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From: torahweb@torahweb.org Sent: Feb. 25, 2004 To: weekly7@torahweb.org

Subject: Rabbi Benjamin Yudin - The Mikdash: A Different Kind of Group Home

<http://www.torahweb.org/thisWeek.html>

RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN

THE MIKDASH: A DIFFERENT KIND OF GROUP HOME

The mishkan served as the religious center during the forty years that the fledgling Jewish nation traveled in the dessert, and was the hub of spirituality in the land of Israel until David/Shlomo built the Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim. The Ramban explains that just as at Sinai the entire nation camped around the mountain, similarly when they traveled from Sinai, the mishkan was at the center of the camp. The mishkan /mikdash unified the people. There is no Mitzvah for any individual to build a mikdash, rather it is incumbent upon the Jewish nation. It was to the mishkan / mikdash that they came thrice yearly to celebrate the pilgrim festivals and to bring the prescribed offerings. Once we were privileged to build a Beis HaMikdash, the Torah distinctly prohibited the offering of korbanos in any other location.

In addition, the ability to develop a close relationship with Hashem is attainable by every individual wherever in the world they might live. The individual keeping Shabbos, kashrus, and studying Torah can attain a personal closeness with Hashem. However, it is only when the nation is united in its pursuit of sanctity that there is a concept of kingship (government), sanctity of the Temple and sanctity of the community serving Hashem. This is only attainable in Eretz Yisrael.

With the above, we can now more fully understand a perplexing teaching of the Talmud (Megillah 12a) regarding the threat of Purim. The Talmud asks: what might the Jewish people have sinned so terribly that they deserved "l'hasmid laharog l'abed es kol hayehudim" - to G-d forbid destroy the entire Jewish nation? The Talmud gives two answers, both of which are puzzling on the surface. The first answer is that they worshipped avodah zarah - idolatry. However, a more careful analysis reveals that it was not actual idolatry, but "avak" idolatry, behavior that resembled idol worship, as they bowed to the image of Nebuchadnezzar. While surely a serious offense, at first glance it doesn't warrant such a harsh punishment.

The second response is even more difficult. Rashbi teaches that they were "nehene mei'seudas Achashverosh" - they attended and participated in the party of Achashverosh. What, however, was their crime? Lest we think that they partook of a non-kosher meal, the Megillah explicitly states "hashtiyah ka'das" which the Talmud understands (Megillah 12a) to mean that the king satisfied the individual dietary needs of each person, including kosher food. Even the wine was mevushal. So wherein lies the grave offense? HaRav Yitzchak HaCohen Kook zt"l and Reb Yosef Salant zt"l in his Be'er Yosef suggest a

fascinating response. They remind us of the prophecy of Yirmiyahu that the Jewish people would return to their land after seventy years. Achashverosh miscalculated and believed that the seventy years had passed and the prophecy proved to be false. The Jewish people were not returning home. He was therefore celebrating the demise and downfall of the Jewish nation. Of course, if any Jew wanted to keep Kosher they could in Persia, but the nation, the people of Israel, had lost its purpose. Thus the Talmud understands that when we are told that he donned "bigdei malchus" - royal garb, it refers to the bigdei kehuna - priestly garments, and specifically that of the Kohen Gadol. Moreover, he displayed the relics of the Temple that would no longer be needed. Thus, their participation in this party was an agreement that no redemption/salvation was necessary - they could remain Jews in Persia. Mordechai tried to persuade the nation not to attend. There is much more than individual observance of mitzvot. Moreover, if the Jewish people forsake their sacred mission of being a holy nation, a holy people, then they lose their right to survive as a people. Their attending the party of Achashverosh had much deeper meaning. We can now appreciate Mordechai's plea not to attend, as he was advocating a difficult theological-religious perspective, the importance of the nation on their land.

We can now understand the response of Mordechai who leads the people to teshuva (repentance). Firstly, he tells Esther "lech k'nos es kol hayehudim" - "gather the entire Jewish nation". The people need to be awakened regarding their belonging to a nation. Personal participation in Torah and mitzvos is insufficient. Secondly, he awakens the desire to return home to Israel and build the Beis HaMikdash. The Medrash teaches that the Jewish nation fasted on the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth of Nissan to cancel the evil decree of Haman and Achashverosh. When Haman finds Mordechai to implement the king's order of parading Mordechai throughout the city in an honorable way to express the king's appreciation, he finds Mordechai teaching the innocent Jewish children. Does it really make a difference what the subject of his lesson was? Why does the Gemorah (Megillah 16a) inform us that he was expounding the laws of kemitzah and korban omer, the offering brought on the sixteenth of Nissan? HaRav Kook zt"l explained that this was to maintain their hopes and aspirations for shivas tzion, return to Zion. The korban omer was not brought by any one individual, rather one offering was brought on behalf of the entire nation. In unified the people in spirit and in practice.

The Raavad teaches that Taanis Esther is most unique, in that all other fasts have an element of sadness and tragedy, while this fast is one of simcha, happiness. Happiness that we were victorious over our enemies, and especially that we did not loose a single soldier. In addition, our fasting reminds us of their fasting for three days, which brought about the unification of the Jewish nation and ultimately our geulah. May we, through our fasting, be so privileged to bring happiness and hasten our geulah.

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: Feb. 26, 2004

Subject: "RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Teruma -

We Should Take A Lesson From G-d

The verse says, "And they shall make for me a sanctuary and I shall dwell among them" [Shmos 25:8]. The Medrash elaborates as follows: G-d told the Jewish people that He gave them the most precious thing in the world -- the Torah. However, this caused a 'problem'. "I cannot separate myself from the Torah." G-d was unwilling, as it were, to just hand over the Torah to the Jewish people and walk away from it. "Therefore, wherever you go with the Torah, I want you to make a

dwelling place for me, so that I might still be able to accompany the Torah."

The Medrash compares this to a father who marries off a daughter and finds it very difficult to part with her. So the father requests that the daughter build a room for him in her house, so that he can be a frequent visitor and still enjoy her company. The "room" that G-d asked the Jewish people to build for Him so that he could stay in proximity with the Torah is called the Beis HaMikdash [the Holy Temple].

The message in this Medrash is the message of love of Torah. G-d lacks nothing, but allegorically he is unable to separate himself from Torah because of His great attachment to it. We have the Torah. It is accessible to us. Unfortunately, we may not find it so difficult to separate ourselves from the Torah. We should take a lesson from G-d.

A Person Who Has Torah Has Everything

The verse at the end of last week's parsha says, "Moshe was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights" [Shmos 24:18]. The Yalkut on those words quotes the following Medrash: Rav Yochanan was travelling from Teveria to Tzipori, and he was riding on the shoulders of Rav Chiya Bar Abba. They passed by an orchard and Rabbi Yochanan remarked to Rav Chiya Bar Abba that he used to own this orchard, and then he sold it so that he would be able to spend his time learning Torah. The Medrash then says that they walked a little further and they passed an olive grove. Again, Rabbi Yochanan said that he used to own this olive grove and he sold it to be able to spend his time learning Torah. They came to a vineyard and he again said that it used to be his, but he sold it so he would have the money to sit and learn Torah.

