

## Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet

### VAYAKHEL 5784

#### Weekly Parsha VAYAKHEL

#### Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

One of the main questions raised by the commentators to this week's parsha is why the Torah again discusses the prohibitions of the Sabbath. The Torah has done so in the previous parshiyot of Shemot, so one might question this seemingly unwarranted repetition. In their comments, I feel one of the ideas presented to be especially relevant to our world. We do not find that at the time of creation, the Torah sanctified any given place or location on the face of the earth. The entire idea of the uniqueness of the Land of Israel does not appear in the Torah until the time of our father Abraham. And there it appears as a promise of a homeland to Abraham's descendants without any mention of holiness or sanctification.

Holiness only appears regarding a place and location in the story of our father Jacob and his heavenly dream at Beit El. Already in the first section of the Bible, in the story of creation itself, we read that the Lord sanctified time. "Therefore, did the Lord bless the seventh day and sanctify it." Time is the holiest of all factors in human life. It is the one thing that, since creation, has been blessed, sanctified, and made very special. It is no wonder that the holiness of the Sabbath is emphasized in the Torah. In human behavior and thought, time is as important as wealth or location or the accomplishment of any human deeds. The Torah comes to warn us not to succumb to such a viewpoint or behavior pattern.

The holy Tabernacle, according to most commentators, was ordered and built after Israel sinned in the desert by worshiping the golden calf. These commentators saw this Tabernacle as an accommodation, so to speak, of Heaven to the human condition. People somehow require a tangible place of worship, a holiness of space and locality, something solid that can represent to them the invisible and eternal. The Tabernacle, in a sense, came to replace the necessity for a golden calf created by human beings.

The Lord gave Israel detailed instructions how this Tabernacle and its artifacts should be constructed and designed. Even though holiness of space, location and of actual structure is necessary for human service of God, it must be done solely under God's conditions. There can be many designs to build a golden calf. To build a Tabernacle to God there can only be one ordained holy design and plan. Even when building a Tabernacle according to God's plan, the Jewish people were instructed and inspired to remember that holiness of time is always greater than holiness of place and of structure.

The Sabbath, which has accompanied us from the time of creation, takes precedence over all else except for human life itself. The Tabernacle and its succeeding Temples were all temporary and subject to the events of time. Even the

holy Land of Israel disappeared from Jewish history for millennia. But the Sabbath never stopped accompanying the Jews wherever they lived and under whatever the circumstances. And this is why this lesson is drummed into us in the narrative of the Torah. How pertinent this lesson is in our time and in our environment.

Shabbat shalom.

Rabbi Berel Wein

#### God's Shadow

#### VAYAKHEL

#### Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

In Vayakhel we meet, for the second time, the man who became the symbol of the artist in Judaism, a man by the name of Betzalel.

Then Moses said to the Israelites, "Know that the Lord has chosen Betzalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and has filled him with a Divine spirit of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in every craft, to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver, and bronze, as well as cutting stones for setting, carving wood, engaging in every other craft. He has also given him the ability to teach others, together with Oholiav, son of Achisamach of the tribe of Dan. He has filled them with the skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in sky-blue, purple, or scarlet wool or fine linen, and as weavers. They will be able to carry out all the necessary work and design.

Ex. 35:30-35

It would be Betzalel (together with Oholiab) who would make the Tabernacle and its furnishings and be celebrated through the centuries as the inspired craftsman who used his skills for the greater glory of God.

The aesthetic dimension of Judaism has tended to be downplayed, at least until the modern era, for obvious reasons. The Israelites worshipped the invisible God who transcended the universe. Other than the human person, God has no image. Even when He revealed Himself to the people at Sinai:

"You heard the sound of words but saw no image; there was only a Voice."

Deut. 4:12

Given the intense connection – until around the eighteenth century – between art and religion, image-making was seen as potentially idolatrous. Hence the second of the Ten Commandments:

"Do not make for yourself any carved image or likeness of in the form of any creature in heaven above or the earth beneath or in the waters below."

Ex. 20:4

This concern continued long after the biblical era. The Greeks, who achieved unrivalled excellence in the visual

arts, were, in the religious sphere, still a pagan people of myth and mystery, while the Romans had a disturbing tendency to turn Caesars into gods and erect statues to them.

However, the visual dimension was not wholly missing from Judaism. There are visible symbols, like tzitzit and tefillin. There is, according to the Sages, a meta-mitzvah known as hiddur mitzvah – “beautifying the command” – to try to ensure that all objects used in the performance of a command are as beautiful as possible.

The most significant intrusion of the aesthetic dimension was the in Tabernacle itself, its framework and hangings, its furniture, the cherubim above the ark, the menorah, and the vestments of the priests and the High Priest, lekavod uletifaret, “for dignity and beauty” (Ex. 28:2).

Maimonides in *The Guide for the Perplexed* (III:45) says that most people are influenced by aesthetic considerations, which is why the Sanctuary was designed to inspire admiration and awe; why a continual light burned there; why the priestly robes were so impressive; why there was music in the form of the Levitical choir; and why incense was burned to cover the smell of the sacrifices.

Maimonides himself, in the work known as *The Eight Chapters* – the introduction to his commentary on *Mishnah Avot* – speaks about the therapeutic power of beauty and its importance in counteracting depression:

Someone afflicted with melancholy may dispel it by listening to music and various kinds of song, by strolling in gardens, by experiencing beautiful buildings, by associating with beautiful pictures, and similar sorts of things that broaden the soul...

*The Eight Chapters*, chapter 5

Art, in short, is balm to the soul. In modern times, the thinker who spoke most eloquently about aesthetics was Rav Kook. In his *Commentary to the Siddur*, he wrote:

“Literature, painting, and sculpture give material expression to all the spiritual concepts implanted in the depths of the human soul, and as long as even one single line hidden in the depth of the soul has not been given outward expression, it is the task of art [avodat ha-umanut] to bring it out.”

*Olat Re-ayah*, II, 3

Evidently these remarks were considered controversial, so in later editions of the *Commentary* the phrase “Literature, painting, and sculpture” was removed and in its place was written, “Literature, its design and tapestry.”

The name Betzalel was adopted by the artist Boris Schatz for the School of Arts and Crafts he founded in Israel in 1906, and Rav Kook wrote a touching letter in support of its creation. He saw the renaissance of art in the Holy Land as a symbol of the regeneration of the Jewish People in its own land, landscape and birthplace. Judaism in the Diaspora, removed from a natural connection with its own historic environment, was inevitably cerebral and spiritual, “alienated.” Only in Israel would an authentic Jewish

aesthetic emerge, strengthened by and in turn strengthening Jewish spirituality.

Perhaps the most moving of all remarks Rav Kook made about art came in the course of a conversation he had with a Jewish sculptor:

“When I lived in London I used to visit the National Gallery, and my favourite pictures were those of Rembrandt. I really think that Rembrandt was a tzaddik. Do you know that when I first saw Rembrandt’s works, they reminded me of the rabbinic statement about the creation of light?

We are told that when God created light [on the first day of Creation, as opposed to the natural light of the sun on the fourth day], it was so strong and pellucid that one could see from one end of the world to the other, but God was afraid that the wicked might abuse it. What did He do? He reserved that light for the righteous in the World to Come. But now and then there are great men who are blessed and privileged to see it. I think that Rembrandt was one of them, and the light in his pictures is the very light that God created on Genesis day.”[1]

I have often wondered what it was about Rembrandt’s paintings that so enthralled the Rav. Rembrandt lived in the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam, knew Jews and painted them, as well as painting many biblical scenes, though the closeness or otherwise of his connection with Jews has been the subject of controversy. Rav Kook’s admiration for the artist had, I suspect, nothing to do with this and everything to do with the light Rembrandt saw in the faces of ordinary people, without any attempt to beautify them. His work let us see the transcendental quality of the human, the only thing in the universe on which God set His image.

Art in Hebrew – omanut – has a semantic connection with emunah, “faith” or “faithfulness.” A true artist is faithful both to his materials and to the task, teaching us:

To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And eternity in an hour.[2]

The name Betzalel means, “in the shadow of God.” Art is the shadow cast by the radiance of God that suffuses all things:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil.[3]

And as Goethe said: “Where there is much light, the shadow is deep.”[4] When art lets us see the wonder of creation as God’s work and the human person as God’s image, it becomes a powerful part of the religious life, with one proviso. The Greeks believed in the holiness of beauty. Jews believe in hadrat kodesh, the beauty of holiness: not art for art’s sake but art as a disclosure of the ultimate artistry of the Creator. That is how omanut enhances emunah, how art adds wonder to faith.

Rav Avraham Kook, article in *The Jewish Chronicle*; London; 13 September 1935, p. 21.

From Auguries of Innocence by William Blake.

From God's Grandeur by Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Götz von Berlichingen with the Iron Hand, translated by Walter Scott, London; 1799.

questions english 5783 Around the Shabbat Table

How does Betzalel's story inspire us to use our talents for meaningful purposes?

Can you think of other times in the Tanach where someone uses their "artistic" talents to connect with their spirituality?

Rav Kook believed in the deep connection between art and spirituality. How can art help us express or understand our spiritual beliefs?

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"I have loved the Torah of R' Chaim Schimmel ever since I first encountered it. It strives to be not just about truth on the surface but also its connection to a deeper truth beneath. Together with Anna, his remarkable wife of 60 years, they built a life dedicated to love of family, community, and Torah. An extraordinary couple who have moved me beyond measure by the example of their lives

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### **Israel is the Source of Blessing**

#### **Revivim by Rabbi Eliezer Melamed**

It is forbidden to take charity from non-Jews because of desecration of God's name \* Accepting charity from non-Jews also causes the exile to continue and delays the redemption \* It must be seriously considered whether the aid budgets that the State of Israel receives from the United States are included in the prohibition of accepting charity from non-Jews

It is forbidden for a Jew to accept charity from non-Jews. The prohibition against accepting charity is because of the desecration of God's name, so that the non-Jews will not say: How despicable are the Jews, and how despicable is their religion, that they do not support their own poor, and members of other nations need to support them (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 254:1; Shach, Taz, and Levush there). However, donations to a synagogue and public needs are permitted to be accepted, since receiving those does not express humiliating dependence. But accepting personal charity desecrates God's name, since the purpose of the Jewish nation is to be a light unto the nations, and bring goodness and blessing to all peoples. And when they need the help of non-Jews, they humiliate themselves, and fail in their role. And as our Sages said: "Since the receivers of charity from idol worshipers increased – the Jews became lowly, and the non-Jews became elevated; the Jews behind, and the non-Jews ahead" (Sotah 47b; the Gemara expresses it euphemistically).

Accepting Charity from Non-Jews Delays the Redemption

Our Sages further said (Bava Batra 10b) that when the Jews accept charity, the non-Jews become haughty over the

Jews and despise them, and are strengthened to continue enslaving the Jews. Therefore, Jews who accept charity from them cause the exile to continue and delay the Redemption, as it says: "When its crown is withered, they break; women come and make fires with them. For they are a people without understanding; that is why Their Maker will show them no mercy" (Isaiah 27:11). That is, when the merits of the non-Jews who enslave Israel dry up and are used up, they will be like dry straw that is easily broken and burned, and Israel will be freed from them. But when Israel does not act wisely, and accepts charity from them, the merits of the non-Jews increase, and they continue to enslave Israel, and God does not have mercy on Israel to redeem them.

Our Sages also said (Sanhedrin 26b) that the one who transgresses and receives charity from a non-Jew is invalid for testimony, because since he committed a desecration of God out of greed for money, one must fear that he will lie in his testimony for bribery (Rashi). In addition, since he agreed to shame his honor by receiving charity from a non-Jew, there is concern he will agree to shame his honor with false testimony (Rambam, Edut 11:5).

