

לע"נ ר' זאב בן ר' יעקב

In My Opinion FIRING THE COACH

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

All of us inveterate sports fans who absurdly and loyally follow the fortunes of a certain team that we are somehow attached to, are aware that when that team does not do well or does not win the championship and has disappointed us, the solution to the problem always seems to be to fire the coach or manager of that team.

It is clear and logical to us that the failure of the team to win the championship is not exclusively to be laid at the doorstep of the coach. The usual explanation is that the team was deficient in talent, and even the most talented teams often fail to win the championship through no fault of the coach's decisions and strategy. The coach did his best, and perhaps even overachieved with the raw materials – the players – that he had under his tutelage. Nevertheless, the axe of blame and responsibility always seems to fall upon the head of team, no matter what.

This is undoubtedly not fair, just as we are all aware that we were never promised that life would be fair and just in all circumstances. Thus, anyone accepting the job and responsibility of coaching or managing any professional sports team knows in advance immediately upon accepting the position, that he will eventually be ignominiously dismissed and fired, for no team can forever win every year. Despite this knowledge, there always are many applicants for the position of head coach, for we are all capable of self-delusion and the belief that we are the exception to all the rules that apply to everyone else.

I use this illustration from the world of sports, which in the long run of human history is not the most important of human endeavors, but it fits the increasing trend that exists in the field of Jewish education, certainly in the United States, but has seeped into the culture here in Israel as well. I speak of the fact that anyone who volunteers or is chosen to serve as the principal of a Jewish school practically agrees in advance that he or she will be fired at some point because of the whim of boards of directors, disgruntled parents, and other social currents, that really have nothing to do with the quality of education being offered and taught at that school.

Every year, there are many capable and experienced educators who are rather summarily dismissed from their jobs as principals of schools that they have served for many years. The dissatisfaction of parents and of lay education committees which run these schools never seem to focus on the role that the parents and the students themselves play in seemingly underachievement, but rather always direct their anger and frustration at the principal of the school.

Thus, in the world of Jewish education, there is a continual game of revolving chairs that absolutely destroys any sense of continuity or tradition in any given school. It is as though every principal knows in advance that he or she is going to get fired no matter how good a job one does, when attempting to educate a very spoiled and many times disinterested student body.

I do not mean to indicate that every principal of every Jewish school is perfect. Nor do I fail to recognize that there are instances where the behavior or competence of the principal of the school certainly does warrant dismissal. However, the rate of dismissing principals of Jewish schools on a regular and continuing annual basis is disheartening. I feel that it is also counterproductive to the goals of producing a better education for the students attending those schools.

The fallout from this trend is that it certainly has made teaching or administering in a Jewish school, as a life career, much less attractive. To start with, one must be an idealist to enter the field of Jewish education. Though great improvement has been made regarding salaries and remuneration for teachers and principals in Jewish schools over the past few decades, the payment scale in the Jewish educational world still lags far behind other fields of endeavor that are open to talented Jewish young men and women starting out in their professional careers. Knowing in advance that one is likely to be fired from one's job is hardly an inducement to enter that field in the first instance. Parents and the lay

leaders of Jewish schools should think carefully whether firing the coach is really the solution to what they deem to be a losing season.

Shabbat shalom

Berel Wein

Home Weekly Parsha TERUMAH

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

I think that we can all agree that it is difficult and challenging to part with one's wealth on behalf of an altruistic cause that will bring to the donor no immediate discernible physical profit or gain. Human beings are very possessive when it comes to money. Money and territorial rights are two main issues that have existed throughout the ages regarding disputes between individuals and even nations.

Heaven therefore placed a great burden on our teacher Moshe when it required him to ask the Jewish people to part with their wealth in large sums, to build a holy Tabernacle, the benefits of which the people could and would be measurable only in spiritual and eternal terms. In fact, the verse in the Torah regarding the necessity to contribute to the building of that Tabernacle can be understood as requiring that the donor, to fulfill that commandment, must donate part of one's own heart to this cause.

For too many people, material wealth is really the heart of life and one does not part with it easily or joyfully. Though society generally disrespects and even abhors stinginess and miserly behavior in others, truth be said, within all of us lies the seeds of such behavior. Instinctively, humans want to retain what they think they already have, and they want to possess more of the world than they currently own or control.

We come into this world with clenched fists ready to grab everything that we can. Only at the very end, are our fists open, and our fingers fully extended to indicate that we really possess nothing of this physical world in which we have devoted so much of our time and efforts.

There are many reasons advanced as to why the building of the Tabernacle should occupy such an important part in the biblical narrative of the Torah. One such idea is that the inherent difficulty to give away what one has personally achieved is of such a nature that the Torah recorded for us the building of the Tabernacle in a long, detailed fashion. It is as though the Torah is emphasizing to us the difficulty involved in having to donate towards the construction of even the most glorious and noble of causes.

And, if it is difficult, as it certainly is, to give of one's own wealth towards a charitable cause, it is even more difficult to ask others to do so. The Talmud told us that the one that causes charitable causes to be financed and advanced by others through their donations, is greater even than the donor. We are all reluctant to ask others to part with their wealth no matter how noble the cause that we are representing. Therefore, the Torah reading of this week really speaks to us and to our continuing challenges as individuals and as a society.

Shabbat shalom

Rabbi Berel Wein

The Home We Build Together (Terumah 5781)

Rabbi Sacks zt"l had prepared a full year of Covenant & Conversation for 5781, based on his book Lessons in Leadership. The Office of Rabbi Sacks will continue to distribute these weekly essays, so that people all around the world can keep on learning and finding inspiration in his Torah.

The sequence of parashot that begins with Terumah, and continues Tetzaveh, Ki Tissa, Vayakhel and Pekudei, is puzzling in many ways. First, it outlines the construction of the Tabernacle (Mishkan), the portable House of Worship the Israelites built and carried with them through the desert, in exhaustive and exhausting detail. The narrative takes almost the whole of the last third of the book of Exodus. Why so long? Why such detail? The Tabernacle was, after all, only a temporary home for the Divine Presence, eventually superseded by the Temple in Jerusalem.

Besides which, why is the making of the Mishkan in the book of Exodus at all? Its natural place seems to be in the book of Vayikra, which is overwhelmingly devoted to an account of the service of the Mishkan and the sacrifices that were offered there. The book of Exodus, by contrast, could be subtitled, “the birth of a nation”. It is about the transition of the Israelites from a family to a people and their journey from slavery to freedom. It rises to a climax with the covenant made between God and the people at Mount Sinai. What has the Tabernacle to do with this? It seems an odd way to end the book.

The answer, it seems to me, is profound. First, recall the history of the Israelites until now. It has been a long series of complaints. They complained when the first intervention by Moses made their situation worse. Then, at the Red Sea, they said to Moses: “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn’t we say to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians’? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!” (Ex. 14:11-12).

After crossing the sea they continued to complain, first about the lack of water, then that the water was bitter, then at the lack of food, then again about the lack of water. Then, within weeks of the revelation at Sinai – the only time in history God appeared to an entire nation – they made a Golden Calf. If an unprecedented sequence of miracles cannot bring about a mature response on the part of the people, what will?

It is then that God said: Let them build something together. This simple command transformed the Israelites. During the whole construction of the Tabernacle there were no complaints. The entire people contributed – some gold, silver, or bronze, some brought skins and drapes, others gave their time and skill. They gave so much that Moses had to order them to stop. A remarkable proposition is being framed here: It is not what God does for us that transforms us. It is what we do for God.

So long as every crisis was dealt with by Moses and miracles, the Israelites remained in a state of dependency. Their default response was to complain. In order for them to reach adulthood and responsibility, there had to be a transition from passive recipients of God’s blessings to active creators. The people had to become God’s “partners in the work of creation” (Shabbat 10a). That, I believe, is what the Sages meant when they said, “Call them not ‘your children’ but ‘your builders’” (Brachot 64a). People have to become builders if they are to grow from childhood to adulthood.

Judaism is God’s call to responsibility. He does not want us to rely on miracles. He does not want us to be dependent on others. He wants us to become His partners, recognising that what we have, we have from Him, but what we make of what we have is up to us, our choices and our effort. This is not an easy balance to achieve. It is easy to live a life of dependency. It is equally easy in the opposite direction to slip into the mistake of saying “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me” (Deut. 8:17). The Jewish view of the human condition is that everything we achieve is due to our own efforts, but equally and essentially the result of God’s blessing.

The building of the Tabernacle was the first great project the Israelites undertook together. It involved their generosity and skill. It gave them the chance to give back to God a little of what He had given them. It conferred on them the dignity of labour and creative endeavour. It brought to closure their birth as a nation and it symbolised the challenge of the future. The society they were summoned to create in the land of Israel would be one in which everyone would play their part. It was to become – in the phrase I have used as the title of one of my books – “the home we build together.”[1]

From this we see that one of the greatest challenges of leadership is to give people the chance to give, to contribute, to participate. That requires self-restraint, *tzimtzum*, on the part of the leader, creating the space for others to lead. As the saying goes: A leader is best when people barely need to acknowledge him. When his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: ‘we did it ourselves.’[2]

This brings us to the fundamental distinction in politics between State and Society. The state represents what is done for us by the machinery

of government, through the instrumentality of laws, courts, taxation and public spending. Society is what we do for one another through communities, voluntary associations, charities and welfare organisations. Judaism, I believe, has a marked preference for society rather than state, precisely because it recognises – and this is the central theme of the book of Exodus – that it is what we do for others, not what others or God does for us, that transforms us. The Jewish formula, I believe, is: small state, big society.

The person who had the deepest insight into the nature of democratic society was Alexis de Tocqueville. Visiting America in the 1830s, he saw that its strength lay in what he called the “art of association”, the tendency of Americans to come together in communities and voluntary groups to help one another, rather than leaving the task to a centralised government. Were it ever to be otherwise, were individuals to depend wholly on the state, then democratic freedom would be at risk.

In one of the most haunting passages of his masterwork, *Democracy in America*, he says that democracies are at risk of a completely new form of oppression for which there is no precedent in the past. It will happen, he says, when people exist solely in and for themselves, leaving the pursuit of the common good to the government. This would then be what life would be like:

Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood: it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labours, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness; it provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances: what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living?[3]

Tocqueville wrote these words almost 200 years ago, and there is a risk that this is happening to some European societies today: all state, no society; all government, little or no community.[4] Tocqueville was not a religious writer. He makes no reference to the Hebrew Bible. But the fear he has is precisely what the book of Exodus documents. When a central power – even when this is God Himself – does everything on behalf of the people, they remain in a state of arrested development. They complain instead of acting. They give way easily to despair. When the leader, in this case Moses, is missing, they do foolish things, none more so than making a Golden Calf.

There is only one solution: to make the people co-architects of their own destiny, to get them to build something together, to shape them into a team and show them that they are not helpless, that they are responsible and capable of collaborative action. Genesis begins with God creating the universe as a home for human beings. Exodus ends with human beings creating the Mishkan, as a ‘home’ for God.

Hence the basic principle of Judaism, that we are called on to become co-creators with God. And hence, too, the corollary: that leaders do not do the work on behalf of the people. They teach people how to do the work themselves.

It is not what God does for us but what we do for God that allows us to reach dignity and responsibility.

[1] Jonathan Sacks, *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2009).

[2] Attributed to Lao-Tsu.

[3] Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, abridged and with an introduction by Thomas Bender (The Modern Library, New York, 1981), 584.

[4] This is not to imply that there is no role for governments; that all should be left to voluntary associations. Far from it. There are things – from the rule of law to the defence of the realm to the enforcement of ethical standards and the creation of an equitable distribution of the goods necessary for a dignified existence – that only governments can achieve. The issue is balance.

Shabbat Shalom: Terumah (Exodus 25:1- 27:19)

By Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel — “They shall make an ark of acacia trees. Overlay it with pure gold— outside and inside—and you shall make upon it a gold crown all around. Cast for it four gold rings and place them on its four corners, two rings on one side and two rings on the other. Into these rings you must insert the [two] poles of acacia trees which you are to overlay with gold, and with which you are to carry the ark. The staves shall remain in the rings of the ark; they may not be removed from it. You shall place into the ark the Testimonial Tablets which I will give you” (Ex. 25:10-16)

The first of the Sanctuary’s accoutrements is the Ark of the Covenant, into which the Tablets of the Ten Commandments are to be deposited. These Tablets are the written record of the Revelation at Sinai, under whose rubric God transmitted the 613 Commandments of the Torah.

