

# Torah Tidbits

ח' אדר תשפ"א FEB 20<sup>TH</sup> '21 ISSUE 1408

פרשת תרומה - פרשת זכור

PARSHAT TERUMAH - PARSHAT ZACHOR

ב"ה  
Over  
40  
Years  
OU ישראל



## PURIM GUIDANCE FOR SHULS AND COMMUNITIES

Presented by the OU and the RCA

page 44



## MEGILLAH FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT GO TO SHUL

Rabbi Daniel Mann  
page 52

Pre-Purim  
Special  
Expanded  
Edition

# ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה

מגילת אסתר פרק ח', פסוק ט"ז

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT TERUMAH

Candles 4:53PM • Havdala 6:07PM • Rabbeinu Tam 6:47PM

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## HELPFUL REMINDERS:

### Kiddush Levana

7 Days After Molad: 9 Adar/ Motzei Shabbat Feb. 20

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana Until: 14 Adar/ Thurs. Feb. 25, All night

**Ta'anit Esther, Thursday February 25, 13 Adar**

Fast begins (Jerusalem) 4:58am. Ends, after Megillah or 6:01 pm

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



# OTHER Z'MANIM



## JERUSALEM

**RANGES 11 DAYS WED.- SHABBAT  
5 ADAR- 15 ADAR FEB. 17 - FEB. 27**

Earliest Talit and Tefilin -----5:28- 5:18  
Sunrise-----6:19 - 6:08  
Sof Zman Kriat Shema -----9:06- 9:00  
(Magen Avraham: 8:29 - 8:24)

Sof Zman Tefila-----10:02- 9:57  
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)

Chatzot (Halachic Noon)-11:53- 11:52  
Mincha Gedola(Earliest Mincha)12:23- 12:22  
Plag Mincha-----4:17- 4:23  
Sunset (counting elevation)-----5:32 - 5:40

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| CANDLES | TERUMAH                              | HAVDALA | TETZAVEH |         |
|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|
|         |                                      |         | Candles  | Havdala |
| 4:53    | Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim          | 6:07    | 4:59     | 6:12    |
| 5:11    | Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)   | 6:10    | 5:17     | 6:15    |
| 5:12    | Beit Shemesh / RBS                   | 6:08    | 5:18     | 6:13    |
| 5:09    | Gush Etzion                          | 6:07    | 5:15     | 6:13    |
| 5:10    | Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba | 6:08    | 5:15     | 6:14    |
| 5:09    | Modi'in / Chashmona'im               | 6:08    | 5:15     | 6:13    |
| 5:10    | Netanya                              | 6:08    | 5:15     | 6:14    |
| 5:11    | Be'er Sheva                          | 6:09    | 5:16     | 6:14    |
| 5:10    | Rehovot                              | 6:09    | 5:16     | 6:14    |
| 4:53    | Petach Tikva                         | 6:08    | 4:59     | 6:14    |
| 5:09    | Ginot Shomron                        | 6:07    | 5:14     | 6:13    |
| 4:58    | Haifa / Zichron                      | 6:07    | 5:04     | 6:13    |
| 5:08    | Gush Shiloh                          | 6:07    | 5:14     | 6:12    |
| 5:10    | Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel             | 6:09    | 5:16     | 6:14    |
| 5:09    | Giv'at Ze'ev                         | 6:07    | 5:14     | 6:13    |
| 5:09    | Chevron / Kiryat Arba                | 6:08    | 5:15     | 6:13    |
| 5:11    | Ashkelon                             | 6:10    | 5:17     | 6:15    |
| 5:10    | Yad Binyamin                         | 6:09    | 5:16     | 6:14    |
| 5:01    | Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden              | 6:05    | 5:07     | 6:11    |
| 5:06    | Golan                                | 6:05    | 5:12     | 6:10    |

**Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 6:47 PM • next week - 6:53 pm**

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities, 40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)

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# DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



## Rabbi Avi Berman Executive Director, OU Israel

Purim marks one year since Covid-19 has impacted our holiday celebrations. I vividly remember recording a short video before Pesach sharing that this Pesach will be remembered forever and encouraging people to write Divrei Torah and memories to share with their parents and grandparents as we all prepared for Leil Haseder in our own homes. Then, Shavuot came and we found that we were still in the midst of the pandemic. Little did we know the Yamim Noraim, Sukkot, and Chanuka would be celebrated through the lens of Covid as well. Our years are marked by the celebration of the Chagim and Smachot, and with Purim appropriating we mark a full cycle of this alternative reality we find ourselves in.

Last week we celebrated Rosh Chodesh Adar. I find it interesting that even after so many years, each Rosh Chodesh Adar has me reflecting on the incredibly fun experiences of Rosh Chodesh Adar during high school, particularly my senior year. It is customary for the seniors to turn the school upside down, and there is a big teacher vs. student basketball game. This provides a chance to interact with the Rebbeim and teachers in a less formal manner and results in bonding after four years of frontal teaching and learning.

It saddens me that my 12<sup>th</sup> grade son is missing out on this opportunity and that my 8<sup>th</sup> grade son is missing out on similar activities on the middle school level. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders usually run a Shuk Purim to raise money for a fun end of year activity for the graduating class, and he waited years to be the grade organizing this. Yet, like so many things this year, it has come and gone without group activities. As a parent and educator there are different ways to handle the disappointment, and I am trying to impart the lesson that our happiness and adaptability are in our own hands.

Each of us has the choice to make the most of this very challenging year. With the recent arrival of the coronavirus vaccine, I pray that we are nearing the end of this pandemic. For years to come, each of us will be asked “What did you do during corona?” I hope we can answer along these lines – we learned to be more adaptable, we enjoyed time with our families and took advantage of modern technology to connect even when we could not be together physically, we listened to Shiurim and improved our Kavanah during davening, we learned new skills, and we practiced Chesed in new ways.

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The banner features a photograph of a young girl with a joyful expression, wearing a headband adorned with colorful flowers. The text is overlaid on a dark blue background with a white and red border.

In this week's Parsha, Rashi comments that the Bnei Yisrael lined up to give Terumot to the Mishkan. They recognized that the building of the Mishkan was going to be a one time phenomenon, and they wanted to have a part in this unique Mitzvah. They took advantage of the opportunity Hashem provided them with in their generation.

Similarly, we want to take advantage of the unique Mitzvot that are available to us during this Covid-19 year. With Purim coming up, we can think about our neighbors who may be feeling sad or having their Purim Seudah alone and make sure they are the first of our Mishloach Manot deliveries. We can also think about our IDF soldiers and bring a smile to their faces.

Every year, OU Israel runs a campaign to raise funds to deliver pre-Purim Mishloach Manot to IDF soldiers. This year, we decided to take the campaign to a new level and promote it on a larger, global scale. As a parent whose son enlisted in the IDF during the pandemic, I know first-hand how difficult this year has been for soldiers. Due to the army's correct priority of keeping our soldiers' healthy, soldiers have strict corona related guidelines including being given time off much less frequently. After being on his base for 30 days straight, my son finally had a weekend off a couple weeks ago, but our family was in Bidud and were unfortunately not able to see him. Luckily, he was able to spend Shabbat with my parents, but he was unable to come home and we both missed the opportunity to spend time together or even share a hug before he headed back. Hopefully, we will

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be able to see him again after Purim.

A lot has changed since the Purim story occurred in Shushan, but the Jewish people still have enemies that want to kill us. We are all lucky to have the IDF and our dedicated soldiers looking out for us and keeping us safe from our enemies. Ultimately, our soldiers are in the IDF to serve the Jewish people. The least we can do is help Jews around the world put a smile on their faces. You can take part in this Mitzvah by purchasing a Pre-Purim Mishloach Manot for our soldiers at [www.ouisrael.org/purim](http://www.ouisrael.org/purim), and despite the differences this pandemic Purim will likely have, your holiday should be positively impacted knowing you brought Simchat Purim to our brave Chayalim.



Avi  
Executive Director, OU Israel

# TERUMAH



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven Tradburks**  
Director of RCA  
Israel Region

Terumah has one theme: the instructions to build the Mishkan. Moshe calls for contributions of materials. Instructions are given for the construction of: the Aron to house the tablets of the 10 commandments, the table upon which the breads would be placed, the Menorah, the coverings over the Mishkan, the building of the Mishkan, the altar for offerings of the courtyard of the Mishkan, and the courtyard surrounding the Mishkan.



**1<sup>st</sup> aliya (25:1-16)** Moshe is instructed to tell the people to bring donations of materials: gold, silver, copper, woven material, animal skins, oil, incense, and jewels. And make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell amongst them.



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Make an Aron: wood overlaid with gold, poles with which to carry. And place into the Aron, the tablets that I will give you.

The Torah describes the Mishkan as a place for G-d to dwell amongst the Jewish people. How the Eternal, Infinite One dwells on earth is the stuff of philosophers. But it fits seamlessly in the flow of the narrative of the Torah. In G-d's reach for man, He moves closer and closer. He creates a world. Initiates contact with Adam and Eve, with Cain and with Noah. But their sins bring exile from Him: Adam and Eve sent away from the Garden, Cain to wander the world, tower of Babel scatters the people. When He initiates contact with Avraham, it is to pull him close, promising the Land. Then He intervenes in nature to redeem the people from Egypt, splitting the Sea: He has gone well beyond merely speaking to man, rather now putting His arm around the entire Jewish people. Then, He pulls the veil away in speaking with the entire people at Sinai. A place to dwell consistently, not just sporadically on earth is the natural next step. It matches the relationship of a man and woman: initiate a conversation, make a promise and commitment, help and assist each other, close and intimate contact like Sinai and then a home.



**2<sup>nd</sup> aliya (25:17-30)** Cover the Aron with a gold cover, from which 2 angels, facing each other, with outstretched wings emerge. I will meet and speak with you there, from between the angels that are on the Aron. Make a table, of wood overlaid with gold, with poles with which to carry. The Lechem Hapanim shall be placed there permanently.

The immanence of G-d that is inherent in the Mishkan is tempered with excessive coverings. The tablets of the 10 Commandments are to be sealed in the Aron, covered and hidden in the Holy of Holies. Never to be seen. The luchot are the symbol of G-d's communication with us. I would have taken them, propped them up high on a pedestal, displaying them in the most public of places. Yet, the opposite of a public display is done. Place them in the Aron, covered, placed within the Holy of Holies, which itself is hidden by a curtain and where no one but 1 Cohen Gadol, 1 time a year may enter. Only 1 person per year will ever see the Aron, though certainly not the luchot that are in it.

The immanence of G-d in the Mishkan is countered with the mystery of transcendence, the inability of man to grasp any understanding of Him: symbolized by covering the very thing that represents His intimacy, the tablets of the 10 Commandments. He is close; yet concealed. Dwelling in your midst; yet unattainable. Present; yet imperceptible.



**3<sup>rd</sup> aliya (25:31-26:14)** Fashion a Menorah from solid gold, decorated with cups, knobs and blossoms with 7 lights. Make it in the form you saw at Sinai. Fashion curtains woven of tchelet, purple and red with cherubim. These long curtains are to overlay the entire mishkan as both a roof and covering of the sides of the building. They are to be made in sections and then joined. On top of these, fashion curtains of goat hair. And on top of that a cover of red ram and tachash skins.

On top of these, fashion curtains of goat hair. And on top of that a cover of red ram and tachash skins.

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The Mishkan consists of a building that is covered with 3 coverings. Inside the building, in the innermost room of the Holy of Holies is the Aron, hidden by a curtain. Outside this curtain are the Table with the breads, the Menorah and an altar for incense. (Some of this will be described in the ensuing aliyot). This is all covered by 3 curtains. These curtains form the roof of the building. The 1<sup>st</sup> set of curtains are made of woven colored wool with a woven design of angels. These multiple curtains are draped all the way from the ground on one side of the building, up over the top and down on the other side, reaching almost all the way to the ground. The 2<sup>nd</sup> set of draped curtains are made of goat hair. These were placed on top of the first, completely covering them, reaching closer to the ground. The beautifully woven 1<sup>st</sup> set of curtains were not seen at all to those on the outside of the Mishkan. They would only be seen by the Cohanim who entered the Mishkan. The 3<sup>rd</sup> set of leather or fur curtains lay on top of the black goat hair curtains.

These curtains reinforce the privacy, the sequestered nature of the Mishkan.



**4<sup>th</sup> aliya (26:15-37)** Make panels of wood overlaid with gold. These will sit in silver sockets. The

series of gold overlaid panels will be 30 amot, in total, along the sides. One end will have 10 amot of these panels.

The Cohanim were permitted to enter this Mishkan. They would see gold walls and peering up would see the colored woven curtain with the angel design.



**5<sup>th</sup> aliya (27:1-8)** Then, make a parochet, a curtain of woven colored wool with the design of

an angel. This will divide the Holy of Holies from the outer area. The Aron will be in the Holy of Holies. The Table and Menorah will be outside of this curtain. The entrance at the opposite end of this building from the Holy of Holies shall have a woven curtain as its wall.

The Aron was not visible to the Cohanim; it is hidden behind a colored woven curtain with the angel design. They would see the Menorah and Table with breads as well as an incense altar (not yet described).

One could view this as a minimalist home: light, food, table. And the inner private place where He dwells.

