourage me when my luck is bad, my situation forlorn, my existence boring, my life dull, and pain ever present? But the answer of the Jewish tradition, accumulated in the course of three thousand years, is that happiness or

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joy is a state of mind which can be inspired from without as well as aroused from within. If one acts happy, one eventually emerges from under the burden of sadness. Hasidism made a great principle of this idea. They drank a “*lehayyim*,” sang in the synagogue, and even danced, declared that sadness is a sin, and tried to inspire happiness, even artificially – and they succeeded. In a continent and in an age when European Jewry was seized with despair because of false messiahs, because of massacres and political persecutions, because of economic and cultural deprivation, Hasidism was able to inspire the idea of acting happy, and then being happy – by a process of *tokho kevaro*! Create a greater image than your reality is, and then change over your reality to conform to the image.

To summarize, then, what we have said: To demand, as some deluded people sometimes do, that we become *baro ketokho*, that we remake our outer life to conform to our inner life, is to condemn men to the lowest station of humanity and to deny them hope. However, to urge them towards *tokho kevaro* is to hold forth a realizable ideal in the finest tradition of Jewish ethical optimism. Through concern for *marit ayin*, we preserve that image. Through the other means we have mentioned, we enhance that image. And then, we must live up to it: “*mibayit umifutz tzizapenu*.”

*Excerpted from Rabbi Norman Lamm’s *Derashot Ledorot: A Commentary for the Ages*—Exodus co-published by OU Press, Maggid Books, and YU Press; edited by Stuart W. Halpern*



BS"D

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from: **TorahWeb** <torahweb@torahweb.org>

date: Feb 27, 2025, 10:06 PM

subject: **Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg - The Foundation of the Mishkan**

The pasuk says, "And you shall make the planks from shitim wood" (Terumah 26:15). Rashi comments that the Torah does not say "you shall make planks," but rather "you shall make the planks" because the beams of the Mishkan were not made from any ordinary wood; they were made from the trees that Yaakov Avinu planted in Mitzrayim. Chazal elaborate further (Midrash Rabbah, Vayigash 94:4) that Yaakov Avinu stopped in Be'er Sheva on his way down to Mitzrayim to take trees from Avraham Avinu's "eshel" so that he could replant them in Mitzrayim and later Klal Yisrael would be able to use wood from those trees for the planks of the Mishkan, and specifically for the middle beam, the briach ha'tichon, which kept all the planks together (see Targum Yonason, Terumah 26:28, for a different version of this Midrash).

Why did Yaakov Avinu want the middle beam to be made from Avraham Avinu's eshel? Chazal (Sotah 10a) cite two opinions as to whether the eshel was an orchard or an inn, but either way it was a place where Avraham Avinu would invite guests to eat and rest. This was where Avraham Avinu, the pillar of chessed, engaged in acts of kindness and generosity. It would seem that Yaakov Avinu wanted Klal Yisrael to use this eshel in building the Mishkan in order to infuse the middah of chessed in the very planks of the Mishkan, and especially in the briach ha'tichon, the middle beam, which kept the Mishkan together.

Why did the Mishkan require a foundation of chessed? The Ramban writes in his introduction to Parshas Terumah that the Mishkan was intended to be like Har Sinai; the goal was that the Shechina which rested on Har Sinai should dwell in the Mishkan. Before kabbolas haTorah, the pasuk says, "And (Bnei) Yisrael camped there (Yisro 19:2)" Chazal comment that the word "camped" - vayichan - is written in singular form to teach that Klal Yisrael camped before ma'amad Har Sinai "as one man with one heart" (see Rashi there).

In order for Klal Yisrael to experience the Divine Revelation of ma'amad har

Sinai, they first had to unite as one because the Shechina dwells among Klal Yisrael in its fullest sense only when they are united. This is the kind of perspective that Yaakov Avinu wished to instill in the Mishkan by using wood from Avraham Avinu's eshel. When Klal Yisrael would see the planks that symbolize the values of kindness and sensitivity, they would draw closer together and that would cause the Shechina to dwell in the Mishkan.

This idea is also highlighted by the keruvim that were placed on top of the aron. The pasuk says, "And the keruvim should be with their wings spread upward...with their faces toward each other (uf'neihem ish el achiv)...It is there that I will set My meetings with you and I shall speak with you...from between the two keruvim" (Terumah 25:20,22). Hashem spoke with Moshe and rested his Shechina so to speak between the two keruvim. Why specifically in that place?

The Kli Yakar (Kedoshim 19:18) suggests that the wings of the keruvim were spread upward to symbolize mitzvos bein adam l'Makom, while their faces were turned toward each other to symbolize mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro. Both types of mitzvos must be fulfilled properly in order to achieve perfection - shleimus. That is why, says the Kli Yakar, the ten commandments are split equally; the first five are bein adam l'Makom, while the second five are bein adam l'chaveiro. This shows that the two types of mitzvos are of equal importance.

When a prospective convert approached Hillel and asked him to teach him all of Torah on one foot, Hillel responded, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your friend. (Shabbos 31a)" In other words, he told him, "You should love your friend as yourself." The Kli Yakar explains that by asking to be taught all of Torah on one foot, the prospective convert was not playing games. He was really asking, "What is the one foundational principle of the Torah, on which everything else stands?" Hillel responded with the pasuk, "You should love your friend as yourself; I am Hashem. (Kedoshim 19:18)" This pasuk encapsulates the two types of mitzvos that encompass the entire Torah. "V'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha" is the basis for mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro, while "ani Hashem" underscores the importance of mitzvos bein adam l'Makom.

The positioning of the wings and faces of the keruvim on top of the aron reflected this duality of mitzvos as well. Perhaps that is why Hashem specifically chose that space between the keruvim as his meeting place with Moshe, to emphasize that his Shechina will rest on the Mishkan only if Klal Yisrael maintains a proper balance between mitzvos bein adam l'Makom and mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro. It is not enough for them to focus their attention on serving Hashem through the avodah of korbanos and tefillah, with their arms outstretched to the heavens. Their faces must also be "ish el achiv" - acting toward each other with compassion and sensitivity.

The more we internalize the dual message of the keruvim, the more we can hope to merit the protection and the blessing of the Shechina.

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From: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabbiiyy@theyeshiva.net>

reply-to: info@theyeshiva.net

date: Feb 27, 2025, 4:40 PM

subject: **In a Dark Exile, Whispering Trees - Essay by Rabbi YY**

In a Dark Exile, Whispering Trees

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

Rabbi YY Jacobson

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 Moshiach; that as beautiful as America is it is not our true home; it is but a temporary stop in our journey toward Moshiach. 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]

[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: <https://www.meaningfullife.com/prehistoric-cedars/>

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subject: **Rav Frand - "And You Shall Take for Me Teruma" — Doing for Oneself**

Parshas Terumah

This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #87, Microphone on Shabbos. Good Shabbos!