Herein lay the Constitution of this newly formed nation, the message by which a holy nation was to be fashioned and the mission with which blessing was to be brought to all the families on earth. Hence, the production of this ark must contain many symbolic and instructive teachings; its very architecture is therefore divinely commanded.

The wood of the sacred ark came from acacia trees (atzei shittim), a rare type of tree which grows even in a desert wilderness; it is therefore an early forerunner of the freshness and vitality of the cedars of Lebanon which, in the days of our redemptive Messiah, will spread its force throughout Israel and transform arid deserts into fountains of water: “I will open up streams on the bare hills and fountains amid the valleys; I will turn the desert into ponds, the arid land into springs of water. I will plant cedars in the desert, acacia and myrtle and the oil tree... that people may see and know, consider and comprehend, that the Lord’s hand has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it” (Isa. 41:18-20).

The fact that the Sacred Ark, receptacle for the Torah, the Tablets of Testimony, was fashioned from the acacia tree emphasizes the fact that the Revelation was given to Israel not in the Land of Israel, not from Mount Moriah, but rather from the open-spaced no-man’s land of the Sinai desert wilderness. This, our Sages teach us, is because “had the Torah been given in the Land of Israel, the Israelites could have demanded it only for themselves, arguing that the nations of the world have no share in it; now, anyone who wishes to accept it, may come and accept it” (Mekhilta de R. Yishmael, BaHodesh 1, Lauterbach ed. p. 198).

Moreover, many botanists and researchers claim that the miraculous “burning bush” seen by Moses at the very beginning of his ministry was actually a semi-parasitic plant which covers acacia trees, the *Loranthus acaciae*, whose fire-red blossoms seemed to Moses to be a fiery flame which was burning, but which did not consume the tree it surrounded (Tree and Shrub in our Biblical Heritage, Nogah Hareuveni, p. 39).

The message and mission of the wood from the acacia tree is indubitably clear; God entrusted us, inflamed us, with His “fiery law of love” (esh dat) to become a holy nation of priest-teachers to humanity, to transform the wilderness wasteland of a corrupt world into a blooming Garden of Eden of fruits and flowers, piety and productivity, during the Time of Redemption.

The rest of the symbolism of our Sacred Ark is easy to interpret. The wooden ark was placed within a larger, outer box made of pure gold, and it itself enclosed a smaller, inner box of pure gold so that the wooden ark which encased the Tablet of Testimony was formed from the outside as well as from the inside with pure gold. Gold symbolizes eternity—it never decays; it is critical that the golden preciousness of God’s Torah must be expressed to the outside in human words and deeds and must emanate from an inner purity of heart, soul and mind.

The essential, central ark was made of wood, as we have seen, because a tree, unlike sterile gold, grows, develops branches, and often gives forth new fruit. Two staves, likewise made of wood, were inserted into gold rings on the sides of the ark, so that the ark—the Torah— would move, progress and travel along with the People of Israel.

Ours must be a living Torah. Our Torah must be found wherever human beings happen to be. Remember that in the Messianic Age the Gentiles

will accept at least the ethical laws of our Torah (Micah 4). Our eternal Torah must respond with commanding vision to every new era, to every fresh possibility. Our Torah must apply eternal truths to changing conditions, maintaining deep roots which dig deeply into the depths of ancient nutrients but equipped with the necessary wings to fly into hitherto uncharted heights; it must bring us close to the One who revealed His Will in the wilderness and endowed us with the wisdom and wherewithal to perfect his world. Herein lies the secret of the cherubs, in human form with wings poised heavenwards, ultimate guardians of an eternal people with an eternal Torah. “They shall make for Me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell in their midst,” in My Sanctuary, which must transform the world into a house of communion and communication with Me for all the nations of the world.
Shabbat Shalom!

RAV AVINER

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:

Heavenly Mate

Q: Is it true that there are 7 soulmates for each and every individual and that based on

one's spiritual level the most appropriate is the designated spouse?

A: No.

Studying English

Q: Studying English in high school is a complete waste of my time. What should I do?

A: 1. Switch to a high school without English studies on the curriculum.
2. If that's not a viable option, change your attitude and invest serious effort. Life is full of challenges. By overcoming obstacles we reinforce positive character traits such as courage.

Forgiveness

Q: How should I react after someone insulted me? Should I discuss the matter with him or should I forget about it completely?

A: Sincere forgiveness is best but only on condition that you won't hold a dormant grudge. If the matter lingers on in your heart, you should tactfully speak to him.

Medication Containing Non-Kosher Ingredient

Q: Is it permissible to administer a medication that contains enzymes derived from the pancreas of a pig to a patient whose life is not endangered?

A: Yes. The medication underwent a process that transformed its nature. It's not consumed as a food.

Disrespectful student

Q: How should an educator contend with an extremely audacious and disrespectful student?

A: Initiate a heart-to-heart discussion and encourage him to disclose his troubles and concerns.

Duplicating Discs

Q: Is it permissible to duplicate computer discs?

A: No. The artist or musician invests time and money, therefore only after permission is granted may one duplicate the disc. Otherwise it's theft.

Sleeping in Shelter

Q: We live in the South. Should the parents or the children sleep in the shelter?

A: The children, because they are more vulnerable.

Power of an Individual

Q: Given the fact that I am a single individual, how much influence can I possibly have on the world?

A: There's no limit to the tremendous influence on the world of the seemingly unimportant, single individual. The effort one invests counts far more than the outcome, as we learn in the book *Nefesh Ha-Chaim*, as well as in the *Pirkei Avot* chapter 5 at the end of the last Mishnah.

Jewelry during Pregnancy

Q: Is it true that during pregnancy a woman should refrain from wearing gold jewelry, for example, a gold ring?

A: No.

Difficult Challenges

Q: When I'm in Yeshiva everything runs smoothly but when I'm at home I can't deal with the difficult challenges!

A: You have the wherewithal to emulate the righteous Yosef Ha-Tzadik, who courageously overcame extremely difficult challenges during his entire time in Egypt, when he was surrounded by immorality!

Terumah 5781

Rabbi Nachman Kahana Coming Attractions

Parashat Terumah relates the details of the construction of the Mishkan, the precursor of the three Bet Hamikdashim in Yerushalayim. It served for 39 years in the desert, another 14 in Gilgal, 369 in the town of Shiloh, and in Nov and Givon for 57 years. The minute details of the Mishkan served as “coming attractions” of the three Batei Mikdash in Yerushalayim, built by King Shlomo, Ezra the Scribe and Hordus (Herod), and the future Bet HaMikdash which will, b'ezrat Hashem, be built in our time.

Megillat Esther: Coming Attractions of Miracles in The Final Days

The Talmud (Yuma 29a) states:

Esther is likened to the dawn. That just as dawn signals the end of night, so too does Esther signal the end of miracles.

The statement that “Esther signals the end of miracles”, is questioned in view of the great miracles which occurred later at the time of Chanukah. And the Gemara explains that Chanukah with its military victories and the episode of the candles was indeed a huge miracle, but the meaning of Esther as “the end of miracles” is that the Book of Esther is the twenty fourth and last of “miracle books” to be included in the Bible, while the Book of the Maccabees was not included.

The Gemara (Megillah 14a) explains that the Jewish people had prophets who numbered twice the number of men who left Egypt; but only those prophecies which would have relevance in the future were included in the Bible. From here we learn that the story of Esther, which is included in the Bible, will hold relevance for the Jewish people throughout our future history. Much like a cinema that shows “coming attractions,” Megillat Esther serves as “coming attractions” for the final days when HaShem will perform the final miracles in the redemption process of the Jewish people.

On Purim, we dust off its cyclical resha'im (villains) – Achashverosh, Haman and Mrs. Haman – and realize again how formidable these enemies were and how great was HaShem's intervention in our salvation.

Let's step out of the simple facts of the near tragedy and analyze who these people were and what they stood for.

There are three cardinal sins for which HaShem has limited patience: murder (shefichat damim), idolatry (avoda zara) and sexual immorality (gi'lui arayot). Each of the Megillah's anti-heroes suffered from all of these flaws, but each one “distinguished” him (or her) self by accentuating one of them.

Haman stood for idolatry (avoda zara) as we know from the Gemara (Megillah 10b). He presented himself as a component of avoda zara, which explains Mordechai's adamant refusal to bow before him.

Haman's wife was the “Madame DeFarge” of the episode (shefichat damim). It was she who proposed the construction of gallows 50-amot high from which Mordechai was to be hung.

His Royal Highness, Achashverosh, King of Persia and Media, was hopelessly licentious (gilui arayot).

But all three lived their daily lives without too much “interference” from HaShem, who gives resha'im (evil people) enough rope to hang themselves.

Had Achashverosh, Haman, and his wife continued with their private, polluted and depraved ways, they would have finished their evil lives enjoying in this world their reward for the few good things even and evil person does. What brought them all to their final damnation was their intended onslaught against the Jewish Nation.

Pesach, too, is the “coming attraction” of the eventual destruction of Egypt for its intentions to destroy Am Yisrael, as we will see. HaShem sent the prophet Amos to declare a reckoning with the evil nations in the

regions bordering Eretz Yisrael, as stated in chapters 1 and 2 of his prophecies:

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Damascus (Syria), even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth...

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Gaza, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she took captive whole (Jewish) communities and sold them to Edom, I will send fire upon the walls of Gaza that will consume her fortresses...

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Tyre (Lebanon), even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she sold whole (Jewish) communities of captives to Edom, disregarding a treaty of brotherhood, I will send fire upon the walls of Tyre that will consume her fortresses.

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Edom (Europe), even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because he pursued his brother (Ya'akov) with a sword, stifling all compassion...

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Ammon (Jordan), even for four, I will not turn back {my wrath}. Because he ripped open the pregnant (Jewish) women of Gilead in order to extend his borders.

Amos informs the nations of the region that for three of their sins they have until now gone unpunished, because HaShem is compassionate and waits for man's teshuva (repentance). But for the fourth sin which is common to all, their cruelty and callousness towards the Jewish Nation, HaShem will not be silent and will bring upon each nation their deserved retribution.

The Malbim, in his commentary on Amos, identifies the three unnamed sins in the verses referring to Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom and Ammon, for which these nations were as yet untouched by HaShem's quality of justice. The Malbim states that they were the three cardinal sins of murder (shefichat damim), idolatry (avoda zara) and sexual immorality (gi'lui arayot), with the immediate cause of the total annihilation of these peoples and their cultures being their cruelty to Am Yisrael.

In the not-far-off future, a man endowed with the spirit of HaShem could justifiably stand on the Temple Mount and address the nations of the world, as did Amos, saying:

“This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of the world, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.”

Meaning:

The nations of Europe – including Portugal, Spain, England, France, Germany, Poland, Ukraine and Russia, etc., have “excelled” in the sin of murder.

The peoples of the East – including the Buddhists, Hindus, Shintos and atheistic China – have excelled in the sin of idolatry.

The nations of North America – primarily the United States – have excelled in the sin of sexual immorality, with every breach in the walls of modesty beginning in Hollywood and endorsed by millions of moviegoers in the States, and then spread to the rest of the world.

Let us not forget Islam, the master of all the sins, with the added perverted twist that they perform all three sins in the name of their god!

HaShem patiently looked aside and permitted the evil in the world to exist unabated, as He did with the evil peoples of Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom and Moav; until they turned their evil machinations on the Jewish nation. At that time, HaShem descended from His throne of mercy to ascend His throne of justice.

We, Am Yisrael, the chosen of Hashem, would do well to prepare ourselves for a global onslaught of anti-Semitism. It will be like a growing tidal wave of irrational hatred toward one of the smallest nations in the world. The wave will include even the nations we believe today to be our friends and allies, who will callously and brutally betray us.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 97b) warns us:

The Holy One, blessed be He, will appoint a king (general term for a leader) whose decrees will be as harsh (towards the Jewish people) as those of Haman, and this will arouse the Jewish people to do teshuva and return to the desired way.

This Purim when listening to the Megillah, recall that the episode occurred in Persia, modern-day Iran. At that time, Haman paid

Achashverosh ten thousand shekels for the privilege of annihilating the Jewish nation. Today, the Iranian-Persians are utilizing ten thousand centrifuges to enrich uranium for that same purpose. As for Pesach being a “coming attraction”, the prophet Yechezkel (32:17) states that in the future the main enemy of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael will be Egypt. And they will be the first of the nations to come against us militarily (see Malbim on this verse). Egypt today has the largest military in the Middle East, and a very large population of extreme Islamists.