Rav Chiya Bar Abba was so overcome by this knowledge that he put Rav Yochanan down and started to cry. Rav Yochanan asked him why he was crying. Rav Chiya Bar Abba responded, "I am crying because you will not have anything left for yourself for your old age." In other words, "Where is your retirement fund?" Rav Yochanan responded, "Are you so upset that I sold something which took only six days to create, and exchanged it for something which took forty days and forty nights to acquire (i.e.-- the Torah)?"

Rav Yochanan protested, "I am not left with nothing. I have everything! I have all those years that I sat and learned Torah." The Medrash concludes that when Rav Yochanan died, they eulogized him with the pasuk "...If a man gives over all the treasure of his house with love..." [Shir HaShirim 8:7], saying the the pasuk alluded to the love that Rav Yochanan had for Torah.

"What do you mean I have nothing? I have everything!" A person who has Torah, has everything.

The Love Of Torah -- Father of the Ridbaz

The Ridbaz (Rabbi Yakov Dovid ben Ze'ev Willowski; 1845-1913) was a very interesting personality. At one point in his life, he lived in Chicago. At the end of his life, he lived in Tzfas. When he was a very old man, someone came into his Beis Medrash in Tzfas and he saw the Ridbaz hunched over his shtender (study desk), crying. This person asked the Ridbaz why he was crying. The Ridbaz answered, "It's my father's Yahrzeit today". At the time of this incident, the father of the Ridbaz might have been dead for over 50 years, so the observer asked him further as to why he was crying.

The Ridbaz explained that he remembered the love of Torah that his father demonstrated. "I remember how much my learning meant to my father." He recounted that when he was six years old, his father hired a tutor (melamed) to teach him Torah. But his father could not afford to pay the tutor and he was two months behind in the tutor's payment. One day, the tutor sent home a note with the Ridbaz giving the father an ultimatum. If the tutor did not get paid, he would need to find other employment and stop learning with the child.

The father was beside himself with anxiety. He went to shul and overheard a wealthy man saying that he wanted to build a house for his future son-in-law who just got married, but he could not find the necessary bricks to make the chimney. Without a chimney, he could not build the house. The father of the Ridbaz went home and dismantled his own chimney brick by brick, sold the bricks to the wealthy person, paid the tutor the back wages and then had enough money to pay him for the next six months.

The Ridbaz said that he remembered the bitter cold of those winters. There was no heat in the house. The father took apart the chimney so that the son could learn Torah. This, he explained, was why he was crying on the Yartzeit. He was not crying over the loss of a father fifty years after the fact. He was crying for the love of Torah that his father had, to the extent that the whole family should shiver through the winters so that the son could learn Torah.

This is an echo of what Rav Yochanan told Rav Chiya Bar Abba. "What do you mean I'll have nothing in my old age? I'll have the years I sat learning Torah. What could be more important than that?"

We have opportunities galore. We have the Torah there waiting for us in all forums and all shapes -- chavrusas, shiurim, all kinds of media -- we have it! As with many things in life, we fail to appreciate what we have. Our attitude must emulate that of G-d: "I am unable to separate myself from it."

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Terumah: Do You Measure Up? Volume XVIII, No. 19 6 Adar 5764 Feb. 28, 2004 Sponsored by Rochelle Dimont and family, in memory of father-in-law and grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel Elchanan Dimont a"h; Elie, Rachel and Daniel Rutstein in honor of the birthday of wife and mother, Galit Bobbi and Jules Meisler in memory of mother Anne Meisler a"h; The Katz family, on the yahrzeits of uncle, Avraham Abba ben Avigdor Moshe Hakohen a"h, aunt, Ettl (Etush) bat Avigdor Moshe Hakohen a"h, Yitzchak Zvi ben Chaim Hakohen a"h, Yitzchak Isaac ben Yehuda a"h, Czirel bat Shlomo a"h, and Sheindel Rivka bat Shmuel Eliezer a"h

"The poles shall remain in the rings of the Aron/Ark, they may not be removed from it." (25:15)

R' Yaakov Kamenetsky z"l writes: The Aron represents those who study Torah, and the poles represent their financial backers. The prohibition to remove the poles from the Aron alludes to the teaching of the Gemara (Pesachim 53b) that those who support Torah study will be seated in Heaven right next to the scholars they supported.

But how can this be? R' Kamenetsky asks. In Heaven, souls "sit" and "discuss" Torah topics. And, since Torah knowledge can be acquired only with much toil, how will a person who spent his whole life toiling in business (and not in Torah) take part in the discussion with the great scholars that he sits amongst?

He explains: When a baby is in the womb, it is taught the entire Torah. Then, just before birth, it forgets what it learned. Why? Because, in the words of the prophet (Iyov 5:7), "Man was born to toil." Man must toil in this world to reclaim the Torah knowledge which he forgot at birth.

A person who toils in business during his lifetime so that he can support Torah scholars has also toiled, R' Kamenetsky observes. Because he has toiled for the sake of Torah study just as the Torah scholar has, he, too, is able to reclaim his lost Torah knowledge. (Emet Le'Yaakov: Shmot 25:15 & Devarim 33:18)

R' Pinchas Halevi Ish Horowitz z"l (18th century rabbi of Frankfurt, Germany; author of several widely used Talmud commentaries) writes that the entire construction of the Aron alludes to the founding fathers and leaders of the Jewish people:

The two keruvim allude to Avraham and Yitzchak. Two times the gematria of "keruv" equals 456, the gematria of "Avraham" and "Yitzchak."

The Aron itself alludes to Yaakov, who said (Bereishit 28:17): "How 'nora' / awesome is this place." The letters of "nora" are the same letters that spell "Aron." [Ed. note: In addition, Yaakov is the Patriarch most associated with Torah study, and the Aron housed the Torah.]

The four walls of the Aron allude to the twelve tribes, which traveled in a four-sided formation. [Ed. note: In addition, as noted on page 1, the combined area of the four walls of the Aron was 12 square amot.]

The two poles for carrying the Aron allude to the two leaders -- Moshe and Aharon.

Finally, the Luchot Ha'berit / Tablets of the Covenant inside the Aron allude to Yosef because a person who guards his morality, as Yosef did in the face of Mrs. Potiphar's seductions, is traditionally referred to as a "Guardian of the Berit." (Panim Yafot)

"You shall make two keruvim / cherubs of gold . . . (25:18)
". . . with their faces toward one another." (25:20)

The Gemara (Sukkah 5b) states that the word "keruvim" is related to the Aramaic word for "baby," teaching that the keruvim were baby-faced.

Regarding the second verse quoted above, the Ba'al Ha'turim explains that the keruvim faced each other "like two friends discussing a Torah topic."

R' Meir Rubman z"l (Israel; 20th century) asks: Aren't these mixed metaphors? Babies don't discuss Torah topics with each other!

