

# Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1458 MAR 5<sup>TH</sup> '22 ב' אדר ב' תשפ"ב

פרשת פקודי

PARSHAT PEKUDEI

ב"ה

OU  
ISRAEL

וְעָשִׂיתָ עֵל

וּפְעָמֵינוּ יִזְדָּבַר  
מִתּוֹכֶם סְבִיבֵי



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שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT PEKUDEI

Candles 5:03PM • Havdala 6:17PM • Rabbeinu Tam 6:57PM

## This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

**Photograph by:** Eugene Weisberg **Design:** Joel Guberman

They are Paamon v'Rimon on a background of the Meil.

Rimon made of authentic techeilet, argamman and tolaat shani.

- Meil cilil techeilet from authentic techeilet woven by Yehudit Abrams

- Weaving of rimon and dying of tolaat shani by Orna Hershberg

- Paamon brass gold plated designed by Maayan Ayish based on paamon found in Ir David

Dying of techeilet and argamman, Joel Guberman

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Meron Nemirov // Liam Ratner



### KIDDUSH LEVANA ADAR BET

Earliest Kiddush Levana, 3 Days After Molad **4 Adar II/Sun. night Mar. 6**

7 Days After Molad **8 Adar II/ Thurs. night Mar. 10**

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana Until **15 Adar II/ Thurs. night Mar. 17, until 9:52 pm**

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed.- Shabbat

Mar. 2-12/ 29 Adar Aleph - 9 Adar Bet

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:15 - 5:03
Sunrise	6:05 - 5:53
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	8:58 - 8:51
Magen Avraham	8:22 - 8:15
Sof Zman Tefila	9:56 - 9:50
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:51 - 11:49
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	12:21 - 12:19
Plag Mincha	4:25 - 4:30
Sunset (Including Elevation)	5:42 - 5:49

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CANDLES	PEKUDEI	HAVDALA	VAYIKRA	
			Candles	Havdala
5:03	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	6:17	5:08	6:22
5:21	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	6:19	5:26	6:24
5:22	Beit Shemesh / RBS	6:17	5:27	6:22
5:19	Gush Etzion	6:17	5:24	6:22
5:20	Raanana / Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	6:18	5:25	6:23
5:19	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	6:17	5:24	6:22
5:20	Netanya	6:18	5:25	6:23
5:21	Be'er Sheva	6:18	5:26	6:23
5:20	Rehovot	6:18	5:25	6:23
5:03	Petach Tikva	6:18	5:08	6:23
5:19	Ginot Shomron	6:17	5:24	6:22
5:09	Haifa / Zichron	6:17	5:14	6:23
5:18	Gush Shiloh	6:16	5:23	6:21
5:20	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	6:18	5:25	6:23
5:19	Giv'at Ze'ev	6:17	5:24	6:22
5:19	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	6:17	5:24	6:22
5:21	Ashkelon	6:19	5:26	6:24
5:20	Yad Binyamin	6:18	5:25	6:23
5:12	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	6:15	5:17	6:21
5:17	Golan	6:15	5:22	6:20

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 6:57PM • next week - 7:02pm

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



One of the most challenging elements of my position at OU Israel is putting together the budget.

Toward the end of each year, my team, board and I must determine our fundraising goals and identify which crucial programs will receive larger funds in the year ahead. While this decision is one that many leaders face, each OU Israel program plays a weighty role in the future of Am Yisrael, whether it is saving the lives of teens at risk or inspiring English-speaking Jews via diverse creative mediums, such as shiurim, events, Torah Tidbits etc... It is therefore with trepidation that the team, led by OU Israel's CFO David Katz, and Comptroller, Sara Berelowitz, tries to find ways to provide each program with as much funding as possible. As they say in Hebrew, *'the blanket is too narrow to cover everyone.'* Once we reach a decision, we shift our focus to maximizing each program to its fullest with the budget available.

For those interested in understanding how we make our budgeting decisions, it's quite simple as we have one goal in mind: **ensuring the vitality and destiny of Am Yisrael at whatever cost.** Most often this means working with smaller marketing and PR budgets, investing whatever funding we have into directly supporting Klal Yisrael.

As you can imagine, this exercise never gets easier and it is disheartening when I

meet people who have not heard about the amazing efforts of OU Israel. To be fair, it is understandable when speaking with a native Israeli who lives in an area that our programs do not reach (yet...). But this past week I had a somewhat painful experience when realizing that some members within the international OU network are only just learning about the essential role OU Israel plays for Klal Yisrael within our Holy Land, illustrating the ripple effect of our budgeting decisions.

In 2020 the OU appointed two new members to its executive team: Rabbi Moshe Hauer (EVP) and Rabbi Dr. Josh Joseph (EVP and COO). Due to Covid (aside from a short visit by Rabbi Hauer) they have been unable to visit Israel since their appointments, I have made an effort to maintain the weekly appointments I have with them, during which I provide updates on various OU Israel activities.

Finally, this past week, Rabbi Joseph, his Chief of Staff Yoni Cohen, assistant Racheli



Schwartz and Rabbi Hauer arrived in Israel, and we filled their days with meaningful engagements, events and meetings to give them a taste of the impact of OU Israel programs. Throughout the week I had the pleasure of introducing Rabbi Joseph and Yoni to our devoted staff around the country who work tirelessly to support the various needs of Am Yisrael. From Kiryat Gat to Dimona, Sderot to Beit Shemesh and Maale Adumim, our days began early in the morning and ended late at night. Each day was uplifting, inspiring and eye opening.

Additionally, with a busy schedule at the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, Rabbi Hauer gave a shiur at the OU Israel Center in memory of his late father, Rav Binyamin ben Rav Moshe z"l, on the evening of his Yahrzeit. It was wonderful to see the packed room of those who traveled to listen to the shiur, as well as those who joined virtually. It was thought provoking and powerful. For those who missed it, you can find a link to the recording here: <https://www.ou.org/holidays/purim-and-the-beit-hamikdash/>

In all honesty, after working for the OU for 21 years I assumed the impact of OU Israel is apparent. But after only the first day of their visit, during which we spent time meeting key staff members, having lunch with the extended team and a late visit to the Pearl and Harold Zula outreach center, I saw the shock on Rabbi Joseph's face as he began to see with his own eyes just how dedicated the OU Israel team is and how vital the OU Israel programs are. As you can imagine, his appreciation grew by the hour as the week unfolded.

Rabbi Joseph's reaction is the very reason why I sometimes ask myself if I am making the right budgeting decisions. It would be very "simple" for us to shut down clubs that we run in Kiryat Gat or Sderot (just as an example) and allocate the funds to marketing efforts that would help OU Israel share our impact with the world. Fortifying the future generations of Am Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael, I choose to spend our budget on investing in the next generation and continuing to serve as a Torah resource for the growing Anglo-Israeli population, at the cost of raising awareness.

This very decision is one of the reasons why I am sharing this experience with our Torah Tidbits readers. I am hoping that in response to this week's article, you will reach out and share the impact that OU Israel has on you. Moreover, I ask that you help us spread the word as we aim to secure further funds so that we can invest in marketing and PR efforts to further maximize our reach.

I remain grateful to the OU executive team who, despite the magnitude of their global responsibilities, spent time creating meaningful connections with all the OU Israel family members they encountered. We are fortunate to have such dedicated leaders at the helm of our organization as the OU continues to support and inspire Klal Yisrael around the world.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman  
Executive Director, OU Israel  
[aberman@ouisrael.org](mailto:aberman@ouisrael.org)

# PEKUDEI



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



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



### 1<sup>st</sup> aliya (Shemot 38:21-39:1)

An accounting was made of all the raw materials used to build the Mishkan: the gold, silver, copper and what they were used for. The fine textiles were used for the Kohen's garments, just as G-d commanded Moshe.

The Torah records how the materials gathered from the people were used. That is interesting but why is it here? What purpose is served by this accounting?

Once Moshe comes down from the mountain with the second luchot, a new chapter dawns for the Jewish people. It is the chapter of autonomy. We now are free. These are the first steps of the Jewish nation. We are embarking on our national endeavor: governance, leadership, budgets, building. The Mishkan is the first national project. All eyes are on it. Will our Jewish project be no different than every other power

Condolences to  
Miriam Knecht and family  
on the passing of her  
**FATHER z"l**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

structure known to mankind? They all follow the same formula: build national structures by taxing the people. And skimming a bit off the top for the leaders. Moshe sets the tone for the Jewish nation. We are not skimmers. What is conspicuously absent in the description here is the verse: And G-d spoke to Moshe commanding. No command. This is Moshe's initiative. To set the tone of integrity. Serving G-d, not serving ourselves.



### 2<sup>nd</sup> aliya (39:2-21) The Efod

(skirt) was made from colored materials as G-d commanded Moshe. The fine jewels with the names of Israel chiseled were placed on the Efod shoulders, as G-d commanded Moshe. The **Choshen** (Breastplate), of the material of the Efod, was made with the 12 jewels mounted on it, hung from the shoulder pieces of the Efod, as G-d commanded Moshe.

The Kohen's garments stand in contrast to the rest of the Mishkan. They move. Dynamic. The building of the Mishkan does not move. It is stationary. The Aron, Menorah, Shulchan, Incense altar; all stationary. Static. The Kohen's garments move with him. It would seem that there are 2 simultaneous notions in the Mishkan. There is constancy, permanence, an unchanging notion symbolized by the consistency of the building and its vessels. And then there is dynamism, movement, change symbolized by the Kohen. In our service of G-d, on one level our covenantal relationship is solid, unchanging, consistent, daily service. But at the same time our world changes constantly. Every moment is different, new, unique. We grow, we age, our

circumstances change, our world changes. We live in a dynamic, ever changing world. The constancy of our covenantal relationship is reflected in the solid material of the vessels and the building of the Mishkan. The fluidity of life is reflected in the garments of the Kohen that move with him, expressing our service of Him through all the exigencies of life.



**3<sup>rd</sup> aliya (39:22-32) The Meil** (robe) was made of Techelet, with pomegranates and bells

on the hem as G-d commanded Moshe. The **K'tonet** (linen robe) was made for all the Kohanim, as was the **Turban** and **Belt** as G-d commanded Moshe. The golden **Tzitz** (on the forehead) was made and fastened as G-d commanded Moshe.