"And You Shall Take for Me Teruma" — Doing for Oneself

When the Jewish people were commanded to bring a donation to Moshe Rabbeinu for the purpose of erecting a Mishkan (Tabernacle), the pasuk (verse) uses the expression, "v'yikchu Li (and take for Me) a donation..." (Shemos 25:2). The obvious question is that this is a peculiar choice of words. The more appropriate expression would have been "v'yitnu Li (and give to Me) a donation..."

On a simple level, since Hashem really owns everything (as it says "...to Hashem is the Earth and all that it contains..." (Tehillim 24:1)), it is impossible to give Him anything. Giving usually implies that I have ownership and I transfer that ownership to someone else. Therefore, when we talk about giving to Hashem, we don't use the expression "giving." Instead, we use the expression "taking." In other words, Hashem already owns everything, we are merely 'allowing' Him to take that which is already His.

In Parshas Vayera, Rav Shlomo Breuer shares a beautiful thought on this concept of "v'yikchu Li." Whenever we 'give,' whether by doing chessed (kindness) with our bodies or with our money, every giving is actually 'taking.' Whenever a person performs chessed, he is really doing more for himself than for the person to whom he is giving.

The Medrash in Parshas Vayikra says, "More than what a ba'al habayis does for a poor person, the poor person does for the ba'al habayis." (Literally, a ba'al habayis is the master of the house, but in this context, it means a benefactor.) When someone gives a donation, the money is very temporary. Perhaps it pays for the next meal. Perhaps it pays for the rent. In actuality, it is very, very finite. On the other hand, a person who 'gives,' in addition to

acquiring olam haba (the world to come), he accumulates something else as well... He acquires that which giving does to his personality, his soul, and his self-esteem. A person who helps another person is taking far more than he is giving.

Rav Breuer points this out the first time that the Torah describes an act of chessed: by Avraham Avinu and the malachim (angels). The invitation extended by our Patriarch Avraham to the malachim, offering them a place to eat and sleep, is the first overt mention of an act of chessed in the Torah. In that parsha, the Torah repeatedly uses expressions such as "yukach nah me'at mayim" (let water be taken) (Bereishis 18:4) and "va-ekcha pas lechem" (I will take bread) (18:5)? What kind of expressions are these? Avraham should have said "I will give water. I will give bread."

The answer is that Avraham Avinu is instructing and teaching his children, "My children, you should know for all future generations, that when you help someone else, you are not giving. You are taking!"

When a person helps someone, he does more for himself than he does for the other person. This is what the Torah is teaching us with the expression "V'yikchu Li teruma." Whether a person gives to an individual or to an institution, he is really receiving more than he is giving.

Getting Our Priorities Straight: Kemach vs Torah

When the Torah explains how the kaylim (vessels) of the Mishkan were set out, the pasuk says: "You will then place the cover on the Ark of Testimony in the Holy of Holies. And place the Table outside the curtain and the Menorah should be placed opposite the Table, toward the southern wall; and the Table should be toward the northern wall." (26:34-35)

Anyone who examines the pasuk carefully sees a redundancy. The Torah first says to put the Shulchan (Table) in front of the curtain and then immediately says to put the Menorah opposite it on the southern side. Any person with the power of deduction knows that as a result, the Shulchan is on the northern side. Why does the Torah need to repeat and reiterate the fact that the Shulchan is on the northern side?

I once heard a beautiful interpretation of this from Rav Kulefsky (previous Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Yisroel). The sefer "Sifsei Kohen" asks the following question: We know that the Shulchan symbolically represents *parnasa* (livelihood), the ability for the Jewish people to sustain themselves physically and materially. The Menorah symbolically represents Torah. The light of the Menorah symbolizes the light of Torah. Why then, asks the Sifsei Kohen, was the Shulchan placed first, before the Menorah? After all, the Menorah is more significant than the Shulchan.

Rav Kulefsky answers, "If there is no *kemach* (flour), there is no Torah" (Mishna Avos 3:17). If there is no livelihood, there can be no Torah. Therefore, first we put out the Shulchan, representing *parnasa* and then we put out the Menorah, representing Torah.

Rav Kulefsky asks further that the same Mishna says, "If there is no Torah, there is no *kemach*!" So what did the Sifsei Kohen accomplish by quoting the Mishna? The question remains, why give the Shulchan priority over the Menorah?

Rav Kulefsky quotes a very important comment from the Gaon of Vilna's commentary on Mishlei. The Mishna also says "If there is no *chochma* (wisdom), there is no *yirah* (fear of G-d)." Then the Mishna says, "If there is no fear of G-d, there is no wisdom." The Gaon asks, what does this mean? Which way is it?

The Gaon answers that when we speak in terms of chronological priorities, wisdom needs to precede fear of Hashem, because "the ignoramus cannot be pious" (Avot 2:5). Simply, someone who does not know anything, cannot be observant. However, in terms of 'tachlis' – in terms of our goals and purpose in life, priority is given to fear of Hashem. In other words, if wisdom is not going to lead to observance, (for example, writing 'chidushei Torah' (novel insights into Torah) on Shabbos while smoking a cigarette), the wisdom is worthless. The person can learn a blatt Gemara, but if he is not an honest person, his learning is not worth much.

The same is true here as well. In terms of chronological priorities, unless a person establishes a viable means of supporting himself — one way or another — if there is no *kemach*, there is no Torah. If a person must go

around begging, he is not going to be able to sit and learn.

But in terms of ultimate goals and purposes, in terms of tachlis, if it doesn't lead to Torah, if someone is just accumulating money for the sake of making money, then the money is worthless. If a person does not use his kemach for the right reasons, it is of no value.

This is what the Torah is teaching: First we place the Shulchan, because "If there is no flour, there is no Torah." Then we put the Menorah opposite the Shulchan because we need the Shulchan to be there for the Torah, represented by the Menorah, to exist.

Then the pasuk reiterates that the Shulchan should be on the northern side. Now that we have reached the point where we have established the Menorah / Torah, we must realize that the Shulchan's only purpose is to be opposite the Menorah. At this point, we need to realize that the Shulchan's reason for existing is only to support the Menorah. Merely having a Shulchan, in and of itself, serves no purpose. We need to have our priorities straight: Without Torah, the kemach serves no purpose!

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

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subject: Covenant and Conversation

COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l

The Architecture of Holiness Terumah

From here to the end of the book of Exodus the Torah describes, in painstaking detail and great length, the construction of the Mishkan, the first collective house of worship of the Jewish people. Precise instructions are given for each item – the Tabernacle itself, the frames and drapes, and the various objects it contained – including their dimensions. So for example we read:

"Make the Tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim woven into them by a skilled worker. All the curtains are to be the same size - twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide... Make curtains of goat hair for the tent over the Tabernacle - eleven altogether. All eleven curtains are to be the same size - thirty cubits long and four cubits wide... Make upright frames of acacia wood for the Tabernacle. Each frame is to be ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide..."

Ex. 26:1-16

And so on. But why do we need to know how big the Tabernacle was? It did not function in perpetuity. Its primary use was during the wilderness years. Eventually it was replaced by the Temple, an altogether larger and more magnificent structure. What then is the eternal significance of the dimensions of this modest, portable construction?

