



BS"D

To: parsha@groups.io
From: Chaim Shulman <cshulman@gmail.com>
& Allen Klein <allen.klein@gmail.com>

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON TERUMAH - 5786

parsha@groups.io / www.parsha.net - in our 29th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to parsha+subscribe@groups.io Please also copy me at cshulman@gmail.com A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net> It is also fully searchable.

Sponsored by **Dr. Phil & Leah Kazlow**
in memory of Leah's mother
Matil bas Dovid - Mrs. Moshe Stern
whose Yahrzeit is Vav Adar.

To sponsor a parsha sheet contact cshulman@gmail.com
(proceeds to tzedaka)

Rav Moshe Feinstein

Darash Moshe

[Rav Moshe Feinstein's 40th Yahrzeit is next Sunday 12 Adar]

Parashas Terumah

יִקַּח לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנֶה לְבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֵת תְּרוּמָתִי

The Torah uses the phrase "and let them take for Me a gift", which suggests that the donations for the Mishkan were taken by force. This is puzzling, because the historical reality was that the people gave so willingly, they exceeded the required amount. Why would the Torah hint at coercion in such a generous context? This phrasing teaches us a vital lesson about mitzvos like tzedakah or supporting the Mishkan. It's wrong to perform these deeds out of a cold sense of obligation or resentment. Instead, we must use our yetzer tov to force our yetzer hara to agree with a generous attitude. By mobilizing our Torah knowledge and past good deeds, we can change our very nature until we truly want to be generous.

Alternatively, the choice of the word "take" instead of "give" highlights the true nature of ownership. Hashem only wanted contributions from those who believed their wealth belonged to Him rather than themselves. While Hashem grants us the freedom to use money as a test of faith, it's actually a trust fund under our care. A person with this mindset doesn't feel like they're giving; they feel as if they're simply allowing a collector to reclaim what's already Hashem's. For the Mishkan, Hashem was unwilling to accept gifts from anyone who felt they were giving from their own pocket. This mirrors King David's words regarding the Beis Hamikdash, where he told Hashem that "from Your hand we have given it to You".

This idea helps explain why the Torah specifies that gifts come from "every man whose heart motivates him". This suggests that the actual command to donate applied only to those with truly giving hearts. While less generous people could still contribute and receive a mitzvah, they weren't the primary target of the command. They earned only the lesser reward of those who act without being commanded to do so. There's a profound difference in reward between a voluntary act and one done in fulfillment of a divine decree.

We see this same principle in the Talmud's discussion of Yehoshua, whom Hashem told to reflect on the Torah day and night. The Sages view this command as a blessing rather than a burden. Because Yehoshua loved the Torah so much, Hashem deemed him worthy of a formal command to study it constantly. This allowed him to earn the greater reward reserved for someone who performs a mitzvah because they're commanded to. We should all strive to learn and act with such enthusiasm and love for Hashem. The more we love the mitzvos, the more we become obligated to do them, which ultimately leads to a far greater reward.

The Precious Stones of the Manna

Rav Yechiel Michel Kossowsky zt"l*

“דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה וּגְו” — “Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me an offering...” (Ex. 25:2). The Torah lists gold, silver, copper, rare stones, and all the materials for the Mishkan. How could a recently redeemed people in the wilderness provide all this?

Chazal (Shemos Rabbah) teach that the stones were wondrously supplied. When Hakadosh Baruch Hu commanded Moshe regarding the Mishkan, Moshe asked, “Are Bnai Yisrael capable of this?” Hashem replied that even one Jew could do so — “מֵאֵת כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנֶה לְבוֹ” — Chazal add that when the מן descended, precious stones descended with it; they gathered and set them aside. The means were given — but the deeper question remained: were Bnai Yisrael spiritually ready?

Having just received the Torah, Bnai Yisrael required a unifying center that would bind them together in avodas Hashem. That was the Mishkan — a מקום השראת השכינה. Every Jew contributed so that the Mishkan would belong to all of Klal Yisrael, binding each individual to the Shechinah. Yet Moshe wondered: can an entire people truly rise to become a dwelling place for the Divine Presence?

