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ON PEKUDEI  
Shekalim Rosh Chodesh - 5765**

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**RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN**

**ADAR-ATION: GRATITUDE TO THE MULTITUDE**

The Mishna at the beginning of Shekalim teaches: on the first of Adar it was announced that the people should prepare their shekalim and check their fields for kilayim - forbidden mixtures; that the Megillah is read on the fifteenth of Adar, and that other services were provided for the community. We are then taught in the same mishna that in Adar the beis din attended to all the public needs. Why does the month of Adar warrant greater attention to servicing the public needs?

The Binyan Shlomo (responsa 55) enlightens us with a novel approach. The Gemorah Shabbos (33b) relates how R' Shimon Bar Yochai and his son miraculously hid from the Romans for twelve years. When he finally emerged, R' Shimon said, "since a miracle was performed on my behalf, I shall go and contribute something to benefit the community." This, we are taught, he learned from Yaakov. When Yaakov arrived (Beraishis 33:18) "shaleim - intact" in terms of his body, wealth, and his Torah, "vayichan es pnai ha'ir - and he encamped before the city". The rabbis understood that he either contributed chain - charm, or changed the face of the city. He either established their own currency, or marketplaces, or bathhouses. In gratitude for Hashem's protection and salvation he showed his appreciation by assisting the community.

Yaakov Avinu and R' Shimon show how it behooves an individual to "pay back" the community upon their personal deliverance. Certainly in the month of Adar when we commemorate our "deliverance from death to life" (Megillah 14a) we should annually direct this thanksgiving and gratitude to some form of communal service and enhancement.

The Gemorah Taanis (22a) teaches us that Eliyahu Hanavi proclaimed that two comedians who cheered up the depressed were destined to go to olam ha-bah. This is further explained by the Maharsha that just as the mishna Sanhedrin (46a) relates that Hashem feels the pain and suffering of the individual that is executed, as one of His children is suffering, how much more so is He pleased when His children are made happy. It is thus understandable that enhancing the welfare of the community brings greater pleasure to Hashem, as "G-d, His Torah, and the people of Israel are inseparable" (Zohar Acharei Mos 23).

Moreover, the entire miracle of Purim evolves around the t'zibur, the community of Israel. Haman charges (Esther 3:8) that the Jewish nation is "mefuzar u'mefurad - scattered and dispersed", lacking unity and concern for one another, and full of strife. To demonstrate the falsity of

his charge, "nikhalu ha-Yehudim - the Jews organized themselves in their cities" (Esther 9:2). Again in verses 15 and 18 the theme of the kahal forming one unit is stressed. The very acceptance of Purim by the Jewish nation is expressed by "v'kibail ha-Yehudim - the Jews undertook" (Esther 9:23), written in the singular, explains the Gr"a, to portray their unity.

In addition, the Gemorah Shabbos (88a) teaches the significance of Purim as a time of reacceptance of the Torah. In contrast to the coercion present at Sinai, understood by our rabbis - "vayisatzvu b'sachtis ha-har - they stood under the mountain" each witnessing gilui Shechinah, (making it almost impossible to refuse Hashem), here at Purim they experienced hester panim - concealment of His presence, reflected by the fact that Hashem's name is not found in the Megillah. As the first acceptance of Torah at Sinai was accomplished in the spirit of "vayichan - they encamped" (Shemos 19:2) at Sinai "as one man, with one mission", similarly at Purim the acceptance was "v'kibail" - as one.

In addition, the mitzvah of mishloach manos is explained by R' Shlomo Alkabetz zt"l (author of l'cha dodai) in his Manos Halevi, that this mitzvah demonstrates the love and brotherhood present in the Jewish nation. It therefore follows that we focus on the needs of the community in this month of national unity.

Perhaps one can further suggest that the response to a miracle is to benefit the community as taught in Shabbos, as an individual should ideally attribute the miracle not to his worthiness, but to the merit of the community. To demonstrate this true humility, he shows his appreciation to the community by his reciprocation on its behalf.

In light of this new dimension and obligation inherent in the month of Adar, might I suggest that each individual, in keeping with "b'chal m'odecha" - serving Hashem with your unique talents and resources, introspect on how you can best serve the needs of, and help fill the voids in, your community. Not only the obvious needs, such as bikur cholim and greater attention to the shut-ins, but also to those needs that might go unnoticed, such as calling the local Yeshiva and offering to tutor a child for free.

Finally, Rav Ephraim Wachsmann shlit"a delivered the following inspiring message at the recent siyum hashas in the name of the Tomer D'vorah: all Israel is one collective soul. Your personal learning of Torah is not only a personal fulfillment if talmud Torah, but it elevates the entire community of Israel.

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**PARASHAT PEKUDEI**

**SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A**

**People of Spirit and People of Action**

**Summarized by Dov Karoll**

The second verse of Pekudei (38:22) states that Betzalel built the mishkan just as G-d had commanded Moshe. Rashi (s.v. U-vetzalel, citing Berakhot 55a) points out that the order in which Betzalel built corresponded to order which G-d had commanded Moshe, but differed from the order which Moshe had commanded Betzalel. When G-d told Moshe to appoint Betzalel to build the mishkan (31:1-11), He commanded the construction of the ohel, the tent of meeting, first. Only afterward did He command the construction of the keilim (vessels). However, when Moshe informed the people about the appointment of Betzalel (35:30-35), he mentioned his ability to use the raw materials for the keilim (gold, silver, wood) first, and subsequently described his talent at utilizing the materials for the structure (the various dyed fabrics).

Rashi records a dialogue between Moshe and Betzalel explaining why Betzalel reversed the order Moshe had told him. Betzalel asked Moshe: Is it not customary to first build a house, and only afterward to put in its utensils? Moshe responded that that is precisely what G-d commanded him to do.

Why do Moshe and Betzalel approach the order differently? Moshe's perspective is that of a "man of spirit" - he organizes the different parts of the mishkan according to their order of importance. Since the vessels are of primary significance, and the tent serves only as its cover, Moshe mentions the vessels first. Betzalel, on the other hand, is a "man of action," and he viewed the mishkan from the perspective of an architect. The architect does not focus on what is more important, but rather on the physical layout of the building.

As a "man of spirit," Moshe represents those whose spiritual priorities are set straight. He realizes what actions are central in significance, and which are more peripheral. He then trains his focus on those elements which are primary, while treating the secondary elements as such. However, Betzalel, the "man of action," knows the technical details and can carry out his assigned task. His fulfillment of mitzvot is done "by the book," though it may be lacking a deep understanding of what he is doing.

In modern times, there are many people who follow the model of Betzalel. They know precisely what they are to do, down to every last detail. However, people very often lack the model of Moshe - the perspective and the spirit to realize the true significance of their actions, and which are more central. For people whose Judaism is based exclusively upon book reading, and not from living in an environment surrounded by other observant Jews, this problem is particularly relevant. In my house, growing up, there were no great Torah giants. Nonetheless, it was always perfectly clear which actions were of high significance, and which were more peripheral. People always had their priorities straight.

Sometimes, people who read the Shulchan Arukh, or other books of Halakha, learn halakhot such as Shabbat (OC 242-416) and Keriat Shema (OC 58-88), which are central issues. They also see rulings about what order a person should put on his shoes and the like (OC 2), which are customs much less central. However, a person could get the impression (and people sometimes do) that these practices are all on the same level. People very often assume that everything included under the category of "Halakha" is equivalent. They do not distinguish between biblical laws, rabbinic laws, and customs, nor can they tell the difference between cardinal values and secondary ones. Out of an understanding such as this, a person can lose perspective, and place great emphasis upon peripheral elements. This is a very dangerous flaw.

What a person should do, in addition to determining the relative significance of different actions, is try to bring certain spiritual elements into the more central actions. He should choose a certain important action, and go beyond the call of duty with regard to it. This can mean

extending the time set aside for studying Torah, or doing some comparable action which shows one's particular love and enjoyment of that particular mitzva.

Sometimes, this can be accomplished by investing all available effort into a mitzva in a difficult situation. This is significant even if the effort will fall short of the normal expectations of that mitzva. For example, when I was in a forced labor camp during the Holocaust, I used to put my cleanest shirt (although it also was far from clean) in my pocket on Friday morning. I would then put it on an hour or so before Shabbat. Although it was a far cry from my normal Shabbat dress, it was very meaningful for me to put on that shirt, even more meaningful than dressing for Shabbat usually is. Since all of my emotions were focused on this one action (because this was all I could do), it was very meaningful. Since I was forced to work on Shabbat, this constituted the extent of my preparing for and honoring Shabbat.

A person should try to have this intent sometimes even when he is able to fulfill all the necessary elements of the mitzva. If occasionally he truly experiences the beauty of a mitzva, he should use that experience to infuse his daily action with some of that same enthusiasm. Hopefully, through setting straight his religious priorities, and through the infusion of additional spirituality to some of those mitzvot, we will be able to more closely model Moshe - the man of spirit.

(Originally delivered at Seuda Shelishit, Shabbat Parashat Pekudei 5757.)

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HORAV YAAKOV KAMENETZKY zt"l

[Translated by Ephraim Weiss]

[40:3] "And you should put there the aron of testimony, and you should cover the aron with the kapores"

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l explains the reason for the letter "Heh" at the beginning of the word "Ha'edus." When there is a noun that is made up of two words, the second word always begins with the letter "Heh." This is called the "Heh Hayediah." When the first word of the phrase is a noun and the second word is an adjective that describes the noun, the extra "Heh" is not used. In this case, the full name for the aron is either "Aron Ha'edus", "The aron of testimony," or, "Aron Habris", "The aron of the treaty." Both expressions refer to the fact that the aron was used as a storage place for the luchos, which represented the treaty between Hashem and Bnei Yisroel that was sealed at the time of matan Torah. The fact that the luchos were inside is not a description of the aron, but rather defines the very essence of the aron. The aron existed only to serve as a holder for the luchos, and without the luchos the aron itself was superfluous. As such, the reference to the luchos through the word "Edus" is not a description of the aron, but rather a part of the existence of the aron, and it is therefore connected to the word aron with the "Heh Hayediah"

Rav Yaakov uses this concept to explain several other difficulties. We find several places throughout Tanach where the aron is referred to using a feminine conjugation. [Shmuel I 4:17; Divrei Hayamim II 8:11.]

The word aron, according to the rules of dikduk, should be considered masculine. However, as we explained, the full name for the aron is either "Aron Haedus," or "Aron Habris." As such, whenever the aron is referred to as such, it changes to a feminine word, as both the word Edus and the word Bris are feminine.

