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from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <[ryfrand@torah.org](mailto:ryfrand@torah.org)> to: [ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org)  
date: Thu, Mar 8, 2018 at 5:21 PM subject: Rav Frand –

**Sanctifying the Mundane is Precious**

**Rabbi Yissocher Frand**

Parshas Vayakhel

Sanctifying the Mundane is Precious

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These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: CD #1024 – Turning Old Dress Into Cover for a Sefer Torah? Good Shabbos! The Torah tells us that the women donated their mirrors to the Mishkan building fund, and the mirrors were used to make the base of the Kiyor [Laver]. Rashi quotes Chazal that initially Moshe was hesitant to take this donation, because he felt that mirrors were a tool of the Yetzer Ha'rah [evil inclination]. Rashi uses a very strong expression. Not only did Moshe Rabbeinu reject these mirrors, "he was repelled by them" (haya mo'ays bahem). "How can the mirrors — which are made for sensual purposes — be used for a spiritual purpose in the Mishkan?" But the Almighty overrode Moshe's objections, also using a very strong expression in instructing him: "Accept them; for they are more precious to Me than any other donation!"

Rashi explains that in Mitzraim, the men did not want to engage in the act of procreation, because they felt they were in a futile situation where it was not worth bringing additional Jewish children into the world. The women were not so pessimistic. They used their mirrors to beautify themselves, went out into the field, and enticed their husbands. As a result, the Jewish population continued to increase. By virtue of the fact that these mirrors were used for such a positive purpose, the Almighty told Moshe that He considered them to be the dearest donation of the entire Mishkan fundraising effort.

I saw an interesting question raised by Rav Dovid Kviat, one of the Roshei Yeshiva in the Mir Yeshiva. Tosfos says in many places in Shas that Talmudic disputes do not result from "sevaros hafuchos" [diametrically opposed lines of reasoning], where one opinion says "black" and another opinion says "white." True, one point of view can be "mutar" [permitted] and another point of view can be "asur" [forbidden] or one point of view can be "Kosher" and another point of view can be "Treife", but that is only the practical outcome of the dispute. However, the source of the underlying

dispute cannot come from diametrically opposed logical positions. In other words, if one "person" says something makes sense, how can the disputant take the exact opposite point of view?

In effect, Rav Dovid Kviat is asking, what happened to Moshe Rabbeinu here? Moshe considers the mirrors repugnant — he is repelled by them — while the Almighty finds them to be His favorite and most precious donation. How can that be? Moshe usually has a keen understanding of the Will of Hashem. After all, he was Moshe Rabbeinu! How could he be so off base here with his reaction to the mirrors?

Rav Kviat answers that Moshe Rabbeinu was not off base. Moshe's reaction was logical and totally understandable. However, Moshe Rabbeinu was missing a piece of information that the Holy One Blessed be He possessed. Moshe Rabbeinu, who was in Midyan at the time, had no way of knowing what happened in Egypt regarding the intimate relationships between the Jewish men and their wives. He had no way of knowing that the men were hesitant to have children, and that their wives used these mirrors to encourage their them.

This is a way in which it is possible to have sevaros hafuchos. The Ribono shel Olam knew the purpose that the mirrors served. Had Moshe had this same "inside information" regarding the history of these mirrors, he would also have felt the same way. Moshe saw the mirrors simply as tools to put on eyeliner and mascara. As such, he felt they were a totally inappropriate gift for use in the Beis HaMikdash. The Almighty told him, "Moshe, you do not know the whole story. The whole story is that the women built Klal Yisrael with these mirrors. These are more precious to Me than anything else."

Chazal say, regarding the words "With all your heart," [Devorim 4:29] that a person must worship the Almighty "with both his inclinations" (i.e., the Yetzer Ha'tov and the Yetzer Ha'rah). It is obvious how a person serves the Master of the Universe with his "Good Inclination." How does a person serve Him with his "Evil Inclination?" One explanation is by conquering it. When someone has an urge to do something forbidden, he can subdue that urge, and thereby serve G-d by conquest of his Evil Inclination. However, there is a higher form of serving G-d through one's Yetzer Ha'Rah. The highest form of serving G-d is to take that Yetzer Ha'Rah and turn it into a Davar Kodesh [Holy Item]. That is what these women did. They leveraged something that is in fact the Yetzer Ha'Rah. Lust for women, lust for sexual relations, can be internal drives that derive from one's "Evil Inclination." To take those urges, and to make them into an act of holiness, is the highest form of Divine Service. It gives special pleasure to the Almighty, and the tools used to accomplish this transformation became the most precious donation to His Mishkan.

A similar idea is found with the Tzitz [Headplate] worn by the Kohen Gadol [High Priest]. One of the eight garments of the Kohen Gadol was the Tzitz. The pasuk in this week's parsha says, "And they made the Headplate, the holy crown, of pure gold, and they inscribed on it with script like that of a signet ring, 'Holy to Hashem'" [Shemos 39:30]. The words "Kodesh l'Hashem" Were engraved upon the Tzitz, which was worn on the forehead of the Kohen Gadol. This is the only garment that has those words upon it. Why?

Chazal say that the Tzitz sat on the metzach [forehead] of the Kohen Gadol, and the word metzach is symbolic of the term azus metzach, which means chutzpah. On Yom Kippur, as part of the Al Chet confession, we confess for sins we have committed with "azus metzach." Chutzpah is a terrible trait. The Mishna says "Az panim l'Gehinnom" [a person with chutzpah goes to Hell] [Avos 5:24]. The fact that they wrote "Holy to Hashem" on the metzach, which represents azus [chutzpah], is symbolic of the fact that sometimes the attribute of chutzpah can be transformed and sanctified. It can become Kodesh l'Hashem! The item which represents the bad and evil traits in man, when sanctified and transformed into holiness, represents the highest form of Divine Service.

Sometimes we need to stand up for principles, and take action that requires chutzpah. Such manifestation of chutzpah is called "azus d'Kedusha." Of

course we need to be careful, but to take chutzpah and use it for fighting Hashem's battles can reflect a high level of spirituality.

Rav Tzadok comments on the famous Mishna at the end of Sotah. The Mishna writes that in the pre-Messianic era, "chutzpah will multiply." This is certainly true on a simple level in our own time. The Kotzker Rebbe gives this Mishnaic statement a positive twist, and says that in pre-Messianic times we will need to have chutzpah to spiritually survive. We will be in such a spiritually hostile environment, that unless a person has a certain degree of chutzpah, he will melt away in the corrupt society in which he finds himself. The Mishna says that in the time before the imminent arrival of Moshiach, we will need to take that attribute of azus-chutzpah, and turn it into a tool for our spiritual survival. This is an instance of having the words Kodesh l'Hashem engraved on the metzach.

This concept can allow us to properly interpret a famous statement of Chazal. The pasuk in Parshas Pekudei says that they finished the Mishkan, and Moshe Rabbeinu gave them a blessing: "Moshe saw the entire work, and behold, they had done it as Hashem had commanded — so had they done! — and Moshe blessed them." [Shemos 39:43] Rashi adds, "He said to them 'May the Divine Presence dwell in the work of your hands.'"

The simple reading of the pasuk is that now that the work was all done, and the Mishkan [Tabernacle] was built exactly to specification. Moshe gave the people a blessing that the Shechina should now come down to the Mishkan and dwell therein. Why would they need a bracha for this? This is what they had been promised all along. It was part of the deal. The Ribono shel Olam guaranteed, "You build for Me a Mishkan, and My Presence will dwell therein!" [Shemos 25:8] So what is this blessing doing here after they did everything correctly? They had every reason to expect the Shechina now, without any new blessings!

I once saw an interpretation that the expression 'May the Divine Presence dwell in the work of your hands' means more than just that the Shechina would come down to the Mishkan. "Yehi Ratzon she'Tishreh Shechina b'ma'aseh yedeichem" means that the effect of the Mishkan — the effect of having the Ribono shel Olam in your midst — should turn all of your mundane acts into vessels for the Shechina.