He explains: Every person has hidden powers far in excess of his everyday abilities. These powers manifest themselves, for example, when a person is in danger. A person's powers are like a storekeeper's merchandise; a small amount is on display, and the rest is in the back room.

Most people use only their "visible" powers, but a great person strives to use his hidden powers. This is because the typical person feels no need to strive for greatness, while a select few do. Indeed, this is one way to differentiate between a "regular" person and a great one.

The lesson of the baby-faced keruvim who face each other like friends engaged in a Torah discussion is that every person, even if his powers are hidden like a baby's, can bring out his full potential and achieve greatness, just as a person who is engaged in a Torah discussion with his friend uses all of his intellectual powers to prove his point. (Zichron Meir)

R' Shimon Sofer z"l (19th century rabbi of Krakow, Poland) offers another reason why the keruvim were baby-faced. The appearance of the keruvim teach us that one should approach the Torah as a baby relates to his father, not with preconceived notions and faith in our own knowledge, but as completely blank slates and with trust in the Torah's wisdom.

(Michtav Sofer)

Malbim (19th century) writes: The two keruvim were on the cover of the Aron, which held the two luchot. Thus, one of the keruvim covered one of the Tablets, and the other covered the second.

On one of the luchot were engraved five obligations of man to G-d; on the other were engraved five obligations of man to his fellow man. One of the keruvim represents the kohen gadol, whose role is to inspire man to perform his obligations toward G-d. The other keruv represents the king, whose role is to enforce man's obligations to his fellow man.

The two keruvim faced each other, to teach that Israel's political and religious authorities should work together. (Quoted in Sha'ar Bat Rabim) HaMaayan, Copyright © 2004 by Shlomo Katz and Torah.org. Posted by Alan Broder, ajb@torah.org . Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. learn@torah.org 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 250 (410) 602-1350 Baltimore, MD 21208

From: Kol Torah [koltorah@koltorah.org] Celebrating Thirteen Years of Kol Torah KOL TORAH A Student Publication of the Torah Academy of Bergen County Parshat Yitro - Mishpatim

THE USE OF ELEVATORS ON SHABBAT: PART I BY RABBI CHAIM JACHTER

A major Halachic issue in modern life is the use of elevators on Shabbat and Yom Tov. The question has been debated for decades, but there have been distinct periods of both Halachic and technological developments in this area. In this essay, we will attempt to summarize the different approaches taken by Poskim on the issue during the past number of decades.

The Earliest Responsa - the Strict Views of Minchat Yitzchak and Chelkat Yaakov

Both Dayan Weisz (Minchat Yitzchak (3:60) and Rav Yaakov Breisch (Chelkat Yaakov 3:137) forbade using even automatic elevators on Shabbat. Dayan Weisz's reasoning is that the rider's additional weight in the elevator cabin causes the elevator to work harder, thereby causing its motor to draw more current.

Rav Breisch's argument is quite interesting. He cites Rav Yitzchak Schmelkes' ruling (Beit Yitzchak 2:30) forbidding one to ride on a train or trolley on Shabbat. The precedent cited by Rav Shmelkes is a Gemara (Beitzah 25b) which records the rabbinic prohibition to be transported in a sedan-like chair carried by others because this runs counter to the spirit of Shabbat (see Rashi s.v. Ein Hasuma). Rav Breisch proceeds to apply the Beit Yitzchak's ruling to an elevator. Rav Breisch argues: "What is the difference between riding horizontally or vertically?" Both activities should be forbidden even if the train or elevator is entirely automated. He notes the practice of scrupulously observant Jews to avoid riding on elevators.

The Earliest Responsa - The Lenient Views of Rav Henkin and Rav Unterman Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin (Kol Kitvei Harav Henkin 2:59) and Rav Yehudah Unterman (the Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel during the 1960's, writing in the journal Torah Shebaal Peh 5727 p.13) felt that it is permissible to ride an elevator if one does not push any of the buttons. Rav Henkin points out that the Halacha (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 252:5) follows the opinion of Beit Hillel (Shabbat 17-18) that prior to Shabbat one may arrange for his utensils to perform work on Shabbat. Accordingly, since the rider performs no Melacha (forbidden act of labor), Rav Henkin permitted the use of an elevator on Shabbat if no buttons are pushed. Rav Unterman notes: "I have personally witnessed great Torah sages entering an elevator and travelling to the floor for which a non-Jewish passenger pushed the button; they never raised the possibility of their added weight posing a Halachic problem." Rav Unterman relates that he was present one Shabbat when the Chafetz Chaim was meeting with other rabbinical figures discussing community matters. When the Chafetz Chaim needed something to be brought to him, one of the rabbis proceeded to ride the elevator along with a non-Jewish passenger to retrieve the item. None of the rabbis, including the Chafetz Chaim, objected to his riding the elevator.

It should be noted that it appears from Igrot Moshe 2:80, that Rav Moshe Feinstein agrees with Rav Henkin and Rav Unterman's ruling that if the elevator is not operated by a Jew, and a non-Jew has not been instructed to operate the elevator, one may ride the elevator.

Rav Halperin's Revolution Based on the heretofore cited rulings it would appear that Rav Henkin and Rav Unterman's rulings should be considered normative Halacha. Rav Breisch's novel approach comparing elevators to trains received almost no support from other Halachic authorities (see chapter 17 of Maaliot Bishabbat; Rav Hershel Schachter told me that Professor Zev Lev told him that Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky did not concur with the ruling of the Beit Yitzchak upon which the Chelkat Yaakov bases his ruling). Also, increasing current is permitted by most authorities in case of considerable need (see Minchat Shlomo p. 74 who notes the common practice to engage in conversation with individuals who wear hearing aids despite the fact that this causes increased current flow in the

hearing aid). Moreover, the increased current flow is only caused indirectly (Grama) because when one enters the elevator, the motor is not operating. Only when the elevator begins to ascend does the current flow increase. Performing Melacha on Shabbat indirectly is permitted on Shabbat in case of exceptionally great need (see Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 334:22 and Biur Halacha ad. loc. s.v. Digram). This would appear to be analogous to the case described by the Gemara on Sanhedrin 77a - the "Sof Chamah Lavo" scenario. This passage describes a case in which one ties someone up and leaves him in the desert at night and then the encroaching sun kills the victim the next day. Rashi (s.v. Sof Chama) explains that since the killing agent (i.e. the sun) was not present when the perpetrator tied up the victim, the murder was committed indirectly (Grama) and the crime will be punished by G-d, not by Beit Din. Similarly, when one enters the elevator, the motor is not operating; it is only when a passenger is standing still that his weight causes an increase in current. This argument appears to be made by Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, as cited in the Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata (I:305 end of note 140). In addition, see Maaliot Bishabbat, pages 172-174, that the increased current is caused by the passenger so indirectly, that the passenger's actions are even beyond the pale of Grama (it is a situation of "Meniat Monea", preventing a preventative act from occurring). Accordingly, the increased current appears not to be a serious problem and one may take an ascending elevator. Rav Hershel Schachter told this author, however, that this should be avoided if at all possible.