Using this concept, we can also understand why during the period of the second Beis HaMikdash there was no aron. It is known that the aron from the first Beis HaMikdash was lost, but wasn't it possible to construct a new one? Rav Yaakov answers that yes, it was possible to assemble a new aron, but to do so would have been superfluous. When the aron was lost after the churban, the luchos that were inside were lost as well. The luchos, which were written by Hashem Himself could obviously not be replaced. The aron without the luchos served no purpose, and as such, a new aron was never built.

**NINETEEN YEARS OF REFLECTION** Rabbi Binyomin Kamenetzky shil't'a, Rosh Yeshiva Emeritus

This past Thursday was the yahrtzeit of my beloved father zt'l. Each year at this time over the past nineteen years holds special significance in the lives of those dearest ones. The thoughts that pass through my mind every year is another lesson from the significant and colorful life that my father zt'l lived. I perhaps remember him the longest in my family, and can never forget his constant hasmadah. Every time I saw my father as a child, I was enthused and inspired to see he was always learning and writing. Many people are remembered by the many different qualities they processed, and I am personally inspired by the fact that I never saw him idle.

There are many mitzvos that require zechirah (remembrance). When Moshe Rabbeinu tells us "remember the days of old," he further ends the same pasuk with the words, "understand the years of every generation." The lessons that my father zt'l taught us are a continued process that will never come to an end.

Chazal tell us, "The righteous even in their death are called alive," as they continue to bring us new perspectives in our daily lives. This concept goes with the verity that the Torah is a Toras Chaim, as it is given to us for the purpose of living through it - as the pasuk says "Ushmartem Es Hamitzvos". The Chiddushei Har'im explains that this means that all our chiyus comes from the Torah and the kiyum hamitzvos. He explains that we are to do all the mitzvos with life and with enthusiasm, in a manner that will bring more kavod shomayim (honor of Heaven) and ahavas Hashem (love of G-d). It is important to become attached to the mitzvos commanded to us, and it is just as vital to be connected to the Gedolei Yisroel and learn from their ways; especially in the areas of bein odom lachaveiro (actions of man between man), where it is best reflected in being mekadesh shem shomayim (sanctifying the name of Heaven). In this manner, one can and will rise to the pinnacle of having proper fear of Heaven, and hopefully the zechuyos of my father zt'l will bring blessings and praises to all. Teheh Nishmoso Tzerurah Bitzror Hachayim

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**THE DAY AFTER! MAKING A COMMITMENT TO DAF HAYOMI!**  
**BY RABBI MOSHE MEIR WEISS**

The global Jewish community is aflame with excitement about the incredible Siyyum HaShas this coming Tuesday. As awesome as this is, I believe that an even greater event is occurring the day after, on Wednesday, when Jews the world over will begin the new journey of starting Shas again with the thrilling Masechtos Berachos. This is a golden opportunity that comes only once in seven and a half years or roughly six to seven times during one's adult lifetime. Shlomo Hamelech teaches us, "Chacham leiv yikach Mitzvos." The wise at heart seizes Mitzvos." (Mishlei 10:9) This refers, for example, to Moshe Rabbeinu who had the smarts to seize the mitzvah of retrieving Yosef HaTzadik's body while everyone else was busy taking the lucrative spoils of Egypt. It takes wisdom and foresight (foresight is one of the definitions of wisdom, as it says, "Aizehu chacham? Haroeh es hanolad." Who is wise? He who can foresee the future (Tamid 32a) to recognize when a great opportunity is at hand.

I am writing this article as a salesman. I desperately want to convince the reader to set aside any other plans this Wednesday, bite the bullet, and start with us the new Talmudic cycle. This has the potential to be one of the most important decisions

you will make in your entire lifetime. The change that the daily Daf makes on a person is multi-faceted and truly wonderful.

Let's first discuss some advantages to be gained from embracing this incredible pursuit. We believe in the Afterlife. We also believe that this world is a preparation for the Eternal rewards of the World to Come. As such, it is important to realize that the Gemora informs us, "Ashrei mi sheba l'kan v'talmudo b'yado." Fortunate is he who comes to the next world with his Gemora in hand." The ultimate VIP status in the Next World is granted to those who dedicate this life to the study of Hashem's Talmud.

But it's not only Eternal success that one attains with Daf HaYomi. Chazal teach us, "Ein simcha k'simchas HaTorah " There is no joy like the joy of Torah." The dedicated adherent to Daf Yomi opens for himself new vistas of personal satisfaction and fulfillment of which he's never dreamed.

There's also the issue of knowing that you are doing with your time that which you were created to do. As Rashi teaches us in the beginning of Breishis, "Breishis bara Elokim: Bishvil Torah shenikra reishis " In the beginning Hashem created: Because of the Torah. This is the purpose of the entire world. Similarly, the Mishna teaches us in Pirkei Avos [2:8], "Im lamadta Torah harbeh, al tachzik tova latz'mcha, ki l'kach notzarta" - If you learned a lot of Torah, don't be full of yourself, FOR THIS IS WHY YOU WERE CREATED!

Then, there are the protective qualities of regular Torah study. In Mishlei [4:22], it states "Ki chaim heim l'motzeihem ulchol b'saro marpei" - It (the Torah) brings life to all those who find It and brings cure to ALL of one's flesh. In the same vein, we know that when the Angel of Death engaged in combat with Yaakov, he couldn't prevail over him because of Yaakov's dedication to Torah study.

Another great benefit of the Daf Yomi discipline is the example it sets for our children. When our young ones see that, no matter what, we make sure to learn our daily page, it teaches them life's priorities more than any lecture could. When they see that we pack a Gemora - even when we go on vacation, it teaches them that there is no time off from Torah. And, when they see us open a Gemora even when we come home late after a wedding, or when we are exhausted from a hard day's work, after we spent hours shoveling snow, or after enduring a painful root canal, it teaches them mounds about sacrificing for Torah. As the saintly Chofetz Chaim taught us, the directive for teaching children Torah is, "Vlimadtem osam es b'neichem" - Teach Them (the Torah) to your children. In this command, the word 'osam' is written defectively, without a vav. Thus, it can also be read 'atem' meaning 'you.' Pronounced this way, the verse then says, "You learn and that will teach the children." This conveys the great lesson: the best way to teach is by example.

Regular attendance at a Daf Yomi shiur also has the huge benefit of creating a new and wonderful social circle for ourselves. When a person attends a shiur every night with other individuals who also share in the same attitude of self-sacrifice and dedication for such a lofty goal, these people tend to form a special camaraderie and bond. It goes without saying that forming friendships and relationships with people of such spiritual aspirations can greatly enhance the quality of our lives.

One of the great problems of our society is the peril of boredom. When one is bored, they tend to gravitate to the many dangerous pastimes of our decadent society. The Daf Yomi devotee is never bored. He's always either catching up, or delving into, or reviewing, the mounds of information he absorbs every day.

Then, there's the very important benefit that Daf Yomi brings to one's Shalom Bais, marital harmony. The Netzi"v promoted that one who introduces regular Torah study in his life greatly enhances his Shalom Bais. This is, in part, because wives will have a new respect for husbands when they see them dedicating themselves to such a lofty and spiritual goal on a consistent basis. It is also because the Torah radiates Shalom, as it says, "D'racheha darchei noam, v'chol n'sivoseha Shalom " It's (Torah's) ways are ways of sweetness, and all It's paths are paths of Peace. (Mishlei 3:17)

Finally, let's talk about the sense of fulfillment and accomplishment that one gets from finishing masechta after masechta of Shas. In our day and age, when so many people grapple with middle age crisis, fretting over the fact that they feel hugely unfulfilled, the Daf Yomi answers the problem in a very exciting way. As the Daf Yomi afficianado becomes more proficient in every aspect of Judaism - from the laws of Shabbos to family purity, from the rituals of shechita to the technical laws of idolatry (which suddenly came to life during the sheitl controversy in the last Daf Yomi cycle), he fills a thrill of personal success and achievement that is hard to describe.

Now, as a good salesman, let me play devil's advocate. The first argument that one might offer to the suggestion that he start Daf Yomi is, "Impossible. I have no time to make such a huge daily commitment." Indeed, many people have started skeptically, doubtful whether they'd be able to find the time on a regular basis. Often, to their great surprise, time opened up for them to meet their objective. This follows the tried and tested Talmudic adage, "B'derech she-adam rotzeh leilech bah,

molichin oso " In the way a person wants to go, he is (Divinely) led. (Makkos 10b) It should not come as a surprise that one who dedicates himself assiduously to Torah study finds more time becoming available. This is because Hashem created the world primarily for Torah study. As such, when Hashem sees someone spending more time learning Torah, He will shower him with more wealth so that he doesn't have to spend so much time working - in order to free-up time for him for his Torah pursuits. On the other hand, if he wastes his free time with frivolous ventures, Hashem will likely give him more expenses so that at least he should spend his time meaningfully working for a living rather than wasting it on meaningless or even sinful activities.

The next most frequent argument is, "Daf Yomi is not for me! I'm just not cut out to learn so much every day." Or, another might argue, "It's not for me. The difficult Talmudic tractates like Eruvin, Yevamos, Kerisos, Niddah, etc. I need to stick to easier terrain." Let me vociferously counter these arguments. On Pesach, we sing the beloved song 'Echad Mi Yodeia?' In it, we chant, "Tisha mi yodeia? Tisha ani yodeia. Tisha yarchei leida " Who knows nine? I know nine. It's the nine months of gestation before having a baby." This is a puzzling answer. All of the other numbers are uniquely Jewish such as the two tablets, the three patriarchs, the four matriarchs, the five Chumashim, and so on. The nine months of gestation, however, are universal. Furthermore, what is so special about nine months of morning sickness and nausea that merits its inclusion in this lofty list? The Chasam Sofer, Zt"l, Zy"a, answers that the significance of the nine months is because of what the malach, angel, teaches the baby during those nine months in his mother's womb. As the Gemora reveals to us in Masechtas Niddah (30b), an angel teaches us the entire Torah in our mother's womb. Thus, we all have the vast potential to be able to learn the entire Torah - for this is the reason that the malach taught it to us in the first place - so that we should all be able to recover it when we come to this world. This is the mandate that Shlomo HaMelech refers to in Mishlei (20:5), "Mayim amukim eitzeh bleiv ish v'ish tvuna yidlena - Deep waters are the council in a man's heart and the understanding person will draw from them." On a practical level, I can personally testify to having seen individuals with very little Yeshiva background starting and finishing Shas with the Daf Yomi. If they can do it, so can you!!