It is Permitted to Accept Charity from Non-Jews When There is No Choice

The prohibition against accepting charity from non-Jews is on condition that the poor person can barely subsist without it, but if he cannot subsist, he is permitted to secretly accept charity from non-Jews. And when they do not give it to him in secret, and there are no Jews who can support him, he is permitted to openly accept the charity, and he is not disqualified by this from being a witness, since he did it under duress (Rambam Laws of Edut 11:5, and Laws of Gifts to the Poor 8:9; SA YD 254:1, Responsa 'Rishon LeTzion', Aruch HaShulchan).

Lenient Opinions and the Halakha

Some poskim (Jewish law arbiters) are lenient for an individual poor person to secretly accept charity, since in their opinion, the prohibition is specifically for charity collectors (Drisha). And some permitted this when the non-Jew is not donating specifically to Jews, but donates to Jews as well as to non-Jews, in which case he does not have a great mitzvah for it (Taz), or that the prohibition to secretly accept charity is only from an official, but not from an individual (Rabbi Chaim Palagi).

However, in practice, as long as the Jewish poor can subsist in hardship, even in secret, one should not accept charity from non-Jews. Because any acceptance of charity from non-Jews involves desecration of God's name and shame, that their Jewish brethren do not support them, and non-Jews sustain them, and in doing so, we continue to be dependent on non-Jews, and the yoke of exile remains on our necks (Responsa Rishon LeTzion to SA YD 254:2; Beit Hillel,1; Aruch HaShulchan 254:1).

Accepting Charity from Righteous Non-Jews

It is permitted to accept charity from a kosher, non-Jew who observes the seven Noahide commandments. On another occasion we will clarify who is a kosher non-Jew, and explain that this also is only after the fact.

#### Prohibition against Accepting Charity from Officials and Countries

It is forbidden for Jews to accept charity from officials and countries, because if accepting from individuals debases the honor of Israel and prolongs the exile, how much more so when accepting from officials and countries. And only when refusing to accept the donation could endanger the Jews, due to 'shalom malchut' ("sake of peace with the kingdom") is it permitted to accept it. As related in the Talmud (Bava Batra 10b) about Ifera Hurmiz, the mother of the King of Persia, who sent four hundred dinars to Rabbi Ami to distribute to the poor. And even though Ifera Hurmiz was personally known as a righteous woman, since she was the mother of the king who enslaved the Jews, Rabbi Ami refused to accept her donation.

Ifera Hurmiz sent the four hundred dinars to Rava, and he accepted them. They told this to Rabbi Ami, and he scolded Rava, arguing how could he make it easy to support the Jewish poor with the charity of non-Jews, and not worry that by doing so, he prolongs the exile, as it says: "When its crown is withered, they break; women come and make fires with them" (Isaiah 27:11).

However, the Gemara relates that Rava accepted the donation because of shalom malchut, that if he had refused to accept, they might have borne a grudge against Israel for it. Afterwards, without Ifera Hurmiz knowing about it, he distributed the charity to poor non-Jews. And there was no deception towards Ifera Hurmiz in this, since it is known that Jews support the non-Jewish poor together with the Jewish poor (Gittin 61a; Rashi, Bava Batra 11a, "de'lo"). And this man who told Rabbi Ami about Rava accepting the charity money from Ifera Hurmiz did not finish the story by saying that Rava was careful to use it to support non-Jewish poor, and thereby violated the prohibition of gossip. Perhaps he sinned inadvertently, since Rava gave the charity in secret to non-Jewish poor, so that it would not become known to the kingdom, he thought that Rava supported Jewish poor with it.

However, in another case Ifera Hurmiz sent a large sum to Rav Yosef for charity, and explicitly requested he make with it a "great mitzvah". And since this was the case, if Rav Yosef had diverted the charity to the needs of non-Jewish poor, which is not a "great mitzvah", he would have violated the prohibition of deception (Chullin 94a), therefore Rav Yosef used her money for redeeming Jewish captives, which is the greatest charity (Bava Batra 8a; Tosafot "yativ").

#### The Problem with Accepting Financial Aid from the United States

Today, there is room for concern that aid budgets the State of Israel receives from the United States are included in the

prohibition of accepting charity from non-Jews, since there is desecration of God's name in that the State of Israel needs assistance, and cannot cope on its own with the challenges it faces. And if an individual Jew accepting charity desecrates God's name, how much more so when the State of Israel accepts aid. In addition, as a result of receiving aid, the State of Israel is forced to accept dictates from the United States and other countries, that harm fulfilling the mitzvah of Yishuv ha'Aretz (settling the Land of Israel), and its ability to defeat its enemies, and thereby, the yoke of exile continues, to some extent, on our necks.

Indeed, some claim that since there are many Jews living in the United States, the aid coming from the United States is not considered aid from non-Jews, but from a joint fund. However, in practice, since it is a large country with clear interests, and only two percent of US citizens are Jewish, the aid cannot be defined as coming from a fund jointly owned by non-Jews and Jewish partners.

#### Charity versus Partnership

Nor can it be argued that since the aid is not intended for the Jewish poor, it is considered a gift, and not charity. Because a gift is for someone who is self-sufficient and does not need assistance, and giving the gift is meant to express the connection to him, and make him happy. Charity, on the other hand, is for one who struggles to get by on his own and needs assistance, and it does not matter if with the assistance, he will buy food, or furniture, or security means.

Some argue that the aid money is actually money that the United States invests in Israel so that it will safeguard its interests in the Middle East for it, and assist it in developing cutting-edge combat capabilities. Indeed, if the aid is defined as dignified cooperation, which both sides are equally interested in, it would not be considered charity. But for that, the annual aid budgets would have to be canceled, and every collaboration must be privately summarized how much each party invests, as partners do.

#### The Big Question

However, some argue that without the aid, Israel will find it difficult to withstand its war against its enemies, and then, because of the urgency, it is permitted to accept the aid. This claim indeed needs to be seriously considered by Israel's leaders, while at all times remembering to make great efforts to free ourselves from the need to receive charity from non-Jews. Because the fact that the State of Israel receives aid is a situation of desecration of God's name, which causes the State of Israel to be enslaved to the interests of foreign countries, and prevents it from fulfilling its aspirations independently.

#### Our Situation Fifty Years Ago, and Today

When the State of Israel was poor and needed help (at the end of the War of Attrition in 1971), Rabbi Mordechai Frum ztz"l, a senior rabbi of Yeshivat Merkaz HaRav, wrote that it is permitted to receive aid from foreign countries, because the State of Israel is an independent

state, and the Jewish people are no longer in exile, and therefore, there is no concern that by accepting charity, they prolong the exile. In addition, it should be permitted since we are surrounded by many enemies, and involves pikuach nefesh of the Clal (saving lives of the general populace) (in the collection 'Zachor Zot Le'Yaacov').

In 1990, Rabbi Ben Zion Kriger deliberated whether there is still an urgent necessity or not (Techumin 11).

However, in the meantime, our situation has changed tremendously. In 1990, Israel's annual GDP was about \$61 billion, and American aid of \$3 billion was about five percent of it. In 2023, Israel's GDP was \$488 billion, and annual aid was \$3.8 billion, so it constituted only 0.8 percent.

Moreover, according to various economists, Israel loses money as a result of receiving aid, since receiving it is conditioned on severe restrictions on the arms industry and large deals with various countries in the security field.

Therefore, it is fitting that decision makers seriously consider the possibility of relinquishing aid funds, in order to strengthen our independence and enhance our achievements in the economic, security and social spheres, and fulfill our destiny to be a source of blessing for all the nations of the world.

### **Parshat Vayakhel: Sanctuary and Sabbath Revisited** **Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin**

"And Moses assembled [vayakhel] all of the congregation of the children of Israel and said unto them: ...Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day shall be for you, a day of complete rest for the Lord." (Exodus 35:1-2)

The portion of Vayakhel opens with the command to keep the Sabbath. This raises once again that fundamental question of the very strange order of the last five portions of the book of Exodus: Sanctuary – Sabbath – golden calf – Sabbath – Sanctuary.

Thus the Torah commands us first to create a Sanctuary, to establish a center of the sacred, which is after all the purpose and ideal of a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. But the sacred can easily be profaned – as history in modern life can testify – with holy wars, Iranian Khomeinism and fanatical stone-throwing and book burning. Hence, in the middle of the construction of the Sanctuary (the first two portions, Teruma and Tetzaveh, are dedicated to the Sanctuary) comes the travesty of the golden calf (the portion of Ki Tisa), which serves as an eloquent warning to subsequent generations not to pervert, or idolify, the holy. It then becomes perfectly logical, or rather psychological, to now return and conclude with the positive message of the Sanctuary as the Torah does in its two concluding portions of Vayakhel and Pekudei. And the Sabbath is the beacon of light which teaches the essence of Judaism, preventing its perversion into a golden calf of idolatry.

The Sabbath is the most central pillar of our faith. It is no accident that the very first law which was given to the

Israelites after the splitting of the Reed Sea – before the revelation at Sinai – was the Sabbath (Ex. 15:25; Rashi ad loc. citing Sanhedrin 56b), and the first law explained to a would-be convert (Jew by choice) is likewise the Sabbath (Yevamot 47). In all of my experience in attempting to expose Jews who have wandered far afield from their faith to the glories of their Jewish heritage, I have found that there is no more powerful introduction to returning to Judaism than the Sabbath experience.

And how does the Sabbath accomplish this? Certainly the delightful glow of the Sabbath candles, the warmth of the Kiddush wine, the familial and congenial togetherness of delectable Sabbath meals replete with angels of peace, praises to women, blessings of children, songs of holiness and words of Torah, all contribute to the creation of a special and unique day dedicated to physical relaxation, spiritual creativity and existential well-being.

But the Sabbath is more than that. It contains the essence of the Jewish ideal, the purpose for which we were chosen by God, and the mission which has the power to unite all of us in the pursuit of a common historic goal (vayakhel). The "oasis in time" evokes the three most seminal moments in Jewish history, three moments of past and future that more than any others serve to define our Jewish present. A description of these moments is to be found in each of three main Amidot (standing prayers) which are recited by observant Jews every Sabbath. On Friday evening we evoke and re-experience the creation of the world ("And God completed the heavens and the earth and all their hosts..."), on Sabbath morning we evoke and re-experience the revelation of the law at Sinai ("Moses rejoiced with the gift of his portion...the two tablets of stone he brought down in his hands"), and on Sabbath afternoon we evoke and attempt to experience the redemption ("You are One and Your Name is One" – and the prophet Zekhariah teaches that only "...on that day [of Messianic redemption and universal peace] will God be One and will His name be One").

Creation, revelation and redemption are the three pillars which form the bedrock of the Jewish message and mission.

Creation reminds us that there is one omnipotent creator, and the entire world consists of His limited, but still exalted, creatures. The very creaturehood of all of humanity serves to unite all individuals in a bond of inescapable unity. The very fact that we share the same parent in heaven means that we are all of us siblings on earth: whites and blacks, Israelis and Palestinians. The corollary of God the Creator is God the Redeemer, God who will not allow any of His children to be enslaved by any of His other children. Hence the two versions of the Decalogue as well as the Kiddush prayer define the Sabbath as both a memorial to creation as well as a memorial to the Exodus from Egypt. And the Sabbath remains an eternal reminder that any expression of the

sacred which does not include sensitivity to every human being and respect for the freedom and integrity of each of God's children can only lead to the perversion of the golden calf idolatry.