"The work of your hands" is not referring only to the Mishkan, to the act of construction. Moshe's blessing was that if you did this right and the Ribono shel Olam is going to dwell in your midst, consequently you will be different people. Your eating is going to be different, your sleeping is going to be different, your business is going to be different. Everything about you is going to be different because you are going to elevate yourselves. This is the ultimate tachlis [purpose] of the Mishkan. "Yehi Ratzon she'Tishreh Shechina b'ma'aseh yedeichem" is the highest possible level of spirituality. "Elu chavivim Alai min ha'kol."

If you can take a mirror, if you can take makeup, if you can beautify yourselves and that becomes a mitzvah — and that becomes "G-d's most treasured contribution" — that is because this is what Yiddishkeit is all about. "You shall be a holy people to me" [anshei kodesh...]. I want you to be human beings, but holy human beings. You should become different through your work and contributions towards establishing the Mishkan.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch says that in Sefer Vayikra, which we are about to start next week, the first Korban [sacrifice] mentioned is the burnt offering (Korban Olah). The unique feature of the Olah offering is that it was Kulah l'Hashem — it is entirely burnt as an offering to G-d. At the end of Sefer Vayikra, the last Korban mentioned is ma'aser be'heimah [animal tithe]. This is a form of Peace Offering [Korban Shlomim]. It is almost entirely consumed by those who bring it.

In other words, the Toras Kohanim, the Book of the Law for the Priests (i.e., Vayikra), begins with an offering that goes entirely to G-d, but ultimately — at the end of Vayikra — the Torah demonstrates that it is possible to take something that is a Korban — Kodoshim Kalim — and enjoy it. We are supposed to eat it; we are supposed to take enjoyment from our consumption

of this holy offering. It primarily belongs to the owners, and they are supposed to enjoy eating it as a spiritual experience.

That is what the Mishkan is all about, and that is what Toras Kohanim is all about. This is what having a Beis HaMikdash is all about. It is about giving us the capacity to elevate our handiwork, to elevate our lives above the mundane. We are charged with taking the profane and making it holy. We take the mirrors and make a Kiddush Hashem with them. We take Chutzpah, and use it for the Sake of Heaven. We take our possessions and our professions and make with them things which are holy. This is the blessing of "Yehi Ratzon she'Tishreh Shechina b'ma'aseh yedeichem".

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com  
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD  
dhoffman@torah.org This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A listing of the halachic portions for Parshas Vayakeil/Pikudei is provided below: A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Rav Frand © 2017 by Torah.org.

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from: Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com> reply-to: rav-kooklist+owners@googlegroups.com to: Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com> date: Wed, Mar 7, 2018 at 1:56 AM subject: **[Rav Kook Torah]** VaYakheil: Choosing a Leader

### **VaYakheil: Choosing a Leader** Betzalel's Appointment

God informed Moses of Betzalel's appointment to oversee the construction of the Tabernacle, and Moses subsequently apprised the people. According to the Midrash (Berachot 55a), however, this was not just a perfunctory notification.

"God asked, 'Moses, is Betzalel acceptable to you?' 'Master of the world,' exclaimed Moses, 'if he is acceptable to You, then certainly he is acceptable to me!' 'Nevertheless, I want you to speak with the people.' "So Moses went to the people, and asked them, 'Is Betzalel acceptable to you?' 'If he is acceptable to God and to you,' responded the people, 'then certainly he is acceptable to us!' The Sages learned from this story a lesson in public appointments: one should seek the people's approval before assigning a leader. Still, it seems superfluous for God Himself to consult with Moses and the people. Certainly God knows who is best qualified to organize the Tabernacle construction; why bother consulting with Moses and the people? Was this just a formality, out of politeness?

### Three Qualifications for a Leader

A great leader must possess three qualities. These qualities differ in relative importance and the ease by which they may be recognized.

The first trait of leadership is integrity and purity of soul. This is an inner quality, only fully revealed to the One Who examines innermost thoughts and feelings. It is also the key trait of true leadership.

The second quality sought in a leader is the wisdom needed to successfully guide the people. This quality is recognizable to people - but not to all people. Only the astute can accurately gauge a leader's sagacity. While not as crucial as the trait of personal integrity, an administrator cannot successfully lead the people without good judgment and political acumen.

The final quality that marks a successful leader consists of external talents apparent to all, such as charisma and eloquence. While these qualities are

less important that the previous two, they certainly contribute to a leader's popularity and effectiveness.

The order is, of course, important. Candidates who excel only in the superficial qualifications make poor and even corrupt leaders. Good leadership is based on honesty and integrity. Upon these traits, the other two levels, political acumen and charisma, are built.

The Midrash about Betzalel reflects this prioritization. First, God affirmed Betzalel's qualifications in terms of those inner qualities that only God can truly know. While critical, these traits of integrity and purity are not sufficient. Therefore, He consulted with a wise leader - Moses - whether Betzalel also qualified in terms of the political wisdom necessary for the position. And finally, the people were consulted whether Betzalel met the qualifications that they sought in a popular leader.

(Gold from the Land of Israel (now available in paperback), pp. 166-167. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. II, p. 262)

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from: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com> date: Thu, Mar 8, 2018 at 9:04 AM subject: My Inspiring LA Uber Ride; Jewish Women's Greatness

### **Covenant & Conversation**

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha

#### **From Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

Making Space by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Creating a home for God on earth.

With this week's double parsha, with its long account of the construction of the sanctuary - one of the longest narratives in the Torah, taking a full 13 chapters - comes to a magnificent climax:

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Sanctuary. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the Glory of the Lord filled the Sanctuary. (Ex. 40:34-35)

That is what the building of the sanctuary was about: how to bring God, as it were, from heaven to earth, or at least from the top of the mountain to down in the valley, from the remote God of awe-inspiring power to the Shekhinah, the indwelling Presence, God as shakhen, a neighbour, intimate, close, within the camp, in the midst of the people.

Yet for all this, we wonder why the Torah has to go on at such length in its details of the Mishkan, taking up the whole of Terumah and Tetzaveh, half of Ki Tissa, and then again Vayakhel and Pekudei. After all, the Mishkan was at best a temporary dwelling for the Shekhinah, suited to the years of wandering and wilderness. In Israel, it was superseded by the Temple. For two thousand years in the absence of a Temple its place was taken by the synagogue. Why, if the Torah is timeless, does it devote such space to what was essentially a time-bound structure?

The answer is deep and life-transforming, but to reach it we have to note some salient facts. First, the language the Torah uses in Pekudei is highly reminiscent of the language used in the narrative of the creation of the universe:

<http://www.aish.com/tp/i/sacks/475768043.html>

Genesis 1-2 Exodus 39-40 And God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good. (1:31) Moses saw all the skilled work and behold they had done it; as God had commanded it they had done it. (39:43) The heavens and earth and all their array were completed. (2:1) All the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting was completed. (39:32) And God completed all the work that He had done. (2:2) And Moses completed the work. (40:33) And God blessed... (2:3) And Moses blessed... (39:43) And sanctified it. (2:3) And you shall sanctify it and all its vessels. (40:9)

Clearly the Torah wants us to connect birth of the universe with the building of the Mishkan, but how and why?

The numerical structure of the two passages heightens the connection. We know that the key number of the creation narrative is seven. There are seven days, and the word "good" appears seven times. The first verse of the Torah

contains seven Hebrew words, and the second, 14. The word *eret*, "earth," appears 21 times, the word *Elokim*, "God," 35 times, and so on.

So too in *Pekudei*, the phrase "as the Lord commanded Moses" appears seven times in the account of the making of the priestly garments (Ex. 39:1-31), and another seven times in the description of Moses setting up the Sanctuary (Ex. 40:17-33).