Then, there are the protestations of, "At the end of the day I'm too tired to absorb all that information," or, "I'll learn and then right away forget it, so what's the purpose?!" To the first argument, I counter that it is quite possible that there will be difficult Gemoras that we might not grasp early in the morning or late at night. There might even be times that we will fall a sleep in middle of the lecture and even start to snore. However, realize that there are 2,711 pages in Shas, so that even if we falter 500 times, we are still left with over 2,200 pages of Talmud, putting us in the highest echelons of Torah scholars. As to the question of forgetting what we learn, this is a problem that plagues all Torah scholars. There is no question that to establish a method of chazara, review, is a great idea. Even reviewing the Mishnayos of the Tractate after finishing the Masechta is of great value. But regardless of whether or not we find time to review, we should not let this dissuade us from starting in the first place. This is precisely the reason we say the formula hadran alach, we will return to you, after we finish each chapter and tractate - acknowledging the fact that we need to return to it again, and asking Hashem that we be provided the longevity to return to these tractates many times over. And, believe it or not, each time we learn it something sticks and the next time around it will be easier and more meaningful.

It goes without saying that starting is very difficult. There is nothing that the Yeitzer Hara, the evil inclination, offers more resistance to than the study of Torah. One needs to exercise great spiritual strength and personal courage to give up other activities and bite the bullet to start. But, once we make that momentous gesture, it's easy sailing from then on. This fundamental lesson is taught to us by the great Rashi, in Parshas Yisro (19:5), where he states, "Im atta t'kablu aleichem yerav lachem mikan v'eilach shekol hascholos kashos " If you accept it upon yourself now, it will become sweeter from then on! For all starts are difficult!" This is imperative to remember: not only will it get easier, it will become sweet!!

No matter what age bracket you are in, it is a good time to start. If you are young (check with your Rebbe first), you have the advantage of making Shas your girsa d'yankusa, the learning of your youth " which is then remembered better throughout life. If you are middle-aged, there is the urgency of starting before the memory begins to fail and the concentration begins to weaken. If you are a senior citizen, starting will grant you the great segulah of 'Hamaschil b'mitvah omrim lo ligmor," that one who starts a mitzvah, Hashem grants him the ability to finish it.

For those who have finished Shas already, we must not rest on our laurels. The Talmud teaches us that Torah is hard to acquire and easy to forget. It is for this reason that we make a siyyum, to say chazak, be strengthened, in your Torah learning. This is also the reason why Shas starts on Daf Beis and not Daf Alef, to

hammer home the lesson that there is neither end nor a beginning to Shas. It is just a continuation to be studied over one's entire lifetime.

Women should absolutely not feel left out of all this excitement. Our Shas would look totally different without the great Rabbi Akiva. It was Rabbi Akiva who told his 24,000 disciples that 'All that is mine and all that is yours is only because of Rebbetzin Akiva.' In the same vein, although Dovid HaMelech's father was the great Yishai, who was one of three people who never sinned and who taught 600,000 Torah disciples, Dovid HaMelech attributed his success to his mother, as he says, "Ani avd'cha ben amasecha " I am Your servant, the son of Your handmaid! Women receive an equal portion in all their husband's Torah pursuits when they support their husband's efforts. The gentle encouragement of a wife and her show of admiration for her husband's Torah accomplishments go a long way in making the difference for many successful Torah scholars.

I conclude with once again my sales pitch, jump on this lofty bandwagon; you'll never regret it. Hashem tells us, "Ki lekach tov nasati lachem, Torasi al tazovu" - For a goodly merchandise I have given you; Do not forsake My Torah. The words 'lekach tov,' goodly merchandise, equals 155 in gematria, which, amazingly, is the equivalent of Daf HaYomi. Students of this past cycle remember digging out to attend a shiur during the blizzard of the century. They remember learning it through the horrors of 9/11 and recall learning it by candlelight during the great blackout. This is how all embracing this commitment is. I can guarantee you it will change your life for the better in countless ways. To all those who have finished already, join me as Daf Yomi salesmen. When you convince someone to join, you improve not only their lives but the lives of their entire family. In the merit of our Torah study, may Hashem bless us all with long life, good health, happiness, and everything wonderful!

Come to Rabbi Weiss's weekly shiur every Tuesday at 9:30 p.m. at the Landau Shul in Flatbush, Avenue L and East 9th Street. Subscribe for a weekly CD or tape from Rabbi Weiss. Please see his advertisement in the Jewish Press. (Sheldon Zeitlin transcribes Rabbi Weiss' articles. If you wish to receive Rabbi Weiss' articles by email, please send a note to ZeitlinShelley@aol.com.)



From: Yated USA [mailto:yatedusa@yated.com]  
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2005 Subject: YATED  
USA WEEKLY 03-11-05  
PROUD TO BE A YID — IMPRESSIONS OF THE  
ELEVENTH SIYUM HASHAS  
BY C.B. WEINFELD 13 March 11, 2005

I stood on the ninth floor, behind the mechitza, frozen in place, watching the scene unfold before my eyes. To my right, a young girl murmured. "This is not normal. This is not normal. I can't believe this. Pinch me. Is this for real?" I wanted to shush her, to tell her that she was disturbing the poignancy of the moment, but thought better of it. Perhaps she was giving voice to the thought that hovered in our minds as we stood, hearts tingling with a powerful joy, watching the floors below us vibrate and shake with intensity as twenty thousand pairs of feet danced.

What had prompted this dancing, this united expression of soaring joy, a simcha and d'veikus so powerful, it cannot be put in words? As the expression goes, "For those who were there, words are not necessary, for those who weren't, words will not suffice."

Rav Chaim Stein, one of the embers plucked from the fire, a talmid from amohl, who had begun learning the Daf Yomi nine cycles ago, when the citadels of Torah learning were in Lita, Hungary, and Poland, had just finished reciting the hadran. In a voice choked with tears and emotion, Rav Chaim spoke in Mama Loshon, as he completed the last sugya in Maseches Niddah. "Kol Hashoneh Halachos B'chol Yom," one who learns halachos every single day, "Muvtach Lo Shehu ben Olam Haboh." Is guaranteed to be a ben olam haboh. Why bechol yom? Said the Rosh Yeshiva, "These words have a direct connection to Daf Yomi, to learning every single day, even when it is difficult sometimes...even with great mesiras nefesh. And that applies to all of us, Yeder Eintziger, to every single Yid."

The Rosh Yeshiva of Telz vividly recalled the second Siyum Hashas in 1938, the completion of the second machzor of Daf Yomi, during which Rav Elchonon Wasserman, who was later murdered by the Nazis in the Ninth Fort, emotionally addressed a crowd of 20,000 Yidden gathered in Lublin. At the same time, a new wing of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin was dedicated. Rav Menachem Ziemba, the kodosh of Warsaw, delivered a powerful drasha, and the Rebbes of Boyan, Tchebin, Sadigur and Sochatzov attended.

"We already felt the faint stirrings of the puraniyus, the evil that was looming above our heads," said Rav Chaim, "Chazal say the yisurim of Ikvesa D'mshicha will be so great, they davened that they should not have to experience it. So, too, we hope

and daven that the suffering of Ikvesa D'mshicha, the chevlei Moshiach, have already passed."

There was nary a dry eye in the crowd as Rav Chaim continued, his voice choked with emotion, "By the Asara Harugei Malchus, when they burned (Rav Chanina Ben Teradyon with a Sefer Torah wrapped around him,) the parchment burned, while the Osiyos flew up to Shomayim. During the Churban Europe, when they destroyed all the yeshivos, only the physical buildings were destroyed—the spiritual koach remains with us until today."

"The essence of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin lives on, with the koach of the Daf Yomi, and this has contributed to the tremendous revival of Torah among Klal Yisroel today. While the Kedoshim went to their deaths, Shema Yisroel on their lips, their mesiras nefesh remains with us. We, the survivors, have an achrayus to rebuild, to be mechanech, to impart Torah to the next generation."

Rav Chaim then uttered the timeless words, that signaled the end of the eleventh machzor of the Daf Yomi. "Hadran Oloch, Tinokes." We shall return to you, Tinokes. "V'silka Loh Maseches Niddah." And Maseches Niddah is concluded.

Rav Noach Eizik Oelbaum recited an emotional kaddish, and the collective Omein echoed for several long moments. Suddenly, the respectful silence that had hovered over the tenfloor stadium at Madison Square Garden, and the vast Continental Airlines Arena, dissipated. Reb Abish Brodt, the beloved menagen, took the mike and began to sing "Siman Tov U'mazel Tov."

The silent, staid crowd was electrified. In an instant, the mood changed from poignancy and longing to intense d'veikus and joy. One by one, entire rows stood up and began to sing along, swaying in their places, their voices rising in collective euphoria.

Groups of bochurim and yungeleit sitting in the center rows stood up, linking arms, and began to dance. In a chain reaction, row after row, from the fourth floor seats all the way up to the eighth, fathers and sons stood up in unison, dancing in their places, singing with all their might. As far as the eye could see, a sea of black, twenty thousand strong, were clasping hands, clasping souls, united in the harmony and power of the moment. It was an unforgettable scene.

And I thought, "Now I understand. Now I know why thousands upon thousands of men, women, and children had left their usual commitments, flocking to Manhattan or New Jersey at 5:00 p.m., to take part in such a massive gathering. Now I know why I, a regular Yiddish Mommy, who had never learned a blatt gemara in my life, felt compelled to attend this powerful maamad. What was I celebrating? Was I paying homage to the Torah of my husband, my children, my brothers, my relatives? Or was it something deeper? A massive outpouring of unity, an outpouring of love for the holy Torah, which has kept us going through the millennia?"

Ashreinu, Mah Tov Chelkeinu. I felt so proud to be part of this. It felt so good, so utterly exhilarating, to be a Yid. Ribono Shel Olam, I whispered, "Look down at Your people and see this massive Kiddush Hashem. Instead of gathering to play hockey or watch a baseball game, 120,000 Yidden across the world are gathering to proclaim, 'Hadran Aloch, V'hadrach Alon.' We shall return to you, Dear Torah, as we have returned to you through the ages."

Rav Ephraim Wachsmann, who delivered the first address, gave voice to these emotions when he compared the powerful "Shema Yisroel" uttered in unison at the Siyum Hashas to the Shema Yisroel uttered by the Six Million Kedoshim, who were gassed and burned at Kiddush Hashem.

"Then, the gezeirah was l'hashmid uleharog u'leabed, to destroy, kill, and wipe out, while today it is 'l'hodos, lehalel, u'lshabeach; to thank, laud, and praise. What remains constant is the cry of Shema Yisroel. From where does Klal Yisroel derive this strength? From the Torah, our lifeblood. This is what has preserved Am Yisroel through the ages."