Revelation reminds us that there can be no freedom without structure, no respect for self without taking into account the needs of others, no love without law. The Torah remains our God-given blueprint for the kind of meaningful and sacred lives which lead to more perfect families and societies. In this sense, Judaism is a revolutionary concept, an idea and lifestyle which will not rest until human nature is perfected and the world is redeemed. Thus the final Sabbath Amida evokes that longed-for period when the world will be redeemed as a result of the Torah, which has the power and the purpose to perfect the universe under the kingship of God, in effect to revolutionize society.

But the tragedy of most revolutions is that the leaders themselves usually lose sight of what it was that they fought for in the first place. Indeed, all too often the beneficiaries of the revolt are guilty of greater crimes of avarice and greed and despotism than were those against whom they rebelled. This was true of the Maccabean revolt, the French revolution, and the Communist revolution in our own time. Equality and fraternity were the sanctuaries of Voltaire and Lenin; the blood baths of Robespierre and Stalin became their golden calf perversion.

The genius of Judaism lies in its ability to maintain the future ideal as an ever-present reality of our daily lives. In this way we can never forget what we are striving to accomplish, nor can we allow ourselves to become cynically disillusioned as to the possibility of our attaining it. Hence each workaday week of frustration and sadness is climaxed by a Sabbath – a taste of the World to Come, a glimpse into the longed-for period of peace and harmony. Each Sabbath reminds us of the pure taste of the Sanctuary, and prevents us from descending into the depths of golden-calf materialism and idolatry.

The story is told of a Hassidic rebbe who always rejoiced mightily upon sharing the Sabbath meals with his congregant-disciples. People who were bent over with burden and toil each week, whose brows were creased with anxiety and whose eyes were clouded with worry, would become almost miraculously transformed into tall and clear-eyed princes and princesses with their new-found freedom and faith at the advent of Shabbat. But alas, the picture would change during the “third meal” late on Shabbat afternoon. As the sun would begin to set, the songs would become somber and the mundane concerns would return to haunt the faces and backs of the Jews who were forced to return to reality. And the rebbe would look heavenwards and beseech: “How long, dear Father? Can you not redeem us now!?”

But at one particular Sabbath “third meal,” the rebbe's eyes became animated with a strange glow. He banged on the

table, crying out: “I have it, my beloved disciples. We shall force God's hand, wage a rebellion against Heaven. We will bring about the redemption – now. The plan is breathtakingly simple. We will not recite the havdala [the prayer of “separation” which concludes the Sabbath and begins the week]. If the Sabbath never ends, redemption never ends. If there is no havdala, we will never have to return to the weekday world.”

The Hassidim were entranced. They danced and sang joyous tunes long past the appearance of three stars, long past the conclusion of the Sabbath in other congregations. But then their wives began looking for them; after all, the children had to be fed and bathed, clothes had to be washed, food had to be cooked. One by one each disciple embarrassedly returned to his family, leaving the rebbe as the lone revolutionary – until the rebbe's rebbetzin entered the scene, complaining that the week had to begin, for there was much necessary work to do.

With tears coursing down his cheeks, the defeated rebbe made havdala. A voice then came down from heaven: “Redemption shall come, and the world will experience a never-ending Sabbath. But this cannot occur until all of Israel really wants to be redeemed, really works to be redeemed, and until every Jew internalizes the message of the Sabbath and reaches out to every human being, making each day a Sabbath, creating a new world order, an eternal period of peace and love.”

Shabbat Shalom

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Mar 7, 2024, 5:05 PM

**A Cover-Up of Biblical Proportions**

**A Tribute to My Dear Student Nativ**

**By: Rabbi YY Jacobson**

The Truth, the Whole Truth and...

Harry gets stopped by a police car. When the police officer gets to his car, Harry says, "What's the problem officer?"

Officer: You were going at least 65 in a 50mph zone.

Harry: No sir, I was going 50.

Wife: Oh Harry, You were going 70.

Harry gives his wife a dirty look.

Officer: I will also give you a ticket for your broken brake light.

Harry: Broken brake light? I didn't know about a broken brake light!

Wife: Oh Harry, you've known about that brake light for months.

Harry gives his wife a really dirty look.

Officer: I am also going to book you for not wearing your seat belt.

Harry: Oh, I just took it off when you were walking up to the car.

Wife: Oh Harry, you never wear your seat belt.

Harry turns to his wife and yells, "Shut your mouth!"

The officer turns to the woman and says, "Madam, does your husband talk to you this way all the time?"

Wife: "No, only when he's drunk..."

Smooth or Problematic?

In the Torah, the building of the Mishkan (Tabernacle)—culminated in the Torah portion of this and next week Vayakhel & Pekudei—is presented as a seamless flow of command, collection, and finally, construction. G-d commands Moses, Moses presents the people with the plans, the people respond over-enthusiastically, donating more than necessary (for the first and last time in Jewish history...), and all Moses has to do is tell them when to stop. The construction goes ahead according to plan, and in no time at all—six months in total (compare that with construction nowadays)—the Mishkan is up and ready to function.

However, the student of Midrash—the Talmudic and Midrashic commentary to the Torah, transmitted orally throughout the generations till transcribed—makes aware of the “politics” behind the events. It was anything but smooth. The Midrash[1] tells us, shockingly, that there were those who suspected Moses of pocketing funds and they insolently demanded that Moses make an accounting for every ounce of every item. Moses conceded to their demands and humbly presented a detailed account of every “dollar” collected for the grandiose “building campaign.”

The Midrash[2] also tells us that Moses actually forgot what he did with some of the silver, and the rumors began circulating... The Rabbi is driving a new BMW... Who paid for his cruise to the Bahamas... How did he manage to buy the two-million-dollar home for his daughter? How can he afford such a grandiose wedding?... Did you see his new kitchen?... Till Moses reminded himself that he used them for hooks on the pillars in the Tabernacle, and the Jews calmed down.

There was another obstacle in the process. There were times—the Midrash tells us—when Moses struggled with understanding G-d’s directions, and G-d had to show him a detailed vision of what He wanted.[3] Once, during the formation of the Menorah, the sages relate, that too did not work. Moses completely gave up and G-d had to make the menorah Himself.

Then the Sanctuary was completed much earlier than expected, and it had to remain idle for three months.[4]

When the time came for the actual erection of the Mishkan, they again ran into a glitch: No one could succeed in lifting the walls. Even collectively, it was impossible. Imagine the anti-climax, the fear that all was in vain. At the end, Moses miraculously lifted the beams alone.

Yet here is the astounding part in all of this:

All of these parts of the story are completely ignored in the biblical text itself! There are a few tantalizing hints, but overall, the story presented in the Torah is one of a holistic, pure, and ideal experience. No glitches, no politics, no accusations, no problems; a perfectly smooth ride.

One wonders how do we reconcile the biblical and oral traditions of the narrative? If the Midrashic traditions are presenting what happened, why are these details ignored in the biblical text? Is the Torah trying to brush over the disturbing truths? Is the Torah teaching us to repress uncomfortable facts; to ignore the real story, to make believe everything is “perfect” when in fact it’s far from it? And if so, why did the Rabbis in the Midrash “ruin the party” and “spill the beans”?

Creation Cover-Ups

This is not the only incident with this birthmark. We find this tendency at least twice more.

The opening of Genesis records eloquently but concisely the facts of creation and it sounds like pretty smooth sailing. “In the beginning, G-d created heaven and earth...” Over the next six days, a universe is formed. The Talmud and the Midrash, however, tell us that even G-d ran into some seemingly unexpected delays and had to make some serious alterations. Each of the six days presented another challenge.

For starters, the Midrash relates[5] that the attribute of Truth opposed creation, and G-d had to cast Truth away in order to create our universe. The sages also relate that G-d attempted to create the world with the quality of Judgment and was forced to retract to Mercy when He saw that the world could not handle it.[6]

Then: He created light on the first day, hoping it would serve all of creation, but it was too great and luminescent and He deemed it useless (and had to stow it away as a reward for only the truly meritorious.)[7]

Next: On the second day, he constructed heaven and separated higher waters from lower waters. According to the Midrash, the lower waters “revolted” and are still weeping about their rejection.[8]

Next: On the third day, G-d designed trees with edible branches, but the trees disobeyed and produced only edible fruit.[9]

Next: On the fourth day, the sun and the moon were created to be equals, the moon complained that “two kings cannot serve with one crown,” and hence the moon was diminished.[10]

Next: On Thursday, G-d created the fish, including the Leviathan. Then, realizing that if the Leviathan would procreate, it would spell the end of the planet, He killed the partner of the Leviathan.[11]

Next: On Friday, when He wished to create man, the angels in heaven complained it would be a fatal mistake.[12] Indeed, shortly after Adam and Eve were created they disobeyed G-d's commandment to refrain from eating the Tree of knowledge.

Can you see a pattern? Not a single day passed without some glitch or crisis. Yet, none of these “glitches” or “issues” are recorded explicitly in the actual biblical text. There it is as smooth a process as can be. How can we make sense of this shocking discrepancy?

Even more perplexing is the fact that following the six days of creation, the Torah sums it all up with these stunning words:

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי.

And G-d saw all that He made and it was very good.

Very good? Really? Each day brought another headache, another meltdown, and another crisis. What makes it so good?

#### The Second Cover Up

The Tanach describes glowingly and in minute detail the materials and construction and dedication of the First Temple built in Jerusalem without the hint of a glitch. Yet the Midrash adds the “problematic” information: During construction, they hit an underground spring that threatened to flood the entire world;[13] then, at what was to be the climactic finale, the entering of the Ark to the Holy-of-Holies, the gates refused to open against all efforts.[14]

According to the Midrash,[15] the entire dedication of the First Holy Temple was heavily delayed because the night before King Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh and he slept in! It was his mother, Bat Sheba, who had to enter his bedroom, wake him up, and chastise him for oversleeping on the day the Temple was to be dedicated.

We are left with a striking enigma: The biblical text ignores the disturbing details. Then the rabbis come and share with us “the rest of the story.” Why?

#### What Is Your Story?

The answer is a crucial and profound lesson in life. It captures a basic perspective of Judaism. The Torah is not trying to hide anything (a general pattern in Torah is that it tolerates no cover-ups, for anybody), and that is why the Sages felt comfortable exposing all of the details. Rather, the Torah is telling us that when one develops a proper perspective of his or her life, the problems do not always deserve to be mentioned. Not because they don’t exist, but because they don’t define the story of our lives, and therefore we can decide not to make them part of the narrative.

In each of these three series of events—creation of the universe; construction of the Sanctuary and the Jerusalem Temple—something awesomely cataclysmic and earth-shattering is occurring. The infinite fuses with the finite; the impossible becomes possible, Man meets G-d and G-d meets Man. Out of cosmological emptiness and infinite Divinity, creation develops; something-ness is made out of nothingness. G-d “squeezes” his omnipotence and omnipresence into a Mishkan (sanctuary) of a few square cubits, into a building of stone, into the heart of mortal man.

This, then, is THE story; this is what happened. The bumps on the road, true as they may be, do not constitute the story, not because they didn’t happen, but because they are not what really happened; they should not, they cannot,

obscure or even dampen the majestic power and beauty of the events.

The Torah is teaching us how to live. Life is tough. The really important things are even tougher. Raising and support a family requires strength and courage. Building a good marriage is often challenging and difficult. To develop a relationship with G-d may be frustrating and lonely. Many things will not work out as we hoped they would. We face adversity, grief, and loss. There are inevitably times of pain and heartbreak. There are quarrels and squabbles, moments of anger and setbacks. We must confront depression, illness, mental challenges, financial stress, and spiritual confusion.

But we have the choice not to make all of these THE story of our lives. Sure, raising children is challenging, but when you gaze into the loving and trusting eyes of your child—that is THE miracle of existence, not the challenges leading toward that moment. When you connect to your spouse in a truly meaningful way, in a moment of real camaraderie and respect—that is the miracle of love playing itself out in your life. A bad day at work, hours of frustration in running your business, all melt away before the power of something so much greater, so much more real—your growth as a human being and your ability to help others with your money and your experience.

