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### **Rav Soloveitchik on Teruma: The Temple in Our Midst**

**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider** (Excerpted from Torah United, Teachings on The Weekly Parashah From Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, and The Chassidic Masters (Ktav, 2023)  
Parashat Terumah

#### **The Temple in Our Midst -**

Nearly two millennia have passed since the Second Temple, the focal point of Jewish life, was reduced to rubble. Nevertheless, God promised “I shall be a minor Temple (מִקְדָּשׁ קטן) for them” (Ezekiel 11:16) in exile. What does this mean? The Sages tell us it refers to the synagogues and study halls that thankfully heavily dot the map of the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>1</sup> The Rambam understood this to be no mere homily but a halachic reality. He notably extended the biblical prohibition against destroying the Temple recorded in Deuteronomy 12:4 to synagogues and study halls.<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik deduced from this that there is indeed a profound link between the ultimate house of worship and our own humble houses of worship, a link reflected in Halachah.

**The Source of the Temple’s Sanctity –** The first step in precisely defining the nature of the synagogue’s sanctity is to understand the source of the Temple’s own holiness. According to the Ramban, “the main intent of the Mishkan was to have a place for the divine presence to rest, namely, the ark, as it says, ‘I shall meet with you there and speak to you from on top of the cover’ (Exodus 25:22).”<sup>3</sup> The difficulty is that according to tradition the ark was absent from the Second Temple, so did it lack the full sanctity of the First Temple? The Rambam wrote: “When Shlomo built the Temple and foresaw that it would eventually be destroyed, he built a chamber below, in the labyrinthine depths, in which to hide the ark.”<sup>4</sup> The Rav explained that while the ark did not rest in the Holy of Holies during the Second Commonwealth, it was still physically located at the Temple Mount, albeit deep beneath the ground. Therefore, it continued to radiate its holiness onto

the magnificent structure above.<sup>5</sup> The ark as the Temple’s true source of sanctity has halachic implications for the “minor Temple” today. A synagogue without an ark containing a Torah scroll, the Rav argued, does not possess the full status of a synagogue.<sup>6</sup> Praying with a quorum where there is no Torah scroll, such as outdoors, discharges the obligation of tefilah be-tzibur, public prayer, but lacks the framework of holiness provided by the synagogue.

**A Temple in Miniature -** The sanctity of the synagogue being modeled on that of the Temple leads to a number of halachic requirements governing its structure and ambiance: (1) Location of the bimah: The Chatam Sofer ruled that the platform on which the Torah is read, the bimah, must be in the middle of the synagogue rather than at the front, as was the contemporary practice of nascent Reform: “Since our bimah is like the inner altar, it is fitting to place it in the middle of the synagogue to make it as similar to the Temple as possible. One should not change our miniature Temple.”<sup>7</sup> (2) Hanging of the ark curtain: In today’s synagogues, the Torah scrolls in the ark are separated from the rest of the room by a curtain that is usually lavishly embroidered with a verse or images. Since our ark represents that of the Mishkan and Temple, it requires the same dividing curtain: “you shall cover the ark with the curtain” (Exodus 40:3).<sup>8</sup> (3) Necessity of gender separation: Although we often associate gender separation in the synagogue as necessary for modesty and appropriate decorum for prayer, there is another fundamental reason for it. The Rambam states: “The women’s courtyard [of the Temple] was surrounded by balconies, so that women could look from above and the men from below without intermingling.”<sup>9</sup> The Maharam Schick adds that what was true of the Temple must apply to the synagogue.<sup>10</sup> The Rav appealed to history (in addition to Halachah) when declaring the mechitzah, the barrier separating the sexes, an absolute requirement, in contrast to those denominations of Judaism who were doing away with it: [T]he separation of the sexes in the synagogue derives historically from the Sanctuary, where there were both a Court of Women and a Court of Israelites. ...the people of Israel have never violated this sacred principle. [...] It would seem to me that our remembrance of history alone should keep us from imitating today the practice of primitive Christianity almost 1900 years ago.<sup>11</sup> (4) Elevated modesty: Many observant, married women who do not usually cover their hair do put on some covering upon entering the synagogue for prayer. Rabbi Hershel Schachter explains that there is a real basis for this practice. As a miniature Temple, the synagogue is a place designated for the resting of the Shechinah, the divine presence, and thus entails a heightened regard for modesty. Parashat Terumah says that the curtain at the entrance of the Mishkan was folded over (Exodus 26:9). Rashi likens this to “a modest bride whose face is veiled.”<sup>12</sup> This seems to indicate that modesty is essential for God’s presence to be manifest.<sup>13</sup> (5) Planting trees in the courtyard: The Rav cites the position of the great Talmudist Rabbi Akiva Eger, which prohibits the planting of trees on the premises of a synagogue based on the biblical prohibition against planting trees in the Temple precincts: “You shall not plant for yourselves an Asherah tree—any tree—near the altar of Hashem your God” (Deuteronomy 16:21).<sup>14</sup> (6) Strolling in the synagogue: Rabbi Yosef Caro rules in his Shulchan Aruch that one may not act frivolously in a synagogue. One example is “do not stroll in them.”<sup>15</sup> In the synagogue, one must maintain not only decorum but reverence for its sanctity. Apparently staying put is a perennial problem, as Rav Chaim Brisker made the following remark about one of the miracles associated with the Temple: “They stood crowded, yet prostrated with ample space.”<sup>16</sup> Even the first part, the standing still, quipped Rav Chaim, was miraculous.

**Not Quite a Temple -** Though it is clear that the synagogue is like the Temple in many respects, of course the two should not be conflated. The Rav captures the qualitative distinction in the following evocative manner. God refers to the Temple as “My house” (Isaiah 56:7), and David ha-Melech likewise calls it “the house of God” (Psalms 27:4). If the Temple is God’s palatial home, when we cross its threshold awe and dread should overpower us. God instructs us to “fear My Temple” (Leviticus 26:2). The synagogue,

on the other hand, is our communal home. The Talmud makes the comparison explicit: “[The synagogue] is like one’s house. Just as one objects to walking through the house as a shortcut but not to spitting or wearing shoes, the same is true of the synagogue.”<sup>17</sup> It is into this communal home that we invite God, so to speak. “When the Holy One enters a synagogue and does not find ten men there, He immediately becomes angry.”<sup>18</sup> The synagogue therefore deserves our respect, but not fear. In a lecture, Rabbi Menachem Genack presented this distinction of the Rav and mentioned an intriguing practical ramification. Both Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and the Rav were asked their opinion regarding bringing a seeing-eye dog into a synagogue during prayer services. Since the Talmud says that Rabbi Imi permitted scholars to enter the study hall with a donkey, Rabbi Feinstein felt it would be certainly permitted in this circumstance.<sup>19</sup> The Rav argued that just as we do not bring a dog into a Jewish home, we should hold to the same standard for a synagogue. Apparently, the Rav could not fathom that a Jewish home would welcome a dog.<sup>20</sup> However, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, the Rav’s son-in-law, taught that the Rav permitted bringing a guide dog into the synagogue because a person would allow such a dog to enter one’s home when accompanying a blind man.<sup>21</sup> In both versions of the Rav’s ruling, one can see that the analysis rests on a comparison between the synagogue and the home, and what constitutes proper respect for both.

Exploring the Rav’s Insight - Regarding the practice of nefilat apayim, resting the head on the arm when reciting the tachanun supplication, the Rema rules: “Some say that we only do nefilat apayim in a place where there is an ark containing a Torah scroll... and this is the accepted practice.”<sup>22</sup> Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky recorded an exception to this: In Jerusalem, the custom is to do nefilat apayim even in a structure that does not contain a Torah scroll, and even in a place that is not regularly used for prayer. Doing nefilat apayim only in a place that contains a Torah scroll is based on a biblical allusion, “And he fell on his face toward the ground before the ark of God” (Joshua 7:6). Since Jerusalem’s holiness is everlasting, it is tantamount to being in the presence of God’s ark.<sup>23</sup> Applying the Rav’s logic, if the ark beneath the Temple Mount infused the Second Temple with its sanctity, perhaps its presence at the spiritual center of Jerusalem extends its sacred presence to the entire city. Moreover, according to the Rambam the entire city of Jerusalem is considered to be the machaneh, the camp that surrounds the Temple Mount.<sup>24</sup> When one prays in Jerusalem, then, one can be said to be praying in the presence of the original ark, and one must do nefilat apayim. The beautiful notion that the entire city of Jerusalem is an extension of the Temple appears in a verse recited during the Hallel prayer: “In the courts of the House of God, in your midst, Jerusalem, Hallelujah” (Psalms 116:19). Commenting on this verse, both the Radak and Don Yitzchak Abarbanel suggest that because the holiness of the city of Jerusalem results from the ark’s presence, it is most appropriate that God be praised in the midst of this holy city.