This parochet, or curtain, is made of colored wool, woven with a pattern of Cherubim or angels. This same design, of wool woven with cherubim or angels, is used for the curtain hanging at the entrance to the Mishkan. And this same material with the cherubim design is used for the curtains or drapes that cover the entire Mishkan, visible from the inside. What did these cherubim in the design look like?

The cover over the entire Mishkan and the Parochet in front of the Holy of Holies

The OU Israel Family extends its heartfelt condolences to

**Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh & Chavi Weinreb**

and family of the passing of their great-grandson

**Michael Dovid HaLevi Afrah z"l**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך אבלי ציון וירושלים

had a different design on the 2 sides of the curtain. On one side was a winged angel that looked like an eagle. The other was a winged angel that looked like a lion. The curtain that hung at the entrance to the Mishkan had only a lion angel design on both sides.



**6<sup>th</sup> aliya (27:9-19)** Make an altar of 5 square amot with horns at its corners, overlaid with copper. All the utensils, the pots, shovels, pans, and forks shall be of copper. Poles of wood overlaid with copper are placed in rings to carry the altar.

An ama, or cubit, is the length from the elbow to your fingertips. Which would be about a foot and a half, or a half meter. 5 amot would be 7 ½ feet by 7 ½ feet. This altar is quite a bit larger than any of the other objects in the Mishkan.

This altar is placed outside of the Mishkan building that held the Menorah, the table, the incense altar and the Holy of Holies with the aron. The altar is in the large courtyard described in the next aliya. While the Mishkan building was covered entirely, this altar and courtyard area is open to the sky.



**7<sup>th</sup> aliya (27:9-19)** Make curtains of fine white linen for the Courtyard surrounding the Mishkan. The curtains shall hang from poles. The Courtyard shall be 100 amot long by 50 amot wide. The curtain at the entrance of the courtyard shall be of colorful woven wool.

The structure, the static structure of

the Mishkan is complete. There is rich symbolism in the Aron, the Table, the Menorah, the Altar, none of which we discussed. Our emphasis was on the tension inherent in an earthly place of contact between man and G-d. And that this tension is conveyed through the coverings, a symbolic way to convey a message of the sublime, mysterious, hidden, ineffable experience of the Divine contact with the earthly.

---

## MAFTIR

### PARSHAT ZACHOR

#### DEVARIM 25:17-19

---

The Shabbat before Purim we read Parshat Zachor. The verse says to remember what Amalek did, attacking the weak amongst you when you were tired and not fearing G-d. The word remember is taken to be a Mitzvah not just good advice. The reading of these 3 verses fulfils that requirement to recount what Amalek did at least once a year. ■

## STATS

19th of 54 sedras; 7th of 11 in Sh'mot  
Written on 154.8 lines in a Torah (43rd)  
9 Parshiyot; 4 open, 5 closed  
96 p'sukim - ranks 38 (9th in Sh'mot)  
1145 words - ranks 45 (10th in Sh'mot)  
4692 letters - ranks 41 (9th in Sh'mot)  
T'ruma is a short sedra with very short p'sukim

## MITZVOT

3 mitzvot; 2 positive, 1 prohibition  
One of the mitzvot *asei* in the sedra is a super-mitzvah, in that it includes the many commands to make all the furnishings of the Mikdash. Further, the fulfillment of this mitzvah facilitates many others.

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## HAFTORAH

### PARSHAT ZACHOR

#### 1 SHMUEL 15:2-34

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This week's special *haftorah* highlights the theme of the Almighty's command to destroy the people of Amalek. This echoes the subject matter found in the Torah reading of Amalek's unprovoked attack on the Israelites as the Israelites traveled in the wilderness and our eternal responsibility to avenge this horrendous crime.

Shmuel addresses King Shaul and commands him to wage battle against the Amalekites, and leave no survivors - neither humans or beasts. The army of Israel kills the entire population with the exception of the king, Agag, and they also spare the best of the cattle and sheep.

God then conveys the following message to Shmuel: "I regret that I have made Shaul king." God says, "For he has turned his back from following Me, and has not fulfilled My words."

Shaul admits that he had transgressed and then invites the prophet to join him in his return home. Shmuel refuses his offer. "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you, today; and has given it to your fellow who is better than you." Shmuel then kills the Amalekite king. ■

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IN THE PARSHA

## Happy and Proud of its Many Colors

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

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

“Blue-processed skins—others have ‘black leather;’ that is, leather worked in such a manner as to come out dark and waterproof. Other sources identify *tachash* as a species of animal. Some say that it is the ermine, a member of the weasel family. Others state that it is a member of the badger family... Others say that it is a colorful one-horned animal known as a *keresh*. Some say that this is a species of wild ram, possibly an antelope, okapi, or giraffe. Some see the

one-horned creature as the narwhal, which has its left tooth developed into a single long horn-like appendage. This animal, which can grow to be over 16 feet long, is occasionally found on the southern Sinai shores... In Arabic, *tukhush* denotes the sea cow or dugong, an aquatic mammal which is found on the shores of the Sinai. Some say that the *tachash* is a type of seal, since its skins were used for the Tabernacle’s roof, and seal skins are often used for this purpose.”

Suffice it to say that whatever the true identity of the *tachash*, it was such a multifaceted creature or object that it couldn’t be definitively identified by anyone who hadn’t actually seen it.

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

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

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

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

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

Eventually, I was fortunate to be blessed

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with educators who were more colorful and were able to draw from a wider scope of sources and areas of human experience.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Named for ancestors who were called *Avraham Yehoshua*, and known informally as *Reb Shia*, he was a *chasid* in every sense of that often misused term. He was pious, devout, and meticulously observant of every ritual and every minor custom. He

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was a *chasid* in his dress, on the Sabbath and festivals and on every day of the week. He knew Hasidic tales and knew how to tell stories in an inimitable fashion and in a manner designed to reach the hearts and souls of every audience he addressed.

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

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

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

collaborated with the cartoonist himself, Charles Shultz.

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

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

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

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

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

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

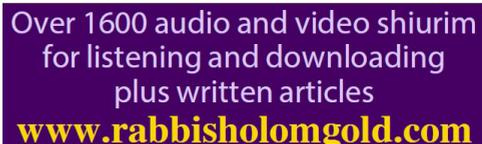


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## The Home We Build Together

The sequence of parashot that begins with *Terumah*, and continues *Tetzaveh*, *Ki Tissa*, *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei*, is puzzling in many ways. First, it outlines the construction of the Tabernacle (Mishkan), the portable House of Worship the Israelites built and carried with them through the desert, in exhaustive and exhausting detail. The narrative takes almost the whole of the last third of the book of Exodus. Why so long? Why such detail? The Tabernacle was, after all, only a temporary home for the Divine Presence, eventually superseded by the Temple in Jerusalem.

Besides which, why is the making of the

Mishkan in the book of Exodus at all? Its natural place seems to be in the book of *Vayikra*, which is overwhelmingly devoted to an account of the service of the Mishkan and the sacrifices that were offered there. The book of Exodus, by contrast, could be subtitled, “the birth of a nation”. It is about the transition of the Israelites from a family to a people and their journey from slavery to freedom. It rises to a climax with the covenant made between God and the people at Mount Sinai. What has the Tabernacle to do with this? It seems an odd way to end the book.

The answer, it seems to me, is profound. First, recall the history of the Israelites until now. It has been a long series of complaints. They complained when the first intervention by Moses made their situation worse. Then, at the Red Sea, 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).

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After crossing the sea they continued to complain, first about the lack of water, then that the water was bitter, then at the lack of food, then again about the lack of water. Then, within weeks of the revelation at Sinai – the only time in history God appeared to an entire nation – they made a Golden Calf. If an unprecedented sequence of miracles cannot bring about a mature response on the part of the people, what will?

It is then that God said: *Let them build something together.* This simple command transformed the Israelites. During the whole construction of the Tabernacle there were no complaints. The entire people contributed - some gold, silver, or bronze, some brought skins and drapes, others gave their time and skill. They gave so much that Moses had to order them to stop. A remarkable proposition is being framed here: *It is not what God does for us that transforms us. It is what we do for God.*

So long as every crisis was dealt with by Moses and miracles, the Israelites remained in a state of dependency. Their default response was to complain. In order for them to reach adulthood and responsibility, there had to be a transition from passive recipients of God's blessings to active creators. The people had to become God's "partners in the work of creation" (Shabbat 10a). That, I believe, is what the Sages meant when they said, "Call them not 'your children' but 'your builders'" (Brachot 64a). People have to become builders if they are to grow from childhood to adulthood.

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Judaism is God's call to responsibility. He does not want us to rely on miracles. He does not want us to be dependent on others. He wants us to become His partners, recognising that what we have, we have from Him, but what we make of what we have is up to us, our choices and our effort. This is not an easy balance to achieve. It is easy to live a life of dependency. It is equally easy in the opposite direction to slip into the mistake of saying "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me" (Deut. 8:17). The Jewish view of the human condition is that everything we achieve is due to our own efforts, but equally and essentially the result of God's blessing.

The building of the Tabernacle was the first great project the Israelites undertook together. It involved their generosity and skill. It gave them the chance to give back to God a little of what He had given them. It conferred on them the dignity of labour and creative endeavour. It brought to closure their birth as a nation and it symbolised the challenge of the future. The society they were summoned to create in the land of Israel would be one in which everyone would play their part. It was to become – in the phrase I have used as the title of one of my books – "the home we build together."<sup>1</sup>

From this we see that one of the greatest challenges of leadership is to give people the chance to give, to contribute, to

participate. That requires self-restraint, *tzimtzum*, on the part of the leader, creating the space for others to lead. As the saying goes: A leader is best when people barely need to acknowledge him. When his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: 'we did it ourselves.'<sup>2</sup>

This brings us to the fundamental distinction in politics between State and Society. The state represents what is *done for us* by the machinery of government, through the instrumentality of laws, courts, taxation and public spending. Society is what we *do for one another* through communities, voluntary associations, charities and welfare organisations. Judaism, I believe, has a marked preference for society rather than state, precisely because it recognises – and this is the central theme of the book of Exodus – that it is what we do for others, not what others or God does for us, that transforms us. The Jewish formula, I believe, is: small state, big society.

The person who had the deepest insight into the nature of democratic society was Alexis de Tocqueville. Visiting America in the 1830s, he saw that its strength lay in what he called the "art of association", the tendency of Americans to come together in communities and voluntary groups to help one another, rather than leaving the task to a centralised government. Were it ever to be otherwise, were individuals to depend wholly on the state, then democratic freedom would be at risk.

In one of the most haunting passages of his masterwork, *Democracy in America*,

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2 Attributed to Lao-Tsu.

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1 Jonathan Sacks, *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2009).

he says that democracies are at risk of a completely new form of oppression for which there is no precedent in the past. It will happen, he says, when people exist solely in and for themselves, leaving the pursuit of the common good to the government. This would then be what life would be like:

Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood: it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labours, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness; it provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances: what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living?<sup>3</sup>

Tocqueville wrote these words almost 200 years ago, and there is a risk that this is happening to some European societies

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3 Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, abridged and with an introduction by Thomas Bender (The Modern Library, New York, 1981), 584.



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today: all state, no society; all government, little or no community.<sup>4</sup> Tocqueville was not a religious writer. He makes no reference to the Hebrew Bible. But the fear he has is precisely what the book of Exodus documents. When a central power – even when this is God Himself – does everything on behalf of the people, they remain in a state of arrested development. They complain instead of acting. They give way easily to despair. When the leader, in this case Moses, is missing, they do foolish things, none more so than making a Golden Calf.

There is only one solution: to make the people co-architects of their own destiny,

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*4 This is not to imply that there is no role for governments; that all should be left to voluntary associations. Far from it. There are things—from the rule of law to the defence of the realm to the enforcement of ethical standards and the creation of an equitable distribution of the goods necessary for a dignified existence – that only governments can achieve. The issue is balance.*

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to get them to build something together, to shape them into a team and show them that they are not helpless, that they are responsible and capable of collaborative action. Genesis begins with God creating the universe as a home for human beings. Exodus ends with human beings creating the Mishkan, as a ‘home’ for God.

Hence the basic principle of Judaism, that we are called on to become co-creators with God. And hence, too, the corollary: that leaders do not do the work on behalf of the people. They teach people how to do the work themselves. **It is not what God does for us but what we do for God that allows us to reach dignity and responsibility.** ■

#### Questions (Around The Shabbat Table)

- What are the main themes and messages you have found so far in the book of Shemot?
- Can you think of new ways that your community could unite to build something together?
- Making the Golden Calf was also a project that united the people in a creative goal. Why was this so problematic?

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*These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt”l are part of the ‘Covenant & Conversation’ series on the weekly Torah reading. Read more on [www.rabbisacks.org](http://www.rabbisacks.org).*

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## **THE PROPHETS**

“Baruch ata LaShem – hakimoti et d’var Hashem.” After returning from his battle against the Amalekite people, King Shaul greets the navi Shmuel with these words, expressing to the prophet that he had fulfilled Hashem’s command and had destroyed Amalek, as he had been told. To which the prophet responds: “Lama LO shama’ta b’kol Hashem?” – “Why did you NOT listen to G-d’s command?” And it is this simple difference of opinion which will help us comprehend one of the most difficult narratives in all of Tanach.