The answer lay in מתן תורה and in the daily miracle of the מן. The manna did more than sustain; it shaped Bnai Yisrael. Dependent each day upon Hashem, they learned emunah, discipline, and refinement. This is the meaning of the jewels descending with the manna — through it they were formed into a holy people “וְרָאוּ כָּל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שָׁם ה' נִקְרָא עֲלֵיהֶם” — not through power or might, but through a life visibly sustained by Hashem.

Only through this gradual formation did the Shechinah rest upon them. Faith that begins as simple receiving matures into inner strength and wholeness. This message applies in every generation. A person cannot rise higher than what he is nourished by. Without sustained Torah, one remains limited and spiritually coarse. When Klal Yisrael live with Torah and the Shechina, they reveal the “precious stones” within them — treasures that elevate themselves and the world.

The manna is also inseparably linked to Shabbos. “וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי” — Hashem blessed the seventh day with a double portion on Friday and sanctified it by withholding manna on Shabbos (Rashi; Mechilta). Shabbos teaches that success does not stem from human effort alone but from Divine will. One may toil endlessly and achieve nothing; one may refrain and still receive abundance.

Chazal teach (Shabbos 118b): “If Bnai Yisrael would keep two Shabbosim properly, they would be immediately redeemed.” Shabbos is not merely about reward and punishment; it instills awareness — that the world stands upon Torah, and that Bnai Yisrael, who bear the Torah, sustain it.

* Rav Yechiel Michel Kossowsky studied at the Mir Yeshiva in Poland, where he developed a close relationship with Rav Yeruchem Levovitz and with his uncle, Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski. At the age of twenty-five, he received semicha and was appointed Rav of Volkovisk, later serving as Rav in Zelva. In 1936, he married Chiena Garber, daughter of the Rav of Horodok. In the end of 1940, through a remarkable series of providential events, he and his family escaped war-torn Europe. He subsequently settled in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he served as Rav and Dayan and founded the first Yeshiva high school in the country. Rav Kossowsky was known as an innovative and eloquent speaker, a distinguished Torah scholar

and a devoted and warm community leader and he worked tirelessly to ensure that Torah continued in South Africa after WW2.

Rav Schachter on Parshas Terumah The Mikdash Me'at

Rav Schachter on the Parsha I - Based on the shiurim of Rav Hershel Schachter - Adapted by Dr. Allan Weissman -

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FL5876LH> - Reproduced with permission.

The Ramban, in his introduction to our parsha, writes that the main purpose of the Mishkan and the Beis HaMikdash was to serve as a continuation of the hashra'as haShechinah (Divine Presence) that was revealed at Ma'amad Har Sinai. Therefore, since Bnei Yisrael received the luchos ha'edus at Har Sinai, the Mishkan, referred to as Mishkan Ha'Edus, served as a sanctuary to house those luchos.

The Gemara in Yoma (52b) tells us that towards the end of the period of the First Beis HaMikdash, Yoshiyahu HaMelech hid the luchos in a special vault beneath the Temple Mount, constructed for this purpose by Shlomo HaMelech. The Gemara (53b-54a) brings a dispute among the Tanna'im as to whether the luchos remained in this location during the period of the Second Beis HaMikdash or whether they were removed and taken to Bavel. The Rambam (Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 4:1) rules in accordance with the first opinion.

Rav Soloveitchik noted that the Rambam's ruling indicates that this was not merely a historical issue, but one with halachic significance. The dispute centers on whether it is possible to have a Beis HaMikdash without the presence of the luchos. The accepted opinion maintains that in order for the Beis HaMikdash to be invested with kedushah, it must function as a Mishkan Ha'Edus, housing the luchos. Accordingly, the Second Beis HaMikdash must have housed the luchos, albeit in an underground vault.