We must look at our lives and ask what is the real story happening here? Is my life a story of hardship and struggle, or am I part of something incredible: I am building a home for G-d; I am constructing a fragment of heaven on planet earth; I am building a Jewish family, a loving marriage; I am helping people; I have the privilege of studying Torah, of spreading Torah, of doing a mitzvah, of inspiring others to light up the world. This is my story; this is my life. The other parts are of course also true and deserve to be acknowledged as such, much as the Midrash acknowledges the other side of the story with creation, the Mishkan and the Temple. I must deal with every challenge and I must attempt to repair it, but I cannot allow it to become THE STORY.

Here we have the origin, thousands of years ago, of what is known today as Narrative Therapy. Each of us has the choice to define and reframe the story of our lives.

When I wake up in the morning, I know that I have fifty things to do today, most of them are not fun; some are difficult and frustrating. But that is not THE story. The real story is captured in the words a Jew says the moment he or she opens his eyes: “Modeh ani lefanecha... shehechezarta bi nishmasi...” I am alive; G-d gave me back my soul for another day. Gevald! How awesome is that? I can now talk to G-d face to face, learn Torah, pray, share my heart and love with another human being, give charity, and become an ambassador for love, light and hope. I can embrace an aching soul, and touch a bleeding heart. Now that’s a life!

Yes, I got to pay my bills, I have to deal with headaches, I need to catch the bank, I have to fix my garage, I need to



call my son's principal, I have to pick up the cleaners, I need to go to the dentist, and I need to pay back the loan, and I was just called to do Jury Duty. But do not let that become the story of your life. Stay focused on the real story – that at every moment you can construct a home for G-d in your corner of the world and bring redemption one step closer.[16]

My Dear Student

At this time of the year, I remember a dear student who passed on on the 18th of Adar, nine years ago. Nadiv Kehaty was only 30 years old when he died. A loving husband, and the father of four young children, his sudden passing left a family and a community in shock.

Nadiv's very presence made you feel how much possibility life contained if it was filled with laughter, love, and innocence. For Nadiv, all of life consisted of one story: An opportunity to laugh and make others laugh.

A memory: I was a teacher, sitting at my desk in the lecture hall, presenting a Talmud class to 25 students. I was focused, immersed, and serious. But then, suddenly, one student leaped into the classroom, jumped over the tables, and after listening to a few sentences, exclaimed with his genuine giggle and pure selflessness: "Rabbi, you are awesome; I love you!"

This was Nadiv on a regular day. I'd melt away. It was clear that his soul was sent to this world to teach us how to love and laugh.

I love you too, Nadiv. \_\_\_\_\_

[1] Shemos Rabbah 51:6 [2] Ibid. [3] Shemos Rabbah 52:4 [4] Shemos Rabbah 52:2 [5] Bereishis Rabbah 8:5 [6] Bereishis Rabbah 12:15. Rashi Genesis 1:1 [7] Talmud Chagigah 12a [8] Tikunei Zohar Tikun 5 (19b). [9] Rashi Genesis 1:12 [10] Talmud Chulin 60b [11] Rashi Genesis 1:21 [12] Midrash Tehilim 8:2 [13] Talmud Sukkah 53a [14] Talmud Shabbos 30a [15] Bamidbar Rabbah 10:4 [16] My thanks to Rabbi Avraham David Shlomo for his help in preparing this essay.

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**Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parsha Insights**  
**For the week ending 9 March 2024 / 29 Adar Alef 5784**

**Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair -**  
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**Parshat Vayakhel**  
**The "New Israel"**

*"And he made the breast-plate as a craftsman, like he made the ephod – from gold, turquoise, purple and crimson wool..." (39:8)*

At the beginning of the Scroll of Esther, Achashverosh throws a party to end all parties. The party of the millennium. He was celebrating his unassailable grip on the throne of the Persian Empire. At this party, he brought out the vessels of the Holy Temple, which the Babylonians had plundered and caroused with. More than this: Achavshverosh's party attire consisted of the vestments of the High Priest. Why did he do this? Was it some elaborate

spoof? Was he poking fun at the Jewish People and their prophecies of the demise of his all- mighty kingdom? Or was there something more sinister behind this charade?

"And the land was formless and empty and darkness on the face of the deep."(Genesis 1:2)

These words form part of the opening words of the Torah. They hint to four mighty empires who will subjugate the Jewish People. The first, Babylon, will snatch the crown of Empire from the Jewish People, and then the Persian, Greece and Roman empires will successively snatch world domination one from the other. Eventually, the last of those empires, Rome and its cultural heirs, will return the kingship to the Jewish People. When that happens, "The lost ones will come from the land of Ashur..." (Isaiah 27:13) and the final exile will end. The name Ashur is related to the Hebrew word "ishur." An ishur is a certification. Each nation who takes the kingship from the Jewish People seeks to "certify" itself as being the true and final recipient of the crown of the world. But they can only do this by proclaiming themselves the true heirs. They claim to be the "New Israel." They claim that the testament of faith of the Jewish People is old; that they have a new one. That, in essence, was what Achashverosh was attempting to do at his millennial party. He was certifying himself as the New Israel. His party was a grotesque replication of the Temple service. The vessels of the Temple were there and being used. He was dressed as the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest. He even went so far as to name his ministers after the offerings of the Holy Temple. He was trying to utilize those forces of holiness for his own means, to set his seal on world domination using the higher spiritual forces. This was no charade.

And we all know how his plan backfired and all turned upside-down, with the Jewish People surviving and thriving, as is beautifully recorded in the Scroll of Esther. May we always merit the same help from Heaven, especially in light of the current security situation in Israel and across the globe.

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**Office of the Chief Rabbi**

**The true meaning of Shalom: Shabbat for Israel**  
**7 March 2024**

*I'm standing here at the entrance to Kibbutz Be'eri in southern Israel, right on the border with Gaza. A place where so many terrorist atrocities took place on the 7th of October. And from here I'd like to pose the following question to you. Why is it that in Hebrew, we have the same word for 'hello' and 'goodbye'? 'Shalom' means hello, 'Shalom' means goodbye. And of course, Shalom also means peace.*

Well, I'll tell you. The reason is that Shalom is also one of the names of Hashem. So therefore, when you greet a person, you say, 'Shalom', may Hashem's peace be with

you. And when you depart from a person, again you say, 'Shalom'. Now, that we are leaving, may Hashem's peace be with you. *Peace is right at the heart of everything we yearn for and everything we pray for.* And that is my prayer, standing here in a place of such awful destruction. And as we enter into Shabbat for Israel, together with so many thousands of people, our prayer is, may this indeed be a 'Shabbat Shalom'. *A Shabbat through which ultimately our prayers will be heard and peace will reign. Shabbat shalom. Rabbi Mirvis is the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He was formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland.*

### ***Drasha Parshas Vayakhel - Focal Points***

#### ***Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky***

The commands for the building of the Mishkan were fully meted. The job was winding down, and this week in Parshas Vayakhel Moshe instructs the nation with the final directives of the monumental task. First, however, he has a message. The portion begins telling us that Moshe gathered the nation and told them that "six days you shall work and the seventh day shall be holy – you shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day" (Exodus 35:1-2). Only then does he continue with the directives that pertain to the erection of the Mishkan.

The strange juxtaposition of the laws of Shabbos in the midst of all the instructions of building a sanctuary is cause for concern. That is why our sages explain that Moshe was informing the Jewish people that despite its importance building a Mishkan does not pre-empt the Sabbath. All work must cease on Shabbos regardless of how it may impact the progress of the Mishkan.

Yet what must be analyzed are the seemingly disconnected verses. Why didn't the Torah tell us of Shabbos' power in a straightforward way, by openly directing the nation "thou shall not construct the Mishkan on the Shabbos." Why juxtapose Shabbos as a stand-alone unit, leaving us to infer its overriding power through scriptural juxtaposition? In fact the words "you shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath" make the command seem totally irrelevant to Mishkan per se and applicable to each and every individual homemaker. If so, the command truly seems out of place. It seems that regardless of its relation to the laws of construction, the theme of Shabbos plays a greater role vis-a-vis the Mishkan. What is it?

*A famous Magid was asked to lecture in a prosperous and modern city. Before he was to speak he was told to consult with the synagogue's president. "This is a very distinguished community," he was told "and we must be careful. We surely would not want to offend anyone with, even the slightest rebuke." The Magid met the president who was sitting in a richly upholstered leather armchair behind a mahogany desk. As the Magid entered, the man rested his lit cigar on the corner of a brass ashtray.*

*"Rabbi," asked the president, "you have a reputation as a remarkable speaker. One who inspires crowds and makes –*

*might I say – waves. Pray tell me," he continued "what are you intending to speak about in our town?"*

*The Magid promptly replied, "I intend to talk about Shabbat observance."*

*The president's face turned crimson. "Oh no dear rabbi, please. In this town, such talk will fall on deaf ears. We all struggle to make a living and Shabbos is just not in the cards. I implore you. Talk about something else."*

*The rabbi pondered. "Perhaps I should talk about kashrut." "Kashrut? Please," begged the president, "don't waste your time. There hasn't been a kosher butcher in this town for years."*

*"How about tzedaka?" offered the Magid. "Charity? Give us a break. Do you know how many shnorrers visit this town each week. We are sick of hearing about charity!"*

*Meekly the Magid made another suggestion. "Tefillah? (prayer)"*

*"Please. In a city of 1,000 Jewish families, we hardly get a weekday minyan. The synagogue is never filled except on the High Holy Days. No one would be interested."*

*Finally the Magid became frustrated. "If I can't talk about Shabbos, and I can't talk about tzedaka, and I can not discuss kashrut, what do you want me to talk about?" The president looked amazed. "Why, rabbi" exclaimed the president. "That's easy! Talk about Judaism!"*

By placing the concept of Shabbos in general, and one of its detailed laws in particular, smack in the middle of the architectural directives of a most glorious edifice, the Torah was telling us that although we may build beautiful palaces in which to serve the Almighty, however, if we forget the tenets of our faith, those great structures are meaningless. Shabbos was mentioned as a separate unit because its relevance is even greater than its ability to halt construction. A Jew must remember that without Shabbos, without kashrut, without tefillah, a beautiful sanctuary is no more enduring than a castle in the air.

*Dedicated in honor of the naming of Shantal Ariana Kash, daughter of Donna and Peter Kash*

*Good Shabbos!*

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

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### ***Rav Frand - Parshas Vayakhel***

#### ***The Rich Get Richer and the Wise Get Wiser***

The following thought on Parshas Vayakhel is from the sefer Nachalas Eliezer, written by Rav Eliezer Cohen, who was a mashgiach in the Gateshead Yeshiva in England.

The pasuk says, "And He filled him with the spirit of Elokim, with wisdom, with understanding, and with knowledge and with every craft." (Shemos 35:31) The Medrash, according to the interpretation of the Etz Yosef, takes note of the verb va'y'MALEH, which means "and he

filled him up.” Filling something up implies that there is already something there prior to filling it up to full capacity. So, if the pasuk says that Hashem filled up Bezalel with wisdom, it means that Bezalel was already wise.

Hashem gives wisdom to people who are already *chachomim* (wise people). This is reminiscent of a pasuk in Parshas Ki Sisa: “And in the heart of everyone wise of heart, I gave wisdom” (Shemos 31:6). Superficially we might ask, if a person is already a *chacham-lev* (wise of heart), why does he need to be given wisdom? The answer is that Hashem only gives wisdom to people who are already *chachomim*.