But as then when the Jewish people had no one to turn to except HaShem and our own military strength, so too today our salvation will come about by returning to HaShem and through the holy soldiers of Tzahal. The “coming attractions” are very quickly becoming the real scenes of our lives, in which we are no longer passive spectators, but rather the stars in the final production of history.

And just as the episode of the Megillah ended with the return of many Jews, led by Ezra the Scribe, to Eretz Yisrael and the rebuilding of the Bet HaMikdash, so too will this episode in contemporary Jewish history cause the return to Eretz Yisrael of those who are faithful to the call of HaShem; and we will merit to rebuild the Bet Hamikdash on Har HaBayit.

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Parshat Terumah and Purim

Throw Away Your Mask!

“You shall place in the Ark the Testimonial-tablets that I shall give you.” (25:16)

The holiday of Purim is about throwing away your mask.

There is an ancient custom for us to wear masks on Purim. Queen Esther masked her Jewishness. Her husband, King Achashverosh, did not know that she was Jewish. But at the crucial moment, when the Jewish People were threatened by Haman's genocide, she removed her mask and counted herself as a Jew. By doing this, she saved the Jews of Persia and everywhere from annihilation. By being proud of her Jewishness, she saved her nation.

Do not think that our enemies will be persuaded that we are good by listing the vast contributions that Jews have made to civilization. The hatred of the anti-Semite is illogical, and something that defies logic cannot be reasoned with. The Jew-hater hates us because we are “the filthy rich and the filthy poor, the bastions of the bourgeoisie and rootless cosmopolitans, the communist and the capitalist. The only thing that the Jew-haters of the world can agree upon is their hate.

We will never ingratiate ourselves among the nations by aping them. Never was the cause of assimilation stronger than at the turn of the nineteenth century in Germany. The more the Jew pushes to be like everyone else, the more everyone else will turn around and remind us that we are different — sometimes with murderous results.

Do not expect the love of the Nations of the world – but we will earn their respect by being what we are supposed to be. The Midrash says that when Hashem was giving us the Torah, everything stopped. Everything was silent. The nations of the world, fearing another giant flood, sent for Bilaam, their prophet, to ask him what was happening. Bilaam replied with the words of Psalm 29, that Hashem was not bringing a flood or destruction, but “Hashem was giving “Oz” — the Torah — to His People. To which the Nations replied, “May Hashem bless His people with peace.”

When we, as proud Jews, throw away our masks and sanctify the name of the Torah, the whole world will proclaim, “May Hashem bless His people with peace.”

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Terumah: Happy and Proud of its Many Colors
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

It is an animal. But then again, some say it is a colored dye. Many translate it as a dolphin, whereas some render it “blue-processed skins.” Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan in his *The Living Torah* offers this footnote to “clarify” the matter. Always one to do his “homework” thoroughly, Rabbi Kaplan offers us this dazzling variety of definitions of the term tachash, which is listed among the materials necessary for the construction of the Tabernacle near the very beginning of this week's Torah portion, *Terumah* (Exodus 25:1-27:19):

“Blue-processed skins—others have ‘black leather;’ that is, leather worked in such a manner as to come out dark and waterproof. Other sources identify tachash as a species of animal. Some say that it is the ermine, a member of the weasel family. Others state that it is a member of the badger family... Others say that it is a colorful one-horned animal known as a keresh. Some say that this is a species of wild ram, possibly an antelope, okapi, or giraffe. Some see the one-horned creature as the narwhal, which has its left tooth developed into a single long horn-like appendage. This animal, which can grow to be over 16 feet long, is occasionally found on the southern Sinai shores... In Arabic, tukhush denotes the sea cow or dugong, an aquatic mammal which is found on the shores of the Sinai. Some say that the tachash is a type of seal, since its skins were used for the Tabernacle's roof, and seal skins are often used for this purpose.”

Suffice it to say that whatever the true identity of the tachash, it was such a multifaceted creature or object that it couldn't be definitively identified by anyone who hadn't actually seen it.

As usual, I find Rashi's definition most reasonable. Here's Rashi on the verse in Exodus 25:5 where we first encounter the tachash:

“It was a type of wild animal which only existed for that moment in history. It had many different colors and is, therefore, translated by Targum Onkelos as *sasgona*, a composite of the Hebrew phrase ‘she'sass u'mitpaer b'gavanim shelo,’ ‘which is happy and proud of its many colors.’”

In short, it is a multifaceted creature which rejoices in the range and diversity of its many colors.

Rashi's definition, with which I've been familiar since my early elementary school years, began to take on a special significance for me as I grew older. I came to know many teachers who were, in a sense, monochromatic. That is, they seem to have only one color to them. The color was often of a strikingly beautiful hue. But it was only one color, something I found limiting.

Sometimes, in Judaic classes, the “color” was scholarly expertise in specific tractates of the Talmud, with ignorance of, or deliberate neglect of, other tractates. Sometimes, in general studies classes, it was an obsession with math and experimental science, often accompanied by scorn for poetry, music, and art.

Eventually, I was fortunate to be blessed with educators who were more colorful and were able to draw from a wider scope of sources and areas of human experience.

I recall my seventh-grade general studies teacher, Mr. Zeller, who taught us math through baseball statistics and evoked in us an interest in fine literature by reading us tales from William Saroyan's “My Name is Aram.” He even helped us draw parallels between our secular studies and our religious curriculum.

It was not until college that I was introduced to the writings of the great British philosopher, who had an impressive Jewish yichus, Isaiah Berlin. He wrote a precious little book entitled *The Hedgehog and the Fox*. The title is drawn from a proverb of the ancient Greek poet, Archilochus, “A fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.” The hedgehog has one means of defense, his quills. The fox, on the other hand, has countless ways to outsmart his pursuers.

Isaiah Berlin expands this distinction to writers and thinkers. He contrasts those whose work focuses upon one single defining idea versus those who draw on a wide variety of areas of knowledge and life experiences. He includes Plato and Dostoyevsky in the former category

and Aristotle and Shakespeare in the latter. Note that he makes no claim that either of these writers and thinkers is superior to the other.

Throughout my life, I have encountered many great leaders of the Jewish community. Some have been "hedgehogs," and others have been "foxes." I have also found that many of my friends are attracted to, and prefer to identify with, those who "know one big thing."

My own tendency is inclined toward those "who know many things." Some might call me a fan of the "foxes", but I prefer to be considered a fan of the tachash.

During this past year, the year of the pandemic, we have suffered the loss of many great men and women who have "known one big thing," known it well, and taught it well. We have also suffered the loss of other men and women who have "known many things," known them well, and taught them well.

Not quite two weeks ago, we lost a man who was more than a mentor to me and more than a dear friend. I speak of Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, zecher tzaddik l'vracha, a "fox" in the best sense of the metaphor.

Named for ancestors who were called Avraham Yehoshua, and known informally as Reb Shia, he was a chasid in every sense of that often misused term. He was pious, devout, and meticulously observant of every ritual and every minor custom. He was a chasid in his dress, on the Sabbath and festivals and on every day of the week. He knew Hasidic tales and knew how to tell stories in an inimitable fashion and in a manner designed to reach the hearts and souls of every audience he addressed.

He knew well, better than almost everyone I have known, the "one big thing" that is Hasidism, Chasidus.

But he knew so many other things. He attended medical school and received tuition assistance from the famed non-Jewish comedian Danny Thomas. He was trained as a psychiatrist and went on to become a world-renowned expert in the fields of alcoholism and addictive behaviors. He founded one of the most prestigious centers in the world for the treatment of alcoholism. He worked closely with nuns and archbishops of the Roman Catholic faith.

His interests were far more colorful, to use the tachash analogy, than his faith and profession, although they too had plenty of "color" to them. He was an avid fan of the famous Peanuts cartoons and appreciated far more than their humor. He perceived their profound wisdom and eventually collaborated with the cartoonist himself, Charles Shultz.

He was the author of more than sixty books, and although he maintained that they were really all about "one big thing," namely self-esteem, I insist that they were about "many big things." I urge the readers of this column to sample but several of his works, and I am certain that you will agree with me.

There are many other "big things" that I could enumerate: his generosity, his openness, his authenticity, his friendliness, his ability to get along with his adversaries and often convert them to his side, and, perhaps above all else, his courage to confront the issues of abuse in the Jewish community.

I close my remarks with one other "big thing," his soulful musical compositions. How appropriate it was to have been escorted to his final resting place with a song he composed, Hoshea et Amecha.

How apt is that tune as an antidote for our ubiquitous despondency!

How apt are its words: "Deliver Your people, and bless Your heritage. Tend to them and uplift them, forever."

And how well do the words for the tachash describe the persona of Rabbi Dr. Twerski: "Happy, and proud of his many colors"!

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Rabbi Buchwald's Weekly Torah Message - Terumah 5781-2021

"The Mishkan and the Sanctity of the Jewish Home"

(updated and revised from Terumah 5763-2003)

Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald

With this week's parasha, we begin a series of five weekly Torah portions that deal with the building of the מִשְׁכָּן —Mishkan, the Tabernacle—the portable sanctuary that the Jews erected and utilized in the wilderness.

Parashiot Terumah, Tetzaveh, a part of Kee Tisah, as well as parshiot Vayakhel and Pekudei, describe the processes of the design and the building of the Mishkan. These portions recount in minute detail all the materials utilized in the construction of the Mishkan: the acacia wood, rams' skin dyed red, cherubs, and more. There's even a reference to the skins of animals called תְּחָשִׁים —T'chashim, which is translated in some texts as seal skins. It is, obviously, highly unlikely that there were any seals in the wilderness, but, with so miracles happening, one can never be certain!

These parshiot also refer extensively to measurements: a cubit, a cubit and a half, two cubits, two and a half cubits. In essence, while these Torah portions may be an architect's dream, they are truly a rabbi's nightmare!

Notwithstanding, all the seemingly vexing detail of the Tabernacle, the Torah is never, ever irrelevant. To the contrary, with proper explication, the Torah always ultimately proves itself to be highly relevant and, at times, quite ahead of its time. Part of the challenge of studying these Torah portions is to uncover the inner meanings, and often the inner magic, that is to be found in each of the Tabernacle's furnishings, as well as in each of the extensive descriptions.

In this week's parasha, parashat Terumah, G-d instructs the Israelites to donate various precious materials to the national building effort—gold, silver, purple thread, red thread, various animal skins and precious stones, all to be utilized in the construction of the Tabernacle.

In Exodus 25:8 the Bible records G-d's command, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ, וְאֶדְוֶנּוּ בְּתוֹכְכֶם, "And you [Israel] shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst." Interestingly, the Al-mighty does not instruct the people to build a sanctuary to dwell in the sanctuary. After all, an Omnipresent G-d, cannot be confined to a sanctuary. Rather the verse is affirming, that if the Jewish people build a sanctuary for G-d, He will dwell "in their midst"—among the people of Israel.

Clearly, the obvious and ultimate purpose of the Tabernacle is to help the Jewish people focus on G-d. That place of focus may be a miniature Temple, such as a local synagogue, or even a location somewhere in the wilderness. Obviously, the portable Tabernacle, and, of course, the permanent Temple that was later erected in Jerusalem, are significant locations in which, and upon which, Jews are to focus.

The Torah, in another of its revolutionary statements, introduces to the world the idea of קֹדֶשׁ, —sacred or holy. The Torah affirms that there can be sacred time, sacred space, and that human beings themselves are considered sacred.

The idea of "sacred" is a truly revolutionary idea of unfathomable proportion, but its grandeur is often unappreciated. Contemporary society, in fact, has abandoned much of the idea that human beings are intended to be sacred beings, and, as that appreciation is lost, the humanity of our society is significantly and progressively diminished. Furthermore, nowhere is that sense of sanctity more necessary than in the Jewish home.

Therefore, a major function of the ancient Tabernacle was to serve as a מִקְדָּשׁ —Mikdash, a sanctuary. The fact that the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, and its central furnishings so closely resemble the Jewish home, is intended to underscore the sanctity of the Jewish domicile. By analyzing each of the Tabernacle's furnishings, we may uncover the vital symbolic meanings that are being communicated.