Year after year, each time we read this special haftarah for Shabbat Zachor, a selection found in the 14<sup>th</sup> perek of Sefer Shmuel A, we attempt to understand two morally troubling messages from Hashem that were relayed to King Shaul by Shmuel HaNavi. These directives are especially difficult for a modern society to accept at face value. After all, how can we understand the command to utterly destroy an entire nation-men, women and children- as well as all cattle and livestock? Ironic (or hypocritical) as we might think

it is to see a generation that passively watched while one third of our nation was murdered, now shriek in horror at the very idea of committing genocide, the question is a valid one-and the reaction is as well. It is valid question, because it is a fair one, regardless of who asks it, and it is a valid reaction because a new generation, one brought up in the shadow of the Holocaust, one that (hopefully) learned of its horror, should certainly react in shock and disbelief.

In the past, I have discussed with you the evil of Amalek, an evil that continued throughout generations, an evil that saw them attack the weak, plunder the defenseless and enslave kidnapped women and children. Yes, we may still be puzzled at the harshness of the reaction of a merciful G-d, but as believers, ma’aminim b’nei ma’aminim, we accept the decision of the All-Knowing One as One Who knows more than we do. (I remember my earliest questioning of G-d, wondering why, on Yom Kippur, G-d wanted me to publicly walk in the street wearing my best suit, a starched shirt, a new tie and SNEAKERS?? – but, if Hashem wanted it then...). But the next question that should disturb us is somewhat different.

The second troubling message delivered to Shaul was that, due to his failure to TOTALLY destroy Amalek he had forfeited

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the right to lead the nation of Israel and, therefore, would be replaced by another. Additionally, we should remember that by losing the throne-the dynasty- he would also lose his sons – three of his four sons died with him in his final war!! But WHY?? Consider: the king gathered an army, led them into war and risked his life to fulfill Hashem's mitzvah! He killed all of the population and almost all of the animals, "...hakimoti et d'var Hashem" – no wonder he proudly told Shmuel "I have fulfilled G-d's command"!!! Why should he have deserved to lose the throne and the future dynasty he should have built??

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## Morality is established by Hashem's standards – not by man's preferences

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I would submit that Shaul's failure to destroy everything was a sin worse than having ignored G-d's command completely. After all, what possible moral justification could one have for wiping out a people? None....except the same justification for going outside on Yom Kippur in formal wear and canvas sneakers.

It was G-d's command!!

Nothing else could justify such an extreme act. And if that was NOT Shaul's only reason, then he is regarded simply as a murderer. Had Shaul ignored G-d's demand he would have been punished as a sinner. But once he wiped out all of the children, all of the women and all of the men (save the king Agag) but kept the best quality livestock, it was clear that his actions were not based upon a Divine command alone and, if so, there was no justification to act as he did. In the end, morality is established by Hashem's standards – not by man's preferences.

Shaul believed that he had fulfilled G-d's command; Shmuel rightfully told him that he did not. But the prophet did not base his response upon the fact that Shaul spared the Amalekite king and some high-quality animals. Remarkably, the navi was teaching him that, by sparing lives, he became a murderer!!

How brilliantly do Chazal comment on Shaul's destruction of Nov, the city of Kohanim, that one who shows mercy the truly guilty will, eventually, show cruelty to the truly innocent! ■

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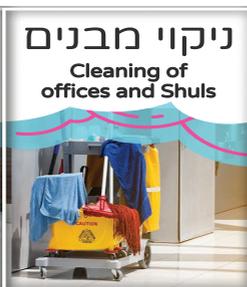
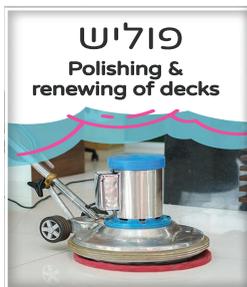
# Communal Service is Supreme

In the introduction to the *Ein Yaakov*, there is a well-known midrash that records a three-way dispute among *tanna'im*. They argue over which *pasuk* of the Torah is most comprehensive and all-inclusive. Ben Zoma suggests the *pasuk* of “*Shema Yisrael*. Ben Nanas suggests, “*v’ahavta l’reacha kamocho*.” But then, Ben Pazi suggests a *pasuk* that describes the *korban tamid*: “*es hakeves ha’ehad ta’aseh baboker, v’es hakeves hasheni ta’ase bein ha’arbayim*”. The midrash ends with a statement that Rav Ploni stood up and declared the dispute to be resolved in favor of Ben Pazi, based on a *pasuk* from our parsha “*kechol asher ani mareh oscha es tavnis hamishk-*

*kan v’es tavnis kol keilav v’chen ta’asu*”.

This is somewhat puzzling. It is easy to understand why *Shema* would be suggested, as it was the last words uttered by several martyrs throughout Jewish history. It is quite easy to understand why “*ve’ahavta lere’ekha kamokha*“ would be suggested, as it encompasses the essence of interpersonal mitzvot. The third *pasuk*, about the *korban tamid*, seems to pale next to the first two choices – let alone be declared superior!

The significance of the *korban tamid*, as its name implies, lies in its constancy and consistency. It is the same sacrifice that we offer each morning and evening. It symbolizes the way we are required to approach our *avodas Hashem*. We must act in a consistent, persistent, and unrelenting manner. This is indeed an important lesson derived from this Midrash. Yet, let's focus on the last statement. How does the *pasuk*



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from our parsha (referring to the building of the Mishkan), prove that the verse relating to the korban tamid is of greatest significance?

The Kesav Sofer suggests as follows. The first pasuk referenced, Shema Yisrael, relates to one's obligation to inspire others. The pasuk does not just declare "Hashem Elokenu" – rather it begins with "Shema Yisrael" – all of Israel should hear. This highlights one's obligation to not just be inspired but to spread the flame and spark the inspiration in others.

The second pasuk, references – loving one's neighbor. It is not enough to inspire another spiritually, one must be there for others in times of celebration and in the most challenging times. To feel the pain and happiness of others and to offer assistance and comfort.

The third pasuk, referencing the korban tamid, reflects a communal sacrifice that was offered on behalf of each individual. The highest level of avodas Hashem is serving Hashem together as a people. That combines the previous two ideas represented by the *Shema Yisrael* and *v'ahavta l'reacha kamocho*.

The proof offered by Rav Ploni from the pasuk in our parsha underscores that serving Hashem together is the ideal. Just as Am Yisrael joined together to build the Mishkan- "v'chen ta'asu" - so too in the future, we should always gather together and worship Hashem in a unified manner. Communal service is the ideal. May we be *zoche* to return to our *Mikdash me'at*, and once again serve Hashem *brov am*. ■

כ"ט



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# Angelic Archetypes

Although the *keruvim* were not seen by the masses, they featured prominently adorning the *aron*, the holy ark in the *Kodesh Hakadoshim*. Chazal describe them as having the form of two children, male and female with angelic qualities. We are familiar with Chazal's teaching – when the Jews did the will of Hashem the *keruvim* faced each other; when they did otherwise, the *keruvim* faced in opposite directions. Additionally, their wings extended upwards towards heaven. Why were these figures chosen to grace the *aron* and what can we learn from them?

Rabbi Grossbard in *Da'at Shraga* explains that the imagery of children reflects pure faith. A child in his innocence relies completely and unquestionably on his

parents. We can model this behavior, taking this level of faith beyond the intellectual purview to affect our daily actions, thus meriting Hashem's protection and Divine influence in our lives.

Another special attribute of a child is his quest for knowledge, notes Rabbi Roberts in *Prism of Torah*. A child is always exploring, experimenting, and continually growing. The *keruvim* spread their wings upwards, a sign of growth and aspiration to reach spiritual heights. It is Yaakov Avinu who models this concept. The name Yaakov comes from the word *ekev*, heel. This expresses the mindset to constantly develop and learn, moving from the bottom upwards. Yaakov's polar opposite is his twin brother Eisav, whose name derives from the word *asui*, ready-made. Eisav reflects a life of complacency, devoid of movement. Contrarily, a Torah Jew strives for perpetual growth and elevation.



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It is further significant, Rav Sorotzkin points out, that the *keruvim* were made from the same piece of gold that fashioned the *aron*. Creating a foundation that will allow children to flourish and live a life of Torah must begin even when they are infants. When babies see mitzvot performed, the experience becomes embedded in their psyche forging the bedrock of their identity.

As we mentioned, the *keruvim* faced each other when *Am Yisrael* did the will of Hashem. Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch in *Tiv HaTorah* explains that facing each other **is itself** the will of Hashem. The majority of the 48 ways to acquire Torah involve interpersonal relationships. One cannot reach great heights in Torah living in isolation. Rather it is when facing one another, reaching out to get involved in the needs of one another, that one can achieve spiritual greatness. Rav Sternbach in *Ta'am Vadaat* adds that one always must be ready to face another, to extend oneself in chessed for another. Indeed, this connection, feeling *beachdut*, is the greatest 'will of Hashem' comments Rav Schorr in *Halekach Vehalebuv*.

The *keruvim*, the very space from which the Divine voice emanated, teach us the essence of Torah living. Be childlike in your complete faith in Hashem, constantly strive to grow and seek to concern yourself with the needs of others. ■

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## Filling the Void

**N**athan Straus, zy'a, was a legendary humanitarian and philanthropist who reportedly gave two thirds of his personal fortune to building up the Land of Israel. One of the owners of Macy's, he invested enormous time, effort and resources into this project, as well as his humanitarian work in New York. The City of Netanya is named in his honor.

On a visit to Eretz Yisrael, he had the honor of visiting the Chief Rabbi, Rav Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook zy'a. After their meeting, Rav Kook solicited Mr. Straus for *Ma'os Chittim* to help provide residents of

the holy city with provisions for Yom Tov. Straus made a substantial donation, and seeking validation, asked Rav Kook, "Dear Rabbi, will this suffice? Is it enough?" Rav Kook responded by sharing a story:

"There was a Russian landowner whose estate was so large that one day, he lost his way on his own property, and ended up at the home of a simple Jewish laborer who lived in a hut on a neighboring estate. The Jew was not prepared for such an honored guest, and served the man all that he had available in his home: black bread and hard boiled eggs. The Russian landowner wanted to pay, but the Jew refused, saying it was his pleasure to play host. But when the wealthy man insisted that he wished to pay, the Yid asked for a whopping thousand rubles, a disproportionate sum for the meal he was served.

The landowner asked, "Are eggs so rare here?"

"No," the yid replied, "but wealthy landowners like you are."

Rav Kook then turned to Mr. Straus, "I do not have the privilege of hosting such a special guest like you every day..."

Nathan Straus smiled... and gave the Rav an even larger check.

דָּבָר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְקַח־לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר

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“Speak to the children of Israel, and have them take for Me an offering; from every person whose heart inspires him to generosity, you shall take My offering.”

Our sedra outlines the *terumah* contributions, which we are called upon to offer to the communal fund, with *nedivas ha-lev*, goodwill and ‘generosity from the heart’. Included in the list of the materials to be donated were the precious stones set into the *choshen* breastplate of the Kohen Gadol (25:7): “...Shoham stones and *avnei miluim*, (filling stones), for the *ephod* (linen apron) and for the *choshen* (breastplate).” Rashi comments on the construction of the breastplate: “Since there was an indentation in the gold and the stones were placed there, they are called *avnei miluim*, ‘stones that fill’.

Rav Yaakov Bender shlit’a, beloved rosh yeshivah of Darchei Torah shared a moving insight from his Rebbi, the rosh yeshivah of Mir, Brooklyn, Rav Shmuel Berenbaum zt”l: “The precious, hewn gemstones that adorn the holy breastplate of the Kohen Gadol are priceless. Each had its own beauty, color and intrinsic value. Yet they are specifically called ‘space fillers’? How can this be?

“Each of us has abilities, strengths and personality traits that make us special. Our positive attributes and characteristics bring value and meaning to the world. More importantly, however, is how we use our personal qualities to ‘hold space’ and *fill the void* in others. Our primary purpose in life, our essence, is how we provide for the material, spiritual and emotional needs

ד"ר

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of others. That is the essence of the precious gems of the *avnei miluim* worn over the heart of the High Priest; they are reminders of what it means to take responsibility and 'hold space' for others.

.....

This week is Shabbos Zachor, when, in advance of Purim, we remember the intention of our arch-enemy, Amalek. Haman desired to eradicate the Jews, and offered King Achashveirosh ten thousand *shekel kesef* to to curry favor with him and to offset any expense to the Kingdom that the intended genocide would incur. Achashverosh enabled Haman's plans, and gave over his signet ring, empowering Haman with absolute power. Chazal explain that Haman's decree was averted in merit of the mitzvah of *machatzis hashkel*, the 'half-shekel' donation to the Temple. Similarly, when we give our pre-Purim tzedakah, it is a remembrance of the *terumos*, the donations given to the Temple.

Indeed, the joy of Purim itself hinges on our generosity of heart. Rambam (*Hilchos Megillah*, 2:17) prioritizes sharing with others above our own personal celebration:

"It is better for people to increase in their gifts to the poor more than they increase in their meal and the gifts that they send to their companions...

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"...For there is no greater or glorious joy than to bring happiness to the hearts of the poor and orphans and widows and strangers, and one who brings happiness to the hearts of the less fortunate is compared to the Divine Presence, as it says, "To revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the hearts of the broken ones." (Isaiah 57:15)

Like the *avnei miluim*, the greater role of our giving is to fill the void of another.