Names are engraved on the Kohen's garments. But whose names? The names of the 12 tribes of the Jewish people are engraved on 2 jewels and placed on the shoulders of the Kohen Gadol. In addition the same 12 names are engraved individually on jewels and placed on the breastplate. But besides our names, the name of G-d is engraved on the Tzitz, a gold plate that hung from the Kohen Gadol's turban onto his forehead. Our names on the heart and shoulder. His Name on the head. Rav Soloveitchik viewed these in the context of halacha. G-d's name on our brain represents the pristine halacha in its theoretical sense. The names of the Jewish people on the heart, fixed to the Choshen Mishpat, represents the application of halacha in its practical sense, taking into account the uniqueness of each situation, judging with the sensitivity and tenderness of the heart.

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**4<sup>th</sup> aliya (39:33-43)** All the work was completed as G-d commanded Moshe. All of the completed work was brought to Moshe: the building of the Mishkan, the vessels, the outer courtyard, the Kohen's garments. Moshe saw that it was all done as G-d had commanded Him. Moshe blessed the people.

The repetition of the phrase "as G-d commanded Moshe" is striking. It occurs 18 times. This creates a subtle contrast to the golden calf. Unlike the terrible violation of His command at the golden calf, here, everyone acts in complete accordance with what was commanded.



**5<sup>th</sup> aliya (40:1-16)** G-d commands Moshe: On the first day of the first month, assemble the

Mishkan. Moshe is instructed in the exact order to place the vessels and the building. He is to clothe the Kohanim and anoint them. Moshe did all that G-d commanded him.

The actual assembly of the structure is on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, year 2. One year after the Exodus. The Exodus was a beginning. Hence Nissan became the first month of the year. This too is a beginning. Hence, 1<sup>st</sup> day, 1<sup>st</sup> month.



**6<sup>th</sup> aliya (40:17-27)** On the first day of the first month of the second year, the Mishkan was assembled, in the exact order Moshe was instructed by G-d.



**7<sup>th</sup> aliya (40:28-38)** Moshe completed the work. A cloud covered the Ohel Moed; the

glory of G-d filled the Mishkan. Moshe could not enter due to the cloud and the

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glory of G-d. The lifting of the cloud was a signal to travel. The cloud of G-d was on the Mishkan daily, fire at night, visible to all the Jewish people.

This short aliya betrays its profundity. The culmination of the building is the descent of the cloud, indicating G-d's presence. We are familiar with the cloud. When G-d wants to indicate He is present, or more accurately, the Shechina, She is present, a cloud appears. We saw the cloud at Har Sinai. And here.

This deceptively simple description is the culmination of the entire Torah to this point. And it is the story of G-d's love for us. The entire story of the Torah to this point is the story of increasingly intimate reaches of G-d for man. He created the world, withdrawing to make room for man. When Adam and Eve sinned, He did not destroy them. When Cain killed Abel, Cain wandered the world but was not destroyed. In Noah's time, He saved mankind. He made a promise to not destroy the world. Each of these expresses G-d's commitment to man; His generosity and love for man. He promised the land to Avraham. Watched while Avraham's children stumbled, repeating His promise to them. Took the Jewish people out of Egypt, though undeserved. Reaching for man over and over, drawing the Jewish people to Him. Giving the Torah to the Jewish people, coming down to Har Sinai to speak. And in response to the greatest insult of the golden calf, giving a second set of tablets. As much as the Torah is the

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story of the Jewish people, it is really the story of G-d's reach for man: reaching for man, pulling man closer and moving closer to man. It is the story of the Faithful One, pulling us to Him, pulling Avraham, pulling us out of Egypt, moving closer to us at Sinai. And finally, descending to settle in the midst of the people in the Mishkan. A home for the Shechina in the midst of the people. The Mishkan is the home for the

Shechina in this world.

This is not rhetoric. This is the simple reading of the flow of the Torah. Everything leads to this moment: the settling of the Shechina in our midst. It is a radical thought. G-d dwelling in this world? But that is what the Torah says. Radical. And profound.

We are all familiar with the oft-cited expression that the G-d of the Christians is the G-d of love. Well, the G-d of the Jewish people is the G-d of love. He pursues us unrelentingly, even when we insult Him and spurn Him. And settles in our midst.

Human beings want to be wanted. We want to know that someone cares, someone loves us. Well that is the story of the Torah. That G-d's unremitting love culminates in His desire to dwell amongst us. Us? Yes. He wants to settle in the Mishkan.

And so ends the description of His pursuit of us. The rest of the Torah will be how we reciprocate in pursuit of Him.

The book of Exodus is called Sefer HaGeula, the book of redemption. But not just the redemption from Egypt. But the redemption of man from the absurdities and vagaries of life, the meaningless folly



## STATS

	Pekudei
Sedra Among 54	23rd
Sedra Of Sh'mot's 11	11th
Lines	158.7
Rank (Among The 54)	41st
Parshiyot	20
P'tuchot	6
S'tumot	14
P'sukim	92
Rank (Torah/Sh'mot)	40/10
Words	1182
Rank (Torah/Sh'mot)	42/9
Letters	4432
Rank (Torah/Sh'mot)	44/10



## MITZVOT

There are no mitzvot in Parshat Pekudei

## A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

Rav, Beit Kneset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

In the last Pasuk of the Parsha it says

"כי ענן ה' על המשכן... בכל מסעיהם" (מ:לח)

"For the cloud of G-d was upon the Mishkan...throughout all their journeys." (40:38)

If the cloud of glory covered the Tabernacle only when it encamped, why does the Torah say it covered the Tabernacle throughout all their journeys?

Rashi says that an encampment is also called a journey. The Yalkut Yehuda (Rav Yehuda Leib Lazarov 1875-1939) teaches us from this that even when the Jewish people enjoy calm and peacefulness and it seems that they have found a suitable place to settle down, we must remember that "an encampment is also called a journey."

We must remember that our ultimate and permanent home is only the Holy Land. All our other "encampments" as a people throughout history are merely temporary stops on the way to our real destination of Eretz Yisrael. Shabbat Shalom

of existence to the glorious and majestic moment of the Shechina embracing us. In the Shechina's embrace of us, all of life gains meaning.

## HAFTARAH

### 1 MELACHIM 7:51-8:21

This week's *haftorah* describes the dedication of Shlomo's Temple, following the theme of this week's Torah reading: the dedication of the desert Mishkan.

The construction of the Beit Hamikdash was completed. King Shlomo assembled the leaders and elders of the tribes to Yerushalayim, and amidst great fanfare the Leviim transported the Aron from its temporary location in the City of David and installed it in the Kodesh Kodashim chamber in the Beit Hamikdash. Immediately, Hashem's presence appeared in the Beit Hamikdash, in the form of a smoky cloud.

King Shlomo then blessed Hashem. He recalled the history of the sanctuary, how his father, King David, had wanted to build it—but was told by Hashem that it would be his son who would accomplish this feat. “And the L-rd has established His word that He spoke, and I have risen up in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the L-rd spoke, and have built a house for the name of the L-rd, the G-d of Israel. And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein (is) the covenant of the Lord, which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.” ■

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## THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB  
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## IN THE PARSHA

# Above Suspicion

I have written and lectured extensively on the topic of Jewish leadership. I have frequently indicated that I consider Moses our teacher, Moshe Rabbeinu, a role model for those who would be leaders.

Once, after a lecture on just this topic, I opened the floor to a question-and-answer session. I have always found such sessions useful and instructive. The questions that are raised by the audience are often quite provocative, raising unanticipated issues.

On this particular occasion, a gentleman in the audience raised a question which encouraged me to think long and hard. He asked, "Rabbi, can you recall a moment in your own career when Moses' example influenced your leadership behavior? What specific lesson did you learn from Moses?"

At first, a number of possibilities came

to mind. After all, Moses was a teacher, an advocate for the people, a person who came to the aid of the oppressed, a selfless person. Surely there are many aspects of Moses' life that I have tried, however inadequately, to emulate.

But after some introspection, I recalled one specific incident and shared it with the audience. I told them that the one time I most consciously followed Moses' example was the time when I was entrusted with some Chanukah *gelt*.

When I was a child, I remember fondly how my grandfather would gather all of his grandchildren around the Chanukah *menorah*, have us line up in order of our ages, and distribute to each of us a silver dollar, Chanukah *gelt*. Many still practice this custom, although I suspect that nowadays far more than a silver dollar is distributed.

One year, back when I was the rabbi of my former synagogue, I received a phone call from a gentleman just a few days before Chanukah. This gentleman was one of the influential trustees of a major charitable foundation. I had interacted with him many times with regard to proposals I submitted to the foundation for grants to community

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institutions. He typically studied these proposals very assiduously and asked very demanding questions of me about these proposals. He would say, "There is much that I find worthwhile in your proposal. My tendency to be generous inclines me to grant you the funds you request, but I cannot be generous with someone else's money."

He voted against almost every proposal that I submitted.

One year, just a few days before Chanukah, he called. At that point, none of my proposals for charity was even under consideration. I was surprised by his call and even more surprised when he asked me to lunch that very day.

We met at a local restaurant and chatted about all sorts of things for the better part of an hour. Finally, he asked me if I knew what Chanukah *gelt* was. He himself had fond memories of the Jewish customs he had experienced in his childhood.

When I assured him that I knew very well what Chanukah *gelt* was, he withdrew an envelope from his pocket and said, "Here is a check for Chanukah *gelt*. I know that you control a discretionary charity fund and I'd like you to deposit this check in that fund for the use of truly needy families."

Of course, I thanked him profusely for the donation. I did not think it was proper to open the envelope in his presence, so I didn't open it until I returned to my car. I was astonished to find that the sum was



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easily equal to the yearly salary of most of the members of my congregation. When I looked at the check more carefully, I noted that he had made out the check to me personally, and not to my discretionary fund.

I cannot deny that I immediately heard the loud voice of temptation. But, along with that voice, another voice was heard, and it uttered nothing other than the first verse of this week's Torah portion, *Parshat Pekudei*, (*Exodus 38:21-40:38*): "These are the records of the Tabernacle...which were drawn up at Moses' bidding...under the direction of Itamar son of Aaron the Priest."