The Ramban, quoted by the Ran in his commentary to Maseches Megillah (8a in Dapei HaRif), claims that kedushas Beis HaKnesses is similar to the status of tashmishai mitzvah (objects used in the performance of a mitzvah). A sukkah or esrog is considered huktzah lemitzvaso during the duration of Sukkos. A Beis HaKnesses enjoys this same status because it enables a more enhanced performance of the mitzvah of tefillah. According to this approach, on a d'oraisa level, once a Beis HaKnesses falls into disuse and will no longer be used for mitzvah performance, it does not retain its kedushah. The Ran disagrees and maintains that the nature of the kedushah of a Beis HaKnesses is similar to that of the Beis HaMikdash, which has a status akin to tashmishai kedushah. This is based on the pasuk referring to a time when Bnei Yisrael will be in galus: "Va'ehi lahem leMikdash me'at" ("Yet I will be for them a miniature sanctuary") (Yechezkel 11:16). The Gemara in Megillah (29a) explains that this refers to "batei knessiyos u'vatei midrashos she'b'Bavel" — the synagogues and study halls in Bavel that will remain available to Klal Yisrael even in exile.

While the Ran writes that this interpretation is only an asmachta, the Sefer Yere'im (siman 394) maintains that kedushas Beis HaKnesses is d'oraisa in origin. The Chayei Adam (17:6) rules that we should follow the opinion of the Yere'im and therefore be stringent to abstain from non-mitzvah functions within the Beis HaKnesses.

Rav Soloveitchik and the Sdei Chemed pointed out that the Rambam (Minyan HaMitzvos at the beginning of the Mishnah Torah) appears to share this view. In listing Lo Sa'aseh 65, "Lo sa'asun kein laHashem Elokeichem" ("You shall not do so to Hashem, your G-d") (Devarim 12:4), the Rambam writes that it is forbidden to remove a stone from the mizbe'ach or from batei knessiyos or batei midrashos. The Beis HaKnesses thus seems to be included in this prohibition on a d'oraisa level.

We can therefore understand why the Rambam (Hilchos Tefillah 11:2), in discussing the dinim of kedushas Beis HaKnesses, writes that there should be a designated aron hakodesh in which to house the sefer Torah. This requirement reflects the idea that kedushas Beis HaKnesses parallels kedushas haMikdash, which stems from the presence of the aron housing the luchos. Even if a room is regularly used for tefillah, it would not attain the

status of Beis HaKnesses as a Mikdash Me'at without an aron hakodesh containing a sefer Torah.

Tosfos (Nazir 23b) implies that kedushas Beis HaKnesses stems from the Torah SheBichsav — the presence of a sefer Torah inside the aron hakodesh. Tosfos further suggests that kedushas Beis HaMedrash emanates from the study of Torah SheBe'al Peh there. The Gemara in Megillah (27a) records a dispute as to which possesses greater kedushah, a Beis HaKnesses or a Beis HaMedrash, and rules that a Beis HaMedrash possesses greater kedushah. Tosfos may understand this as reflecting the greater importance of Torah SheBe'al Peh.

In what sense is a Beis HaKnesses classified as a Mikdash Me'at? Rav Soloveitchik (Shiurim LeZecher Abba Mari Z"l) explained that the stricter din of mora (reverence), forbidding even the wearing of shoes, applies to the Beis HaMikdash, in contrast to the requirement of kavod (respect) that applies to a Beis HaKnesses.

The Gemara in Berachos (63a) states that one may not use a Beis HaKnesses as a shortcut, just as such conduct would not be tolerated in "beiso" — one's own house. A Beis HaKnesses must be treated with the same degree of respect as one's own home. Just as it was customary to remove galoshes before entering one's home, entering a Beis HaKnesses wearing galoshes would violate kevod Beis HaKnesses.

Thus, a Beis HaKnesses is our house, to which Hashem comes to visit. In contrast, the Beis HaMikdash is termed Beis Hashem, where we come to visit Him. In both places, Man has a rendezvous with Hashem; the difference lies in who is the visitor and who is being visited.

The Rav drew a parallel between Shabbos and Yom Tov. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 529:1), based on the Talmud Yerushalmi (Kiddushin 1:4), rules that while weekday clothing may not be worn on either Shabbos or Yom Tov, Yom Tov clothing should be superior. On Yom Tov, there is an obligation of simchah, as we appear lifnei Hashem in His home to fulfill the mitzvah of aliyah laregel. When visiting the King in His royal palace, one must dress most splendidly.