As Rav Matisyohu Solomon later affirmed, in his emotional address, "After the war, my father was instrumental in bringing young refugees to England. I recall a 16 year old bochur who was treated to a platter of cookies, which, in those days, was a real treat. My father said the boy had been farhered by the Rosh Yeshiva on 200 blatt gemara, b'aal peh. When did he learn the gemara? With his father, in the concentration camp! His father, who had been a Daf Yomi Magid Shiur in Lodz, learned with him in the squalor of the camps, as long as they were still together.

"I pictured the father huddled with his son, trying not to be caught, a young child, learning daf after daf, until he knew 200 blatt ba'l peh, and suddenly the father grew in my eyes. Tonight, I was thinking, after 200 blatt, they must have finished at least one, perhaps two or three masechtos. And I imagined, 'What did the siyum look like?' In the squalor of the camp, after a day of torture, perhaps they shared half a piece of dry bread, as they said, 'hadran aloch, daytan aloch.' This is our life! This is what we concentrated on during our darkest hour."

In a ringing voice, Rav Solomon concluded, "I believe that this gathering is already the beginning of the nekamah, for nations must be amazed and inspired. May this be the beginning of the renewal of Klal Yisroel, and kevod malchus Shomayim."

The singing and dancing continued, showing no signs of abating. On the contrary, it seemed to gather strength, as fathers carried young boys on their shoulders, Bnei Torah swayed with eyes shut, as if holding the Torah dear to their heart. It was Simchas Torah magnified a thousandfold. It was like watching all the Botei Midroshim and shteeblach of Klal Yisroel gather to celebrate a massive hakafa, the hakafa of the Daf Yomi. Even several of the security guards, moved beyond words, danced along. Most of them had never seen such a powerful scene in their lives.

And then, the voice of Rav Pinchos Friedman, Rosh Kolelei Belz, appeared on the screen, as he uttered the timeless Hadran. "Yehi Rotzon M'lfonechoh... Shetehei Torascho U'mnoseinu B'olam Hazeh... Ut'hay Emonu L'olam Haboh." May it be Your will, that the Torah should be our trade in this world, and may it remain with us in the World to Come. Ribono Shel Olam, make the words of the Torah sweet in our mouths, in the mouths of Your nation....Boruch Atoh Hashem, Lamdeinu Chukecha."

The words of the Hadran gave voice to our deepest emotions as Rav Pinchos continued, "Praised are You, Our Creator, who has given us a chelek with the Yoshvei Bais Medrash, and not with those who sit aimlessly in the corners. We awaken and they awaken, yet there is a difference. We awaken to learn the timeless word of the Torah, and they awaken for d'vorim b'tailim, empty pursuits. We toil and they toil; we run and they run. We run to Chayei Olam Haboh, while they run to be'er shachas..."

The powerful hadran, and the hascholas haShas that followed, were the raison de'tre of the evening. Yet they were not the only highlights. One after another, powerful, riveting speakers, Rabbonim, Roshei Yeshiva and representatives of Torah kehillos across the world addressed the crowd; electrifying, invigorating, inspiring.

It was a memory that shall remain forever etched in the hearts and minds of those who attended. As Rav Yissochor Frand stressed, in his powerful drasha, transmitted live from Chicago, "We must all leave here tonight committed to accomplishing more. Some people will be moved to undertake Daf Yomi and finish Shas, while others will encounter their first daf in gemara."

And still others, notably the women who attended, will be committed to supporting their husbands and children, giving up the precious evening time, so that their menfolk can shteig in Torah. For these n'shei Chayil, this momentous ma'amad was also a tremendous source of chizuk. As a friend expressed, during the bus ride to the Siyum Hashas, "It was really hard for me to juggle everything and come, but I had to. You see, I attended the last Siyum Hashas, and I'm still inspired. There's no way I would miss this one..."

Making a Kiddush Hashem The five-hour event flew by quickly. Remarkably, despite the logistics of containing such a huge crowd, everything went more smoothly than anticipated. The scores of police officers stationed at the doors to Madison Square Garden, (the same applies to Continental Arena, ) were professional and highly competent at guiding the crowd. As a member of the (frum) press, I was given a special press necklace, enabling me to report from a special press section on the sixth floor. When I arrived, one of the news networks was doing an interview with a heimishe woman, picked out at random, who was endeavoring to express what the Siyum Hashas was all about.

"This is about the Jewish people coming together to celebrate the completion of the Talmud," she explained. "Every seven-and-a-half years, the cycle is complete, and then we start all over again."

"Do women also learn the Talmud?" came the next, inevitable question. "No, of course not," the well-spoken woman replied. "Don't you feel bad that you can't really be a part of it?" asked the interviewer. "Not at all. Because in essence, we really are a part of it. We are the support system, the ones who stay behind the scenes, guiding and encouraging. Also, we have our own mitzvot—" "Can you translate? Most people don't know what that word means." "—Our own commandments to fulfill, like lighting candles, and teaching the next generation. So we really play an important part in this celebration." "And without the Jewish mothers who raise their children to value this lifestyle, we wouldn't be having such a gathering today." Kudos to her. I couldn't have said it better.

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Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from  
RABBI DR. JONATHAN SACKS



Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth

Pekudei A Sense of Closure

Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of G-d filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it and the glory of G-d filled the tabernacle. (40: 34-35)

WITH THESE WORDS, the long story of the building of the mishkan - and the book of Shemot as a whole - reaches closure. But there is a much larger narrative arch completed by these words. In a sense, the entire prehistory of mankind, beginning with the first human beings, Adam and Eve, here reaches a point of rest.

As modern scholars have noted one of the key literary devices of the Torah is the chiasmus - a form that has the structure A-B-C-C-B-A. One of the most striking examples is the key verse of the covenant with Noah:

A. Shofekh, "he who sheds"

B. dam, "the blood"

C. ha-adam, "of man"

C. ba-adam, "by man"

B. damo, "shall his blood"

A. yishafekh, "be shed." (Bereishith 9:6) 1

A chiasmus is a literary unit (verse, paragraph, or entire section) in which the second half is the mirror- or reverse-image of the first. Many sections of the Torah have this shape.

Most scholars focus on the chiasmus itself as a technique of form or style. This is a mistake. In fact, the chiasmus is a supreme example of form following function: style that communicates substance. At its simplest level, a chiasmus is the literary expression of the most basic principle of biblical (retributive) justice: the rule of measure for measure (middah keneged middah), or "as you act, so shall others act to you". [hillel] Those who harm others will themselves be harmed. Those who do good will have good done to them. (Hence the corollary: behave toward others as you would wish them to behave to you). What happens to us (C-B-A) is a mirror image of the way we ourselves act (A-B-C).

This is more than a rule of ethics. It is a key to the biblical interpretation of history. The starting point of the human situation is harmony. Then comes sin, which breaks the intrinsic harmony of the universe. The result, measure for measure, is exile (a sin is an act in the wrong place; the result is exile, a person or people in the wrong place). There then follows an act of contrition, purging or atonement, which leads to return and the restoration of original harmony.

What does this have to do with the mishkan?

One detail in the construction of the Mishkan holds the key:

Make two gold cherubs, hammering them out from the two ends of the cover. One cherub shall be on one end, and one on the other . . . The cherubs shall spread their wings upward so that their wings shield the cover. The cherubs shall face one another, looking towards the cover. Place the cover on top of the ark, and put in the ark the Testimony that I will give you. 2 (25: 18-21)

There is only one place we have encountered cherubs before: at the entrance to the Garden of Eden:

G-d banished [man] from the Garden of Eden, to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove away the man, and stationed cherubs at the east of Eden, and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. 3 (Gen. 3: 23-24)

The connection between the cherubs in the sanctuary and those in the garden is strengthened when we recall that, in the sanctuary, they stood above the ark, which contained the tablets of the Torah, and that the Torah itself is called "a tree of life to all who seize hold of it." ("G-d hid the tree that granted eternal life to all who ate from it and in its place He gave us His torah. This is the tree of life, as it says, 'She is a tree of life for those who grasp her'" 4 (Midrash haGadol to Bereishit 3:24). If Eden was paradise lost, then the Tabernacle was paradise regained.

This becomes clearer still once we realize that the six days of creation were not merely a sequence of events, an evolution. They were, in fact, two cycles of three, the first of which created domains, which were then filled by the second:

Domains created Domains filled Day 1: Day/night Day 4: Lights ruling day / night Day 2: Waters above sky/ waters below Day 5: Sea creatures in waters below sky/birds that fly above Day 3: Sea/dry land Day 6: Land creatures: animals and mankind

This separation into three domains is precisely mirrored in the Tabernacle with its three key spaces: the outer court, the holy, and the holy of holies. The order of the sanctuary recapitulates the order of the cosmos as it was before human beings sinned. Every sin is an averah, a "transgression", a forbidden crossing of boundaries, the creation of disorder. The sanctuary is where sin is atoned - and order is restored. Just as in creation, once the domains had been created they were then filled with life, so in the sanctuary, once the domains have been separated from one another by the various frames and their coverings, so they are filled by the divine presence ("the glory of G-d filled the tabernacle").

We can now understand the depth-meaning (omek peshuto shel mikra) 5 represented by the following midrash:

When G-d created the universe, He desired to have a dwelling place in the lower world as He had in the upper world. He called Adam and gave him one command, which he transgressed. G-d then removed His presence to the [first] heaven. Cain killed Abel, and G-d removed His presence from the first to the second heaven. Next came the generation of Enosh, during which people began serving idols. G-d removed His presence to the third heaven. Then came the generation of the flood, and G-d removed His presence to the fourth heaven. After that came the generation of the dispersion (the builders of Babel) and G-d removed His presence to the fifth heaven. Then there were the people of Sodom, because of whose sins G-d removed His presence to the sixth heaven. After them came the Philistines, who angered G-d and caused Him to move His presence to the seventh heaven.

G-d then said: I created seven heavens, and until now the wicked have prevailed. What did He do? He gathered all the generations of the wicked together and in their place set Abraham. Abraham's good deeds brought the Divine presence down from the seventh heaven to the sixth. Isaac's willingness to be sacrificed brought it down to the fifth. Jacob brought it down to the fourth, Levi to the third, Kehat to the second, and Amram to the first. Then came Moses and brought the Divine presence down to earth. When? When the Tabernacle was erected. 6 (Midrash Tanchuma (Buber) Naso 24)

The whole of human history from creation to the exodus thus describes a vast chiasmus, during which the Divine presence gradually becomes more and more distant from mankind. Then comes Abraham and the successive generations of his children, each of whom bring heaven one stage closer to earth. Closure is reached in the Tabernacle, the human counterpart of the creation of the universe (see Covenant and Conversation, Terumah). Just as creation, in the first chapter of the Torah, is a form of order (domains distinguished and then filled), so the Tabernacle is a symbol of order in the midst of the wilderness - the desert here standing as the counterpart of the *tohu vavohu*, "formless waste", with which creation began.