Note also one tiny detail, the apparently odd and superfluous "And" at the very beginning of the book of Exodus: "And these are the names ..." The presence of this connective suggests that the Torah is telling us to see Genesis and Exodus as inherently connected. They are part of the same extended narrative.

The final relevant fact is that one of the Torah's most significant stylistic devices is the chiasmus, or "mirror-image symmetry" - a pattern of the form ABCC1B1A1, as in "(A) He who sheds (B) the blood (C) of man, (C1) by man (B1) shall his blood (A1) be shed" (Gen. 9:6). This form can be the shape of a single sentence, as here, or a paragraph, but it can also exist at larger levels of magnitude.

What it means is that a narrative reaches a certain kind of closure when the end takes us back to the beginning - which is precisely what happens at the end of Exodus. It reminds us, quite precisely, of the beginning of all beginnings, when God created heaven and earth. The difference is that this time human beings have done the creating: the Israelites, with their gifts, the labour and their skills.

To put it simply: Genesis begins with God creating the universe as a home for humankind. Exodus ends with human beings, the Israelites, creating the Sanctuary as a home for God.

But the parallel goes far deeper than this - telling us about the very nature of the difference between *kodesh* and *chol*, sacred and secular, the holy and the mundane.

We owe to the great mystic, R. Isaac Luria, the concept of *tzimtzum*, "self-effacement" or "self-limitation." Luria was perplexed by the question: If God exists, how can the universe exist? At every point in time and space, the Infinite should crowd out the finite. The very existence of God should act as does a Black Hole to everything in its vicinity. Nothing, not even light waves, can escape a Black Hole, so overwhelming is its gravitational pull. Likewise, nothing physical or material should be able to survive for even a moment in the presence of the pure, absolute Being of God.

Luria's answer was that, in order for the universe to exist, God had to hide Himself, screen His presence, limit His Being. That is *tzimtzum*.

Now let us come back to the key words *kodesh* and *chol*. One of the root meanings of *chol*, and the related root *ch-l-l*, is "empty." *Chol* is the space vacated by God through the process of self-limitation so that a physical universe can exist. It is, as it were, "emptied" of the pure Divine light.

*Kodesh* is the result of a parallel process in the opposite direction. It is the space vacated by us so that God's presence can be felt in our midst. It is the result of our own *tzimtzum*. We engage in self-limitation every time we set aside our devices and desires in order to act on the basis of God's will, not our own.

That is why the details of the Sanctuary are described at such length: to show that every feature of its design was not humanly invented but God-given. That is why the human equivalent of the word "good" in the Genesis creation account is "as the Lord commanded Moses." When we nullify our will to do God's will, we create something that is holy.

To put it simply: *chol* is the space God makes for humankind. *Kodesh* is the space humankind makes for God. And both spaces are created the same way: by an act of *tzimtzum*, self-effacement.

So the making of the Sanctuary that takes up the last third of the book of Exodus is not just about a specific construction, the portable shrine that the Israelites took with them on journey through the wilderness. It is about an absolutely fundamental feature of the religious life, namely the relationship between the sacred and the secular, *kodesh* and *chol*. *Chol* is the space God makes for us. *Kodesh* is the space we make for God.

So, for six days a week - the days that are chol - God makes space for us to be creative. On the seventh day, the day that is Kadosh, we make space for God by acknowledging that we are His creations. And what applies in time applies also in space. There are secular places where we pursue our own purposes. And there are holy places where we open ourselves, fully and without reserve, to God's purposes.

If this is so, we have before us an idea with life-transforming implications. The highest achievement is not self-expression but self-limitation: making space for something other and different from us. The happiest marriages are those in which each spouse makes space for the other to be his or her-self. Great parents make space for their children. Great leaders make space for their followers. Great teachers make space for their pupils. They are there when needed, but they don't crush or inhibit or try to dominate. They practice tzimtzum, self-limitation, so that others have the space to grow. That is how God created the universe, and it is how we allow others to fill our lives with their glory.

This article can also be read at [www.aish.com/tp/i/sacks/475768043.html](http://www.aish.com/tp/i/sacks/475768043.html)

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From: torahweb@torahweb.org to: weeklydt@torahweb.org date: Wed, Mar 7, 2018 at 8:32 PM subject: Rabbi Benjamin Yudin –

### **To Know That You Don't Know**

**Rabbi Benjamin Yudin**

To Know That You Don't Know Koheles (7:29) notes "indeed Hashem created man yashar - perfectly upright, but they sought many intrigues." The Chasid Yaavitz, in his commentary on Avos (5:7) which lists the 10 miracles that occurred in the Beis Hamikdash, asks why did Hashem need to display open miracles? He suggests a most intriguing answer, namely to demonstrate that ideally there is a perfect harmony between Torah, man and nature.

In Chapter 2 of Breishis we read of the Garden of Eden that Hashem planted in this world. The Medrash presents a utopian existence in that environment, whereby man's spiritual existence is primary and his physical necessities are cared for from On High. Lest one doubt the feasibility and reality of such an existence, the supernatural miracles present in the Beis Hamikdash on a constant basis was a clear reminder of that perfect harmony between Torah and nature. When the Torah commands (Vayikra 6:6) that "the fires on the Altar shall remain aflame, it shall not be extinguished," nature responds in kind, and a heavy downfall of rain does not extinguish the fires on the mizbeyach.

After Cain kills Hevel, Cain is afraid for his life and exclaims, "whomever meets me will kill me" (Breishis 4:14.) Who, you might ask, is Cain afraid of? After all, the only humans alive are his family, and while his parents might have "wanted to kill him," they would not literally do so. The Ramban answers that Cain was afraid of the animals, who were so upset at Cain for having disturbed the perfect harmony between Torah and nature. The Torah prohibits murder, and by man committing murder he polluted the environment and thus Hashem had to place a sign on his forehead, warning the animals not to kill Cain. Ideally, there is a perfect balance.

With this background I believe we can understand and appreciate the insight of the Be'er Yosef who cites the Medrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 19:6) that Hashem revealed the reason for the enigma of the Parah Adumah - red heifer exclusively to Moshe. The wise King Solomon said, "I thought I could become wise, but it is beyond me" (Koheles 7:23.) The Medrash understands this verse as an expression of the frustration of the wisest of all men. If, as the Medrash continues, in the future, in Messianic times, the reason for this mitzvah will be public knowledge, why did Hashem conceal its rationale from us? The above enigma, simply stated, is that the ashes of the red heifer mixed with water are sprinkled on an individual who is impure as a result of contact with a dead body, or under the same roof as a deceased. The sprinkling of the ashes by a Kohen on the tamei individual on the third and seventh days of his purification process was essential in removing his tum'ah

and his becoming tahor, while the Kohen who expedited this transformation became tamei.

The Be'er Yosef suggests that participating and engaging in a mitzvah that is beyond our comprehension but clearly Divinely legislated can help us respond to and accept circumstances and happenings that are equally difficult to comprehend. In Parshas Ki Sisa (33:13) Moshe asked, "to see Hashem." This is understood by the Talmud (Brachos 7a) that Moshe was requesting to understand Hashem, specifically why righteous individuals suffer and not-yet good individuals prosper? One utilized the ashes of the parah regularly. Every time one went to a funeral, sat shemira, or participated in the chevra kadisha they became tameh - impure. The frequent utilization of these ashes, "helped the medicine go down." Just as one cannot understand the mitzvah of the parah adumah so too, one often cannot understand the circumstances and timeliness of the cause for this mitzvah. Just as we accept the chok - statute of the parah knowing its Divine origin, so too do we accept circumstances and situations knowing they too are Divinely ordained. Thus, in the imperfect world that we now live in we need the eifer parah as a kind of catharsis to aid our spiritually challenging wounds.