Notes 1 See Megilah 29a. 2 Minyan ha-Mitzvot ha-Katzar, lo ta’aseh §65. 3 Ramban on Exodus 25:2. 4 Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit ha-Bechirah, 4:1. 5 Schachter, Eretz ha-Tzevi, 91. 6 Genack, Shi’urei ha-Rav, 314. 7 Shut Chatam Sofer, Orach Chayim, §28. 8 Chumash Mesoras Harav, 2:347. 9 Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit ha-Bechirah, 5:9. 10 Quoted in Schachter, Eretz ha-Tzevi, 93. 11 Soloveitchik, Community, Covenant and Commitment, 134. 12 Rashi on Exodus 26:9. 13 Schachter, Eretz ha-Tzevi, 96. 14 Genack, Shi’urei ha-Rav, 300. Interestingly, Rav Chaim Brisker, the Rav’s grandfather, permitted such planting in Brisk. 15 Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, 151:1. 16 Pirkei Avot, 5:7. 17 Berachot 63a. 18 Berachot 6b. 19 Igerot Moshe, Orach Chayim, vol. 1, §45. 20 Rabbi Menachem Genack, “Chidushei Torah on the Approach of Rav Soloveitchik zt”l to the Sanctity of Beit Haknesses and Beit HaMedrash,” <https://outorah.org/p/33420/> (accessed March 14, 2021). 21 Rabbi Howard Jachter, “Halachic Perspectives on Pets,” *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* XXIII (Spring 1992; Pesach 5752), [http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/english/halacha/jachter\\_1.htm](http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/english/halacha/jachter_1.htm) (accessed March 14, 2021). 22 Rema on Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, 131:2. 23 Eretz Yisrael, 1:9. 24 Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit ha-Bechirah, 7:11.

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**Rav Frand Parshas Terumah**

**Torah Is Like Both Gold and Silver**

There is an interesting Medrash Rabbah in the beginning of Parshas Terumah. The Medrash links the pasuk at the beginning of the parsha about taking gold and silver (Shemos 25:3) with the pasuk in Mishlei “For I have given you a good teaching, do not forsake My Torah.” (Mishlei 4:2) The Medrash states: Do not ever abandon this great acquisition that I gave you. A person can buy a golden item, but not have silver. He can buy something of silver but not have gold. However, the acquisition I gave you (Torah) has both. Torah has within it silver, as it is written “The words of Hashem are pure words – like purified silver...” (Tehillim 12:7) (Here, Dovid Hamelech refers to Torah as silver). And the acquisition I gave you has within it gold, as it is written “They are more desirable than gold, than even much fine gold...” (Tehillim 19:11) Torah is both gold and silver; there is no other such acquisition.

We must ask, if someone has gold, why does he need silver? Gold is more valuable than silver! What is the advantage that the Medrash is boasting about, that Torah is compared to both gold AND silver? The Abir Yosef answers by referencing an insight from Rav Chaim Soloveitchik on the Hagaddah. The author of the Hagaddah writes: Baruch HaMakom, baruch Hu, baruch shenasan Torah l’amo Yisrael, Baruch Hu, which introduces the “four sons about which the Torah speaks” – the wise son, the wicked son, the simple son, and the son who does not know how to ask. Everyone asks why this section of the Hagaddah begins with the expression “Blessed is He who gave Torah to His nation, Israel.”

The answer is as follows: By almost all disciplines in the world (Chemistry, Physics, Math, English, etc.), a curriculum that is appropriate for a six-year-old child is not appropriate for a sixty-year-old. If I take a basic arithmetic book (2+2 = 4, 4+4 = 8) and show it to a professor of math, he does not need to learn that, and he does not learn it. It is the same with all endeavors. But this week – and so it is every week – our children or our grandchildren will come home from school and share what they learned about the parsha... the story of the Mishkan and all the events in Parshas Teruma. Likewise, great talmidei chachomim will discuss the same parsha.

In the great Yeshivos of the Torah world, the world famous roshei yeshiva will say over their weekly Torah lessons this week on Parshas Teruma. Every rabbi will be speaking about Parshas Teruma. Every little child will be talking about Parshas Teruma. How can the same parsha, which works for a six-year-old, work for a sixty-year-old? What other discipline is like that? Perhaps the only other discipline that this can be remotely compared to is music. Music can be appreciated on a very basic level and on a very sophisticated level. That is why Torah is compared to song: “And now write for yourselves this Song...” (Devorim 31:19) A great musicologist appreciates great music on his level and a little child may appreciate it at his level. So too, a great rosh yeshiva can give a deep shiur on Mishnayos Bava Kamma at the same time that his eight-year-old grandson learns those Mishnayos in cheder.

That is the meaning of the Medrash. Torah is both gold and silver. Someone who appreciates the deeper mysteries of Torah appreciates it as gold. The little school child who comes home with a picture of the Menorah with its knobs and flowers appreciates Torah on his level, at least like silver.

“Ki lekach tov no’sati lachem; Torasi al ta’azovu” (For I have given you a good teaching, do not forsake My Torah) (Mishlei 4:2)

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<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/1089173/>

**The Three Wars**

**Rabbi Moshe Taragin**

The world around us is swirling in confusion. Our people and our land were brutally attacked by barbarians bent on murder, rape, and destruction. A war of survival has been involuntarily thrust upon us. Predictably, our enemies have seized the opportunity to falsely accuse us of ghastly and baseless crimes. The ugly monster of anti-Semitic hatred has been reawakened. Just when we thought we had entered a new, modern period of enlightenment and tolerance, we were dealt a harsh lesson: the struggle for Jewish destiny continues. Our homeland witnessed horrors we thought were relics of our tortured past, living in exile. Wanton violence against defenseless Jews could not possibly occur in Israel. Unfortunately, it did, and the pogrom reminded us that we haven't fully redeemed our people or our land. The struggle for Jewish destiny continues. Alongside the military battle in Azza, our enemies are waging a war of hatred and historical denial, protesting our rights to live in our homeland. Astonishingly, minority groups, whose own legitimate rights we have traditionally championed, have turned their backs on us. Regrettably, many in the African-American Community as well as many in the LGBTQ community, are spewing venomous and inciteful hatred against us. There is a shadow war being fought, both on the campuses of America and on the promenades of Europe. Surprisingly, there is a third front to this war. Over the past three decades disturbing cultural narratives have upended many of our sacred traditional values. Many modern perspectives upon human identity, religion, family, and community are corrosive to Jewish values. Unexpectedly, many of these post-modern narratives are surfacing in protests against Israel and in the endless discussions about our rights to our homeland. We have a nagging sense that the modern cultural wars have become entangled with the war in Azza. This threading of cultural wars with our war in Azza is confusing. What does the war in Azza have to do with Wokism or with post-modernism? They seem to be completely unrelated. However, as with everything in Jewish history, nothing is random.

The Sun Rises for All - Jewish redemption is pivoted upon a people and a land. We were meant to inhabit the land of Hashem, but repeatedly failed Him, and were banished to a two-thousand year odyssey of wandering this Earth. We are slowly climbing our way back to peoplehood and back to historical relevancy, but redemption will only conclude when we are resettled in our homeland, living under the eye of Hashem. Redemption is national, and it is geographical. Though redemption is pivoted upon a people and their land it isn't a phenomenon limited to Jews. Judaism is unique, in that its redemption radiates outward to all of humanity. As we reconvene back in our homeland, all of humanity recognizes Hashem, accepts His authority, and enjoys widespread prosperity. Jewish redemption is a microcosm for a broader redemption. Chazal applied a series of metaphors to describe the texture of redemption. As redemption hasn't ever occurred, we don't know its specific details, or, to paraphrase the Rambam, we will only know that Moshiach has arrived after he has arrived. Seeking to describe the unknown world of redemption, Chazal generated a rich array of metaphors. One popular metaphor for redemption is the rising sun. The Yerushalmi in Yoma (3:2) documents two Tanaim who witnessed the sun rise above the Kinneret lake. They commented that a sunrise mirrors redemption: just as the sun rises gradually or *קִימָע קִימָע*, similarly, redemption unfolds in stages. Additionally, the sunrise metaphor accentuates the universal nature of Jewish redemption. The sun rises above the horizon and provides light and life for all of humanity, not just for Jews. Redemption is a universal event, powered by a nationalistic experience. As redemption is universal, Moshiach will heal all social illnesses and repair all human failings. War will cease, poverty will be eliminated, and social strife will abate. The great advances of the past few centuries are all part of the leadup to redemption. The political, industrial, technological, and economic revolutions of the past four hundred years are harbingers of Moshiach. As humanity surges toward a better state, the whisper of Moshiach can be heard.

The Moral Cost Progress though, has come at a steep moral cost. Human experience has been enhanced and individual freedom has been extended, but moral values and ethics have each declined. With its emphasis upon individualism and personal expression, modernity has thrown core elements

of human identity into question. Fundamental social hierarchies have been abandoned while the basics of human identity are no longer self-evident. We are more comfortable than ever, but feel morally adrift. Just as redemption must advance human material prosperity, it must also repair moral decline. Moshiach must deliver moral clarity.

Part of the Redemptive Process - It is obvious that this war isn't a local geopolitical skirmish, but part of the historical battle to advance Hashem's presence in our world. Though we are left with many perplexing question marks, we know that this war is part of the redemptive arc and that, one day, the mystery of Oct. 7 will become clear. If this historical war is part of a Messianic trajectory, it must also begin to repair the toxic cultural narratives which afflict humanity. Any war which is part of redemptive Jewish history must also advance moral clarity. Therefore, it is totally expected that the war in Azza be interlocked with the cultural wars. We are designated by Hashem to defeat evil. We defend humanity against its darker self. We are placed on this earth to defeat evil and to help repair broken cultural narratives.