To put the question more sharply still: is not the very idea of a specific size for the home of the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, liable to mislead? A transcendent God cannot be contained in space. Solomon said so:

"But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain You. How much less this Temple I have built."

1 Kings 8:27

Isaiah said the same in the name of God Himself:

"Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where is the house you will build for Me? Where will My resting place be?"

Isaiah 66:1

So no physical space, however large, is big enough. On the other hand, no space is too small. So says a striking Midrash:

When God said to Moses, 'Make Me a Tabernacle,' Moses said in amazement, 'The glory of the Holy One blessed be He fills heaven and earth, and yet He commands, Make me a Tabernacle?'... God replied, 'Not as you think do I think. Twenty boards on the north, twenty on the south and eight in the west are sufficient. Indeed, I will descend and confine My presence even within one square cubit.'

Shemot Rabbah 34:1

So, what difference could it make whether the Tabernacle was large or small? Either way, it was a symbol, a focus, of the Divine Presence that is everywhere, wherever human beings open their heart to God. Its dimensions should not matter.

I came across an answer in an unexpected and indirect way some years ago. I had gone to Cambridge University to take part in a conversation on religion and science. When the session was over, a member of the audience came over to me, a quiet, unassuming man, and said, "I have written a book I think you might find interesting. I'll send it to you." I did not know at the time who he was.

A week later the book arrived. It was called 'Just Six Numbers', subtitled 'The deep forces that shape the universe'. With a shock I discovered that the author was the then Sir Martin, now Baron Rees, Astronomer Royal, later President of the Royal Society, the oldest and most famous scientific body in the world, and Master of Trinity College Cambridge. In 2011 he won the Templeton Prize. I had been talking to Britain's most distinguished scientist. His book was enthralling. It explained that the universe is shaped by six mathematical constants which, had they varied by a millionth or trillionth degree, would have resulted in no universe or at least no life. Had the force of gravity been slightly different, for example, the universe would either have expanded or imploded in such a way as to preclude the formation of stars or planets. Had nuclear efficiency been slightly lower the cosmos would consist only of hydrogen; no life would have emerged. Had it been slightly higher there would have been rapid stellar evolution and decay leaving no time for life to evolve. The combination of improbabilities was immense.

Torah commentators, especially the late Nechama Leibowitz, have drawn attention to the way the terminology of the construction of the Tabernacle is the same as that used to describe God's creation of the universe. The Tabernacle was, in other words, a micro-cosmos, a symbolic reminder of the world God made. The fact that the Divine Presence rested within it was not meant to suggest that God is here not there, in this place not that. It was meant to signal, powerfully and palpably, that God exists throughout the cosmos. It was a man-made structure to mirror and focus attention on the Divinely-created universe. It was in space what Shabbat is in time: a reminder of creation.

The dimensions of the universe are precise, mathematically exact. Had they differed in even the slightest degree the universe, or life, would not exist. Only now are scientists beginning to realise how precise, and even this knowledge will seem rudimentary to future generations. We are on the threshold of a quantum leap in our understanding of the full depth of the words: "How many are Your works, Lord; in wisdom You made them all" (Ps. 104:24). The word "wisdom" here – as in the many times it occurs in the account of the making of the Tabernacle – means, "precise, exact craftsmanship".[1]

In one other place in the Torah there is the same emphasis on precise dimensions, namely, Noah's Ark:

"So make yourself an Ark of cypress wood. Make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The Ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around."

Gen. 6:14-16

The reason is similar to that in the case of the Tabernacle. Noah's Ark symbolised the world in its Divinely-constructed order, the order humans had ruined by their violence and corruption. God was about to destroy that world, leaving only Noah, the Ark, and what it contained as symbols of the vestige of order that remained, on the basis of which God would fashion a new order.

Precision matters. Order matters. The misplacement of even a few of the 3.1 billion letters in the human genome can lead to devastating genetic conditions. The famous Butterfly Effect – the beating of a butterfly's wing somewhere may cause a tsunami elsewhere, thousands of miles away – tells us that small actions can have large consequences. That is the message the Tabernacle was intended to convey.

God creates order in the natural universe. We are charged with creating order in the human universe. That means painstaking care in what we say, what we do, and what we must restrain ourselves from doing. There is a precise choreography to the moral and spiritual life as there is a precise architecture to the Tabernacle. Being good, specifically being holy, is not a matter of acting as the spirit moves us. It is a matter of aligning ourselves to the Will that made the world. Law, structure, precision: of these things the cosmos is made and without them it would cease to be. It was to signal that the same applies to human behaviour that the Torah records the precise dimensions of the Tabernacle and Noah's Ark.

1. See Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, III:54

from: **Ira Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.org>

date: Feb 27, 2025, 9:14 PM

subject: Tidbits • Parshas Terumah - Shekalim 5785

In memory of Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz ZT"ל

Parshas Terumah - Shekalim • March 1st • Rosh Chodesh Adar 5785

מִשְׁגַּנְנָס אֶיךָ מִרְבֵּין בְּשָׁהָה - as we enter Adar we increase in joy.

Over the Shabbosos leading up to Purim and Pesach, four Shabbosos are designated for the leining of the Daled Parshiyos - four special mafotri aliyyos and haftaros. On these Shabbosos, Av Harachamim is omitted and the Kel Malei (recited before Mussaf by one who has yahrzeit upcoming) is also not said. This week we will lein the first of the Daled Parshiyos, Parshas Shekalim.

This Shabbos is the second day of Rosh Chodesh Adar. Yaaleh Veyavo is included in Shemoneh Esrei and Bircas Hamazon. Hallel is added after Shemoneh Esrei of Shacharis. Many congregations say yotzros for Parshas Shekalim after Shacharis; Av Harachamim before Mussaf is omitted. Shabbos Rosh Chodesh's "Ata Yatzarta" replaces the standard Mussaf text of Shabbos. Many shuls say yotzros for Parshas Shekalim during chazaras hashatz of Mussaf. Borchi Nafshi is said at the end of davening.

This Shabbos, three Sifrei Torah are taken out; after leining (the complete) Parshas Terumah in six aliyyos from the first sefer, the Rosh Chodesh leining is read for the seventh aliya from the second sefer. The third sefer is used for mafotri of Parshas Shekalim followed by its haftarah.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levana is Sunday night, March 2nd. The final opportunity in the USA is Thursday night, March 13th.

Tzidkas'cha is omitted at minchah on Shabbos (Rosh Chodesh).

Daf Yomi - Shabbos: Bavli: Sanhedrin 74 • Yerushalmi: Shabbos 95 • Mishnah Yomis: Shavuos 5:4-5 • Oraysa: Tannis 19a-21a • Kitzur Shulchan Aruch: 66:7-10 Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to connect with them as well!

Parshas Zachor is next Shabbos, Parshas Tetzaveh.

Taanis Esther is on Thursday, March 13th.

Purim is on Friday, March 14th.

