



RABBI JUDAH

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We Carry Each Other

Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, zt'l, was a renown gaon and *lamdan*. The Rosh Yeshiva of Kamenetz was a *talmid muvhak* of Reb Chaim Brisker, and respected as one of the great Torah minds and *mechadshim*, innovative teachers of the generation. Rav Baruch Ber once wondered aloud to his *talmidim*: On what grounds can I expect to gain entry into *Olam haBa*? Will I be rewarded for my *chidushei Torah* in *Sefer Birkas Shmuel*? No, for how insightful will my ideas be relative to those of the *Tannaim, Amoraim, Rishonim* and *Achronim*?

Will it then be as a reward for my *mesirus nefesh* for Torah and *mitzvos*? That too is unlikely, for many generations of Jews have paid the ultimate sacrifice and given their lives *al Kiddush Hashem*.

Turning to his students, Reb Boruch Ber opened his heart: "Even if not for my learning, or for my sacrifice for *Mitzvos*, what is certain is that I will be rewarded for my *ahavas Yisrael*, for I love every Jew, exactly as he is. I have never met a Jew in the street and not wished them well with all my heart...."

Our sedra details the construction of the Mishkan as well as the vessels that are found within it. First among them is the *Aron*, the

Ark containing the *Luchos*. Atop the Ark was the *Kapores*, a golden lid upon which rested the *Keruvim*, the Golden Cherubs:

וַעֲשִׂיתָ שְׁנַיִם כְּרֻבִים זָהָב תִּקְשֶׁה תַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם מִשְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַכַּפֹּרֶת:

And you shall make two golden *Keruvim*; you shall make them from hammered work from the two ends of the Ark's cover. (25:18)

These childlike angelic figures were fashioned of a single piece of gold. They were specifically not to be soldered together, rather formed as a *miksheh*, 'a hammered out form' from the same source.

וְהָיוּ הַכְּרֻבִים פְּרָשֵׁי כָנָפִים לְמַעַל סִכְכִּים בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם עַל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו אֶל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת יִהְיוּ פְּנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים:

"The *Keruvim* shall have their wings spread upwards, shielding the ark cover with their wings, with their faces toward one another; [turned] toward the Ark cover shall be the faces of the *Keruvim*." (25:20)

The gaze of the *Keruvim*, directed both toward the Ark and toward each other,

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represents the essence of a life of Torah. Yidishkeit is meant to cultivate in us the ability to experience the *hashraas haShechinah*, the resting of the Divine Presence, but precisely in the mode of “their faces turned toward one another”. This radiant symbol of *ahavas Yisrael*, of a people looking toward each other, rooted in a single soul and hammered out and formed from the same Source, was situated above the *Luchos*. *Ahavas Yisrael* crowns the Torah.

Rav Dovid Feinstein, zt”l, insisted: “When *Yidden* get up after learning a *sugya*, they should be more compassionate, kinder, and with more room in their heart for others. If that doesn’t happen, then they didn’t really learn it, and they should sit down and learn it again.”

וְעָשׂוּ אֶרְוֶן עֲצֵי שֵׁטִים... וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר תְּבִיֵת וְתַחֲוֹץ תִּצְפְּנֵנוּ וְעִשִׂיתָ עֲלֵינוּ זָר זָהָב סָבִיב:


They shall make an ark of acacia wood... Overlay it with pure gold inside and out and make upon it a gold molding surrounding it. (25:10-11)

While other vessels in the Mishkan were constructed of solid gold, the Ark was constructed of acacia wood and only plated with gold. This would seem to diminish the honor of the Torah that rested within it. However, during the travels of Bnei Yisrael in the Desert, the Levi'im had the privilege and responsibility to carry the heavy *Aron*. Chizkuni suggests that the instruction to make the Ark out of wood lightly plated with gold shows deliberate sensitivity to the Levi'im. And this provides a lesson for all of us in how to live a Torah life. It is a reminder that the goal of Torah is expressed when we alleviate the physical, emotional or spiritual burdens of our fellow.


There are times where living a Torah observant life can feel heavy, and carrying the

zechus of mitzvos not always easy. Yet *Kavod haTorah* is enhanced when we turn toward our fellow, cover them with our wings of love, and lighten their load with our friendship. And this is part of the goal of Creation itself, as Rabbeinu Bachya comments: “The attribute of kindness pervades all of existence in its eternity, the heavenly realms and the lower realms, and these realms have no possibility of continued being without it; everything needs kindness and kindness has no end or boundary (*Kisvei Rabbeinu Bachya*, p. 327).

The construction of the *Mishkan* and its vessels gives us models of how to ‘carry’ the Torah as individuals and as a community, and to grow closer to Hashem and each other. May we internalize these lessons in kindness, and may the Shechinah dwell within all of us, together — *v’shochanti b’tocham*: “And I will dwell in *them*.” ■



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