The people had contributed vast amounts of silver and gold and other precious materials for the construction of the Tabernacle. Moses, and only Moses, was in charge. He was, in the words of the Midrash, a *gizbar*, the comptroller of those funds. Technically, he was accountable to no one. He did not have to make a reckoning, and he certainly did not have to invite another person into the process.

But our verse tells us that he not only initiated a reckoning, but he invited his nephew, Itamar, to hold him to account. He insisted upon full accountability for every bit of the material collected.

*Midrash Rabbah* comments, making use

of other biblical verses: "A dependable man will receive many blessings, but one in a hurry to get rich will not go unpunished (*Proverbs 28:20*).' Moses was a dependable man, as is written, 'Not so with my servant Moses; he is trusted throughout my household (*Numbers 12:7*).' He alone was the *gizbar*, yet he invited others to perform the accounting...our verse does not read, 'These are the records which were drawn up by Moses,' but rather, 'These are the records which were drawn up at Moses bidding.' Moses asked to be held accountable, and did what he could to be assured that he would be held accountable."

Getting back to that cold pre-Chanukah afternoon, I am proud to say that my conscience prevailed. It was in the days before cell phones, but I immediately went to the nearest phone booth and called my "Itamar," a respected member of my congregation. I told him that I held this magnanimous gift in my hands and wanted him to know about it. I asked him to form a small committee which would decide exactly how to distribute the "Chanukah gelt" to those who needed it the most. Until today, we jokingly refer to that committee as "the Itamar committee."

The commentary known as *Torah*

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*Temimah*, written by the early-20<sup>th</sup>-century rabbi, Rabbi Baruch Epstein, opens his remarks on this week's *parsha* with a citation from an earlier *halachic* authority known as Bach: "Although a trustee of charity who has proven himself trustworthy need not be scrutinized, it is, nevertheless, advisable that he give a full reckoning of his collections and distributions, as did Moses our teacher."

Long after the incident with the Chanukah *gelt*, I came upon this astute remark in the book *The Transparent Society* by David Brin: "When it comes to privacy and accountability, people always demand the former for themselves and the latter for everyone else."

Not so with Moses. He demanded accountability for himself, and so should we all. ■



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Dedicated by  
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## Integrity in Public Life

There is a verse so familiar that we don't often stop to reflect on what it means. It is the line from the first paragraph of the Shema, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your *me'od*" (Deut. 6:5) That last word is usually translated as "strength" or "might". But Rashi, following the Midrash and Targum, translates it as with all your "wealth".

If so, the verse seems unintelligible, at least in the order in which it is written. "With all your soul" was understood by the Sages to mean, "with your life" if need be. There are times, thankfully very rare indeed, when we are commanded to give up life itself rather than commit a sin or a crime. If that is the case then it should go without saying that we should love God with all our wealth, meaning even if it

demands great financial sacrifice. Yet Rashi and the Sages say that this phrase applies to those "to whom wealth means more than life itself."

Of course, life is more important than wealth. Yet the Sages also knew that, in their words, *Adam bahul al mammono*, meaning: people do strange, hasty, ill-considered and irrational things when money is at stake (Shabbat 117b). Financial gain can be a huge temptation, leading us to acts that harm others and ultimately ourselves. So when it comes to financial matters, especially when public funds are involved, there must be no room for temptation, no space for doubt as to whether it has been used for the purpose for which it was donated. There must be scrupulous auditing and transparency. Without this there is moral hazard: the maximum of temptation combined with the maximum of opportunity.

Hence the parsha of *Pekudei*, with its detailed account of how the donations to the building of the *Mishkan* were used:

"These are the amounts of the materials used for the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Testimony, which were recorded at Moses' command by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the Priest." (Ex. 38:21)

The passage goes on to list the exact amounts of gold, silver and bronze collected, and the purposes to which it was put. Why did Moses do this? A Midrash suggests an answer:

“They gazed after Moses” (Ex. 33:8) – People criticised Moses. They used to say to one another, “Look at that neck. Look at those legs. Moses is eating and drinking what belongs to us. All that he has belongs to us.” The other would reply: “A man who is in charge of the work of the Sanctuary – what do you expect? That he should not get rich?” As soon as he heard this, Moses replied, “By your life, as soon as the Sanctuary is complete, I will make a full reckoning with you.”<sup>1</sup>

Moses issued a detailed reckoning to avoid coming under suspicion that he had personally appropriated some of the donated money. Note the emphasis that the accounting was undertaken not by Moses himself but “by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar,” in other words, by independent auditors.

There is no hint of these accusations in the text itself, but the Midrash may be based on the remark Moses made during the Korach rebellion:

“I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I wronged any of them.” (Num. 16:15)

Accusations of corruption and personal enrichment have often been levelled against leaders, with or without justification. We might think that since God sees all we do, this is enough to safeguard against wrongdoing. Yet Judaism does not say this.

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1 *Tanchuma, Buber, Pekudei, 4.*



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The Talmud records a scene at the deathbed of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, as the master lay surrounded by his disciples:

They said to him, “Our master, bless us.” He said to them, “May it be God’s will that the fear of heaven shall be as much upon you as the fear of flesh and blood.” His disciples asked, “Is that all?” He replied, “Would that you obtained no less than such fear! You can see for yourselves the truth of what I say: when a man is about to commit a transgression, he says, I hope no man will see me.” (Brachot 28b)

When humans commit a sin they worry that other people might see them. They forget that God certainly sees them. Temptation befuddles the brain, and no one should believe they are immune to it.

A later passage in Tanach seems to indicate that Moses’ account was not strictly necessary. The Book of Kings relates an episode in which, during the reign of King Yehoash, money was raised for the restoration of the Temple:

“They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty.” (II Kings 12:16)

Moses, a man of complete honesty, may thus have acted “beyond the strict requirement of the law.”<sup>2</sup>

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2 A key concept in Jewish law (see, e.g., *Brachot 7a, 45b, Bava Kamma 99b*), meaning *supererogation, doing more, in a*

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It is precisely the fact that Moses did not *need* to do what he did that gives the passage its force. There must be transparency and accountability when it comes to public funds even if the people involved have impeccable reputations. People in positions of trust must be, and be *seen to be*, individuals of moral integrity. Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, had already said this when he told Moses to appoint subordinates to help him in the task of leading the people. They should be, he said,

“Men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain.” (Ex. 18:21)

Without a reputation for honesty and incorruptibility, judges cannot ensure that justice is seen to be done. This general principle was derived by the Sages from the episode in the Book of Numbers when the Reubenites and Gadites expressed their wish to settle on the far side of the Jordan where the land provided good grazing ground for their cattle (Numbers 32:1-33). Moses told them that if they did so, they would demoralise the rest of the nation. They would give the impression that they were unwilling to cross the Jordan and fight with their brothers in their battles to conquer the land.

The Reubenites and Gaddites made it clear that they were willing to be in the front line of the troops, and would not return to the far side of the Jordan until the land had been fully conquered. Moses accepted the proposal, saying that if they kept their word, they would be “clear [*veheyitem neki'im*] before the Lord and before Israel” (Num. 32:22). This phrase

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*positive sense, than the law requires.*

entered Jewish law as the principle that “one must acquit oneself before one’s fellow human beings as well as before God.”<sup>3</sup> It is not enough to do right. We must be *seen to do right*, especially when there is room for rumour and suspicion.

There are several instances in the early rabbinic literature of applications of this rule. So, for example, when people came to take coins for sacrifices from the Shekel Chamber in the Temple, where the money was kept:

They did not enter the chamber wearing either a bordered cloak or shoes or sandals or tefillin or an amulet, lest if he became poor people might say that he became poor because of an iniquity committed in the chamber, or if he became rich people might

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3 Mishnah, Shekalim 3:2.

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say that he became rich from the appropriation in the chamber. For it is a person's duty to be free of blame before men as before God, as it is said: "and be clear before the Lord and before Israel," (Num. 32:22), and it also says: "So shall thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (Prov. 3:4).<sup>4</sup>

Those who entered the chamber were forbidden to wear any item of clothing in which they could hide and steal coins. Similarly, when charity overseers had funds left over, they were not permitted to change copper for silver coins of their own money: they had to make the exchange with a third party. Overseers in charge of a soup kitchen were not allowed to purchase surplus food when there were no poor people to whom to distribute it. Surpluses had to be sold to others so as not to arouse suspicion that the charity overseers were profiting from public funds. (Pesachim 13a.)

The Shulchan Aruch rules that charity collection must always be done by a minimum of two individuals so that each can see what the other is doing.<sup>5</sup> There is a difference of opinion between Rabbi Yosef Karo and Rabbi Moshe Isserles on the need to provide detailed accounts. Rabbi Yosef Karo rules on the basis on the passage in II Kings – "They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty" (II Kings 12:15) – that no

formal accounting is required from people of unimpeachable honesty. Rabbi Moshe Isserles however says that it is right to do so because of the principle, "Be clear before the Lord and before Israel."<sup>6</sup>

Trust is of the essence in public life. A nation that suspects its leaders of corruption cannot function effectively as a free, just, and open society. It is the mark of a good society that public leadership is seen as a form of service rather than a means to power, which is all too easily abused. Tanach is a sustained tutorial in the importance of high standards in public life. The Prophets were the world's first social critics, mandated by God to speak truth to power and to challenge corrupt leaders. Elijah's challenge to King Ahab, and the protests of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah against the unethical practices of their day, are classic texts in this tradition, establishing for all time the ideals of equity, justice, honesty and integrity. A free society is built on moral foundations, and those must be unshakeable.

Moses' personal example, in giving an accounting of the funds that had been collected for the first collective project of the Jewish people, set a vital precedent for all time. ■

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6 *Ibid.*, 257:2.

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4 *Ibid.*

5 *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 257:1.*



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As our parasha closes Sefer Sh'mot with a final accounting of the Mishkan construction and with its final assembly, so too does our haftarah review the final assembly of the Bet HaMikdash with the placement of the Holy Aron into the Kodesh Kodashim. With that act Hashem's Shechina enters the Holy Temple through a cloud that fills the Bet HaMikdash and prevents the Kohanim from carrying out the Avodah – the sacrificial rite. This wonder mirrors that which the Kohanim experienced upon the completion of the Mishkan – a cloud filling the Tabernacle and preventing the Kohanim from entering - as our parasha depicts in its final psukim.