The Be'er Yosef z"tl continues in this vein and discusses the two giants of their times, Moshe Rabbeinu and Rabbi Akiva. The Talmud (Menachos 29b) relates that when Moshe ascended Har Sinai he found Hashem adorning seven letters in the Torah with crowns. When Moshe asked why, he was told that there would be a great scholar Akiva ben Yosef who would reveal multitudes of laws from these crowns. Moshe was so intrigued that he asked to see him in action. Hashem played the projector of the future and Moshe sat in the eighth row of Rabbi Akiva's shiur and was most frustrated as he did not understand the presentation until he heard one of the students ask for a particular source and Rabbi Akiva responded that it is a halacha l'Moshe miSinai - a law given to Moshe without our understanding. This assuaged Moshe's feelings. Thus, even Rabbi Akiva, who revealed so many secrets of Torah, even he, needed to know that there are areas we just don't know and can't understand.

The Gemara continues that Moshe asked to see what the end of Rabbi Akiva's life was like, and was shown his being tortured to death, with Shema Yisrael on his lips (Berachos 61b.) Moshe immediately burst forth with "is this the reward for Torah?" Hashem responded that he be silent this is that which emanated from His Divine thought beyond man's comprehension. Thus, just as Rabbi Akiva accepted halacha l'Moshe miSinai, so too, it was easier for Moshe to accept the Divine plan. Just as in the Torah there are laws beyond our comprehension so too in the Divine governing of the world, there are happenings we cannot fathom or comprehend.

What emerges ultimately from the parah adumah is the bolstering of our emunah. While we cannot understand all, we submit to His higher authority. This is most crucial all year long, but especially as we approach the holiday of Pesach. The parah adumah humbles us, which helps us put Him at the center of our universe, and not ourselves. Thus I pray that our reading and studying of Parshas Parah will not only be a fulfillment of "unishalma parim sefaseinu - let our lips substitute for bulls" (Hoshea 14:3), i.e. that it be looked upon and considered as if we actually brought the parah adumah, but may it inspire us to greater bitachon to know that we don't know, but He does!

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From: Rabbi Berel Wein <genesis@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: rabbiwein@torah.org date: Wed, Mar 7, 2018 at 1:17 PM subject: Rabbi Wein - A Public Shabbat

**By Rabbi Berel Wein Parshas Vayakhel  
A Public Shabbat**

The opening subject in this week's double parsha, which marks the conclusion of the book of Shemot, discusses the Shabat and its centrality in Jewish life and halacha. Rashi points out to us that this parsha regarding Shabat was stated and taught *bhakheil* in a public assembly and gathering – hence the name of the parsha itself – *Vayakheil*.

I have always felt that there is a great implicit but vital message in this idea of Shabat being taught *bhakheil*. Shabat has two distinct aspects to it. There is the private Shabat the meals and family table, the leisure and serenity of our homes during this holy day, the feeling of dignity and Jewish identity that Shabat automatically engenders in the soul of every Jew. But there is also the requirement that Shabat be taught *bhakheil* in a public fashion and forum. The public Shabat is the sign of the covenant between God and Israel and through Israel with all of humankind. It is the public Shabat that reaffirms the communal unity of the Jewish people and determines the direction of our public policies and agendas.

In the absence of a public Shabat the entire community structure of the Jewish people is weakened, our goals and objectives obscured and confusion reigns with regard to our true rights and purpose.. While the absence of a private Shabat for an individual and family eventually proves very costly in relationship to their continuity in Judaism, the absence of a public Shabat is a death knell for the Jewish community.

In recent decades the private Shabat has made a strong come back within many Jewish families. Even those who are not halachically observant attempt to have some sort of Shabat at home, whether it is in lighting the Shabat candles or having a special family meal. The realization of the importance to ones psychological and family well-being of having a private Shabat is slowly dawning on increasing numbers of Jews who otherwise are, in the main, non-observant of halacha and Jewish ritual. However, the public Shabat is slipping away from us, here in Israel and certainly in the Diaspora. Jewish community centers in much of the United States, transformed basically into health clubs for all, stay open on the Shabat. In Israel, *kibbutzim* and some shopping malls skirt the official laws and stay open on the Shabat. Jewish airlines devise all sorts of subterfuges to fly on the Shabat with the excuse of customer service necessitating such practices. But again, a Jewish community that does not provide for a public face for the Shabat is dooming itself to Jewish extinction. It has been said often that more than the Jews guarding the Shabat, the Shabat has guarded the Jews.

In the difficult times in which we live, discarding the public Shabat is tantamount to spiritual suicide. Only by securing the public Shabat and treasuring it as the national gift that the Lord has granted us can we at the same time guarantee our continuity and future success as a people. *Shabat shalom*.

Rabbi Berel Wein Rabbi Berel Wein- Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at [www.rabbiwein.com](http://www.rabbiwein.com)

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From: Torah Musings <[newsletter@torahmusings.com](mailto:newsletter@torahmusings.com)> date: Wed, Mar 7, 2018 at 11:19 AM subject: Torah Musings

### **When to Make Up P'sukei D'zimra by R. Daniel Mann**

Question: Someone in shul did something I see as strange. He came late, skipped to *Yishtabach* when the *tzibbur* got up to it, but then was making up few *p'sukim* of *P'sukei D'zimra* at each of the pauses in *Birchot Kri'at Shema* and during *chazarat hashatz* (we barely had a *minyán*, and it was unclear to me how often he was answering *amen*). Is that the right way to do things?

Answer: Your shul-mate was correct to skip parts of *P'sukei D'zimra* in order to daven with the *tzibbur*, preferably finishing *Yishtabach* together and, more crucially, starting *Shemoneh Esrei* together (*Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 52:1). For *Sephardim*, one may even skip all of *P'sukei D'zimra*, including *Baruch She'amar* and *Yishtabach* (*ibid.*), whereas *Ashkenazim* should say at least those *berachot* and *Ashrei* (*Mishna Berura* 52:6).

However, it was wrong to say parts of *P'sukei D'zimra* during pauses in *Birchot Shema*, during which one may not speak non-crucial things. There are two sets of rules of speech at that time: in between *berachot* and sections of *Kri'at Shema* (*bein haperakim*), and in their midst (see *Shulchan Aruch*, *OC* 66:1). Actually, most of the "pauses," i.e., when we wait for the *chazan*, are in the midst of *berachot* of *Kri'at Shema* or other times when it is particularly bad to speak, even for *mitzva* purposes. (The exception is after "...*yotzer hame'orot*.")

Even *bein haperakim*, the list of permitted recitations is very limited. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*ibid.*) rules that one who did not put on *tallit* and *tefillin* previously may do so with a *beracha* during *bein haperakim*. However, the *Rama* cites an opinion that one does not recite the *beracha* until later, even though putting on *tefillin* at that time is important (see *Shulchan Aruch*, *OC* 25:4), and rules this way regarding *tzitzit/tallit*. The *Mishna Berura* (66:15) explains that since having a *tallit* on at that time is only desirable and not a real requirement, the *beracha* is an unjustified interruption during the *Kri'at Shema* section.

How critical is *P'sukei D'zimra* at that point? For one who skipped all of *P'sukei D'zimra* (see above), arguably, if he now realizes that he can fit it in *bein haperakim*, it might be important enough to do. After all, according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, a make-up *P'sukei D'zimra* will be without *Baruch She'amar/Yishtabach*. We find a *machloket* whether a passing opportunity to make a non-critical *beracha* (see *Mishna Berura* 66:19 regarding the *beracha* on lightening) justifies recitation *bein haperakim*. However, assuming the person said a shortened *P'sukei D'zimra*, why recite individual *mizmorim* at this sensitive point? After all, there already was a basic pre-*tefilla* praise of *Hashem* (*P'sukei D'zimra's* main function), and the fact that one may shorten it shows the rest is not critical. Whatever he recited was out of its normal framework (i.e., between *Baruch She'amar* and *Yishtabach*), and the *mizmorim* can and should be done after *tefilla*. There is a better idea, for one who hopes to get in more of *P'sukei D'zimra* than if he just skips to *Yishtabach* and knows he davens faster than the *chazan*. He can continue *P'sukei D'zimra*, answering *Kaddish* and *Barchu* while in its midst, and then catch up to the *tzibbur* during *Birchot Kri'at Shema* (*Mishna Berura* 52:6).