The Alter Rebbe, Rav Shneur Zalman, zy'a, tells us: "Let us not just ask what we need, rather ask where we are needed." We may not have the material resources of Nathan Straus, z'l, but we can all do our best to step into the void and fill the lives of others with simcha this Purim. ■

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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

The *Shabbat* which immediately precedes the festival of *Purim* is known as *Shabbat Zachor*, the Sabbath of Remembrance. On this *Shabbat*, we read of the biblical mandate to remember how the tribe of *Amalek* attacked the Jewish People as we departed from Egypt. This passage is read specifically on the *Shabbat* preceding *Purim*, since *Haman*, arch enemy of the Jews of *Shushan* and villain of the *Purim* story, is a descendant of *Amalek*.

The passage we read is the very conclusion of *Parshat Ki Tetzei* (*Devarim* 25:17-19).

*“Zachor-Remember what Amalek did unto you, as you were en route of departure from Egypt. Asher Karcha BaDerech- How they came upon you on your way, and struck the back of your encampment, all that were enfeebled in the rear of the camp, when you were faint and weary; they did not fear G-d. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord your G-d has given you rest from all your enemies, in the land which the Lord your G-d has given you as an inheritance to possess it, that thou shall blot out all remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, lo tishkach- you shall not forget...”*

*Rashi*, citing the *Midrash Tanchuma* offers an interesting insight regarding the words *Asher Karcha BaDerech-How they came upon you on your way.*

*Asher Karcha BaDerech this is connected in meaning with the phrase קור וחום “cold and heat” and it means: he made you cold and lukewarm after the boiling heat you had before. For all the nations were afraid to war against you and this one came and began to point out the way to others. A parable! It may be compared to a boiling hot bath into which no living creature could descend. A good-for-nothing came, and sprang down into it; although he scalded himself he made it appear cold to others...*

*Rashi* suggests that *Amalek* somehow represents the Jewish People, being cooled off, becoming vulnerable once again to our enemies, and the powers of evil.

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The great Chasidic Master, the **Maor VeShemesh, zy'a** offers a beautiful insight to explain this idea of *Amalek* cooling off the Jewish People and becoming vulnerable.

*Amalek cooled the Jewish People, they caused the Jewish People to be cold toward one another, they cooled off their burning good hearted kindness for one another.*

What was it that *Amalek* caused to happen, that made us vulnerable and susceptible to harm? A lack of warmth, empathy, and love for one another.

As we prepare ourselves for *Shabbat Zachor*, let us work to internalize this powerful short teaching from the *Maor VeShemesh, zy'a*- and may we recognize the power and protection that *achdut*-unity-provides for *Klal Yisrael*. ■

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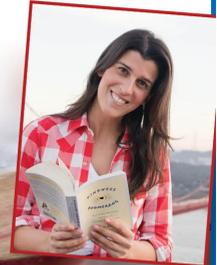
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**10:15 AM Rabbi Aharon Adler** The Giants Who Shaped Modern Orthodoxy <https://zoom.us/j/403831319>

**11:30 AM Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz** Mishlei: Wisdom for Life (L'Ayla) <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82280847618>

**2:00 PM Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld** Men's Gemara Chabura S,T,TH <https://zoom.us/j/887981820>

**4:30 PM Rabbi Hillel Ruvell** Men's Gemara B'lyun S,M,W,Th <https://zoom.us/j/86466998217>

#### **4:30PM Special Event**

Pre-Purim Extravaganza for Grandparents and Grandchildren  
[www.ouisrael.org/events/grandparents](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/grandparents)

#### **8:30PM Special Event**

Food for Thought: Purim cooking and Torah workshop (L'Ayla) <https://zoom.us/j/86595547307>

**MON, FEB 22**

**9:15 AM Mrs. Pearl Borow**  
Sefer Ezra (L'Ayla) <https://zoom.us/j/144986284>

**10:30 AM Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**  
Rav Soloveitchik on the Parsha <https://zoom.us/j/700303855>

**11:45 AM Rabbi Shmuel Herschler**  
Ethics, family and society in the writings of Rav Hirsch, Rav Kook and Rav Soloveitchik <https://zoom.us/j/81925157325>

**4:30PM Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

**7:00 PM Rabbi Baruch Taub**  
Parshat HaShavua <https://zoom.us/j/888974573>

**9:00 PM Rabbi Sam Shor**  
Penimiot HaTorah- Inspiration from the Masters of Jewish Thought  
[facebook.com/OUIsrael](https://facebook.com/OUIsrael)

**PLEASE NOTE:**  
Password for classes is: **ouisrael**

**TUE, FEB 23**

**9:00 AM Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**  
Minchat Chinuch <https://zoom.us/j/89983298537>

**9:15 AM Mrs. Shira Smiles**  
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla) <https://zoom.us/j/98629920642>

**10:30 AM Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**  
Parshat HaShavua <https://zoom.us/j/195174554>

**2:00 PM Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld**

**5:00 PM Mrs. Sylvie Schatz**  
Chazal: Insights Into Our Times (L'Ayla) <https://zoom.us/j/85177782268>

#### **8:00PM Special Event**

A Lot about the Lots- The Inner Meaning of Purim  
Rav Zev Leff  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81293948298>

Archived recordings of shiurim: <https://www.ouisrael.org/video-library/>

WED, FEB 24

**9:00 AM Rabbi Shimshon Nadel** Halacha and Medina  
<https://zoom.us/j/6878683646>

**10:15 AM Rabbi Anthony Manning** Contemporary Issues in Halacha and Hashkafa  
<https://zoom.us/j/460662359>

**11:30 AM Rabbi Alan Kimche** Great Jewish Thinkers  
<https://zoom.us/j/772450422>

**4:30PM Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

**7:00 PM Rabbi Baruch Taub** Halacha  
<https://zoom.us/j/709706986>

**8:30 PM Rabbi Ezra Friedman** Practical Kashrut  
<https://zoom.us/j/698124792>

**8:30 PM Rav Meir Goldwicht** (Hebrew) Parshat Hashavua  
<https://zoom.us/j/2244321902>  
Passcode: 18

**\*L'AYLA CLASSES ARE FOR WOMEN ONLY**

THURS, FEB 25

**10:15 AM Rabbi Baruch Taub** Parshat HaShavua  
<https://zoom.us/j/615813416>

**11:30 AM Rabbi Shai Finkelstein** Unlocking the Messages of Chazal  
<https://zoom.us/j/488542635>

**2:00 PM Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld**

**4:30PM Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**



**MISSED A CLASS?**  
You can watch the recording at  
[www.ouisrael.org/video-library](http://www.ouisrael.org/video-library)

FRI, FEB 26

**10:00AM KIDS' KOLLEL PURIM PARTY**

<https://web.zoom.us/j/87159465384>



# Quick Purim Review פורים

**TA'ANIT ESTHER** is the same day, 13 Adar, whether you celebrate Purim on the 14th or the 15th of Adar.

**ZEICHER L'MACHATZIT HASHEKEL** can be given at Mincha of Taanit Esther or before Megillah reading. Common amount is 3 half-shekel coins. Some give the value of the original silver half shekel, which at today's price of silver and the current exchange rate is around 20NIS. Remember - we don't give Machatzit HaShekel without a Beit HaMikdash, we give ZEICHER - commemorative of it.

**AL HANISIM** said in the Amida in the B'RACHA of MODIM and in Birkat HaMazon in the B'RACHA of NODEH L'CHA. If you forget AL HANISIM in the Amida, do NOT repeat it. If you catch your omission before HaShem's name in HATOV SHIMCHA... go back and say it. In Jerusalem and halachic 'walled cities' Al Hanisim is recited this year on Shabbat.

**MEGILLAH READING** Required TWICE, at night and in the day. KAVANA should include the Mitzvah of Megillah and the publicizing of Hashem's miracles. All of Klal Yisrael reads the Megillah this year on Thursday night and Friday morning.

**MATANOT LA'EVYONIM** are gifts to the poor - usually money (be generous, more than you spend on Mishlo'ach Manot). Best to give on Purim day. Giving it earlier to someone who will distribute it on Purim day is also okay. This year Matanot La'evyonim is also given in Jerusalem and halachic 'walled cities' on Friday.

**MISHLO'ACH MANOT** are gifts of foods (min. two kinds) to friends (or just other Jews) - who are observing Purim the same day you are. One Mishloach Manot is sufficient, but most people give multiple times. This year, residents of Jerusalem and halachic 'walled cities' perform this mitzvah on Sunday.

**TORAH READING FOR PURIM** The special reading of Va'yavo Amalek is read on Purim day. This year in Jerusalem and halachic 'walled cities' it is therefore read on Shabbat.

**SEUDAT PURIM** is a festive meal in the afternoon of your Purim day. In Jerusalem and halachic 'walled cities' the seudat Purim is observed on Sunday this year.

The proper custom on Purim is to drink more wine than you usually do. A bit more is sufficient. In most cases, excessive drinking turns out not to be in line with SIMCHAT PURIM.

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\*Each session is a stand-alone session



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- ▶ Multimedia encounter with modern-day heroines
- ▶ Drama workshop

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# Purim Guidance for Shuls and Communities



Presented by the Orthodox Union and the Rabbinical Council of America

## Part I – נקהלו ועמדו על נפשם

### A Community Committed to Life

**T**he approaching Adar and Purim represent the sobering milestone of a year since the arrival of the pandemic on these shores. This year has brought devastating loss of life, immense financial struggle, and significant personal and social upheaval.

The emergence of safe and effective vaccines, accompanied by highly contagious virus variants, introduces great hope and cheer but also compels redoubled vigilance in adhering to public health guidelines as we push to stay safe and avoid further losses while aggressively supporting the nationwide vaccination campaign.

Those who have achieved immunity, including those fully vaccinated who have passed the subsequent waiting period as well as those who have recovered from the virus with a confirmed antibody response, may be able to return to some of their pre-pandemic activities. But public and communal practice and behavior, even for those fully vaccinated, should continue to reflect the standards of masking and social distancing until the pandemic is defeated to help the unvaccinated stay safe and contribute to the shared national project of saving every possible life.

The situation continues to evolve and varies significantly from region to region. As such, these recommendations and guidelines are formulated based solely on information and advice available as of February 2021. As always, shuls and communities should follow, at a minimum, the guidelines provided by local and

national authorities, including the CDC and local health departments.

Regarding the celebration of Purim, we present the following guidance based on our Poskim Harav Hershel Schachter שליט"א and Harav Mordechai Willig שליט"א:

## Megillah Reading

Shuls should conduct public davening and Megillah readings only with proper masking and social distancing, in accordance with local regulations and guidelines. As has been the case for many months, many shuls may find it necessary to create additional Minyanim to address capacity issues resulting from distancing requirements.

- Generally healthy individuals should attend public Megillah readings as usual, where the community is exercising the proper precautions of social distancing and masking.
- Those who are not currently ill but are not attending a public reading because they are deemed high risk should reach out to their Rabbi and community to help arrange a private Megillah reading.
- Those who are ill or have had serious exposure and must remain in isolation must not come to shul. To fulfill the Mitzvah, they should have a kosher, hand-written Megillah in hand from which they read audibly, either on their own or assisted by a reading heard electronically.
- The clear majority of Halachic authorities do not consider Halachically adequate a Megillah reading heard over the phone or online. There is however a minority opinion that does allow for this, provided that the reading is live, and not pre-recorded. Following the Halachic principle that we may rely upon minority opinions under extenuating circumstances, when no better option exists this minority opinion can be relied upon.

## Seudas Purim

Purim meals and get-togethers must necessarily be limited due to the pandemic, social distancing requirements, avoidance of prolonged exposure, singing and

dancing in enclosed spaces. For those who have not achieved immunity, the Purim Seudah would best be conducted within the family “bubble.”

## Mishloach Manot

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advise that cooking or preparing food and delivering it to someone, with a mask and proper social distancing, is a very low-risk activity. When delivering or receiving Mishloach Manot, visit and greet guests outside the home and leave the package on the front porch or outside the apartment door.



## Part II- משנכנס אדר מרבים בשמחה

### Bringing Joy to Our Community

“When Adar arrives, we are to increase our Simcha (joy).” This is a yearly mandate, but it is especially compelling this year, when so many are suffering particular stress, pain, isolation, and loss. The pandemic’s necessary limitations should not deny or defeat our efforts to generate within our family, and others, warmth, lightness, and joy.

The joy of Purim is specifically expressed through extending expressions of friendship and providing needed support, Mishloach Manot and Matanot l’Evyonim. In addition to the basic fulfillment of these mandates, many use the opportunity to visit with others they do not see often, and to express appreciation in manifold ways.

In addition to enhancing our camaraderie with family and friends, the celebration of Purim provides us, as shuls, communities and individuals, the opportunity to focus on our obligation to bring warmth, lightness, and joy to the isolated, to the exhausted, and to the community, young and old. Specific ideas to consider:

- The isolated: Many elderly and high-risk members of our communities have not been in shul for many months. This season is an ideal time for us to reach out, check in on, and reconnect with them after an extended period of isolation. We should also help arrange for those isolated at home to properly

hear the Megillah and plan appropriate and safe Purim visits to their homes.