However, Rav Levi Yitzchak Halperin, director of the Institute for Science and Halacha in Jerusalem, published a work on elevators entitled "Maaliot Bishabbat" which revolutionized the way Halachic authorities view elevator usage on Shabbat. Rav Halperin notes in the introduction to the book that he invested no less than sixteen years into investigating the Halachic challenge posed by elevator usage on Shabbat prior to publishing Ma'aliot Bishabbat. Rav Halperin relates that he travelled many times to Europe and the United States to meet with leading elevators manufacturers in the world including Otis, Westinghouse, and the Schindler. His conclusion is that one may ascend on an automated elevator, but he may not descend on an elevator unless special modifications have been made to avoid Halachic pitfalls. Rav Halperin's conclusion is just the opposite of what had been asserted by earlier Poskim. It was previously assumed that taking an ascending elevator posed the most serious problems. Rav Halperin insists that riding an ascending elevator is permitted, but that riding a descending elevator is fraught with Halachic problems. "Maaliot Bishabbat" is a masterpiece and a classic of Halachic literature and we will discuss in the next weeks some of its main points and the criticism of its conclusions from other authorities.

Rav Halperin's Arguments Rav Halperin points out that the weight of the passenger riding on the elevator assists the elevator's motor in the descent of the elevator. He writes: "If the passenger is responsible for the descent, he is responsible also for illuminating the various lamps, connecting the door motor, the brakes, and numerous other electric circuits which are activated during the descent (Maaliot Bishabbat p. 11 of the English section)." Rav Halperin points out another problem associated with descending on an elevator. He writes:

"When the car is descending with a heavy passenger load it may speed up to a point where the counter-force developed in the motor is greater than the force of the electric power station. When this condition occurs, the motor, rather than aiding the descent, is used to brake the car thus preventing dangerous overspeed. When the speed of a motor increases to a value above that for which it was designed, it automatically becomes a generator. Instead of consuming electrical energy it generates power which is fed into the electric company lines to be used by consumers in the immediate vicinity (p. 19 of the English section of "Maaliot Bishabbat")."

Mr. Y. Kornbluth of Brooklyn, New York (an engineer who advised Rav Halperin on this matter, see Maaliot Bishabbat p.16) told this author in January 1995 that one can perceive this phenomenon at the World Trade Center at times of peak usage of the descending elevators, (around five o'clock in the afternoon) namely, that the lights burn brighter than usual because of the power generated by the descending elevators. I have heard others respond, though, that this situation is unique to unusually tall buildings at high volume usage. Tragically, Poskim have been concerned with the elevator system at the World Trade Center in resolving the Agumah problems generated by the vicious terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. We will continue, Im Yirtzeh Hashem and Bli Neder, to explore this question in the next few articles.

From: Kol Torah [koltorah@koltorah.org] Mishpatim
 THE USE OF ELEVATORS ON SHABBAT: PART II
 BY RABBI CHAIM JACHTER

In the last article we surveyed the Halachic debate surrounding the use of elevators on Shabbat. We discussed Rav Levi Yitzchak Halperin's breakthrough position that

one may ride an ascending elevator but may not ride a descending elevator on Shabbat. In the coming weeks we will focus on five core areas of dispute between Rav Halperin and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. Rav Shlomo Zalman challenges Rav Halperin's approach and suggests that it may be permitted to ride on a descending elevator. His opinion is recorded and discussed at length in Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchata (23:49 especially note 140 - the longest footnote in the entire work). We will cite a few of the proofs alluded to by the advocates of both sides of the issue to give the reader a richer appreciation of these interesting debates.

Dispute 1 - Performing a Melacha that Would Have Occurred Even Absent His Action Rav Shlomo Zalman suggests that:

"Since the passengers did not cause any change in the pace of the elevator, either faster or slower, for even without the passengers everything would have occurred exactly the same, it is considered that the passengers actions are irrelevant and Halachically insignificant."

Rav Shlomo Zalman cites numerous proofs to this suggestion. One source is the Mishnah (Shabbat 104b) which teaches that one who writes two letters in black ink upon two letters already written in black ink (K'tav Al Gabei K'tav) does not violate the prohibition to write on Shabbat. The Ramban (ad. loc. s.v. Konketom) and Ritva (ad. loc. s.v. Katav) both explain that, theoretically, this act should have been defined as writing since the previously written letter was erased and a new letter created. Nonetheless the Talmud does not regard the act to be defined as writing because the writer has not accomplished anything. One violates Shabbat when he engages in "Melechet Machshevet," accomplishing a goal to produce something new. When one does not add to what was previously in existence he has not engaged in "Melechet Machshevet" and has not violated Shabbat. Rav Halperin, in chapter nine of Ma'aliot Bishabbat, vigorously disputes Rav Shlomo Zalman's proofs and cites proofs to prove the contrary. One example is what the Gemara (Kritub 20a) which teaches (see Rashi and Rabbeinu Gershom) that one who had two candles before him, one which was lit and one which was not lit, and simultaneously extinguished one candle and lit the other, has violated Shabbat. We see from here that even though by his actions he has not accomplished anything new he is considered to have performed Melacha on Shabbat. Moreover, Rav Halperin points out that additional passengers' weight slightly increases the velocity of the elevator.

Dispute 2 - Is a Person Responsible for the Actions of His Weight? Rav Levi Yitzchak Halperin in chapter seven of Ma'aliot Bishabbat seeks to demonstrate that one is Halachically responsible for the effects of his weight, even if he is standing still. One of Rav Halperin's proofs is a Mishnah (Kilayim 8:3) which states the following: "One who drives a team of Kilayim (mixed animals) is punished with Malkot (forty lashes) and he who rides in the wagon [which causes the mixed animals to plow] is also punished with Malkot. Rav Meir excuses the person who sat in the wagon, from Malkot."

Both the Rambam (Hilchot Kilayim 9:9) and the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 297:12) rule in accordance with the first opinion in the Mishnah that the one who sits in the wagon violates a Torah prohibition. Rav Halperin concludes from this Mishnah that even if one is sitting in the wagon absolutely motionless and it is merely his weight which causes the animals to plow, he is Halachically responsible for the actions caused by his weight. Similarly, even though the rider in an elevator is motionless and only his weight causes the elevator to descend, the person is responsible for the actions of his weight. Dayan Weisz (Minchat Yitzchak 3:60) seems to concur with this view.