The Medrash comments that a certain Roman matron asked Rav Yosi ben Chalafta about the interpretation of a certain pasuk in Doniel (2:21): “...He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who know how to reason.” The matron protested: What is this business of G-d giving wisdom to the wise? It should say that He gives wisdom to the fools! They are the ones who really need wisdom!

Rav Yosi ben Chalafta answered her: My daughter, if you came across two individuals who wished to borrow money from you – a rich man and a poor man – to whom would you rather lend the money? She responded, “Obviously, I would lend my money to the person who already has money, so that if he loses the money I lent him, he still has other money with which to pay me back. If I lend money to a poor man and he loses it, from where will he have money to pay me back?”

Rav Yosi bar Chalafta told the matron, “Let your ears listen to that which your mouth has spoken! So too it is with wisdom. If G-d would give wisdom to the fools, they would waste it in the taverns and pool houses (i.e. indulging in foolish pleasures). Therefore, He gives wisdom to the wise, who take it and sit in the synagogues and houses of study and occupy themselves with His commandments.”

However, we can ask a big question on this Medrash. Isn't the Medrash comparing apples to oranges? It is true that someone would rather LEND money to a wealthy person than to a poor person. But if someone is GIVING AWAY money, then clearly, it is preferable to give the money to a poor person, who does not possess any money, rather than to a rich person, who already possesses plenty of money. Lending money is a business deal, so you prefer to give it to a person who can pay it back. But that is not what the pasuk in Doniel is discussing. The pasuk is talking about GIVING wisdom to the wise. If we are talking about GIVING wisdom, Hashem should in fact GIVE it to the one who has no wisdom. What then is the parable of the Midrash?

The Nachalas Eliezer explains that we are missing the point here. When Hashem “Gives wisdom to the wise,” it is also not really a GIFT, but rather it is a LOAN. A person with true wisdom understands that the wisdom he possesses is

not really his wisdom, but rather, it is on loan. (“Talent on loan from G-d”, so to speak.) When a person recognizes that the talent he has been given is “only on loan,” he realizes that he needs to guard it and do the right things with it. “It’s not mine. It is on lease.”

When someone is driving a leased car, he knows that he cannot bang it up. He is going to need to pay for the damage. He needs to return it someday. That is what the Medrash is saying. When Hashem gives us wisdom, money or anything – He is not GIVING! He is only LENDING. When you lend something precious, you lend it to a person whom you know will not abuse it or misuse it.

Therefore, *chachomim* are the appropriate recipients of wisdom. They realize that wisdom is a loan, which will someday be returned, and that they must use it appropriately while it is in their possession. Fools would think that the wisdom they were given is “theirs,” to do with whatever they wish. They would feel that they own it, and therefore they would abuse it.

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**Shema Yisrael Torah Network**

**Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Vayakhel**

**פרשת ויקהל תשפ"ד**

**ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש**

**On six days work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you. (35:2)**

*Rashi* teaches that, in the text, the *mitzvah* of *shemiras Shabbos* precedes the building of the *Mishkan* to warn us that *shemiras Shabbos* overrides the building of the *Mishkan*. Interestingly, in *Parashas Ki Sisa* (preceding the creation of the molten Gold Calf), the Torah introduces the *mitzvah* of building the *Mishkan* prior to mentioning the injunction concerning *Shabbos*. The *Chidushei HaRim* explains that, prior to the sin of the Golden Calf, the six weekday/workdays prepared for *Shabbos Kodesh*. (*Shabbos* was the focal point of the week, with each day bringing one closer to the ultimate goal of *Shabbos Kodesh*.) After the *cheit ha'eigel*, the nation needed their *Shabbos* observance to elevate them to the point that they be worthy of building the *Mishkan*.

We understand from the above that the nation's participation in the Golden Calf debacle harmed them spiritually. They plummeted from the unprecedented level of *kedushah* they achieved when they received the Torah. A number of spiritual deficiencies seemed to “occur” following their sin. They lost the crowns of *Naase v'nishma*: “We will listen, and we will do” (placed on them by Heavenly Angels). Moshe *Rabbeinu* appeared to have some difficulty grasping the idea of the *machatzis ha'shekel*, half shekel, every Jew was to donate. *Horav Zev*

Weinberger, זל, explains that, following their sin, Moshe did not see how they could have the *nedivus halev*, heartfelt donations, that were necessary for the building of the *Mishkan*. Hashem showed Moshe a fiery coin (representing the half-*shekel*). This hinted to Moshe that actually the intrinsic sanctity of the Jew did not become tarnished. The “other half” *shekel* in Heaven corresponded to the one on earth. If the people make their attempt, Hashem will connect the coins. Clearly, a sad change occurred in the nation’s spiritual integrity.

Rav Weinberger adds that much more was expected of the nation prior to their sin. Indeed, we find that the *Nesiim*, Princes, were censured (a *yud* was removed from their name), because they were “late” in donating to the *Mishkan*. Veritably, they acted *l’shem Shomayim*, for the sake of Heaven, when they declared, “Let the nation donate, and we will guarantee the balance.” They did not expect the extraordinary outpouring of contributions from the people. Thus, they were left with no reason to give. At least they tried; they meant well. Why hold it against them? The commentators explain that at the very root of their offer was a minute tinge of indolence, a sort of laziness unbecoming men of their stature. Rav Weinberg posits that this tinge of indolence was evidenced only relative to the nation’s spiritual standing prior to the sin of the Golden Calf. It would not have been noticed after the nation’s drop in spiritual status.

Alacrity to perform a *mitzvah* is measured on a variant barometer. In other words, the greater one is with regard to his spiritual performance, the greater will be his alacrity to perform *mitzvos* and good deeds. He relates that *Horav Menachem Porush*, זל, was called by the *Brisker Rav*, זל, on *erev Shabbos* to write a letter of support for a Jew in need [Rav Porush was a member of the Knesset and a powerful figure in *Eretz Yisrael*]. The *Rav* dictated the letter, and *Rav Porush* signed it. The *Rav* instructed *Rav Porush* to go to the post office immediately to mail it. “Why?” he asked, “No mail is delivered on *Shabbos*. I can mail it tomorrow night.” *The Brisker Rav’s* response should rouse us from a spiritual slumber. “Who knows if we will be alive *Motzoei Shabbos*?” When one performs a *chesed*, act of kindness, for a Jew, he has no room for any kind of indolence.

ראו קרא ד' בשם בצלאל בן אורי בן חור

**See, Hashem has called by name Betzalel, son of Uri, son of Chur. (35:30)**

The Torah mentions Chur twice (other than the three places that he is listed as Betzalel’s grandfather). Who was Chur, and how important was he as a member of *Klal Yisrael’s* spiritual leadership? The first time that Chur is mentioned concerns the war against Amalek. This despicable nation ignored *Klal Yisrael’s* special status as Hashem’s chosen people and attacked them shortly after their liberation from Egyptian slavery. Moshe *Rabbeinu* sent Yehoshua to lead the Jewish men in battle against Amalek. Our leader stood and prayed with his hands spread

out. As long as Moshe’s hands remained straight (out), Yehoshua prevailed. When they began to descend, Aharon *HaKohen* and Chur brought a large rock for Moshe to sit upon, while they held his hands up. We see from here, observes *Horav Aryeh Leib Heyman*, זל, that Chur was a member of the nation’s spiritual elite – on a level similar to his uncle, Aharon *HaKohen*. Bearing this in mind, *Rav Heyman* posits that the egregious nature of the sin of the Golden Calf notwithstanding – it was not the worse sin committed that day. It was the brutal murder of Chur, who was one of the *gedolei hador*, for which they have remained unforgiven.

We should take into consideration that Chur was not only saintly and virtuous in his own right, he was also the son of Miriam *HaNeviah* and Calev ben Yefuneh. Miriam endangered her life to save the Jewish infants whom Pharaoh wanted murdered. Only a miserable few, the lowest of the low, had the audacity and moral repugnance to blatantly murder Chur, only because he had the “temerity” to stand up for Hashem. It was, however, still a violent act of murder.

Interestingly, the Torah glosses over Chur’s murder, making no mention of it. One would think that such a heinous incursion which precipitated an unforgiving Heavenly response would somehow be alluded to in the Torah’s narrative. It is not – why? *Rav Heyman* suggests that this act was excluded in order to protect the esteem of the Jewish people. Such an unspeakable murder committed by a few unwelcome guests (*erev rav*, mixed multitude) casts a pall of shame over the entire nation. Best not to write about it. Indeed, *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* (commentary to 32:1) writes: “Chur’s murder is not mentioned in the Torah, so that a record of this shameful act should not remain in the Torah for posterity, for Hashem preserves the honor of His people.”

I write this entire preface to underscore the extraordinary *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice, the consummate ability to vanquish whatever feelings – including demand for revenge – that may have entered Betzalel’s mind, knowing that the *Mishkan* he would create would atone in part for his grandfather’s murder. Chur was following a family tradition of standing up for what is right, regardless of the possible ramifications of taking such a position. His mother, Miriam, stood up and pointed out to her father, Amram, that he was wrong when he divorced her mother, Yocheved, in order to halt the propagation of Jewish children. When the *gadol hador* acts, the rest of the men followed. Miriam was a young girl (six-years-old); yet, she told her father that his decree was (in a way) worse than Pharaoh’s. The Egyptian sought to rid the country of Jewish males (who could become the potential Jewish leader). By encouraging them to divorce their wives, Amram’s actions were affecting both males and females. In his attempt to support Moshe, Chur’s father, Calev ben Yefuneh, stood up to the *meraglim*, spies, exposing their

lies. With such parents, it is no wonder that Chur became the person he was. Betzalel followed in his noble heritage, building the *Mishkan* with complete equanimity. This, perhaps, is what gives/adds to the *Mishkan's* power to facilitate atonement.

*Mesiras nefesh* for *mitzvos*, self-sacrifice in order to maintain or elevate one's spiritual standing, is part of the Jewish DNA. One does not have to be an observant Jew to give up his life for Judaism and the Jewish People. To achieve the level of self-sacrifice, to be able to carry out *mitzvos*, is in a league all of its own. It takes a special person, with unique values and a penetrating understanding of *mitzvos*, to live on such a spiritual plane. The following two stories are connected by the answer to the question that every reader will raise. The answer will illuminate the underlying dominating factor for *mesiras nefesh*. These stories were related by *Horav Bentzion Felman, zl*.

*Horav Avraham, zl*, brother of the *Gaon, zl, m'Vilna*, was an outstanding *talmid chacham* and *yarei Shomayim*, G-d-fearing Torah scholar (author of *Maalos HaTorah*). He lived some distance from Vilna, which was home to the *Gaon*. The *Gaon* asked his brother to join him in Vilna, so that they could study together. [We have no idea the meaning of studying *b'chavrusa* with the *Gaon*.] *Rav Avraham* replied that, indeed, he would love to join him. His wife, however, was not willing to move. He gave the following reason for her deterrence.

*Esrogim* were normally very hard to obtain. When a town was able to obtain a few, the price was usually very high. One year, due to an early frost, the *esrogim* were even less available than usual, and the prices were beyond the ability of most people's wallets. The community in which *Rav Avraham* lived had an option of purchasing one beautiful *esrog*. The problem was: the price was through the roof. No one could possibly afford it. *Rav Avraham's* wife had an idea. She said, "We live in a nice house which is presently too big for us. We could sell the house and move into the type of hut used by so many of our community's poor, and the profit would be used for the *esrog*." She was not suggesting or asking; she was stating what, in her mind, was a *fait accompli*. They sold the house, fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *esrog* and moved into a small ramshackle hut. She explained that, when she passed by their old house every day, she experienced extraordinary pleasure and satisfaction from the realization that she had given all this up for the sake of a *mitzvah*. An incredible story, an awesome lesson in *mesiras nefesh*, but what about the *z'chus*, unimaginable merit, of studying with the *Gaon*? Does her pleasure override this unparalleled experience?