Understandably the personalities that are highlighted in each story reflect the 490 years that separated the events, with each story focusing upon the leaders of their respective undertakings. In the parasha, we read the name of Moshe some twelve times and in our haftarah, we find the name of Shlomo mentioned seven times.

Interestingly, we find another name that repeats in the haftarah, one that is found almost as often as that of King Shlomo..... the name of David HaMelech, which is

somewhat puzzling. Certainly we know that David had hoped to build the Bet Mikdash and we also know that Hashem promised that the task would be accomplished by his son. In fact, both facts are mentioned by Shlomo in our haftarah. But why was it that David's name is found six times in these few verses? Why was that so important?

I direct you to the opening of our haftarah, the final verse of the seventh perek of M'lachim A that serves as an introduction to the haftarah. When all of the work for the Bet HaMikdash was completed, Shlomo brought the gold, silver and utensils that David had sanctified, and had placed in the treasury of "Bet Hashem". The treasury of the "House of Hashem"? There was NO House of Hashem in David's lifetime?! There was only a tent! What is the text referring to??

At the very outset of the "David Saga" we read of his defeat of Golyat in which we read a seemingly minor detail. We are told that, after his victory, David took the weapons of Golyat and brought them to Yerushalayim and placed them in the treasuries of the House of Hashem (eventually, since Yerushalayim had not yet been



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conquered). Similarly, following his many military victories, we read how David took the precious booty, the gold, the silver and the copper vessels, brought them to Yerushalayim and consecrated them to Hashem (Shmuel B 8: 7,10-12). And if any more proof is necessary, I turn your attention to Divrei HaYamim A 29: 1-4 where David himself enumerates the wealth he gathered and consecrated to the yet-to-be-built Bet HaMikdash.

There could not be a discussion of the completion of the Temple construction without a recognition of King David. We had to realize that David didn't simply "want" to build the Bet HaMikdash – he yearned for it, he prayed for it and even dedicated a perek in Tehillim to his ache and longing (132).

But wanting was not enough. He also gathered all that he could for a building he would never see. Is there any question then, as to why we begin every morning service with 'Mizmor Shir Chanukat HaBayit...L'David', the prayer that David composed for the eventual dedication of the Bet HaMikdash that he would never attend?

And is it any question now, why we find his name so often in our haftarah?!! ■

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# RABBI SHALOM

## ROSNER

Rav Kehilla, Nofei HaShemesh  
Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org  
Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

# Protecting The Torah

The Tzlach in his *hakedama* to *Shas* talks about the significance of *Torah Shebeal Peh*. He asks why is it that we refer to a tractate of gemara as a “messeches”?

The Tosfos Yom Tov and others suggest that the word “messeches” is derived from the word “masecha” (mask- appropriate with Purim around the corner) to depict that one may think they know the contents of the gemara, yet as they dig deeper, they uncover new insights on a variety of topics.

Others suggest, the term is derived from the word “masuch” as in *yayin masuch* that connotes a mixture. Each tractate is not limited to one topic but contains a plethora of information on a variety of subjects. Irrespective of the name of a *messeches*, in seder *moed* there are insights on *nezikim and taharos*.

The Tzlach offers an alternative

explanation based on a pasuk in our parsha: (shemos 40:3). וְסִכַּתְךָ עַל הָאָרֶן אֶת הַפָּרֹכֶת. *And you shall spread the paroches (dividing curtain) toward the Aron.*

## They suggest that we be “open-minded” about contemporary norms and values

The *paroches* covered the Aron and offered it protection. The Aron symbolizes *Torah Shebiksav* (the written Torah), as it housed the *Luchos*. The Torah uses the word *v'sakosa* to refer to the *paroches* covering the Aron. The *paroches* symbolizes the *Torah Shebeal Peh*. Just as the *paroches* protects the Aron, so too the *Torah Shebeal Peh* protects the *Torah Shebiksav*. One cannot fully comprehend the Torah without the interpretation provided by the Mishna and Gemara. The only way to enter the Kodesh Kodashim is through the

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*paroches*. Similarly, the only way to interpret the *Torah Shebiksav* is through a comprehensive understanding of the *Torah Shebeal Peh*.

Throughout the generations, there were attempts to reject the teachings of *Torah Shebeal Peh* and to reinterpret and “adapt” the *Torah Shebiksav* to be more appropriate to the modern era. We must keep in mind that as the *The Gemara* (Shabbat 31b) states that when a person passes away, one of the questions that Hashem will ask of them is: “*Kavata itim laTorah?*” Did you set aside time to study Torah?” But we have, on occasion, suggested another interpretation. “Did you adjust the times – the norms and influences of the day – to the precepts of the Torah rather than trying to adjust the Torah to fit with the times?” The influence should be from within the Torah environment to the outside world and not the opposite. Some people try to adapt the Torah to modern times. They suggest that we be “open-minded” about contemporary norms and values. We say that, on the contrary, we need to open our minds to accept the Torah and adapt our lives to it. As the *Tzalach* teaches us, the *paroches* protects the Aron - the *Torah Shebeal Peh* is the sole entrance through which to interpret the *Torah Shebiksav*. May we be able to learn many *messechtos* and fully appreciate the beauty of the Torah. ■

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# Cloud Connection

The grand finale of *Sefer Shemot* describes the *Shechina's* Presence filling the *Mishkan* and the cloud that hovered above it (*Shemot 40:39-38*). When the cloud was stationary, the people would rest; they only moved when the cloud lifted. It is surprising then, that the last verse relates how the cloud was with the camp when they traveled. It would seem from the previous verses that the cloud was only present when they were encamped. Further, why does *Sefer Shemot* end with such an emphasis on the clouds?

Rashi, sensitive to this question, explains that the place where *Am Yisrael* rested is also referred to as their travels, that is where the cloud descended. Rav Kaufman, in *Mishchat Shemen*, expounds upon Rashi, teaching that the whole purpose

of their setting up camp was so that they could continue traveling. This is equally true in our lives. We are all wired to need time for rest, to eat, to be involved in the mundane aspects of our lives. It is impossible to 'travel' and be spiritually engaged in perpetuum. However, we must elevate those moments of rest and regard them in the context of our *avodat Hashem*. Our downtime should be a means of regenerating our energies so we can continue to serve Hashem with energy and positivity. *Bilam* compares the Jews to "crouching lions" (*Bamidbar 24:9*). When a lion wants to pounce on his prey, he crouches down to give him the force to jump even higher. Likewise, we rest to propel us higher in our service of Hashem.

The Slonimer Rebbe in *Netivot Shalom*, also understands a directive in these verses. Each of us must create a mini sanctuary within ourselves, to be a repository for Hashem's Glory. The focus on the clouds, both in movement and in a stationary

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position, reflects the constant feeling that our lives are always directed and devoted to serve Hashem.

The Midrash notes that the command *Vehalachta bederachav*, and you shall walk in His ways (*Devarim 28:6*), is to follow the *ananei hakavod*. This is a mitzvah for all generations. Rav Yerucham Levovitz of Mir explains that although the clouds of glory were only found with the generation of the desert, this is a mandate for every generation to connect to the Divine Presence. Following the Cloud of Glory is sensing that Hashem is directing and leading every aspect of our lives. Although at times Hashem seems hidden and it is hard to see this intense manifestation, Rav Wachtfogel teaches that when one looks for the *hashgachah*, the expression of Hashem's Presence, he will certainly find it. ■

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## SEFER SHOFTIM YOM IYUN

**THURSDAY, MARCH 10TH, 9:15AM-1:00PM**

- 9:15AM** Words of Introduction **Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski**
- 9:25AM** The "less-known" Shoftim - When Less is More **Mrs. Shani Taragin**
- 10:15AM** The Prophecy of Devorah, The Bravery of Yael & the Wailing of Sisra's Mother: A Tale of Three Biblical Women **Mrs. Michal Horowitz**
- 11:00AM** Brunch
- 11:30AM** Mapping out the book of Judges: A Shofet from Every Shevet **Mrs. Adina Ellis**
- 12:15PM** Judging the Judges: A Prelude to Monarchy **Mrs. Leah Feinberg**

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SUN, MAR 6

9:15 AM

Tefila: Journey through the Siddur

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10:20 AM

Likutei Halachot: Discover the Deeper Meaning in Halacha  
**Rabbi Azarya Berzon**

11:30 AM

Shivat Tzion in Tanach: Daniel, Ezra, Nechemia  
**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**

Hot Soup available throughout the morning



8:00 PM

Women's Beit Midrash: Hilchot Shabbat-  
**Rabbanit Shani Taragin** (L'Ayla)

**THE BAIS CLASSES AND PROGRAMS ARE FOR MEN ONLY**

MON, MAR 7

9:15 AM

Divrei HaYamim (Layla)  
**Rebbetzin Pearl Borow**

10:30 AM

The Thought of Rav Soloveitchik  
**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**

11:45 AM

Halacha and Agada in Contemporary Society  
**Rabbi Shmuel Herschler**

Tea & Coffee Available



8:30 PM

Semichat Chaver Program  
**Rabbi Elyada Goldwicht** (The Bais)

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

TUE, MAR 8

9:15 AM

Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)  
**Rebbetzin Shira Smiles**

9:30AM

Minchat Chinuch-Meaning in Mitzvot  
**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**

10:30 AM

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

12:15 PM

Jewish History  
**Dr. Deborah Polster**



7:30 PM

Safrut Course (The Bais) Resumes after Pesach

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7:00 PM

L'Ayla- Mother/Daughter Bat Mitzva Program

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WED, MAR 9

**9:00 AM**

Medina and Halacha  
**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**

**10:15 AM**

Contemporary Issues in  
Halacha and Hashkafa  
**Rabbi Anthony  
Manning**

**11:30 AM**

Great Jewish Thinkers  
**Rabbi Alan Kimche**

Tea & Coffee  
Available



**8:30 PM**

Halachic Controversies  
**Rabbi Aschi Dick**  
(The Bais)

**SPECIAL EVENT**

**8:00 PM**

L'Ayla **Michal Horowitz**  
Purim Shiur

THURS, MAR 10

**9:00 AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**9:15 AM**

**Rabbanit Shani  
Taragin** (L'Ayla)

**10:15 am**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Baruch  
Taub**

**11:30 AM**

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Halacha, 7:00PM Wed

**Rebbetzin Shatz**

(L'Ayla)-Insights of  
Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

**Rabbi Goldwicht**

Parshat HaShavua  
Wed. 8:30PM  
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Message **Rabbi Shalom Rosner**

**10:00AM** Purim: Petition and  
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# Loving Intent

Rav Zelik Epstein, zt'l, the beloved Rosh Yeshiva of Sha'ar haTorah Grodno in Queens, New York, was renowned for his incisive brilliance and remarkable humility. A member of the Moetzes Gedolei Torah, many considered Rav Zelik, zt'l, to be the greatest talmid of the Mirrer Mashgiach, Reb Yeruchem Levovitz. A masmid more shy by nature, Rav Zelik was most comfortable in the confines of the Beis Medrash, and avoided publicity and controversy.

