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subject: **Meshech Chochmah - Parshas Terumah**
Supporting the Aron The staves shall be in the rings of the Aron. They shall not be removed from it.

Meshech Chochmah: Chazal tell us[2] that removing the badim from the aron is halachically forbidden. Like other prohibitions, it is punishable by lashes. Now, the aron is not the only major appliance of the mishkan that comes with staves. Both the altar and the table were equipped with staves. Regarding those two, however, the Torah only specifies that the staves be in place while they are being moved. Apparently, removing their staves at other times is not objectionable. Why are the staves of the aron different?

A midrash tells us that the Aron is identified with the Crown of Torah. Whereas not everyone is even eligible to wear the crown of kehunah or of monarchy, the Torah crown is available to anyone who wants to crown himself with it, simply for the asking. Thus there is constancy to the aron not shared by the other kelim.

Anyone, then, can have a relationship with Torah. But practical considerations can curtail the talmid chacham's career. To thrive, the talmid chacham requires support from others. This may take the form of handouts, or of creating investment opportunities for the financially strangled. This support is alluded to in our pasuk by the staves – the items through which the journey of the Torah becomes possible.

The gemara[3] notes that in commanding the building of the aron, both the singular[4] and the plural[5] form of the verb is used. The Torah alludes to the roles of the few and many. By using both forms, the Torah suggests that the single talmid chacham should be assisted by the larger group of townspeople ready to offer their assistance. This universal support of Torah knows no restriction or limit. It must come all of the time; the staves representing support of the Torah must never be removed.

We can also suggest a different approach from the one we have taken till this point. It builds on a well-known position of the Rambam. He writes[6] that the menorah in the beis hamikdash was lit not only at night, but in the morning as well. This is readily understandable. The light functioned as a reminder to the world of the presence of the Shechinah in the midst of the Jewish people. Its role was not to provide illumination. "Does G-d need light?"[7] Lighting the menorah each morning drove home this point. The menorah would provide no useful illumination during the brightness of the day. People who understood that also comprehended that its function did not change at night. Just as it did not serve to provide illumination by day, its role was not to provide useful light at night either. The daytime lighting impressed upon us that we needed to look elsewhere for the symbolic significance of the mitzvah; it was not to be found in the practical role of providing light.

The staves of the aron stand in a similar position. When the aron was at rest, they served no clear practical function. From this we realized that even when the aron was transported from place to place, the staves did not contribute functionally. As Chazal teach us,[8] the aron carried its bearers – not the opposite! As the symbolic abode of the One Who carries the universe, nothing needs to carry Him. The badim played no part in making it possible to bear the weight of the aron as it travelled.

[1] Based on Meshech Chochman, Shemos 25:15 [2] Yoma 72A [3] Yoma 72B [4] Devarim 10A [5] Shemos 25:10 [6] Hilchos Temidim U-Musafim 3:10 [7] Shabbos 22B [8] Sotah 35A

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Rabbi Mordechai Willig **Fractions and Aspirations**

I "They shall make an aron, two and a half amos its length, one and a half amos its width, and one and a half amos its height" (Shemos 25:10). The Kli Yakar explains that all the dimensions of the Aron, which represents the Torah which it housed, are fractions, containing half-amos, to teach us that everyone should understand that the breadth and depth of his wisdom is lacking (fractional, so to speak), since his intellect is limited.

A person should pray with his eyes looking down, and his heart focusing up (Yevamos 105b). Think of someone who is higher than you in Torah, and pray that Hashem grant you an understanding heart (Melachim I, 3:9). His eyes, which behold physical things, should look at someone who has less than him, and then he will be happy with his portion and not ask for excessive wealth (Mishlei 30:8).

"You shall make a shulchan, two amos its length, an amah its width, and one and a half amos its height" (25:23). One should say, like Yaakov Avinu, "I have everything" (Bereishis 33:11). The whole numbers indicate that in worldly matters, represented by the shulchan, the wise man who is happy with his portion is not missing anything. The fraction teaches that he should

not indulge in physical desires totally, but rather he should break his desires. Eating bread is, therefore, called breaking bread (Bereishis 43:2), consuming only a fraction of the whole.

"You shall make a mizbe'ach, five amos long, five amos wide, and three amos height" (27:1). By atoning for a person's sins the mizbe'ach completes that which his deeds are missing, and therefore all its dimensions are whole numbers.

II The Kli Yakar's idea of looking up spiritually and down physically was echoed by the Ba'al Shem Tov. His Chasidic interpretation of "On the heaven above and on the earth below" (Devarim 4:39) requires that we compare ourselves to those higher than us spiritually and try to emulate them. Regarding earthly matters we should compare ourselves to those who have less than us, and thereby be happy with our portion.

Unfortunately, too many do exactly the opposite. They rationalize their level of Torah learning and observance by pointing to others who are on a lower level, while in worldly pursuits they look up to those who have more. They seek and pray for excessive wealth and display it even if they don't have it (See Kli Yakar on Devarim 2:3). This ostentation creates harmful jealousy in our communities and beyond, leading to disastrous results (ibid). By contrast, the "jealousy of scholars increases wisdom" (Bava Basra 21a) phenomenon, represented by the fractional dimensions of the aron, is missing.

The parsha begins, "Speak to Benei Yisroel and they shall take to Me a portion" (25:2), which the Ibn Ezra explains to mean that one should take from himself and give it to Me (Ibn Ezra). Just as we must break bread and leave over a fraction, so must we leave over a fraction of our wealth and give it to Hashem. We give "to Hashem" by donating to the poor or to Torah institutions. The recommended fraction of one's income to donate is one tenth or, preferably, one fifth (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 249:1).

Unfortunately, many do exactly the opposite - they spend large amounts of money on luxurious items and/or activities, yet do not give the preferred or recommended portion to tzedaka. Conspicuous consumption is doubly harmful because it creates jealousy and decreases charitable giving.

Parshas Teruma is the Torah reading which emphasizes the importance of donating to good causes and the centrality of Torah (See Shemos 38:21). As we read it, we must establish for ourselves proper priorities and aspirations and internalize these lessons of the Kli Yakar and the Ba'al Shem Tov. We should be jealous of those who are greater scholars than us and thus be motivated to increase wisdom. We should be happy with our worldly portion and compare it to those who have less, and not be jealous of those who have more. May we thereby merit the restoration of the aron, shulchan and mizbe'ach in the rebuilt Beis Hamikdash.

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The Gift of Giving

Britain's Former Chief **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

It was the first Israelite house of worship, the first home Jews made for God. But the very idea is fraught with paradox, even contradiction. How can you build a house for God? He is bigger than anything we can imagine, let alone build.

King Solomon made this point when he inaugurated another house of God, the First Temple: "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain You. How much less this house I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27). So did Isaiah in the name of God himself: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What house can you build for me? Where will my resting place be? (Is. 66:1).

Not only does it seem impossible to build a home for God. It should be unnecessary. The God of everywhere can be accessed anywhere, as readily in

the deepest pit as on the highest mountain, in a city slum as in a palace lined with marble and gold.

The answer, and it is fundamental, is that God does not live in buildings. He lives in builders. He lives not in structures of stone but in the human heart. What the Jewish sages and mystics pointed was that in our parsha God says, "Let them build me a sanctuary that I may dwell in them" (Ex. 25:8), not "that I may dwell in it."

Why then did God command the people to make a sanctuary at all? The answer given by most commentators, and hinted at by the Torah itself, is that God gave the command specifically after the sin of the golden calf.

The people made the calf after Moses had been on the mountain for forty days to receive the Torah. So long as Moses was in their midst, the people knew that he communicated with God, and God with him, and therefore God was accessible, close. But when he was absent for nearly six weeks, they panicked. Who else could bridge the gap between the people and God? How could they hear God's instructions? Through what intermediary could they make contact with the divine presence?

That is why God said to Moses, "Let them build me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." The key word here is the verb sh-kh-n, to dwell. Never before had it been used in connection with God. It eventually became a keyword of Judaism itself. From it came the word Mishkan meaning a sanctuary, and Shekhinah, the divine presence.

Central to its meaning is the idea of closeness. Shakhen in Hebrew means a neighbour, the person who lives next door. What the Israelites needed and what God gave them was a way of feeling as close to God as to our next-door neighbour.

That is what the patriarchs and matriarchs had. God spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah intimately, like a friend. He told Abraham and Sarah that they would have a child. He explained to Rebecca why she was suffering such acute pain in pregnancy. He appeared to Jacob at key moments in his life telling him not to be afraid.

That is not what the Israelites had experienced until now. They had seen God bringing plagues on the Egyptians. They had seen Him divide the sea. They had seen Him send manna from heaven and water from a rock. They had heard His commanding voice at Mount Sinai and found it almost unbearable. They said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die." God had appeared to them as an overwhelming presence, an irresistible force, a light so bright that to look at it makes you blind, a voice so strong it makes you go deaf.

So for God to be accessible, not just to the pioneers of faith – the patriarchs and matriarchs – but to every member of a large nation, was a challenge, as it were, for God Himself. He had to do what the Jewish mystics called tzimtzum, "contract" Himself, screen His light, soften His voice, hide His glory within a thick cloud, and allow the infinite to take on the dimensions of the finite.