Next story. The *Shaagas Aryeh* attempted to conceal his brilliance and erudition. He would dress in the simple, tattered clothes of a beggar and sleep on the bench of a *shul*, as he went from city to city on a self-imposed exile. This went on for a number of years, as he worked on elevating himself spiritually by rejecting all forms of

worldly pleasure. For him, life consisted of Torah and *tefillah*. Thus, the *shul* was his home. When he arrived in Vilna, he was able to beguile everyone but the *Gaon*, who was immediately able to see through his camouflage. He invited him to discuss some *Talmudic* concepts. After a few hours, it was evident that the *Shaagas Aryeh* was an outstanding scholar, sufficient to impress even the *Gaon*. The *Gaon* invited him to continue their Torah discussion at his *Shabbos* table.

Surprisingly, the *Shaagas Aryeh* politely declined. He said, "Since I left my wife alone when I began my exile, I accepted upon myself not to sit at a table with another woman." (Apparently, the *Gaon's Rebbetzin* would be seated with them. Understandably, his conversation would be only with the *Gaon*, but still...) The *Gaon* understood, but countered that he would speak with his wife. The *Rebbetzin*, however, rejected the opportunity to eat alone in the kitchen. She said, "I spend one meal with you a week. I do not see you the entire week, as you are deep in study in your room. I am not willing to be *mevater*, forgo, this pleasure." [We must understand that the *Gaon's* wife was no ordinary woman. When she died, the *Gaon* had etched on her *matzeivah*, monument: *Lo hinichah acharah k'mosah*, "She left no other (woman) like her." In other words, in the eyes of the *Gaon*, she was the greatest woman of her generation. Yet, she felt that the pleasure she derived from sitting with her husband at the meal once a week superseded his learning with the *Shaagas Aryeh*.] How are we to understand her actions?

Two stories – two questions – one answer.

*Rav Felman* explains that the *oneg* and *nachas ruach*, pleasure and satisfaction that the *Gaon's* sister-in-law experienced from seeing the house that she had given up for a *mitzvah*, and the pleasure the *Gaon's Rebbetzin* had from sitting with him and certainly speaking words of Torah and *mussar* were otherworldly. In other words: This was her *Olam Habba*, World to Come. When they experienced the *mesiras nefesh* for a *mitzvah*, they were in *Gan Eden*!

ויאמר משה אל בני ישראל ראו קרא ד' בשם בצלאל בן אורי... וימלא אותו רוח אלקים בחכמה בתבונה ובדעת... ולחשוב מחשבות... ולהורות נתן בלב

**Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael, "See, Hashem has proclaimed by name, Betzalel son of Uri... He filled him with G-dly spirit, with wisdom, insight and knowledge... To weave designs... He gave him the ability to teach." (35:30,31,32,33,34)**

Betzalel was filled with a G-dly spirit, with various forms of wisdom and understanding. The Torah goes on to state *v'lachashov machashavos*, which is translated as the ability to put his extraordinary wisdom to practical use. Furthermore, he was granted the ability to teach. Is it not all part of the "wisdom package"? If one is Heavenly endowed with uncanny wisdom and ability, what is added by his ability to weave designs and mentor others? *Targum*

*Onkelos* defines *v'lachashov machshavos* as *u'lalfa u'manin*, to train others in how to carry out the tasks of working with the gold and silver. *U'lehoros nasan* is the ability to convey his wisdom and understanding in such a manner that others can also achieve his level of perception. Thus, they are able to carry on the transmission from generation to generation.

*Horav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zl (Rosh Yeshivas Be'er Yaakov)*, explains that wisdom to be carried forth requires a special merit. Betzael was blessed not only with the wisdom, but also, the ability to disseminate and teach others. Being a scholar is valuable, but the ability to teach and share with others is equally important. Effective teaching and mentoring help to pass on expertise and contribute to the growth of others. *L'horos nasan* affords one to become a *moseir HaTorah*, a “giver” of Torah to others.

A *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, who accumulates a wealth of knowledge through his own efforts is a very fortunate individual. If, however, he is unable to disseminate and teach it to others, this knowledge remains limited in its impact. Knowledge should not stay confined to one person. Teaching also creates a legacy, whereby students carry on the lifework of their *Rebbe* – thus keeping his memory alive and his Torah lessons perpetuated.

Alas, not every scholar is equipped with the capacity to teach. It is a skill which requires the ability to communicate effectively what is easily understandable to him, but may pose difficulties for others. Teaching requires patience and empathy, which are not easy to come by when a scholar is brilliant and may unfortunately be unable to empathize with a student who is not as exceptional. Some scholars have unique learning styles which are tailor-made for their abilities, but not geared to everyone else. There are those who are simply not interested, for fear it will detract from the time they have allotted for their own development. In other words, for some it works and, for others, it does not. Hopefully, those who, for whatever reason, are unable to perform the task effectively will allow those who could teach to do so.

From a positive perspective are those scholars who are mentors par-excellence, who – with acumen, charisma, love and patience – transmit their knowledge in such a manner that the students return to one class and to another until they become learned and transform their lives. Indeed, the greater the scholar, the more innovative are his efforts to encourage his students to incorporate his lessons into their lives.

The *gadol* responsible for being *machzir atarah l'yoshnah*, returning the crown of Torah to *Sephardic* Jewry, was none other than *Horav Ovadiah Yosef, zl*. A *talmid chacham* without peer, who was fluent in all areas of *halachah*, he did not settle to say *shiurim*, deliver lectures, only to the top echelon of the *yeshivah* world. He sought out students

of all backgrounds and levels of erudition. He would provide gimmicks in order to convince his students to attend. These were simple laborers, who, after a hard day's labor, came to a two-and-one-half-hour *shiur*. How did he achieve this? He came up with an ingenious strategy. In addition to the humor and stories that accompanied the *shiurim*, he related a serial story of which he would tell one part daily. In order for them to hear the entire story, they had to attend the *shiur* daily. The fact that his students were, for the most part, not versed in Jewish law made no difference to him. His true goal was their children. He knew that, in order for parents to send their children to a Torah school, they must value and cherish Torah. When fathers learn – children follow suit. This is not a rule – it is reality.

He convinced the *shiur's* attendees, “Soon, the country will need the talents and knowledge of *Roshei Yeshivah, rabbanim* and *dayanim*. If you send your children to Torah institutions, they will become the future leaders of *Klal Yisrael*.”

One participant at *Rav Ovadiah's shiur* was prepared to send his children to *yeshivah*. He was not quite ready, however, to make good on his commitment: “My oldest son is presently in eighth grade. I am sending him to a national religious high school. I need to know that at least one of my sons will earn a *parnassah*, livelihood. [He felt that the general studies curriculum and the school's lack of focus on Torah 24/7 would prepare his son for going out into the world and earning a living.]

Today, this man's three younger sons – who attended *yeshivah* – are distinguished *rabbanim* in three different cities. The oldest, who was the one who trained for a *parnassah*, became an electrician. He is a fine, upstanding Jew who works all day and sets aside time daily to study Torah and attend a *shiur*. He is, however, envious of his three younger brothers, who are great Torah scholars and have at least as much *parnassah* as he does.

#### ***Va'ani Tefillah***

**שירי ל' שיר חדש – *Shiru l'Hashem shir chadash*. Sing to Hashem a new song.**

Interestingly, throughout Torah literature, song is referred to as *shirah*, in the feminine form. However, here the new song of the future, the song that will be the song in the time of *Moshiach* is *shir* in the masculine form. *Chazal (Shemos Rabbah 23:11)* explain that in this world of adversity, where respite from tragedy is often ambiguous at best, every brief period of triumph is just that: brief. It is soon succeeded by further travail, more tragedy. Positivity does not seem to last very long. Since this pattern of ups and downs (with more downs than ups) resembles the female cycle of pregnancy and childbirth, song takes on the feminine form. In the future, with the advent of *Moshiach Tziddkeinu*, the *shir*, song, will be the Messianic song of ultimate, enduring triumph, one not followed by misfortune; there will be no more “cycles.” It will be

straight song. Thus, it is *shir*, masculine in nature. *Radak* paraphrases the above *Midrash* slightly different. In the past, our victories were shaky and weak, similar to a female (who is considered weak in contrast to a male). Only the final Messianic victory will be sturdy and strong, like a male.

*Dedicated in memory of משה בן שמואל ז"ל Krilov  
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prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum*

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***Ohr Somayach Insights into Halacha***  
***For the week ending 9 March 2024 / 29 Adar Alef 5784***  
***The Seudas Shlishis - Rosh Chodesh Quandary***  
***Rabbi Yehuda Spitz***

We all know the Gemara's dictum "Mishenichnas Adar Marbin B'Simcha – when the month of Adar arrives, our joy increases." [1] Although in a leap year such as ours there is some debate if this maxim also applies to Adar Rishon, [2] nonetheless, this year, with Rosh Chodesh Adar Sheini falling out on Motza'ei Shabbos, aside from the inherent Simcha it heralds in, it will also generate some confusion. Truthfully, the issue under discussion is not specific to Adar per se, but rather one that occurs at least semi-annually - in fact, any time that Rosh Chodesh falls out on Motza'ei Shabbos.

As is well known, optimally, one should have a bread-based Seudah for Seudas Shlishis ('Shaleshudis' in the vernacular). [3] As generally speaking, many people's Seudas Shlishis extends throughout the Bein Hashmashos (twilight) period until the time for Maariv of Motza'ei Shabbos at Tzeis Hakochavim, by the time one is ready to bentch, he may have unwittingly walked into a full-fledged halachic debate – and quite interestingly, one with no clear consensus as to the proper course of action.

Is It Shabbos or Rosh Chodesh?

The question under discussion is what does our 'Shaleshudis' eater add into his Birkas Hamazon? We know that on Shabbos one must add in 'Retzei,' whereas on Rosh Chodesh 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' is inserted. [4] Moreover, the Shulchan Aruch rules following the opinions of most Rishonim, that if on these days one's seudah extends into the night, 'Retzei,' and / or 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' are still recited in bentching, even though Shabbos and / or Rosh Chodesh already concluded, "d'azlinan basar haschalas haseudah – as we follow the commencement of the seudah." [5]

However, in our quite common scenario, one started his seudah when it was Shabbos, yet concluded it on Rosh Chodesh. That would mean that his seudah bridged two different obligations that halachically speaking did not actually overlap. When it was Shabbos, it was not Rosh Chodesh. And, when it was Rosh Chodesh, it was not Shabbos. [6] Consequently, which of these additions should be inserted into his bentching? Or perhaps both? Neither?

As mentioned previously, there is no clear consensus what to do in this case, but rather we find that the Gedolei Ha'Achronim debate this very issue. Following are the various positions:

# 1- Magen Avraham and Mishnah Berurah – Only 'Yaaleh V'Yavo'

The Magen Avraham discusses various considerations, including that reciting both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' in one's bentching would be considered 'Tarti D'Sasri' – contradictory – as while he was having his Seudas Shlishis, it was never actually both Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh. The Magen Avraham concludes citing the Shlah, that in a case such as this, whichever addition is considered a 'tosefes,' an extra, is not recited. [7] Accordingly, at the time of bentching, Shabbos has already concluded and it is now fully Rosh Chodesh. Therefore, at that time 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' is considered current, whereas 'Retzei' deemed the 'tosefes.'