At Rav Zelik's levaya, his son Rav Kalman, shlit'a, related that his father would often tell him that at the end of our lives we will not be certain if the Torah we studied and taught was understood correctly. Nor will we be certain that our *tefillos* were prayed with appropriate *kavanah*, holy intention and clear focus. There is, however, one merit that we can be sure we will retain: any time we have met a Jew in need, feeling broken, depressed, fearful or sad, and left them smiling.

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נִהְפָּךְ לָהֶם מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׂמְחָה וּמֵאֲבֵל לַיּוֹם טוֹב

“...The days wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies, and **the month** which was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day; לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם יְמֵי מִשְׁתָּה וְשִׂמְחָה וּמְשֻׁלּוֹחַ מְנוּחַ אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ וּמִתְנוּחַ לְאֶבְיָוִיִּים:

that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the needy.” (Esther, (9:22

The mitzvah of *mishloach manos*, or “sending portions” of food to each other, strengthens the bonds of community and provides a festive meal for friends and neighbors who may lack the means or provisions to enjoy a seudah of their own. Thus, essential to our Purim joy is ensuring that our neighbors are able to enjoy the day as well. And while Haman sought to sow disunity and define us as a people that is *mefuzar u-mefurad*, “scattered and dispersed”, we share gifts of food with one another and break bread and sip wine together, bringing us closer to each other and unifying Am Yisrael.

Rav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, zt'l, was one of the great *roshei yeshivah*, poskim and Jewish intellectuals of our century, the head of Hildesheimer Rabbinic Seminary in Berlin, and was also well-versed in secular academic knowledge. Author of the

collection of classic responsa, *Seridei Eish*, Rav Weinberg addresses the fact that there is no specific *birkas ha-mitzvah* (blessing) said over the giving of *mishloach manos*:

ועוד נ"ל, שמשלוח מנות היא להרבות שלום ואהבה וריעות... והנה אף שבכל המצות גדול המצווה ועושה ומברכין וציונו - במשלוח מנות טוב שיתן מרצונו החפשי, מתוך רגש של אהבה לאחיו העברי, ואם הוא נותן רק עפ"י צווי הוא מפחית מידת האהבה.

"...It also seems to me that the purpose of *mishloach manos* is to increase *shalom*, love, and friendship. And even though there's a general principle in *mitzvos* that the one who does a *mitzvah* because he is 'commanded' is more praiseworthy (than one who is not specifically commanded), and (merits to) recite the blessing *v'tzivanu*, "and has commanded us" — nevertheless, regarding *mishloach manos* it is better to give them motivated by free will (rather than a 'command'), from a place of love for one's Jewish brothers and sisters. And if a person gives *only* because they were commanded to do so, the quality of love is actually lessened.

וכן הדין בצדקה, שאם הוא נותן מתוך רחמנות או מתוך אהבת ישראל טוב יותר ממי שנותן מתוך צווי וכפיה.

"And this is also the reason that there is not a bracha upon giving tzedakah: it is better to give out of compassion or Ahavas Yisrael

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than a sense of obligation and coercion.”

Moreover, the *Seridei Aish* suggests a ‘chidush’, a new understanding of the nature of *mishloach manos* as a מצווה תמידית, an ongoing, year-round mitzvah. On Purim, this ongoing obligation is ‘activated’ and we actively fulfill it, yet this once-a-year mitzvah should remind us of the always-relevant value of giving, sharing, and increasing connectivity and friendship among us. (1:61)

In *Manos Ha-Levi* on *Megillas Esther*, Rebbe Shlomo HaLevi Alkabetz, zy’a, draws a difference between ‘reason-based’ and ‘authority-based’ mitzvos. ‘Reason based’ mitzvos are acts that we would have intuited even without being commanded. One who does not desire to violate these has greater merit than someone who overcomes his *yetzer ha-ra*, his urge to negativity. However, those who overcome the temptation to

violate ‘authority-based’ mitzvos are greater than those with no desire to violate ‘reason-based’ mitzvos. In other words, doing a mitzvah because it is commanded is the greatest merit.

Our sedra details an accounting of the gold, silver and copper donated toward building the Mishkan. Close to twenty times, the Torah emphasizes that Moshe Rabbeinu and the builders followed the instructions הַכֹּאֲשֵׁר צִוָּה ה', “according to Hashem’s command”.

The special privilege of building the Mishkan and creating a holy space to ‘meet’ the *Ribbono Shel Olam*, was accompanied by so much anticipation and desire that there was a possibility of getting emotionally carried away. Therefore, the Netziv explains, the Torah emphasizes that Moshe’s intentions were tethered to Hashem’s instructions, הַכֹּאֲשֵׁר צִוָּה ה' — *l'sheim shamayim*, ‘for the sake of Heaven’.

Purim is the headquarters of *Ad d'lo yada*, ‘going beyond reason’, and ‘getting carried away’ in realizing how much we really don’t know. Do I truly understand the Torah I learn? Will the *divrei Torah* I share make sense and be received well? Is my davening *b'kavana*? Are my intentions pure? Am I doing mitzvos *only* because they are commanded obligations, or also out of love and free will? *Ad d'lo yada* — we really don’t know. What is clear however, is the meaningful impact of sharing *mishloach manos* with neighbors and friends, and providing for the needs of others.

May we merit to fulfill the mitzvos of Purim both as the *ratzon Hashem*, “according to Hashem’s command”, and also with desire, loving intent, inner motivation and celebration of their intuitive ‘reasons’. ■



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**RABBI AARON**

Editor, Torah Tidbits

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# Halachic Man's Creativity

The daughter of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, Dr. Tova Lichtenstein was asked to describe the essential teaching of her father in a word. She chose the following word: Creativity. (YUTorah, "Creativity and Tikun Olam: The Rav and Rav Aharon")

A close study reveals the Rav's enchantment with this notion and its centrality in his worldview.

Turning to the very first verse of the Torah we learn that God is a Creator (Bereshit 1:1). Only a few verses later we are told that man is made in the image of God (Ibid 1:26). Although there are many interpretations to this mysterious idea, the Rav emphasized that it relates to the creative ability with which man is endowed. We are sent to this earth to serve as an agent of God. We are also creators. (Derashot Harav, p 47).

A midrashic teaching which fascinated the Rav portrays God creating and recreating the world until He found this one (Gen. Rabbah 3:7). Taught the Rav: Of course, *Ha-kadosh Baruch Hu* did not need practice. Of course He could get it right the first time. He was teaching us, human beings, a powerful lesson. We also have the ability to create

and recreate. Says *Ha-kadosh Baruch Hu*, in the teaching of the Rav: "Don't despair. Don't get frustrated. Follow in the footsteps of the Divine. I did it. You can do it too. You too can be successful in creating for yourself a world that will be a strong and lasting one." (Majesty and Humility, Zeigler, pp. 11-12).

The Rav argued that the world we live in has been left incomplete and that the Almighty invites man to partner with him in making it whole. This is an essential component of our mandate to create. This idea can be traced again to the creation story: "And God made the two great luminaries" (Bereshit 1:16). The Midrash (*Bereshit Rabbah* 6:3) indicates that at the dawn of creation the sun and the moon were of equal size, until the moon approached God and complained that two kings cannot wear one crown. In response, God shrunk the moon. God's diminution of the moon, *pegimas halevana*, is symbolic of the fact that God left creation incomplete. The imperfection is reflected in the fact that man constantly struggles with nature and at times its catastrophes. Nature's hostility to man is represented by *pegimas halevana*. God wants man to rule and be victorious over nature: man himself must symbolically reverse *pegimas halevana* and thus become a partner with God in creation. (Chumash Mesoras HaRav 1:pp. 8-9 and Halachic Man p. 106)

In a similar vein, the Rav offered a brilliant explanation as to why *Birkat Hamazon*

requires a longer text than the blessing we make following eating one of the seven species and other food items. The fact that we make a shorter blessing for other items strikes us as counter-intuitive. The Rav explains that when it comes to fruits and vegetables, human beings merely do the harvesting.

“It is God who does most of the work. Fruits and vegetables grow by the laws of nature, subject to the will of God. During the period of growth, people are passive, and when the fruit has grown, they merely have to gather it in. Bread, however, is very different. The wheat grows by itself, but it is up to human beings to do the work of plowing and planting, harvesting and grinding, sifting and kenading, and the entire procedure of baking. The fuller and more elaborate Birkat Hamazon is most appropriate because

it signifies the noblest act of man, namely, partnering with God. “(The Royal Table, Norman Lamm p. 97)

“The world is to be viewed as an uncompleted creation whereby God deliberately made the world imperfect in order to leave room for human creativity. Man’s charge is to finish it and act as a co-creator with God.” (Ibid)

At the conclusion of the first week of creation, on Friday afternoon, as Shabbat was entering at sunset, the world was left unfinished. This was done intentionally. Man is to *partner* in creation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The verse says: “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He abstained from all His work which God created to make” (Bereshit 2:3). The clause “created to make” is obscure. Perhaps it



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One of God's names, *sha-dai*, is an allusion to this aspect of God in his creation of the world. The Rav cited the Midrash (*Bereshit Rabbah* 46, also see Chagigah 12a that makes this same point) which teaches that God, in the act of creation, issues the following order to the world: *Dai!* Enough! In the act of creation, God, so to speak, limits his creation.