What about *P'sukei D'zimra* during *chazarat hashatz*? The basic halacha is that it is only forbidden to speak mundane matters during *chazarat hashatz* (*Shulchan Aruch OC*, 124:7). However, *poskim* consider it bad precedent to even learn *Torah* or recite supplications when people should be concentrating on *chazarat hashatz* (*Mishna Berura* 124:17). If it is unclear if there are ten (perhaps, nine – see *Living the Halachic Process* vol. I, A-10) people listening to every word (*Igrot Moshe*, *OC IV* 19) then it is certainly wrong to be involved in anything else. If (as is likely) recitation of *P'sukei D'zimra* will cause him to miss answering some *amens* and this may cause the loss of the quorum for *amen* during some *berachot* (others in shul likely

also sometimes lose concentration), this is severe (Shulchan Aruch, OC 124:4).

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fw from hamelaket@gmail.com from: Ohr Torah Stone  
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subject: Rabbi Riskin on the Weekly Torah Portion  
**Parshat Vayak'hel-Pekudei** (Exodus 35:1 – 40:38)

**Rabbi Shlomo Riskin**

Efrat, Israel — “He made the copper washbasin and its copper base out of the mirrors of the service women who congregated to serve at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting” [Ex. 38:8].

The Sanctuary and all of its furnishings are described in exquisite detail in this week’s Torah portion, Vayak'hel-Pekudei, with one exception: the Ki'ur, the large wash basin in which the priests sanctified themselves by washing their hands and feet prior to each Divine service. Whereas virtually all the other items in the Sanctuary are given exact measurements, here the Torah speaks only in general terms. What makes the wash basin unique? What message is the Torah conveying in highlighting its uniqueness?

For an answer, we turn to the verse that states that the basin was made of the “mirrors of the service women” [Ex. 38:8]. According to Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (19th century Germany), the phrase “ba-marot ha-tzovot” (mirrors of the service women) suggests that the copper mirrors were not melted down at all, but that the wash basin was “...fitted together almost without any alteration at all, so that it would be recognizable that the basin consisted of mirrors”.

This explanation raises additional questions. Of all contributions to the Sanctuary, why should the mirrors retain their unique identity? Does it not seem curious that the very symbol of vanity would find a new incarnation as a central piece inside the Sanctuary? Indeed, without first stopping at the basin to wash their hands and feet, the priests could not begin the Temple service. How could such “vanities” become such a significant aspect of our Sanctuary?

According to Rashi, the inclusion of the women’s mirrors inside the Sanctuary is really the story of a religious metamorphosis; not the rejection of the physical, but rather the sanctification of the physical. And herein, it seems to me, lies the true message of the Sanctuary.

In his commentary to Ex. 38:8, Rashi cites our Sages, who taught that when the Israelite women brought a gift offering of the actual mirrors, they were initially rejected by Moses because they were made for the evil instinct. But God said to Moses: “Accept them; these are more beloved to me than anything else. Through these mirrors, the women established many legions in Egypt.” (A play on the word “tzovot”, translated as “service women”, but which literally means “legions”, and is a reference to the multitudes of children whom the women conceived and birthed.)

Rashi continues: “When the husbands would come home exhausted from backbreaking work, their wives would bring them food and drink. And they would take the mirrors, and would appear together with their husbands in the reflection of the mirror. Thus they would entice their husbands (in order to) become pregnant” [Midrash Tanchuma].

The mirrors thus represent the women’s unswerving faith in their people’s future, which is all the more impressive given that at that time, the Israelites were being enslaved and their male babies thrown into the Nile during the Egyptian subjugation. Logic certainly dictated not having any children. After all, how could one bring innocent babies into a life of suffering and likely death?!

But the women were sustained by the tradition of the Covenant of the Pieces [Gen. 15], God’s promise of redemption. Consider what would have happened had the Israelite women not found a way to entice their husbands. Jewish history would have ended almost before it began, in the very first exile of Egypt, devoid of a next generation of Jewish continuity.

In effect, the transformation of these mirrors of desire into the basin of purification is the Torah’s way of rewarding the women for their devotion and explaining to future generations the Torah’s ideal of the sanctification of the physical and the uplifting of the material. They looked into the mirrors and saw not only themselves and their husbands, but the multitudes of a Jewish future.

A Talmudic teaching brings home this point to a striking degree: “Rav Katina said: When the Jewish people would go up to Jerusalem during the festivals, the keepers of the Sanctuary would roll back the curtain covering the holy ark, and would reveal to the Jews who came up to Jerusalem, the cherubs, which were in the form of a male and female embracing each other. And they would say, ‘See the love that God has for you, like the love of a male and female’” [BT, Yoma 54a].

Love for another, expressed in the highest form by love for one’s beloved, is the greatest manifestation of sanctity, and it is precisely this attraction that has the power to secure our Jewish eternity. Thus, the Sanctuary is sanctified by the mirrors of the women in Egypt, who taught, by their example, how to turn the most physical human drive into the highest act of Divine service. Shabbat Shalom.

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**Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim**  
**From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva**  
**Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a**

Text Message Q&A #280 Ask Rav Aviner: [toratravaviner@yahoo.com](mailto:toratravaviner@yahoo.com)  
Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion Visit our blog:  
[www.ravaviner.com](http://www.ravaviner.com) Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:

**Why Ha-Rav Wears a Non-Black Knit Kipa Q:** In a talk, Ha-Rav said that although the basic Halachah is that one may wear a non-black Kipa, there is a positive aspect to wearing a black Kipa, as was the practice of many in previous generations, including Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah and many of his great students also follow this practice. If so, why doesn't Ha-Rav want the Zechut of wearing a black Kipa? **Why does Ha-Rav instead wear a blue Kipa with a white stripe? A:** I want to wear a Kipa similar to that of Tzahal soldiers, who display self-sacrifice to sanctify Hashem's Name (i.e. a knit Kipa with color).

**Choosing a Yeshiva Q:** How does one choose a Yeshiva? **A:** By finding a place where he will be filled with the most positive character traits and fear of Hashem, and where he will learn the most Torah.

**Class on "Road Safety" to Arabs Q:** Can I teach classes on "Road Safety" (both for drivers and pedestrians) in an Arab school? **A:** Absolutely. It is part of the seven Mitzvot incumbent on non-Jews.

**Mitzvot Worth 20 Times in Eretz Yisrael Q:** Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah said in the name of the Chafetz Chaim that fulfilling a Mitzvah in Eretz Yisrael is worth 20 times of fulfilling the same Mitzvah outside of Israel (Le-Netivot Yisrael Volume 1, pp. 160, 202. Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah - Vayikra, p. 265. Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah - Talmud Torah, p. 247).

**What is the source of 20 times? A:** It is just an expression to emphasize that fulfilling Mitzvot in Eretz Yisrael is on a different level (The Satmar Rebbe said that fulfilling a Mitzvah in Eretz Yisrael is worth twice that of fulfilling it in Chutz La-Aretz. Vayael Moshe, Ma'amar Yishuv Eretz Yisrael 132:1. He also writes that transgressing in Eretz Yisrael is much more severe than doing so outside of Israel).

**Edible Page of Gemara Q:** Is it permissible to print a page of Gemara on edible material to put on a cake and then eat it? **A:** No, since it is forbidden to erase words of Torah. Although there is room to discuss the fact that it was printed for this purpose (See Shut Zekan Aharon 2:70).