But that, as it were, was the easy part. The difficult part had nothing to do with God and everything to do with us. How do we come to sense the presence of God? It isn't difficult to do so standing at the foot of Mount Everest or seeing the Grand Canyon. You do not have to be very religious or even religious at all, to feel awe in the presence of the sublime. The psychologist Abraham Maslow, whom we encountered a few weeks ago in these pages, spoke about "peak experiences", and saw them as the essence of the spiritual encounter.

But how do you feel the presence of God in the midst of everyday life? Not from the top of Mount Sinai but from the plain beneath? Not when it is surrounded by thunder and lightning as it was at the great revelation, but when it is just a day among days?

That is the life-transforming secret of the name of the parsha, Terumah. It means "a contribution". God said to Moses: "Tell the Israelites to take for me a contribution. You are to receive the contribution for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give." (Ex. 25:2) The best way of encountering God is to give.

The very act of giving flows from, or leads to, the understanding that what we give is part of what we were given. It is a way of giving thanks, an act of gratitude. That is the difference in the human mind between the presence of God and the absence of God.

If God is present, it means that what we have is His. He created the universe. He made us. He gave us life. He breathed into us the very air we breathe. All around us is the majesty, the plenitude, of God's generosity: the light of the sun, the gold of the stone, the green of the leaves, the song of the birds. This is what we feel reading the great creation psalms we read every day in the morning service. The world is God's art gallery and His masterpieces are everywhere.

When life is a given, you acknowledge this by giving back.

But if life is not a given because there is no Giver, if the universe came into existence only because of a random fluctuation in the quantum field, if there is nothing in the universe that knows we exist, if there is nothing to the human body but a string of letters in the genetic code and to the human mind but electrical impulses in the brain, if our moral convictions are self-serving means of self-preservation and our spiritual aspirations mere delusions, then it is difficult to feel gratitude for the gift of life. There is no gift if there is no giver. There is only a series of meaningless accidents, and it is difficult to feel gratitude for an accident.

The Torah therefore tells us something simple and practical. Give, and you will come to see life as a gift. You don't need to be able to prove God exists. All you need is to be thankful that you exist – and the rest will follow.

That is how God came to be close to the Israelites through the building of the sanctuary. It wasn't the quality of the wood and metals and drapes. It wasn't the glitter of jewels on the breastplate of the High Priest. It wasn't the beauty of the architecture or the smell of the sacrifices. It was the fact that it was built out of the gifts of "everyone whose heart prompts them to give" (Ex. 25:2). Where people give voluntarily to one another and to holy causes, that is where the divine presence rests.

Hence the special word that gives its name to this week's parsha: Terumah. I've translated it as "a contribution" but it actually has a subtly different meaning for which there is no simple English equivalent. It means "something you lift up" by dedicating it to a sacred cause. You lift it up, then it lifts you up. The best way of scaling the spiritual heights is simply to give in gratitude for the fact that you have been given.

God doesn't live in a house of stone. He lives in the hearts of those who give.

From: Aish.com <newletterserver@aish.com> date: Wed, Feb 10, 2016 at 4:30 PM subject: Advanced Parsha - Trumah

Trumah (Exodus 25:1-27:19)

Golden Inside and Out

The Talmud (Yoma 72b) teaches that just as the Holy Ark was covered with the same gold coverings on the inside and on the outside (Exodus 25:11), so too a Torah scholar must be genuine, with his interior matching his exterior. The Talmud (Berachos 28a) records that Rabban Gamliel decreed that only a person who was the same on the inside as on the outside was permitted to enter the study hall. By what litmus test was the sentry at the door able to discern whether a prospective student was indeed genuine? The Sadigerer Rebbe (Mayanah Shel Torah) suggests that no human guard was able to make this determination. Instead, they simply locked the doors of the study hall, which discouraged most prospective students, yet a student who had a tremendous desire to learn would resort to any means possible to find a means of entering, and in doing so, he demonstrated his authentic interior and was permitted to study there. Alternatively, the Mishmeres Ariel notes that the Talmud continues to say that Rabbi Elozar ben Azariah subsequently abolished this requirement and allowed anybody to come and study, and on that day, hundreds of benches had to be added to the study hall for all of the new students. Why did the Talmud discuss the number of new benches

instead of the number of new students? The new benches weren't required due to the new quantity of students, but because of the new type of students. Until this rule change, there was no need for any benches because the students had such a tremendous desire to learn that they didn't mind the adverse physical conditions, but now that the study hall was opened to the masses, an "upgrade" to sitting on benches was required. Until now, no guard was needed, as the mere lack of comfortable conditions ensured that only those who were sincere would be interested in learning there. * * * CRAFTING THE MENORAH Rashi writes (Exodus 25:40) that because Moshe had difficulty understanding the appearance of the Menorah, God showed him a fiery illustration of how it should look. However, Rashi writes (Ex. 25:31) that even so, Moshe had difficulty making the Menorah. Ultimately, God told him to throw a block of gold into fire, and the Menorah miraculously "made itself" and emerged complete. If God knew that in the end Moshe would be unable to make it, why did He initially need to show him the fiery image and teach him all of the intricate laws regarding its appearance? The S'fas Emes and Rabbi Shmaryahu Arieli explain that in order for Moshe to merit God's miraculous assistance in actually making the menorah, he first needed to try his utmost and demonstrate his total and complete desire to see the project to successful completion. Therefore, he first needed to be shown a picture of how it should look so that he could invest all of his energy and desire into creating it. Only after he had done all that he was capable of did he merit God's aid in completing the project. Rabbi Arieli adds that this concept also applies to Torah study, which is symbolized by the menorah. Properly understanding the depths of the Torah is a gift from God which only comes after a person has exerted himself to the limits of his ability. The S'fas Emes suggests that this principle isn't limited to Torah study, but it applies to all mitzvot. Alternatively, the Brisker Rav answers that even though the menorah was produced in a miraculous fashion, Moshe was unwilling to rely on this alone as proof that it was made properly. He insisted on examining it to ensure that it complied with the legal specifications, and in order to do so, he needed to have a visual image against which to compare it. * * * THE MINIATURE SANCTUARY One of the blessings commonly given to a newly-engaged couple is that the match should "oleh yafeh." While it may be customary to rapidly rattle off the words, an examination of the English translation - the match should "go up well" - reveals that the wording is awkward and the deeper meaning is difficult to grasp. What is the underlying intention behind this curiously-worded blessing? The Satmar Rebbe Rav Yoel Teitelbaum brilliantly explains that the word "oleh" is often used to connote the numerical value of a phrase. If so, we may re-interpret the blessing as stating that the new match should have the numerical value of the word "yafeh," which comes to 95 (yud, fey, hey). But what is the significance of this seemingly arbitrary number? The Sefer HaChinuch discusses the laws and reasons for the 613 mitzvot, listing them in the order of their mention in the Torah. He counts the 95th mitzvah as the commandment "and they shall make for Me a Sanctuary, and I shall dwell amongst them." This is a most appropriate blessing to give a new couple embarking on the establishment of their own personal miniature Sanctuary. Published: February 19, 2012

<http://5tjt.com/shabbos-work/>

Shabbos Work?

Halachic Musings

By **Rabbi Yair Hoffman**

February 11, 2016

Ynet is a non-religious Israeli Internet news site produced by the publishers of Yedioth Ahronoth. Recently, in a controversial article, they posed the following question: How is it that waiters, chazzanim, and ba'aleikriah can work on Shabbos, yet religious Jews demand that shopkeepers and businesses close on Shabbos? "Why," asked the Ynet authors, "can't the rabbis create a workaround?"

Although the question misunderstands some fundamental issues regarding Shabbos, it does beg the question: what are the parameters of who may work over Shabbos and what are the leniencies that are employed?

Can a young lady babysit on Shabbos? May a yeshiva student take a waiter position over Shabbos? Can someone get paid to read from the Torah on Shabbos? May one get paid to speak at a scholar-in-residence program?

Two Types

In halachah, the term for being compensated on Shabbos—whether it be forbidden or permitted—is called “s’charShabbos.” When discussing the idea of “working on Shabbos” there are two types of work that need to be clarified.

- The first type of work is called melachah—one of the 39 major categories of creative acts that the Torah prohibits. Repairing a car or replacing a windshield wiper falls into this category. It is forbidden to “work” in this manner on Shabbos, and if one does, one may never benefit from that work.

- The second type of “work” involves the rabbinic violation of either engaging in a business transaction or earning compensation for services that are performed over Shabbos. This second type of work is discussed in Chapter 306 of the Orech Chaim section of Shulchan Aruch. It is called “s’char Shabbos” and will be the focus of this article (see SA 306:4).

The reason why a workaround could not be developed to open up a commercial district on Shabbos is that invariably it will always involve some violation of the first definition of work—melachah. We must, however, be concerned with the second type of work and what its limitations and parameters are.

Background

The Gemara in Pesachim (50b) states that there are “four coins in which one never sees blessing . . . the payment of a meturgeman (Shabbos interpreter) . . .” Rashi explains that a translator stands before the Torah scholar on Shabbos and listens to him, and then translates for the masses. The indication of this Gemara is that although it is permitted, it is frowned upon.

Two Views Regarding Chazzanim

The Shulchan Aruch discusses the issue of hiring a chazzan to lead the services on Shabbos. In Orech Chaim (306:5) he cites two views:

- The Mordechai citing Rabbeinu Boruch and the Tur forbids it, unless it is subsumed under a longer period of hiring.