The first time we find God's name *sha-dai* is in the context of the Avraham story. The Rav offered a unique interpretation of the imperative issued to Avraham (*Bereshit* 17:1). "I am the Lord - *Sha-dai* - walk before me, and be wholehearted." The intent of this verse is not merely to be "wholehearted," rather "to make whole." In other words, God charged Avraham with the mission of

---

*connotes a world created that is left unfinished and must be made whole by man.*

perfecting the world. This task remains the eternal mission of the Jew. (*Yemei Zikaron* p.90)

In what ways does the notion of creativity characterize the life of a Jew?

First, in the area of Torah learning there is nothing as precious as a *chiddush*, revealing a new perspective, exposing new insight. This tradition of *chiddush* in learning and intellectual breakthrough is given particular prominence in the world of Brisk and can be traced back to Rav's forebear, Rabbi Chaim Volozhin.

In his classic work on the topic of Torah learning, *Nefesh HaChaim*, Rabbi Chaim Volozhin writes: "*Chidushei Torah*, true Torah innovations, that are newly developed by those who study Torah, there's no limit to the value of the greatness of their awesome and remarkable merit...for each and every particular word that is innovated from a person's mouth, the Holy One blessed be He kisses it and crowns it and from it is built a new, independent world..." (*Nefesh HaChaim*, Rabbi Chaim Volozhin, Shaar 4, Chapter 12).

Second, the Rav contends that creativity stands at the center of the mitzvah of Teshuva: "The Halacha introduced the concept of creation, in all its force and splendor in the commandment of repentance... Repentance, according to the halachic view, is an act of creation - self-creation. The severing of one's psychic identity with one's previous "I," and the creation of a new "I,"

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possessor of a new consciousness, a new heart and spirit, different desires, longing, goals - this is the meaning of that repentance compounded of regret over the past and resolve for the future.” (Halachic Man p. 110).

When the Rav discusses the creative ability in man he compares two Hebrew terms. In a talk he delivered as President of the Mizrahi Religious Zionist Movement, the Rav pointed to the similarity between the words *ayef* and *yegiah*. They both translate to mean tiredness or exhaustion. And yet they vastly differ from one another. An act that engenders *ayefut*, exhaustion, is one that lacks a creative component. *Yegia* on the hand is an engagement that requires enormous effort and yet it propels a person forward and is revitalizing.

Within this context the Rav illustrated how the creative gesture is part and parcel of the life of the Jew today in the endeavor of building and strengthening the State of Israel. Although the effort is often strenuous and exhausting and requires immense effort, due to its enormous fulfillment it brings with it renewed enthusiasm, knowing that we are partnering with the Almighty in this most noble and ennobling mission. (The Rav Speaks, p. 203-205) ■



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# GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN

Ram, Yeshivat Har Eztion

## Is Redemption Limited to the Land of Israel?

The book of Shemot was referred to by chazal as the Book of Redemption or “Sefer Hage’ulah”. The redemptive process of this sefer, concludes in the final parsha of Pekudei as the presence of Hashem descends into a Mishkan crafted by human hand.

In his introduction to the book of Shemot, the Ramban claims that redemption occurs “when the Jews return to their “home” and to the “heights” of their ancestors עד יום שובם אל מקומם ואל מעלת אבותם ישובו. This vaunted “condition” of our avot hadn’t been witnessed in centuries. Sefer Shemot began with the Jews subjugated in a foreign land, far-removed from fulfilling their national mission.

Hashem’s presence hadn’t been openly perceived during the 210 years of dark Egyptian bondage. Finally, as the sefer concludes, Hashem’s presence inhabits the human realm, and the redemption of Man is complete. Now that the Jews have returned to the stature of the ancestors, they are considered ‘redeemed’ and the

book of redemption can close.

Hmm.. one factor appears to be missing. At this stage the Jews had yet to actually, physically return to the Land of Israel. How can the book of redemption conclude or how can the redemptive process be accomplished without a return to our Homeland? Evidently, at least according to the Ramban, ge’ulah isn’t pivoted primarily upon a geographic return to the Land of Israel. Ge’ulah occurs anytime Man achieves a mishkan-esque experience and re-establishes a relationship with the shechinah or the presence of Hashem.

Encountering the Divine presence isn’t limited to the Land of Israel or to any specific timeline. In fact, the seventh beracha of shmoneh esrei – גוֹעֵיל יִשְׂרָאֵל doesn’t refer to a “specific” redemption but rather to an ongoing “process” of redemptive experiences throughout Jewish History. For this reason, Hashem is referred to in this Beracha as “go’eil Yisrael” – in the present and continuous tense- as opposed to “ga’al Yisrael”, which would refer to a past redemption-such as the Exodus from Egypt. Redemption isn’t limited to space and time but extends throughout history.

Unquestionably, the ultimate “historical”

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ge'ula returns the entire Jewish people to their ancient Homeland in Israel – an event which occurs as history closes. However, at its core, redemption is any restoration of “ma’alas avosam”- re-encountering the presence of Hashem and recreating the tone of our ancestors’ relationship with Him. These moments are strewn across Jewish history and aren’t always directly related to the Land of Israel.

By the same logic, a mere physical return, absent a corresponding spiritual awakening, doesn’t represent comprehensive redemption. The final scene of Shemot punctuates that ge’ulah is fundamentally a spiritual rehabilitation. It will one day emerge in the Land of Israel, but the process isn’t geographically limited. Returning to the Land without a full spiritual restoration isn’t a culmination of ge’ula. It is just the start.

Since ge’ulah is a continuous national restoration and not merely a return from exile, it can take many forms and shapes. For example, Kaballah or Jewish mysticism asserts that Man inhabits a fragmented world in which G-d’s indivisible presence became divided and scattered. Rebuilding this disjointed world into a cohesive one, in which the Divine presence is fully integrated, entails a form of cosmic redemption. Cosmic redemption obviously extends far beyond the boundaries of our geographic terrestrial Homeland.

Even on a personal level, any renewal of our relationship with Hashem is deemed a “redemptive experience”. For this reason, one of the metaphors employed to describe the process of teshuva or repentance, is the term ‘ge’ulah’. Yeshaya 44 which promises



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שובו אלי כי גאלתיך (shuva alai ki ge'alticha) - return to Me for I have redeemed you. By erasing sin, the barriers between Man and G-d are lifted. The newly established bond in the wake of teshuva constitutes a variety of ge'ulah, since a penitent man once again resides in the presence of Hashem. The "redemptive" conclusion of sefer Shemot outside the borders of Israel reaffirms that ge'ulah isn't limited to the Messianic return of the Jews to their Homeland, but exists in many forms- cosmic, national and personal.

Finally, redemption isn't an event but an attitude. A Jew never flees his world and embraces all of its blemishes and flaws. Yet, a Jew also lives with an abiding and unshakeable sense that our world isn't static but dynamic, and that we aren't trapped within any particular set

of inflexible circumstances. Instead, we constantly yearn to change and improve our condition, whether through incremental steps which gradually mend our broken world, or through an apocalyptic overhaul which radically transforms our world into an unrecognizable reality. Either way, thoughts of ge'ulah are the engine which drives Jewish consciousness - on both individual and collective levels. Recognizing that the universe is constantly surging to a more perfect state, we feel emboldened to drive that process rather than feeling wedged within the confines of history. Jews have always driven the world toward progress and change because we sense that a better and different reality is merely hidden around the next ridge!

By framing the descent of Hashem into the Mishkan as ge'ulah, parshat Pikudei detaches the concept of redemption from any particular time or location. Redemptive experience is definitional - it characterizes our relationship with Hashem as well as our view of human history. We all await the conclusion of history, the full reparation of our people to their Homeland, and the complete and final redemption. Until that day we redeem this world...one step at a time. ■



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## DIVREI MENACHEM

BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

Special Projects Consultant, OU Israel Center  
menpmp@gmail.com

# Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...

We are all familiar with the expression, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” However, does this mantra apply only to works of art and human features? Probably not. Beyond cultural considerations, an item’s beauty or value is undoubtedly measured in terms of its function or the positive associations we have with the object in hand.

So, when our Parsha relates that bronze tablets were among the metals contributed to the Mishkan, what might be our immediate reaction? After all, in contrast to gold and silver, bronze pales.

The bronze was initially donated to make the sockets of the door of the Ohel Moed and the Bronze Altar and its gratings (Shemot 38:29-31) – hardly comparable to the prestigious Golden Altar or the golden bells on the High Priest’s tunic.

Later in the Parsha, the Torah narrative reintroduces the Basin and its stand – also made of bronze – which the Kohanim used to consecrate their hands and feet.

Chazal teach us that the two separate mentions in the Parsha of the bronze items indicate that different sources of bronze applied to each occasion. The bronze for

the Altar constituted part of Bnei Yisrael’s ‘free offering.’ In contrast, the source of the bronze for the Basin (dedicated to refining man’s animal instincts) was *no less* than the women’s mirrors that generally draw attention to the human body! (Hirsch)

How could this be so! We would typically look askance at old mirrors scattered in the market or lying around the house. But what if we knew the stories behind those mirrors?

Following Ibn Ezra, Nechama Leibowitz records that the women’s ready donation of their boudoir items actually represented a *rejection* of vanity, thus to be totally worthy of partaking in the consecration of the Kohanim’s hands and feet.

Or, following Rashi, the women – “in their hosts” – brought their mirrors to Moshe because, as the Midrash recounts, Hashem told Moshe that “these [bronze] mirrors are dearer to me than anything else!”

For, in Egypt, the womenfolk brought food and water to their exhausted husbands, sweating under hard labor. And it was due to the ‘seductive aspect’ of the mirrors that the women brought with them that Bnei Yisrael multiplied and “raised up their hosts.”

So, on that note, may we all merit taking seemingly trivial items in our lives only to the highest and most sublime heights. ■

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## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

**P**arshat *Pekudei*, depicts once again, in vivid detail, the various *begadim* that the *Kohain Gadol* was to wear as he served in the *Mishkan* on behalf of all of *Klal Yisrael*, as well as the completion of the *Mishkan's* construction and arrangement and placement of the various *keilim* to be used in the *Mishkan*.