- **The exhausted:** The professional and lay leaders of our community have borne unprecedented burdens during the past year, often inadequately recognized and acknowledged. They have been addressing life-and-death policy issues, providing material and emotional support and services, and constantly pivoting to respond to changing realities. Purim is an ideal time for us to show our appreciation – as individuals and as communities - to the medical and Chessed professionals and volunteers, shul rabbis and rebbetzins, school administrators, and the many other community servants who have worked untiringly to keep us all going.
- **The collective community:** Young and old have been experiencing a very difficult year on so many fronts. Each shul and neighborhood should consider creative ways and “Purim shtick” to generate smiles and laughter. Perhaps a music truck to tour the neighborhood, an outdoor carnival celebration at a local shul or school, or other extra efforts to decorate and infuse the shul and community with Purim joy and fun.

Above all, in the spirit of Mordechai’s charge to Esther, אל תדמי בנפשך להמלט בית, המלך מכל היהודים, we need to see beyond our personal and familial comfort, and recognize and address the struggles faced by others.

Adar is “the month that was transformed from sorrow to gladness and from mourning to festivity.” It is our hope and our prayer that this transformation will once again be realized this coming month of Adar.

With sincere Tefilla, the observance of proper mitigation strategies, and the wider administration of vaccines, this Adar will with Hashem’s help be the month when we truly begin to emerge from the challenges of the past year and embrace the appropriate degree of joy and anticipation as we thereafter enter the month of Nissan and the holiday of Pesach, the month of miracles and freedom.

## **Purim Sameach!**

**May the days of Purim usher in a time of only joy and greater achdut for Israel and Jews across the globe!**

# Purim Meshulash – Rules and Rationale

By Rabbi Daniel Mann

**Question:** Could you please review some of the rules and the rationale of Purim Meshulash (Triple Purim) in Yerushalayim?

**Answer:** In cities that were walled at the time of Yehoshua (notably, including Yerushalayim), Purim is celebrated on the fifteenth of Adar instead of the standard fourteenth. If the fifteenth falls on Shabbat, when some of the mitzvot of Purim are inappropriate, the various mitzvot of the day are spread over three days, which we call Purim Meshulash. We will start by explaining the concepts and then review the day-by-day activities. By the way, the fourteenth of Adar never falls on Shabbat.

Even in a Purim Meshulash, conceptually, the main day of Yerushalayim's Purim is still the fifteenth of Adar, even though it is the least "eventful" of the days. Therefore, matters connected directly to tefilla and not problematic on Shabbat, are done on Shabbat. This includes reading the story of the battle of Amalek<sup>1</sup> as maftir, a special haftara, and saying Al HaNissim in Shemoneh Esrei and Birkat HaMazon.

Megillat Esther is not read on Shabbat for one of two reasons:<sup>2</sup> Rabbah says that it is out of concern that someone will carry the megillah in the public domain and thus desecrate Shabbat. Rav Yosef says it is because poor people look forward to receiving charity, which cannot be distributed on Shabbat, at the time of the megillah reading. As the rule is that Megillat Esther is never read after the fifteenth of Adar,<sup>3</sup> the reading is pushed up to Friday, the fourteenth of Adar. One should be extra careful to hear the megillah with a minyan in such a year,<sup>4</sup> since when the megillah is read early, it requires a minyan.

Matanot la'evyonim<sup>5</sup> follows suit, and the donations are given on the fourteenth of Adar.<sup>6</sup> After all, according to Rav Yosef, that was the whole reason to read the megillah

<sup>1</sup> *The last 9 p'sukim of Beshalach.*

<sup>2</sup> *Megillah 4b.*

<sup>3</sup> *Based on the words (Esther 9:28) "and they shall not pass." See Megillah 2a.*

<sup>4</sup> *Mishna Berura 690:61*

<sup>5</sup> *The mitzva on Purim of giving a donation to the poor.*

<sup>6</sup> *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 688:6*

early, and even Rabbah must accept some level of linkage between the megillah reading and matanot la'evyonim.<sup>7</sup>

According to most authorities, the se'uda<sup>8</sup> takes place on Sunday, the sixteenth of Adar.<sup>9</sup> The Yerushalmi<sup>10</sup> maintains that it is not held on Shabbat because it must be a se'uda whose obligation can be attributed only to Chazal's decision at the time of Mordechai and Esther. On Shabbat, of course, there is a mitzva to have a festive meal irrespective of Purim, and so the Purim se'uda would remain indistinct. There are opinions that one can/ should have a Purim meal on Shabbat and so some make an effort to have more food and wine than usual at the Shabbat-day meal.<sup>11</sup> At the Sunday meal, Al HaNissim is not recited, at least not in the body of Birkat HaMazon.<sup>12</sup> The mitzva of mishlo'ach manot<sup>13</sup> is apparently linked to the Purim se'uda, and thus is performed on Sunday.<sup>14</sup> Those who want to have a Purim se'uda on Shabbat can attempt to fulfill mishlo'ach manot as well by giving food to a neighbor or having a guest at the meal.

Visitors to Yerushalayim over Shabbat (even if they celebrated Purim fully on Friday) are obligated (according to most authorities<sup>15</sup>) to do the mitzvot of both Shabbat and Sunday (wherever they are on Sunday) even if they leave Yerushalayim soon after Shabbat. This is because the obligations of Sunday are tashlumin (make-ups) for what ideally should have been done on Shabbat.<sup>16</sup> (One should give the mishlo'ach manot to someone who is obligated in the mitzvot of Sunday). Based on the same logic, one who comes to Yerushalayim after Shabbat is not obligated.<sup>17</sup>

Let us summarize by day: Friday- reading of the megillah and matanot la'evyonim; Shabbat – Al HaNissim and special maftir/ haftara; Sunday – se'uda and mishlo'ach manot.

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7 See *Megillah 4b*.

8 *Festive meal*.

9 *Shulchan Aruch op cit*.

10 *Megillah 1:4*.

11 *Purim Meshulash (Diblitzi) 5:11*.

12 See *Mikraei Kodesh (Harari), Purim 15:(34) in the name of Rav Shaul Yisraeli*.

13 *Sending foods to a friend on Purim*.

14 *Mishna Berura 688:18*.

15 See *Mikraei Kodesh 15:30*.

16 *Purim Meshulash 8:15*.

17 *Ibid*.

# ‘Purim Meshulash’: The Perfect Purim

The Secret Meaning Behind Jerusalem’s ‘Three Day Purim’  
(An adaptation from Rabbi Moshe Wolfson’s shli’ta Emunat Iteicha, p.250)

**M**ordechai requested from the rabbinic leaders of his day to establish Purim as a full fledged holiday. He felt it qualified as a day of *simcha, mishteh ve’ Yom Tov (Megillat Esther 9:19)*. Why, he wondered, should the celebration of Purim not be likened to every other major *Yom Tov*? Its observance should surely incorporate one of the key features of a Festival: the prohibition of forbidden labor (*issur melachah*).

The *Chachamim*, Elders, agreed that Purim would surely be established as a holiday, but unlike Shabbat and Yom Tov, it would not carry the stringency of *issur melacha* (the prohibition of labor).

Why did the Sages not grant Purim the full festival status?

Perhaps it was due to the fact that one of Purim’s most basic themes commemorates the eradication of *Amalek* and their evil from the world. Unfortunately, this aspect of the day had not yet come to fruition. Only when that reality is fulfilled - only when the evil of Amalek is completely wiped out - will Purim be celebrated as a full fledged festival. Only at that future date will Purim’s true sanctity be consummated.

This year, the city of Jerusalem will celebrate Purim on Shabbat. Therefore no acts of *melachah* (‘forbidden labor’) are to be engaged in on the day. This year, willy nilly, Purim will be observed the way Mordechai had envisioned the day.

This year, we gain a rare glimpse, to a certain degree, of Purim of a future time...a time when Purim will be perfected and practiced in its most pristine form.

As we usher in this year’s distinctive celebration we might choose to ponder how we can possibly attain the ‘perfect Purim’ that Mordechai HaTzadik visualized.

The answer may be embedded in the unique way Purim will be celebrated differently this year than almost any other year. Only during a ‘three day celebration of Purim’, *Purim Meshulash*, does the entire Jewish people read the Megillah and give *Matanot Le’evyonim* (‘Charity to the Poor’) on a single day. This year’s Purim’s celebration is the rare occasion when these unifying mitzvot are celebrated at the same time in all of *Klal Yisrael*.

This year’s unusual Purim observance is pregnant with spiritual potential. Perhaps the message of unity, and that it is needed now more than ever, is the meaning of this moment.

The three day celebration of Purim is not for the residents of Jerusalem alone. Jerusalem is the heart of the nation of Israel. At its core, every Jew is a part of this year’s Shabbat Purim.

When Shabbat arrives each week, a Jew feels an even deeper longing for the Holy City, as evidenced by the additional unique phrase added to Shabbat evening prayers: “Blessed are You...who spreads a canopy of peace over us, over all His people Israel, and *over Jerusalem*.”

May this rare occurrence of the simultaneous celebration of Purim and Shabbat bring us closer to one another and closer to the ultimate celebration of the *geula shlema*, our final redemption.

\*\*\*

Rabbi Moshe Wolfson *Shlit”a* is the *Mashgiach Ruchani* of ‘Mesivta Torah Vodaath’ and Rav of ‘Beis Medrash Emunas Yisrael’ in Brooklyn, N.Y. He is one of the most revered rabbinic figures of our time.





# Hearing the Megillah for Those Who Cannot Go to Shul

**Question:** If one who is not a *ba'al koreh* cannot make it to *shul* to hear *Megillah Esther* (e.g., if the pandemic will preclude one from coming), how else can he fulfill the *mitzva* of hearing it?

**Answer:** (For those who can hear from a distance, not being in *shul* is not a problem; if they miss a few words, they can make them up.) Almost all *poskim* agree that one cannot fulfill the *mitzva* of hearing *shofar* via microphone, telephone or radio (besides *chillul Yom Tov* issues), because one must hear the authentic sound of a *shofar* (Rosh Hashana 27b). The ruling regarding a live *megillah* reading via microphone is less clear. Although one does not hear the actual voice of a valid *ba'al koreh*, but a device-generated reproduction, it is better than a recording in two ways. First, the sound waves that the *ba'al koreh* produces directly cause the almost identical sounds heard. Secondly, the reproduction is heard at essentially the same time and place the *ba'al koreh* reads. Therefore, while most

*poskim* posit one cannot fulfill the *mitzva* via microphone (see *Yechaveh Da'at* III:54; *Minchat Shlomo* I:9), the lenient position is marginally tenable (see *Tzitz Eliezer* VIII:11; *Igrot Moshe*, *Orach Chayim* II:108).

The *gemara* (Sukka 51b) seems to not require hearing the voice of the person reciting, if one knows what is being said. It tells of a huge amphitheater in Alexandria, where flags were waved to inform people when to answer *amen*. However, this source is not sufficient here, because *Tosafot* (ad loc.) explains that the participants did not attempt to fulfill any *mitzva* but just wanted to answer *amen*.

Rav SZ Auerbach (*Minchat Shlomo* *ibid.*) does not allow even answering *amen* regarding via radio and telephone. He argues that the people in Alexandria were close enough to be connected to the *berachot* without hearing them. However, there is no physical connection between the person reciting and the one “listening” remotely via telecommunication. For him, one could certainly not fulfill a *mitzva*

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and OU Israel's Torah Tidbits.



this way. Nevertheless, there were serious *poskim* who allowed, in a case of necessity, to fulfill *mitzvot* such as *megillah* and *havdala* via telephone (Minchat Elazar II:72, Igrot Moshe, OC IV:91). Adding in video will not improve things halachically, and all agree that one cannot fulfill a *mitzva* by or even answer *amen* to recorded events because of the total break from the human performance of the *mitzva*.

If one is unable to hear the *megillah* normally, it is worthwhile to hear it electronically. This is not only due to the lenient opinions. Exposure to *Megillat Esther's* content has value (Mishna Berura 692:27), like reading the *parasha* from a *chumash* when one cannot go to *shul* (ibid. 143:9), and it enables one to remember Hashem's kindness (Aruch Hashulchan, OC 691:14). In present difficult times, in many communities, the feeling of comradery is also important, especially on a holiday as communal as Purim. Hopefully, people will not incorrectly learn from this, that if away or infirmed for Purim, they do not need to make an effort to fulfill the *mitzva* properly.

The halachically simple way to fulfill the *mitzva* is for the people to read it themselves from a *kosher klaf* they own or can borrow. (One who *lains* without a *minyan* does not make the *beracha* of *Harav Et Riveinu* at the end of the *Megillah* – Rama, OC 692:1).

A non-proficient *ba'al korei* will need help, not only because of difficult *trop*, which is not crucial, but because of hard words and *kri u'k'tivs*. One who is precise in his reading can help the makeshift reader and correct as needed. It is possible to read along with a live or recorded reading. This is not very practical, especially if reading for others, as they need to hear the person rather than the electronic sound. One can use a recording and start and stop it as necessary. For those who prefer, I have made a (1 hour 8 minutes) video of the *laining* with pauses every few words, so that one can read along at a comfortable pace. It is available upon request at: [info@eretzhemdah.org](mailto:info@eretzhemdah.org). ■

*Eretz Hemdah has begun a participatory Zoom class - "Behind the Scenes with the Vebbe Rebbe" - an analytical look at the sources, methodology, and considerations behind our rulings, with Rav Daniel Mann. Contact [info@eretzhemdah.org](mailto:info@eretzhemdah.org) to join while places are open.*

## Having a dispute?



For a Din Torah in English or Hebrew contact 'Eretz Hemdah - Gazit' Rabbinical Court: 077-215-8-215 • fax: (02) 537-9626  
[beitdin@eretzhemdah.org](mailto:beitdin@eretzhemdah.org)



RABBI MOSHE

TARAGIN

Ram, Yeshivat Har Eztion

## Purim and the “Thrust” to Yerushalayim

**R**abbi Shimon Bar Yochai, the great talmudic scholar was questioned by his students: why were the Jews of Shushan imperiled by Haman’s murderous plan; what possible sin warranted this devastating and potentially existential threat? Instead of replying, Rebbi Shimon signaled to his students that they should suggest a reason. They replied that the Jews were punished for participating in royal festivities directed by Achashverosh.