Bereishit-Shemot thus form a single vast narrative arch whose message is this: Just as human beings can cause the exile of the Divine presence, so they can bring about its return. To do so, though, they must themselves return, from self-will to Divine will; from attempting to impose a human order on the world to the recognition of the integrity of the Divine order of the world. The Tabernacle, accompanying the Israelites on their journeys, was the perennial symbol of Eden regained, with the ark (containing the new "tree of life") at its centre.

The Divine challenge to mankind is this: I have created order. Do not destroy it by creating disorder. In all the vast universe there is only one creature on whom I have set My image, and that is you. What will you make? Harmony or chaos? A garden or a wilderness? So that you never forget that choice I am making you My partners in creating the Tabernacle. It will be small and fragile, yet its significance is vast. Here, infinitesimal humanity and Infinite G-d will meet. It will always remind you, as you must always remind humanity, that we are the circumference of a circle at whose centre is G-d.



From: Kol Torah [koltorah@koltorah.org] Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2005 9:57 PM To: koltorah@koltorah.org Subject: Kol Torah Parshat Tetzaveh The Role of Archaeology in Halachic Decision Making – Part One  
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## THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN HALACHIC DECISION MAKING – PART ONE

BY RABBI CHAIM JACHTER

**Introduction** A very exciting and relatively new area of Halachic concern is the potential impact of archaeological discoveries upon Halachic decision-making. The areas of potential impact include proper positioning of Mezuzot, Mikveh construction, identification of Techeilet, proper time of Megillah reading, and the weight of coins used for Pidyon HaBen. We will discuss whether Halacha accords credibility to archaeological discoveries and conclusions. These essays are based largely on an essay on this topic written by Rav Yonatan Adler that appears in the current issue of Techumin. My consultations with Mr. Steven Pickman, an Orthodox Jew who has completed an undergraduate degree in archaeology and is pursuing graduate studies in archaeological and objects conservation, have enriched my grasp of this topic and have considerably improved the quality of this presentation. The comments made by members of Congregation Rinat Yisrael of Teaneck, before whom I delivered a Shiur on this topic, have also enriched this article.

**Three Classic Discussions** There are three classic cases in the Gemara and Rishonim where the question of the Halachic utility of archaeological discoveries arises. First, the Gemara (Bava Batra 73b-74a) relates that Rabbah bar bar Channah was once traveling in the desert guided by an Arab. The Arab directed him to the graves of the Dor HaMidbar. Rabbah bar bar Channah sought to remove the Tzitzit from one of the bodies in order to bring it to the Beit Midrash to be scrutinized by the Chachamim, but his efforts failed. When he returned, his rabbinical colleagues chided him, saying that if his intention was to determine whether the Halacha follows Beit Shammai or Beit Hillel regarding the number of strings one places on the Tzitzit, he merely had to look at the Tzitzit and report about the findings to the Chachamim instead of trying to remove a sample. Rav Hershel Schachter (Nefesh HaRav p.53 footnote 26) observes that the fact that the rabbis were open to considering the Tzitzit of the Dor HaMidbar as a factor in deciding whether to rule in accordance with Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel seems to prove that the Halacha does consider archaeological evidence in rendering Halachic decisions. On the other hand, Rav Chaim Kanievsky (Taamah Dikra, Parashat Shelach) and Rav Shlomo Aviner (Iturei Kohanim 174:34) conclude that Rabbah bar bar Channah's failure to derive Halachic conclusions from his discovery indicates that Hashem does not want us to draw Halachic conclusions from discoveries of the past.

The latter approach seems to contradict the celebrated principle of "Lo Bashamayim Hi" ("it is not in heaven"), that post-Matan Torah heavenly decrees play no role in Halachic decision-making (see Bava Metzia 59b). One may respond that the Gemara in Bava Metzia 59b merely teaches that heavenly decrees declaring Divine agreement with a specific rabbinic opinion are discounted by Halachic decisors. However, Rav Yehuda Shaviv (editor's note to Techumin 24:496) suggests that the Halacha might consider general principles and rules that are indicated by the Divine guidance of history. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik seems to adopt a similar approach (see Nefesh HaRav p.88 footnote 29; also see Nefesh HaRav p.53 footnote 26), arguing that Hashem's Will is discernible by the direction of history. The second classic case is

the Smag (positive Mitzvot 22) who supports the common practice to wear Tefillin whose Parshiot are arranged in accordance with Rashi's view, from an ancient set of Tefillin that were found buried in the area of the grave of the prophet Yechezkel.

The Drisha (Orach Chaim 34) responds that this find does not necessarily disprove the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam, as it possible that these Tefillin were buried precisely because they were invalid! The Bach (ad. loc.) responds, though, that improper ordering of the Tefillin does not warrant burial as the Parshiot simply could have been placed in proper order. Nonetheless, one could respond to the Smag's argument by noting that it is difficult to draw conclusions from one artifact. Indeed, it is entirely possible that in other digs, Tefillin whose Parshiot are arranged in accordance with the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam will be found. In fact, I have heard that it indeed is true that sets of Tefillin with Parshiot arranged in accordance with both Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam's opposing views have been found in archaeological excavations conducted in the twentieth century. Incidentally,

one should not be surprised by the discovery that the Rashi-Rabbeinu Tam debate raged already in earlier generations. The Gemara frequently mentions that the Amoraim engaged in debates that were already debated by the Tannaim in earlier generations. I encountered this experience in the late 1980's when I became involved in Eruv design and construction. I learned that Rabbanim in America debated whether the positioning of a Lechi beneath a wire should be determined by plumb line or by eyesight alone (see my Gray Matter pp.182-184). I thought that I could resolve this debate simply by asking the older Rabbanim what the practice was in pre-war Europe. To my surprise, I discovered that the same difference of opinion existed in pre-war Europe and had reemerged in the 1980's when Jews began building community Eruvin in America (I also discovered that the same difference of opinion existed in Israel). The third classic case of discovery of ancient artifacts is recorded in the Torat Chaim edition of the Ramban's commentary to Shemot 30:13. The Ramban discusses the debate between Rashi and the Rif regarding the weight of a Shekel (this impacts a number of areas of Halacha, such as determining the minimum weight of the coins used for Pidyon HaBen). According to Rashi's opinion, the Shekel would be one-sixth lighter than according to the Rif's opinion. The Ramban originally supported the opinion of the Rif. However, the Ramban writes that when he made Aliyah he was shown an ancient coin that said Shekel Hashkalmim on one side and Yerushalayim Hakedoshah on the other. When he weighed the ancient Shekel he realized that Rashi's opinion was correct. The Ramban subsequently reversed his opinion and supported Rashi based on his discovery of the ancient artifact. It should be noted that in later generations many coins of the type that the Ramban found were discovered in various places throughout Eretz Yisrael and scholars have dated them to the period of the last years of the Second Temple. Interestingly, the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De'ah 305:1) does not rule in accordance with the opinion of Rashi despite the discovery made by the Ramban. The reason for this might be based on two criticisms of the Ramban's evaluation of his discovery. First, as the Abarbanel notes (Shemot 30:13-14), it is entirely possible that the Shekel lost some of its weight over time. Second, the Tashbetz (3:226) is disturbed that the Ramban relied on Samaritans to decipher the writing on the coin. Since we have profound ideological differences with the Samaritans, their testimony has no Halachic credibility. These two criticisms of the Ramban's approach foreshadow the fundamental concerns with the reliability of ancient finds that Rabbanim express today – the integrity of the discoveries and the credibility of the archaeologists, many of whom appear to be hostile to Torah values.

**Modern Archaeology and its Limitations** These three classic cases deal with fairly concrete artifacts. However, the issues raised by modern archaeology are often much more nuanced and abstract. For example, archaeologists might identify human bones as belonging to the early Canaanite period (before Avraham Avinu's arrival and hence not of Jewish origin) based on the fact that they are found on the same stratum as pottery that has been determined by scientific testing to belong to that time period. Does Halacha permit relying on such assertions made by professional archaeologists? To answer this question we will briefly explore the advances and limitations of modern archaeology. The study of archaeology has advanced very significantly in the past hundred years. Each succeeding generation has introduced new methodologies for more accurate exploration and assessment of the past. Today, computers and science are standard tools in archaeologists' ever-expanding arsenal of exploratory techniques. Archaeology is often questioning and challenging its own findings as it develops as a field. In discussions with Mr. Pickman, it became clear that archaeology as a discipline is constantly evolving. Since the early 1900's, each succeeding generation identified the limitations of the previous methodology and techniques employed. Even current techniques will most likely be viewed as somewhat antiquated in as little as twenty years, as progressive technology makes available new tools in the archaeologist's arsenal for the processing and analysis of artifacts. Accordingly,

while we may admire the achievements of archaeologists, we must at the same time be aware of and recognize the limitations regarding their conclusions.

There are other significant limitations that we must bear in mind when assessing the value of archaeological findings. First is that there is an inherent limitation in the survival of most artifacts due to deterioration that occurs over time in the item from use and exposure to the environment. Organic items such as food, papyrus and animal skins do not survive for long periods of time. Even metal and stone objects often do not survive in their original form (as we noted earlier). Most items were meant to be used – they were not created with the idea that they would endure forever, and as such, only a small percentage of the entire corpus of material actually survives. Second, only tiny percentages of areas of interest have been excavated. The reasons for this include cost and the wish to allow future archaeologists to test their theories and methodologies for a site. Hence, it is wrong to draw broad conclusions based on documents or artifacts that have not been found in archaeological excavations. Third, ancient histories that have been unearthed often include bald lies and exaggerations. Ancient kings would often employ individuals to record history in a manner that would be most flattering to the king rather than in the most objective manner. Fourth, an integral component of archaeological studies is the interpretation of the materials that have been unearthed. Interpretation is by definition subjective, and the archaeologist's political or religious beliefs often color and bias his theories and conclusions.

Thus, one must employ archaeology in the service of Torah in a very selective and critical manner. For example, a non-Orthodox spiritual leader stirred a great deal of controversy a number of years ago when he stated in a sermon that Yetziat Mitzrayim never occurred, in light of the fact that no archaeological evidence has been found to prove that it happened. Besides the theological problems with this statement, his pronouncement reflects a naïve understanding and evaluation of the field of archaeology. Another example is the conclusion that some archaeologists reached that the battle of Ai that is described in the book of Joshua did not occur because the excavations at Ai showed that Ai was not inhabited during the time of Joshua's conquest of Eretz Yisrael. However, Rav Yoel Bin Nun (arguably the greatest living scholar of Tanach) demonstrated that they had excavated the wrong area. Instead he found what he believed to be the correct location of Ai, which, when subsequently excavated, yielded evidence that it existed during the time of Joshua's entry into Eretz Yisrael.