Inviting Rabbis to Wedding Q: My son is getting married and I don't have the courage to invite all of the Rabbis, since it would mean hours of travel for them to get there. What should I do? A: Indeed, do not invite them. It is Bitul Torah (The Meharshag said that his Rebbe, the Maharam Shick, told his grandson not to go to all happy occasions and weddings, adding that when one sits and learns Torah, he never regrets it. Shut Meharshag 2:125. And at the wedding of the granddaughter of the Admor of Tzanz from Netanya, they were discussing this Teshuvah, and Ha-Rav Shlomo Lemberger, Av Beit Din Makava Ashdod, said: My father ztz"l would say: And how many weddings were there in the Meharshag's city? Two or three a year... The Admor of Tzanz said: In the large cities like Bnei Brak, it is difficult to fulfill the obligation to participate in Simchas... B"H, Bli Ayin Ha-Ra, there are so many every day, may they increase... In the weekly parashah sheet 'Betzila Demehimnuta' - Parashat Vayera 5778). Great Torah Scholars and Redemption Q: How is it possible that great Torah scholars hold that Redemption cannot come through natural processes? A: They are great Torah scholars in other areas. Special thank you to Orly Tzion for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parashah Sheet

<http://www.koltorah.org/index2.html>

Proposed Standards for Creating and Maintaining a Kosher Community

## **Eruv - Part 1**

**by Rabbi Chaim Jachter**

### Introduction

During the past twenty years, I have been involved with the creation and maintenance of many communal Eruvin. In this essay, I will present proposed protocols for community Eruvin to be maintained at an appropriate Halachic standard, based on my experience in this field. Proper standards can be met by strictly adhering to the outlined protocols. We shall focus our discussion on four groups that are crucial to the success of a community Eruv: the Poseik, the community Rav, the weekly inspectors, and the community.

### The Poseik

Creating and maintaining proper Eruvin involves complex Halachic issues. A Poseik of eminent stature must be consulted to issue Halachic rulings regarding a community Eruv. The qualifications of someone to serve as a Poseik for a community Eruv are as follows:

1. He must be an expert in the Gemara, Rishonim and the many Acharonim (especially the Chazon Ish, who is widely regarded as having great authority in this area of Halacha, perhaps even more than the Mishnah Berurah) who discuss the practical details of Eruv design and construction.
2. He must have extensive experience in dealing with community Eruvin, which includes working in the field with utility poles.
3. He must be widely recognized in the Orthodox community as an authority in the field of Eruvin.

The Poseik must set standards and protocols for the community. He must set optimal standards as well as emergency (She'at HaDechak) standards which can be relied upon when a problem arises shortly before the onset of Shabbat. He must establish protocols in determining the standards for both the creation and maintenance of the Eruv. For example, he must establish how often utility wires must be inspected and, if river banks are used, how often they must be checked to insure that they remain at a proper angle and height to serve as part of the Eruv. Rav Gavriel Bechoffer, the author of The Contemporary Eruv, suggested that the Poseik be asked to review the Eruv twice every seven years (similar to a Mezuzah; see Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 291:1).

No change in the Eruv should be made without consulting the Poseik.

### The Local Rav

The second key figure in Eruvin is the local Rav. He needs numerous qualifications:

1. He must have extensive training and knowledge of Hilchot Eruvin both in theory and practice. We cannot rely solely upon the fact that a Rav of eminent stature designed and once inspected the Eruv. Eruvin are quite vulnerable to weather, vandalism, and utility company workers shifting poles and wires. Eruvin become disqualified quickly and often, especially very large ones. The community depends on the local Rav to facilitate repair of the Eruv in a proper manner.
  2. He must insure that there is an extensive and clear record of every detail of precisely how the Eruv is constructed. Every change in the Eruv's construction must be duly noted. The Rav must be intimately familiar with every detail of the Eruv and involved in its inspection on a regular basis. Ideally, the Rav should be the one who inspects the Eruv each week, as the Chazon Ish did in Bnei Brak every Friday morning, even in the most inclement weather (Pe'ir HaDor 2:136 and 285). Experience teaches that when community rabbis do not attend to the community Eruv, the kashrut of the Eruv deteriorates.
  3. He must understand when it is appropriate to consult the Eruv's Poseik.
  4. The Rav must insure that the Eruv adheres to the highest standards of ethics and safety. I heard directly from Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik that no portion of the Eruv should be constructed without obtaining the necessary permission. Eruvin must be a source of Kiddush Hashem in the community.
  5. Alternative routes for the Eruv must be explored in case of recurrent problems in specific portions of the Eruv.
  6. He must insure that She'at HaDechak standards do not evolve into the conventional standards for the Eruv. For example, a "Lechi" (a portion of a doorframe necessary in the creation of an Eruv; see my Gray Matter 1 pp. 181-182) that was attached to a utility pole shortly before Shabbat in a less-than-optimal fashion (see *ibid.* p. 183 for a related conversation I had with Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach) should not remain a permanent component of the Eruv.
  7. The Rav must insure that the Eruv Chatzeirot (see *ibid.* 1 pp. 194-196) and Sechirat Reshut (see *ibid.* pp. 197-199) remain updated and cover the entire area encompassed by the Eruv. Rav Schachter recommends that Sechirat Reshut should not be made for longer than twenty years (see Mishnah Berurah 382:48 and Netivot Shabbat 37:28 and note 20 for a variety of opinions regarding this issue).
  8. There is great pressure on a Rav to insure that the Eruv encompass all members of the community. He must insure that expanding the Eruv does not compromise its Halachic standards and integrity and/or become too large to properly supervise.
  9. Experience teaches that a community that does not yet employ a Rav should not establish an Eruv. Although there is great motivation to establish an Eruv in order to attract people to the community, Eruvin easily and quickly fall into disrepair without on-site rabbinic supervision.
  10. When a community is "in between rabbis" the Eruv should not be relied upon.
- Eruv Inspectors
- Of no less importance are those who inspect the Eruv on a regular basis.
1. Optimally the Eruv inspectors should be Talmidei Chachamim who are well-versed in the theory and practice of Hilchot Eruvin. At minimum, they should be God-fearing Jews who are highly scrupulous in their observance of Jewish Law who will inspect the Eruv meticulously (see Rav Asher Bush's Teshuvot Shoel BeShlomo number 12, based on Rama Y.D. 127:3).
  2. They should never make any changes or repairs to the Eruv without consulting the local Rav.
  3. They must have a thorough knowledge and understanding of every detail of the Eruv so that they will be able to spot a potential problem in the Eruv. Their knowledge of Hilchot Eruvin should be sufficient for them to know when to alert the local Rav to a problem.
  4. They must record where the Eruv is most vulnerable and must inform the Rav of recurrent problems in specific locations.

5. They must be alert to specific Halachic issues that arise for time to time, such as tangling of wires in trees during springtime. The appearance of a brand new utility pole often signals that the Eruv has been compromised.
6. They must not (except for unusual circumstances) drive a car and inspect the Eruv simultaneously. They will either not drive properly or not inspect the Eruv properly (or both) if they attempt to do both concomitantly.
7. Candidates for Eruv inspectors should be tested to determine competency in this task.
8. The Rav and Poseik should be consulted as to whether the Eruv can be inspected earlier than Friday in case of great need. (See Teshuvot Doveiv Meisharim 2:28, who insists that Eruvin be inspected on Friday.)

#### The Community

Finally, the community maintaining the Eruv must be alert.

1. It must realize that the maintenance of a community Eruv requires a very significant amount of time, resources and effort on an ongoing basis. The price of a kosher Eruv is eternal vigilance. All too often, communal enthusiasm regarding an Eruv wanes after it is constructed. Ongoing attention insures that the Eruv does not fall into disrepair.