The Achashverosh party wasn’t exactly an exhibition of high-minded moral values or a display of human compassion. Rapacious noblemen gorged for a 180-day culinary orgy while the peasants of the country-side were taxed through the nose to foot the bill for this debauched exorbitance. Shameless gluttons lying on marble couches provided

ample eye-candy for voyeuristic people who passed by the royal gardens. Perhaps the food at this party was glatt kosher but there are certain events which should be “off limits” to religious people - regardless of the kashrut level of the food which is served.

However, participation in an immoral party still doesn’t justify such a harsh response. Evidently, there was something far more criminal in this decision to join the Achashverosh and his merry revelers.

Purim mustn’t be viewed as a “miracle in a bottle”; It can’t be reduced simply to the storyline of a mass-murderer who set his sights on Jewish annihilation but whose plans were dashed by Divine intervention. This story has occurred throughout Jewish history and Purim isn’t, in this respect that exceptional. Without understanding the broader “historical framework” of Purim, the miracle feels a bit commonplace. According to Chazal’s timeline, the miracle in Shushan occurred AFTER our initial return to Israel. Having been exiled for 70 years, the Jews began their great project of resettling their homeland and rebuilding Yerushalayim. Sadly, this revival was stalled, as hostile locals were staunchly opposed to what they deemed as Jewish expansionism. Eighteen years elapsed between the aborted initial return and the final homecoming and reconstruction



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of the Mikdash. It is within this eighteen-year period that the Purim saga unfolded. The real crime of the partiers was in their “historical indifference”. Jews were struggling to settle their ancient homeland and fending off hostile enemies. It is one thing not to emigrate and join the battle. However, it is another thing entirely, to remain behind in Persia and feast and drink for half a year while Jews were struggling and dying in their homeland. Their abject disinterest in the historical process – immersing themselves in revelry while their brothers were busy crafting history- was absolutely criminal and deserving of a severe response.

It is crucial not to place Purim in a vacuum and sever it from its historical background. The Jewish people were “stuck in the mud”; having returned to Israel, their grand project was stalled by lack of resources and hostile enemies. This suspended redemption required one miracle, one great electrifying event, to provide the final thrust to propel the Jew back to their homeland. Purim provided that national thrust and that redemptive energy. As the *Sefat Emmet* writes, Purim was a pre-redemptive event which paved the path back to Yerushalayim. As the *Sefat Emmet* continues: it may very well be that our final redemption will also be preceded by a pre-redemptive miracle to provide similar “energy”. We believe that this late 19<sup>th</sup> century prophecy of the *Sefat Emmet* has been fulfilled; our people have been blessed with great miracles which, hopefully, will thrust our people to our final homecoming. ■

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## Kashering with Liquids (Continued)

The method of kashering utensils that were used with hot liquids is known as *hag'alah* (immersing in boiling hot water). There is a dispute regarding kashering with other liquids (known as *sh'ar mashkim*). According to later authorities, only water may be used for *hag'alah*. In cases of need, other liquids may be used. This article examines the complex halachic issues of kashering with *sh'ar mashkim*.

### Water mixed with other liquids

For earlier authorities the *sh'ar mashkim* generally consisted of fruit juice or other basic liquids that were commonly

available. The *Ran* (on the *Rif*, *Chulin* 44:a) cites a case in which water mixed with additional liquids is considered as *sh'ar mashkim*. When many utensils are being kashered through *hag'alah* and the color or consistency of the water starts to significantly change (as a result of minor residue or rust from the utensils), the *Ran* rules that the water is now considered *sh'ar mashkim* and new water must be boiled to continue the kashering process. The *Rema* (OH 452:5) quotes the *Ran*, and all later authorities accept this ruling.

Later authorities debate regarding at what point a water mixture becomes *sh'ar mashkim*. Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (as quoted in *Siddur Pesach Kehilchato* 7, footnote 7) explains that as long as the consistency of the water remains the same, it is still considered water for kashering purposes. However, Rav Belsky rules that if the water remains clear and not discolored, it is still considered water for kashering purposes. The rulings of Rav Elyashiv and Rav Belsky do not necessarily contradict but rather view the subject from different angles. In practice, only when both the color and consistency of the water have changed, it may not be used for *hag'alah*. If utensils were kashered in water that was colored and of a different consistency, the kashering process should be repeated with new pure water (*Pri Chadash* OC 452:5



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and *Sefer HaKashrut* 3, footnote 60). Even though *sh'ar mashkim* may be used in cases of need, the OU or a local orthodox Rabbi should be contacted.

### Which liquids?

Which liquids are considered *sh'ar mashkim*? Fruit juice, wine and milk are examples of liquids that poskim classify as *sh'ar mashkim* (see *Ran* Ibid, *Rashba* 1:503 and *Rebi Akiva Eiger* 1:83). The *Chatam Sofer* (OH 1:108) was asked if whisky could be used for kashering. He ruled that even in cases of need whisky is not acceptable, since the liquid must be naturally occurring. Whisky is manufactured through cooking barley and is not considered to be one of the *sh'ar mashkim*.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Igrot Moshe* YD 1:60) ruled that liquid fat cannot be used for kashering even *bediavad* (ex post facto) arguing that it is not considered a liquid because it remains a solid at room temperature. This reasoning would also apply to the use of liquid chocolate to kasher machinery; since chocolate does not remain liquid when at room temperature, it is not considered *sh'ar mashkim*. When kashering chocolate machinery such as a Macintyre conch, it is harmful to use water, so other solutions must be found. Some kashrut certifications use liquid chocolate in order to kasher chocolate lines from

dairy to parve or from year-round use to Pesach production. The OU generally does not approve such a form of kashering.

### In summary:

- Kashering with *hag'alah* should only be done with water.
- Other liquids (such as fruit juice or milk) may only be used in dire cases and the OU should be contacted in order to determine if each specific case is considered a severe need.
- Water that has been used to kasher many utensils, may not continue to be used, if its consistency and color have changed.
- Liquids that are not naturally occurring such as whisky, may not be used to kasher.
- Liquids that are solids at room temperature may not be used to kasher.
- When kashering a chocolate conch, certain certifications use chocolate to kasher. Other solutions should be found if possible. ■

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**RABBI AARON**

Editor, Torah Tidbits

**GOLDSCHIEDER**

## A Mikdash In Our Midst

It is now close to two thousand years since the life of the Jewish people has centered around the *Beit Hamikdash*. However we as a people have implemented meaningful ways to draw from its sanctity and glory. In this vein the *halacha* embraced the notion that the *kedusha* which characterized the *Beit Hamikdash* directly links to the *Mikdash Me'at*, the synagogues, we pray in today.

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik zt'l set out to carefully define the unique association between the *Beit HaMikdash* and the *beit kneset* (synagogue) today. The Rav demonstrated that this interrelatedness is true not merely in a homiletical sense but has clear *halachic* implications.

The notion that the holiness of a *beit kneset* is a derivative of the holiness of the *Beit Hamikdash* can be seen in the very terminology of *Mikdash Me'at* (*Talmud Megillah* 29a). God assures the prophet

*Yechezkel* that in exile, “Yet I have been for them a minor sanctuary” (*Mikdash Me'at*) (11:16). The Rav argues that this was not merely a turn of phrase but a halachic construct.

The Rav points to a most striking and unique position of the Rambam who posited that the sacred status of *beit kneset* is an extension of the *kedusha* found in the *Beit Hamikdash*. The Rambam (*Minyan Hamitzvot Hakatzar, Mitzvat 31, Ta'ase 65*) codifies that there is a Torah prohibition to cause destruction to the *Beit Hamikdash* (*Devarim* 12:4). The Rambam extends this prohibition to damaging or destruction of a *beit kneset* or a *beit midrash*. The Rav deduced from this halacha that the Rambam is submitting the sanctity of the synagogue shares in the *kedusha* that permeated the *Beit Hamikdash* (*Shiurei HaRav, Al Inyanei Tefilah ve'Kiri'at Shema, Genack, p.299*).

The fact that a synagogue's sanctity stems from the *Beit Hamikdash*, and furthermore is counted as a *Mikdash Me'at*, has multiple repercussions regarding its structure and its ambiance:

1. *Bima in the Center*: The eminent *Chatam Sofer* (*Responsa Chatam Sofer, Orach Chaim, 28*) asserts that the *bima* must be in the middle of the synagogue: “Because we regard the *bimah* upon which we read the

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verses concerning the sacrificial offerings like an Altar...so that our Beit Knesset will be as similar as possible to the Beit Hamikdash, and we should not change our 'miniature sanctuary.' (*Eretz Hatzvi*, Schachter, p.93)

2. *The 'Parochet' on the Ark*: The role of the *parochet* is evident in today's synagogues. We duplicate the practice in the *Mishkan/Mikdash*. "You shall spread the dividing curtain toward the Ark (*Shemot* 40:3). Our ark represents the Ark of the Mishkan and therefore requires a curtain (*Chumash Mesoras HaRav, Shemos*, p. 347).

3. *Separation of Men and Women*: Although we often associate the separation of genders in the synagogue as relating to the need for *tzniut* and appropriate decorum for prayer, there is another fundamental reason that the separation is essential. The Rambam states: "The 'Women's Courtyard' was surrounded by balconies so that women could look from above and the men from below without intermingling (*Hilchot Beit Habechira* 5:9). Namely, since in the *Beit Hamikdash* it was necessary to have a separation between the men and women, this is true for a synagogue. (Rav Hershel Schachter cites the *Shut Maharam Shik, Orach Chaim Siman 77* making this halachic correlation) (*Eretz Hatzvi*, Shachter, p.93). Rabbi Soloveitchik stated the following in a statement regarding the absolute requirement of *mechitza* in the synagogue: "The separation of the sexes in the synagogue derives historically from the Sanctuary (Beit Hamikdash)... the Jewish people have never violated this

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sacred principle...It would seem to me that our remembrance of history alone should keep us from imitating today the practice of primitive Christianity almost 1900 years ago” (Community, Covenant and Commitment, Helfgot, p.134).

4. *Trees*: The Rav cited the position of Rabbi Akiva Eiger (1761-1837) who prohibited the planting of trees on the premises of a Beit Kneset based on the fact that there is a Torah prohibition to plant a tree in the area of Beit Hamikdash: You shall not plant for yourselves an idolatrous tree - any tree- near the Altar..” (*Devarim* 16:21). It is interesting to note that Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik did not agree with this position and when Rav Chaim accepted the rabbinic leadership in Brisk he permitted the planting of trees (*Shiurei HaRav, Al Inyanei Tefiallh V’Kriat Shema*, Genack, p.400).

5. *Elevated Tzniut*: Rav Hershel Schachter *shli’ta* made reference to a practice in some synagogues that married women cover their heads when entering for prayer. Although ideally a woman should always cover her hair, there is a significant

halachic basis to this practice. In a place designated for *hashra’at Shechinah*, resting of the Divine presence, there is a heightened regard for *tz’niut*, modesty. It is interesting to note that in the description of the curtain that hung at the entrance of the *Mishkan* the verse says that it is folded over (*ve’chafalta et haye’riah*) (*Shemot* 26:9). Rashi comments on this phrase: “... like a modest bride who is covered with a veil over her face.” This striking reference to a modest bride seems to allude to the essential need for modesty in order for God’s presence to be manifest (*Eretz Hatzvi*, Shechter, p.96).

6. *Strolling In the Synagogue*: The *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim, Hilchot Beit Haknesset, Siman 151:1)* states that one may not act frivolously in a synagogue. Among the examples cited is “do not stroll in them.” Apparently a sense of decorum and regard for its sanctity is required. Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik is quoted to have humorously commented on the miracle that took place in the *Beit Hamikdash*: “The people stood crowded together, yet prostrated themselves in ample space” (*Avot* 5:7). He understood that it was miraculous that there was ample space. However, what was miraculous about the people standing in place? That, he said, was also remarkable - a Jew in the sanctuary, standing still; that is undoubtedly a wonder! ■

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# Techiyat Hameitim – For Trees? Part 2

Last week we discussed a tree that dried up, was chopped down to about 20 cm above ground, and came back to life. The Shulchan Aruch states (YD 294:18):

A tree that is chopped down and grew back from the root is not obligated [in restarting the *orlah* count], unless it was cut down at ground level, in which case we count from the time it is cut down. However, if even a little remains [above soil], it is exempt.

The *Shach* is stringent and rules that the *orlah* count restarts if the tree is chopped down to less than a *tefach* above ground. However, even according to the *Shach*, if more than 10 cm was left of the stump above ground, there is no need to recount *orlah* years.