Twentieth-Century Evaluations – Chazon Ish vs. Rav Kook Two of the greatest authorities of the first half of the twentieth century expressed their evaluation of archaeological enterprise. The Chazon Ish (a major leader of Chareidi Orthodoxy who lived from 1878-1953 and moved to Eretz Yisrael in 1933) dealt with the question of whether the laws of Shemittah apply to produce grown in the city of Beit She'an. The Gemara (Chullin 6b) records that Shemittah restrictions do not apply to produce grown in Beit She'an. The question is whether we may assume that what we today identify as Beit She'an is the Beit She'an that is mentioned in the Gemara. The Chazon Ish (Shevi'it 3:18-19) rules unequivocally that we may not assume that it is the same Beit She'an. He believes that the practice of identifying places in Israel with their Biblical and Talmudic namesakes is built on mere "Umdenot" (conjecture), which is insufficient evidence to be used for Halachic purposes. In his letters (Collected Letters of the Chazon Ish 2:22 and 3:19) the Chazon Ish reveals his fundamental attitude towards archaeology. He writes, "I am not acquainted with the endeavor of excavations and studies of antiquities, and I oppose this enterprise because of the many uncertainties involved." The Chazon Ish seems to reject the fundamental value of investigating the past by searching for artifacts. It appears that the Chazon Ish believes that it is not worth paying any attention to archaeology because anything that we need to know about our past has been preserved throughout the generations. Anything that has not been preserved seems to have not been worth preserving, in the Chazon Ish's view.

I assume this to be the Chazon Ish's approach based on his attitude towards the discovery of previously unknown manuscripts of early Halachic authorities. The Chazon Ish is famous for rejecting the attachment of any Halachic significance attached to these newly discovered manuscripts. He reasons that Hashem allowed only those manuscripts that were worth preserving to be transmitted from generation to generation without interruption. If the transmission of a manuscript was interrupted, it means that Hashem did not want this manuscript to be part of the Mesorah and Halachic process. It should be noted, though, that not all authorities subscribe to the Chazon Ish's view on this matter. For example, Rav Ovadia Yosef quite often relies upon recently discovered manuscripts in the process of issuing a Halachic ruling. For further discussion of this issue, see Rav Moshe Bleich's essay "The Role of Manuscripts in Halachic Decision Making," Tradition 27:2:22-55. Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook (a leading role model for serious Modern Orthodox Jews who lived from 1865-1935) adopted a similar yet fundamentally different approach to this issue.

Rav Kook addresses this issue in a brief yet illuminating responsum to Rav Yechiel Michal Tukachisky (one of leading luminaries of twentieth-century Jerusalem). The specific issue he treats is whether the Megillah should be read on the fifteenth of Adar based on contemporary scholarship's conclusion that a particular locale was surrounded by a wall in the time of Yehoshua bin Nun. Rav Kook writes (Iggerot HaReiyah 423):

Regarding the issue of establishing the reading of the Megillah in a certain locale on the fifteenth of Adar, I do not find that the evidence you have sent me is sufficient to establish these places as having been surrounded by walls during the period of Joshua. The evidence does not even rise to the level of doubt since it must overcome the Rambam's observation that the Rov (majority) of cities of the world were not surrounded by walls during the time of Joshua. This entire enterprise of "Eretz Yisrael scholarship" is filled with guesswork. Although this endeavor is worthy of respect and warm admiration for the scholars involved in this study, due to our love of holy Torah matters, nonetheless, one cannot make Halachic decisions based on the Arab names of a specific area. Nevertheless, if you have any fundamentally different proofs or sources, kindly inform me of them and Bli Neder I will express my views on this matter. Although Rav Kook shares much of the Chazon Ish's skepticism regarding the field of academic Eretz Yisrael studies, he nevertheless seems to have a fundamentally different evaluation of the entire enterprise. First, he expresses positive thoughts about archaeological endeavors in general. Second, Rav Kook keeps an open mind about this matter and is willing to consider more conclusive evidence. The only specific tool he rejects is the use of Arab names for an area. See Rav Kook's Iggerot HaReiyah 574, where he expresses a similar approach (a positive, yet skeptical, yet open attitude) regarding the question of the use of ancient coins found in digs to make Halachic rulings. Rav Kook also expresses an open yet critical attitude to archaeology in Iggerot HaReiyah 91.

Parenthetically, the use of Arab names is a major tool used by scholars to identify the sites of places mentioned in the Tanach and the Gemara. For example, the Arab village of Beit Jallah is identified with the Biblical city Giloh (the residence of the biblical Achitophel). The Arab village of El-Ram is identified as Ramah of the Tanach (the residence of Shmuel HaNavi).

Conclusion The fundamental question of whether Halacha considers the discovery of ancient artifacts is a matter of dispute that began in the time of the Rishonim. Two giants of the twentieth century, the Chazon Ish and Rav Kook, seem to debate this point as well. Next week we will apply the principles we outlined in this essay to the practical issues that we mentioned in the beginning of this essay. We shall seek to demonstrate that the fundamental dispute between the Chazon Ish and Rav Kook still rages today.

From: Kol Torah [koltorah@koltorah.org] Sent: Friday, February 25, 2005 2:27 PM To: koltorah@koltorah.org Subject: Kol Torah Parshat Ki Tisa

## THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN HALACHIC DECISION MAKING – PART TWO

BY RABBI CHAIM JACHTER

Introduction In our previous issue, we outlined the debate among various authorities about whether archaeological finds constitute a legitimate tool to help resolve Halachic issues. We saw that this debate began in the time of the Rishonim and appears to emerge as a dispute between the Chazon Ish and Rav Kook during the first half of the twentieth century. In this essay, we shall explore how this dispute still rages today and how it applies to disputes regarding the identification of Techeilet, construction of Mikvaot, and the placement of Mezuzot. If you missed last week's article, it is available on our website, [www.koltorah.org](http://www.koltorah.org).

The Techeilet Controversy In the early 1990's, Rav Eliyahu Tevger (a leading Rav at Yeshivat Merkaz HaRav) and others (see Techumin 9:425-428) sought to demonstrate that the murex trunculus (a type of snail) is the Chilazon that is the source for producing Techeilet used to dye Tzitzit. Among his proofs are archaeological finds including the discovery of huge mounds of shells of the murex trunculus on the Northern Israeli coast alongside dyeing vats. This claim sparked a great controversy, as some believed that it was likely that a Mitzvah that had been lost from Am Yisrael for more than one thousand years had finally been restored, while others were skeptical about this claim. This remains a matter of controversy as some Jews wear Tzitzit with a blue string dyed with the dye of the murex trunculus and others do not. Rav Yosef Shalom Eliashiv (a leading Israeli Posek) argues against wearing this Techeilet (Kovetz Teshuvot 2). One of his arguments is that the Radzhiner Rebbe claimed in the late nineteenth century that he had rediscovered the lost Techeilet. Subsequently, in the early twentieth century, Rav Yitzchak Herzog demonstrated that the Radzhiner's identification of the Techeilet was incorrect and argued that the Techeilet is from a snail known as the Janthina. Rav Eliashiv writes that now in the late twentieth century, Rav



Herzog's claim has been refuted and a different snail is reputed to be the authentic source of Techeilet. Rav Eliashiv argues, "And we do not know if, in the coming years, others will come and disprove their claim as well." Indeed, Rav Eliashiv's skepticism has ample precedent among the Acharonim. Rav Yonatan Eibeshetz (Kreiti Upleiti 40:4) writes that scientific claims should be treated with great skepticism. He notes that although the works of Galen and Aristotle were accepted as truth for many centuries, today they are dismissed as incorrect. Rav Kook (Teshuvot Daat Kohen 140) also writes that Halacha treats scientific claims as only possibly correct. Indeed, Rav Kook argues that the reason we rely on a physician's assessment that someone must eat on Yom Kippur is that we merely consider the possibility that he is correct (Safek Nefashot Lihakel). Rav Hershel Schachter and other leading Poskim, on the other hand, consider the current identification of Techeilet as being possibly correct (Safek Techeilet). Furthermore, Rav Tevger's identification is based on the work of Rav Herzog, which is based on the work of the Radzhiner Rebbe. Each generation advances the process of identifying the Techeilet and does not simply dismiss the work of the previous generation. Indeed, the contemporary Poskim who advocate wearing the Techeilet believe that at some point the archaeological and other evidence is sufficiently convincing to at least rise to the level of Safek. Moreover, there are times that Poskim accept certain scientific claims as certainly correct, as seen in the extensive Halachic literature on this topic, especially in the context of Hilchot Niddah (see the entry in Dr. Avraham Steinberg's Encyclopedia of Halacha and Medicine, "Ne' emanut HaRofeh"). The advocates of the "new" Techeilet believe that while it is wise to maintain a healthy skepticism about archaeological and other scientific claims, it is also wise to keep an open mind about these claims. Thus, it appears that Poskim in collaboration with archaeologists should evaluate each find to determine whether it should be considered in the process of rendering Halachic decisions (as we shall discuss more fully in next week's essay).