Post-modernism - This war has showcased the perils of post-modernism which asserts that that truth isn't absolute or objective, but subjective. Post modernism claims that truth is merely a social construct and that different communities or cultures may "construct" different truths. This counterfeit ideology has obliterated any abiding notion of a fixed and factual truth. Every fact can be manipulated, and every narrative can be justified based on falsifications masquerading as socially constructed truth. Throughout the war we continually faced baseless accusations, as casualty figures were glibly falsified and pictures from Azza doctored and photoshopped. No sane or civil conversation is possible, since there isn't a baseline of truth and fact. Everything is up for grabs in the post-modern swirl of confusion. A former dean of a major US college clarified to us that rabid and violent calls for the murder of Jews must be understood in the "context" in which they were stated. Truth, we are taught, is always contextual. Our battle, in part, is to restore the concept of truth. Hashem is the ultimate *אמת* and any forgery or counterfeit blocks His presence in this world. Our battle for truth is a battle for His presence. Intersectionality Intersectionality theory asserts that all forms of oppression or discrimination are interconnected. Therefore, all marginalized groups with grievances must support one another in their respective battles for equality. The battle for freedom and equality for an African American has become fused to the war in Azza. An ignorant world, intoxicated with intersectionality and seething with antisemitic fury, has thoughtlessly adopted a colonialist narrative, recasting the war in Azza as a battle between an indigenous population and their foreign occupiers. Depicting Jews as white male occupiers, criminalizes us in the eyes of every underprivileged group. We have nothing to do with bigotry or discrimination. We have built one of the most liberal democracies in the world, which grants freedom of worship to every religion. Intersectionality, though, blinds its naïve victims into hating whoever they deem to be the "oppressor". It leaves no room for facts, education, or nuance. The weak must hate the strong. We are fighting three concurrent wars. We will defeat the evil murderers of Azza. We will defy antisemitism. Slowly but surely, we will help humanity recover its senses, and repair its broken cultural narratives.

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from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org> date: Feb 15, 2024, 8:56 PM  
 subject: Rabbi Mordechai Willig -vThe Joy of Adar I  
 Rabbi Mordechai Willig  
 The Joy of Adar I

I From when Adar enters, we increase joy (Ta'anis 29a). Is this true for the first Adar in a leap year as well? The Mishna (Megillah 6b) states that there is no difference between the first and second Adar except reading the Megillah and gifts for the poor. This implies that the increased joy applies to both Adars. Furthermore, R' Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev (Kedushas Levi, Parshas Ki Sisa, s.v. ta'am) writes that it is known that the twelve months correspond to the twelve tribes (see Tur, Orach Chaim 417). The mazal of Adar is dagim, fish (Esther Rabba 7:11), which corresponds to Yosef who is

compared to fish that the evil eye does not harm. Rashi (Bereishis 49:22), cites the Gemara (Berachos 20a) that the evil eye does not affect Yosef or his descendants. When Yaakov blessed Menashe and Efrayim he said (48:16), "may they reproduce abundantly like fish", over which the evil eye has no effect, presumably because they are hidden underwater. [See Kedushas Levi, Tetzave, s.v. oh.] The Kedushas Levi concludes: Yosef fathered two tribes, Menashe and Efrayim, and therefore, there are two Adars [perhaps this is why the mazal is dagim, plural, not dag, singular like the mazalos all the other months] both of which have the mazal of dagim and increased joy (Nitei Gavriel, Purim 11:1, fn 2). The Chosam Sofer (Orach Chaim 163) agrees that the first Adar has increased joy as well.

He cites Rashi (Ta'anis 29a) on, "when Adar enters" who says, "Purim and Pesach were days of miracles for Yisrael." Rav Yaakov Emden (She'elas Yaavetz II:88) asks, why does Rashi include Pesach? It must be to teach us that increased joy applies only to the Adar that is close to Pesach, namely Adar II in a leap year.

Indeed, in determining which Adar the Megillah should be read in, the Gemara (Megillah 6b) rules that it is read in the Adar which is adjacent to Nisan, namely Adar II. The Gemara explains the reason for this is that it is preferred to "juxtapose redemption to redemption", which Rashi explains to mean juxtapose Purim to Pesach.

II A deeper understanding of Rashi's inclusion of Pesach can refute the proof of Rav Yaakov Emden. There are two types of miracles, hidden and supernatural. Purim commemorates a hidden miracle in which no laws of nature were broken, while Pesach celebrates a series of supernatural miracles. Joy increases when we recognize Divine Providence in the hidden miracles as well, and seeing Divine Providence everywhere equally applies to Adar. Rashi mentioned Pesach to equate the two types of miracles as sources for increased joy.

The Ramban (Shemos 13:16) writes: From the great and famous miracles (i.e. the supernatural ones of the Exodus), a person acknowledges the hidden miracles which are the foundation of the entire Torah. A person has no portion in the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu unless he believes that all our things and happenings are all miracles, not natural and the [unguided] custom of the world, whether communal or personal.

The realization that nothing in our lives is left to chance yields the greatest possible joy. The connection of Purim to Pesach does not limit joy to Adar II, rather it explains the joy of both Adars. Adar II celebrates the hidden miracles of the Megillah, while Adar I goes further and acknowledges everyday events as reflections of Divine Providence. As the Mishna teaches, the two Adars are identical except for the Megillah and the gifts for the poor, which focus exclusively on the hidden miracles of Purim.

The connection to the mazal of dagim and to Yosef who is not subject to the evil eye may be explained as follows: fish are hidden from the human eye as Adar commemorates hidden miracles. Yosef merited the blessing of protection from the evil eye when he hid his mother Rachel from Esav's wanton gaze (Bereishis 33:7, Rashi there and 49:22).

III What about Purim Katan, 14 Adar I? In the final section of Orach Chaim (697:1), the Rama states that some say that one is obligated to increase "mishteh v'simcha" (see Esther 9:22) on the 14th of Adar I. This is not our custom, but one should increase his se'uda a bit to satisfy the strict view; "a good-hearted person is always feasting - mishteh tamid" (Mishlei 15:15).

The Taz (697:2) invokes the aforementioned Mishna (Megillah 6b) in equating the two Adars regarding feasting on the 14th of Adar I, and endorses the Rama's conclusion of "mishteh tamid." The Birkas Yosef (2) cited in the Shaarei Teshuva (2) lauds the Rama's wisdom in concluding Orach Chaim similar to how he opened it: he began (1:1) "I have set Hashem before me always - tamid" (Tehilim 16:8), and ended with "mishteh tamid", thus two "temidim".

The passuk in Mishlei (15:15) begins: "All the days of a poor person are bad." The Vilna Ga'on cites the Mishna (Avos 4:11) "who is rich? One who

is happy with his potion." If so, a poor person is one who has a greedy soul. All his days are bad, because he can never attain all that he desires. By contrast, one who is satisfied with what he has, his heart is always as happy as one who has a mishteh in his house. A person at a feast is very happy when he is a shasuy yayin, intoxicated by fulfilling mishteh literally with excessive wine. But his happiness is temporary and ends when the influence of alcohol subsides. The happiness of one who has a good heart is always as great as the momentary happiness of one who is intoxicated.

This interpretation leads to an opposite understanding of the Rama's conclusion. One who has a good heart has no need to drink wine. He is always happy, without artificial stimulation. This level of constant joy described in 697:1 reflects the opening of the Rama in 1:1. One who constantly sets Hashem before him realizes that his portion comes from Hashem and is satisfied with it. He thereby attains constant joy, equivalent to the temporary high of alcohol, without drinking.

In this way, the heightened joy of Purim Katan is based upon the joy of the entire month. Adar teaches that the hidden miracles of Purim are from Hashem just as the supernatural ones of Pesach are. The extension of the Ramban to everyday occurrences governed by Divine Providence is a source of constant joy. This makes drinking on Purim Katan superfluous.

IV Am Yisrael is entering Adar reeling from the crisis in Eretz Yisrael. The realization that these tragic events are also manifestations of Divine Providence must lead us to teshuva which will bring the crisis to an end (Rambam, Hilchos Ta'anios 1:1). Even during this crisis, we increase joy in Adar by recognizing that all of our experiences, individual and especially communal, are miracles governed by Divine Providence, as the Ramban emphasizes.

"My anger will flare on that day, I will forsake them and conceal My face from them and they will become prey" (Devarim 31:17). The otherwise inexplicable events of October 7th, when over a thousand of our brothers and sisters became prey of vicious invaders, can only be a result of Hashem's decree. The passuk continues: "many evils and distresses (tzaros) will afflict [Am Yisroel]. They will say on that day, 'Because Hashem is not in our midst these evils have afflicted me.'" The declaration we will reportedly make mentions evils but not tzaros. Why the omission of tzaros?

There is a remarkable introduction (Avi Ezri, Nashim, Kedusha), written in a besieged Yerushalayim exactly one week after the state of Israel was declared. In it, Rav Shach describes the situation, "on the outskirts the sword kills, indoors there is dread" (Devarim 32:25), a terrible, evil plight. He asks, why does the passuk begin with ra'os (evils) and tzaros (distresses), and end with ra'os alone? Rav Shach answers that tzara, from tzar, narrow, is not the evil itself, but the despair it triggers. One feels pressed and depressed. However, when one says that it comes from Hashem, it is still evil, but it is no longer a tzara.

Knowing that everything, good and bad, is Divine Providence, enables a measure of consolation, and even joy in Adar I, even in times of suffering. We pray that Hashem will increase the joy of Adar by saving us from Hamas, the Amalek of today, just as he saved us on Purim from Amalek, Haman, of old.

from: Rabbi YY Jacobson <rabbiiy@theyeshiva.net> reply-to: info@theyeshiva.net date: Feb 15, 2024, 3:31 PM

In a Dark Exile, Whispering Trees

**A Father Plants Saplings 210 Years Early, Offering Solace to His Children**

**By Rabbi YY Jacobson**

Dedicated by Nancy Miller in honor of my parents' yartzheits: Moshe ben Elezar on 6 Adar (22nd yartzheit), Tzeril bas Dovid on 6 Adar 1 (16th yartzheit). May they continue to be good interbetters for their family and all Klal Yisroel. Graciously dedicated by Rina Persiko to her mother פ"ע Brina Sara bas Chaim Zeev on her birthday and to her father פ"ע Moshe Mendel ben Pinchas Okunieff

The Smuggler

Tony comes up to the Mexican border on his bicycle. He's got two large bags over his shoulders. Joe, the border guard, stops him and says, "What's in the bags?"