The *haftara* we'll read this *Shabbat* comes from *Sefer Melachim Alef*, and it describes the incredible celebration upon the completion of the *Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim*, and the transport of the *aron* and other *keilim* from their temporary resting place *Tzion, Ir David*, to be placed in the newly completed *Beit HaMikdash*.

Recently a tour guide friend of mine, with whom I've had the personal pleasure to visit the incredible archaeological excavations of *Ir David*, shared a photo of a remarkable recent discovery. Archaeologists working in the *Ir David* National Park, recently discovered a fantastic treasure. An archaeological expedition is currently on-going to excavate a 2,000 year old street that led *Olei Regel* from a massive *Mikva* straight up to the *Beit Hamikdash*. One of the members of this team of archaeologists, looked down to see what appeared to be a golden bead with a golden loop attached to it, but as they unearthed this small bead, and picked it up, they realized the object they were holding was actually a small golden bell that still sounded it's noise!

One of the bells attached to the edge of the *Me'il*- the robe worn by the *Kohain Gadol* must have fallen off and without him realizing, it fell into the drainage canal and left us with a rare 2,000 year old souvenir.

*This spiritual renewal will not come from any other place, except for here in Eretz Yisrael*

When I read my friend's incredible account of this fantastic discovery, I began to ponder the significance of this find. On one hand this certainly has tremendous historical and spiritual importance, both allowing us the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the *Kohain Gadol*, and to literally hold history in our hands. But what does it mean to hold history in our hands?

One of the great religious personalities of the pre-state *Yishuv* and early years of *Medinat Yisrael*, was the ***Ohalei Yaakov of Tel Aviv, Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, the Admor of Husiyatin zy'a***. The *Rebbe* of Husiyatin, was fortunate to make *aliya* from Poland, just ahead of the Nazi onslaught, settling in *Tel Aviv* in 1938, where he lived until his passing in 1954. Within the *Rebbe's* beautiful teachings we not only find depth and inspiration, but are often given a glimpse of this very challenging period in Jewish History.

One particularly poignant message that *Ohalei Yaakov* shared was a sermon for

*Shabbat of Parshat Ki Tavo in 1952.*

*Vhaya Ki Tavo El Haaretz-And it shall be when you arrive upon the Land...*

The **Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh**, in his comments on this verse explains : *Vhaya-Lashon Simcha*. Our arrival to the Land of Israel is something to celebrate and rejoice over!

The *Rebbe of Husiyatin*, asked regarding this insight of the *Ohr HaChaim*:

*When we look at the reality and spiritual circumstances here in Eretz Yisrael today(in 1952), one can't help but ask-how are we to rejoice? Yes, indeed we have merited to receive the gift of Medinat Yisrael, and for the beginning of the ingathering of the Exiles, but how can we rejoice when we look at the lack of spirituality which seems rampant among us. I do not wish to pass judgment, Chas V'Shalom, rather our way is always to find merit and see the good. There are three reasons for the spiritual malaise which is so worrisome and a cause for deep concern. 1. A portion of our people have received a poor education 2. A portion of our people live in difficult conditions and circumstances, abject poverty 3. The Shoah which nearly decimated our people, and left so many broken physically and despondent emotionally and spiritually, from which we have yet to recover.*

*However, there is no room for despair! The Torah has already promised us that indeed the Jewish People will return to Hakadosh Baruch Hu-V'Shavta Ad Hashem Elokecha.*

*This spiritual renewal will not come from any other place, except for here in Eretz Yisrael. **The spiritual renewal of Am Yisrael will indeed come forth from this center of Jewish life we are building now here in Eretz Yisrael....***"

*Yehi Ratzon*, as we continue to mine and

discover the treasured evidence of our historic connection to our sacred homeland, may we be blessed to witness the continued return of the Jewish People to the sacred soil of *Artzeinu HaKedosha*, and together play our part in writing the next glorious chapter in the collective journey of *Am Yisrael*. ■



## Be'er Tziporah a"h - Bottled Water Gemach



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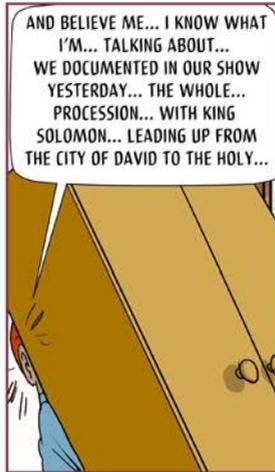


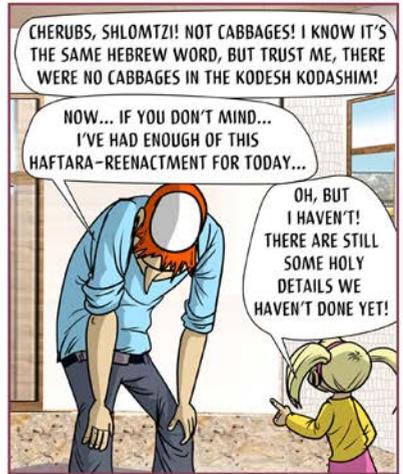
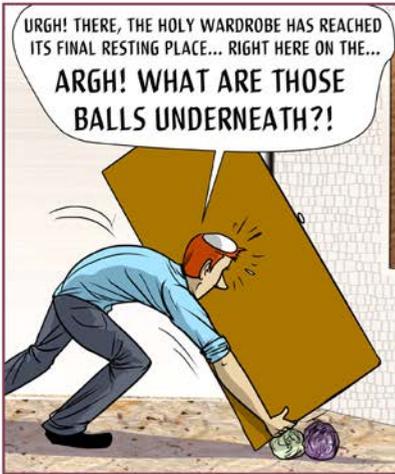
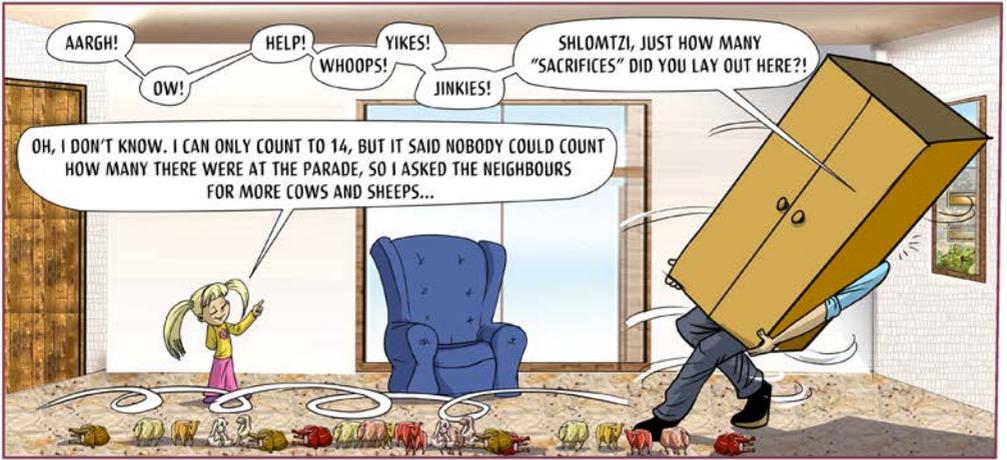
Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem. With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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## Age to Begin Wearing Tefillin

**Question:** My son is almost twelve. When is it best for him to start putting on *tefillin* (he is a responsible, religiously eager child)? We are *ba'alei teshuva* (without family *minhagim*).

**Answer:** We will start with sources in the *gemara*. The *mishna* (Berachot 20a-b) lists *tefillin* among *mitzvot* that women and children are exempt from. On the other hand, a *baraita* (cited in Sukkot 42a and Arachin 2b) lists *tefillin* among *mitzvot* that a *katan* is trained in at the appropriate age. Notably, while the description of readiness for the other *mitzvot* involves the ability to fully perform the *mitzva*, the age by *tefillin* is defined according to his ability to protect the *tefillin*. *Rishonim* raise three required protections: from entering the bathroom, from sleeping, and from releasing gas. They broadly assume that this comes at a later age than for other *mitzvot* and after the child can effectively fasten the *tefillin* to his arm and head.

Most *Rishonim* and the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 37:3) posit that the *baraita* refers to a child under bar mitzva and seem to view the age determination as dependent

on the individual child (see Yechaveh Da'at II:4). Some Sephardi *poskim* (see Darchei David, OC 7) encourage it for mature children as young as 10. Yalkut Yosef (OC 37:3.1) mentions a year or two before bar mitzva as reasonable.

The Itur (Tefillin 61b) is in the small minority (Rashi, Berachot 20b might agree) who understand that the *katan* who wears *tefillin* is a thirteen year old (who still must pass the carefulness test). Surprisingly, the Rama (OC 37:3) reports and strongly supports the *minhag* to wait until the child is thirteen to don *tefillin*. There are two ways to view the essential denial of *chinuch* (i.e., starting a *mitzva* before bar mitzva) for *tefillin*. It may be a fundamental ruling – no *mitzva* of pre-bar mitzva *tefillin* donning was instituted. It might be just a practically conservative approach to determining when children are ready (which some *poskim* use to explain the *minhag* in old Sephardi communities to wait until bar mitzva – see Yechaveh Da'at *ibid.*). Some practical differences follow.

The Magen Avraham (37:4) reports his time's prevalent *minhag* to start two or three months before bar mitzva, and he and the Mishna Berura (37:12) seems to support it. The latter also cites the Bach's opinion that a learned child can don *tefillin* at age 12 (Be'ur Halacha, *ad loc.*) (There was also a controversial *minhag* that orphans started at age 12 – see Teshuvot V'hanhagot I:53.)

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.



Many understand the Magen Avraham to fundamentally accept the Rama, just modifying it to start a little earlier to build up experience before the bar mitzva (see Tzitz Eliezer XIII:10). As some saw the Itur/Rama as fundamental, many (see Even Sh'ti'ah 14, Tzvi Latzaddik 23) raise the question if a child during his practice period should make a *beracha* on putting on the *tefillin*. However, almost all *poskim* accept, for a wide variety of reasons, the *minhag* that whenever a child starts putting on *tefillin*, it is with a *beracha*.