2. As suggested by Rav Hershel Schachter, the community should be aware of the route of the Eruv so that members can alert their Rav and Eruv committee to potential problems, such as utility pole construction.

3. It should consider adopting the practice (initiated by Rav Pinchas Teitz) of the Elizabeth, New Jersey Jewish community to declare the Eruv out of operation once a year in order to educate the community that carrying is forbidden on Shabbat (see Eruvin 59a). Otherwise, a generation is raised not knowing the prohibition to carry on Shabbat. For example, a woman who grew up in a community encircled by an Eruv told me that she never knew that there is a difference between Shabbat and Yom Tov with regard to Hotzaah. In Elizabeth, the Eruv is always declared "down" on the Shabbat that follows Parashat Zachor. We should note that not all Rabbanim subscribe to this practice.

#### Conclusion

In contemporary Israeli and North American Orthodox communities, it is almost expected that there be an Eruv and that the community Rav properly maintain it. Indeed, Halacha assumes that an Eruv should be established whenever it is possible to do so (see Eruvin 67b-68a, Mordechai Eruvin number 515, Teshuvot HaRosh 21:8, Teshuvot Chatam Sofer Orach Chaim 89 and Teshuvot Har Zvi O.C. 2:24). However, not all community members are sufficiently sensitized to the time and effort necessary to achieve the goal of maintaining a kosher community Eruv. Many if not most Rabbanim are severely overburdened and cannot, in most cases, be expected to maintain the Eruv without abundant and generous communal support, both moral and financial. The community must be willing to devote time to insure the Eruv's success. On the other hand, community members cannot be expected to successfully maintain an Eruv at an appropriate Halachic level unless the local Rav is involved with the Eruv on an ongoing basis. The synergy of Rav and community will insure that our Eruvin maintain the same high standards as they did at the time of their creation.

A document that presents these protocols in much greater detail has been submitted for review by leading Poskim. Please share any comments and insights by contacting me at [koltorah@koltorah.org](mailto:koltorah@koltorah.org).

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date: Mon, Feb 17, 2014 at 5:22 AM

subject: VBM-SICHOT74 -22: Parashat Vayakhel

PARASHAT VAYAKHEL

**SICHA OF HARAV MOSHEH LICHTENSTEIN**

The Haftara of Vayakhel

Translated by David Strauss

The haftara for Parashat Vayakhel (according to Sephardic custom,

Melakhim I 7:13-39; according to Ashkenazic custom, Melakhim I 7:40-50) is yet another entry in the series of haftarot taken from the chapters of Melakhim dealing with Shlomo's Temple. These haftarot accompany the reading of the parshiyot in the book of Shemot that deal with the Mishkan, namely, Teruma, Vayakhel and Pekudei.[1]

One of the striking differences between the account of the Temple and the account of the Mishkan concerns the relationship between the structure and its vessels. Anyone who reads Parashat Teruma can see that the Torah focuses primarily on the vessels of the Mishkan. Immediately following the command, "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them," the Torah continues at length with the sections dealing with the building of the ark, the table and the candelabrum as practical applications of that mitzva. Only after completing the description of the various vessels does the Torah begin to relate the mitzva of building the Mishkan itself. Later as well, the sections dealing with the brass altar, the golden altar and the laver seize significant space. Indeed, it is not for naught that the Ramban writes: The main desire in the Mishkan is the site of the resting of the Shekhina which is the ark, as it is stated: "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the covering" (Shemot 25:22). Therefore, the ark and its cover are mentioned first, for it is first in importance. And following the ark come the table and the candelabrum which are vessels like it. They teach about the essence of the Mishkan which was made for them. (Commentary on Shemot 25:2) Without going into a broad halakhic discussion regarding the precise relationship between the Mishkan and the vessels,[2] it is clear to anyone who reads Parashat Teruma and Parashat Vayakhel that the vessels are a central component of the Mikdash. In contrast, the passages in the book of Melakhim are formulated very differently. The candelabrum, the table and the altar play only a minor role in the description of the Temple in Jerusalem, and even the role and status of the ark is much more modest than in Shemot. It is telling that the command regarding the candelabrum and the table in the Mishkan continues for eighteen consecutive verses (Shemot 25:23-40)[3] and the account of their actual fashioning takes up another five verses, while in the book of Melakhim a mere three verses are dedicated to these two vessels (Melakhim I 7:48-50). These verses, which are part of our haftara, are swallowed up in the framework of a fairly general description, and they don't merit a separate section or independent importance. In similar fashion, the extended description of the golden altar in the Torah (Shemot 30:1-10; 37:25-28) contrasts with the brief description of the altar in Melakhim I (6:20-21; 7:48). What is more, the burnt-offering altar that merits an entire section in Teruma and another section in Vayakhel is not mentioned at all in the account of the building of the Temple.[4] Among all the vessels of the Temple, only the laver, which is not mentioned at all in Teruma, but only at the beginning of Ki-Tisa in the context of the preparations for the service, and not as part of the Mishkan itself, is given significant treatment in the description of the Temple!

In other words, in the book of Shemot the walls serve as a shell for the vessels that are the heart of the Mishkan, whereas in the book of Melakhim the structure itself is central, while the vessels are meant merely to fill the structure. This point is especially striking in our haftara. If we read the account of the building of the Temple in Melakhim I 7, we immediately see that ample space is dedicated to a description of the two pillars of the Ulam (Yakhin u-Bo'az). The verses describe in great detail the capitals and decorations added to these pillars, meaning that the building was not meant to function as a shell for the holy vessels found inside, but rather that it enjoyed independent symbolic and spiritual significance. Therefore, it was of utmost importance to decorate and adorn it in its own right. Scripture emphasizes the "capitals of molten brass" (16), "nets of checkerwork" (17), "pomegranates" (18) and "lilywork" (19) because of their artistic and spiritual expression; their role is ornamental and symbolic, and not only functional. This is, of course, the reason that they are given names; if the function of the pillars was merely to support the doorposts and lintels so that

they not fall down, they would certainly not have been assigned names. But since they are not merely part of the construction of the building, but rather works of art, they are given names like other works of art.

The contrast to what we find in the Mishkan could not be greater. There, the pillars serve exclusively to hold up the curtains of the Mishkan and support the structure, and therefore there is no mention of any decorative elements. Needless to say, the pillars do not have names, capitals or nets of checker work. Thus, in addition to the contrast mentioned above between the descriptions of the Mishkan and Shlomo's Temple with respect to the relationship between the vessels and the building, the respective texts' attitudes toward the pillars attest to a significant difference between the Mishkan and the Temple with respect to the purpose of the building in itself.

The truth is that the pillars are not merely ornamental, but also monumental. They are eighteen cubits tall, twelve cubits in circumference, and their capitals are five cubits in height. These dimensions also attest to the fact that the building, with its pillars, was meant to impress and to fill a symbolic and representational role in addition to its functional role.

A similar process is also evident in the second utensil that stars in the haftara: the sea and the bases. These correspond to the laver and its pedestal that appear in Ki-Tisa. Whereas the Torah presents the laver in utmost brevity as a functional vessel that contains water, the main purpose of which is to enable the priests to wash their hands and feet ("And you shall make a laver of brass... for washing... and you shall put water in it. For Aharon and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat"), in our haftara the sea becomes a vessel with independent importance and symbolic significance. Its functional purpose is not even mentioned. This is especially striking in the account of the base.[5] It merits a separate section, has its own name and is not merely an appendage to the laver as it is in the Torah – "a laver of brass, and its pedestal also of brass" (Shemot 30:18) – and it is crowned and decorated with animal figures and keruvim between its borders. According to various opinions, the symbolism of these decorations is exceedingly significant; the Radak (v. 33) goes as far as to say that these decorations are an expression of the Shekhina's heavenly chariot!

Here too, the dimensions of the laver are very large (five cubits high and thirty cubits in circumference) and they reflect the tendency toward monumental dimensions, beyond functional necessity, that rules in the Temple.