TERUMAH: Campaign to collect materials for the Mishkan structure and its vessels • "They shall make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them"

- The Aron • The Kappores and Keruvim, from between which Hashem's voice is heard
- The Shulchan • The Menorah • The curtain layers of the roof
- The beams and the foundation sockets • The Paroches • Arrangement of the k'lei haMishkan • The outside Mizbe'ach • The courtyard curtains and their pillars and sockets.

Shevi'i: The special seventh aliyah (Bamidbar 28:9-15) discusses the added korbanos of Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh.

Mafotri: Parshas Shekalim (Shemos 30:11-16): The Bnei Yisrael are to be counted through shekalim to avoid counting the people directly • Only men twenty years of age and above are counted • Whether rich or poor the

amount should be specifically one-half shekel coin • The shekalim should be used towards the Beis Hamikdash's avodah expenses.

Haftarah: The special haftarah for Parshas Shekalim (Melachim II 11:17 [or 12:01] - 12:17) describes the contributions of the Bnei Yisrael to the Beis Hamikdash, in the campaign led by King Yeho'ash and Yehoyada the Kohen Gadol.

Parshas Terumah: 96 Pesukim • 2 Obligations • 1 Prohibition

- 1) Assemble the Mishkan and its accompanying vessels.
- 2) Do not remove the Aron's poles from its rings.
- 3) Arrange the Lechem Hapanim on the Shulchan each week.

Mitzvah highlight: When one performs a mitzvah, Hashem bestows His blessing in a manner that corresponds to the means with which the mitzvah is performed. By performing the mitzvah of Lechem Hapanim with bread, we draw Hashem's blessings on our bread so that we will have sufficient food and sustenance.

"וְיִקְרֹב לְפָרָשָׁה"

"And they shall take for Me a donation" (Shemos 25:2)

The Parashah discusses the donations of Bnei Yisrael toward the construction of the Mishkan. However, instead of the pasuk stating "veyitnu li terumah", 'and they shall give to Me a donation,' the Torah says "veyikchu" 'and they shall take'. Why say that every Jew will "take" his donation for Hashem's Mishkan?

R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains: The pasuk is teaching us that while it appeared on the surface that the Bnei Yisrael contributed their own wealth for the construction, the truth is that all wealth belongs to Hashem; He grants people wealth as a safekeeping, until the time that it can be contributed for a worthy cause, in this case, the building of the Mishkan. When one dedicates his wealth to the Mishkan or other worthy causes with a full heart, he is justifying his acquisition of the money in the first place - to be a reliable agent in allocating it in accordance with its Owner's wishes. Therefore, the pasuk accurately states that Bnei Yisrael 'shall take [their wealth knowing that it is meant to be passed on] for Me a donation.'

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www.matzav.com or www.torah.org/learning/drasha

Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha

By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Terumah Job Placement

The winged seraphs that rest atop the Aron Kodesh in the Holy of Holies are known as the cherubim. These cherubs, the Midrash explains, have the faces of innocent children — a young girl and boy. The Aron Kodesh contains the most sacred of our physical entities,– the Luchos (Ten Commandments). In the sacred box lay both the Tablets that Moshe carved and the shattered pieces of the G-d written ones that Moshe smashed upon seeing the Golden Calf.

The two cherubs sit atop of a lot of history. They also protect a lot of sanctity. So they must be endowed with great spiritual symbolism. Yet this is not the first reference to cherubim in the Torah. In fact cherubim are mentioned at the onset of creation where they did not sit innocently upon an Aron Kodesh. They stood guard to block Adam and Chava (Eve) from re-entering the Garden of Eden after their expulsion. "Hashem placed the cherubim and the flame of the ever-turning sword to guard the entrance of Gan Eden." (Genesis 3:34)

The apparent contrast is striking. How is it possible that the very same beings who guard the sanctity, chastity, and purity symbolized by the Aron Kodesh could be flashing fiery swords at the gates of observer the rest of his life, he also became a strong supporter of Torah institutions."

The speech ended. The crowd shuffled out. But one elderly man remained fixed in his chair. His face was ashen and his eyes were focused directly at the Rabbi. Slowly he got up and approached the lectern. "Where did you hear that story?" he demanded. "Do you know who that boy was?"

The Rabbi shook his head in nervous innocence. "No," he stammered. He could not imagine where the conversation was leading.

"It was me!" cried the old man. "And you know what the Chofetz Chaim told me?"

Again, the Rabbi, not knowing what to say, shook his head with nervous ignorance. "I have no idea," he pleaded. "Honestly, I have no idea. What did the Chofetz Chaim say?"

The man smiled. "The Chofetz Chaim said absolutely nothing." As his mind raced back more than half a century the old man repeated the words again. "Absolutely nothing just held my hand — the one that held the cigarettes — and began to cry. Then the Chofetz Chaim slowly began to whisper the words 'Shabbos, Shabbos' over and over in a sad singsong. And the words mingled with the tears that were dripping on my hand that had held a cigarette just hours earlier.

"He sat there without looking at me. Crying. He felt the pain of the Shabbos. And I felt his pain, too. Just being there with him for those 15 minutes changed the hand that held the cigarette to the hand that would hold up the Torah."

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l used to comment that the same cherubim that held swords as they stood guard at the gates of Eden are not doomed to that position. They can change drastically when they are placed upon an Aron Kodesh. When they are on top of the Aron, they guard it and cherish it. Young children are affected by their whereabouts. Place them as a guards and they will brandish swords. Put them with the Aron Kodesh — let them feel the sanctity and they will become the cherubim we all cherish and aspire to emulate.

In memory of Edith Gluck by the Gluck Family

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subject: More on Seudah Shelishis

Question #1: Double on Friday!

Does someone who eats two meals on Friday night and only one on Shabbos day fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals on Shabbos?

Question #2: Split Feature

May I divide my Shabbos morning meal in half, thereby fulfilling seudah shelishis?

Question #3: Early Seudah Shelishis How early may I eat seudah shelishis?

Answer

In an article I published recently, we discussed the mitzvah to eat three meals on Shabbos, which might be required min haTorah. We learned of the dispute between tanna'im whether the requirement is to eat three meals during the course of the entire Shabbos, or whether it is to eat three meals during the daytime of Shabbos, plus a Friday evening meal, for a total of four meals. We also learned that the rishonim disagree on whether the last of the Shabbos meals must include bread. The conclusion of the Shulchan Aruch and most late authorities requires eating bread for the third Shabbos meal, and that this should be done by reciting hamotzi upon two whole loaves of bread or rolls (lechem mishneh). Both men and women are obligated to fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals on Shabbos, despite the fact that it is a time-bound positive mitzvah (mitzvas aseih sheha'zeman grama).

We have not yet discussed or resolved several halachic issues germane to the mitzvah of eating three seudos on Shabbos. Is there a time frame within which these three meals must be eaten? For example, may I eat all three meals Friday night? Let's say that after the Friday night seudah, Reuven decides to make hamotzi when attending a neighbor's shalom zachor. Or, perhaps, he joined a Friday night sheva berachos for dessert and made hamotzi to satisfy the requirements of a minyan. Upon returning home after the bread, beer, peanuts and chickpeas of the shalom zachor, or the bread, cake, pareve ice cream and wine of the sheva berachos, Reuven makes hamotzi again and has a third seudah. Has he now fulfilled eating the three meals of Shabbos and can sleep (or diet) the entire Shabbos day?