Hence, following this shittah, unless one ended the bread portion of his 'Shaleshudis' while it was still Shabbos, only 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' would be recited, as the seudah continued into Rosh Chodesh. The Mishnah Berurah cites this as the Magen Avraham's opinion [8] and seemingly rules this way as well. [9] Other poskim who rule similarly include the Eimek Bracha, Derech Hachaim, Chayei Adam, and Elyah Rabba. [10]

# 2- Sefardic Psak, Bach, and Aruch Hashulchan – Rak 'Retzei'

The Ben Ish Chai and Shulchan Melachim understand the Shulchan Aruch's ruling of adding 'Retzei' and / or 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' when starting one's seudah on Shabbos or Rosh Chodesh even when it extends into the following night, to be a ruling in all circumstances. [11] Meaning, we glean that even in a case such as ours, when bridging two different obligations, the ikar still remains the start of the seudah. Hence, in this case, they maintain that only 'Retzei' would be recited. This is the commonly held Sefardic psak, [12] as well as the Bach, Yosef Ometz, and Aruch Hashulchan's conclusions, that practically speaking, even in our case, "d'basar haschalas haseudah azlinan, we follow the commencement of the seudah." [13]

# 3 – The Taz's Take – Two are Better than One

The Taz, on the other hand, after citing both of the previous opinions, argues that this case is not a true 'Tarti D'Sasri.' He explains that over the course of the Seudas Shlishis one started to eat bread when it was still Shabbos and was continuing to eat when it was now Rosh Chodesh. Hence, he asserts, our 'Shaleshudiser' is obligated to recite both additions – as he ate both on Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh, even though they are technically considered consecutive days. Accordingly, in his Birkas Hamazon, he must recite both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo.' Both the Shulchan Aruch Harav and the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch favor this psak. [14]

# 4 – Kaf Hachaim – No Additions



The Kaf Hachaim takes an alternate approach. He explains that as we are discussing Seudas Shlishis, this may prove an exception to the rule. Generally speaking, as one is mandated in washing and eating bread-based Seudos on Shabbos, one is therefore obligated to repeat the whole bentching upon omitting 'Retzei.' [15] Yet, this may not hold true regarding Seudas Shlishis. As there is a machlokes Rishonim whether it is necessary to have a bread-based meal for Seudas Shlishis, the Tur concludes tzarich iyun whether one must repeat Birkas Hamazon upon forgetting Retzei. Practically, the Shulchan Aruch rules that if one completed bentching of Seudas Shlishis without reciting 'Retzei,' he should not repeat bentching, as lemaaseh, Seudas Shlishis shares the halachic status of Rosh Chodesh, when it is preferential to wash, but not an outright obligation. [16]

Hence, asserts the Kaf Hachaim, as there is no true obligation to for a bread seudah at Seudas Shlishis, it cannot be mandated for us to recite the additions when there are conflicting circumstances, and especially when there is a machlokes what the proper course of action should be. Hence, he concludes, echoing the Talmudic dictum, 'Shev v'al taaseh adif – it is preferable not to take action,' but rather omit any addition. [17]

What to Do?

So, with so many differing, yet, viable options, which should we follow? As noted, there are Rabbinic opinions advocating for each side of this debate. [18] For example, the contemporary sefer V'Zos Habracha asserts that Chassidim generally follow the Taz on this and recite both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' in this instance, [19] whereas Bnei Lita (those of Lithuanian origin) would usually follow the Magen Avraham and Mishnah Berurah here and only recite 'Yaaleh V'Yavo.' [20] And as discussed previously, most Sefardim follow the Ben Ish Chai and only insert 'Retzei.' [21]

Yet, the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch adds a fifth option – not to get involved in this complicated halachic predicament and ensuing debate.

#### # 5 – Avoidance is the Best Policy

The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch maintains that at this specific 'Shaleshudis,' it would be preferable not to eat bread when it is night. In this way, one would avoid the whole sheilah to begin with. [22] As stated previously, everyone agrees practically that when commencing one's meal when it is Shabbos, he should still recite 'Retzei' when concluding it after nightfall. So, by making sure to eat a k'zayis of bread before Shkiya, and then abstaining from consuming more bread afterwards, all would agree that when bentching, all he would recite is 'Retzei' – as he did not eat actually bread when it is Rosh Chodesh at all.

Hence, it turns out that the ideal resolution to our complex quandary may very well be not to get entangled in it at all. Not a Daas Yachid, this optimal solution is given as well by Rav Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky in his essential Luach

Eretz Yisrael, [23] and is cited as the preferred custom of several luminaries of the 1800s, including the Chasam Sofer, Divrei Chaim, Harei Besamim, and Birkas Habayis, [24] and by many contemporary Rabbanim as well, including Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, the Steipler Gaon, the Klausenberger Rebbe, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Rav Dovid Feinstein, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, Rav Asher Weiss, and Rav Yaakov Hillel. [25]

This why we find that anytime Shabbos concludes into Rosh Chodesh, [26] many have a minhag to start their Seudas Shlishis somewhat earlier and limit their challah intake, making sure to finish it before nightfall, [27] all to ensure that they do not unwittingly enter into a complex, complicated halachic quandary, with no clear-cut consensus or conclusion.

Yes, Mischenichnas Adar Marbin B'Simcha, but sometimes that simcha is reserved for resolving (or perhaps avoiding) halachic doubt. [28] May this year's Adar herald in Besoros Tovos, Refuah Sheleimah and Shalom for all of Klal Yisroel.

[1] Taanis (29a).

[2] Although the Mishnah (Megillah 6b) declares "Ain Bein Adar Rishon l'Adar Sheini ela Mikra Megillah bilvad," the Gemara concludes that all Purim-related observances (including the Arbah Parshiyos) are actually celebrated in Adar Sheini, to ensure that the Geulah (Redemption) from Haman (Purim) and the Geulah from Egypt (on Pesach) should be observed in consecutive months. However, there is some debate whether 'Marbin B'Simcha' applies to Adar Rishon. Although the Yaavetz (Shu"t Sheilas Yaavetz vol. 2:88) and Teshuva Mei'ahava (Shu"t vol. 2:301) held that it only applies to Adar Sheini, nonetheless, in a teshuva (Shu"t Chasam Sofer, Choshen Mishpat 20), we find that the Chasam Sofer dated it 'Alef D'Rosh Chodesh Adar Rishon Shemarbin Bo B'Simcha.' There are those who infer that this is also the Gr'a's opinion. See the Gr'a's Peirush on Megillas Esther (Ch. 9:22) that the 'simcha' is inherently dependent on the month of Adar itself, implying whichever month is deemed 'Adar.' On a more contemporary note, see Shu"t Shevet Halevi (vol. 10:105, 3), Shu"t Az Nidberu (vol. 9:49), Shu"t Rivevos Efraim (vol. 3:464, 3), Halichos Shlomo (Moadim vol. 2, Purim Ch. 18, footnote 35), Chashukei Chemed (Purim 6), and Moadei HaGra"ch (vol. 1:682, pg. 315).

[3] See Tur and Shulchan Aruch and main commentaries to Orach Chaim (291:5).

[4] See Tur and Shulchan Aruch and main commentaries to Orach Chaim (188:5), based on Gemara Brachos (48b).

[5] Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 188:10), following the Orchos Chaim citing Tosafos (although there is some debate as to where this source is located), as well as the Maharil (Shu"t 56), Hagahos Maimoniyos (Megillah Ch. 2:1), and Rashal (Biur on the Tur, Orach Chaim 695:3), and not like the Rosh (Shu"t Klal 22:6) who maintains that one does not recite additions in Birkas Hamazon after the zman if the seudah extends past it. Although there is some discussion as to whether the Shulchan Aruch meant this Klal across the board or not, as he cites two opinions without a clear psak in Orach Chaim 271:6, regarding eating on Erev Shabbos and concluding one's seudah when it was already Shabbos, nonetheless, regarding our case his ruling is deemed conclusive. [See Magen Avraham (271:14-15) and Taz (Orach Chaim 188:7) for differing approaches to understanding the Shulchan Aruch's position.] Of course, if one davened Maariv before bentching, he would then lose the ability to recite 'Retzei' in our case, as by doing so, he technically personally 'took on' the new day. See Magen Avraham (ad loc. 17), Ba'er Heitiv (ad loc. 7), and Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 32).



[6]It is important to note that this sheilah is not referring to when Shabbos is Rosh Chodesh, as in that case since there is a Tosefes Shabbos, 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' is recited along with 'Retzei' when one extends the day and bentches on Motza'ei Shabbos. Moreover, regarding Rosh Chodesh as well, unless there is a potential contradiction (as in the our main topic of discussion here) practically speaking, we follow the beginning of the seudah, which in our case would be both Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh. See Shulchan Aruch (ibid.), Magen Avraham (419:1), and Mishnah Berurah (424:1).

[7]Magen Avraham (188:18) and Shlah (pg. 82, Shaar HaOsiyos, Kedusha, Hagahah). As an aside, the Magen Avraham also cites the minority opinion of the Olas Tamid (ad loc. 5) who maintains that this discussion would depend on Tosefes Shabbos and therefore only if one's seudah extends up until and hour and a quarter past shkiya (roughly Zman Rabbeinu Tam) would one still be able to recite 'Retzei.' After that time, one would only recite 'Yaaleh V'Yavo.' The Magen Avraham strongly argues, stating that the din of Tosefes Shabbos is exclusive to Erev Shabbos, and not relevant to this discussion. See also Pri Megadim (Eishel Avraham ad loc. 18). A somewhat similar view to the Olas Tamid, but from an entirely different perspective and rationale is that of the Halachos Ketanos (Shu"t vol. 2:46; cited by the Ba'er Heitiv ad loc. end 8) who asserts that one may only recite 'Retzei' on Motza'ei Shabbos as long as he did not yet digest the food he ate while still Shabbos [which is estimated practically at around 72 minutes as well – see Mishnah Berurah (184:20)]. However, as Rav Asher Weiss (Zemiro L'Shabbos Minchas Asher, Seudah Shlishis end 7) points out, the Mishnah Berurah cites differing opinions what to do in this case, but leaves out any mention of this one, implying that this qualification is not accepted practically, likely as this din is deemed dependent on actual seudah and not digestion.

[8]Although the Chayei Adam (118:4), Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 33), and other poskim identify this as the Magen Avraham's opinion, on the other hand, the Machatzis Hashekel (ad loc. 18 s.v. u'lchein) understood this to actually be the Magen Avraham's elucidation of the Shlah's opinion, whereas the Magen Avraham himself intended to rule akin to the Shulchan Aruch, that we always follow the beginning of the seudah. According to his understanding, in this case, as Seudas Shlishis commenced while it was still Shabbos, the Magen Avraham would rule that only 'Retzei' would be recited, and not as he is commonly quoted, mandated only 'Yaaleh V'Yavo.'

[9]The Mishnah Berurah (ibid.) first cites this shittah but then concludes with the Taz's shittah as a 'Yeish Omrim,' without actually stating one decisive psak. Based on this, and how he is cited by later authorities, implies he deemed the Magen Avraham's psak as the ikar one.

[10]Eimek Bracha (Dinei Birkas Hamazon, 48, Hagahah; cited by the Taz), Derech Hachaim (117:1), Chayei Adam (ibid.), and Elyah Rabba (Orach Chaim 188:20 s.v. gam; and Elyah Zuta ad loc. 18; following the Shlah).

[11]Ben Ish Chai (Year 1 Chukas 22) and Shulchan Melachim (188:10). This also seems to be the Knesses Hagedolah's (Shiyurei Knesses Hagedolah ad loc. Hagahos on Beis Yosef, 18) opinion as well. The Ben Ish Chai adds that when reciting the addition when it technically is no longer the zman, one should omit the word "hazeh," as it is technically no longer accurate. In this he is paskening like the Halachos Ketanos (Shu"t vol. 2:47), who first raised this differentiation.