**In practice:** If the tree is cut down to less than a *tefach*, it is best to be stringent and restart the *orlah* count; in extenuating circumstances, however, one can be lenient (*Hilchot Ha'aretz, Orlah* 5:7). If only the root system is alive, all *posekim* concur that the *orlah* count should be restarted.

The renewal of a tree cannot begin from a part that is already dead. So if a new shoot grows from an area above a *tefach*, there is no need to restart the *orlah* count. To check for the point of renewal, carefully peel back a small part of the trunk. If the inside is green, the tree is still alive; if it is brown, that part of the tree is dead. If we continue peeling back additional parts along the stump, we can find the exact place the tree is dead.

If shoots grow from below the ground (from the same root system), this is considered a new tree, and the *orlah* count should be restarted. ■



*Trees in Wrocław cemetery, Poland.  
Photo: Rabbi Moshe Bloom*

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## DIVREI MENACHEM

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# The Messages of The Mishkan

This week's Parsha introduces us to the Mishkan, the Sanctuary in the wilderness for Hashem, "so that I may dwell among them (Bnei Yisrael)." In today's parlance, we might call that arrangement a win-win situation. For instance, Rashi points out that the institution of the Mishkan was an antidote to the backsliding of the nation into idol worship, as exemplified by the Sin of the Golden Calf. For Hashem, as it were, the Mishkan was a medium to communicate with the people, albeit primarily through Moshe Rabbainu.

Chaim Richman (in his description of the Mishkan) reminds us that the temporary

and portable structure that comprised the Sanctuary in the desert was, ultimately, to find its resting place as the Beit Hamikdash in Yerushalayim at "the place that God chose to rest His Presence for all time." That site was where Avraham Avinu conducted the Akeidah. Moreover, besides the Ohel Moed (often used as an alternative name for the Mishkan) serving as an "intimate" meeting place of Israel with the Divine, the Mishkan also served to demonstrate to the other nations that a people can "live in unity with God in its midst" (Artscroll).

How did the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, "dwell among the people"? From a physical perspective, at each location in their desert travels, the tribes camped around the Mishkan according to prescribed stations. The tribe of Levi, responsible for the Mishkan and its maintenance, camped closer to the center of the encampment.

From a "religious" perspective, the Mishkan was a rallying point for the nation and the place where individuals would bring offerings in the hope of elevating their spiritual status. Additionally, Rav Hirsch indicates that the people's voluntary donations to the building of the Mishkan (see the opening verses of the Parsha)

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symbolized Israel's obligation to sanctify itself in its personal life. In return for these gifts to the Mishkan, Hashem responded by dwelling among the people, perhaps to raise their spiritual consciousness.

For the Ramban, the Mishkan and its many parts were symbolic of the experiences at Sinai. For example, as Ibn Ezra remarks, no longer would Moshe have to climb the mount to converse with God; for this purpose, there would now be a Holy Ark (the Aron Habrit) over which the Cherubim hovered and from which Hashem's "voice" emanated.

The Mishkan was where the twice-daily sacrificial service (the Tamid) would take place, alongside many other ritual practices, including the Lechem Hapanim (the Shewbread), the preparation of the Ner Tamid, and the penance for the people on Yom Kippur.

In any civic training program, we would learn of the importance of involving the people in building community services. Here, we see that the people's contributions were outstanding and a reflection of their generosity, voluntarism, and ready commitment. We can surmise on the

source of the many varied and valuable items donated – the precious metals and gems, linens and fibers, oil, spices, and the aromatic incense – but that is beyond the scope of this article.

Notably, the people were told to "take for themselves" these voluntary gifts rather than "give" to the setting up of the Mishkan. Our rabbis tell us that what the people would "take" for their efforts would be the merits earned by giving to the holy cause (Bava Batra 10a). By extrapolation, we learn of the importance of taking responsibility, of the Mitzva of supporting generously to the causes in our community.

The building of the Mishkan, as we know, was spearheaded by the great master artisans Betzalel and Oholiav, the former of the highest echelons in the community, the latter from simple stock. They demonstrated that whatever our status in society, we can all be pioneers and make that critical clearing in the forest (or monument in the Midbar) for the betterment of our people and this world. ■

Shabbat Shalom!

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# Bringing Forward the Wedding

Last time we started discussing the problems of rescheduling a wedding, which became a real problem during the Covid 19 pandemic. As we discussed, it is preferable for a kallah to go to the mikveh before getting married. In order to ensure that this happens, we generally recommend to regulate the kallah's cycle with hormones that give us control to decide when we can start and stop. This enables us to ensure that she will be able to come to her wedding after having been to the mikveh.

But Corona presented new considerations; people were anxious to have their wedding prior to a promised lockdown. The wedding was scheduled for the following week, but the talk was that the government would cease all public gatherings. The wedding could be brought forward a week, and the guests would be able to attend. But the kallah may not be able to get to the mikveh before the wedding.

While the Rambam is strict in such a case and invalidates the wedding, most other poskim would be lenient, but this does present complex issues. This needs close rabbinic guidance as to how to overcome the complications and still have a happy and kosher wedding. This often required relying on leniencies that are not the normally accepted rulings. In such extreme circumstances the Rabbi must use all of the halachic tools at his disposal.

More complex were situations in which the kallah could go to the mikveh the morning of the wedding. On the one hand, this solved the problem, in that the kallah would have been to the mikveh before the chupah. However, the halacha is that a woman should only go to the mikveh at night.

In rare circumstances, such as in times of danger or when the gates to the city are locked at night and people would not be permitted to return to the city, there is a possibility of going during the day. We do

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use this for a kallah in rare cases, but in such a case the kallah and chatan should only meet after nightfall. This is not always an option, especially if the lockdown will start from nightfall, and gatherings can only be permitted during the day.

It should be clear from this discussion that PUAH has been invaluable in guiding couples, kallot, chatanim and their families in order to permit weddings, remain safe, and follow the halacha.

More on this next time. ■

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## REMEMBERING

### DR. MEIR TAMARI ZT"L

*A niece of Dr. Tamari, Rita-Rivka Lewy, shared a personal reflection with us at Torah Tidbits as we soon mark the Shloshim since his passing.*

## Looking Back on the Life of Dr. Meir Tamari zt"l

We recently lost one of the longtime contributors to Torah Tidbits - my uncle, Meir Tamari. Dr. Tamari was a passionate proponent of the Halachic ethics of economic life, as presented in his iconic writings.

He began the nine plus decades of his colorful life in South Africa, a child of refugees from Lithuania. A conscientious thinker, he came to embrace a religious *hashkafah*. While obtaining a secular BA in Economics, he studied Gemara

and Dinim at afternoon Hebrew School. He joined Bnei Akiva, and made aliyah around the time of *Hakamat Hamedinah*.

He was among the developers of Kibbutz Shluchot, “the purest kibbutz I could find,” digging ditches and living as true a *chalutz*. He married there, but compromises by the community led him to make new choices for his family, including moving to Jerusalem.

After a stint as teacher, he joined the Bank of Israel, where he became Chief Economist. He developed a method of predicting bankruptcy, helping small firms with trade trends and market predictions. He was sent to meet the Queen, and traveled extensively, lecturing and consulting internationally.

As a rabbinic scholar and lover of the works of many gedolim, he developed a lifelong passion for the writings of the Sochachover Rebbe, *Shem Mishmuel*.

A talmid chacham well versed in Jewish sources, he focused increasingly on Jewish morality and economics. He

## WEEKLY INSPIRATION

To be frank, sensitivity in general, and religious sensitivity in particular, is a rare phenomenon in this day and age. The modern Jew is in dire need of religious experience, of a great ecstasy in living as a Jew and “being involved” in Jewishness.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt"l (‘Community, Covenant and Commitment’ p. 337)

developed a course on the subject - 'the most important thing I've ever taught' - as a Bar Ilan University professor for more than 15 years.

This material, which he found appealed to Jew and Gentiles alike, became the central themes of his book 'With All Your Possessions'. In it, he painted a vivid portrait of 'Jewish Economic Man' - adhering to mutual responsibility, sanctification of daily life, and absolute morality. He also refuted anti-semitic slanders about Jewish business activity, highlighting the unique and highly ethical system of laws and customs central to Jewish life.

Through his teaching, his Institute for Ethics in Economics, and his many published works, Dr. Tamari has highlighted the relationship between Torah and Economics, contributing uniquely to the field in our developing state - a guiding light for living in an open society without compromising Torah truths. *Yehi Zichro Baruch.* ■

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## In Memoriam

# Dr. Meir Tamari ז"ל

*"I used to read his articles in Torah Tidbits. Noticeably different from the regular kind of articles - very interesting and insightful. But who was he?"*



Two ways to answer that question. First, let's Google him.

He was born in Cape Town, South Africa... graduated from the University of Cape Town with a degree in economics in 1948... He was an active member of the Zionist Bnei Akiva youth group, and in 1950, he joined other members of this group in moving to Israel... Kfar Darom, then Kibbutz Shluchot... In 1960, he became an economist at the Bank of Israel, attaining the status of Senior Economist in 1967... In 1971, he served as a special consultant to the UK Royal Commission on Small Firms, and later he was invited by the French Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) to make a comparison of corporate financial patterns in various countries... PhD from City University of London... senior lecturer in economics at Bar Ilan University... published several books - ranging from Jewish Business Ethics to commentaries on Torah and the Haftarat. His specialty, in everything he wrote, lectured, taught, spoke - JEWISH BUSINESS ETHICS...

Very impressive. What's the other way to answer the question, Who was Dr. Meir Tamari?

The personal way. Dr. Tamari was a passionate Jew and a sensitive human being. For him, there was no separating the strict adherence to Torah and Mitzvot from Ethics. Sounds simple and obvious, but we all know of Jews who do make that separation. Dr. Tamari took Torah values into the marketplace, and deplored as hypocritical, those Jews who seem to have forgotten about the Choshen Mishpat section of Shulchan Aruch.

Dr. Tamari had a twinkle in his eye and a good sense of humor. The fact that he took his column in Torah Tidbits so seriously, calling to check if he was under deadline, asking advice about what he should write, checking and double checking - in light of all his accomplishments - was truly amazing. For him there was no separation between Torah and secular pursuits. They were all Torah.



He was good person and a good Jew. יהי זכרו ברוך - *Phil Chernofsky*

# Real Life Rescues

## Bringing Good Deeds Into The World



Tiberias - Shimrit Cohen is a United Hatzalah EMT from Tiberias who also volunteers with the organization's emergency room (ER) assistance program at the Poriya Medical Center. As hospitals are approaching peak capacity with the influx of COVID patients, Shimrit knows that her volunteer shifts in the ER and activities as a United Hatzalah responder are now more vital than ever. Shimrit is so committed to helping others that she is also pursuing a degree in nursing. While volunteering in the ER, as an always on-call EMT, and a nursing student, may seem to be a lot for some people, Shimrit, who is a single mother of 8, accomplishes this with modest acknowledgment, saying she is merely a "messenger" to help do good deeds in the world.

One Tuesday morning in the middle of January, Shimrit was at home studying when she received an alert for a woman in labor. The devoted volunteer immediately dashed outside to her car and drove to the given street address. Shimrit drove down the foggy and rainy street searching for the address but unable to find the precise location.

Meanwhile, the expectant mother was on the floor of her home in the midst of rapid contractions, as her panicked husband was on the phone with dispatch. The husband was hysterical and kept on yelling for help, however in his frenzy, he had mistakenly told the dispatcher the incorrect address. By this point, multiple responders were now driving around trying to locate the birth, each of them having received the faulty information. Finally, the dispatcher managed to calm the father down enough to obtain the proper information and relayed it to the responders in the field. Shimrit raced over to the now correct address.

Shimrit ran inside together with fellow EMT Oriya Sadeh, and found the mother on the ground, pushing out a baby feet-first. It was going to be a footling breech birth. Shimrit, with her ER experience, knows that when babies are in the rare and dangerous footling breech position, the acceptable procedure is for the mother to be rushed into surgery for a c-section. Not having that luxury, Shimrit quickly caught and secured the baby and helped ease it through the birthing process causing as little harm to both the mother and child as possible, as the husband was still hysterically yelling for help. Shimrit saw that despite the positioning, the infant had not been harmed during the birth and the mother as well did not appear to have sustained any injury. Miraculously, this potentially dangerous birth culminated in a healthy baby boy.

Shimrit performed a rapid assessment, finding a perfect APGAR score. As newborns are unable to properly regulate their own temperatures, Shimrit knew that it was critical to ensure that the infant was warm. She dried the slippery newborn, placing him in clean and cozy sheets. Additional EMTs arrived and joined Shimrit. Shimrit started an IV for the mother and reassured the woman that her baby was healthy. The medics then clamped and cut the umbilical cord, and as soon as an ambulance arrived, they placed the mother and newborn inside. The father turned to Shimrit and her colleagues, and now significantly calmer, he thanked them profusely. Once the mother and baby were safely on the way to the hospital and the father was able to calm down, Shimrit took her leave and returned home to continue studying.



Shimrit spoke about the incident after the fact and said: "Being present at a birth can be difficult, especially when there are complications, but it is also a very beautiful thing. One needs to exude a sense of calm in order to help the mother relax and lower the stress level of other family members. As it was a particularly dangerous situation due to the breech birth, I am very thankful that both the mother and baby were safe."