"Sand," answers Tony.

Joe says, "We'll just see about that. Get off the bike." Joe takes the bags and rips them apart; he empties them out and finds nothing in them but sand. He detains Tony overnight and has the sand analyzed, only to discover that there is nothing but pure sand in the bags.

Joe releases Tony, puts the sand into new bags, hefts them onto the man's shoulders, and lets him cross the border.

The next day, the same thing happens. Joe asks, "What have you got?"

"Sand," says Tony.

Joe does his thorough examination and discovers that the bags contain nothing but sand. He gives the sand back to Tony, and Tony crosses the border on his bicycle.

This sequence of events is repeated every day for three years. Then Joe runs across Tony one day in a cantina in Mexico.

"Hey, buddy," says Joe, "I retired. I know you are smuggling something. It's driving me crazy. It's all I think about ... I can't sleep. Just between you and me, what are you smuggling?"

Tony sips his beer and says, "bicycles."

Cedar Trees

One of the most employed materials in the building of the Tabernacle—discussed in this week's portion, Terumah—was cedarwood ("atzei shitim.") Much of the structure and many of the vessels of the Tabernacle were fashioned from cedar.

Says Rashi, quoting the Midrash:

How did the children of Israel obtain [cedar wood for the construction of the Sanctuary] in the desert? Rabbi Tanchuma explained: Our father Jacob foresaw with his holy spirit that Israel was destined to build a Sanctuary in the desert; so he brought cedars to Egypt and planted them [there], and instructed his children to take them along when they left Egypt.[1]

This seems strange. Why carry trees from the Holy Land to plant in Egypt for use in a building to be constructed centuries later? Surely, there is no dearth of wood in wealthy Egypt, and, in any case, it could always be obtained for a price wherever their descendants might find themselves. Even the Sinai desert was not far from populated areas from where the Jews could obtain cedarwood.[2]

From the day Jacob descended to Egypt till the Exodus, 210 years passed. In life, it is good to plan long-term. I know people who pack for a trip one week before the flight. It is not my style, but I can respect them. Yet to pack up 210 years before a journey, seems like going overboard. Did Jacob feel that he needs to prepare the cedar wood 210 years before it was needed? Could he not have told his children to obtain cedars in or around Egypt?

Imagine, a fellow by the name of Jacob Isakson (son of Isaac) is relocating from Russia to the US in 1810. He brings with him cedar saplings to plant in America. He tells his children that one day in 2020 they might leave America to go build a sanctuary in the desert and they will need cedarwood. It would be strange; we could buy the wood in America!

It is not like Jacob came to Egypt empty-handed, so he had nothing to take along, but some cedar trees. Jacob, at the age of 130, was relocating his entire life, family, livestock, and his enormous wealth, to Egypt. The last thing he needed to add to the wagons were cedar trees!

Finding Comfort

The answer to this question I heard from the Lubavitcher Rebbe at an address on Shabbos Parshat Terumah, 6 Adar, 5747, March 7, 1987.[3] I can still vividly recall the profound emotion with which the Rebbe shared this insight—and it moves me deeply to this day.

The answer, the Lubavitcher Rebbe suggested, is intimated in the name of the Sage who transmitted this tradition: Rabbi Tanchuma. As a rule, Rashi rarely quotes the authors of the teachings in Talmud and Midrash he quotes in his commentary. Here is one of the exceptions. Because it is the name of the rabbi who shared this teaching, Tanchumam which explains why Jacob

would engage in this seemingly unnecessary toil, two centuries before his descendants would need the cedar.

The name "Tanchuma" means to comfort and console. Jacob our father knew that one day the very country which has been so hospitable to him and his family, the country saved by his son Joseph, would turn its back on the Hebrew tribe and transform their lives into purgatory. Egypt would impose one of the most torturous conditions upon the young Hebrews. Jacob knew that the people of Israel would need something to hold on to, something tangible to remind them that they don't belong here; something concrete to imprint upon their tormented hearts that they come from somewhere else, and they will one day leave this hellish concentration camp and return home.

A promise? Yes. He and Joseph promised the family that they would leave Egypt one day. But a verbal promise is insufficient. People can't live on words alone. Jacob needed to give them something tangible that could comfort them and offer a measure of relief as they walked in a valley of tears and watched their infants plunged into a river.

Whispering Trees

Hence, the cedar trees. Jacob transported from the Land of Canaan young, tender saplings of cedar and lovingly planted them in the soil of Egypt, instructing his children, that one day, when they depart from this country, they must take these trees with them.

Jacob dies. Joseph dies. All the siblings die. Then all the grandchildren die. The first generations of Jews who still knew Jacob and his children passed on. A new Pharaoh began to enslave the young nation. Brutal labor and the extermination of Jewish babies began to become the Jewish plight.

And throughout this entire horrific ordeal, the crushed Hebrew slaves watched these cedars grow. And with it, their hope grew. They harbored the knowledge that long before their enslavement by the Egyptians, these trees had grown in the soil of Holy Land—the land promised to them as their eternal heritage. Each generation of Jews pointed out these cedar trees to their children, transmitted to them Jacob's instructions to take these trees along when they would leave Egypt, to be fashioned into a Sanctuary for G-d.

And so, throughout their long and bitter exile, these cedars had whispered to the Jewish slaves: This is not your home. You hail from a loftier, holier place. Soon you will leave this depraved land behind, to be reclaimed by G-d as His people. Soon you will uproot us from this foreign land and carry us triumphantly to Sinai, where you will construct of us an abode for the Divine presence, which shall once again manifest itself in your midst.

These cedar trees stood as a permanent, tangible, silent but powerful, and tall symbol of courage, dignity, and hope in a bright future. They gave a nation of tormented, wretched slaves something to "hold on to" in a very concrete way, as they struggled under the yoke of their Egyptian oppressors. These trees offered the Jews some measure of "Tanchumah," of solace and fortitude, during their darkest moments.

When the Jewish people held on to Jacob's "prehistoric" cedar trees, for a brief moment, they felt free. And that's what you need in order to endure. It reminded them that in their essence they were not slaves, they did not deserve to be beaten and oppressed; they were inherently free and one day they would see that freedom.

Staves of Faith

"The Tzaddik shall bloom as a palm," sings the Psalmist, "as a Cedar of Lebanon, he shall flourish." [4] Jacob planted cedars in Egypt, and G-d plants exactly such cedars in our midst throughout our long and turbulent history. [5] These are the Tzaddikim, the Rebbes, the spiritual giants, defined in Psalms as "cedar trees," providing us with a link to the past and hope for the future.

The Tzaddik is a soul that towers above the transience and turbulence of exile; a soul that is rooted in Israel's sacred beginnings and pointed toward the ultimate Redemption—a soul whose two feet stand on earth, but whose head touches heaven. When our subjection to the temporal and the mundane threatens to overwhelm us, we need only look to the cedars implanted in our midst. In these timeless staves of faith, we find guidance and fortitude,



comfort, and encouragement. We remember who we are and what we are capable of becoming.

#### Above Exile

This is the function of every Rebbe, every leader among our people—and in today's age, who of us is not in a position to influence one or more of our brothers and sisters. The Rebbe is the Jew who by his sheer presence and love reminds us that we are "higher," that we must never surrender to a life of quiet desperation; that we are Divine ambassadors of love, light, hope, and redemption.

When we connect to a Rebbe, a Tzaddik, we too become, at least for a moment, free. We are all exposed to challenges, obstacles, and pressures; we must face trauma, darkness, pain, addiction, depression, disappointment, filth, and degradation. We can become apathetic, cynical, and indifferent. But when we gaze at the cedars in our midst, and at the cedar inside each of our souls, we remember that we are fragments of infinity, sent to this world to transform its landscape. We remember that we are on a journey from Sinai to Moshiach; that as beautiful as America is it is not our true home; it is but a temporary stop in our journey toward Moshiach. As comfortable as this great country is and as much as we cherish it, it is not the place we call home. A child who has been exiled from the bosom of his father, even if he is living in the Hilton, is living in exile.

That is the function of every spiritual "cedar tree" teacher in Judaism: [6] To remind all of us that even as we are in exile, our souls can soar on the wings of eternity.[7]

Notes: [1] Rashi to Exodus 25:6 [2] Indeed, this is the view of some of the commentators. See Divrei David (Taz), Ibn Ezra, Baalei HaTosfos and Chizkuni on the verse (Exodus 25:6). [3] Part of the address was published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 31 Terumah pp. 142-148. [4] Psalms 92:13 [5] The Hebrew word Nassi ("leader") is an acronym of the phrase nitzotzo shel Yaakov Avinu, "a spark of Jacob our father." The soul of every leader of Israel is an offshoot of the soul of Jacob, father of the people of Israel (Megaleh Amukot, section 84). [6] See Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5752, 1992—explaining why the first idea Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said as a leader was that we are obligated to mention the Exodus of Egypt also during nighttime. This captures the role of the leader: To help people experience Exodus even when night prevails, and darkness overwhelms. [7] My thanks to Rabbi Yanki Tauber for his rendition of this address. I used some parts from his essay: [www.meaningfullife.com/prehistoric-cedars/](http://www.meaningfullife.com/prehistoric-cedars/)

From: **Alan Fisher** <afisherads@yahoo.com>

The Internet Parsha Sheet, an outstanding compilation, posts after midnight. You may download it by Friday morning at [parsha.net](http://parsha.net). Alan BS"D February 16, 2024 Potomac Torah Study Center Vol. 11 #19, February 16-17, 2024; 7-8 Adar 1 5784; Terumah Purim Katan next Friday 14 Adar 1; Shushan Purim Katan next Shabbat

NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z"l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning more than 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his untimely death.

Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from [www.PotomacTorah.org](http://www.PotomacTorah.org). Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.

Hersh ben Perel Chana, cousin of very close friends of ours, has been confirmed as one of approximately 240 initial hostages to Hamas in Gaza. The Wall St. Journal featured Hersh and his family in a front page article on October 16. Chabad, OU, and many synagogues recommend psalms (Tehillim) to recite daily for the safety of our people. May our people in Israel wipe out the evil of Hamas, protect us from violence by anti-Semites around the world, and restore peace for our people quickly and successfully – with the help of Hashem.

One principle of our religion is that the Torah provides the cure for significant problems before mentioning the disease. In our parsha, the Torah presents the commandment to build a house for Hashem, along with detailed

instructions, before relating Egel Zahav, the sin of the golden calf. We read the story of Egel Zahav and Moshe's argument with God not to destroy B'Nai Yisrael in chapter 32, two weeks from now, in Ki Tisa. Most commentators identify Egel Zahav as the reason that B'Nai Yisrael had to build the Mishkan, an essential part of obtaining God's forgiveness for that sin.

The most essential component of building the Mishkan is instructing the people to give what their hearts desire. Terumah constitutes voluntary gifts. (Next week, in Tetzaveh, God tells Moshe to command the people, including the Kohanim, to give specific items for the Mishkan. Tetzaveh items constitute a tax on the people, very different from the voluntary gifts in Terumah.)

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l, observes that the voluntary gifts for the Mishkan give the people a critical gift – the ability to give something back to Hashem. Giving is an essential part of human dignity. As Rabbi Yehoshua Gordon, z"l, put it, by identifying voluntary gifts that B'Nai Yisrael could give to Hashem, He permits us to be His partners in building a place for His presence in our world. Rabbi Label Lam notes that giving for the sake of Hashem is the most essential ingredient in building the Mishkan. Rabbi Yehoshua Singer adds that Torah study elevates a person. This elevation is unique to Torah study. Indeed, Rabbi David Fohrman reminds us that one meaning of "Terumah" is elevating, what we read that the waters of the flood do for Noach's teva (where the Torah uses "Terumah" for the effect of the flood water lifting the teva).

Rabbi Marc Angel notes how timely this parsha is, coming just before Presidents' Day. He quotes Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address with a message that could have come from a Torah commentary: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations." Rav Kook gives a similar message, that the purpose of the Beit Ha Migdash (the permanent replacement for the Mishkan) is to lengthen life, to be a world center of prayer and holy inspiration. President Lincoln's message adds the mitzvot from Yitro and Mishpatim that concern and care for others, especially the needy, is perhaps the central theme of true religion. Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander, President and Rosh HaYeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone, adds that Hashem desires to live within us, B'Nai Yisrael. God's ultimate real estate is not any sacred building, but it is within each of us. Our mission is to find a piece of Hashem within each of us and thereby make the world a better place. God wants to live within us out of love – He could easily remain in heaven. Our task is to find, feel, and strive for Hashem's presence always, and to make the world a better place both for Hashem and for all humankind.

Rabbi Mordechai Rhine reminds us that after God destroys the Beit HaMigdash, God remains with us wherever we go: "Although I have [destroyed the Beis Hamikdash and] scattered you among the nations and foreign lands, I shall be for you a mini-sanctuary in the lands to which you go." (Yechezkel 11) The synagogues and yeshivas of our people all over the world have been Hashem's place within us for the past two thousand years. Our enemies are always waiting at our gates and frequently chasing us everywhere. Rabbi Moshe Rube reminds us that we all mourn during tragic or sad times and all Jews rejoice during happy times, such as earlier this week when the IDF rescued two of our holy hostages. Rabbi Brander reminds us that among the thousands of Ohr Torah Stone emissaries around the world, many face threats from anti-Semites, especially those in England. While Hamas is one of the most evil and dangerous threats to our people, it is far from the only one. Hamas and other evil followers of Amalek challenge the message of the Mishkan and separate us from Hashem's presence. As Rabbi Brander and other contributors remind us, our task is to come close to Hashem and do our part to make the world a better place. This

task is the essence of the message of the Mishkan. May we work harder to carry forward Hashem's message.

My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, always found a way to make the Torah exciting, a trait that came through especially in legal sections of the Torah where the topics could seem very foreign to Americans in a modern world. The Mishkan section of the Torah certainly requires a reader's guide for us in the 21st Century. Hopefully some of the excitement of the sort that Rabbi Cahan brought to his Torah discussions comes through with the insights in the following Devrei Torah.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah and Alan Fisher

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**Twilight**

**Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Question #1: Why then?

"After sunset on a Friday evening, may I ask a non-Jewish person to turn on the lights?"

Question #2: Until when?

"May I toivel dishes, glasses and silverware during the same twilight period?"

Question #3: Challah

"May I separate challah during bein hashemashos?"

Introduction: Twilight laws

As we are all aware, the halachic day begins and ends at nightfall. But at what exact moment does one day march off into history and its successor arrive with its banner unfurled? Is it before sunset, at sunset, when the stars appear, or dependent on some other factor? And, if a day begins when the stars appear, which stars and how many? Does the amount of time after sunset vary according to longitude and/or season of the year? And does it, perhaps, vary according to the amount of humidity in the atmosphere?

There is much discussion in the Gemara and the poskim concerning many of these issues, some of which I have written about previously. This article will discuss the halachic rules that apply during the period of time called bein hashemashos, which is the term used to refer to the twilight interval when we are uncertain whether it is still day or already night. Of particular concern is what is the halacha of this time on Friday evening, when it is unclear whether or not Shabbos has already begun. Does bein hashemashos have the exact same halachic status as the time that is definitely Shabbos, or does its questionable status allow any lenience? The answer is that, under extenuating circumstances, some lenience is allowed. We will see that the definition of "extenuating" for these purposes is rather moderate.

The earliest sources

In several places, the Mishnah, the Gemara and the poskim explain that certain activities that are prohibited on Shabbos are permitted during bein hashemashos of Friday evening. We will begin our research with a Mishnah (Shabbos 34a) that many recite every Friday evening in shul, as the last passage in Bameh Madlikin. There, it teaches: If it is in doubt whether nightfall has already arrived, it is forbidden to separate maaser from produce, when we are certain that it was not yet separated. (Such untithed produce is referred to as tevel.) It is also prohibited to immerse vessels to make them tahor. (Unfortunately, since we are all tamei today, this question is not relevant, but we will soon discuss whether immersing vessels used for food that were previously owned by a non-Jew is permitted during bein hashemashos.) The Mishnah also prohibits kindling lights during bein hashemashos. However, it permits separating maaser from demai produce, about which it is uncertain whether this separation is required. It is permitted during bein hashemashos to make an eiruv chatzeiros, which allows carrying from one's house to a neighbor's house on Shabbos. The Mishnah also permits insulating food, hatmanah, using something that does not increase heat (such as clothing), notwithstanding that this is prohibited on Shabbos.

As we will see shortly, there is much discussion among rishonim and early poskim whether we rule according to the conclusions of this Mishnah, or whether we rule more leniently. But first, we need to understand each of the halachic issues that the Mishnah mentions. For example, what is wrong with separating maasros, even on Shabbos itself? Which melacha of Shabbos does this violate?

Maasering

The Mishnah (Beitzah 36b) prohibits separating maasros on Yom Tov, and certainly on Shabbos. The reason for this prohibition is that, since it makes the food edible halachically, it is viewed as a form of forbidden "repair work."

Demai has an in-between status. What is demai? In the times of Chazal, observant but poorly educated Jews observed the mitzvos, although some of them would occasionally "cut corners," violating details of halachos that involve major expense. These people, called amei ha'aretz, were lax predominantly regarding three areas of halacha – the laws of shemittah, the laws of tumah and taharah, and the laws of separating maasros. Although most amei ha'aretz indeed separated maasros faithfully, Chazal instituted that produce purchased from an am ha'aratz should have maaser separated from it, albeit without first reciting the brocha for taking maaser. This produce was called demai, and the institution of this takkanah was because it was difficult to ascertain which amei ha'aretz were separating maasros and which were not. Thus, we treat this produce as a type of safek tevel. For this reason, the brocha for separating maasros was omitted prior to separating maaser from demai because, indeed, most amei ha'aretz separated maasros. In addition, because most amei ha'aretz separated maasros, Chazal allowed other leniences pertaining to its use; for example, they permitted serving demai produce to the poor or to soldiers in the army.

Because there is a great deal of reason to be lenient relative to demai, the Mishnah permitted separating maasros from it during bein hashemashos (Shabbos 34a). The reason this is permitted is because this separation may not actually be "fixing" anything – it is more than likely that the maasros were already separated.