Alternatively, Shimon is invited to a sit-down hamotzi kiddush after an early minyan Shabbos morning. His wife, who prefers to catch up on some much-needed shuteye on Shabbos morning, sleeps until eleven, and then, when Shimon returns from the morning kiddush, joins him for a splendid repast that ends with plenty of time for him to learn with each of his seven sons before he leaves to catch the earliest mincha gedolah minyan in the neighborhood. His wife still needs to eat seudah shelishis, but has Shimon now fulfilled his obligation to eat three meals on Shabbos, one on Friday night and two on Shabbos morning?

Or, an actual shaylah that I was once asked. A mohel had a Shabbos bris to perform that was a considerable distance from his home, and he could not join them for the bris

seudah. In order to daven in shul

and attend the bris, his only option was to leave his home early Shabbos morning, daven in a shul near the bris, perform the bris and then walk back, arriving home on Shabbos afternoon. Does he fulfill the three meals of Shabbos by eating two of them either on Friday night or on Shabbos afternoon?

A similar shaylah often presents itself among nurses, doctors, other emergency personnel or family members who must be in the hospital on Shabbos or in another setting in which they have little control over their schedule. Does one fulfill the three meals of Shabbos by eating two of them either Friday night or Shabbos afternoon?

Rabbi Chidka

To answer these questions, we will discuss a beraysa that records a dispute between the tanna kamma and Rabbi Chidka, whether we are required to eat three meals on Shabbos or four (Shabbos 117b-118a).

The pasuk in the Torah says, "And Moshe said, eat it today, for today is Shabbos for Hashem. Today you will not find it [the mann] in the field" (Shemos 16:25). The requirement to eat three meals on Shabbos is derived from this pasuk, because the word hayom is written three times. The tanna kamma understands that the requirement is to eat three meals over the course of Shabbos, whereas Rabbi Chidka learns that three meals required during Shabbos day, with an additional requirement to eat a meal on Friday night — for a total of four meals.

Proof from a Mishnah

The Gemara endeavors to prove whether a Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma, like Rabbi Chidka, or perhaps like neither. Before quoting this Mishnah, I need to provide an introduction. The Mishnah (ibid. 117b) discusses a situation in which a house is burning on Shabbos, but there is no risk to life from the fire (see Rema, Orach Chayim 334:26) — for example, all the people in the house can exit safely, and there is no risk of the fire spreading to another building; perhaps it is a farmhouse or exurban house very distant from any neighbors. It is also discussing a situation in which taking items out of the burning house does not involve any prohibition against carrying on Shabbos — in other words, there is an eruv or other halachically acceptable way to carry the items out of the house.

Under the above conditions, Chazal allowed removing from the burning house only as much food as is needed to provide for the meals of Shabbos.

In these circumstances, why do Chazal limit how much one may carry out of the house?

The Gemara explains that the concern is that since a person becomes confused when he may lose money, he might violate Shabbos in ways that are not permitted, such as by extinguishing the fire (Shabbos 117b). The concern is that once someone gets involved in saving things from a fire, he may forget that it is Shabbos (see Tosafos Yom Tov). By providing very specific rules as to what he may save from the fire and what he may not, Chazal ensure that he will not forget that it is Shabbos, and he will be attentive to what he is permitted to do even under stressful circumstances. This demonstrates the absolute brilliance and depth of understanding of the human psyche that Chazal displayed in the way they created their takkanos.

The Mishnah mentions a dispute concerning how much food may be removed from the fire. The unnamed first opinion (stam Mishnah) rules that it is permitted to save enough for the meals that he intends to eat on Shabbos, but no food for after Shabbos — not even for melaveh malkah, the meal of motza'ei Shabbos. Therefore, the stam Mishnah states that if a fire began on Friday night, it is permitted to remove from the burning house three Shabbos meals. If the fire started Shabbos morning, it is permitted to remove food for two meals. And if it is in the afternoon, which the Mishnah calls "mincha," it is permitted to save only one meal.

Rabbi Yosi disagrees, ruling that it is always permitted to remove three meals. He contends that once it is sometimes permitted to save three meals, the gezeirah of how much to remove is not contingent on when during the Shabbos day the fire is discovered — it is always permitted to save three meals (Rashi to the Mishnah, Shabbos 117b).

How much can you drink?

By the way, according to all opinions it is permitted to remove as much beverage as you can possibly drink, even late in the afternoon, since a person is never certain how much he might want to drink (Tosefes Shabbos, cited in Biur Halacha 334:1 s.v. Uveshacharis). I am unaware of any distinction made between soft drinks and harder beverages. Thus, although chas veshalom that anyone should ever have a household fire, bear in mind that, within the eruv, you can haul out your entire supply of Chivas Regal on Shabbos.

Tanna kamma or Rabbi Chidka?

In order to understand the proofs regarding whether the three meals of Shabbos must be eaten at certain times of the day, we need to analyze a passage of Gemara. The Gemara seeks clarity as to whether the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma that there is a requirement to eat three meals on Shabbos, or like Rabbi Chidka, who requires four meals. Ultimately, this depends on how we understand the Mishnah. When the

Mishnah permits saving three meals from a burning house on Friday evening, was it discussing someone who had already consumed his Friday night repast when he discovered the fire, or someone who had not yet eaten his meal? This technical question will reveal to us whether the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma or like Rabbi Chidka. If he has already eaten his Friday night meal, yet the Mishnah still permits saving three meals, clearly the Mishnah holds according to Rabbi Chidka that three additional meals are to be consumed on Shabbos.

If the Mishnah's case was when he has not yet eaten the Friday night meal, the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma, since it allows saving three meals and not four, thus not allowing for the fourth meal required by Rabbi Chidka. Since there is no way to know whether the Mishnah's fire was discovered before or after he ate his Shabbos meal, we cannot prove from this part of the Mishnah on its own whether its author held like the tanna kamma or Rabbi Chidka.

A similar discussion takes place regarding the case in the Mishnah when the homeowner discovers a fire on Shabbos morning – and there, the Mishnah rules that he can save two meals. If the Mishnah refers to someone who has not yet eaten his Shabbos morning repast, and yet it holds that he saves two meals, the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma. On the other hand, if he has already eaten his Shabbos morning repast, and the Mishnah permits saving two meals, the Mishnah must hold like Rabbi Chidka, who contends that he has two more meals to eat. As with our case above, it is unclear whether this Mishnah is describing someone who discovered the fire before he ate his morning meal or after. Although it is clear that the Mishnah's author had an opinion regarding the dispute between the tanna kamma and Rabbi Chidka, we cannot determine which way he held on the basis of this part of the Mishnah alone.

The same analysis is germane to the Mishnah's ruling regarding saving only one meal on Shabbos afternoon, a time period which the Mishnah calls "mincha." If the Mishnah refers to someone who has not yet eaten his Shabbos afternoon meal, yet it holds that he can save only one meal, then we know that the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma. On the other hand, if he has already eaten his seudah shelishis and the Mishnah holds that he can save another meal, the Mishnah must hold like Rabbi Chidka, who contends that he has yet to eat a fourth meal. Here, too, we cannot determine which way the Mishnah holds.