- The Mordechai also cites the view of Rabbeinu Shmuel who permits it. The MishnahBerurah explains that this is because it is a mitzvah, and in the place of a mitzvah the rabbis did not create a prohibition. Nonetheless, the recipient of the compensation will not see a sign of blessing from it.

The MagenAvraham (OC 526:12) writes regarding burying someone on second-day yom tov that it is permitted to take payment because perhaps they may not find someone who will do it for free.

To Whom It Applies

The prohibitions involving s’char Shabbos applies to both the employee and the employer, but in different ways. Only the employee who receives compensation for services rendered on Shabbos is in violation of the prohibition of s’char Shabbos—the employer is not, according to most authorities (see MB 305:21 and Tehillah L’Dovid 305:7). However, by paying the employee, the employer is in violation of placing a stumbling block before the blind—Lifnei iver lo sitein michshol.

The employee might also be in violation of causing the Jewish employer to violate lifnei iver, thus causing a sort of lifnei iver on a lifnei iver. (See Rosh, AvodahZarah 1:14; RitvahAZ 14a; Meiri; Ramban Chulin 94a where this is a problem.)

There is a view espoused by Rabbi Uziel Meisels, grandson of the Sha’agas Aryeh, that the prohibition of s’char Shabbos applies equally to the employer (see Menorah HaTehorah 347:2). Most poskim, however, reject this view.

It should be noted that the prohibition applies to Jews, but if a gentile is employed by a Jew, it is permitted to pay him or her after Shabbos.

Melachah may not be done by a gentile for a Jew, but it is permitted to pay for the hours he or she has worked.

The Three Exceptions

There are three types of exceptions, wherein some form of s’char Shabbos might be permitted.

Havla’ah. When payment is being made for an entire job that encompasses more than Shabbos.

Gift. When the moneys are given as a gift and there was no monetary obligation for the work at all.

Not normally paid. When the type of payment given is not something that someone would normally work for.

Exception Of Havla’ah

According to the Shulchan Aruch, if the payment is being made for one job that includes work done on Shabbos as well as before and/or after Shabbos, the sages never issued a prohibition.

It is important to conceive it as one hiring and not two separate hirings combined into one payment.

The wording of the MishnahBerurah when he discusses the notion of havla’ah is also the subject of controversy. He writes: “Therefore it is considered proper to make an arrangement with the watchman that he also be paid for hours that he worked before Shabbos begins and also for hours that he will work after Shabbos ends, and then it would be considered havla’ah according to all opinions.”

There are three different views in the poskim about how to understand this MishnahBerurah. Most poskim understand the MishnahBerurah (306:21) to mean that the havla’ah can be either before or after Shabbos. (See Minchas Shlomo Vol II 35:9 written by Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt”l.) It is just that in the specific case under discussion by the Mishnah Berurah’s citation of the Chayei Adam, the weekday work happened both before and after Shabbos.

Others understand the MishnahBerurah as requiring both before and after in order to create a havla’ah (Megillas Sefer Shabbos 81:4).

A third view is that the havla’ah may certainly happen before Shabbos, but it is a doubt as to whether the havla’ah may happen on motzaeiShabbos only (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach cited in Shemiras Shabbos K’hilchasa, volume III, chapter 28, note 129).

It seems that the commonly held view is to allow the havla’ah to happen either before or after Shabbos. It is still considered havla’ah even if the majority of the hours that were worked were on Shabbos.

Some poskim hold that havla’ah can also include an expense and service that the employee includes (see VayavrechDovid Siman 41).

Limitations On Havla’ah

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (ibid) is also of the opinion that if there is a discrepancy in the rate of compensation between the going rate on a Shabbos and that of the weekday, it is not considered havla’ah. It would thus be forbidden to take the extra money that is offered for Shabbos work. Rav Elyashiv, however, still considers it havla’ah (Zichron Dror Yikra page 344).

Exception Of Free Gift

If both parties agree that there is no financial obligation incurred, but rather the person who has benefited from the work of the other offers compensation after Shabbos as a gift or token of appreciation, then it seems from the MishnahBerurah (306:16,24) that it is permissible.

Exception Of Compensated By Guarding

Although all forms of compensation for Shabbos is prohibited, whether it is money or food, if the compensation is a non-tangible, such as watching something, it is permissible as well according to Rav Neuwirth, z”l (ShemirasShabbos K’hilchasa 28:54). Thus one can babysit in exchange for babysitting.

Benefiting From Money Earned On Shabbos

The Shulchan Aruch (OC 245:6) indicates that it is forbidden to benefit from s’char Shabbos if it was paid. The case of the Shulchan Aruch dealt with gentiles who had forcibly used a Jew’s oven to bake bread and paid him

with bread. The Shulchan Aruch rules that it is forbidden for the owner or any other Jew to benefit from the bread.

Practical Examples

If a waiter arranges for doing work before or after Shabbos in addition to his Shabbos tasks, he may be paid for the total job in one payment. It must be understood that it should be one job. Ba'al kriah. A ba'al kriah may be paid because he is also being paid for preparing the leining. If he does not prepare before Shabbos it is a problem.

A babysitter may only be paid for Shabbos work if she also babysits before or after Shabbos and she is paid for one total job. However, if she provides diapers or food on her own that she had paid for previously, then she can be paid for that as part of the havla'ah (see aforementioned Vayavrech Dovid). Now, can a city rely on these three heterim to open up a commercial district? Aside from the fact that it would undermine the spirit of Shabbos, and the fact that actual sales and credit cards cannot be transacted, it is completely impractical.

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Parshas Terumah

How Do You Say The Number

This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: CD #934 – Kohanim Face The Nation Good Shabbos!

Parshas Terumah contains the pasuk: "You shall make a Cover of pure gold, two and a half cubits its length; and a cubit and a half its width. You shall make two Keruvim of gold, hammered out shall you make them – from both ends of the Cover." [Shmos 25:17-18] One of the central pieces of "furniture" in the Mishkan was the Aron [Ark]. There were two Keruvim on top of the Aron. Chazal say the Keruvim were child-like figures. They had wings; but the faces of the Keruvim, the Talmud tells us, were the faces of children.

The Torah continues: "You shall make one Keruv from the end at one side and one Keruv from the end at the other; from the Cover shall you make the Keruvim at its two ends. The Keruvim shall be with wings spread upward, sheltering the Cover with their wings with their faces towards one another; toward the Cover shall be the faces of the Keruvim. You shall place the Cover on the Aron from above, and into the Aron shall you place the Testimonial-tables that I shall give you. It is there that I will set My meetings with you, and I shall speak with you from atop the Cover, from between the two Keruvim that are on the Aron of the Testimonial-tables, everything that I shall command you to the Children of Israel." [Shmos 25:19-22] In other words, when the Almighty would talk to Klal Yisrael it would appear as though He was talking through the Keruvim.

Rabbeinu Bechayeh makes an interesting observation in the wording of these pasukim. When the Torah first introduces making the Keruvim (pasuk 18) it says, "You shall make two Keruvim" (v'asisa shnayim K'ruvim). And yet when the Torah sums up the matter (pasuk 22), it writes "between the two Keruvim" (m'bayn shnei ha'Kruvim). The word "shnayim" means two and the word "shnei" means two. But nevertheless it is strange that the Torah in the same parsha uses two different words connoting the number two! Shouldn't the Torah be consistent?

Rabbeinu Bechayeh emphasizes something very fundamental about Lashon HaKodesh [Hebrew – literally "the holy tongue"]. Lashon HaKodesh is a very nuanced language. There are shades of difference between the word shnayim and the word shnei. Shnei is used when we have two things which are exactly alike. Shnayim is used when we have two things which are similar but not identical. For instance, when the Kohen is told to take two

lambs for various sacrificial offerings [Vayikra 14:10; Vayikra 23:19; Vayikra 23:20; Bamidbar 28:9] the Torah uses the word(s) shnei (kevasim) – to indicate that the lambs should be identical. Similarly, the two identical goats brought on Yom Kippur are identified as being shnei seirim [Vayikra 16:7-8].

Rabbeinu Bechayeh explains that the Keruvim are called "shnayim" because although similar, they are not identical – one is male and one is female. It would therefore be inappropriate to refer to them as "shnei ha'Kruvim", denoting exact identity between them. In fact, the Talmud says that when Klal Yisrael were doing the mitzvos and behaving properly, the male and female Keruv figures embraced one another, connoting the love between the Almighty and His People. Conversely, when Klal Yisrael were acting inappropriately, the Keruv figures separated. The Talmud relates that when the Romans entered the Holy of Holies, they saw the Keruvim embracing and they made fun of the Jewish religion, charging that there was lewdness portrayed in the Holy of Holies.

At any rate, Rabbeinu Bechayeh explains that since the Keruvim were fundamentally different – a man and a woman – the Torah enumerates them by using the word shnayim. This principle of Rabbeinu Bechayeh is echoed by the Netziv in Sefer Devarim. The Torah there states that based on the testimony of two witnesses (shnayim eidim) or three witnesses a guilty person may be put to death. The Netziv wonders why the Torah does not use the term Shnei Eidim to denote two witnesses. Why use the word shnayim? The Netziv uses the same principle to explain it. Shnayim, he says, means they are the same but they are dissimilar. He cites the Yerushalmi which rules that if two people come into court and testify word for word the exactly identical story, they are not believed. We suspect them of lying because no two people are going to relate a n incident exactly the same way. The fact that these two people are saying exactly the same story is an indication that it is rehearsed and planned. Therefore, the Yerushalmi says, one must strongly suspect in such a case that they are false witnesses. For this reason, the pasuk emphasizes shnayim eidim – similar witnesses, but not exact duplicates of one another. So too, in our parsha the pasuk says shnayim k'ruvim because the Keruvim were different from one another.