Immersing utensils

During bein hashemashos, the Mishnah permitted immersing vessels and other items that had previously become tamei. This immersion is prohibited on Shabbos or Yom Tov, itself, as mentioned in Mesechta Beitzah (Mishnah 17b and Gemara ad loc.). There, the Gemara (Beitzah 18a) cites a four-way dispute why it is prohibited to immerse vessels to make them tahor on Shabbos or Yom Tov. The four reasons are:

1. Someone immersing vessels on Shabbos may inadvertently carry them through a public area. According to this opinion, immersing vessels on Yom Tov was prohibited as an extension of the prohibition of Shabbos.
2. Clothing and cloth that became tamei, and was then toiveled on Shabbos or Yom Tov, could cause someone to squeeze out the water. According to this opinion, immersing pots, plates, silverware and other items that do not absorb water was prohibited as an extension of the prohibition to immerse cloth and other squeezable items.
3. Knowing that someone has time to toivel vessels on Shabbos or Yom Tov, the owner might delay toiveling them until then. This procrastination might then result in foods or other vessels becoming tamei. Banning the immersions on Shabbos or Yom Tov would cause people to immerse the vessels at an earlier opportunity.
4. Immersing vessels to make them usable is considered "repairing" them on Shabbos or Yom Tov.

The rishonim disagree how we rule in this dispute: in other words, which of the four reasons is accepted (see Rif, Rosh, etc.). There are halachic ramifications of this dispute. Although immersing vessels to make them tahor is not a germane topic today, since we are all tamei anyway, the question is raised whether vessels acquired from a non-Jew, which require immersion in a mikveh prior to use, may be immersed on Shabbos and Yom Tov. When we look at the reasons mentioned by the Gemara why Chazal forbade immersing tamei vessels on Shabbos and Yom Tov, we can conclude

that some of the reasons should definitely apply to the immersing of vessels for this latter reason, whereas others might not. The Rosh concludes that it is prohibited on Shabbos and Yom Tov to immerse vessels acquired from a non-Jew. (See, however, Shaagas Aryeh #56.) We will discuss shortly whether one can immerse them during bein hashemashos.

#### Kindling lights

During bein hashemashos, any Torah prohibition cannot be performed because of safek de'oraysa lechumrah, the rule that cases of doubt regarding Torah prohibitions are treated stringently. The Mishnah's example of this is kindling lights, which is certainly forbidden during bein hashemashos.

#### Hatmanah -- Insulating food

The Gemara explains that the Mishnah's last ruling, insulating food, is permitted bein hashemashos because of a specific reason applicable only to its case. Since explaining the details of this rabbinic injunction, called hatmanah, would take us far afield, we will forgo that discussion in this article.

#### Rebbe and the Rabbanan

Up until this point, I have been explaining the Mishnah in Bameh Madlikin. However, elsewhere, the Gemara (Eruvin 32b) cites a dispute between Rebbe and the Rabbanan, in which Rebbe contends that all rabbinic prohibitions may be performed during the bein hashemashos period, whereas the Rabbanan prohibit this. The obvious reading of the Mishnah in Bameh Madlikin is that it follows the approach of the Rabbanan who prohibit performing most rabbinically prohibited acts during the bein hashemashos period, and, indeed, this is how Rashi explains that Mishnah. However, the Gemara (Eruvin 32b-34b) demonstrates that the Mishnah there in Eruvin follows the opinion of Rebbe. On its own, this is not a halachic concern, since there are instances in which different Mishnayos follow the opinions of different tana'im. The practical question that needs to be decided is whether we indeed rule according to the Rabbanan's position as stated in the Mishnah in Bameh Madlikin, or whether we follow Rebbe's more lenient ruling. The conclusion of the Gemara in Eruvin implies that the halacha follows the opinion of Rebbe, and not that of the Rabbanan.

Among the rishonim, we find variant halachic conclusions regarding this question (Rashi, Shabbos 34a s.v. safek; Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 24:10 and Hilchos Eruvin 6:9; Tur Orach Chayim 342; Beis Yosef Orach Chayim 261 and 342). The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 342) concludes according to the Rambam's opinion, ruling that during bein hashemashos Chazal did not forbid anything that is prohibited because of a rabbinic injunction, provided that there is some mitzvah involved or that there were extenuating reasons why it was not performed on erev Shabbos. The Shulchan Aruch mentions, specifically, that it is permitted during bein hashemashos to climb a tree on Rosh Hashanah to get a shofar in order to perform the mitzvah, although it is prohibited to climb a tree on Yom Tov itself even if, as a result, you will be unable to blow shofar. Returning to our first question ("After sunset on a Friday evening, may I ask a non-Jewish person to turn on the lights?"), the Shulchan Aruch also permits asking a non-Jew to kindle a light during bein hashemashos. The Mishnah Berurah 261:17 permits asking him, even if you already accepted Shabbos.

Similarly, the Magen Avraham (261:6) permits separating maasros during bein hashemashos, if you do not have enough food ready for Shabbos. (The Ketzos Hashulchan [75:5, 6 in Badei Hashulchan] explains that the situation is such that he does not have enough fruit or vegetables to have an enjoyable Shabbos meal.) It is very interesting that the Magen Avraham permits this, because the Mishnah at the end of Bameh Madlikin that we quoted above expressly prohibits separating maasros during bein hashemashos.

Nevertheless, the Magen Avraham permits this separating of maasros, since we rule according to Rebbe, not like the Mishnah.

#### Toiueling during bein hashemashos

With this background, let us examine the second of our opening questions: is it permitted during the bein hashemashos period to toivel dishes, glasses and silverware purchased from a non-Jew? Assuming we conclude, like the Rosh does, that it is prohibited to toivel these items on Shabbos or Yom Tov,

which is the common practice, someone who has no others to use on Shabbos or Yom Tov may toivel them during bein hashemashos (Magen Avraham 261:6).

#### Separating challah

There is much discussion among halachic authorities whether it is permitted to separate challah during bein hashemashos, if you realize that you forgot to do so before. As we will see shortly, the Magen Avraham (261:2) prohibits separating challah bein hashemashos, whereas other authorities qualify this. To explain their halachic conclusions, we need to provide some background to the laws of separating challah.

Although people are often surprised to discover this, challah is categorized under the mitzvos ha'teluyos ba'aretz, the agricultural mitzvos that apply min haTorah only in Eretz Yisroel. The requirement of separating challah from dough made in chutz la'aretz is a rabbinic requirement. However, when implementing this requirement, Chazal instructed that the mitzvah be performed in a different way from how it is observed in Eretz Yisroel. Dough made in Eretz Yisroel that has not yet had its challah portion separated has the halachic status of tevel and may not be eaten. Dough made in chutz la'aretz does not become tevel. There is a mitzvah to separate challah, but this mitzvah can be fulfilled even after most of the dough has been eaten.

Therefore, should one realize on Shabbos that challah was not separated from dough made in Eretz Yisroel, the bread cannot be eaten because it is tevel. However, if the dough was made in chutz la'aretz, the bread can be eaten on Shabbos, and the challah separated after Shabbos. To do this, you must make sure that you keep some of the bread until after Shabbos, and then separate challah from what was set aside.

#### Reverse the law

The result of this halacha is that dough produced in chutz la'aretz does not require that its challah is separated in order to permit eating it on Shabbos, whereas dough produced in Eretz Yisroel does. We therefore have an anomalous conclusion regarding whether the challah may be separated during bein hashemashos. Challah may not be separated from dough made in chutz la'aretz, because you can wait to separate the challah until after Shabbos. The later authorities explain that this is the intention of the ruling of the Magen Avraham (261:2). However, when the dough was prepared in Eretz Yisroel and challah was not taken, it will be forbidden to eat the bread on Shabbos. Therefore, when you realize that you forgot to separate challah, and you are relying on that bread for your Shabbos meals, you may separate the challah during bein hashemashos (Machatzis Hashekel 261:2; Pri Megadim, Eishel Avraham 261:2; Mishnah Berurah 261:4).

We can now address the third of our opening questions: "May I separate challah during bein hashemashos?" The answer is that if the dough was mixed in chutz la'aretz, I may not, but I may eat the baked bread during Shabbos, as long as I leave some of it for after Shabbos and then separate challah retroactively. On the other hand, if the dough was made in Eretz Yisroel, I may therefore not eat it without first separating challah, and I may separate the challah during bein hashemashos.

#### In conclusion

The Gemara teaches that the rabbinic laws are dearer to Hashem than the Torah laws. In this instance, we see that Chazal provided lenience to permit otherwise prohibited activities to be done during the bein hashemashos period.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch (Shemos 20:10) notes that people mistakenly think that work is prohibited on Shabbos, in order for it to be a day of rest. He points out that the Torah does not prohibit doing avodah, which connotes hard work, but melachah, activities or actions which bring purpose and accomplishment. Shabbos is the day on which we refrain from constructing and altering the world for our own purposes. The goal of Shabbos is to allow Hashem's rule to be the focus of creation, by refraining from our own creative acts (Shemos 20:11).



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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky  
**Drasha Parshas Terumah**  
**Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky**

### **Ark of Inclusion**

In this week's portion, Hashem commands the Jewish nation to build the Mishkan. Each one of the utensils is specified as to how it should be constructed, its width, its length, and its height. The type of material whether it was gold, silver, or copper, is enumerated and the details of its ornaments are provided.

The procedure for the construction of each vessel is preceded by a command stated in the singular form: "And you shall make" "And you shall make a show bread table." "And you shall make a Menorah." "And you shall make an Altar."

The command is directed toward Moshe to delegate the construction. The Aron Kodesh, the Holy Ark is different. Its command is not stated in the singular form, rather in the plural. The Torah does not say and you shall make a Holy Ark, it states, "And they shall make a Holy Ark." The commentaries ask, why was the command to build the Ark the only one that was given to a group?

In a small shul in Yerushalayim, a daily Daf HaYomi shiur (Talmudic folio class) was held each morning before Shacharis. An elderly Russian immigrant attended the shiur. Quiet as he was, his behavior in the shiur intrigued the lecturer. He would never ask a thing. Often he would nod off. Sometimes, when the Rabbi quoted a particular Talmudic sage, the old man's face would light up – especially when the Rabbi mentioned an opinion from an obscure Talmudic personality.