In the front and larger portion of the inner sanctuary known as the קֹדֶשׁ —Kodesh or "holy" section, are to be found three most significant furnishings: the Menorah (the candelabra), the Table of Showbread, and the Golden Altar. According to rabbinic interpretation, the menorah, which is a seven-branched candelabra, represents the seven streams of wisdom, sciences, philosophy, literature, language and all other wisdom, with the central branch of the Menorah representing the flame of Torah. The menorah is designed so that all the wicks of the three left branches and the three right branches face toward the center. This underscores the idea that all of human wisdom and understanding emanate from the central branch, from the Torah.

Every home has a table. The table in the Tabernacle is known as the שֻׁלְחָן הַלֶּחֶם הַפָּנִים, the Table of the Showbread. Every week, 12 fresh

showbreads, which were actually shaped like bent matzot and represent the 12 tribes, were baked, to replace the previous week's 12 loaves, which were eaten on Shabbat. These breads represent material endowment, the food that Jews have on their tables, and the people's general economic wherewithal. While the spiritual endowments of the home are reflected in the menorah, the material endowments are symbolized by the table.

In the forefront of the Kodesh section, stood the **זָבִיחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ**, the Golden Altar. Offered to G-d on this altar is the melding of the Jews' intellectual endowments (represented by the Menorah), and material endowments (represented by the Table of Showbread). The horns of the altar point upward to underscore that all our endowments are offered toward heaven.

The innermost chamber of the holy Tabernacle is known as **קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדֶשׁ**, the Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies only a single, most sacred, furnishing is found, the Holy Ark—known as the Aron. The Torah text, at great length, describes the details of the Ark. The ark itself, a rectangular-shaped box, contained the Torah, the five books of Moses, and the two stone tablets upon which were etched the Ten Commandments. The extensive detailed instructions concerning the building of the Ark underscore its prime centrality to Jewish life.

A fascinating feature of the Ark is that while it looks as though it is made of solid gold, it is really constructed of acacia wood. Gold, of course, is a most valuable substance, perhaps the purest precious metal found in nature. Unlike copper or silver, when gold is removed from the earth it contains no impurities. The Talmud tells us that the ark was actually constructed, not of metal, but of three concentric wooden boxes, each fitting into the next. The outermost and innermost boxes were covered with gold, while the middle box, is simply natural, unadorned acacia wood.

The rabbis suggest that despite gold's unparalleled purity and beauty, it is, after all, a mineral substance that does not grow. That is why the essential structure of the Ark must be constructed of wood—a live and growing material. Of course, those who hold onto the Torah, those who learn the Torah, must shine, like gold, but if the scholars can't grow, and don't grow, in their learning, then their value is effectively diminished.

This urgent need for growth is what the Kotzker Rebbe meant, when he was asked, "Who is higher on the ladder, the person on top, or the person on bottom?" He realized that the question was a set up, and responded very cleverly: "It depends in which direction they are going! If the person on the bottom is on his or her way up, and the person on top is on her or his way down, then theoretically, the person at the bottom, may very well be higher than the one on top."

This, then, is really what Jewish homes are meant to represent. At the very core of our homes must be Torah, the Ark, made purposely of modest wood, yet covered with beautiful gold. More important than the beauty of the gold is the desire and ability to grow.

The lesson of the Mishkan is that each of us must see the ultimate purpose in life to be the desire to strive upwards, to climb to a higher rung on the ladder. This is the ultimate secret of the Jewish home—sanctity and growth.

Please note: This coming Shabbat is known as Shabbat Zachor. It is the second of four special Shabbatot that surround the holiday of Purim. On this Shabbat, a thematic Torah portion is read from Deuteronomy 25:17-19 about remembering the vile nation, Amalek. Most authorities consider it a positive commandment for both men and women to hear this particular Torah reading.

May you be blessed.

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Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Dvar Torah Parshat Terumah

If you turn away from the needs of another person, you're turning away from the will of Hashem

If you turn away from the needs of another person, you're turning away from the will of God. This is an important message emerging from Parshat Terumah. The Torah introduces us to the concept of the keruvim, the cherubs, angelic-styled three-dimensional figures emerging

from the lid of the aron, the Holy Ark in the Sanctuary in the Wilderness. And the Torah tells us,

"Ufeneihem ish el achiv," – "Each one was facing the other,"

It was face to face contact. However, in the temple of Solomon as is described in the second book of Chronicles, Chapter 3, the Bible tells us, "Ufeneihem labayit," – the cherubs, the keruvim were both facing towards the inside of the Temple. They weren't facing each other. Why this difference?

The Gemara in Masechet Bava Batra 99a explains that within the Sanctuary in the Wilderness, it was a time when the people of Israel were mostly keeping to the will of God, and this is represented by the keruvim facing each other. However during the days of the reign of King Solomon in general the people were rebelling against the word of God, and this is represented by the keruvim not facing each other.

So what emerges for us is that it is the will of Hashem that we should turn our faces towards others: we should be filled with compassion, live altruistic existences, ask what we can do for those who are in need. In the event however that we don't face each other, that we turn our backs to each other, that is a time when we're rebelling against the word of Hashem.

In the yevarechecha prayer, the Priestly Blessing, our Cohanim say, "Yisa Hashem panav eilecha," – "May the Lord turn His face towards you. If you turn your face toward somebody, if you look that person in the eye, it means that you are relaxed in their presence, you've got nothing to hide, you feel comfortable with them and you are there for them in the way that you would expect them to be for you.

That is the blessing that the Cohanim give to us: that Hashem should look us in the eye, be comfortable with us, be proud of us and shower us with His blessings. Therefore, the keruvim in the wilderness represent a time when we face others, when we build our relationships with others, when we're concerned for them and always try to do whatever we can to assist. That is a time when we are performing the will of Hashem. In the event however that we turn our backs on other people, that is a sure sign that we are going against the will of our Creator.

Shabbat shalom.

Rabbi Mirvis is the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He was formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland.

Drasha Parshas Terumah - Support System

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya

The Aron Kodesh in the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, contained the most precious spiritual gift that was transmitted by Omnipotent to mortal – the two Luchos – the Tablets handed from Hashem to Moshe at Sinai. The receptacle had to be worthy of the insert. It therefore had to be intricately constructed with it symbolism as meticulously configured as its beautiful design. The Aron consisted of three contiguous boxes of gold, wood, and gold, each inserted in the other. It contained a golden crown bordering it's edge and a golden cover adorned with cherubim. These angelic figures faced each other, their wings spread, as they represented the profound love of a nation and their Creator.

But a seemingly insignificant item which was connected with the Aron holds perhaps the most symbolic of all the many peripheral adornments. The Torah tells us that the Aron was to be fitted with gold plated wooden staves. Then Moshe is told, "You shall insert the staves in the rings on the ark, with which to carry the ark" (Exodus 25:13). The Torah goes on to state: "The staves shall remain in the ark; they shall not be removed" (Exodus 25:14). The sages explain that the Torah is thus meting a prohibition for anyone to remove the staves that were used to carry the ark from place to place in the Jewish sojourn in the desert and beyond. What needs examination, however, is the phraseology of the command. When referring to the staves, instead of commanding, "You shall not remove them," the Torah is seemingly prophesizing, "they shall not be removed." Why didn't the Torah just command, "the staves shall remain in the ark; you shall not remove them"? By stating, "they shall not be removed" it seems that instead of talking to us – the Torah is talking to history. Can it be that the Torah is foreshadowing the relationship between the Holy Ark itself and the staves that carry it?

What important symbolism do the staves bear that intrinsically connects them with the Holy Ark they are meant to support? Can insignificant staves actually become part and parcel of the arks very essence?

During World War II many young Jewish children were harbored by a myriad of monasteries throughout Europe. At the end of the war, the Vaad Hatzalah sent representatives to the monasteries to try and reclaim the orphaned children to their heritage. Many of the children who found refuge did so at a young age and they had but a few recollections of their birthright.

When Rabbi Eliezer Silver, who was the Rabbi of Cincinnati, Ohio and a very influential member of the Vaad, came to a particular hermitage in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France, he was met with hostility. "You can be sure, Rabbi, if we had Jews here we would surely hand them back to you immediately!" exclaimed the monk in charge. "However, unfortunately for you, we have no Jewish children here."

Rabbi Silver was given a list of refugees and was told that they were all Germans. The monk continued, "the Schwartzs are German Schwartzs, the Schindlers are German Schindlers and the Schwimmers are German Schwimmers."

Rabbi Silver had been told that there were definitely close to ten Jewish children in that hermitage and was not convinced. He asked if he could say a few words to the children as they went to sleep. The monk agreed. Rabbi Silver returned later that evening with two aides, and as the children were lying in their beds about to go to sleep, they entered the large dorm room.

He walked into the room and in the sing-song that is so familiar to hundreds of thousands of Jewish children across the globe he began to sing "Shema Yisrael Ado..." unexpectedly — in mid sentence — he stopped. Suddenly from six beds in the room the ending to that most powerful verse resounded almost in unison. "Hashem Echad!"

He turned to the priest. "These are our children. We will take them now!"

The children were redeemed, placed in Jewish homes, and raised as leaders of our community.

Perhaps the Torah is make a powerful prophecy in addition to a powerful regulation. The Torah talks about the peripherals that help bear the burden of the Torah in a unique way. "In the rings of the ark the staves shall remain – they shall never leave!" Perhaps it is a prediction in addition to a charge.

The wooden staves that are adapted to carry the message of Torah, the tunes, the customs, and the small nuances, are much more than gold-plated sticks. They may not be as holy as the ark, but they will never leave its sides. They will be remembered long after the Aron has been captured. They will be cherished long after the golden ark has been buried. And it may very well be that when the cherished handles of those staves, jutting ever so slightly from the ground, are pulled from the mire, the entire Torah is eventually raised with them.

Good Shabbos

Dedicated in memory of our grandmother, Chai bat Samuel Libkind. This dedication is in conjunction with her Yartzeit, by her loving children and grandchildren, Vladimir, Zhanna, Alex & Miriam Libkind, and Sveta & Victor Svirnovsky.

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Rabbi M. Kamenetzky is the Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore.

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Terumah

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya

Mishkan Boards Trace Their Yichus to the Family Trees

The pasuk says "You shall make the beams of the Mishkan of shittim wood, standing erect" [Shemos 26:15]. Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded to make the boards of the Mishkan out of shittim wood. Rashi says that the wood used for the Mishkan came from special trees that Yaakov Avinu planted in Egypt. Just prior to his death, he commanded his children to remove these trees and take the wood with them when they left Egypt. He prophesized that the Holy One Blessed Be He would in the future command to make a Mishkan, and that the

wood from these trees he planted would become the boards for that Mishkan.

This Rashi is based on a Medrash in Sefer Bereshis, on a pasuk in Parshas Vayigash [Bereshis 46:1] On his way down to Egypt, Yaakov stopped in Beer Sheva. The Medrash says he went there to gather cedar wood that his grandfather Avraham had planted there many years earlier. This wood has a very long history. The Torah says that Avraham planted an Eishel in Beer Sheva [Bereshis 21:33]. He made his "hotel" there, and at that time he planted these trees. Yaakov, on his way to Mitzrayim, stopped in Beer Sheva and cut down those trees, taking them with him to Egypt, where he replanted them.

So, these trees from which the wood of the Mishkan was taken, come with a pedigree. Not only do they go back to Yaakov Avinu, they go all the way back to Avraham Avinu.

With this background, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky explains the above cited pasuk [Shemos 26:15]. What is the meaning of the term "Atzei Shittim Omdim"? The Gemara [Succah 45b] explains that Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded to use wood that would last forever. They would not burn or be destroyed. They would never be captured. They would never warp or rot. Moshe was told "You will need the type of trees that will stand forever (that would be "omed l'olam u'l'olmei olmaya").

Moshe wondered, "How am I supposed to do that? How am I supposed to build with boards that I know for sure will never be destroyed and never be captured? It depends. If Klal Yisrael will behave, then the Mishkan will last. If they misbehave, the Mishkan will meet the same fate that the Batei HaMikdash met!" It appears that Moshe was being given a Mission Impossible!

The answer is that Moshe was being told: Do not take just any trees. Take the trees that Yaakov planted, which he received from Avraham Avinu. Those trees will last forever and ever. Since those trees were originally planted and used for a matter of mitzvah, they were used for Kedusha, they will last forever and ever. Something that is made "al taharas haKodesh", which is built from the beginning with the most pure and pristine of intentions, exists forever and ever.