However, Rabbeinu Bechayeh does not explain why the Torah in pasuk 22 reverses itself and uses the term shnei K'ruvim which connotes identical Keruvim, when they were not truly identical! The obvious answer is that the Torah has already made its point (the Keruvim were not identical) so now it can use the more common term for the word two – shnei. However, I saw a beautiful comment from Rav Avraham Gurwicz, the Rosh Yeshiva of Gateshead Yeshiva in England. He interprets this as a hidden allusion (remez) to how a Jewish household is supposed to operate.

By using the word(s) shnayim (K'ruvim) – one a male and one a female – the Torah is alluding to something that may seem obvious to us, but is unfortunately not obvious to everyone. Namely, that men and women are different. In Judaism, men and women have different roles. The roles that Torah delineated for men and for women are – in the eyes of the Ribono shel Olam – the correct roles. Western civilization, and American civilization in particular, is paying a high price for the foolishness hoisted upon us some forty to fifty years ago that there is absolutely no difference between men and women and that "a woman can do any job that a man can do, only better".

Unfortunately, this has trickled into our Jewish society as well. There is tension caused by this attitude: "Why is it that the husband stays up all night Shavuus learning and the wife stays home with the children? Why shouldn't the roles be reversed?" "We live in an egalitarian society and therefore whatever the man does the woman can do as well." And so on and so forth. That, my friends, is fundamentally not correct in the eyes of the Torah.

I remember one of the most prescient things I heard from Rav Weinberg, zt"l, close to fifty years ago in the very beginning of the Women's Liberation movement. When the breakdown of morals in the United States was raging and everyone was afraid of the inroads the "sexual revolution" was having on

Klal Yisrael, I remember Rav Weinberg telling me the following: "Everybody knows that such behavior is treife [forbidden to take part in]. We will be on guard for that kind of licentiousness. However, we will pay a price for the aspect of the Women's Liberation movement that will try to convince us that we have it wrong and that there should be equal roles for men and for women in Judaism as well. As was the case many, many, times Rav Weinberg was a "wise man who sees what will happen in the future" (chacham ha'roeh es ha'nolad) and he was correct. Unfortunately, this philosophy has taken its toll amongst us.

Rav Avrohom Gurwicz explains that the pasuk is teaching "you shall make shnayim K'ruvim", one is a male and one is a female. They have different jobs. They both raise their wings heavenward to do the Will of the Creator. But they need to know that their roles are different. A man is commanded in the mitzvah of "Talmud Torah" and a woman is not commanded in "Talmud Torah". The Talmud tells us that the way a woman receives the merit of "Talmud Torah" is by being an enabler of her husband to learn. Even though that is not as glamorous or as "Geshmak" as actually sitting and learning (being a facilitator is never as wonderful as the actual learning itself), the Gemara says that the reward of women is greater than the reward of men for this mitzvah.

Once this has been established – that there are shnayim K'ruvim, that there are different roles for the male and the female, the pasuk says, "It is there that I will set My meetings with you, and I shall speak with you". The Ribono shel Olam will dwell and will put His Presence in that house. "...And I will speak with you from above the Cover..." Then the Almighty will come and say I can be in this house and I can speak in this house...from between the shnei Keruvim." They can work in unison in a way that is pleasing to Me when they are already convinced of the different roles they are each designated to play. Such is a house that HaKadosh Baruch Hu has nachas ruach to be in.

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From: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org> date: Thu, Feb 11, 2016 at 10:56 PM Parshat Teruma— Interpreting God's Blueprint Excerpted from **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin's 'Unlocking The Torah Text: An In-Depth Journey Into The Weekly Parsha- Shemot'** copublished by OU Press and Gefen Publishers

Context

As previously indicated, God initiates the creation of the Mishkan (the portable Sanctuary in the desert) with the seemingly straightforward directive, "And they shall create for me a mikdash (a holy place), and I will dwell within them."

Questions

Two linguistic issues emerge upon careful review of the commandment concerning the Mishkan.

Why does God state, "and I will dwell within them"? Parallel structure would have mandated that the sentence read: "And they shall make for Me a holy place, and I will dwell within it."

Why does the Torah use the generic term mikdash (holy place) in this commandment? This is the only occasion in the text where the portable desert Sanctuary is not referred to by its specific name: Mishkan.

Approaches

A

In light of our previous discussion concerning the Mishkan, the apparent non-parallel structure of this commandment makes abundant sense. The Torah does not state "and I will dwell within it," because God does not dwell in the Mishkan nor will He dwell later in the Beit Hamikdash.

Centuries later, in his historic address on the occasion of the First Temple's dedication in Jerusalem, Shlomo Hamelech (King Solomon) makes this point clear:

Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this house that I have built? Turn, therefore, to the

prayer of Your servant and to his supplication... that Your eyes will be open towards this house night and day.... And You will listen to the supplication of Your servant and of Your nation Israel that they shall pray towards this place... Shlomo's sentiments are thus foreshadowed in the Torah text with the very first introduction of the Mishkan, the precursor of both Temples. The Torah states, "and I will dwell within them," to stress that the purpose of the Sanctuary is to bring God into the lives of the people. Whether a sign of God's reconciliation with the nation after the sin of the golden calf or a corrective for that sin or an originally mandated symbol of continued divine presence, the Sanctuary serves to represent God's constant accessibility to man.

Some commentaries, including the Malbim, go a step further in their interpretation of the phrase "and I will dwell within them." The Israelites are commanded, they say, to build not only a physical sanctuary in the midst of the camp, but an internal spiritual sanctuary within each of their souls. They are thus instructed to create a place for God to "dwell within them" – in the hearts of the individual Israelites and their descendants.

B

Concerning the text's use of the generic term mikdash, in place of the more specific Mishkan, a number of scholars maintain that the chosen terminology reflects the continuing character of the obligation. The nation is commanded from the outset to erect a mikdash (a holy place), not only at this point in their history, but also when they successfully establish a presence in their homeland.

The Rambam codifies this eternal mitzva as follows: "It is a positive commandment to build a 'House for the Lord'...as it states, 'And they shall make for Me a holy place...'"

C

The Ohr Hachaim derives a beautiful additional lesson from the text's use of the word mikdash.

The sequence within the sentence "And they shall make for Me a holy place, and I will dwell within them," he claims, is counterintuitive. One would expect the Sanctuary to become "holy" only after the investiture of God's presence. By referring to the Sanctuary immediately as a mikdash, a holy place, the Torah conveys that the Temple is holy from the moment that the Israelites create it – even before God fulfills His commitment to "dwell" within the nation.

The commandment to build the Temple thus reconfirms the fundamental truth repeated over and over again, in different ways, during the critical period of our nation's birth: Sanctity is created in this world when man acts in accordance with God's will. Man, as God's partner, invests the Sanctuary with holiness.

Points to Ponder

Two points for consideration concerning the term mikdash:

1. If the commandment to build the mikdash is ongoing, are we not obligated to construct the Third Temple in Israel in our day? While numerous positions concerning this issue are staked out by the halachists, the approach presented by the Sefer Hachinuch is particularly intriguing.

The Ba'al Hachinuch explains that the parameters of the obligation to build a "holy place" shift dramatically with the building of the first permanent Temple in Jerusalem (tenth century bce). From that time on, the commandment is effective only when the majority of the Jewish nation is living in the Land of Israel.

An immediate challenge to the Ba'al Hachinuch's position, however, emerges from a clear historical reality. The Second Temple was erected at the end of the Babylonian exile, when the vast majority of "exiles" tragically opted to forgo a return to Zion and remain in Babylon. Why, then, was the Second Temple built by the minority who did return?

Rabbi Yehoshua of Kotno defends the Ba'al Hachinuch with a bold contention: the Jews of Babylon remained in "exile" of their own choice. They therefore effectively ceded their rights to the Temple and could no longer, through their absence, prevent its rebuilding.

The Ba'al Hachinuch's basic contention and Rabbi Yehoshua's further observation highlight the historic opportunities and challenges of our day. As the balance of Jewish life inexorably shifts from the diaspora to the State of Israel, we are rapidly approaching the point when the majority of Jews will be living in their homeland. Will we be biblically obligated at that point, political exigencies aside, to commence rebuilding the Temple?

Even further, an argument might be made that the "tipping point" concerning the Temple has already been reached. The majority of diaspora Jews today, like the Babylonian Jews of the Second Temple period, live in an "exile of choice" with the opportunity of return to the Land of Israel fully available. Have those of us in the diaspora lost our "rights" to the Temple? If so, should the Beit Hamikdash be built today, even in our absence?

The question remains academic given the political realities as well as other philosophical/halachic concerns. The issues raised, however, certainly should give us pause as we consider the momentous times in which we live. For the first time in nearly

two thousand years we approach the point when, after centuries of wandering, a majority of the Jewish nation will be "home." What halachic, philosophical and psychological changes should occur within our nation's psyche as a result of this new reality? How are we meant to mark our momentous transformation from a "people of exile" to a "people of return"?