This behavior continued throughout the summer. Always quiet, the man would sometimes nod off, and at other times he would perk up. Then winter came. The group of men would gather around the table in the frigid mornings huddled close as they would warm to the strains of the Talmud and the straining heater in the old synagogue. The old man never missed a class. One morning a rare snow blanketed Jerusalem. No one showed up to the shiur except the Rabbi and the elderly Russian Jew. Instead of giving his usual lecture, the Rabbi decided he would ask the old Jew a little bit about himself.

"Tell me," he inquired, "I watch you as I say my shiur. Sometimes you look intrigued but at other times you seem totally disinterested. The trouble is I would like to make the shiur more interesting for you during its entirety, but I can't seem to make out what perks you up and makes you doze?"

The old man smiled. "I never had a Jewish education. I can barely read Hebrew. I do not come to the shiur for the same reasons that the other men come." He paused as his eyes pondered his past. "You see, I was a soldier in the Red Army during World War II. Every day our commander would herd us into a room and put a gun to our heads. He commanded us to recite the names of every member of the Politburo. And we did. We learned those names backwards and forward. I come to this class to hear the names of every rabbi in the Talmud. If I cannot learn at least I will know the names of all the great sages! "That," he smiled "is my Daf HaYomi!"

Although the show bread table, the Menorah, and the Altar can be constructed by individuals — the Ark that holds the Torah is different. One man cannot make it alone. It must be a communal effort. Just as the Torah cannot be learned by one man alone, its Ark cannot be built by an individual either.

The Torah is given for everyone to learn and to experience – each one according to his or her own level and ability. Lighting a Menorah is a clear-cut ritual delegated to the Kohain. The Altar is used for the sacrifices brought by the kohanim. The Torah is for everybody. And each individual has his own Shas and Daf HaYomi. Each person has his share in Toras Yisrael. Everyone extracts something holy from the Torah. To some it may be extrapolative halachic theory, while for others it may be the refinement of character. And still for others it may be the names of Abayai and Rava.

*In memory of Ruth Gleicher by Ben Lipschitz (Chaya) Rivka Bas haRav Yoel*

*Good Shabbos!*  
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subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum  
**Shema Yisrael Torah Network**  
**Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Terumah**

**פרשת תרומה תשפ"ד**

**ויקחו לי תרומה**

### **And let them take for Me a portion. (25:2)**

Chazal (Midrash Rabbah Shemos 33:1) expound on the *pasuk's* expression, *V'yikchu Li*, "They shall take for Me." The *Midrash* compares the Torah to a good acquisition (*mekach*) of which people are unaware of its value. When they consider how much the buyer paid the broker, however, they realize the value of the purchase. Likewise, how does one determine the true value of the Torah which we received? We look at the payment made to Moshe *Rabbeinu*: the skin of his face becoming otherworldly radiant. The *Midrash* further expounds, discussing an acquisition during which the seller sells himself along with the item he is selling. Likewise, Hashem says, "I sold you My Torah; I myself was sold along with it." This may be compared to a king who had a one and only daughter. One of the other kings came and took her for a wife, planning to return to his far-off land. The father of the bride said, "My daughter is my only daughter; I am unable to part from her. I cannot tell you not to take her from me. After all, she is your wife. I ask one favor of you: In any place in which you choose to live, prepare a room for me, so that I may dwell near you." Likewise, Hashem said, "I gave you My Torah. I am unable to part from it. I ask that you make for Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell in it, thus remaining near to My Torah" (whose repository is the *Aron HaKodesh* in the *Mishkan*).

Chazal teach how important the Torah is to Hashem, how He values it so much that He had us make the *Mishkan* to house the Torah in its Ark. We should make note of this caveat: Hashem comes along with the Torah.

Horav Yosef Zundel, zl, m'Salant (Be'er Yosef), supplements this with an insightful comment. A king is willing to live together with his daughter and son-in-law only if his son-in-law treats his daughter respectfully. Only then is the king pleased, as he sees the love and harmony that exists in his daughter's home. If, however, his son-in-law ignores his wife, treating her indifferently, rejecting her for other diversions, and, as a result, humiliates her, the father will surely not be their guest. He will be in too much pain to witness such boorish treatment of his daughter. Likewise, Hashem comes along with his daughter – the Torah, only when He observes that the treatment she receives from *am Yisrael* is respectful. If, in contrast, Hashem sees that His Torah is treated with scorn and derision, He wants no part of this relationship. When we treat the Torah in an unbecoming manner, we are, by extension, driving away Hashem. The flipside is that when we treat the Torah with respect, we merit having the *Shechinah* in our presence. This is why, when one learns Torah, he should be *b'simchah*, filled with joy. After all, Hashem is present with him.

Chazal (Shabbos 30b) teach that the *Shechinah* does not rest upon a person (or an entity, i.e., home) when he/it displays *atzvut*, sadness. When a house is filled with joy, the *Shechinah* permeates the home. In his *hesped*, eulogy, for Horav Shmuel Vosner, zl, Horav Yisrael Zicherman, Shlita (Rav of Achuzas Brachfeld), related the following story. He was on the rabbinical board of Maaynei Ha'Yeshua Hospital in Bnei Brak. As such, he had occasion to visit with the patients. One day, he was summoned to the bedside of a man who was paralyzed over most of his body. When Rav Zicherman entered the room, the patient struggled to position himself. "Rebbe," he asked, "am I still permitted to recite the *brachah* of *She'asah li kol tzarki*, 'Who has provided my every need?'" Rav Zicherman replied, "Rav Vosner is scheduled to visit the hospital today. Why not ask him?"

Rav Vosner visited, and the patient presented his case. He was unable to do much of anything. Did the *brachah* have any real meaning? The Rav replied with a story, “When I was younger and a student in *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin*, I accompanied my venerable *Rebbe, Horav Meir Shapiro, zl*, to visit one of the *yeshivah* students who was gravely ill. He was in acute pain with, very little hope for relief. It was, thus, surprising to see this young man *b’simchah*, in a joyful, serene mood. Rav Meir was taken aback by this young man’s attitude, and he asked, “What is motivating your sense of joy?” The young man’s response was a stunning revelation.

“With regard to my present situation, I am unable to do anything for myself. I asked myself, ‘Why is Hashem keeping me alive? What purpose is served with me laying here in excruciating pain and unable to do anything?’ I then reminded myself of *Chazal’s* statement (*Shabbos* 12b), ‘The *Shechinah* rests above the head of a sick person.’ This means the purpose of a *choleh*, sick person, is to bring the *Shechinah* down to this world. Due to my illness, the *Shechinah* is down here above my head. I think this alone is an important and qualifying reason for living.

“However, *Chazal* also teach (*Shabbos* 30b) that the *Shechinah* does not reside where *atzvut*, sadness/depression, exists. Thus, I gather whatever emotional strength I have to enliven myself, so that the *Shechinah* will remain above my head.”

When Rav Zicherman heard the young man’s story, he commented, “This thought should be saved for generations.” Rav Vosner then looked deeply into the eyes of the sick man and said, “How can you say that your life serves no purpose in the world? On your shoulders rests the *Shechinah*, made possible by you! Can one have any loftier purpose for living than being the medium for bringing down the *Shechinah* and providing a resting place for Him?”

#### ועצי שיטים

#### And *shittim* (acacia) wood. (25:5)

*Rashi* quotes *Midrash Tanchuma* that Yaakov Avinu’s foresight (through *Ruach HaKodesh*, Divine Inspiration) was the reason that *Klal Yisrael* had *shittim* wood available for the *Mishkan*. Yaakov knew that his descendants would one day erect a Sanctuary in the wilderness. This edifice would require wood. Therefore, he planted trees when he arrived in Egypt, using seeds that he had brought with him from *Eretz Yisrael*. He commanded his sons (who obviously commanded it to their sons) that, when they would finally leave Egypt, they should cut down the trees and take them along. *Horav Eliyahu Meir Bloch, zl*, derives a powerful and practical lesson from *Chazal*. Yaakov Avinu did not seem concerned about the nation’s ability to put food on the people’s table.

As far as material sustenance is concerned, the people should be *mishtadel*, endeavor, when necessary and trust in Hashem that He will provide for them when necessary. With regard to *ruchniyos*, spirituality, however, we do not wait for miracles to occur. One must do everything within his means to set up and provide spiritual sustenance for himself and the community. The Jewish People left Egypt with no prospects for food. They trusted in Hashem to provide for them, as He did for the next forty years. With regard to the *Mishkan*, however, which was the spiritual dimension of their journey, Yaakov made sure that they had provisions.

An obvious lesson that can be derived from here regarding spiritual needs is that we must plan, work and worry. We do not rely on miracles when it comes to building religious institutions. We do everything within our power, from raising funds to scouring for students. Nothing happens by itself. The founding fathers of Torah in America – of whom Rav Elya Meir Bloch was among its leadership – understood this. The religious component was their primary focus. The building, food, and day-to-day maintenance were all parts of their *bitachon*. They trusted that Hashem would provide once they established the institution.

*Horav Chaim Mordechai Katz, zl*, who was co-founder of *Telshe Yeshivah* – together with his brother-in-law, Rav Elya Meir – would comment concerning the well-known *Mishnah* at the end of *Pirkei Avos*. A man met

Rabbi Yose ben Kisma and asked him, *Fun vanet kumt a Yid?* “From where do you hail?” The *Tanna* replied that he came from a city in which Torah reigned supreme, with *Roshei Yeshivah, rabbanim, sofrim* and many students of Torah. The man countered, “I will give you a sizable amount of money and jewels to relocate.” Rav Yose replied, that he could give him all the money in the world, but he would only live in a place of Torah. The *man* asked, “Why not take the money and build a *yeshivah* which would attract the finest mentors and students?” He explained that it does not work that way. One does not build Torah with money. Torah is built with blood, sweat and tears. An institution whose focus is money will not succeed. Its leaders require *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice.