It should be noted further that Shlomo did not suffice with one candelabrum and one laver, as were found in the Mishkan, but built ten of each, despite the fact that one of each would have been enough to fulfill the relevant mitzvot. What is evident here is an increase in magnitude and the creation of the impression of power and prosperity, above and beyond what was needed on the practical level. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the altar constructed by Shlomo was exceedingly large – considerably larger than the altar made by Moshe.[6]

The conclusion that arises from all this is that with the building of the Temple, the format of the Mishkan changed considerably, translating into a larger building of great dimensions, decorated with precious metals, carved walls, wonderfully fitted decorations, and large and numerous vessels. The principle underlying the building was splendor and majesty, which found expression in the larger dimensions, material wealth and structural decorations. It should be emphasized that in the wake of Chazal's accounts of the Temple of Herod, we tend to attribute these features to the second Temple, but in truth, this was already the trend set by Shlomo's Temple.

All this stands in stark contrast to the Mishkan in the wilderness. This was a temporary structure that could be taken apart, its roof was a tent, and its dimensions were much more modest. It seems that this is not only an aesthetic difference but also an expression of a different kind of spiritual experience. The Mishkan conveyed a feeling of intimacy between man and God; it was sort of a small, pleasant cottage, in which man could be alone with his God. Of course, there too there was a responsibility to maintain reverence, and the quality of "rejoicing with trembling" prevailed, but its

purpose was not to be a structure that broadcasted strength and power to the outside. Rather, the purpose of the Mishkan was to express the relationship between man and God. The prophecy of Yeshayahu, "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all the nations shall flow unto it" (Yeshayahu 2:2), reflects the ethos of the Temple that faced outward with an intensity of strength, and whose architecture was intended to express this. The Mishkan, on the other hand, did not accord with this model.

Additionally, it seems that the second distinction between the two institutions – the inversion of the relationship between the vessels and the building – reflects a more fundamental difference between them. The vessels as independent works of art, as the candelabrum is described in Shemot, serve the goal of bringing God close to man; they are like an ornament that attests to the closeness between the two. This point is stated explicitly in the famous midrash about the candelabrum, which states that "it is testimony to mankind that the Shekhina rests upon Israel." However, it applies more generally as well, for the vessels were used inside the Mishkan, whereas the structure was prominent from afar. Accordingly, to the extent that the holy vessels have significance beyond their functional role, it is to testify that the Shekhina rests upon Israel.

To summarize, there are significant differences between the Mishkan and the Temple: the former conveyed intimacy and modesty, while the other expressed strength and power; the former placed greater emphasis on the quality of love, while the latter emphasized the quality of fear; the former turned inward and was directed exclusively at Israel, while the latter looked out to all of humanity. Therefore, in the Mishkan the building is simple and functional, whereas in the Temple it is a monumental work of art.

Were we to formulate this in more popular language and translate the matter with a metaphor taken from our own religious world, we might say that the Temple reflects building in the style of the Great Synagogue of Jerusalem, while the Mishkan is more like a modest shtiebel. The first has an impressive presence, while the second lacks any architectural feature beyond its four walls, but has much human warmth and in it the worshiper feels at home. Such a formulation presents us with a critical question: Was a spiritual price paid for building the Temple in the grandiose architectural style selected for it? There are many who enjoy the impressive form of major synagogues and see in their construction an architectural-spiritual achievement. But there are also large sectors of the public who tend to identify the small and vibrant neighborhood shtiebel as a warm and welcoming place of prayer, while the grandiose synagogues convey a certain sense of alienation and distance toward those who enter their gates. Assuming that this feeling does, in fact, exist, and that its existence is not desirable – and one can challenge both claims – we must ask whether such a problem or feeling existed in the Temple as well.

In this context, two points should be noted: 1) In the account of the dedication of the Temple in the next chapter of Melakhim, there is a strong emphasis on the personal encounter between man and God, and this idea replaces the symbolic architectural dimension that dominates our chapter. 2) It is fitting to note, in the framework of this discussion, a midrash cited in Yoma that portrays in sharp and bold manner the relationship between man and God in the Temple, based on a verse in the next chapter of Melakhim, as an intimate and embracing relationship:

"And the ends of the staves were seen"... How so? They pressed forth and protruded as the two breasts of a woman, as it is stated: "My beloved is unto me as a bag of myrrh, that lies between my breasts" (Shir Ha-shirim 1:13). Rav Katina said: "Whenever Israel came up to the Festival, the curtain would be removed for them and the keruvim were shown to them, whose bodies were intertwined with one another, and they would be thus addressed: 'Look! You are beloved before God as the love between man and woman.'" (Yoma 54a)

In light of this, it may be argued that the design of the Temple was meant to reach a double objective: To the outside, it displayed splendor and majesty,

but the innermost chamber of the Temple contained the ultimate representation of affection and intimacy before God – like the love between man and woman. It seems, however, that the combination itself, like most attempted spiritual combinations, created a certain tension in each of the two principles it tried to fulfill. Even when spiritual fertilization is achieved, the cost is that neither of the two principles is realized in full. The intimacy is compromised by the addition of splendor and majesty, just as the feeling of awe and sublimity is knowingly tempered through the process of closeness and intimacy that exists parallel to it. But the combination of these two principles of fear and love, though imperfect, expresses a richer religious and spiritual world. However, this constitutes a significant change from the model that existed in the Mishkan, in which different balances were found.

Why did this transition from Mishkan to Temple occur? We might suggest that the construction of the Mishkan played a role in a given historical context and should be viewed in the framework of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, from Mount Sinai to the Land of Israel. At the time, emphasizing the dimension of intimacy and closeness to God was a spiritual step that was necessary for that generation, and therefore the Mishkan highlighted that experience. On the other hand, the Temple, which is God's "eternal house," presents spiritual balances that are not dependent on time and place. For example, it is possible to view the choice of the intimate experience of the Mishkan as stemming from the connection between the construction of the Mishkan and the giving of the Torah. It was important to emphasize the closeness of God to man following the awesome splendor and grandeur of Mount Sinai. It should be mentioned that placing the Mishkan in the historic setting of its time and understanding its spiritual ramifications as stemming from the reality in which it was supposed to operate is certainly necessary according to those commentators who say that the construction of the Mishkan came into the world as a response to the sin of the golden calf, for the historical context is what underlay its very construction.

In conclusion, the haftara presents the model of the Temple in Jerusalem as starkly different from the Mishkan in the wilderness. The Temple represented a spiritual vision of strength and majesty, an element that was missing from the compact and portable Mishkan.

(Translated by David Strauss)

[1] Another opportunity to read a haftara dealing with Shlomo's Temple – once every few years – is the haftara of the second Shabbat of Chanuka, in years when Chanuka includes two Shabbatot.

[2] The starting point of such a discussion is the disagreement between the Rambam, the Ra'avad and the Ramban regarding the number of mitzvot connected to the building of the Temple and the discussions regarding the place and function of the vessels in the framework of the Temple and/or outside of it. See: the Rambam's Sefer Ha-mitzvot, positive commandment no. 20; the Ramban's stricture on positive commandment no. 33; the Ra'avad's stricture on the short count of mitzvot, positive commandment no. 20; Yerushalmi, Shekalim 4:2; and Da'at Zekeinim Mi-ba'alei Ha-tosafot, Shemot 25:6).

[3] See also the opening verses of Parashat Tetzave (Shemot 27:20-21), which deal with the lighting of the lamps of the candelabrum as well, and the verses in Vayikra 24 and Bemidbar 5.

[4] The altar, like the ark, makes a significant appearance in the account of Shlomo's dedication of the Temple in chap. 5, but not in the account of its building.

[5] The base, referred to here as "mekhona," is called "the kan [of the laver]" in Shemot.

[6] See Zevachim 59b.