And what of those of us who choose not to participate fully in this new historic national adventure – we, who, yet today, live our lives outside of the Land of Israel?

We are quick to criticize, in retrospect, the Babylonian exiles who failed to return to Zion. How, we must honestly wonder, will history judge us?

Our excuses are many – some, perhaps, more valid than others. But the question must be asked: what "rights" do we lose when we voluntarily choose not to return home?

2. A refrain often sounded in today's Jewish community bemoans the lack of "spirituality" in traditional practice and worship. Pulpit rabbis regularly hear, "Rabbi, I fail to be 'moved' by the tefilla (prayer service)... The daily ritual leaves me empty."

Responding to the challenge, numerous religious schools, synagogues and communal institutions have instituted studies and programs designed towards making age-old ritual personally relevant to their constituents. Federations have commissioned studies with an eye towards "reinventing the synagogue"; synagogues, themselves, have initiated programs, from prayer services featuring the poignant tunes of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach to innovative adult education classes; schools regularly design and implement new curricula for the teaching of prayer and ritual.

On an individual level, frustrated by the perceived lack of meaning in "ordinary" Jewish practice, many Jews find their search leading to more esoteric areas of their tradition. Kabbalists and mystics – some of them authentic and some less so – become frequent visitors to "modern Orthodox communities," with claims of easy access to sacred realms. Sophisticated members of the Jewish community treasure questionable symbols – such as the "red bendlach" (red threads worn on the wrist purportedly to ward off the "evil eye," often received from beggars at the Western Wall) – with greater intensity than they do normative Jewish rituals.

While communal creativity (within halachic boundaries) is certainly laudable, and authentic spiritual search is essential to Jewish tradition, Judaism offers no shortcuts to religious meaning. Spiritual "quick fixes" are alien to our tradition. In a world marked by instant gratification, Judaism preaches that spirituality is ultimately found only as a result of hard, continuing work.

An individual, for example, who expects to be spontaneously and passively "moved" by weekly synagogue prayer, without the investment of true effort into that prayer, is doomed to disappointment. Tefilla is neither theater nor spectator sport. Prayer becomes meaningful only as a result of study of text, honest personal introspection, wrenching self-assessment and a continuing evaluation of our relationship with God.

As the Mishna proclaims: "One should not stand to pray without full and serious intent. The righteous of old would deliberate a full hour before beginning to pray, in order to direct their hearts towards the Almighty."

Consider, in contrast, the hurried, preoccupied nature of so much of our tefilla today. Like tefilla, all the daily rites and rituals of Judaism are filled with significance readily available to those motivated, committed and industrious enough to explore the familiar. Within and through this regular ongoing observance, we are meant to find true religious meaning in our lives.

Centuries ago, God launched the central symbol of Jewish worship with the commandment "And they shall make for Me a holy place..." Only we, as God's partners, generate holiness in this world. Only we, through conscientious effort, can create sanctity and attain spirituality in our lives.

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Peninim on the Torah

by **Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum**
Parshas Terumah

And let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him. (25:2) Rashi notes that the word *terumah*, portion/donation, is mentioned three times. This teaches that there were three *terumos*: one was the *Machatzis HaShekel*, half-shekel, which was used for the *Adanim*, sockets, in which were placed the *Kerashim*, poles, which acted as the walls of the *Mishkan*; another half-shekel which was placed in the communal chest and designated for communal offerings; third was for the building of the *Mishkan*. Here, each person gave according to his heart's content.

The *Bostoner Rebbe*, *zl*, expands on these two approaches to communal involvement. The Jewish People form a community, all dedicated toward a common goal. Basically, people contribute in two ways. One way is to contribute as individuals – each person giving in accordance with his personal talents, qualities, attributes. Some offer "gold"; others bring "silver," while others offer blue dyed wool. Although each one brings

something disparate – together, they all meld to construct a *Mishkan* in which the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, will dwell.

The second way goes beyond the individual attributes of talent or character traits. On a deeper level, all Jewish souls are equal, emerging from the same spiritual source. This equality is personified by the *Machatzis HaShekel* offering in which each individual Jew – all 600,000-plus members of *Bnei Yisrael* – contribute an equal amount. In this instance, the Jew is offering himself. When a Jew offers not only the contents of his heart – but the heart itself – all Jews become indistinguishable sparks of the same Divine Flame.

A number of such *mitzvos* abound which focus on and underscore the significance of each and every Jew – regardless of his personal proclivity, talent, characteristics, nature, position, or demeanor. On *Succos* we bring together the *Arba Minim*, Four Species: *Lulav*, *Esrog*, *Hadassim*, *Aravos*. One contributes fragrance, while one gives taste; another offers nothing, and the last brings both taste and fragrance to the table.

Together, they represent four general types of Jews. There are those who are learned, those who focus on carrying out acts of loving kindness; those who do neither – neither learning/nor acting nicely; and there are those who represent perfection: learning and *maasim tovim*, performing good deeds. Yet, the *mitzvah* of *Arba Minim* cannot be performed unless each one of the Four Species, representing all types of Jews, is included. Likewise, the eleven spices which comprised the *Ketores*: Incense requires the inclusion of the *chelbenah*, whose fragrance is far from pleasant. It symbolizes the Jew whose deeds do not represent the finest that *Klal Yisrael* has to offer. The community's incense may not be offered without the inclusion of the *chelbenah*/Jew, whose activities do not represent the finest moments of Judaism. When all is said and done, however, he is a Jew. He is one of us – and this is what it is all about – one of us.

Thus, we find that ten *Yidden* – even if some are distant, alienated, turned off, assimilated, self-loathing – form a *minyan*, which is (ten men) the minimum community required in order to sanctify Hashem's Name through the recitation of *Kaddish* or *Kedushah*. This teaches us a powerful lesson: Everyone has his place, his contribution, his role; and the community can form a resting place for the Divine Presence only when all work together as one. The *Rebbe* notes that this goal is so important that Hashem is willing to facilitate this aggregate of Jews through the vehicle of the *Machatzis HaShekel* contribution.

The idea of total giving of oneself, self-abnegation – to the point that whatever I am I relinquish in the service of Hashem – is perhaps the underlying motif of a story the *Bostoner Rebbe* was wont to relate. Concerning the *pasuk*, "From every man whose heart motivates him," we derive that one type of giving is based upon the heart's impulse. Beyond the heart's impulse is indeed a higher, more carefully weighed and considered level of giving – whereby one gives not only what the heart motivates him to give, but he even gives up the heart itself. He throws all of himself into the service of G-d.

The *Kotzker Rebbe*, *zl*, was a uniquely holy person. His personality was bound up entirely in Hashem. He was like a burning flame: intense; passionate; sharp; demanding. He had neither patience nor tolerance for the utterly insignificant things people did with their lives. He could not understand how a person could waste a moment of time in which he could be serving Hashem. As a result of his utterly demanding nature, some of his closest disciples left him, feeling that his opposition to the mediocrity of ordinary life was too strong and beyond the point to which an ordinary person would find it possible to relate. Many of them charted their own *Chassidus*, becoming the progenitors of some of Poland and Galicia's largest and most dynamic *chassidic* courts. Ultimately, toward the end of his life, the *Kotzker* lived in solitude, closing himself off almost entirely from the "little men, the flatterers," whom he was unable to tolerate. During his years of seclusion, he would often refer to himself as *Der Heilige Tzap*, "The Holy Goat."

The *Kotzker Rebbe* would relate the following parable to explain the meaning of his statement. There was a man who would dole out strong snuff during *davening* in order to arouse the worshippers. More than one worshipper was indebted to this man for his "service," enhancing his prayer service by playing the vital role of keeping him awake. People in Europe worked long and hard hours, the warm *shul* often being the one place where they could rest their weary bones. Dozing during *davening* was for some not uncommon. The man kept his snuff in a beautiful, ornate silver snuff box. One day the box disappeared, leaving the man distraught and broken. True, it was only a snuff box, but, to him, it was his snuff box, with which he provided a meaningful service. As he was walking around grief-stricken, he met the "Holy Goat" outside the *shul*.

The Holy Goat possessed a great, holy and caring heart. Since he saw a Jew walk around dejected, he was prompted to ask him what was wrong. After hearing the man's tale of woe, the Holy Goat said, "Take out your penknife, slice off a piece from the tip of my long horns, and fashion a new snuffbox for yourself. The man proceeded to do this, and joy returned to his life.

The man's new tabak pushkah, snuffbox, made of the Holy Goat's horn became the talk of the town. Indeed, everyone wanted one for themselves. Whenever someone asked him how and from whom he had obtained such a unique snuffbox, he referred them to the Holy Goat - who obliged and also allowed them to cut off a small piece of horn. The end result was that everyone in town now possessed a snuffbox fashioned from the Holy Goat's horns, so that the Holy Goat soon had no horns left! The Heilige Tzap had given away his horns.

The Kotzker was referring to himself. He had used his powers to mentor and raise group after group of disciples who spiritually matured and went on to become Admorim in their own rights. Now, like the goat, he felt that he had nothing left to give.

(Obviously, this is an analogy.) The Kotzker was an individual who was beyond holy. His mentoring abilities and personal sanctity never waned. This was clearly a figure of speech intimating that he was now ready to "retire" and work "on himself."