The most prevalent *minhag* nowadays (the Aruch Hashulchan, OC 37:4 already mentioned it) among non-Chasidic Ashkenazim is to start a month before the bar mitzva. Tzitz Eliezer (ibid.) presents two of the conjectures of the significance of a month (a known time for learning a topic – Pesachim 6a; since many who are born in Adar and have a bar mitzva in a leap year start with *tefillin* in Adar I (see Living the Halachic Process II, H-12) everyone starts a month early). The explanations are less important than the fact the *minhag* is along the lines of the Magen Avraham and is reasonable.

There are different planes of explanation (see Divrei Yatziv, OC I:11) for the Chassidic *minhag* to wait until bar mitzva – halachic, spiritual (sanctity of *tefillin*), practical (people might think he already is a *gadol*), and educational (reinforcing the need to

respect *tefillin*'s sanctity is crucial *chinuch*).

Our practical advice for a non-Chasidic Ashkenazi is a month and for a Sephardi in a Sephardi community is to follow local practice. ■

## Having a dispute?



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NECHER LEHACHLIDEN



PORTION FROM

BY RAKEL BERENBAUM

Contributor, Torah Tidbits

THE PORTION

# Pekudei, Prayer and Purim

After the Mishkan is completed Moshe checks everything and sees that it was done “as God had commanded them” (39:43) The verse continues to tell us that then Moshe blessed them “*Vyevarech otam*”. The Midrash says that Moshe’s blessing to the people was that God’s presence should rest on the work of their hands. But we can ask – why is this blessing of Moshe’s necessary? Didn’t God promise them numerous times that His Presence would rest in the Mishkan so why did Moshe feel that he had to say a special blessing to the artisans who built the Mishkan to make sure that this would actually happen? Wasn’t God’s promise enough?

From this verse we can learn the importance of our prayers. It’s like a brand new car engine that has all its pieces assembled in order to work, but without the spark to ignite the fuel the engine won’t do anything. Human prayers are like the “spark” that helps to get God’s plans moving.

From the Purim story we also gain an appreciation of the importance of prayer. Before Esther goes to the King to plead for her nation, she asks Mordechai to gather all the Jews together “*Lech Knos et kol hayehudim...*

*Vzumu alei*” so they could cry out together to God in prayer. Their joint prayers would be stronger than each one praying separately.

She, like Esther the Queen before her, was a model of self-sacrifice and endless devotion to a noble cause

There is a minhag to recite the 22nd chapter of Tehilim (*Lmnazeach al Ayelet hshachar*) on Purim, which the Midrash says is filled with Queen Esther’s prayer. On the third day when she went to the king, God’s presence was hidden from her. She proceeded to say the prayer “*Eli, Eli, Lama, azavtani?* – God, God, Why have you abandoned me?” Esther says to God – “In Egypt our ancestors called out to you and You answered, but now our enemies also want to kill us and we have called out to You to revoke the decree but we haven’t been answered yet. If it is because we don’t have enough good deeds, please redeem us for the sake of Your Name.” All the prayers helped to have the decree overturned.

This week is the shloshim of Esther Pollard, obm, who passed away on the eve of Rosh Chodesh Adar 1. She, like Esther the Queen before her, was a model of self-sacrifice and endless devotion to a noble cause. A woman of deep faith and a firm believer in Divine providence, she was that spiritual anchor that gave Jonathan, her husband, strength and hope in the darkest of times of his over 30 year jail term. She fought for justice and never stopped praying and dreaming. She especially loved the Nishmat Kol Chai prayer

of praise and gratitude believed to bless those who recite it, which she posted on the Pollard website.

Every Jew's prayers are important. May we take inspiration from all those before us who's prayers made a difference to all pray together prayers that will make a difference. There are so many things to pray for such as to maintain the Jewishness and security of the State of Israel, for the lives of our brethren in Ukraine and for peace and stability all over the world.



## RECIPE

Here is a simple recipe from Gil Marks' "The World of Jewish Cooking" for a traditional Jewish cookie, the Kichel, that I remember eating as a kid. These cookies are sometimes also made with poppy seeds so they are appropriate to serve during Purim, since the German word for poppy seed is "mohn", which sounds similar to the name of Haman. Eating these cookies then fits with the custom to symbolically eat some part of Haman in order to fulfill the mitzvah to erase the name of his ancestor Amalek.

## EIR (MOHN) KICHLACH – (POPPY) COOKIES

- 3 large eggs
- 1/4 cup plus 1 tbsps. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 cup flour
- 3 Tblsp. Poppy seeds ( optional)

In a mixer beat the eggs until fluffy, 5-10 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon sugar and the salt. Add the oil and beat till thick, about

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10 minutes. Gradually beat in flour. Drop the batter by teaspoonful's onto a baking sheet. Sprinkle the remaining sugar on top of the cookies. Bake until puffed and golden brown (about 25 minutes), at 180 C in the middle of a warm oven. Cool and serve. Purim Sameach!

P.S. - Speaking about *mohn* - poppy seeds, don't miss seeing the red protected poppy flowers in bloom throughout the country now - if you haven't made a trip to see them yet don't miss your chance – whether it's down south in the *Darom Adom* Festival or even just to go to a field near your house in search of the beautiful flowers. ■

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## BY TEENS

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### It's Cloudy Outside

The description of Har Sinai is truly awesome; action, lights, noise and Hashem's presence resting upon Har Sinai as Moshe ascends to receive the Torah. Five weeks later we have a parallel situation, notes Rav Mencahem Leibtag. The Mishkan is finally built, the cloud of glory comes to rest, and yet this time Moshe is unable to enter! What went wrong? Why is Moshe barred from coming close to Hashem?

Rabbi David Fohrman suggests that it's an incredible success that Moshe was blocked and not a failure. Moshe not being allowed in shows the intensity of the holiness in the Mishkan was so great even Moshe could not enter. As tremendous as the experience of Har Sinai was, it had a short lived impact as evidenced by the sin of the golden calf. What changed? The Golden calf happened. Bnei Yisrael craved a mediator to Hashem and tried to create something of their own to solve their issue. And while it went horribly off the rails, the intentions were good for the most part.

When they realized the severity of their actions they came together to do teshuva, mourning God's decision to leave their camp when he temporarily decided to send an angel instead. Afterwards, when given

the opportunity to give back to Hashem, the donations flooded in to build the Mishkan at unprecedented levels.

Building the Mishkan, "Vayakhel Moshe et Kol Edat Bnei Yisrael," united together as one, brings Hashem more into this world than anything before. It's a stunning victory that we should all strive for and be zoche to emulate. We should remember that no matter what heights we may achieve, and then whatever pitfalls may come after, the highest highs are still attainable, Hashem is here, just waiting for us to return again.

— אָמַר רַבֵּי אֶבְרָהָם: מִקּוֹם שֶׁבְּעָלִי תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִין —  
צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים אֵינָם עוֹמְדִין



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### Just Do It

Have you ever bought a piece of furniture from IKEA, and you have no idea how to put it together? Fear of never having built something before keeps you procrastinating for a week!

The Jews building the *mishkan* seem to disagree. Take it from the Torah; the verse states "Like everything that G-d commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did." How could they have built this intricate structure, with no prior knowledge in architecture or construction? Any normal human being would at least ask for a

construction crash course beforehand, or at least want some on-the-job experience before assembling a complicated piece of architecture such as the *mishkan*.

Speculation is the killer of creation. This could be what the verse here is trying to teach us. Essentially, if you want to get something done, don't spend so much time on the preparation, under the guise of procrastination. As Nike says, "Just do it".

Don't take it the wrong way, failing to plan is planning to fail, as famously quoted by Benjamin Franklin. But you need to understand the essence of 'doing'. The *medrash* states that Betzalel, who was in charge of the building of the tabernacle, was only 12 years old at the time. Although Rashi says that Betzalel's name, Betzal-El, in the shadow of G-d, hints to the fact that he already had all the knowledge that he needed to know to build the *mishkan*, there is still room to wonder how a twelve year old could accomplish such a feat, with no known prior experience.

How did he do it, and how did he get the entire nation to follow suit, without fear? He got up and started doing it, no fear, no excuses, and a will to serve the Creator to the best of his ability. ■

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# Real Life Rescues



## Following a Pillar of Cloud To A Rescue

A few weeks ago, United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Shai Jaskoll and his wife were on their way to the IDF officer training school in the Negev to attend his future daughter-in-law's graduation ceremony. Suddenly, Shai saw a pillar of cloud, a thick cloud of smoke rising up from the roadway ahead of him on the opposite side of the highway. It was obvious to the experienced EMT that there had been a serious incident. Shai's wife immediately called United Hatzalah's dispatch and command center as Shai focused on driving safely to the scene.

"Initially we thought it may have been a terror attack or act of violence, We saw people flailing their arms and waving at one another. It looked like there may have been a fight. When we got closer we saw it was off-duty police officers putting on their vest and calling for help." When they arrived, they saw the flaming wreck of a vehicle. Shai grabbed his medical equipment from the trunk and jumped over the highway partition, "Which isn't an easy thing for someone my age," he quipped.

Shai was informed by bystanders that the driver (who had not been wearing a seat belt) was ejected from the vehicle and was now lying in a ditch on the side of the road. Shai rushed to the location of the victim and conducted a field assessment. The EMT found the man semiconscious, suffering from multisystem trauma. He quickly provided C-spine stabilization with a neck brace before using his BVM device to administer oxygen.

"From the evidence on the road, it was clear that the driver lost control of his vehicle on the turn and pinballed off of the central divider and then the fence on the opposite side of the road. At some point, he was thrown through the windshield. The car was still smoking. In order to alert our dispatch to the exact location of the accident, we used the specialized Carbyne technology that United Hatzalah dispatch employs to ping our cell phone and get the exact GPS coordinates of the accident. This allowed our dispatch to tell the ambulance service where exactly to send the ambulance to."

Two additional victims in the crash (who were wearing seatbelts) only sustained minor injuries and Shai helped treat their injuries as well. Once the ambulance arrive the combined team then loaded the seriously injured man onto the ambulance to be transported to the nearest trauma center which was Soroka Medical Center in Beer Sheva, while other ambulances transported those with minor injuries.

"I was happy that I was able to be in the right time and in the right place to help the people involved in the accident, and I am thankful that I followed my instincts and the pillar of smoke so that I was able to arrive as quickly as I did," Shai concluded.



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