Professor Zev Lev (Techumin 5:63) seeks to counter this argument. Professor Lev (who served as the president of the prestigious Jerusalem College of Technology) argues that the act of sitting down in the wagon (rather than merely being seated) is what causes the animals to move, and not the weight of the passenger. Professor Lev also mentions the fact that many great Halachic authorities and Chassidic masters traveled on steam powered ships on Shabbat even though they knew that the ship consumes more fuel if it carries more weight. Professor Lev cites this "Maaseh Rav" (actions engaged in by eminent scholars) as proof that these authorities believed that the passengers are not Halachically responsible for the actions caused by their weight. It should be noted that "Maaseh Rav" is a significant proof in Jewish law. What great sages did is at least as important, if not more important than what they said. The Talmud is replete with stories related about the actions of the various Talmudic figures. Stories abound concerning the Halachic practices of the great sages until this very day, and are taken quite seriously by Halachic authorities (see, for example, Rav Moshe Shternbach's Teshuvot Vihanhagot where the author cites innumerable instances of the Halachic practices of the great sages of the past hundred years).

Professor Lev cites the celebrated responsum in which Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe O.C. I:132) permitted a relative or friend to accompany a woman about to give birth to the hospital on Shabbat. Professor Lev notes that Rav Moshe did not make any mention of the effect the added weight

of the individual accompanying the woman would have on the vehicle, thereby increasing fuel consumption. Professor Lev explains that most people are unaware of the impact their weight has on the operation of the elevator. They intend only to reach their destination and are not concerned with the impact their weight has on the motor's functioning. He cites an important comment made by the Maggid Mishnah (commenting on Rambam Halachot Shabbat 12:2) that absent intention and awareness one cannot be considered to be engaged in "Melacha" (forbidden labor). The Magen Avraham (318:36) approvingly cites this comment and the great Rav Meir Simchah of Dvinsk termed this comment of the Maggid Mishnah as a "beautiful jewel" (Ohr Sameach to Rambam Hilchot Shabbat 12:2).

Professor Levi compares riding in an elevator to the situation when one is sitting in at the Shabbat table on Friday night during the winter, when the window are shut closed. In this situation, the inhaling of oxygen and exhaling of carbon dioxide impacts on the flames of the Shabbat candles. No Halachic authority has written that this constitutes a Halachic problem. This is because this phenomenon is beyond one's intention, concern, and awareness. Similarly, the impact of one's weight on the operation of the elevator is beyond the intention, concern, and awareness of the rider and thus should not constitute a Halachic problem. Next week, Im Yirtzeh Hashem and Bli Neder, we will continue our review of the debate between Rav Halperin and Rav Shlomo Zalman concerning riding on a descending automatic elevator on Shabbat.

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TORAH WEEKLY - For the week ending 28 Feb. 2004 / 6 Adar I 5764 - from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1560>

Written and compiled by RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR
Means To Be a Mensch

"...and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him, you shall take my portion." (25:1)

"Being a mensch" is one of those untranslatable Yiddish phrases which define what it means to be Jewish.

A few years ago an El Al flight to London was carrying a young child in need of an urgent and critical operation. Apart from the child's medical problem, there was another problem: money. The parents had barely enough to cover the cost of the flight to London, which involved the purchase of a whole row of seats to accommodate the stricken child and his medical support systems.

During the flight, a religious Jew who was traveling in first class came to the back of the plane to pray with a minyan. On his way back to his seat he went over to the father of the child and asked how the child was doing. In the course of the conversation the father mentioned he had no idea how he was going to be able to cover the cost of the operation. He was already way over his head in debt with the medical expenses that he had already incurred. He would need nothing short of a small miracle.

Without further ado the man took his leave, walked back to the first class cabin, pulled out his hat, and proceeded to tour the aisles of the first-class cabin collecting for the operation. In approximately ten minutes his hat contained checks to the value of some \$100,000, sufficient for both the operation and the flights and all the medical expenses to date.

If Jews excel at anything, it's tzedaka - charity.

"Charity," however, really doesn't translate the word tzedaka. Tzedaka means "righteousness." Unfortunately as we live in a largely selfish and unrighteous world, the word righteousness usually finds itself being used with the reflexive pronoun "self" as in "self-righteous." However, "righteousness" is no more than "rightness," doing what is right. A Jew

gives tzedaka, not because it's charity, not because he is charitable, but because that's what's right. The definition of what is right is what G-d wants. Thus ultimately we give tzedaka not because our hearts reach out to the plight of others but because that's what G-d wants from us.

"...and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him, you shall take my portion."

There are three kinds of tzedaka, and they are all hinted at in this verse.

The highest level is "...let them take for Me a portion..." Here the giving is "for Me" - because that's what G-d wants us to do. The second level is when we give tzedaka out of the kindness of our hearts because we cannot bear to see the suffering of the poor, "...from every man whose heart motivates him." Noble as it is, this is not the highest level of giving.

And the third level is the person who would really prefer not to give at all, but he is too embarrassed to say no. About him the verse says, "...you shall take my portion."

No one will ever know from which of these groups were the passengers in that first-class El Al cabin, but one thing is clear: whatever a Jew's motives, he knows what it means to be a mensch.

- Source: Nachalat Chamisha in Iturei Torah

<http://www.ohr.edu>

From: Rav Kook List [RavKookList@hotmail.com] Sent: Feb. 24,
Subject: Rav Kook Dvar Torah List - Teruma: "Take for Me an Offering"
TERUMA: "TAKE FOR ME AN OFFERING"
RAV A.I. KOOK ON THE WEEKLY PARASHA

In preparation for constructing the Tabernacle, G-d commanded Moses to collect the necessary materials from the people:

"Speak to the Israelites, and have them take for Me an offering. Take My offering from everyone whose heart impels him to give". [Exodus 25:2]

Why did G-d command to ****take**** the donations? The verse should read, 'have them ****give**** Me an offering'!

One could theorize that the materials were taken forcibly from the people. Yet, this cannot be, for the Torah stresses that the offerings be donated freely, "from everyone whose heart impels him to give". [see Magid Meisharim]

Why, in fact, did this collection need to be voluntary? The Talmud teaches that the community may coerce members to support the needy. [Baba Batra 8b] Using our money to help others is a trait that needs to be trained and developed. Why did G-d command that these gifts, the first act of national "tzedaka" (charity), be donated solely out of sincere generosity?

There are two objectives to the mitzvah of "tzedaka". The first concerns the one ****receiving****. Through this mitzvah, we assist the poor and help provide what they are lacking. The second aim concerns the one ****giving****. By donating our time and money, we express in the world of action our inner qualities of "chesed" and kindness. The act of "tzedaka" actualizes our feelings of generosity, and contributes towards our own spiritual growth.

We can distinguish between these two objectives within the act itself. The first goal stresses the aspect of ****giving**** to the needy. The important factor here is that the poor person receives the assistance needed. The second goal, on the other hand, stresses the aspect of ****taking**** from the benefactor. This is a special quality of "tzedaka": by reducing our material possessions for the sake of others, we contribute to the elevation and fulfillment of our soul.

Which of these two goals is the principle objective of "tzedaka"?