Can Archaeological Discoveries Substitute for a Mesorah? Among the reasons presented against acceptance of the "new" Techeilet is the argument that a tradition from our ancestors is necessary to identify the authentic Chilazon. Indeed, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Shiurim Lizecher Abba Mari Z"l 1:228) cites that his great grandfather, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (author of the Beit HaLevi) rejected the Radzhiner Rebbe's identification of the Techeilet precisely for this reason. The Rav argues that just as we know that the Etrog is the Pri Etz Hadar mentioned in the Chumash purely as a result of a tradition that is handed down from generation to generation, so too, the identity of any species of animal or plant involved in the fulfillment of Mitzvot must be passed down from generation to generation. This approach by definition rejects the possibility of reviving a lost tradition before the arrival of the Mashiach. The Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 9:12) seems to adopt Rav Soloveitchik's approach as well, as he writes that the Mitzvah of Techeilet will not be restored until the time of Mashiach. I heard that an interesting response to this assertion is offered by Rav Shabtai Rappaport (Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshivat Hesder in Efrat). He reportedly argues that Mashiach himself will be identified by Simanim, namely, that he will match the description of Mashiach that is outlined in the Tanach, Rambam and other sources. Thus, he argues that we can identify the Techeilet in a similar manner that we will eventually identify the Mashiach, since the Gemara in various places describes various aspects of the process of making Techeilet. On the other hand, one could argue that this is precisely why it is necessary for Eliyahu HaNavi to precede the arrival of Mashiach to identify the authentic Mashiach. Rav Hershel Schachter (Nefesh HaRav p. 53 footnote 26) notes that the Radzhiner Rebbe published a letter from the author of the Beit HaLevi that differs significantly from the approach that is presented by his great grandson. In this letter (printed in Ein HaTecheilet page 13 and reprinted in Rav Menachem Burstein's HaTecheilet) the Beit HaLevi calls attention to the issue that the tint fish (and the method of extracting its dye) that was identified by the Radzhiner Rebbe as the Chilazon was known among Torah scholars for many generations and they never identified it as the Chilazon. Thus, we have a "de facto Mesorah" about this fish that teaches that it is not the authentic Chilazon. By contrast, Torah scholars in earlier generations seem not to have known about the murex trunculus as it is a rare snail. Moreover, the method of obtaining a sky blue dye from this snail was unknown for many years until it was discovered serendipitously in a laboratory in Israel during the 1980's. The letter published in the Radzhiner's work does not disprove the Rav's presentation of his ancestor's idea to be incorrect. It simply shows that the Beit HaLevi articulated different approaches to our issue. However, the idea articulated in the letter does present an alternative approach to that presented by the Rav, and leaves open the possibility of restoring a lost tradition through the use of archaeology. In fact, the Beit HaLevi wrote in his letter "that if this tint fish (or the method of procuring its dye) was lost and newly rediscovered we would be obligated to listen to [the Radzhiner] and wear [his Techeilet]." Rav Eliashiv, though,

raises another problem with reviving the Mitzvah of Techeilet today. He notes the lack of a Mesorah regarding how to resolve disputes among the Rishonim regarding the production of the Techeilet. Rav Elazar Meyer Teitz similarly noted (in a personal communication) the lack of a Mesorah of how to resolve the disputes among the Rishonim regarding how to tie the knots of the Tzitzit and how many strings of the Tzitzit to dye with the Techeilet. Other Rabbanim, such as Rav Hershel Schachter, argue that sufficient analytical bases exist in the Shulchan Aruch and the Mishnah Berurah (for example, Mishnah Berurah 9:7) to resolve these disputes. One could also cite the precedent of Shmittah and other Eretz Yisrael-dependent Mitzvot, regarding which modern age Poskim have resolved Halachic issues despite the absence of clear Halachic precedent. Another core issue regarding the Techeilet is whether there is any Halachic risk involved in wearing the "new" Techeilet. Rav Eliashiv argues that there is a Halachic risk involved if the Techeilet in one's Tzitzit are not authentic, as the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 9:6 and see the Pri Megadim cited in the Mishnah Berurah 9:15) cites an opinion in the Rishonim that the color of the Tallit should match the color of the strings (the Tzitzit) that we attach to the Tallit. One could respond, though, that the Shulchan Aruch does not rule, essentially, in accordance with this opinion. Indeed, Rav Yechiel Michal Tukachinsky (Ir HaKodesh Vihamikdash 5:55) writes, regarding the Radzhiner Techeilet, that there is no Halachic downside to wearing this Techeilet ("if it does not help, it does not harm"). Furthermore, Rav Chaim David Halevi (Asei Lecha Rav 8:1) writes that since there is no Halachic downside to wearing the wrong Techeilet, one is obligated to wear what is thought might be Techeilet since there is a chance that it might be the authentic Techeilet. It also should be noted that Rav Kook was receptive to the Radzhiner Techeilet (see Rav Burstein's HaTecheilet p. 192). Of course, since we are not certain that we have succeeded in identifying the correct Techeilet, one should not attach wool Tzitzit even with the "new" Techeilet to a four cornered linen garment (see Shulchan Aruch O.C. 9:2).

Mezuzah By contrast, the fact that archaeological evidence indicates that our ancestors affixed their Mezuzot in the vertical direction (see Sinai 98:23-38) in harmony with the view of Rashi and the Sephardic tradition, should not move Ashkenazic Jews to change their custom of placing their Mezuzot on a slant on the door. The Ashkenazic tradition seeks to compromise between the view of Rashi who holds that the Mezuzah should be placed vertically on the door and Rabbeinu Tam's view that it should be placed horizontally (see Rama Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 289:6). Parenthetically, we should explain that Mezuzot used to be placed in holes etched into the doorways (as one can see in some old homes in the Old City of Jerusalem). This is how one can draw evidence about the way Mezuzot were affixed to homes in antiquity through archaeological evidence. There are two reasons not to change our tradition. First, the archaeological evidence is inadequate. We noted last week that only a small percentage of the items have survived through the ages. Moreover, only a tiny percentage of remains from the ancient world have been excavated. Thus, one cannot draw conclusions from what we have not found. It is entirely possible that homes where the Mezuzot were affixed in accordance with Rabbeinu Tam will be found, just as Tefillin have been found that match both Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam's opinions about the order of the Parshiot. The second reason is that we should not abandon our tradition even in light of archaeological evidence. We have seen with respect to the Techeilet that archaeology can possibly play a role when there is no Mesorah (tradition). It certainly cannot uproot a tradition. Mikveh There is no exclusive tradition on how to construct a Mikveh. In fact, we outlined in articles we wrote on the subject a few years ago (available at www.koltorah.org) that there are at least five styles of Mikveh construction that are employed throughout the world today. Accordingly, the question arises whether all Mikvaot should now be adapted to the approach of the Chazon Ish and Hungarian Jewry whereby Mikvaot are constructed to function using only the Zeriah method of rendering the water in the immersion pool as Kosher, as it seems was done in the Mikveh on Massada (see Techumin 17:389-398). Can we conclude from the Mikveh on Massada that this is the way that our ancestors arranged their Mikvaot and therefore we should follow in their path regarding this specific issue? The answer is a resounding no. Since we have uncovered only a few of the ancient Mikvaot, it is inappropriate to draw conclusions from these artifacts. Moreover, perhaps the Mikveh at Massada was constructed at the highest standard that was possible to be practiced in the ancient Judean desert at that time. Indeed, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe Yoreh De'ah 1:111) rules that while it is preferable for a Mikveh to employ both the methods of Hashakah and Zeriah, nevertheless, if it is only possible to make the Mikveh using either only Zeriah or only Hashakah, the Mikveh is undoubtedly acceptable. Accordingly, we should not be disturbed by the fact that the Mikveh in Teaneck, for example, is constructed at a higher standard than the Mikveh in Massada. Obviously, we have much easier

access to water in Teaneck than did our predecessors in Massada and have the practical capabilities of achieving higher Mikveh standards that were beyond the reach of the residents of Massada.

**Conclusion** The dispute between the Chazon Ish and Rav Kook in the early part of the twentieth century has continued to rage among the Poskim of the latter part of the twentieth century. However, all agree that archaeology cannot uproot an accepted tradition among the Poskim.

Next week, we shall conclude our discussion of the interface of Halacha and archaeology and discuss the question of the impact of archaeology on the proper date for reading the Megillah and identifying bones.

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#### PENINIM ON THE TORAH BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

**PARSHAS PEKUDEI** These are the reckonings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony. (38:21) The Mishkan was filled with numerous vessels, each one exemplifying beauty and magnificence? and intimating lofty spiritual ideals and physical blessings. The Menorah, which was made of solid gold, symbolized wisdom. The Shulchan, Table, likewise was magnificent in its gold design. It signified blessing and wealth. The Kohen Gadol radiated glory as he performed the avodah, service, bedecked in his multi colored, gold brocade vestments, topped off with the Breast Plate with its multi colored precious jewels. Indeed, anyone who had the opportunity to see this glorious spectacle was certainly inspired by its rich beauty. Nonetheless, the Torah, in referring to the Mishkan, does not in any way allude to all the pomp and majesty that was manifest in the Mishkan. It refers to the Mishkan as the Mishkan HaEidus, signifying the Testimony, the two Luchos that were contained within its environs. Why is this? Why is the majesty of the Mishkan ignored and the emphasis placed instead on the Luchos, which were not seen anyway?

Horav Moshe Shapiro, Shlita, explains that the focus of the Mishkan, its purpose in Klal Yisrael, determines its name. The tachlis, purpose, is to serve as a place for the Shechinah to repose in Klal Yisrael. To that end, we know that the Shechinah's "place" in the Mishkan, or, the place where the word of Hashem was heard, was from between the two Keruvim which were a part of the Kapores, Cover, of the Aron Hakodesh. The Shechinah rested within the Aron HaEidus, which contained the Luchos and served as testimony to the world that Hashem had reconciled with Klal Yisrael following the sin of the Golden Calf.

Undoubtedly, the majesty that was manifest in the Mishkan was significant, but it was not primary. The Shechinah resides in the place that is modest, in the individual who is devoted to Torah study. Fanfare, pomp and circumstance, are not necessary - Torah study is.

During Horav Chaim Volozhiner's tenure, there lived a man by the name of Reb Moshe Soloveitchik who was very wealthy and was very generous with his money. He contributed to every worthwhile cause and his house was the address for everyone in need. One day he went bankrupt and was left with barely his shirt on his back. Rav Chaim Volozhiner convened a bais din, court of law, to determine what could have caused this dreadful turn of events. The other rabbanim decided that Reb Moshe was punished because he was giving away too much money. According to halachah, one should not donate more than twenty percent of his possessions, a sum which Reb Moshe exceeded many times over. Rav Chaim was not satisfied with this logic.

Nonetheless, Reb Moshe now had the time to throw himself into Torah study. He had no distractions, no business, and no requests for his time or money. He studied diligently and was blessed in developing a vast knowledge of Torah. This knowledge and determination to study was transmitted to his descendants, and the roots of the famous Brisker dynasty began to develop. Rav Chaim Volozhiner commented that this could not have occurred had Reb Moshe retained his enormous wealth. Torah grows in a modest and humble environment. Everything

needs its unique climate for growth and development. Luxury and opulence is not necessarily the climate most conducive for Torah advancement.

Rav Moshe Shapiro adds that the Shechinah's voice emanated from between the Keruvim. This teaches us that the Shechinah rests only on the Torah learning of a chavrusashaft, two study partners, who, as the Keruvim, "face each other" and learn together. While one certainly derives schar, reward, for studying Torah by himself, the place of hashraas ha'Shechina's, the Shechinah's resting place, is when Torah emanates from two people who study together.