It was at this point that the Bostoner would conclude with his own brilliant inspirational insight. Sometimes people give everything they have to their children, their friends, their community, to the point that they now feel spent, left out and hurt - very much like the Kotzker's fabled Holy Goat. If they would stop for a moment and reflect, they would realize that perhaps this is specifically what made him Holy.

They shall make an Ark of shittim wood, two and a half cubits its length; a cubit and a half its width; and a cubit and a half its height. You shall cover it with pure gold, from within and from without shall you cover it. (25:10, 11)

The construction of the Mishkan -- its various components and accompanying vessels -- is replete with symbolism. The materials used for the Mishkan, its very measurements, and the manner of constructing its components are a source for much exposition by the various commentators. While we are not on the level of comprehending the mystical aspects and secrets involved in this holy edifice, there is great practical application to be derived from what we are able to understand.

The Chafetz Chaim explains the half-measurements of the Aron as alluding to the reality that no human being can claim to have achieved sheleimus, perfection, with regard to his knowledge and understanding of Hashem's Divine wisdom. The Aron housed the Torah, thus granting it symbolic status in connection with the Torah. The mere fact that the Aron, because it housed the Torah, was thus considered the central feature of the Mishkan, speaks volumes concerning the significance of the Torah in Jewish life. A Jew must strive to gain deeper, more encompassing knowledge of the Torah; regardless of how many times one has reviewed the same passage in any area of Torah erudition, each time he perceives a new approach, gleaning new insight. We are unable to measure the profundity of the Torah. Indeed, every time we study Torah, we realize how much more there is to know, how distant we are from really understanding the full depth of the Torah.

Horav Avraham Pam, zl, quoted by Rabbi Sholom Smith in "Shabbos with Rav Pam," suggests that this is the reason that each tractate of Talmud Bavli begins on Daf Bais, Page Two, rather than Daf Aleph, page one. This illustrates that there is no beginning to the Torah and certainly no end. We make siyumim, celebrating the completion of a tractate, Seder Mishnayos, parsha of Chumash. While it is certainly an achievement, in the scheme of Torah knowledge it is like a drop of water in a vast ocean. However, Kol prutah u'prutah mitztarefes l'cheshbon gadol, "Every penny combines (with one another) to account for a large total." We continue learning, and, with time, we will achieve an incredible grasp of Torah.

The Aron consisted of three boxes placed one in another, with the middle box being constructed of shittim wood. The outer and inner boxes were made of gold. This teaches that the character of a talmid chacham, Torah scholar, should be tocho k'baro, his external character should coincide with his internal character. In other words, he must be real; what you see is who he is - through and through. Middos, character traits, are the true measure of a man. His essence is his character. One who learns Torah must demonstrate this through his middos tovos, positive character traits. Otherwise, his Torah learning is deficient.

The Alter, zl, m'Kelm, Horav Simchah Zissel Ziv Broide, was one of the primary disciples of Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl, founder of the mussar, ethical character refinement, movement. As such, he devoted his life to training his own students to perfect themselves in the area of middos. Torah erudition without character development was flawed. Many stories abound concerning his personal refinement. The Alter was once traveling to small towns and villages on a fundraising trip on behalf of his yeshiva in Kelm. His travels brought him in contact with an eclectic representation of the Jewish community -- from men of great wealth and education to those who hailed from simple, rural backgrounds, with little or no education. They all had one thing in common: their respect for a Torah luminary. The greatness of the Alter was no secret, and any intelligent person could see on his face and from his demeanor that he was an unusual person. Wherever the Alter went, he was welcomed with great esteem.

During one of his trips, he stopped overnight on a farm. The farmer and his wife had heard of the sage and were eager to provide him with accommodations. Taking money for the provisions and lodging was out of the question. They were honored to host the Rosh Yeshiva. The farmer's wife was excited to be able to prepare a meal for Rav Simchah Zissel.

As she was preparing the meal, Rav Simchah Zissel struck up a conversation. He asked about their cow: does it provide sufficient milk? Do the chickens lay enough eggs? Was the quality of the eggs good? How was their potato crop? The farmer's wife was not bashful, and she gave lengthy answers to each question, going into detail, describing the health of the cow and chickens, and describing the work involved in planting a potato crop. During this whole time, Rav Simchah Zissel carried on a long, healthy, animated conversation with this simple woman.

Rav Simchah Zissel later explained his actions. This couple was very kind to give him a room and meals for a day. The next day, he would be gone and would probably not see these people for at least a year or two. They had refused to take any remuneration for the accommodations which they provided. How could he possibly pay them back? The only other way was to show them that they were relevant, that he cared about their lives. By showing them a friendly countenance, by taking an interest in the simple goals of their lives, by rejoicing over their achievement, and by lauding their accomplishments, he was providing payment for their time and efforts. Rav Simchah Zissel placed great value on his time. Nonetheless, small talk with the farmer's wife was his way of making payment for his accommodations. This is the meaning of refined ethical character traits.

The Keruvim shall be with wings spread upward... with their faces toward one another; toward the Cover shall be the faces of the Keruvim. (25:20)

In his commentary to the Torah, the Abarbanel writes that the phrase, "The Keruvim shall be with wings and spread upward," alludes to the idea that all Jews should be focused on Heaven. A person's mind determines his goals and objectives. His thoughts should be motivated; his values should concentrate on spiritual growth. If one is stimulated towards nurturing his spiritual dimension, he can be certain that everything else in life that matters-- ethics, morals -- will develop on a positive note. When one's values are distorted, the distortion takes its toll on everything else in his life, leaving him dissatisfied, depressed, floundering aimlessly in the wind, with nothing with which to anchor himself.

This is with regard to bein adam la'Makom, his relationship between man and G-d. Concerning his relationship with his fellow man, bein adam l'chaveiro, Abarbanel writes it should be "with their faces toward one another." One's concern should be about his fellow: "How can I help? What can I do? Is something bothering you?" When we gaze into the eyes/face of our friend, we notice a change. We perceive when things are not going as they should, when the smile is not there, indicating a change in his life.

Whether it concerns one's relationship with G-d or his connection with his fellow man, it should always be, "towards the Cover shall be the faces of the Keruvim." His guidance with regard to all aspects of life - both spiritual and physical/mundane - must be derived from the "Cover," which alludes to the Torah kept in the Aron. With the Torah as our guide, we know that we are traveling on the straight and proven course charted for us by the One Who navigates our lives: Hashem.

Greatness is determined by one's sensitivity to, and empathy for, his fellow Jew. One who thinks only of himself and his immediate family is neither great nor deserving of the crown of leadership. The Gerrer Rebbe, the Lev Simchah, related that he was present when the Ostrovitzer Rebbe, zl, met with Horav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, zl. These were two of Europe's preeminent Torah leaders. The Lev Simchah was himself a brilliant Torah scholar, who in Eretz Yisrael was Rebbe to thousands of Chassidim, as well as one of the Holy Land's primary builders of Torah.

The Ostrovitzer asked Rav Chaim Ozer the following question: The Talmud Makkos 22b laments at the crudeness of people who stand up for a Sefer Torah, while failing to arise for a gavra rabba, great man - meaning a talmid chacham, Torah scholar, who is the living embodiment of a Sefer Torah. Essentially, he is a living Sefer Torah. One should surely pay him the proper respect by standing up when he goes by. The Talmud goes on to explain why a Torah scholar is referred to as a gavra rabba. The Torah writes that the punishment of malkos, lashes, should consist of forty lashes - arbaim yakenu. Yet, our sages have determined that the offender receives only thirty-nine. This is an indication of the power of the sages, who were able to reduce the Torah's original number by one lash.

The Ostrovitzer asked, "Why did the Talmud support its definition of gavra rabba from a pasuk in Sefer Devarim, when, in fact, there is an earlier instance which indicates the power of the sages. The Torah writes (Sefer Vayikra) that Sefiras HaOmer should be counted for fifty days, tisperu chamishim yom. Yet, the sages interpreted that we count only forty-nine days. Why wait for a proof from Sefer Devarim, if there is one readily available in Sefer Vayikra?"

The Ostrovitzer explained that Chazal, our sages, believed that a true gavra rabba is one who can lighten the physical punishment of a Jew by diminishing the lashes by one lash. A gavra rabba is one who eases the load of a fellow Jew.

Rabbi Binyamin Pruzansky ("Stories That Unite Our Hearts") tells the story of a man who was sitting on the floor on Tishah B'Av, reciting Kinnos, Lamentations. He was very moved by the words, and he expressed his emotion with copious tears. Next to him on the floor sat a blind man. The blind man turned to his neighbor and asked, "Could you please walk me home?" The man who was saying kinnos halted his "emotion" and answered with a sharp, "Now? Of course not! Do you not 'see' that I am in the midst of weeping over the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash?"

The Chernobler Rebbe, zl, was sitting on the floor nearby and had witnessed the interchange. He rose up and approached the man who was so wrapped up in himself and his tears, telling him, "You are exempt from crying over the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash!"

"I am?" the man asked. "Why?" "Because it would be better that you cry over your own churban, destruction. I think that your heart is in ruins, and it would be more worthwhile for you to cry over that."

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Rav Lichtenstein Discusses Abortion

by R. Gidon Rothstein

Bloggng R. Lichtenstein, Leaves of Faith, Volume 2, Week Two:

A Practical RA"l Discusses Abortion

In these discussions of RA"l's writings and teachings, I've tried to capture characteristic elements. Granted that I was going to write only two essays on each volume, I've been seeking topics that could be defended as in some way broader than the issues themselves, presenting some identifiable piece of a larger whole.