This explains the famous Gemara in Masseches Bava Metzia [85b] that Rav Chiya stated that he was going to ensure that "Torah will not be forgotten from Israel." This was a bold statement. The reason we are here today learning Torah is because Rav Chiyah made a statement that he was going to do something that would ensure the eternity Torah. What did he do? He taught young children Torah. He taught children the five Chumashim and the six orders of the Mishna and they taught it to others, and that is how Torah lasted.

But what guarantee did he have? Maybe the children or grandchildren or great grandchildren of these students he taught would not carry on the tradition! The Gemara explains that Rav Chiya did not merely sit down with these children, open up a Chumash and teach them. Rather, he planted flax from which he made nets with which he caught deer. He then skinned the deer and he made hides. On the hides he wrote the Chamisha Chumshei Torah. Now, why did he go through all that trouble? He was not merely satisfied with buying parchment and writing the Torah scrolls himself. That was not good enough! He planted the flax to make the nets to catch the deer to procure the hides. That was the guarantee that this Torah would last forever. His motives were pure from the get-go. When that type of intense Kedusha is invested in a person's efforts, the results last an eternity.

There is a famous saying from the Gaon of Vilna: If the wood used in the ax handle used to chop down trees used to build a Beis HaKeneses came from a tree planted by a Shomer Shabbos Jew, people would never recite a prayer without Kavannah (intense devotion) in that shul. This is exactly the same concept. If something is pure and holy and pristine and infused with kedusha from the very beginning, it lasts forever and ever.

This, says Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, was the message to Moshe to build the Mishkan from Atzei Shittim OMDIM (that stand forever). You need to obtain the type of wood that will last forever and ever. From where can he obtain such wood? It is very simple. Do not go to the lumber yard and buy wood. Get the trees that Yaakov Avinu planted in Egypt after

having first cut down the trees Avraham Avinu had planted by his Eishel in Be'er Sheva. Those trees, already used by Avraham to provide hospitality for wayfarers in his hotel, have been infused with kedusha from the beginning. They used those trees to build the Mishkan, and the fact is that the Mishkan was never destroyed. The First Beis HaMikdash was so much more glorious than the Mishkan, but it was built by non-Jews. Chiram, King of Tyre, contributed and sent workers. It was not pure, pristine, and unadulterated holiness. Certainly, the Beis HaMikdash had great Kedusha, but if you want to create something that will last forever, sanctity must be put into the structure from the very beginning.

That is why—this is not the custom here, but it is the custom in Yerushalayim and other places—when they take a child to Cheder for the first time to learn, they wrap him in a Tallis and bring him to the Cheder. Some Yerushalmi Jews go one step further, and they cover the child's eyes on the way to Cheder so that he should not see anything impure on the way to Cheder. Why? It is because you want that moment to be pristine, pure and holy. That can affect the child for the rest of his life.

Nothing Happens on Its Own

The pasuk "You shall make a Menorah of pure gold – miksha shall the Menorah be made" (Shemos 25:31) uses the passive language (tey'aseh – shall be made) rather than expressing the more common direct command (ta'aseh – make). Rashi comments on this: The Menorah was made on its own because Moshe had difficulty visualizing its appearance. The Menorah was so intricate with its flowers and cups and buds that Moshe could not figure out how to make it. Hashem finally told him to throw the ingot of gold into the fire, and it was miraculously made by itself. Moshe threw the gold into the fire and presto, out came the elaborate candelabra.

The Maharal in his Gur Aryeh asks a question on this Rashi from the Medrash Tanchuma. The truth is that the Medrash Tanchuma internally has the same problem. On the pasuk in Parshas Beha'aloscha "V'zeh ma'aseh ha'Menorah..." (This is the workmanship of the Menorah...) [Bamidbar 8:4] the Medrash notes that every time the word "zeh" (this) appears in Chumash, it indicates pointing with a finger. On the pasuk "Zeh K-eli v'Anveyhu" (This is my G-d and I will glorify him) [Shemos 15:2] Chazal say that a handmaiden at the Red Sea could see things that the great prophet Yechezkel himself could not see. They were able to point: This is my G-d.

Here too, the Medrash states, the use of the word "V'Zeh" by the Menorah indicates that HaKadosh Baruch Hu pointed out to Moshe the exact appearance of the Menorah. The Maharal points out that this Medrash in Bamidbar seems to contradict what Rashi says here in Parshas Teruma. Our Rashi says that Moshe could not figure it out and the Menorah emerged from the fire by itself. The Medrash Tanchuma seems to indicate differently – that Hashem clearly pointed out the appearance of the Menorah to Moshe, so Moshe would know how to make it himself. Perhaps then Moshe tried and still had difficulty so he finally threw the gold into the fire and a menorah came out. However, from Rashi it sounds like it was totally "presto". There was not even an initial attempt by Moshe to make it, as implied by the Medrash.

The Maharal explains that there was a process. Moshe Rabbeinu needed to look at the Menorah, study it, and try to understand its structure. Then he tried to make it. But it did not work. At that point, Hashem told him – "Okay, throw it into the fire," and the finished product emerged without further effort.

The Maharal says there is a big lesson here: Nothing happens on its own. Even when a task seems hopeless, the person must make an effort by himself. Once the person makes the effort, then the Ribono shel Olam can give Siyata d'Shmaya (Help from Heaven). But if a person sits back with folded hands and just waits for a miracle to happen – it is not going to happen!

Rabbi Hartman, in his commentary on the bottom of the Maharal, cites the pasuk "...And the L-rd your G-d will bless you in all that you do." (Devraim 15:18) and quotes the Sifrei: I might think (that the blessing

will come) even if the person sits and does nothing – therefore the Torah emphasizes: "All that you do." This means you need to make the effort.

The concept is the same when Moshe was commanded to count the Levi'im. Unlike the other tribes, Levites were counted from the time they were thirty days old. Moshe complained to the Ribono shel Olam: Do you want me to go into the tents of the nursing mothers with their new babies to count them? The Ribono shel Olam said, "No. Go to the door of the tent. Once you get there, I will tell you how many babies are inside."

Why did Moshe need to go to the doors of the tents? He could have sat by the Mishkan, and Hashem could have given him a figure and he would have the number! The answer is that a person needs to make the effort. Even though it may be Mission Impossible, but the person needs to make the effort.

If there is one lesson that we learn in bringing up our children, it is this. Sometimes we feel that it is an impossible effort. How can we do it? The answer is we need to put in the effort and then the Ribono shel Olam will bless us with Divine Assistance.

One Story: Two Lessons

While we are on the subject of educating our children, I will relate a story someone recently told me. He asked me not to use the name of the individual. I happen to know the individual, and it is a beautiful story.

There was a Jew who passed away in his nineties. This Yid was responsible for Yiddishkeit, and specifically Torah Yiddishkeit, in a small town somewhere in America. He was the "go to" person for all matters of Torah communal life in that town. He built the shul, the Day School, not only financially but administratively. He was the layman that took care of everything. Today this community is a flourishing Jewish community because of his efforts decades ago.

He was not originally from that town. He was originally from another town. He told his children what motivated him to become this "Askan" (community leader), assuming the responsibility with all that it implies to build Torah in a small community. He said it is something that happened at his Bar Mitzvah. This person died in his nineties. This means his Bar Mitzvah was over eighty years ago in a small town in America.

Eighty-plus years ago in a small town in America, a Bar Mitzvah consisted of the following: You were called up for Maftir, you read the Haftorah, and that was it! There was no leining the whole parsha, there was no 'pshtel' in Yiddish, there was no 'pshtel' in English, there was no "Bo Bayom" (special celebration on the exact calendar day of his 13th birthday). The expression "Bo Bayom" did not enter the dictionary until the 1990s! That was a Bar Mitzvah in small town America circa 1930.

This Bar Mitzvah boy received Maftir in shul that day. After davening, he overheard two of the congregants talking to one another. One said – "the Bar Mitzvah boy did a really good job." The other one said back – "Yeah, he did a really good job, but let's see whether he comes back for Mincha!"

In those days, you had a ceremony in the shul in the morning, but very few came back for Mincha in the afternoon. The first congregant said "He will come back for Mincha, because this boy is different!"

This Bar Mitzvah boy told his own children, decades later, that those words he heard that day "This boy is different" kept ringing in his ears his entire life. He always told himself "I am different! People expect more from me." It was these words that he heard when he was 13 years old which motivated him his entire life!

I happen to know the family – his siblings were not religious. This boy went off to Yeshiva, which was not a common practice in those days. Why did he do it? Because "this boy is different." He married a frum woman. Why? It was because "This boy is different!" He assumed the responsibility of building a community. Why? Because "This boy is different!"

Four words: THIS BOY IS DIFFERENT. They made a difference in a person's lifetime that changed a city. It changed a family. It changed generations. I know his children. I know his grandchildren. All Shomrei Torah u'Mitzvos. Bnei Torah.

The other lesson from this story goes back to the Jew in shul who made that comment. When he passed away and he went to Heaven, he was shown all the merits he accrued during his sojourn in the world below. This surely included the shul in this other fellow's town, and the school there, and all the people who were made from there. They will tell him: These are your zechusim (merits). He will say "What are you talking about?" I never stepped foot in that city! How can I get credit for those institutions? There must be a computer glitch here. You have the records mixed up!"

The Ribono shel Olam will tell him "I do not mix up records!" He will be told – it was the words you said at so and so's Bar Mitzvah "This Boy Is Different." They made all the difference in his life and in all that he accomplished.

These are the two important lessons of this story. (1) If a child knows he is different, it can make an impression and (2) saying even the smallest complement can change a person's life.

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Trumah: Lighting God's house

Ben-Tzion Spitz

Light is the first of painters. There is no object so foul that intense light will not make it beautiful. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Torah portion of Trumah deals primarily with the building components of the Tabernacle. It first lists all of the raw materials: gold, silver, copper, various colored yarns, linens, skins, and wood. It mentions precious stones, of which we receive a detailed listing later on. The portion also specifies all of the construction details, every article of the Tabernacle including the Ark, the Table of the Showbread, the Candelabrum, as well as the exact construction of the walls of the Tabernacle. Afterward, we get details of the ritual vestments of the Kohens, especially those of the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, who among other items wore the Breastplate embedded with twelve different precious stones.

Nestled in between these very concrete, architectural, and sartorial elements and descriptions are two notable and unusual exceptions.

The Torah also lists:

"Oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense."

The Bechor Shor on Exodus 25:6 wonders why these specific non-building or vestment components are itemized in the middle in what was otherwise a shopping list for the constructors and tailors. He further wonders, that if indeed the Torah felt the need to digress into some of the operations of the Tabernacle such as oil for lighting and anointing and spices for the incense, why then doesn't it also list the other operations such as baking bread or offering sacrifices?

The Bechor Shor answers that the anointing oil was required for anointing the Tabernacle implements and therefore could be considered part of the building process. The spices also required specialized artisans to prepare them and the ingredients needed to be specially itemized and assembled beforehand. However, that doesn't answer the need for "oil for lighting."

The Bechor Shor further elaborates that it is not the way of a king to enter his home before the place has been illuminated for him. It is not proper for a king to enter a darkened abode. Similarly, the spices are required so that the home should have a pleasant fragrance. It would be inappropriate for the king to enter a home that is dark and malodorous. Therefore, the oil and the spice, the light and incense are indeed building requirements. They are vital components for building the Tabernacle, to light it, and to perfume it.

May we ever be in bright and sweet-smelling abodes, and if not, make them so.

Dedication - To beautiful and gentle snowfall.

Shabbat Shalom

Ben-Tzion Spitz is a former Chief Rabbi of Uruguay. He is the author of three books of Biblical Fiction and over 600 articles and stories dealing with biblical themes.

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

Parashat Teruma 5781

Who Wants Imperfect Deeds?

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, Rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites

[The two Torah portions we are going to read over the next two Shabbatot – Teruma and Tetzaveh – describe the Divine instructions given for the construction of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle – the temporary temple that accompanied the Children of Israel in their wanderings until the permanent Temple was built in Jerusalem. These instructions were given in great detail. Instructions for every piece of the Mishkan and its ritual utensils were given with great precision. In a few weeks from now, we will read two portions – Vayakhel and Pekudei – that describe the actual building of the Mishkan and its utensils, again with great detail and precision.