Before we discuss the Gemara's conclusion about whether the Mishnah requires three or four seudos, let us note several important observations. Although the berayta mentions the position of Rabbi Chidka, there is no allusion as to when Rabbi Chidka holds that the three meals should be eaten, other than that they must all be eaten during the daytime part of Shabbos.

Now, if the Mishnah is according to Rabbi Chidka, it could be possible that on Shabbos afternoon a person could still have two meals to eat. Yet the Mishnah allows only one meal to be saved at "mincha" time. This implies that, according to Rabbi Chidka, he is required to eat one meal Shabbos morning, a second before the time called mincha, and a third sometime thereafter.

Based on the assumption of the Mishnah that mincha time is before someone has eaten their last meal of Shabbos, Tosafos rules that seudah shelishis must be eaten after mincha time (Shabbos 118a s.v. Bamincha). This is also the opinion of several other rishonim (Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 30:9; Hagahos Maimaniyos ad loc. quoting Rabbeinu Tam; see Mordechai, #397). Thus, according to these rishonim, Shimon, who ate two seudos on Shabbos morning, did not fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals on Shabbos, since he ate his third meal in the morning and did not wait until the afternoon to eat it. Certainly, Reuven, who ate all three meals at night, did not fulfill this mitzvah correctly.

Ba'al Halachos Gedolos

The Ba'al Halachos Gedolos (usually abbreviated Behag) has a different approach. He rules that it is permitted to split the Shabbos morning meal in half, bensch in the middle of the meal and wash again – and thereby it qualifies as two meals, (Shabbos 6:19:2). The rishonim cite other evidence to this practice from other passages of Gemara: one passage that discusses how much chometz you can leave over when erev Pesach falls on Shabbos, and another regarding washing dishes on Shabbos that will be used in the course of Shabbos. Tosafos notes this to have been a common custom, but raises two objections to the practice. First, seudah shelishis must be eaten in the afternoon, as is implied by the Gemara in Shabbos quoted above, and these people ate in the morning.

This objection is deflected by other rishonim. The Mordechai (Shabbos #397), quoting Rabbi Eliezer of Metz, the author of Sefer Yerei'im, and others, explains that the Mishnah is simply estimating how much food a person would usually consume during that part of the day, but not delineating when the meal must be eaten (see also Rosh, Shabbos 16:5).

Beracha she'einah tzericha

The second objection of Tosafos is that the method suggested by the Behag involves reciting berachos she'einah tzerichos – berachos that are unnecessary, since a person is bensching and reciting new berachos of netilas yadayim and hamotzi only in order to count one meal as two.

Obviously, the Behag was not concerned that this practice generates berachos

she'einah tzerichos. Some authorities explain that since the purpose of splitting the meal this way is to fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals on Shabbos, that itself makes all the berachos purposeful. A beracha she'einah tzericha is, by definition, a beracha recited without any purpose at all.

Despite Tosafos' objections, the Behag's approach is quoted approvingly by the Ran, who explains that it is not necessary to fully interrupt the meal; it is sufficient, he says, to bensch, throw a cloth on top of the food, recite hamotzi again, uncover the food, eat another kebeitzah-size piece of bread and bensch a second time.

Gemara's conclusion

Ultimately, the Gemara demonstrates that the Mishnah does not hold like Rabbi Chidka because of a different reason. A principle of the Mishnah and the Gemara is that when a dispute is recorded, this is the only matter in which the two disputants disagree. Based on this, we can prove that Rabbi Yosi – who permits saving three meals any time of the day -- holds like the tanna kamma in the dispute of the berayta between the tanna kamma and Rabbi Chidka. If Rabbi Yosi held like Rabbi Chidka, he would permit removing four meals from the burning house, since there are times that one might need to evacuate the house before eating any Shabbos meals. Yet, Rabbi Yosi permits removal of only three meals – meaning that the maximum number of meals that you are ever required to eat on Shabbos is three!

So the dispute between the stam Mishnah and Rabbi Yosi is not how many meals you are required to eat on Shabbos, but whether Chazal permitted the same number of meal retrievals regardless of the time of day. Therefore, we can demonstrate that the stam Mishnah also held according to the tanna kamma and not Rabbi Chidka (Shabbos 118a with Rashi).

On an ordinary Shabbos, fulfilling the mitzvah of eating three meals should not present any major difficulty or require extensive planning. One should simply follow the conclusion of the Shulchan Aruch, who requires that all three Shabbos meals be bread-based, one on Friday night, a second in the morning, and the third on Shabbos afternoon.

This sequence is halachically preferable. However, we have endeavored to determine what the halacha is in unusual situations. As we have seen, according to most authorities, eating the three Shabbos meals by combining two or more of them into one part of the day does not fulfill the mitzvah. Nevertheless, since there are authorities who rule that this practice fulfills the mitzvah, someone who cannot follow the optimal way to fulfill the mitzvah should still try to have three meals on Shabbos and fulfill the mitzvah according to the Behag's opinion, namely, that one must eat three meals over the course of Shabbos, but the time when one eats them is not a halachic concern.

Next week's exciting article will outline how we observe, in practice, these laws on Erev Pesach.

Conclusion

The entire tikkunah of saving food from a fire is highly unusual. While observing Shabbos, we need to focus constantly on what we do and how we do it. The laws of moving muktzah fulfill a similar goal. Implementing the laws of muktzah requires the details of Shabbos observance to be on our minds constantly.

Creating a beautiful Shabbos entails much planning and organization. Studying all the halachos of Shabbos helps us appreciate Shabbos more, and enables us to achieve maximum joy and growth on this special day.

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Rav Kook Torah

Terumah: Tachash Skins in the Tabernacle

The uppermost covering of the Mishkan, the mobile Tabernacle of the desert, was made from the colorful skins of the Tachash. The exact nature of this unusual animal is not clear. The Sages (Shabbat 28b) were not even sure whether the Tachash was a kosher animal. According to Rabbi Meir, it was a unique, multi-colored creature, with a single horn in its forehead. After the Tachash made its appearance in the time of Moses, it disappeared from sight. How could the holy Tabernacle be constructed from an impure animal? What purpose would this serve?

The difference between pure and impure is similar to the difference between good and evil. These distinctions are true and valid, and it is necessary for our moral development to recognize and emulate good, while abhorring evil and corruption. However, these distinctions are really only by way of comparison. Good and evil are in fact relative terms. On a very fundamental level we recognize — at least intellectually — that everything has some ultimate purpose and value. Nothing can exist, nothing was created, which is absolute evil. Everything must relate, on some level, to the underlying good

of the universe.

This abstract recognition of the hidden value of evil has no practical application, since morality is based upon the strongest possible feelings of hatred for evil and love for good. Therefore, when it comes to fulfilling mitzvot, which are practical ethical guidelines, it is not appropriate to use impure objects.