The Sages noted that the letter "gimmel" has a 'leg' pointing towards the next letter, the "dalet". Why is that? The "gimmel" is the benefactor ("gommeil", meaning to give or support). Inherently, he runs after the

impoverished "dalet" ("dal", meaning "poor") to help him. [Shabbat 104a]

Why is the benefactor running after the poor? Should it not be the other way around? The Sages wanted to teach us that the principle aim of "tzedaka" is based on the very foundations of the universe. The true goal of "tzedaka" is to elevate the soul of the giver. After all, if the purpose was to help the poor, G-d could have provided other means for their support, without having to rely on the generosity of man. The shape and order of the letters - letters by which G-d created the universe - hint at this fundamental rule of the world. The "gimmels", the benefactors, need to run after the "dalets", the poor, in order to achieve their spiritual completion.

Therefore, the first charitable act of the Jewish people emphasized that the central aspect of "tzedaka" is not giving to the needy, but taking from the donor: "have them ****take**** for Me an offering." G-d commanded that the contributions to the Tabernacle be given freely, "everyone whose heart impels him", since the soul is only fully perfected when one donates willingly.

[Otzrot Hari'ah II: 189-190]

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http://www.geocities.com/m_yericho/ravkook - Rav A.I. Kook on the Weekly Parasha http://www.geocities.com/m_yericho/ravkook/thisweek.htm - This week's Dvar Torah

From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalist@shemayisrael.com]

PENINIM ON THE TORAH

BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

Parshas Terumah

And let them take for me a portion. (25:2)

Horav Chaim Plagi, zl, cited by Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, notes that the word terumah, which is interpreted here as a contribution, has the same letters - taf, raish, vav, mem, hay - as the word hamosar, that which is a luxury. He derives a noteworthy lesson from the similarity between these two words. When Hashem sees that a Jewish home is replete with luxuries, He "tells" its owner, "I see that you do not worry about how you spend your money. You are prepared to open up your wallet for all kinds of luxuries, items that are not essential, objects that reflect unnecessary indulgence on your part. Do you do the same for the poor man that comes to your door begging for alms? Do you manifest the same 'open door' policy for your terumah as you do for mosar?"

We do not realize that when we spend on ourselves, when we indulge ourselves in opulence, we open ourselves to criticism. Do we do the same for the poor, or do we assure them that suddenly we have no liquid assets available? If there is money for extravaganzas, we are obligated to have funds available to assist those who are in need.

And you shall make on it a gold crown all around. (25:11)

In the Talmud Yoma 76b, Chazal say that the attachment of a golden rim/crown projecting upward and encircling the top of the Aron symbolized the crown of Torah which is available to whomever "wants it." What is the meaning of "wanting" the crown of Torah, and how does one demonstrate his desire to achieve this status? Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, explains this concept with the following story, related to him by an elderly Jew, concerning one of the distinguished rabbanim of their generation. When this Jew was a young man, he studied in a small yeshivah in the city of Krason, which was situated on the outskirts of Kiev. Among the student population there was a young boy who strived very hard to achieve knowledge in Torah. His diligence was incredible. He had one problem, however - his mind was far from astute. His ability to grasp even the most simple Talmudic logic was extremely weak. He would go from student to student asking them, begging them, to assist

him in understanding the Talmud. It was to no avail. As soon as he understood one halachah and he continued to the next, he forgot the first halachah. This went on and on until the students in the bais hamedrash lost their patience with him.

The elderly Jew who was relating the story said that he continued to take pity on this boy and told him that he would always be available to him to answer questions and explain the Talmud's passages. This continued on a regular basis until he could no longer study for himself. He was always being pestered by the boy who, regrettably, did not retain what he was being taught. Finally, he lost it and said, "I also have to learn something!"

Hearing this, the boy walked away, dejected. After a short while, the young man wanted to see what had happened to the boy. Did he approach someone else, or did he just go study by himself? He looked around and there in the corner of the bais hamedrash sat the boy, his head bent over a small sefer. Creeping up behind the boy, the young man saw it was a Siddur, and the young boy was reading from the Tefillah of Ahavah Rabbah, which precedes Shma Yisrael. He was praying to Hashem, V'sein b'lebeinu l'havin, "and instill in our hearts to understand." "Hashem, please help me that I should no longer have to beg others to teach me the Torah lessons. Open my eyes to the light of Torah. Help me to understand. Please, Hashem!"

When the young man heard this broken-hearted entreaty, he sat down next to the boy and said, "Do not worry. I will study with you. I will always be there for you." The elderly gentleman concluded, "Look what became of that young boy. He is today one of the gedolei hador, preeminent Torah scholars of the generation, and I am just an old man."

Rav Shach concluded, "That young boy demonstrated what it means to want the crown of Torah."

You shall make the planks of the Mishkan of Acacia wood, standing erect. (26:15)

Chazal in the Talmud Yoma 72a, interpret the term "standing erect" homiletically, as a guarantee that the Jewish nation will survive in the worst times. "Perhaps you will say that their hope of return is gone and their expectation is frustrated? But it is written, 'acacia wood, standing erect' - they will stand forever!" What is unique about acacia wood that Chazal saw in the term "standing erect" a portent for Klal Yisrael's endurance and steadfastness? Is it the nature of the wood, or is it the manner in which it was placed in the Mishkan that conveys the message? This wood was special, and its uniqueness is what catalyzes the message and concomitantly the reason that Klal Yisrael has survived. According to the Midrash Tanchuma, there is a very special history to these planks. Yaakov Avinu anticipated the need for such lumber. Knowing that acacia trees do not grow in the wilderness, he planted these trees in Egypt and instructed his children that when they left their exile, to take the trees with them. It was Yaakov Avinu's foresight that enabled his descendants to have the materials needed to erect the Mishkan. Throughout Jewish history, it has been the foresight and planning of the previous generation that gave the next generation the opportunity and the foundation to persevere and triumph over the vicissitudes that have challenged us. Whether they were of a spiritual or a physical nature, be it internal conflict or external persecution, it was the lessons taught to us by our forbearers, directly or by example, that have made the difference in our lives. We truly stand upon the shoulders of those who preceded us.

The ability to stand up erect, resolute and with fortitude against the prevalent obstacles and forces that undermine and degrade the Torah way of life, is part of our national character. We have been fighting against the incursion of alien thought into our way of life throughout the millennia. The challenges brought on by the exile are not only spiritual, moral and philosophical. The component of suffering, persecution and

anguish has had a detrimental effect on the Jewish psyche. Yet, in every generation, we have been blessed with giants of Torah, men of the spirit, whose piety, virtue, and faith comprise a spiritual force that has the compelling power to uplift, embolden and transform his followers into believing, committed, stalwartly observant Jews. One of the lowest periods for our People was only sixty odd years ago during the terrible years of the European Holocaust. Six million perished, while many who survived succumbed spiritually. Those who were saved were fortified by towering individuals whose mind and spirit triumphed over pain and torture and rallied others with their indomitable conviction. The Klausenberger Rebbe, Horav Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam, zl, was such a giant. Clearly, he saved thousands from spiritual extinction by virtue of his love for all Jews that was manifest throughout his every endeavor.