Actually, the description of the building of the Mishkan and its utensils is spread out over about 400 verses, over ten times the description of Creation! In the Talmud, it says that the first description deals with the "First Mishkan" and the second deals with the "Second Mishkan." But that doesn't make sense since there was only one Mishkan!

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explained that what was being referred to was the gap between the plan and the implementation. The "First Mishkan" is the one that was planned, as it was in the idea stage. The "Second Mishkan" is the one that was realized. There will always be a gap between a plan and its implementation, and as an acknowledgement of this gap, the Torah repeats for us the exact directions for building the Mishkan.

This gap also explains the words of the Mishna in the Ethics of the Fathers:

Rabbi Shimon the son of Gamliel would say: By three things is the world sustained: law, truth and peace. (Ethics of the Fathers 1, 18)

At first glance, these seem like conflicting positions. Law and truth demand precision, while peace can only be realized through compromise and concession. How can one uphold both truth and peace, and then go so far as to claim that the world can only exist when both truth and peace exist?

Rabban Gamliel's intention was regarding the gap we are discussing between an idea and its implementation. The idea must be pure and truthful; the implementation will always have to involve compromise and concessions.

If so, perhaps G-d is disappointed with the implementation? Maybe imperfect human performance is unworthy in His eyes? How can we know this?

In the description of the actual building of the Mishkan, there is a constant repetition of the phrase, "as G-d commanded Moses." Were things actually done precisely? Was there no gap between the commandment and its fulfillment? Our sages discussed this in the Talmud (Tractate Bechorot, 17) and wondered: How was it possible to be completely precise with the measurements of the Mishkan and the altar if absolute precision is impossible? They answered this question and said that G-d does not demand the impossible of man. If G-d commanded something to be done, He took into account human imperfection and this was what He wanted.

G-d wants humans' imperfect deeds. If G-d had wanted perfect deeds, He would have created us with such wondrous capabilities. The sections on the Mishkan teach us to also appreciate partial, imperfect, and imprecise work. It is true regarding worship of G-d and it is true regarding interpersonal relationships. If we succeed in being better to others, we are worthy of admiration, even if this success is partial and temporary. If people can manage to overcome their egos and see others – even if on a limited scope – it is a fantastic accomplishment.

Imperfection and incompleteness accompany us in every aspect of life, but nevertheless, they do not negate our accomplishments. Human progress is attained when we learn to value even those accomplishments

that are partial and imprecise, and through those, to move forward toward the next imperfect accomplishment.

The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites.

Rav Kook Torah

Psalm 24: Opening the Temple Gates

Chanan Morrison

In this chapter, the psalmist pleads with the gates to open up:

“Lift up your heads, O gates; and let the entrances of the world be uplifted, so the King of glory may enter.

Who is this King of glory? God, strong and mighty; God, mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, gates; lift up, entrances of the world, so the King of glory may enter.

Who is He, this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory.” (Psalm 24:7-10)

What exactly are these gates that refuse to open? Why does the psalm describe God first as a mighty Warrior in battle and later as the “Lord of Hosts”?

The Talmud writes that these were the prayers of King Solomon as he pleaded with the Temple gates. After completing the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the final step was to bring the Holy Ark into the Holy of Holies. But the gates refused to open!

Why did the Temple gates disobey Solomon?

Disconnect Between Mind and Heart

According to Rav Kook, Solomon’s difficulty placing the Ark inside the Temple was a sign that the Jewish nation was not ready for the Temple and its spiritual influence on the entire world.

Divine service is based on those human faculties through which the human soul receives the Divine light. The Temple service — like prayer — primarily engages our faculties of emotions and imagination.

But these faculties must be governed by the intellect. Thus, completing the Temple meant placing the Ark — which contained the *luchot* and the scrolls of the Torah, the source of enlightenment for the world — in the innermost chamber.

Those who have not refined their character traits suffer from a dissonance between their intellectual recognition and their desires. While they know the correct path, their hearts and desires are not under the intellect’s control. This disparity, if not corrected, will eventually lead to a spiritual lapse of great magnitude.

This phenomenon of dissonance can also exist on the national level. The people in the time of Solomon were not on a sufficiently high spiritual and moral level. Their spiritual attainments were temporary. In the depths of their souls, the seeds of corruption that would later bring about the Temple’s destruction were already planted.

The Temple gates’ refusal to accept the Ark is a metaphor for this lack of spiritual readiness. The people’s inner emotions were not pure, and they had failed to fully establish their intellectual level. They had not clarified the path that could guide their hearts and desires.

King Solomon’s Solution

When King Solomon sought to bring the Ark and the Temple together, he was searching for a method to unite the minds and hearts of the nation.

Generally speaking, the intellect seeks to benefit all peoples, without differentiating between nationalities. It is the heart that feels an attachment to one’s people and seeks to promote its success in particular.

With regard to the Jewish people, however, there is no conflict between these two aspirations. Respect accorded to the Jewish people leads to universal recognition of monotheism and the ideals of the Torah; the entire world benefits from this enlightenment.

Solomon turned to the Temple gates, guarding over the national interests of the Jewish people: “Lift up your heads!” Open up, and let God enter!

When the gates of Jerusalem open up, the “entrances of the entire world” will also open. The heart, full of love and concern for the Jewish people, will then complement the intellect, which aspires to elevate the entire world.

Two Paths to Elevate the Nations

The Temple is a source of universal enlightenment, a “house of prayer for all the nations” (Isaiah 56:7). There are two paths in which Israel can influence the world; King Solomon alluded to both in his prayer.

At a time when there are many forces in the world opposing the Jewish people and the Torah, we can nonetheless identify an overall progress towards the ultimate goal. One factor in this advance is recognition of God’s protection of His people over the millennia. The unique story of a people surviving (and outlasting) many powerful empires who sought to subjugate and destroy it demonstrates formidable Divine providence in the history of the world.

Not only did Israel survive, but often vanquished other nations, enabling other nations to recognize the nobility of its Torah and holy ideals. The survival of the Jewish people throughout centuries of persecution reflects the Divine attribute of *gevurah*, strength and might. Solomon referred to this aspect when he described God as “mighty in battle.”

There exists a second, gentler method by which Israel influences the world. Not in the loud blaring of battle, but in the “still, small voice.” Gradually, without fanfare, holiness spreads from the enlightened source of Israel. The “entrances of the world” are not forcibly opened by the gates of Jerusalem. They lift themselves up: “Let the entrances of the world be uplifted.”

Each nation will rise to the higher goal, but its truth will correspond to its own predisposition. The ethical hues will be numerous and varied, as each nation accepts the imprint of Godly ideals based on its natural tendencies.

In this second path, God is revealed as “the Lord of Hosts,” the God of many diverse peoples. Each nation strives towards its own particular goal, and together they unite towards the one universal goal, in accordance with their Creator’s will.

(Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. III, pp. 83-85, on Shabbat 30)

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Terumah

פרשת תרומה תשפ"א

ועשו ארון עצי שטים אמתים וחצי ארכו ואמה וחצי רחבו ואמה וחצי קמתו

They shall make an Ark of *atzei shittim*, acacia wood, two and a half cubits its length; a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. (25:10)

Chazal (Talmud Yoma 21a) teach that one of the miracles which occurred in the *Bais HaMikdash* was *Aron einah min ha'middah*, the place of the *Aron HaKodesh*, Ark, was not included in the measurement of the *Kodesh HaKedoshim*, Holy of Holies. Based on the measurement, the Ark should not have fit inside the room. The *Kodesh HaKedoshim* measured twenty cubits by twenty cubits, and a *Braissa* states that a space of ten cubits was on either side of the *Aron*. Thus, only through a miracle did the *Aron* fit in the *Kodesh HaKedoshim*. Obviously, how this occurred is beyond the grasp of our mortal minds, but that it did occur is all that matters. Clearly, this miracle presents profound symbolism and a significant lesson for us.

Four levels of *hashroas ha'Shechinah*, resting of the Divine Presence, occurred within the environs of *Eretz Yisrael*. *Horav Eliyahu Baruch Finkel, zl*, observes that, concerning all four, the parameters of space miraculously did not exist. First (and the highest level) was the *Kodesh HaKedoshim*, with the *Aron HaKodesh*'s measurements not being included in its internal measurements – as if it were there, but not there – since it took up no space. Next was the *Azaray*, Temple Courtyard. During the *Shalosh Regalim*, Three Festivals, when the People ascended to *Yerushalayim* for the pilgrimage, they stood crowded (in the Temple Courtyard) but, when they bowed, they had sufficient space, such that no one was too close to his fellow (in order that no one would hear the confession of another). The miracle of space in *Yerushalayim* was manifest by everyone obtaining a place of hospitality in the Holy City. Jews came from all over; yet, they each had place to sleep. *Eretz Yisrael* is quoted in the *Talmud (Gittin 57a)*. In *Eretz Yisrael on Har HaMelech*, King’s Mountain, 600,000 cities sat, each containing a population paralleling the number of Jews that left

Egypt. Three of those cities had a population double of those who left Egypt. The space of the *Har Hamelech* was far from able to absorb so many cities with so many people. When a certain heretic asked Rabbi Chanina why he had exaggerated the numbers, his response was, “*Eretz Yisrael* is called *Eretz HaTzvi*, Land of the Deer. Just as the skin of the deer cannot hold its flesh (for, after the deer is skinned, its hide shrinks), so, too, when *Eretz Yisrael* is settled, it expands; when it is not settled, it contracts.”

In any event, we observe that space miraculously does not play a role concerning *hashroas haShechinah*. Why? *Rav Elya Baruch* explains that while the *Mishkan* and *Bais HaMikdash* are physical edifices, they are infused with a spiritual dimension due to the fact that Hashem rests within them. Indeed, we can posit that these structures serve as the link which connects the physical world to the spiritual. In the spiritual dimension, no limitation of space exists. It transcends space. Thus, we may say that when the two connect, the spiritual sphere overwhelms the physical in such a manner that physicality no longer plays a role. Therefore, the *Aron HaKodesh*, which is the central point and focus of the *Mishkan/Bais HaMikdash*, the place where Hashem rests His Divine Presence, is not bound by physical parameters. It transcends them.

Having said this, we suggest that the more one is able to focus and connect with spirituality, the less he is constrained by physical limitations. This is why a holy person can experience extreme pain, yet neither feel it nor be encumbered by it. One can face the greatest adversity if his mind is focused on the spiritual. *Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl*, endured painful leg surgery without general anesthesia, because it would cloud his mind. His students held his leg down as the surgeon operated. *Rav Shach*, clearly in pain, never once emitted a cry of pain. His mind was on the Torah. He was transported to the world of the spirit, in another realm, where physical pain was non-existent. *Horav Yisrael Taub, zl*, the *Modziter Rebbe*, composed his famous *Ezkerah*, a searing melody, during the surgical amputation of his leg, which he was compelled to undergo without anesthesia (his heart could not tolerate the anesthesia – it was 1913). The lengthy and intricate melody, expresses the profound agony he experienced viewing the thriving metropolis of pre-World War I Berlin, while simultaneously remembering the wretched state of Yerushalayim (at that time). For *Modziter Chassidus*, music is not merely an ancillary to worship; rather, it is the very essence of spirituality and the primary avenue for achieving true *avodah she'b'lev*, service of the heart. Indeed, *Rav Yisrael* was wont to say, “The world sees *heichal ha'neginah*, celestial sphere of melody, as being adjacent to the *heichal ha'teshuvah*, celestial sphere of repentance. I see the *heichal ha'neginah* as standing even higher than the *heichal ha'teshuvah*. Through song, we are able to captivate one's heart and reach it, and, through the music, bring him back to Jewish observance. Music is like a switch that turns on the light that illuminates his soul.”

We all know simple Jews, some who were even distant from Jewish observance, who have been able to transcend pain and fear by connecting – even on an elementary and modest level – to a spiritual entity. An elderly Russian patient in a west coast hospital, who had many years earlier been observant, was asked by the hospital's chaplain if he would like to touch a Torah scroll. This man was gravely ill, his morale sagging lower and lower, as the pain of his illness and the awareness of the inevitable were obviating any sense of joy. Yet, he wanted to touch the scroll. He requested water to wash his hands, then recited a blessing and touched the Torah. He asked if he could hold it – he did – and then wept and smiled simultaneously. From that day on, he was transformed into a different realm, a world where pain and fear did not exist.