The Tabernacle, however, may have been an exception to this rule.

The generation of Jews who lived in the desert for forty years was a special generation. Their spiritual achievements were for all times. They encompassed the essence of all future generations, so that the covenant they made with God — and the Torah which they accepted upon themselves — obligated not only their generation, but all future ones as well.

Like the special generation of the desert, the Mishkan embodied timeless aspects of the universe. The holy sanctuary of the desert was not a matter of specific morality for a particular era, but encompassed the expanse of all times and all things. It reflected the beautiful harmony of the entire universal order, and the divine aim of elevating all of creation. It was therefore possible that its outermost covering was made from an impure animal. The Tachash, with its many hues and colors, represented the ultimate value of the many forces in the world, in all their variations. Its inclusion in the Tabernacle, albeit in its outermost layer, enabled an expression of our intellectual recognition of God's essential unity, that nothing exists outside of Him, and that all was created in His Glory.

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date: Feb 27, 2025, 3:35 PM

subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Terumah

Parshat Terumah

by **Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair** - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Hashem commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Jewish People are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard there is an Altar for the burnt offerings and a Laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the Kohanim, the descendants of Aharon. This contains the Table of showbreads, the Menorah, and the Golden Altar for incense. Entrance to the innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, was permitted only for the Kohen Gadol, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone which Hashem gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the instructions for the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

PARSHA INSIGHTS

A Deeper Understanding of Terumah

“...and let them take for Me Terumah” (25:2)

There's a hidden message in the name of this week's Torah portion: Terumah.

The entire Oral Torah begins with a Mishna that asks the question, “When should one recite the Shema prayer in the evening?” It answers, “When the Kohanim come in to eat their Terumah.” If this is the first Mishna in the whole of the Oral Law, it must be that there is an essential message for us here.

Also, why is the commandment to say Shema linked to the mitzvah of Terumah? What connection is there between the two?

Our Sages teach the spectrum of how much a person needs to separate from his produce and give it to the Kohen. One-sixtieth is minimal, one-fortieth is admirable, and one-fiftieth is the median amount. The Vilna Gaon explains that the word terumah is an allusion to trei m'meah, two out of one hundred, which is one-fiftieth, and alludes to the median fraction of produce one should give as Terumah.

But this begs the question: If the Torah wanted to hint that a person should give one-fiftieth, why express it as two parts in a hundred? Wouldn't it be

simpler and more direct just to say one part in fifty? And the word “Terumah” should be a word like “Chadmish” – or something like that. Why didn't the Torah use a word that expressed a fiftieth in its most basic form? The Gaon explains that the essence of Shema lies in the first verse of “Shema Yisrael...” and in the second phrase “Baruch Shem kevod malchuso leolam vaed” - Blessed is the Name of the Honor of His Kingship for ever and ever.”

The essence of Shema is yichud Hashem, unifying Hashem's Name by expressing that every detail in creation – everything - ultimately is Him alone. The Gaon observed that there are twenty-five letters in the first verse of “Shema Yisrael...” and twenty-four letters in the phrase “Baruch Shem....” Together, they equal forty-nine. And since we recite Shema twice daily, each time we are expressing forty-nine in terms of the spoken letters, plus two expressed by the twice-daily recitation itself. The result is trei m'meah, two out of one hundred – Terumah.

The Yichud, the unifying of Hashem's name, comes from the ‘one’ that follows the ‘forty-nine,’ but which we do not - we cannot – count. This we do twice daily. And that totals fifty.

This is a deeper meaning of why the Mishna uses the time when the Kohanim come in to eat their Terumah to tell us the time to recite the Shema.

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date: Feb 27, 2025, 3:10 PM

Hostages Connected to Judaism to Help Them Survive

by **Yehudis Litvak** February 26, 2025

Recently released hostages recall that reconnecting to their faith and to Jewish observance gave them strength to survive the harsh conditions of captivity

Keith Siegal

While held in captivity in Gaza, American-Israeli hostage **Keith Siegal** began saying the Shema prayer, “just connecting with God,” he began on a social media reel. Born and raised in Chapel Hill, NC, Keith had moved to Israel over 40 years ago, where he met and married his wife Aviva. They lived in the Kibbutz Kfar Aza, where they raised their four children. Throughout those decades, Keith did not have much occasion to remember any of the Jewish liturgy he had learned as a child in his family's Conservative synagogue.

On October 7th, Hamas terrorists kidnapped 65-year-old Keith and 63-year-old Aviva from their home in Kfar Aza and brought them to Gaza. Aviva was released in November 2023, in the first hostage deal. Keith remained in captivity for 484 days. For about half a year, he was held alone, in a locked room.

At a rally in Tel Aviv, Aviva described the horrors her husband experienced in captivity: most of the time, he was “lying on a mattress on the floor in a very small room, hungry, with the only food he got being moldy pitas or burnt ones, unfit for human consumption. On one of the days, the terrorist who was with him came over, kicked him in the ribs with full force, spat on him, and called him ‘you dog,’ for no reason, just because he wanted to. One day, the terrorist pointed a gun at him and said, ‘Now I’m going to shoot and kill you.’”

Keith lost 30 kg (66 lbs) in captivity. He experienced both physical and psychological abuse and was moved from one place to another 33 times. He did not think he was going to come out of Gaza alive.

Keith Siegal being embraced by his wife, Aviva, upon his release from Hamas terrorists

Under such unimaginable circumstances, Keith found strength and comfort in reconnecting to his Judaism. “We had a pita bread for every meal, that was the first thing I would eat after I said the bracha [blessing],” says Keith. The blessing on bread was the only one he remembered. Later, he saw a bit of Israeli TV that his captors had turned on. The TV episode was showing good places to eat in Tel Aviv, and one of the people in the show made a blessing “borei minei mezonot” recited on pasta and baked goods. When Keith heard

the blessing, he decided to recite it before eating things other than pita. "I thought it was appropriate," he said. "But it was the only one I knew."

"In that inferno, he remembered that he is a Jew and that there is significance to his people and to where he came from. This gave him a lot of strength."

After Keith returned from captivity, Shir asked him what he would like for the first Shabbat dinner they would spend together as a family. She thought he would ask for a special dish. Instead, Keith said to her, "What I want most is a kippah and a kiddush cup."

Shir was surprised. She reflects that it's especially when our enemies force us to abandon our traditions that we remember how our parents had lived their lives and resolve to follow in their footsteps. In Gaza, the terrorists had tried to talk to Keith about Islam and convince him that it was the true religion. Keith refused to listen to them. Instead, he clung to his own religion.

Omer Shem Tov and Shabbat

Even before Omer was released after 505 in captivity, he became famous as the hostage who made kiddush on Friday nights. Kidnapped from the Nova music festival,

22-year-old Omer was originally held together with his friend Itay Regev, who was released in the first hostage deal in November 2023.

Upon his return, Itay told Omer's parents Shelly and Malki that Omer had begun observing Shabbat in captivity. Though the Shem Tov family did not observe Shabbat fully, they always had a Shabbat dinner on Friday nights, where Omer would always make kiddush. While in Gaza, Itay and Omer spoke about how much they missed Friday nights at home.