Here, I'm going to go in the other direction. Most of the articles in the second volume of Leaves of Faith fit RA"l's usual mode of laying out a field broadly and deeply, giving general perspectives that would then greatly illuminate one's approach to a specific problem. There are discussions of "Religion and State: The Case for Interaction," "Does Judaism Recognize an Ethic Independent of Halakha?" "The Parameters of Tolerance" and several essays on "The State of..." Centrist Orthodoxy, Orthodoxy in general, the condition of Jewish belief, and so on.

These all are RA"l at his most familiar: taking a topic that seems well-trodden and, in outlining how to look at the issue, bringing to bear factors that add unexpected nuance to our own. For all that he seemed to me often difficult to pin down to an exact answer—since he was always so aware of countervailing factors to weigh, such that he was ready to see wrong answers, but often was also ready to see more than one right or acceptable answer—his broad brush discussions were still enlightening and, often, life changing.

One article in the volume cuts so much against that that I found it irresistible. Soon after RA"l made aliyah, when he was only about forty, he testified before the Knesset about a law regarding abortion (his views were originally published in Hebrew in 1974). We'll see his characteristic setting of parameters, but the occasion called for more specificity. Here we'll see RA"l giving practical answers to a practical question (while leaving room for case by case exceptions).

He starts with the categorical assumption that there are situations where the Torah prohibits abortion. His basic reason for this certainty is that the consensus of decisors holds that non-Jews may not perform abortions (for them, it's like murder), and we have what RA"l calls "the great halachic principle" (which I think bears remembering in other contexts as well) that the Torah does not permit Jews to do that which is prohibited to non-Jews.

The Most Serious Prohibition

Beyond that problem, RA"l raises several other issues that might disallow abortion. He has to deal with each, because each might apply, with leniencies or stringencies, to different situations. Aside from murder (and, as we'll see, he is only confident that it counts as murder when the fetus can live outside the womb; that means that before that, the reason to prohibit abortion will depend on one of the other factors).

Abortion might also be seen as ancillary to homicide. Even where it's not actual murder, it's "part of a network of strictures revolving around the prohibition...extending beyond it." This would make it similar to what are known as abizrahu, acts that are

similar enough to other prohibitions, such as idolatry or sexual immorality, that they are themselves prohibited.

Even if it's in no way murder, it might be habbalah, causing physical damage to another Jew (the mother or the fetus), which is generally prohibited, often even if the person being damaged consents.

More positively, for all that the fetus isn't recognized as a full life, there might still be an obligation to protect and save it, which would then disallow acting to end its life.

RA"l takes for granted that Noahides are only considered murderers if the fetus has reached the point of independent viability (that is, that if we removed the fetus through a Cesarean instead of aborting it, it could live).

Stages of Pregnancy

His reference to viability leads him to note that the different reasonings for prohibiting abortion might come into play at different stages of the pregnancy. If abortion is an adjunct to murder, that seems to him already true at the forty-day mark, a stage the Gemara mentions as when the fetus becomes more than *mayah be-alma* ("mere liquid") and a miscarriage counts as a birth.

If the question is physical damage being done, if it's the damage to the fetus we're concerned about, that, too, would seem to come into play at the forty-day mark. If it's the damage to the mother, forty days might be the mark at which the damage is serious enough to be prohibited, but RA"l can also imagine allowing it up until the end of the first trimester, the point at which the Gemara speaks of the pregnancy becoming recognizable (which has ramifications for other halachot, such as what she does or does not have to think about in terms of *niddah* issues).

As to the possible affirmative obligation to save a fetus' life, RA"l notes a debate about when we can violate Shabbat to save a pregnancy. He mentions three opinions: we can violate Shabbat to save any conceived fetus, because we "violate one Shabbat so that (the fetus) could later keep many Shabbatot;" forty days, since that's when it has the status of a living soul; or, we cannot ever violate Shabbat to save a fetus, since it's not yet alive.

For the view that we can violate Shabbat from the moment of conception, it makes great sense to say we could not willfully terminate such a fetus. For the other views, RA"l notes that not being allowed to violate Shabbat to save a fetus does not necessarily translate into permissibility to terminate it; taking deliberate action to destroy life or potential life is a further step, running counter enough to the general obligation to save life that it is likely not allowed earlier than when Shabbat violation is permitted.

Mitigating Factors to Allow an Abortion

The source, reason, and timing of a prohibition of abortion also helps us understand what factors might override those. Murder is only set aside for actual danger to the mother. RA"l notes. He does note *poskim* who include spiritual or psychological danger in the general category of danger, but that they did so when allowing violating Shabbat or kosher laws, not when another life is at stake. The farthest RA"l was willing to go was to say that if having the baby would lead to actual insanity—which he differentiates from "a sense of frustration, perplexity, bad nerves, or some neurosis or psychosis"—he could see that qualifying as sufficient danger. He urges applying such reasoning only in the most extreme cases, since the fetus' life hangs in the balance.

Even in the case of physical danger to the mother, he assumes we would have to use a stricter standard than we do in the cases of Shabbat violation, for example. We violate Shabbat for dangers to life that might be statistically small, but RA"l doubts we could do so when another viable life hangs in the balance, and says it would have to be carefully weighed.

The other reasons to prohibit abortion, which come into play at an earlier stage, allow for more factors to affect the calculus. Noting that a nursing mother is allowed to use contraception to prevent a further pregnancy (which was seen as dangerous to the existing baby), RA"l infers that halachah is allowing putting aside certain values to allow for normal family relations.

That being true, issues like human dignity, domestic peace (meaning: keeping marriages happy), and pain all carry halachic weight, and could be relevant here as well. He does not have any evidence or clear-cut argument that can define when to be lenient in this area; it would have to be case by case, but he's made it clear that there are circumstances where he could see such issues being significant enough to allow an abortion.

Injury to the mother also allows for many leniencies, since we allow such injury in other cases (such as elective surgeries of various sorts). He mentions the mother's health, even if not life threatening and then, much more hesitantly, the damage that might come from having a seriously crippled child, given the social and familial stigma that might ensue. If the issue is injury caused the fetus, none of this would come into play.

For those who saw abortion as being in opposition to our general obligation to save lives, RA"l notes that that obligation might be based on positive requirements, such as

va-hay bahem, you shall live by them (the mitzvot) or a kind of hashavat aveidah, returning of lost objects; or it might be a ramification of the prohibition against standing by and watching someone die or be killed. If the latter, RA"l sees less room to allow an abortion.

But if it's the former, many situations override an obligation to fulfill a positive commandment or ideal. Here, significant physical or psychological cost to the parents (even if not as far as insanity, bankruptcy, or the like) could be a relevant factor. In addition, if the concern is the life of the fetus itself, RA"l sees the possibility that there is no obligation to do so if the fetus is going to lead a life filled with suffering. While we are not allowed to end lives, even those filled with intolerable suffering, we are in certain circumstances allowed to abstain from acting to prevent such a person's death. RA"l thinks that logic applies even more easily to a life that has not yet come into being.

If It's All Rabbinic

There is a minority view that these prohibitions as rabbinic. While RA"l firmly rejected that for third trimester abortions, he was willing to entertain it for the other issues he'd raised. Once a rule is rabbinic, there are many other routes to leniency, since rabbinic rules often take account of various kinds of "great need."

RA"l adds three caveats: the lenient position is a minority view, "great need" is too loose a term, making it difficult to apply with any consistency, and these respondents were speaking to specific and exceptional cases, not laying out general policy.

Conclusions

Based on the above, RA"l sees little room to allow abortions after the forty day mark for psychological-social reasons. He stresses that this is not out of a lack of sensitivity to those suffering distress by virtue of their pregnancy, but because of how seriously halachah takes feticide.

He then reviews the reasons it is so serious: 1) abortion after forty days possibly transgresses biblical commands and prohibitions; 2) Even if rabbinic, there is rarely a real danger of insanity or physical deterioration, and who can be sure the fetus' life will end up being purely detrimental, such that we can push aside these prohibitions, 3) There are other ways to deal with many of the issues around a pregnancy, such as psychological counseling, monetary support, and so on. Even where those aren't available, the fact that they present a viable alternative means, to RA"l, that we shouldn't allow a general policy of permitting abortions.

Flexibility and Stringency

RA"l closes with two general points. First, he has left some areas of the discussion not fully determined. This was not out of any hesitation to come to conclusions, but because he thinks psak cannot be broad-brush; the flexibility in the sources means the same decisor might in one case prohibit an abortion but in another case, with significant enough other factors, allow it. He wrote as he did to leave that room for human input into decisions, which is how halachah is supposed to work.

All that being said, he recognizes that his views will be seen as very stringent (since it was a time when abortion was seen as a woman's right; as Dr. Jotkowitz points out, over a decade later, in a talk later published in *By His Light*, RA"l was still struck by the modern insistence on a woman's right to her body, and how much it ran counter to halachah's view).

Without apologizing, he does note that the "liberal" view on this issue comes at the expense of the humanity of the fetus. In order to allow the mother to do what she feels right, the "liberal" view had to ignore or dismiss the concerns and humanity of the fetus.