If I were to select a paradigm of *mesiras nefesh* for building Torah, an example of what it means to negate material and physical accoutrements for the purpose of building Torah in its most pristine foundation, I would focus on the *Novarodok Yeshivah* movement. Every movement revolves characteristically around its founder. *Novarodok* was no different. To characterize the *Alter, zl, of Novarodok, Horav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz*, one must delve deep into this *mussar* approach of self-abrogation, soul-searching and introspection, as the precursor for developing oneself into a Jew truly devoted to serving and glorifying Hashem. He felt that one must first conquer his character deficits before he can improve. As long as the *cross* which is the work of one’s *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, infects a person, he cannot successfully strive for greatness in Torah. Perhaps one of the *Alter’s* aphorisms might aptly describe his approach to character development, which is a primary goal of *mussar*: “Man wants to achieve greatness overnight, and he wants to sleep well that night, too.” When someone is gravely ill, it is necessary to treat him with numerous medicines until one finds the key to his cure.

In many ways, the *Alter* was a loner, his approach to spiritual growth too demanding and radical for others to emulate. There were also those who opposed his approach. He succeeded, however, in training Torah giants in Torah and *mussar* whose goal it was to spread out and save as many Jewish brothers as possible. The *Alter’s* first *yeshivah* was established in *Novarodok*, quickly reaching an enrollment of 300 students and a *kollel* of 60 married men. He single-handedly performed all the customary functions of a *Rosh Yeshivah/maggid shiur*, administrator and executive director. His family remained in *Slabodka*, with the *Alter* returning home twice a year – for *Succos* and *Pesach*. His wife supported the family by selling pastries. He subsisted on the barest necessities of life while in the *yeshivah*. He was a brilliant *Rosh Yeshivah*, organizing his students into groups, with older students mentoring the younger ones, while he remained involved with everyone.

If not for the failed Russian Revolution of 1905, the *Novarodok Yeshivah* would have remained on site. Young *yeshivah* students became enchanted by the anti-Czarist rhetoric, and, suddenly, the young men who had no interest in anything but Torah and *mussar* began espousing the communist manifesto. The *Haskalah*, Enlightenment, dealt a terrible blow with their campaign against Jewish observance. Rav Yosef Yoizel responded with intensified learning. These were turbulent times, and those associated with his *yeshivah* would have to spread out and reach the masses of Jewish young people who were quickly becoming contaminated with the diseases of Communism and atheism.

The *Novarodok* students were instructed to spread out throughout Russia and its environs to the far outposts, the tiny rural communities, to find the children and establish *chadorim* and *yeshivos* for them. They had no money, just the tattered clothes on their back. They had, however, a fiery drive to spread Torah and feared nothing but failure. The economic challenges were acute, especially following World War I and the Great Depression. Food and shelter were commodities that were in great demand, but were subject to severe shortages.

Living in Eastern Europe during periods of political upheaval was especially dangerous. The authorities had no love for the Jews in general, and these young men who were spreading religious rhetoric would especially

undermine their plans for a godless Russia. These factors, together with the isolation and deprivation that accompanied living in remote places far from their families and the basic conveniences of life, intensified the challenges they faced. In some instances, the students had to learn a new language and navigate the cultural changes. Despite these hardships, these young men persevered in their commitment to spreading the teachings of the Novarodok *Yeshivah* throughout Eastern Europe. Their sacrifice played a critical role in the preservation and continuation of the movement's values and educational philosophy, even in the face of overwhelming adversity.

I conclude with another of the *Alter's* aphorisms: He was wont to say, "I have never concerned myself whether I can do something, but only whether it must be done. If it must be done, with Hashem's help, one will be able to accomplish it."

ואל הארון תתן את העדת אשר אתן אליך

**And into the Aron you shall put the Testimony that I shall give you. (25:21)**

This *pasuk* (21) seems redundant. In *pasuk* 16, the Torah writes, "You shall place in the Aron the Testimonial Tablets that I shall give you." Two *pesukim* – same message. *Rashi* explains that we derive from this redundancy that it was prohibited to place the *Kapores*, Cover, on the Aron unless the *Luchos* were already in there. There is no such thing as an empty Aron in the Sanctuary. If there are no *Luchos*, the Aron is incomplete; hence, no *Kapores* is placed over it. *Chezkuni* explains that the first *pasuk* refers to the first *Luchos*, while the second *pasuk* refers to the second *Luchos*, which were fashioned by Moshe *Rabbeinu*.

In his commentary to *Bava Basra* 14:b, *Rashi* writes that the second *Luchos* were placed above the first *Luchos*. Others contend that they were on the side, because the first *Luchos*, having been fashioned by Hashem, had greater sanctity than their replacement. *Malbim* explains that *Rashi's* dispensation is due to the fact that the letters flew off the Tablets prior to Moshe shattering them. (If, indeed, the letters had been there): A) How could Moshe shatter them? One does not break something that Hashem creates. B) It would be impossible to break something that Hashem made. As such, their intrinsic *kedushah* was diminished, allowing for them to be placed beneath the second *Luchos*.

The idea of the second *Luchos* being placed on top of the first set of *Luchos* finds purchase in the message that the "new" must be built on the foundation/principles of the old/past. The basis for the second *Luchos*, which Moshe crafted, was the original *Luchos* which Hashem formed. Even the shards of the old can teach us something. We do not discard the past, but we can build on it. The lessons and examples we receive from the past are invaluable for incorporating into the present. Otherwise, our future might leave much to be desired.

*Rambam* (*Sefer HaMitzvos Asei* 20) identifies *V'asu Li Mikdash*, "They shall make for Me a Sanctuary" (25:8), as the source for the *mitzvah* of building the *Mishkan/Bais Hamikdash*. He says that this *mitzvah* includes all of the *klei HaMishkan*, vessels, used in the Sanctuary. He lists seven vessels, which include: two *Mizbeichos*, Altars; the ramp; the *Kiyor* for washing the *Kohanim's* hands and feet, with the base upon which it was placed; the *Shulchan* and *Menorah*. Noticeably, the Aron is not included. The Aron symbolizes the Torah which is contained within it. One would have expected it to be included among the vessels of the Sanctuary.

The *Brisker Rav*, *zl*, quotes his brother, *Horav Moshe*, *zl*, who explains that the above-mentioned vessels play a role in the functioning of the Sanctuary. The *avodah*, service, in the *Bais Hamikdash* is executed through the agency of these vessels. The Aron *HaKodesh* is not involved in any given *avodah*. It is present to serve as the repository for the *Luchos/Torah*. As such, it is different from the other vessels which are intrinsic to the Sanctuary. They serve the *Mikdash* and are, therefore, included in the *mitzvah* of *V'asu Li Mikdash*. The Aron serves the *Luchos*, superseding the other vessels.

The Torah holds a central role in the life of a Jew. It is not only the foundational text of Jewish law; it is our ethical and moral guide. Indeed, it preceded the creation of the world. We conform to the Torah's teachings and principles – not vice versa. Without the Torah, we are no different than any other human specie. Thus, it is no wonder that the *Luchos* and the *Sefer Torah* (scroll) stand above all else. Jews throughout the world would rather die than deface a Torah scroll. They would risk their lives to save a scroll. The Nazis who murdered six million of our brothers and sisters understood the significance of the Torah. Sadly, some Jews are so distant, so indifferent, so alienated, so angry, that the Torah's pre-eminence eludes them.

The Nazis hunted for Torah scrolls, knowing that to defame them would be adding indignity to whatever pride the Jews had. One who reads the stories of the Jewish heroes who, despite the most heinous persecution and death, remained steadfastly committed to *Yiddishkeit* will invariably discover hundreds of recorded incidents in which *Yidden* were prepared to undergo the most brutal suffering just to hold on to and spare the Torah any indignity. They knew that, ultimately, their actions would result in an untimely, miserable death for them. In the end, the Torah would be destroyed, but they would not abandon the Torah.

Those sent on transports to Auschwitz were not permitted to take any religious articles, such as *sefarim*, with them. One Jew stubbornly refused to part with his *Sefer Torah*. He held onto it even as he was herded into the cattle car for transport to Auschwitz. The enemy ignored him – at least he was not smuggling anything. When they arrived in the infamous death camp, the Jews were instructed in no uncertain terms that they must leave all of their possessions on the train. This Jew was the first to exit the train, his *Sefer Torah* ensconced in his arms, held close to his chest. He was not parting with his Torah. The Nazis cursed, reviled and beat him mercilessly, but he would not let go of his Torah.

At this point, a Nazi officer came over and pointed his gun at the man's heart and said, "Let go of the scroll, or I will shoot you dead right now!" The man was not frightened. He ignored the Nazi. He was prepared to die holding his Torah. The Nazis looked at him as if he had lost his mind and left him alone. He held on to his Torah all the way to the gas chambers, where he died holding on to his beloved scroll.

A Jew who had years earlier severed his relationship with *mitzvah* observance watched all of this and was moved to the point that he exclaimed, "I now understand the Orthodox fanatics. Their love of Torah supersedes their life. They will not deviate one iota from the Torah, because of their love for it. I ask forgiveness from Hashem and, from this day on, I accept upon myself to return to *mitzvah* observance with deep-rooted pride, love and devotion."