[12]See Shu"t Yechaveh Daas (vol. 3:55; footnote at the end of teshuvah), Rav Mordechai Eliyahu's Darchei Halacha glosses to the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (44:21), Yalkut Yosef (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 188:19), and Rav Yaakov Hillel's Ahavat Shalom Luach.

[13]Bach (ad loc. end 12; also cited by the Taz ad loc. 7), Yosef Ometz (Minhagei Frankfurt 679), and Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 188:23).

[14]Taz (ad loc. 7), Shulchan Aruch Harav (ad loc. 17), and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (44:17), as well as the Magen Giborim (Elef Hamagen ad loc. 19), and Bigdei Yesha (ad loc. 19; both cited in Shaar Hatziyun ad loc. 26).

[15]This was discussed in a previous article titled 'Facts and Formulae for the Forgetful,' as well as the postscript to another titled 'More Common Kiddush Questions: Kiddush B'Makom Seudah.'

[16]Tur and Shulchan Aruch (ad loc. 8). Although the Tur himself, as well as the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 291:4 and 5), conclude that one should optimally wash for Seudas Shlishis, due to the three times the Torah states 'Hayom' in the Parashas HaMann.

[17]Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 44); Gemara Eruvin (100a).

[18]As Rav Asher Weiss (Zemiro L'Shabbos Minchas Asher, Seudah Shlishis 7 s.v. sof davar) puts it "sugya zu murkeves v'ain bah hachra'ah berurah... u'lechorah yeish lomar bazeh d'avid k'mar avid u'd'avid k'mar avid, v'nahara nahara u'pashtei..."

[19]Indeed we find that many Chassidic authorities ruled that the ikar halacha in this case follows the Taz, and recite both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo,' including the Shulchan Aruch Harav (ibid.), Lekutei Mahariach (vol. 1, pg. 172b s.v. v'hinei; Seder Birkas Hamazon; who adds that one should specifically eat a k'zayis pas after nightfall to obligate himself in both insertions, citing precedent from sefer Derech Seudah of the Maharam Poppers (printed 1678; pg. 80a s.v. seudah; writing "harotzeh latzaeis yedei Shamayim v'chol ha'dei'os" to specifically do so) referring to this as 'Minhag Ha'olam', and Shulchan HaTahor (188:16; who adds that this is only while there is still a din of Kedushas Shabbos – which he puts at an hour and a quarter into the night – [roughly Zman Rabbeinu Tam – similar to the Olas Tamid discussed in a previous footnote that the Magen Avraham objected to]; however, after that point, if one's seudah continues, he asserts that only 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' would be recited), as well as the Belz Dvar Yom B'Yomo Luach (5784; pg. 383). The Debreciner Rav (Shu"t Ba'er Moshe, vol. 1, 5:6) advocates for this minhag as well, and cites many Tzaddikim whom he personally viewed over the years reciting both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' in this instance. On the other hand, other noted Chassidic Rabbanim, including Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson (Shu"t Shoel U'Meishiv, Mahadura Telita'ei, vol. 1:372; adding 'especially during Sefirah'), the Minchas Elazar of Munkacs (Darchei Chaim V'Shalom 307; adding 'even when the seudah continued long into the night') and the Butchatcher Rav (Eishel Avraham, Orach Chaim 188:10, end s.v. vayeitzei Shabbos), all maintained that in such an eventuality, the ikar is to only recite 'Retzei.' The Butchatcher adds that as an 'eitzah tova,' in his opinion, it would be preferable to think 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' in one's mind in this instance, without actually saying it, and this way fulfill all opinions. [He also adds in the next paragraph that if one would follow the Taz and recite both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo,' it is not considered a true 'Tarti D'Sasri,' as 'issura leika bazeh' and there is also no potential issue of 'Lo Sisgodedu.']

[20]V'Zos Habracha (Ch. 15, pg. 145:5). See also Piskei Teshuvos (vol. 2, 188:21) and Shaarei Habracha (Ch. 6:48) for similar assessments. Yet, we find that Rav Moshe Feinstein is quoted (Sefer Dinei Birchos Hanehenin; Hoffner, 124:7) as preferring the Taz's shittah, that in this instance both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' should be recited. On the other hand, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo, Moadim vol. 2, Rosh Chodesh, Ch. 1:21, footnote 82; V'Sein Bracha, vol. 2, pg. 323; and Maadanei Shlomo on Dalet Chelkei Shulchan Aruch, pg. 49), as well as Rav Moshe Sternbuch (Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanhagos vol. 2:119; also citing Rav Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky, Raavad of the Badatz Eidah Chareidis), held that in such an eventuality, the ikar follows the Aruch Hashulchan, "d'azlinan basar techillas haseudah," and only 'Retzei' should be recited. Rav Sternbuch explains that as at that time one only ate bread due to it being Seudas Shlishis, which is only mandated due to it being Shabbos and not Rosh Chodesh, proves that one's intent was due to Shabbos. Hence, only should only recite 'Retzei.' He concludes that if one wishes to follow the Taz, it would be preferable to eat more bread and have intent 'l'kavod Rosh Chodesh' as well and then be obligated to insert both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo.'

[21]On the other hand, we find that other Sefardic poskim take alternate positions. For example, Rav Ovadia Hadaya (Shu"t Yaskil Avdi, vol. 7, Orach Chaim 27:2) paskens like the Kaf Hachaim, that 'Shev v'al taaseh adif, whereas Rav Chaim Na'eh (Ketzos Hashulchan 47:10) and

the Birkas Hashem (vol. 2, pg. 404) follow the Taz, that both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo' should be inserted.

[22]Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (44:17).

[23]Luach Eretz Yisrael (5784; end Adar I).

[24]Piskei Chasam Sofer (Orach Chaim, pg. 55:14), Likutei Mahariach (citing the Divrei Chaim), Shu"t Harei Besamim (Tinyana, end 12; from Rav Aryeh Leibish Horowitz; published 1883) and Birkas Habayis (Shaar 17:37; from Rav Avraham Chaim Einhorn; published 1893).

[25]See Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah (vol. 2, Ch. 57:13), Halichos Shlomo (ibid.), V'Sein Bracha (vol. 2, pg. 323; also citing Rav Elyashiv), Maadanei Shlomo (on Dalet Chelkei Shulchan Aruch, pg. 49), V'Zos Habracha (ibid.), Orchos Rabbeinu (new edition; vol. 1, pg. 165-166:12; citing the Steipler Gaon and his son Rav Chaim Kanievisky), Shu"t Yad Dodi (vol. 1, pg. 66:10), Darchei Halacha glosses to the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (ibid.), Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanhagos (ibid.; citing that this is the minhag of the 'medakdekim'), Zemiros L'Shabbos Minchas Asher (ibid.; also citing this as the hanhagah of the Klausenberger Rebbe; concluding "mi she'ein lo minhag kavua al pi beis avosav v'rabbosav, nireh d'ra'ui linhog k'divrei haKitzur Shulchan Aruch"), and Rav Yaakov Hillel's Ahavat Shalom Luach (ibid.).

[26]Although this sheilah would also technically occur when Shabbos concludes into a Yom Tov, this is less likely to occur. This is because there is a separate halacha that one should not start a seudah on Erev Yom Tov within three halachic hours before shkiya. See Rema (Orach Chaim 529:1), Magen Avraham (ad loc. 1), Elyah Rabba (ad loc. 3), Shulchan Aruch Harav (ad loc. 3), Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 5 and 8), Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 25), and Shu"t Igros Moshe (Orach Chaim vol. 3:68). This is based on a similar din in Hilchos Shabbos regarding Erev Shabbos (Orach Chaim 249:2). If one was not able to do so, then he should still have Seudas Shlishis at its usual time toward the end of the day, making sure to only eat a small amount of Pas (estimated at around a shiur of 'k'beitzah'). Either way, although this sheilah is indeed a distinct possibility regarding Yom Tov occurring on a Motza'ei Shabbos, nonetheless, on a practical level, it comes up less commonly.

[27]The Luach Hahalachos U'Minhagim (5784; pg. 226, footnote 57) makes an interesting diyuk in the lashon of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch and Tukachinsky Luach Eretz Yisrael – that it is preferable not to eat bread 'balayla' (night), to imply that this issue only occurs when it is considered vaday night. Hence, if one continued eating bread while it is still Bein Hashmashos, one would still only recite 'Retzei.' Piskei Teshuvos (vol. 2:188, footnote 81) makes a similar assessment, Rav Dovid Feinstein is quoted as paskening in the same vein (Shu"t Yad Dodi ibid.; "miyad le'achar haShkiya adayin lo tehiyeh ba'aya"), and V'Zos Habracha (ibid.) cites an analogous ruling from Rav Tzvi Webber, noted talmid of Rav Elyashiv, and Rav of Neve Yaakov, Yerushalayim. This also bears out from the Chasam Sofer's minhag, that it is recorded (Piskei Chasam Sofer ibid.) that in order not to enter into

this debate, he would bentch early when Rosh Chodesh was Motza'ei Shabbos – specifically prior to Tzeis Hakochavim (implying it is only an issue regarding nightfall). On the other hand, it is reported (Halichos Shlomo, V'Sein Bracha, and Maadanei Shlomo ibid.) that Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was makpid to finish his Seudah before Shkiya when Rosh Chodesh was Motza'ei Shabbos, and that his local shul davened Mincha earlier than usual that Shabbos afternoon, to specifically accommodate this hanhagah. Similarly, in Rav Yaakov Hillel's Ahavat Shalom Luach (ibid.) it states that optimally, 'yizaher shelo le'echol k'zayis pas achar Shkiya k'dai shelo li'chaneis l'safek.' See also Orchos Rabbeinu (ibid.) citing that both the Steipler Gaon and his son, Rav Chaim Kanievisky were makpid on not only finishing Seudas Shlishis prior to Shkiya in this case, but even bentching before then. [The author, Rav Avraham Halevi Horowitz opines that perhaps this extra chumrah is due to the shittah of the Taz, that one can be medayek in his words that as long as the seudah enters Rosh Chodesh (perhaps even without eating bread then) he would hold one must nevertheless recite both 'Retzei' and 'Yaaleh V'Yavo.' Rav Asher Weiss (Zemiros L'Shabbos Minchas Asher ibid.) writes similarly in his understanding of the Taz. Either way, as discussed previously, this hanhagah is not the halacha pesuka, but rather dependent on the actual achillah of the seudah. Hence, practically speaking, as long as one did not eat bread after shkiyah, he should only recite 'Retzei.']

[28]Metzudas Dovid (Mishlei, Ch. 15:30 s.v. me'ohr einayim) "He'aras einayim b'davar hamesupak yismach lev ki ain b'olam simcha k'hataras hasafeikos." A similar saying is also cited by the Pri Megadim (Orach Chaim beg. 670, Eshel Avraham s.v. nohagin and Orach Chaim 682, Mishbetzos Zahav end 1) regarding why on Chanukah (as we say in Al Hanissim) it is fitting that the 'Zeidim' were given over to the 'Oskei Torasecha.' The Rema (Shu"t HaRema 5) and later, the Bnei Yisaschar (Maamarei Chodesh Sivan, Maamar 5:13; quoting the Rambam, without citing a specific source) make similar statements "Mi shelo Ta'am ta'am hataras hasafeikos (baTorah) lo ta'am simcha miyamav."

For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomos / sources, please email the author: [yspitz@ohr.edu](mailto:yspitz@ohr.edu).

Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority.

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L'zechus L'Refuah Sheleimah Yehuda Michoel ben Sarah, Michoel ben Avigayil, Sarah Chaya bas Dreiza Liba, and Rina Geulah bas Dreiza Liba!

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