"Creator of the World, thank you for being with me every moment!"

Soon afterwards, the terrorists that held them brought them a bottle of grape juice. Itay and Omer made sure to keep track of the days of the week. They saved the grape juice for Shabbat. When they received some salted pretzels, they scraped off the salt and saved it for Shabbat too. On Friday nights, they would cover their heads with pieces of toilet paper instead of a kippah, and Omer would recite kiddush. Then they would make a blessing on a pita and dip it in the salt from the pretzels.

Omer would also refrain from actions forbidden on Shabbat. Itay shared that in the place where they were held, the power would go out every evening at 5 PM. The hostages were given flashlights for their own use. On Shabbat, Omer refused to turn on his flashlight, remaining in the darkness.

As Omer's family left no stone unturned advocating for his release, his mother Shelly also felt inspired to strengthen her connection to Judaism. Exactly a year before Omer's release Shelly attended a Shabbat event for families of hostages, organized by the Kesher Yehudi movement, where she fully kept Shabbat for the first time in her life. "This was a Shabbat I will never forget," Shelly wrote in a social media post on Friday before her son's release². "...On that day, I decided to keep Shabbat. Since then, I have kept Shabbat for a year, and more than I kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept me. And God willing, this Shabbat I will hug my Omer, exactly a year later. It's amazing!"

After Omer was released and reunited with his family, his parents shared that Omer had grown stronger in captivity, despite losing significant weight. For much of his time in

Gaza, he was held alone in a tunnel and was abused, deprived of food, and humiliated. Nevertheless, he retained his optimism and contagious smile.

Shelly publicly thanked God for answering her prayers and returning Omer home. She also expressed her gratitude to the late Ori Danino, who had saved Omer's life at the Nova festival, was also taken hostage, and was murdered in captivity. Shelly thanked the Israeli government, the IDF, and everyone who was involved in bringing her son home.

In his first social media post since his release, Omer wrote³, "Creator of the World, thank you for being with me every moment!" He also acknowledged Ori Danino and thanked the IDF. On the picture, he was wearing tefillin and a tallit.

Ohad Ben Ami and Havdallah

When 55-year-old German-Israeli hostage Ohad Ben Ami was released from Hamas captivity, he wanted to learn how to conduct havdallah, the ceremony at the end of Shabbat. In Gaza, he had participated in havdallah conducted by other hostages, and he drew closer to Judaism.

Ohad, father of three, was kidnapped from Kibbutz Be'eri together with his wife Raz, who was released in a previous hostage deal in November 2023. After his wife's release, Ohad was held together with five other hostages in a tiny room, 6 square meters (65 square feet) in size. He returned to Israel emaciated and frail.

Ohad's daughter Yulie said at a news conference, "My father lost much of his weight, but not his spirit. My father is strong, and I admire him. He survived hell."

"I got stronger in captivity," Ohad said in a social media reel showing him conducting havdallah at home. "I really felt that there was Someone Above watching over me, and I needed to be strong."

Ohad wearing tefillin

In another social media reel, Ohad, wearing tefillin, said, "What unites us is faith in God. On a personal level, it strengthened me and saved me. Thanks to God I am here now, after captivity... Our faith gives us strength at times when we feel crushed."

Havdallah at Beilinson Hospital

After they were released on Shabbat, former hostages Omer Shem Tov, Eliya Cohen, and Omer Wenkert were taken to Beilinson Hospital. After Shabbat, they gathered around Eliya's grandfather, Aharon Rabi, as he conducted havdallah.

It was an emotional ceremony, with everyone present praying for the success of the Israeli government and the IDF and the wellbeing of the hostages and wishing everyone a good week.

The released hostages, finally returned to the embrace of their families, have a long road ahead of them. Undoubtedly, their faith and connection to Judaism will support them on this road, inspiring the rest of us along the way.

1. Aviva Siegel reveals: The terrorist pointed a gun at Keith and threatened to kill him. Israel National News, Feb 18, 2025. Available at <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/404086>, accessed on February 25, 2025.

2. Available at <https://www.bhol.co.il/news/1687186>, retrieved on February 25, 2025.

3. Available at <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/s1oyues5yx>, retrieved on February 25, 2025.

Related article:

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<https://aish.com/courage-in-captivity-agam-bergers-faith-in-gaza/>

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-Shamayim Kis'i," Yeshayahu 66:1-2.) The next two parshiot, Va-Yak'hel and Pekudei, detail Moshe's instructions to the people about the Mishkan and their faithful obedience to the instructions. And since Hashem has forgiven the people and restored His Presence, the Torah returns to using the term "Ohel Mo'ed" to refer to the grand Mishkan where He will reside (the term appears 15 times post-Egel in Sefer Shemot as a reference to the Mishkan) rather than the forlorn tent of the period of His anger.

WHY THE REPETITION?

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

To illustrate with a 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 command 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 Terumah: A Continual Offering

By Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

“THEY SHALL MAKE FOR ME A MIKDASH”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. THE QUESTIONS

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

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

how long it took:

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

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

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

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

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

And these are the kings of the country whom Yehoshua and the B'nei Yisra'el struck on this side of the Yarden on the west, from Ba'al-Gad in the valley of L'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 Shof'tim:

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

- a) R. Yehudah: Menuchah = Shiloh; Nachalah = Yerushalayim
- b) R. Shim'on: Menuchah = Yerushalayim; Nachalah = Shiloh
- c) The school of R. Yishma'el: Menuchah = Shiloh; Nachalah = Shiloh
- d) R. Shim'on b. Yohai: Menuchah = Yerushalayim; Nachalah = Yerushalayim

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

B: THE ARON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C: DAVID’S REQUEST

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

And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and Hashem had given him rest from all his enemies; That the king said to Nathan the prophet, See now, I live in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in your heart; for Hashem is with you. And it came to pass that night, that the word of Hashem came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell My servant David, Thus said Hashem, Shall you build Me a house for Me to dwell in? Because I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the people of Yisra’el out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places where I have walked with all the people of Yisra’el spoke I a word with any of the tribes of Yisra’el, whom I commanded to feed my people Yisra’el, saying, Why do you not build Me a house of cedar? And therefore so shall you say to My servant David, Thus said Hashem of hosts, I took you

from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Yisra'el; And I was with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from your sight, and have made you a great name, like the names of the great men who are in the earth. And I have appointed a place for my people Yisra'el, and have planted them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; nor shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as formerly, From the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Yisra'el, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also Hashem tells you that He will make you a house. And when your days are fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who shall issue from your bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with such plagues as befall the sons of men; But My mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Sha'ul, whom I put away before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you; your throne shall be established forever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak to David. (II Sh'mu'el 7:1-17)

This selection raises a number of difficulties:

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

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

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

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

Why is David prevented from building the house himself?

D: URIM VETUMIM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

E: SH'LOMO'S TEFILLAH

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

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

III. SUMMARY

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

We asked why there was such a delay (nearly half a millennium) 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'nahk – 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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