Wherever the Rebbe went, he felt Hashem's Presence with him. When he arrived in Auschwitz, confronted by the heinous Nazi soldiers with their disparaging comments and brutal beatings, he would encourage his fellow Jews, "Do not fear them. Hashem Yisborach is with us. He preceded us here, and He is waiting to receive us. There is no place in the world that is devoid of His Presence."

This was the Rebbe's message to everyone. "Hashem is here with us." The pasuk in Sefer Tehillim 23:4, immortalized by so many of our People, was the Rebbe's catchphrase that he would recite constantly: "Though I shall walk in the valley of death I shall not fear, for You are with me." No matter what happened to the Rebbe, he firmly believed in the Almighty's salvation.

Even during those terrible times, the Rebbe maintained his focus on avodas Hashem, serving the Almighty. Right beneath the searching eyes of the Nazis, he studied Torah, davened and observed mitzvos. Without regard to his personal safety, he would avoid even the most minor transgression. He refused to eat non-kosher food. He even managed to smuggle his Tefillin into camp, and he donned them every day. He avoided desecrating Shabbos and made sure that no one else did the work imposed on him.

The kapos could not tolerate the Rebbe's observance and would beat him viciously. He accepted these beatings as Hashem's judgment. He would often murmur, "This is because I did not serve You with joy." Slowly the kapos changed their attitude, as they began to recognize the Rebbe's unique character, principles and total devotion to Hashem. Looking at him with renewed respect, they began to treat him favorably.

When one remains resolute in adhering even to customs that have been transmitted through the generations, he has the foundation to maintain that fortitude for observing all the mitzvos. Those who have viewed our People's customs as a tradition that could be eliminated, soon had a similar attitude towards mitzvah observance in general. The Klausenberger Rebbe once related, "In Auschwitz, I wore only a torn, thin garment, even in the bitter cold. I preferred it to the other rags we were given, because the buttons were sewn on the left coinciding with the custom followed by my holy ancestors. Who knows? Perhaps I was permitted to continue living because I was careful about what I wore."

We now have an idea of the meaning of standing "erect." It was individuals of such indomitable spirit that have transmitted the legacy of Torah life to us.

From: E-Mail Staff [dana@eretzhemdah.org] To: @eretzhemdah.org
Subject: Parshat Terumah 6 Adar 5764
Hemdat Yamim Parshat Terumah 6 Adar 5764

Ask the Rabbi Question: I was at a friend's house on Shabbat and found only a roll of toilet paper in the bathroom, with no cut paper. What does one do in such a situation? Answer: The answer to this question must deal with two distinct issues. The first is simply what to do when there is

no prepared toilet paper for Shabbat. The other involves dealing with the fear of insulting friends with differing halachic standards on certain issues.

The overwhelming majority (at least) opinion is that one cannot use toilet paper by ripping it from a roll on Shabbat. One who rips it on the perforation, which creates a measured piece of paper, violates the Torah prohibition of mechatech. If one rips off a piece in an unmeasured manner (not on the perforation), it is a matter of considerable discussion whether he violates the Torah prohibition of korei'ah (ripping for a constructive purpose) or just a rabbinic violation of metaken kli (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 340:13; Biur Halacha, ad loc.; Tzitz Eliezer XI, 30). The crux of the issue is whether korei'ah applies when one cuts a part of an object from the rest of the object in order to use only one of the two parts (Biur Halacha, ibid.).

Several poskim rule that in the case of kavod habriot (compromising of human dignity) one is allowed to rip off the toilet paper in a way that only a rabbinic violation, not a Torah one, will be violated (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 23:16; Tzitz Eliezer, ibid.; Piskei Teshuvot 340:28). This is based on the principle that in cases of significant need of kavod hab'riot, rabbinic laws may be pushed off (Berachot 19b). Although we need to apply this rule with care (see Tosafot, ad loc.) we do have precedent for using something muktzeh as toilet paper (Rama, Orach Chayim 312:1, based on Tosafot Sukka 36b; see also Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata, ibid.). One can make the matter a rabbinic violation by cutting the toilet paper in a significantly unusual way. (Using elbows and legs are among the poskim's suggestions, as is wetting the paper away from the perforation so that it will rip easily in a halachically less severe manner.) This, of course, is under the assumption that there is no other way to deal with the kavod ha'briot issue without ripping the toilet paper. This is not always the case, as we now need to discuss the general question of whether one can find other solutions. The most direct, if the problem is discovered in time, is to ask the host for tissues or pre-cut toilet paper (one may open a package by destroying it), which they may have forgotten to put out. This is not a big deal and has probably happened to all of us. On the contrary, one who says nothing can cause embarrassment when the host discovers later that they put their guest into an uncomfortable situation. The question is about situations where one is convinced that the people are not aware or have purposely been lenient (with an unusual rabbinic ruling or without one) on the matter.

What would happen if one would raise the need for pre-cut paper, either explicitly or with a question like, "I didn't find the Shabbat toilet paper"? While it is not pleasant on either side, it is sometimes preferable to having the host find out years and dozens of guests later that they were unaware of or not careful about something that their peers were and put their guests in uncomfortable positions. If they will not listen or it is a community where you are one of the few who is careful on the matter, then one can, in many cases, apply the rule of mutav sheyihiyu shog'gin (it is better that people violate something unknowingly (or partially so) than knowingly - Beitza 30a). It is trickier when a person might listen, but he is in a fragile religious state where he could also react negatively to what he sees as religious meddling. We cannot address guidelines in a paragraph, as a book would be needed. The basic advice is to be smart (including bringing your own provisions to a home where you expect such a problem).

From: RABBI BEREL WEIN [rbwein@torah.org]
Weekly Parsha TERUMAH

The ability to part with one's wealth and possessions for a philanthropic purpose is not easily attained and is also not easily maintained when attained. The "normal" attitude towards wealth and possessions is characterized by the great rabbis of the Book of Avot as being: "What is

mine is mine and what is yours is yours." The desire to have more wealth and possessions is so intense that the Talmud sadly comments, "Most people are guilty of stealing from others." Since the drive to have more material wealth and keep and conserve what is mine is apparently so ingrained in our human nature, the Torah goes to great lengths to uproot that characteristic - selfishness and miserliness - from our nature and to turn us in the direction of selflessness and generosity. The Torah therefore made the construction of the Mishkan, the tabernacle in the desert, a human project rather than a G-dly one.

The Jewish people were requested to donate substantial contributions of materials from their own personal wealth in order to complete that structure. After centuries of slavery in Egypt, and after suffering impoverishment and want, it would be only natural to expect that there would be a hesitance among the newly freed slaves to part with their only- recently-acquired goods and possessions. The Torah boldly moves to counter that weakness of character and demands immediately that the generation that only just left Egyptian poverty and bondage become a nation of sharing and philanthropy. The Torah however does not measure donations and giving by purely objective standards. It is not merely the amount that is being given, important as that figure is, that ultimately counts. It is also - and perhaps even more important in a spiritual and psychological sense than the amount of the gift - the spirit and intent of the giver that determines the true value of the gift and donation.