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**Dr. Julie Goldstein**  
Rosh HaMidrasha,  
Director  
Of Masks and the  
Mishkan

Whether or not you are a person usually inclined to dress up for Purim, each of us will be wearing a mask this year, for obvious reasons. This time around, we are forced to hide our faces, as God hid Himself throughout the story of Purim, and to present ourselves—our words, emotions and facial expressions—through a barrier i.e. those little pieces of folded paper or fabric that we have all been sporting since around this time last year.

It is apropos, then, with the start of the month of Adar and Purim on the horizon,

to recognize that we are not the first Jews to be forced to filter ourselves by covering up with a mask. In fact, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Mencham Mendel Schneerson, in a famous series of talks delivered in the weeks immediately preceding Purim 1992, reminds us that Moshe Rabbeinu wore a “masveh” (veil) when he relayed God’s messages to Bnei Yisrael, removing it whenever he spoke to God Himself (Shemot 34: 33-35). The Lubavitcher Rebbe (in Likkutei Sihot, 18 Adar 1 5752/Feb. 18-22, 1992) explains that Moshe’s radiant visage as he descended the mountain after receiving the second luhot, which was a manifestation of his having been engaged in transcendent matters, acquired an out-of-this-world, pre-creative wisdom and achieved a kind of infinitude or ultimate

redemption, was too much for the Israelites to bear. In order for Moshe to be able to transmit God's message to the people in any kind of meaningful (and withstandable!) way, to bring metaphysical matters into the finite world, he had to don a mask. That which is most holy can only be introduced into and accepted by the mundane world if it is veiled.

This notion is confirmed in this week's parsha, which introduces us to the Mishkan as an edifice that carries the primordial divine holiness of the Garden of Eden, "masked" in physicality, in the form of wood, metals, dyes, and many other manner of man-made vessels and structures. According to Parshat Terumah, the Mishkan contains specific elements such as cherubim, plant art (flowers, palm trees, pomegranates, lilies) and a seven-branched structure—the Menorah—in the center, resembling Gan Eden which, the Torah tells us, is lush with plant life, guarded by cherubs and, of course, contains a very important tree—the Etz haDa'at—in its center.

Two crucial elements in the parallelism between the Mishkan and Gan Eden lead to the conclusion that the most elusive, esoteric elements and ideas become accessible to human beings when presented in human language and form. Firstly, you may notice that despite the parallels, there is a major difference between the Garden of Eden and the Mishkan. Gan Eden remains an authentically natural place, with live lush greenery created by the hands of God, while the Mishkan remains a structure crafted by humans, its plants



and flowers made of gold and where, according to the Torah itself (Devarim 16:21), no real tree may stand. At the end of the day, Eden is God's realm, a place of purely Divine vitality, where mankind was once welcome to encounter God. The Mishkan, on the other hand, is a human construct, a simulacrum of an Eden which

became inaccessible, a manmade pseudo-Eden which beckons God to encounter man in his human realm. It is only through this façade of human structures that human beings, Bnei Israel specifically, can encounter the Divine.

Secondly, Hazal associates the Menorah with the Etz HaDa'at. The Gemara (Baba Batra 25b) says "Harotzeh she'yahkhim, yadrin, vesimanakh menorah ba-darom" one who wishes to be wise should orient himself southward, which is symbolized by the Menorah in the south [of the Temple]," implying a connection between the Menorah and wisdom. The Netziv points out that the Menorah, symbolizing all forms of wisdom, must be made from one solid piece of gold - not welded together - since all wisdom has one elemental source.

According to the Maharal, R. Yonatan Eybeschutz and R. Kook, the seven branches of the Menorah represent the seven pillars of secular wisdom, knowledge, and science. Just as in Eden, that which appears in the image of a tree, may actually be a conduit to the most incorporeal realm accessible to humankind, the world of ideas itself.

According to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the veil worn by Moshe Rabbeinu, the facades we all wear as a cloak to our inner kedusha, will no longer be necessary in the time of Moshiah, when we will be able to withstand the intensity of the Divine and shine freely. This year, may the masks we will all wear on Purim be a reminder of the primordial depth that lies beneath them and may the masks of this year turn into the light of the year ahead. ■

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## וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַע

**T**he kids in the sixth grade class were celebrating a monumental occasion.

*They had just finished learning their first masechet of Gemara! They had put in hours of study and hard work and their efforts had truly paid off! The learning had both energized and inspired them. They couldn't wait to get started on the next masechet. At their class siyum, their Rebbe got up and presented them with a special prize for their accomplishment. Which of the following would be the more appropriate present – tickets to the local movie theater or beautifully bound personalized siddurim?*

I would venture to say that most of you probably opted for the latter. A spiritual action deserves a spiritual reward, not a physical one! And yet we find just the opposite in the second paragraph of Shema. In the paragraph of וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַע we describe the reward one receives for following Hashem's mitzvot and on the flip side, the punishment one receives for straying from Him. If we do the mitzvot, Hashem will give us all the material sustenance we could ask for – plenty of rain, bountiful crops, and a feeling of complete satiation. If we stray from Hashem, then the result will be the opposite – no rain, no crops, and

galut (exile). This is truly perplexing. We've worked so hard to succeed spiritually, to create a real relationship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu and to do His Mitzvot and He rewards us with full stomachs?! Doesn't that seem inappropriate? Wouldn't we expect a more spiritual compensation; Perhaps Olam HaBa (the World to Come) would be a more fitting reward?

The first answer is that yes, obviously we will be rewarded for all of our Mitzvot in Olam HaBa. That will be the ultimate reward. But we weren't put here in this world to focus only on the next. We need to live our lives to the fullest in this world, to enjoy the beauty around us, and to use it to serve Hashem, not because we want to earn a ticket into the next world but because we want to create a relationship with Him here and now in *this* world. This is also why there is absolutely no mention of Olam HaBa in the Torah and it is not majorly emphasized in Jewish literature.

The second answer is brought down by the Seforno (Devarim 11:13). He writes that these so-called rewards are really just the natural consequences of our actions. Hashem leads us in the way we want to be led. Therefore, if He sees we are trying to keep His commandments, He will make things easier for us (ie. - make sure we have rain, food to eat etc.) so we have the strength to continue keeping His commandments.

But if He sees we are purposely transgressing His commandments, He will make things harder for us (no rain, no food, etc) so that it is easier for us to continue sinning.

The material rewards here are not the ends, but the means. When we fulfill the mitzvot, Hashem gives us the material sustenance that we need in order to be free to do even more mitzvot. This, of course, is a very important message for us to remind ourselves of, every morning as we recite the Shema. When we look around and see all the good that has been granted to us, we need to take stock and realize that Hashem is giving those things to us as a “reward”; He is granting us the ability to serve Him with ease. Let’s take advantage and use all we have been given to enable us to create a real and meaningful relationship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. ■



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# Mishkan, Mikdash And Tents

In *Parshat Terumah*, God instructs Moshe *Rabbeinu* to build the *Mishkan*, (25:10) also called the Tent of meeting, the dwelling place for God's presence in this world. In this portion the *Mishkan* is also referred to as the *Mikdash*, "They shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them"(25:9). Why the use of two different words *Mishkan* and *Mikdash*?

The Shem MiShmuel (1855-1927) mentions that his father, the author of the *Avnei Nezer*, answered this question by quoting the Gemara in *Eruvin* that says that the words *Mishkan* and *Mikdash* are interchangeable. God's dwelling place is called *Mikdash*, the sanctuary of the Divine, when the people come to offer *Korbanot* in order to elevate themselves spiritually. It is called *Mishkan*, the Presence of the Divine, on the other hand, when God, so to speak, comes down to Earth, approaches the people of the nation.

These two names for God's dwelling represent the fact that our relationship with God can be initiated from two directions. When God initiates, when it

starts from above, it is called *Hitoraruta Dile'eila* – "an awakening from above". When the initiative starts from below, by us, and is directed upwards towards God it is called *Hitoraruta Dile'tata*. In modern vocabulary we would say that God is in search of man and man is in search of God.

Throughout the Corona pandemic people have been working hard to search out God and maintain the *Mikdash me'at*, as shuls are referred to, by organizing all kinds of outdoor minyanim. Someone standing on a porch, someone else in their garden, another on their outdoor staircase. In the summer with a piece of material for shade and in the winter tents were added – reminding of *Ohel Moed* – the first holy tent in the desert.

Just this past Shabbat I witnessed this *Hitoraruta Dile'tata* – awakening from below in peoples desire to pray together. My husband and I were walking on our way to the *Kotel*. We heard a little old man with a cap calling out "Mincha, Mincha" in the middle of Ben Yehuda street. There weren't so many people walking there at that time of day so he was happy when anyone considered the idea of joining their minyan. My husband asked him how many people he had already for a minyan – five/six he answered. We hesitantly agreed to help him out with his minyan, not knowing how long it would take to find

one. Another man joined as well, though he was adamant that he would only stay if there were already 9 men. We didn't have to wait long, another man in a wheelchair arrived for this minyan that was accessible for him. It was also a warm, welcoming place for the young Cohen-not more than 16, who was physically handicapped, and joined the minyan as well. As a Cohen, the young man was called up to the Torah first. He got up from his chair and approached the Torah with difficulty, to say the first blessing before the Torah reading. Since there was no Levi he said the second blessing as well. He was helped by an outstretched hand by other members of the minyan, made up of men from the whole Jewish spectrum- wearing all different types of head coverings; cap, kipa seruga, black kipa, black hat, or streimal. As I participated in that Shabbat afternoon prayer service, listening to the verses from the Torah "They shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them" I truly felt that God was with that quorum of people who worked so hard to search Him out and let Him in.



## RECIPE

Since we are in Adar – who's zodiac sign is a fish – this week's recipe is for fish. It is decorated with colorful vegetables to remind of the colored materials we were instructed to bring in this week's portion "gold, silver, copper, sky blue [wool], dark red [wool]..." (25:3) in order to build the *Mishkan* and construct all its tools and garments.

## COLORFUL FISH

- 1/2 kilo fish fillets
- Pepper to taste
- 1 small julienned beet
- 1-2 julienned carrot,
- 1/2 c. minced onion
- 1-2 julienned zucchini
- 1 tbsp. parsley
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 red pepper, thinly sliced
- Paprika hairs for garnish

Lay fish in pan. Sprinkle with pepper. Cover fish with vegetables, with red pepper and paprika hairs on the top. Cover with foil. Bake at 200 degrees C for about 15 minutes. ■

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15 The staves shall be in the rings of the Aron; they shall not be taken from it.

רש"י פרשת תרומה כה:טו

"לא יסרו ממנו" – לעולם

"They shall not be taken from it." – **Forever.**

There were many other vessels of the Mishkan that had poles, but they do not have a prohibition attached for their poles to never be removed. What makes the Aron unique?

The Sefer HaChinuch gives a practical reason for this. In the case that Bnei Yisrael were commanded to pack up camp and move quickly, the Aron would be ready to go, thereby avoiding any careless mistakes which could possibly cause the Aron to fall to the floor.

Rav Hirsch gives another approach.

He says the Aron represents the Torah. Unlike the other vessels in the Mishkan which were used for different Korbanot, the purpose of the Aron was to house the Torah. The Aron, with the poles constantly attached, represents that the Torah is not fixed in one place. The message of the poles is that wherever we go, the Torah must accompany us and serve as our guide in being Mekadesh/sanctifying all that is everywhere in life.

How often are we aware of God in our lives? Do we involve God in our lives? The Rebbe of Kotzk famously taught, "Where is God? Wherever you let him in." The Torah gives us a formula to have God involved in every facet of our lives such as: Dress, food, bodily functions, speech, money, etc. May we merit to feel Hashem's in our everyday lives.



**Yair Konigsberg**  
12th Grade, Modiin

## "The Hidden Meaning of the Lechem Hapanim"

In this week's parsha, we learn about the instructions to construct the כלים that would be used in the בית המקדש and משכן. One of the כלים that is discussed is the שלחן. The שלחן was used to hold the לחם הפנים. The Ramban explains that the reason the לחם הפנים was called by this name is because

פנים means in front of, and the bread was always before Hashem.

The לחם הפנים would stay on the שלחן all week, and according to the Gemara in Menachot there was never a time where the bread was not on the שלחן. Even when the Kohanim would switch out the bread at the end of the week, they made sure to slide the new bread on, causing the old bread to slide off. This ensured that there was always bread on the שלחן.

What was so important about the לחם הפנים that there could never be a time when it was not on the שלחן?

The לקח דעת explains based off of the Ramban on the פסוק that there is a special connection between natural occurrences in the world and blessings from Hashem. For example, a farmer plants many seeds and gives them all the same nutrients and amount of water, however not every seed grows. Why is that? It is because Hashem did not bless those certain seeds to grow.

The לקח הדעת explains that through the לחם הפנים, the most basic of foods, Hashem

wanted to establish the link between His blessings and the world. In the place where Hashem was most connected to the world, the בית המקדש, He established this connection.

May we soon be able to rebuild the בית המקדש and experience this connection with Hashem to the fullest extent.

■ שבת שלום

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Proceeds will go to developing the Esther Horgen Memorial Forest and Park in Tal Menashe, near the site where Esther was murdered.

*"How bittersweet to celebrate Purim, when we read the story of the triumph of Queen Esther, when we are mourning the loss of Esther Horgen."*

**-President Reuven Rivlin**

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**-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu**

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