The chaplain took note of this amazing metamorphosis and had a small *sefer Torah* commissioned, so that he could take it with him on his visits with patients who were feeling discouraged and depressed. As one patient encapsulated the effect on him, “I have not seen one of ‘these’ in such a long time. I have felt so separated from my family and

from my people. Now, all of a sudden, I feel connected again. I am prepared to face whatever the future holds for me.”

Patients who were nearing their final hours of life have found strength and spiritual healing in holding the Torah. A grandson remarked shortly after his elderly grandfather's passing, “In these past months, my grandfather lost much of his faculties and memories, but one thing he never lost was his connection to Torah.” Connecting with the spirit allows us to “lift up” from this physical world.

ועשית ארון עצי שיטים ... ונתת אל הארון את העדות אשר אתן לך

They shall make an Ark of *atzei Shittim* (Acacia wood)... You shall place in the Ark the Testimonial tablets that I shall give you. (25:10,16)

The *Aron HaKodesh* was the receptacle that contained within it the first *Luchos HaBris* – which Moshe *Rabbeinu* broke as a result of the *cheit ha'eigel*, sin of the Golden Calf – and the second *Luchos*. *Chazal* (*Berachos* 8b) compare a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, who, due to no fault of his own has forgotten his learning to the *Shivrei Luchos*, Broken *Luchos*. As we are instructed to place the Broken *Luchos* respectfully beside the *Luchos Shniim*, Second *Luchos*, so, too, are we commanded to respect the elderly Jew whose Torah erudition is sadly now a matter of history. One may think that the scholar's distinction is his Torah knowledge, and, once this Torah knowledge is no longer extant, the scholar is no longer a scholar, and he is no longer deserving the respect that was once accorded to him. We see from the *Shivrei Luchos* that this is untrue. As the *Shivrei Luchos* (which once were special) are placed in the *Aron*, likewise, the *talmid chacham*, who “once was,” is to be respected.

The metaphor of the “broken” next to the “whole” has been the topic of much commentary. The *Kotzker Rebbe, zl*, was wont to say, “There is nothing as whole as a broken heart.” This lends us much insight into the true meaning and value of brokenness. One who is presently broken, but was for the majority of his life whole, is actually transitioning from one form of “whole” to another (perhaps more poignant) form of “whole.” The *Luchos* without the Divinely-engraved lettering (which flew off) reverted to stone; the *talmid chacham* whose Torah knowledge has left him is a mere man without the spiritual accoutrements and benefits that Torah knowledge affords a person. The *Aron HaKodesh* did not contain a set of “whole” *Luchos* and particles of the broken *Luchos*, but actually had two “whole” *Luchos* – one represented whole in the physical sense; the other represented the wholeness of a broken heart. For the Jew who confronts life amid adversity, his hope and trust enable him to cement the broken shards and make them whole again.

I think there is another connection that exists between the *Shivrei Luchos* and the *talmid chacham* who has forgotten his Torah. They both impart a similar message. When Moshe descended the mountain and saw the moral profligacy that had bewitched the nation, the perverse revelry which showed their delight in sinning against Hashem, he made a judgment call to break the *Luchos*. A Golden Calf and *Luchos* do not mix. Torah must remain pristine. It cannot collaborate in any way with anything that undermines Torah values. Torah neither brooks compromise, nor does it need embellishment. It is free-standing and requires neither assistance nor support. One who is devoted to Torah does not dance around a Golden Calf. Moshe made a major leadership decision which Hashem ratified. The Almighty thanked Moshe for his decision, and it became his epitaph as the closing words (*L'einei kol Yisrael*, “before the eyes of all *Yisrael*”) of the Torah. The *Shivrei Luchos* represent a solemn, awe-inspiring *Kiddush Hashem*, sanctification of Hashem's Name, a lesson for future generations: The Torah does not negotiate. It must remain pristine, untouched, pure.

The *talmid chacham* whose learning is no longer a part of him represents a person who has devoted his life wholly to Torah. He neither sought nor cared for material benefit and physical diversion. He gave it all up in order to devote his life to the study of Torah and dissemination of Torah. Now, he is old, shattered by the ravages of time and ill health. His Torah is no longer a part of him, as the words of the *Luchos* were no longer a part of the *Luchos*. They both attest to the verity of Torah

without embellishment, Torah without compromise. People might harshly view the *talmid chacham* in his present state as a sad relic. The Torah views him as a *mekadesh Shem Shomayim*. This is why he is compared to the *Shivrei Luchos* and accorded the same respect, because, after all, he has earned it.

ועשית שנים כרבים ... משני קצות הכפורת. והיו הכרבים פרשי כנפים למעלה ...
ופניהם איש אל אחיו

You shall make two Cherubim... from both ends of the Kapores...The Cherubim shall be with wings spread upward... with their faces toward one another. (25:18,20)

The *Baal HaTurim* writes: *Keruvim* – *Kravya*, like young children. He cites the *pasuk*, *Ki naar yoraei v'ohaveihu*; “When *Yisrael* was a lad I loved him” (*Hoshea* 11:1). The purpose of the *Mishkan* is to draw and continue *hashroas haShechinah*, the Divine Presence, into the earthly sphere (thus, bringing sanctity and deeper spirituality into our midst). The primary place where the *Shechinah* reposed was between the *Keruvim*, whose facial features were that of young children. The *Keruvim* aroused *Klal Yisrael's* attribute of *naarus*, an exciting, exuberant and passionate drive to serve Hashem and observe His *mitzvos*. This is the merit by which we warrant Hashem's repose within our midst.

In his commentary to *Shemos* 25:5, *Vayishlach es naarei Bnei Yisrael*; “He sent the youths of *Bnei Yisrael*.” (*Onkeles* says this refers to the *Bechoros*, Firstborn, who were charged with slaughtering the *Korbanos Shelamim*.) *Ramban* defines *naarei Bnei Yisrael* as the “young men who had not yet tasted sin, never having approached a woman, (never having any immoral thought or action,) for they are the *mivcharim*, choicest, among the people and the holiest among them.” Thus, *Ramban* implies that the advantage of youth is purity and sanctity, not yet having been tainted by sin.

The *Talmud* (*Bava Kamma* 92b) quotes *Rava* asking *Rabba bar Mari*: “From where is this matter derived whereby people say, ‘When we were small, we were considered to be men; now that we are old, we are considered to be children?’ Rabbi *Mari* answered that it is written in the Torah (*Shemos* 13:21), that when *Klal Yisrael* initially traveled in the wilderness, Hashem Himself guided them with a Pillar of Cloud and a Pillar of Fire. The Almighty Himself guarded the Nation. At the end, however, when the nation had “aged” and become more distinguished, they were guarded and led by an angel dispatched by Hashem. (The problem he posed was: It appears that when we were young we were important; when we aged, however, we lost our significance and were treated like children.)

Obviously, the above dialogue in the Talmud requires serious commentary. *Horav Eliyahu Svei*, *zl*, quotes *Horav Mordechai Pogremonsky*, *zl*, who addresses Hashem's initial guidance of *Klal Yisrael*, then transfers it over to an angel. Should it not be the opposite? Youth bespeaks strength and independence. Age evinces infirmity and weakness. A nation that has aged and weakened requires more significant assistance than one that is in the bloom of youth. *Rav Pogremonsky* explains that age is a term applied to sin. *Rashi* comments concerning the *pasuk* in *Sefer Tehillim* (71:9), *Al tashlicheini l'eis zikhah*; “Do not cast me off in time of old age.” “If I have aged with sin, do not reject me.”

When one is young, i.e. with little to no accumulated sin, he has a greater ability to recognize and acknowledge Hashem via the medium of what transpires in the world – especially in that which occurs in the immediate proximity of his personal life. His rationales and excuses, the cynicism that comes with aging, does not hamper his ability to see with clarity. In other words, as we age, we conjure all kinds of reasons for our errors of “omission or commission.” As we age, the blinders become larger and thicker, obviating our ability to see lucidly and acknowledge Hashem.

This is what *Rava* lamented: When a person is young, pure of sin, his vision of Hashem is clear and not myopic. When he ages, it becomes stunted, imprudent and indulgent. He has a *teretz*, answer, for everything, with cynicism abounding in his every word. When *Klal Yisrael* left Egypt (when they were “young”), Hashem led them. Once

they sinned with the Golden Calf, they lost that special closeness. They were now transferred to the care of an angel. *Naarus* is thus defined as purity from sin, which engenders Hashem's love for us.

The *Alter*, *zl*, *m'Kelm* quotes his *Rebbe*, *Horav Yisrael Salanter*, *zl*, who posits that the advantage of *naar*, youth, is a constant drive to learn, to amass more, greater and deeper knowledge. *Klal Yisrael*, regardless of their erudition, seek to delve deeper into the Torah, to swim in the sea of *Talmud*. They never know enough; they never have enough. They always want more Torah. This is the benefit of youth. [It is not reserved for youth. Indeed, the greater one is, the more he has learned, the more he realizes and acknowledges that he has so much more to learn. Youthfulness is an attitude which can and should be shared by young and old alike.]

Rav Svei supplements this with his own caveat. A young child views everything as “new.” Everything that he learns and observes is new to him. This is the attitude of *naar*, youth: excitement concerning everything that he learns. It is special; it is precious; it is new! This emotion should permeate every aspect of our service to Hashem. I remember a few months ago, when I finally left the pandemic-generated isolation of my home to go to *shul* for the first time, the excitement of *davening* with a *minyán*, of hearing *krias haTorah* was overwhelming and palpable. Can I say the same thing now? *Hischadchus*, newness; excitement, exuberance, spirited, eager, etc. These are the words that should define our *avodas hakodesh*.

Perhaps we may add another understanding of *naar*. *Hisnaari mei'afar*, “shake off the dust” (*Lecha Dodi*). Young people live lives that are unfettered by cynicism. Optimism reigns when one is filled with youthful ardor; avoiding the skepticism and misanthropic moods that often accompany someone who has been blindsided by the vicissitudes of human life. Shake it off! Act! Ignore the pessimists and naysayers. This is youth.

One *gadol* particularly exemplified the vitality of a youth – despite his being beset with illness, old age and heavy emotional baggage; it was the *Ponovezher Rav*, *Horav Yosef Kahaneman*, *zl*, who can be credited with reestablishing Torah in *Eretz Yisrael* following the destruction of the Torah centers of Europe. The *Tchebiner Rav*, *zl*, said of him, “The *Ponovezher Rav* showed us what Torah vitality is!” He had every reason to escape to *Eretz Yisrael*, retire from public life and learn all day, but, as he himself said, “I sacrificed the greatness of the ‘*Ponevezher Gaon*’ for the sake of the *Ponevezh Yeshivah*.”

The *Ponovezher Rav's* achievements are beyond incredible. He demonstrated that a person is imbued with mighty willpower and unlimited resources with which he can accomplish so much. What prevents him from realizing success? The perceived and realistic obstacles and barriers that affect little people. One who places his trust in Hashem, as did the *Ponovezher Rav*, can surmount and overcome all challenges. Hashem will grant him success if he will “shake off” the fetters that attempt to separate him from achievement.

יהי תאמים מלמטה ויהיו תמים על ראשו אל הטבעת האחת

They must be coupled together on the bottom, and they must also be coupled together evenly on the top with one (square) ring. (26:24)

The *Mishkan* had two abutting wall planks, which ran from east to west and from north to south, meeting at the corner of the *Mishkan*. They are described as *to'amim milmatah*, coupled together on the bottom. The words *to'amim* and *teumim* have the same root, which means twins. Thus, although being two distinct units, separated by the *Adanim*, silver sockets at the bottom (in which pegs of the planks were placed), they fitted and complemented one another. The tops of the planks had to be *tamim*, matched up – completely, united by the *tabaas*, ring, that passed over them.

Horav Shimon Schwab, *zl* (quoted in *Rav Schwab on Chumash*), observes that the construction of the *Mishkan* serves as (among other lessons) a metaphor for the building of the Jewish marriage and, by extension, the Jewish home. A man and a woman are two distinct individuals, with variant personalities, who share common interests. Based upon their individual talents and strengths, they will approach each specific endeavor differently. Twins are born together,

often have similar appearances, but maintain different personalities and talents. Nonetheless, they have a unique relationship unlike the average two siblings. Concerning the physical, mundane aspects of marriage, the young couple are *toamim milmatah*, coupled together on the bottom. Coupled is sufficient, since, after all, they are different. On the other hand, concerning the “top,” *hashkofos*, Jewish philosophical outlook, spiritual values, etc., a husband and wife must do more than merely complement one another. They must be *yachdav*, completely united, unified as one, like the *kerashim* which *yachdav yiheyu toamim*.