The Torah records that the contributions for the Mishkan were to be taken "from every person whose heart prompted him to donate" to the holy project. And that, my friends, is a very subjective standard, known perhaps only to the Creator of us all. When we donate money, time, talent, effort to a good cause, there are usually a wide variety of forces and influences that motivate us to do so. If we can examine our motives and impulses to give to charitable causes and "improve" on those motives - to raise them to a more selfless and less complicated level of our being, the gifts that we give will have a far deeper meaning and effect upon our inner character, even if the amount of the gifts basically remains constant.

The great Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, the founder of the "mother" of all later Lithuanian yeshivot, the yeshiva of Volozhin, employed fund-raisers to travel in Eastern Europe to collect donations for the support of the yeshiva. A wealthy donor to the yeshiva once complained to Rabbi Chaim that he wanted his donation to go directly to the study of Torah and not be consumed in the expenses of the fund-raising projects and employees. Rabbi Chaim coolly answered him: "When Jews contributed gold to the building of the Mishkan all of them undoubtedly wished that their particular piece of gold be used in the creation of the Holy Ark itself and not dispensed for other purposes connected with the expenses of that construction. Bezalel, the builder of the Mishkan, possessed Divine inspiration and was able to discern which gold was given with the purest and most selfless of motives and which gold was donated because of other causes and influences.

The "pure" gold, given selflessly, without hesitation and in fulfillment of G-d's commandment, found its way into the construction of the Holy Ark, which housed the tablets of stone of Sinai. The other gold, containing the dross of conflicting and varying motives, was used for the other tasks necessary for the creation of the Mishkan. So too is the matter regarding the donations to the yeshiva of Volozhin. The purer the intent of the donor to only do G-d's will and to truly support the study of His Torah, the more likely it is that his donation will be used directly for the study of Torah itself and not be subsumed in the expenses of the fund-raising operations of the yeshiva. So, it is the donor himself, not I nor my staff, that will make the eventual determination as to how and where the monies donated will be allocated and spent."

Shabat Shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

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From: National Council of Young Israel [YI_Torah@lb.bcentral.com] Subject: Parshat Terumah Parshat Terumah 6 Adar 5764 Feb. 28, 2004

Guest Author: RABBI ASHER SCHECHTER

Associate Member, Young Israel Council of Rabbis

The Ba'al HaTurim notices that the measurements of the Aron HaKodesh were all half Amos. The length is two and a half Amos, the width is one and a half Amos, and the height is one and a half Amos. What message is being taught to us by these half measures?

The Ba'al HaTurim explains that the Aron HaKodesh represents the Torah. The Luchos (tablets) and Shivrei Luchos (broken tablets) along with Moshe Rabbeinu's Torah were held within it. With regard to Limud HaTorah every individual should always consider himself to be halfway to his goal. We never reach a point where we have learned everything we need to know and can rest on our laurels. Rather, we strive to learn the other half and accomplish more. The more we learn Torah, the more we realize what we don't know. By the same token we should never beat ourselves down because we haven't learned enough Torah. Depression and despair have no place in our pursuit of Limud HaTorah. Like the famous Chassidic statement: Yi'ush - Shelo MiDa'as (if you give up hope on spiritual attainments - you are "out of your mind", i.e. you are not using your mind properly).

Therefore even someone whose accomplishments are few in Limud HaTorah should nevertheless consider himself to be halfway accomplished to give himself Chizuk to work on the second half with Hasmodah. The Noam Elimelech gives a similar pshat in the Pasuk "He'Ashir Lo Yarbeh ViHadal Lo Yam'it MiMachatzis Hashekel", the rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than a half Shekel. The Rebbe Reb Elimelech reads it like this: the rich in Torah and Mitzvos shall not think of themselves as having accomplished more than half of their goals (and rest on their laurels), and the poor in Torah and Mitzvos shall not think of themselves as having accomplished less than half of their goals (and get depressed), rather every Jew should look at himself as halfway towards his desired goal of Avodas HaShem.

Following the lead of the Ba'al HaTurim, I decided to look at the rest of the Kelim in the Mishkan and whether or not their measures are full Amos or half Amos and try to see if we can follow the lead of the Ba'al HaTurim in explaining the measurements. The Menorah does not have total measures mentioned specifically in the Torah so I skip it. Both Mizbeychos are full amos. The Mizbeyach HaChitzuk is five amos by five amos with the height being three amos. The Mizbeyach HaZahav is one amah by one amah with the height being two amos. What is the explanation of these whole measurements?

One of the greatest gifts HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave us is the gift of Teshuvah. The Mizbeychos stand for the concept of Slicha V'Kapparah. After an individual brings a Korban and he breaks down before HaShem with sincere remorse, and commits to complete devotion in the future, he should assume that HaShem has accepted his Teshuvah. This is why Motzai Yom HaKippurim was a great time of celebration throughout Jewish History (last mishna of Ta'anis).

After Ne'ilah we feel a great burden was lifted off our shoulders and we now have a clean slate, hopefully never to repeat the same mistakes in the future. Therefore, the Mizbeychos which signify Kapparah are all full measures. This is because after Teshuvah we should assume that our Kapparah is complete and look forward to being better servants of HaShem. We do not at the moment anticipate needing to ask forgiveness again for the same sins.

The Shulchan provides a puzzling hybrid. The Torah teaches us that the Shulchan is two amos by two amos with the height being one and a half amos. Why are some measures whole and the other half?

The Shulchan represents Parnassah - sustenance. The table and the Lechem HaPanim that were set upon it, remind us of HaShem's bounty, that He provides for us daily. We would expect all the measures to be in full amos. After all, "Aizehu Ashir HaSame'ach BiChelko". We should always be satisfied with whatever HaShem has given us in the way of financial success, never needing more. So why is the height of the Shulchan a half amah measure?

Less than a century ago the scientific community discovered that you could split an atom and get a tremendous amount of energy therefrom. We in Klal Yisrael actually knew this concept well before modern science. We always knew that a person can take a little of Olam HaZeh (matter) and by doing a mitzvah with it we can create a tremendous amount of energy (Olam HaBah - spiritual).

Even a prutah of Tzedaka creates immeasurable reward in the afterlife. This might be the lesson of the measurements of the Shulchan. The length and width of the

Shulchan represent the physical use and enjoyment of one's wealth. To this we are told "full measures", be satisfied with what you have. However, the height of the Shulchan represents the use of one's wealth for holy purposes - to elevate it to a loftier plane. For this one should always see his accomplishments as only halfway towards his goals.

One should always strive to be able to convert more of his wealth into the tremendous energy of Tzedaka and Chesed. At any given point in time he should feel that he has only contributed half of what he could afford to give.

This time of the year is dedicated towards support for those less fortunate through the various Matanos L'Evyonim & Maos Chittim campaigns. Through this mitzvah we can take some of HaShem's blessings and elevate them - a little matter creates great energy.

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