In arguing that the decision often had to go the other way, RA"l closes by reminding his listeners and readers that this isn't only out of obedience to the Will of God, but is also an expression of halachah's concern with human dignity and welfare, which "rises up in indignation against the torrent of abortions." This might create some burden for specific families, which will have to have a child that will cause them real difficulties (which RA"l stresses we should neither deny nor ignore), this is a cost that has to be borne in the name of remembering the humanity of all life, including that of the fetus.

He closes, as will I (in a phrase Dr. Jotkowitz took as the title of his essay), by "paraphrasing the famous words of Shakespeare, that Halachah loved not the parents less, but the child more."

From: Office of Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com> reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com date: Wed, Feb 10, 2016 at 1:45 PM subject: Parshat Terumah 5776- Rabbi Berel Wein

TERUMAH

Rabbi Berel Wein

There is traditional opinion in the works of the commentators to Torah that the construction of the Mishkan/Tabernacle was a form of atonement for the sin of the Jewish people in erecting and worshipping the Golden Calf. So to

speaking, gold atones for gold. Gold well spent on holiness and goodness atones for gold badly misspent on idolatry and wanton behavior. This idea is very much in line with the Jewish concept of repentance, which sees the penitent being in the same position and circumstances as when he originally sinned but no longer behaving sinfully in those circumstances. It is truly wise to avoid temptation but it is heroic and noble to overcome it. The Mishkan/Tabernacle and the priestly garments were to be constructed from gold, silver, fine wood, precious stones and diamonds, valued by humans as possessions of pleasure of this world. People steal and kill, work long and hard hours and years, in order to acquire these physical items. They have greatly inflated importance in human eyes, far beyond their actual value and true worth. But since the Torah was not addressed to angels but rather to humans, the Torah instructs us to consecrate these material gifts to lofty, spiritual and eternal purposes, and to take weapons used many times unfortunately for evil and base goals and convert them to tools of beneficence and purpose. God does not need our wealth nor does He require buildings for His presence to be felt in this world. Rather, it is this lesson of being able to harness everything – even gold and diamonds – for noble purposes. And this is the true challenge in life – consecrating the mundane and impure to holiness. This is the attitude of Judaism towards the so-called pleasures of the world. We are not a nation of monks or ascetics. We are meant to be a kingdom of priests who serve God and humankind and a holy nation. Holiness is the ability to take the realities of life and deal with them in an exalted and immortal fashion. There was a famous dictum/motto attributed to Rav Kook that pretty much said it all regarding this matter: "To renew and refresh the old and to sanctify the new." We live in a transformative generation regarding communication and interpersonal connections. Unfortunately, much of this technological achievement has been exploited for base and harmful purposes. We have not as of yet been able to convert the materials of the Golden Calf into a Mishkan/Tabernacle. Our generation, especially its younger members are struggling mightily with this issue. Much of the future structure of our society is dependent on how this struggle will eventually resolve itself. As we read in Terumah this week, if we can wrest away these valuables from being servants of the Golden Calf and use them to construct our individual and national Mishkan/Tabernacle, then the Lord has assured us that he will dwell within us, in our homes and in our lives. Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Daf Hashavua <daf-hashavua@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Feb 11, 2016 at 7:36 PM subject: Daf Hashavua by Kollel Beis HaTalmud - Parshas Terumah

**Let's Not Get Carried Away
Rabbi Yosef Levinson**

The Torah admonishes us to insert the badim, poles, into the rings of the Aron (Ark) and to never remove them. The poles of the other keilim, utensils, of the Mishkan however, were only inserted when they were required to transport the kielim. This halacha is listed as one of the 613 mitzvos, and although this mitzva may hold no practical relevance today, nevertheless its lessons are eternal and apply very much in our times as well as in past generations.

The Sefer Hachinuch writes (Mitzva 96) that the Ark housed the Torah, which is the foundation of our people. Therefore the Ark must always be ready for travel. Perhaps we might unexpectedly be forced to leave in a hurry and in our haste we will fail to check if the badim are sturdy enough to transport the Aron. This might cause, Heaven Forbid, the Aron's bearers to drop it, which is beneath its honour. However now that the Torah demands that the poles be permanently attached, we will make them very sturdy and durable, averting tragedy in this way.

The late Rabbi Avigdor Miller zt'l adds that the Aron's constant readiness for travel reminded the Bnei Yisrael that they too might be asked to leave their encampment at a moment's notice. Due to this lack of

permanence, the Jewish people never became attached to their material surroundings and were able to focus solely on the study of Torah. This is an important lesson for us as well. If we are to succeed in limud HaTorah, we must first recognise the transitory nature of this world. One must consider Torah study to be his main occupation and work, as the means to achieve that goal (Brachos 35b). This does not depend so much on the amount of time one devotes to learning as it does on one's attitude towards learning. One who anticipates the moment that his work will be finished so that he can go learn, and whose every spare moment, is devoted to Torah study demonstrates that this is his main focus. On the other hand, if one learns many hours a day but is preoccupied with what he will do after his learning seder (session), and he rushes home when he is done, then he shows that Torah learning is not as important as it should be.

Rabbi S.R. Hirsch writes that the badim teach us another lesson. Their constant presence on the Aron demonstrates that Torah never comes to a resting-place, for the Torah is not dependent on any place. Similarly, the Netziv writes that we are commanded to insert the staves into its rings when we make the Aron. In contrast, the poles of the Shulchan (table) and the Mizbeach Hazahav (golden Altar) were not to be placed in them until these keilim needed to be transported. This teaches us that we must take the Torah with us no matter where we go and that Torah learning will flourish no matter where we are exiled. However the monarchy, represented by the Shulchan and Kehuna, represented by the Mizbeach Hazahav can only prosper in Eretz Yisrael, when the Beis Hamikdash is standing.

The badim of the Aron also have another significance. Rabbeinu Bachya writes that since the purpose of the badim is to lift the Aron, therefore the badim are representative of the supporters of Torah. It is through its supporters' assistance that Torah can thrive. The Meshech Chachma writes that it is for this reason that we may not remove the Aron's badim. Just as the poles are a permanent fixture on the Aron, so too a community should view themselves as always bound to the talmidei chachamim of their city and their support for Torah should remain constant.

Conversely, although the staves were only required for transporting the Aron, nevertheless by assisting the Aron, they became permanently united with the Aron, even when they no longer provided any benefit. Thus, writes the Chafetz Chaim, the benefactors of Torah scholars join their beneficiaries forever in the next world. Although at that time they do not provide the talmidei chachamim with any assistance, they enjoy the eternal fruits of Torah study with them.

Rashi, in his commentary to the passuk, "They shall not be removed from it", writes: forever. Apparently Rashi follows the opinions that this is a command not to remove the poles. Rashi states this explicitly in his commentary on next week's Parsha (28:32). However why didn't Rashi write that this is one of the negative commandments as he does there, why did he write that they are not to be removed forever. All the negative precepts are forbidden forever. Yet Rashi does not say that one can not eat non-kosher meat forever, so why does Rashi do so here?

Perhaps Rashi means to add that when they were building the Aron, they were to build it with this in mind, that the poles were to be permanently attached to the Aron, and again it was to be inserted with this intention. Perhaps this symbolizes that when one studies Torah, besides fulfilling a mitzva, he is also affected by his learning. The Torah becomes a permanent part of him, impacting on the rest of his life. Similarly one who supports a young scholar should know that he not only reaps the benefits for the expenses he covered - the advantage accrues for years to come. Should this budding talmid chacham rise to prominence, then all those who assisted him prior to his reaching renown, have a share in the making of a Gadol. For it was through the Torah of his youth that he became what he is. It is forever part of him.

When Rabbi Moshe Blau, head of Agudas Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael visited Vilna, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski zt'l appointed a guide to show R' Blau the attractions and sights of Vilna. The guide took R' Blau to the

Vilna cemetery where both the Gra and the Ger Tzedek, Avraham Ben Avraham were interred. He also showed him the Strushin library and other points of Jewish interest of the city. After his tour, R' Chaim Ozer enquired of the guide if he showed his guest "The attraction of Vilna?" The guide did not understand what R' Chaim was referring to, until finally R' Chaim said: "Did you take our guest to see R' Avraham Yeshaya". R' Avraham Yeshaya was none other than R' Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, better known as the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish would soon rise to prominence when he emigrated to Eretz Yisrael. He was to become the leader of orthodoxy in one of the most trying times of our people. His opinion was sought far and wide. But in those days he shied away from the limelight, learning in privacy. However a few perceptive individuals, including R' Chaim Ozer were well aware of his brilliance and piety. Any visitor to Vilna seeking an audience with a Torah giant would surely run to see R' Chaim Ozer. However R' Chaim was already a gadol, from his many years of toiling in Torah. If one wanted to see a gadol in the making, R' Chaim Ozer pointed out that the correct address to visit was that of R' Avraham Yeshaya.

(The Meshech Chachma makes a brilliant point. Although there was a mitzva for the Leviim to carry the Aron, it only appeared as if they were carrying it. In fact, the Aron transported itself. More than this, it lifted the bearers of the Aron with it. Therefore we were forbidden to ever remove the staves from the Aron, to show that just as the poles were not required for carrying the Aron when it was in the Kodesh Kodashim, so too when the Bnei Yisrael travelled, the poles were not meant to carry the Aron.)

Let us not get carried away with our work - we should have set times for learning. Let us remember the lessons of the badim and constantly seek to connect to the Torah.

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