This accord (fusing of the minds) is created via the *tabaas*, single ring, over both planks. The *Rav* says that this is the source for the custom of using a ring as the medium of marriage, as opposed to any other item of value (*Tosfos Kiddushin* 9A). (Perhaps this is why we should maintain the custom of a single ring ceremony. Two rings imply two *hashkofos*.) The Jewish home is referred to as a *mikdash me’at*, a mini sanctuary. The wedding accentuates the similarities between the sanctity of the Jewish marriage (a union of holiness, hence, *Kiddushin*) and the *kedushas*, sanctity, of the *Mishkan*.

Va’ani Tefillah

שים שלום – *Sim Shalom*. Establish peace.

Requesting peace does not only mean that one does not want to be involved in any form of strife. Indeed, the most essential form of peace, the key to good fortune and enjoyment, is peace of mind. One who is not at peace with himself is not at peace with anyone. Without inner peace, one is unable to cope with the realities and challenges of life. One who is positive about life can, and will, roll with the punches, accepting adversity as it comes, looking for the positive take on everything that occurs. In *Sefer Orchos Chaim l’Ha’Rosh* (69), the *Rosh* teaches: “Want whatever Hashem wants for you. Enjoy whatever you have, whether it be a little or a lot.” *Horav Mordechai, zl, m’Lechovitz*, says (quoted by *HoRav Avraham Chaim Feuer*), “If things are not as you want them to be, you should want them to be as they are.” In other words, if one believes (and we all do) that Hashem controls, guides the world with our lives included, then there is a good reason for what is happening. Being depressed over it will not alter the results. Rather, if we accept it as a G-d-mandated occurrence, with a sense of peace of mind (not resignation) and positive acceptance that this is what Hashem wants, then we achieve true harmony and satisfaction in our lives.

In memory of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

ר' נפתלי מנחם בן נתנאל ז"ל

מרת שרה רייב בת ר' יעקב מאיר הכהן ע"ה

The Rothner Family

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prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

Rabbi Twerski's last column: Surviving with humor Humor is healthy, and laughter is one of the most effective medicines.

Editor's note: Before Rabbi Twerski died in Jerusalem on January 31, 2021, he emailed this column (together with several others) for publication in The Jerusalem Report. We publish it here in loving tribute to a great man with a great sense of humor.

Great, populous empires that were firmly established in their own land and had conquered other countries – the Babylonian empire, the Hittite empire, the Egyptian empire, the Greek empire, the Roman empire – are historic relics, existing only in history texts. The history of the Jews, however, is one of unrelenting persecution, driven from their homeland and expelled from country after country, and suffering inquisition, decimating pogroms and the Holocaust, yet is one of miraculous survival. Some attribute their survival against all odds, at least partially, to Jewish humor.

While humor is indeed an invaluable asset, there are things that simply do not lend themselves to humor. Yet, Jews have been able to find some comfort even in the most serious conditions.

One Tisha Be'av (an annual fast day considered the saddest day in the Jewish calendar that marks a number of disasters in Jewish history, including the destruction of both Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple), a hassidic rebbe was crying incessantly, grieving over the loss

of the Temple. The hassidim were afraid that his intense weeping could be harmful to him, so they sent in someone to try and distract him.

This hassid was very witty, and said, “The Rebbe is grieving because the Temple was burnt down? I can assure you, Rebbe, that the land retains its value.”

Certainly, individuals have been able to cope with adversity by injecting humor into difficult situations. One person stood by helplessly, watching fire consume his house. He danced, reciting the bracha, “Shelo asani goy,” that God did not make me a heathen. When asked why he was saying this bracha, he said, “If I had been a goy, my god would have been a statue, which would have been consumed by the fire. But because I am a Jew, my God lives even though my house is gone.”

Humor is healthy, and laughter is one of the most effective medicines. In *Anatomy of an Illness*, Norman Cousins wrote how he laughed his way out of a disease which doctors had deemed incurable. There is abundant clinical evidence that supports this concept.

While our Sifrei Mussar (ethical books) condemn letzanus, we must understand that letzanus means “mocking,” not “joking.” Letzanus refers to belittling or dismissing important things as being worthless, and this is indeed forbidden. Jokes that are in good taste are permissible and even desirable.

How you perceive something depends on your attitude. Many people in the shtetl were illiterate, so there was a town scribe who wrote letters for them. One woman dictated a letter to her son who had immigrated to America. She said,

Dear Son,

I am, thank God, doing well. I earn my living by cleaning houses, and I can afford day-old bread. It has been pretty cold here, but thank God, I can close up the cracks in the wall with rags. Firewood is expensive, but I use the cooking flame for warmth. Thank God, I was able to get a second-hand coat for cheap.”

The scribe was outraged that the son in America is not supporting his mother, so he wrote, “At my old age I have to scrub floors to be able to afford day-old bread. The cold wind blows through cracks in the wall which I try to stuff with shmattes. I had to buy a second-hand coat. I can't afford enough firewood.”

When the scribe read to her what he had written, she said, “Oy vey, I didn't know how bad off I was!”

It's all in the attitude.

THERE ARE a variety of techniques to inject humor into a situation. One of them is to exaggerate things to an absurdity.

A man called to say that his wife is severely depressed. She refused to leave the house because she had a lesion on her nose which was healing slowly. She was very self-conscious. He finally convinced her to come to see me.

When she entered my office, I said to her, “Wow! The television was right! All the networks devoted the morning news program to the lesion on Leah's nose! The astronauts were taking pictures of Leah's nose from outer space!”

Leah broke out in a laugh and said, “I'm ashamed of myself, making such a fuss about this little red spot on my nose.”

Stress and tension have been demonstrated to have damaging effects physically as well as emotionally, and if you drive a car, you cannot escape stress and tension. Sometimes it's the chutzpadik who cuts in front of you, almost causing a collision, sometimes it's the person who beats you to the scarce parking space, and sometimes it's the stalled traffic which guarantees that you will miss your flight. But face it. Eating your heart out is not going to change things for the better. Inasmuch as backed-up traffic is quite common, one man carries a jar of bubbles in the car. He lowers the windows and blows bubbles. People in adjacent cars laugh, and this makes him laugh, too.

There is a story about a smart student who was walking over a bridge when he heard a cry for help. A man was in the water, struggling to stay afloat. There was a rope on the railing, so he threw the rope to the man, and shouted, “Give my regards to Leviathan!” He explained that he did this to help defuse the man's panic, so that he could catch hold of the rope.

In my book *It's Not as Tough as You Think*, I cited numerous incidents where we thought that we were in a terrible situation, but later realized that we had made mountains out of molehills. Injecting humor into such situations can shrink the mountains into molehills.

There are very few things that have escaped the Jewish sense of humor. We have jokes about antisemitism, about in-law problems, about tzoros (troubles) with children, about poverty, about unemployment, about rabbis, about doctors, about assimilation, and yes, even about our own religion. As long as the humor is in good taste and is not offensive, it can take the sting out of very difficult situations.

The Talmud relates that the prophet Elijah pointed out two people who merited Gan Eden (paradise). They circulated in the marketplace, and if they saw a person who was sad because he had suffered a loss, they would cheer him up and make him laugh. An upbeat spirit is essential even for Torah study. Before Rabbah bar Nahmani began his Torah lectures, he would say things to make his students laugh, and then, with profound reverence, would begin the lesson.

A friend of mine was diagnosed with a serious disease. We agreed that every day, he would send me a funny story and I would send one to him. His wife told me that this made a great difference in his attitude.

A while back, I wrote a book, *Smiling Each Day*, with stories from our Torah literature or our great personalities that can make one smile. A smile can make you happier, and if you smile at someone, that can lift the other person's spirits, too.

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For the week ending 20 February 2021 / 8 Adar 5781

Rabbi Moshe Newman

Making a Big Kiddush

“Please say Kiddusha Rabbah for us.” - Pesachim 106a

When Rav Ashi stayed at a place named Machuza for Shabbat, he was asked by the congregation to make Kiddush for them after the Shabbat morning services. They gave him a cup of wine and said to him, “Please say Kiddusha Rabbah for us.” This term — Kiddusha Rabbah — was unfamiliar to him.

What did he do? He thought to himself, “All the blessings on a cup of wine begin with the beracha of Borei pri hagafen.” So, he decided to say that beracha first, pause afterwards, and see what the elderly, wise people do. If, immediately after this beracha, he would see an important person start drinking from his own cup, Rav Ashi would understand that the Kiddusha Rabbah was completed and there was not need to say the additional beracha that is part of the Kiddush recited on Friday nights.

Indeed, drinking commenced after Borei pri hagafen. In effect, saying this one beracha is the accepted halachic definition of the term Kiddusha Rabbah. True, many communities have the custom to add a brief introduction to this beracha with a verse or verses from the Torah — such as “Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it” (Shemot 28:11) and “And the Bnei Yisrael will keep the Shabbat... (Shemot 31:16-17). But the Kiddusha Rabbah is essentially the beracha of Borei pri hagafen (or hagefen for Bnei Sfarad, since the reply of Amen at the end is halachically considered as part of the beracha, which, as matter of

grammar in Lashon Hakodesh, determines the segol vowel for the first syllable in the previous word - Rav Ovadia Yosef, zatzal).

But, why did Chazal call this kiddush, which consists of a single blessing, by the seemingly paradoxical name of Kiddusha Rabbah — “the great Kiddush”?

The Rashbam (Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir, a grandson of Rashi, and whose commentary is printed on the daf here in a typical Shas) explains that this Kiddush of a single blessing is accorded a special and seemingly grandiose title because it is the universal opening for every Kiddush on any Shabbat or Chag.

Another explanation for this special name is to distinguish the shorter text of the day Kiddush from the longer text of the night Kiddush. The word Rabbah — great or large — is meant as a euphemism, which is used in order not to draw attention to its relative brevity. Calling it “the small Kiddush” would be disrespectful. Instead, euphemistically, it is called the “great” Kiddush. (Rabbeinu Nissim)

Euphemisms are found in many places in Judaism. In fact, the very term for “euphemism” is *sagi nahor*, which literally means “much light” and refers a blind person. However, I learned from my revered teacher, HaRav Moshe Shapiro, zatzal, that every euphemism must also be true on some level. Otherwise, there would appear to be a violation of the Torah's tenet to “Distance yourself from a matter of falsehood.” (Shemot 23:7) The Rav explained: Although a blind person is usually thought of as being in the dark and not having light, it is also possible for a person to be blind and not able to see due to too much light!

In the same manner, we can understand the “hidden” truthfulness in referring to the day Kiddush as Kiddusha Rabbah. The afternoon prayer service is called Mincha, and there is Mincha Gedola which is what the service is called when praying in the early afternoon, whereas Mincha Ketana is later in the afternoon (based on the “Mincha” time when the daily afternoon offering was brought in the Beit Hamikdash, from nine-and-a half hours of the daytime onwards.) Commentaries explain that the earlier portion of the afternoon is called Mincha Gedola — the “greater” Mincha — because the greater portion of the afternoon remains (Perishah, Orach Chaim 232:5), and the latter portion of the afternoon is known as Mincha Ketana, the “lesser” Mincha because only a small portion of the afternoon remains. Likewise, when the Kiddush is said after the morning prayers on Shabbat, a relatively greater, larger part of the day lies ahead. Therefore, there is “truth in advertising” this Kiddush as Kiddusha Rabbah.

On a related note, we have friends in Israel who are originally from Holland (one from Amsterdam and one from The Hague), whose custom is to make Kiddush before the third meal of Shabbat as well. They would say Kiddush before each meal of Shabbat. According to our discussion above of the nomenclature for the various parts of the afternoon, perhaps it might be appropriate to refer to this third Kiddush as Kiddusha Ketana or Kiddusha Zutrata (in Aramaic). Admittedly, I do not recall learning anything on this topic, and the reader is warmly invited to share any thoughts and sources with me.

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לע"נ

שרה משא בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ע"ה
ביילא בת (אריה) לייב ע"ה