They brought the Mishkan to Moshe. (39:33)

In this context, the word Mishkan does not mean the completed Mishkan, but rather, the covering of the Mishkan. The workmen could not erect the Mishkan because of its considerable weight. Since Moshe Rabbeinu had until now not had any share in constructing the Mishkan, Hashem wanted him to be the one to erect it. Although the Mishkan's weight was beyond the ability of a human being to raise it, Hashem instructed Moshe to make an attempt and Hashem would raise it. Moshe tried to erect it and the Mishkan stood up by itself. The Midrash cites the pasuk in Mishlei 31:25, "Strength and majesty are her raiment." - this refers to Moshe. "And she joyfully awaits the last day" - this is a reference to the leitzanim, scoffers, who made fun of Moshe, saying, "Is it possible that the Shechinah will rest on the handiwork of the son of Amram?" Moshe did not respond, but on the "last day" when no one could raise the Mishkan, it was precisely Moshe who demonstrated that he has Hashem's support.

This is the way a Torah scholar should perceive matters: the yom acharon, last day. They do not concern themselves with what occurs in the present, nor are they affected by what the skeptics might say. They know and believe that, in the end, Hashem will respond to their needs and they will realize their reward. The Midrash cites two narratives in support of its statement.

In the first one, one of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's students left the yeshivah and traveled out of Eretz Yisrael and returned a very wealthy man. The remaining students were envious of his financial success. Rabbi Shimon took them out to a valley and said, "Valley, valley, fill yourself with gold." The valley immediately overflowed with gold. Rabbi Shimon turned to his students and said, "If it is gold that you seek, here, take it! But, remember, you are taking your portion in the World to Come." This is the meaning of Vatischak l'yom acharon. "And (she) joyfully awaits the last day." This refers to the World to Come when a person collects his due.

This Midrash begs elucidation. First, are we to suspect Rabbi Shimon's students of being envious of the one who "made it" financially? Certainly, they were not shallow. Second, were they prepared to leave their revered rebbe for financial opportunity? Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, gives an insightful commentary to this Midrash that conveys a practical lesson for us.

He explains that when the student reappeared as a wealthy man, he immediately returned to his original place in the yeshivah and began to study Torah with his old enthusiasm and diligence. Furthermore, he used his newly-acquired funds to support those in need. Now his friends were jealous. To have the learning and the money, to be able to study diligently and also have the wherewithal to help others, this was truly a position to envy. They also wanted to amass great wealth and then return to a life of Torah and gedulah.

Their rebbe, Rabbi Shimon, understood their aspiration and thus, he brought them out to a valley which he miraculously filled with gold. "You want gold so that you can have a greater portion in the World to Come. You seek to learn and to sustain Torah. Let me explain to you that everything one receives is given to him by Hashem. He only receives what Hashem deems him worthy of receiving. This applies to Olam Habah as well as to olam hazeh. One cannot force the issue and expect to appropriate a greater portion than he deserves. If Hashem would have wanted you to have Torah and gedulah, scholarship and wealth, He would have granted it to you. Since He did not, it is an indication that your function is to devote yourself fully to Torah."

The bottom line is that one receives his reward in the World to Come. While there are those whose good fortune it is to eat out of a silver spoon even in this world, as mentioned above, this is Hashem's decision, determined by His expectations of this person. But what about those who do not lead a Torah life, who, at best, live a life of abandon and, at worst, one of iniquity? Many of them seem to be doing quite well in this world. What happened to the concept of reward only in Olam Habah?

The Chafetz Chaim, zl, provides a powerful parable that should serve as a wake-up call for us. One of the king's officers rebelled against his master. It was an act of rebellion that warranted an extreme punishment, one that should impact a message to others. The punishment was decided: the officer would be placed in a cage in the center of town and given no food until he perished from hunger. It seems to be a cruel punishment, but when one sins against the king, there is no room for leniency.

During the first few days the punishment was not apparent, since the officer was properly fed prior to his sentence. It was on day four that the hunger pains began to unnerve him, that the pangs began to eat away at him. He was miserable and, what made it worse - there was no hope in sight. He was paying dearly for his miscreant behavior against the king who had originally been so benevolent to him. Finally, giving in to overwhelming hunger pains, he took a bite out of his own skin. It kept him alive, but after the hunger pains temporarily subsided, he was now overwhelmed with the agony of the wound he had made to his own flesh.

On that day, when this spectacle was occurring and the prisoner was eating his own flesh, a visitor chanced upon the town. This man had not been aware of the officer's rebellion, nor of his punishment. He questioned the townspeople concerning the man in the cage in the center of town. "He is being starved to death for rebelling against the king," they replied.

"He does not seem to be starving," the visitor commented. "I see him eating heartily. Some punishment."

The spectators who had been watching the scene unfold responded, "Yes, he is eating - but, he is eating himself!"

What a powerful analogy. We wonder how some people get away with performing every iniquity, yet, continue to enjoy life in a manner certainly inconsistent with the way they act. What they fail to realize is that they are receiving their eternal reward - in this world.

According to all that Hashem commanded Moshe, so Bnei Yisrael did all the work. And Moshe saw all the work and, behold, they had done it as Hashem commanded, even so they had done it. (39:42,43)

Upon reading the text we are confronted with a glaring question: Why does the Torah repeat itself? Twice it mentions that the work performed by Bnei Yisrael conformed with the specifications that Hashem had set for them. Horav Aharon Soloveitchik, zl, addresses this query and draws a distinction between the various terms used to describe "work." In the first pasuk, the word *avodah* is used to describe work, while in the second pasuk, the word *melachah* is used. These terms are different in that they refer to two different forms of labor.

*Avodah* connotes a labor that is extraneous to the individual performing the work, while *melachah* refers to work which is an art form, embodying the personality of the one who effects it. When an artist creates a work of art, he imbues it with his personality, a part of himself is reflected in his creation. Any project, even one as holy as the Mishkan, can be realized through the spectrum of either mere *avodah*, or personal *melachah*.

When the craftsmen created the Mishkan they followed the blueprint revealed to them by Hashem. This was their *avodah*. Supplementing their work, Betzalel, Ohaliav and their associates instilled their personalities and personal devotion into the construction of the Mishkan and its Keilim, appurtenances. It was only when Moshe Rabbeinu noted that both the *avodah* aspect and the *melachah* aspect of the construction of the Mishkan conformed to Hashem's specifications, that he bestowed his blessing on the Mishkan. The Mishkan had to represent and reflect the harmony between these two forms of labor and its conformity to the *dvar*, word, of Hashem.

Likewise, there are two methods through which talmidei chachamim, Torah scholars, disseminate Torah to their students. There are those who provide efficient training, cultivating their student's intellect and scholarship - yet, these students remain on the periphery with regard to their rebbeim. The relationship that should be so intrinsic between a rebbe and his talmid, student, just does not seem to exist. There are, however, rebbeim who not only teach Torah to their students, but they even infuse them with their own personality. These are the devoted *mechanchim*, educators, who emphasize the *melachah* aspect of Torah dissemination.

How does one effect *harbotzas* Torah on a *melachah* level? What techniques should he employ to reach his students on a personal level? Rav Soloveitchik cites a dialogue between Rabbi Chiya and Rabbi Chanina in the Talmud Bava Metzia 85b that lends insight towards obtaining the correct approach one should take. In a most inspiring debate between these two Tannaim the question that was addressed was: How would each respective Tanna restore Torah to Klal Yisrael if *chas v'shalom*, Heaven forbid, it was forgotten?

Rabbi Chanina felt that through his incredible mastery of Torah, he could have single-handedly revived it through his scholarship and erudition. The problem with this approach is that it works so long as the majority of Klal Yisrael remains committed to upholding the Torah. Then, through study and more study, they will master the Torah. This approach prevails only on the *avodah* level since its focus is primarily on academia and knowledge.

Rabbi Chiya addressed a situation when Klal Yisrael will not only be ignorant of the Torah, they will also be disinterested in seeking its wisdom and guidance. Under such conditions the propagation of Torah via the medium of the *avodah*

approach will be deemed ineffective. Rabbi Chiya then intimated to Rabbi Chanina that his approach might restore knowledge of the Torah, but what was going to guarantee continuity to the next generation when the present generation was hostile to Torah philosophy?

Consequently, Rabbi Chiya introduced the *melachah* approach to Torah dissemination. He felt that by injecting his personality into the hearts and minds of his students, by involving them in the process of Torah learning from its genesis, from preparing the parchment upon which the Torah was written to intellectual guidance and inspirational stimulation and character growth, he would ultimately accomplish much more. The intellectual dialogue of "giving a *shiur*" would work only to a crowd attuned and ready to learn. Indeed, Rabbi Chiya's *melachah* method was, and continues to be, more laborious, but there are times, circumstances and students who will thrive only under such tutelage.

It goes a step further. The rebbe who employs the *avodah* approach to education can simplify his task by a division of labor. He parcels out the running of the *yeshivah*, the psychological guidance of his students and various administrative and organizational duties to those who are proficient in these respective fields, while he devotes his time to the intellectual development and guidance of his students.

The rebbe who takes the *melachah* approach does so either out of need, or educational perspective. To succeed in infusing his personality into his students' psyches, it is essential that he do everything himself. He must find the students, prepare the parchment and instructional materials, at times cook the meals, be father, mother, big brother and psychologist and just about everything else, to succeed in his daunting task. The *melachah* approach is difficult, but, in the long run, it is guaranteed the most success.

There were many rebbeim and *roshei yeshivah* who exemplified this approach to teaching Torah. I take the liberty of citing from a biography of Horav Shlomo Freifeld, zl, Rosh Hayeshivah of Shor Yeshuv in Far Rockaway, NY and an undisputed pioneer in the field of *kiruv rechokim*, Jewish outreach to the unaffiliated. His unusual personal warmth and sensitivity towards Jews from all spectrums of Jewish life earned him their unequivocal love and respect. They became his talmidim in the fullest sense of the word, adapting his philosophy and, to some extent - his essence. A talmid once remarked about his rebbe, "Rav Shlomo did not love people despite their weaknesses, but because of them. He viewed their shortcomings as tools and mediums by which one could climb and develop."

Rav Freifeld did not wait for a student to come to him. He sought them out, picking up potential students in places far off the beaten path. He focused on *chizuk*, encouragement and raising a student's self-esteem. He recognized that the capacity for spiritual growth was closely tied to self-esteem. When dealing with a broken *neshamah*, he would encourage the student to focus on his own capacity for growth. He would not say "be strong." Rather, he encouraged him to "be big," recognizing that not everyone had the potential for strength, but everyone had the opportunity for greatness. He believed in his student's ability to soar spiritually, to become great, and he encouraged them. Indeed, he engendered in his students a drive to greatness.

This approach was especially necessary in reaching out to the many *baalei teshuvah*, returnees to the Torah way of life, who came in contact with him. The insecurity of a would-be-baal teshuvah who realizes that he has missed out on so much of his rightful heritage can be devastating. Rav Freifeld taught them self-respect, because he respected them. He saw their potential, recognized their accomplishments and encouraged further achievements. He exemplified the *melachah* approach and it shows - in his talmidim.

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