On Shabbos, however, when we say "Bo'I Kallah" ("Bride, come") and greet the Shechinah that comes to visit us in our home, less regal clothing suffices.

from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org> date: Feb 19, 2026, 10:00 AM

Parshas Terumah

The Place for Atzei Shitim's Firmness in This World

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1370 They Want To Build A New Shul? N.I.M.B.Y. (Not In My Backyard) 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@yadvechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadvechiel.org/> for further information. Good Shabbos!

The Place for Atzei Shitim's Firmness in This World

The next five parshiyos deal with the building of the Mishkan. The walls of the Mishkan were built with boards that were made from atzei shitim (acacia wood), which, according to the Medresh, is a type of erez (cedar) tree. Whether erez and shitim are similar or different types of trees, they both represent very strong, hardy types of wood. There is an interesting Medrash Rabbah (Shemos 35) which states, "The world was unworthy to use the wood of the cedar tree, which was created only for the sake of the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash.

On a homiletic level, I saw an interesting interpretation of this Medrash in a two-volume sefer called Menachem Tzion, which was written by Rav Menachem ben Tzion Zachs. His interpretation is based on the Gemara (Taanis 20a), which states "a person should always be 'soft' like a reed and not be 'hard' like a cedar." The intention of this Gemara is that people should be flexible. Reeds bend with the wind. They are flexible, not rigid. They compromise and go with the flow. On the other hand, the mighty cedar is erect. It is straight and inflexible. It doesn't bend.

Chazal say that a person should not be firm like a cedar. In life, a person must learn to compromise and make concessions. People need to learn to bend a little. People who are set in their ways and inflexible don't go very far. In most situations, a marriage or a friendship or business cannot work like that. A person simply cannot fit into society if it always has to be "my way or the highway!"

The Menachem Tzion suggests that the message of the aforementioned Medrash is that, in general, people should not be like cedar. As a rule, cedar's firmness is unworthy for this world. But there is one situation where we are supposed to use cedar and we are supposed to be inflexible, standing by our principles, and refusing to compromise. That is in the building of the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash.

When it comes to matters of the faith, we need to stand up for what is right. People can argue about certain things – are they right or not? But there is no compromising regarding matters of faith that are unequivocal! Once you start compromising, you don't have a religion left.

All that is necessary to confirm this concept is to look at other "forms of Yiddishkeit" that have compromised over and over until they don't even look like Yiddishkeit anymore.

I recently saw something that shocked me. This month, the Catholics celebrated "Ash Wednesday," marking forty days before Easter and the start of the season of Lent, a time of repentance and introspection, I'havdil. There is a church in Baltimore that had "Glitter Ash" for certain members of their community who engage in immoral behavior. They could commemorate the date, not with traditional ashes, but using ashes with glitter mixed in, to accommodate "people of that persuasion."

Now this is a church! This church commemorates Ash Wednesday, which is supposed to be about repentance and introspection, with glitter! We know what is going to happen to such a religion. We know what happens to religions that keep on making compromises on their principles and their matters of faith.

This is what the Menachem Tzion sees as the meaning of the Medrash about the cedar's inflexibility being useful only for the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash.

Rabbi Avrohom Buxbaum from Miami, Florida wants to extend this idea one step further.

Rashi, in our parsha (Shemos 25:5), asks where the Jews found atzei shitim (acacia wood) in the wilderness. Rashi quotes a Medrash Tanchuma that Yaakov Avinu foresaw prophetically that Bnei Yisrael would build a Mishkan in the wilderness and would need this kind of wood to build it. Therefore, Yaakov brought down trees with him from Eretz Yisrael when he descended to Mitzrayim and planted them there. He further instructed his children to cut them down and take them with them when they left Mitzrayim.

The truth of the matter is that this began even before Yaakov Avinu. The Medrash says on the pasuk "And he planted an eshel in Be'er Sheva" (Bereshis 21:33) that Avraham Avinu already was the one who originally planted the trees that would eventually be used for the Mishkan. Yaakov Avinu moved his grandfather's trees and replanted them in Mitzrayim and told his children to take them out with them.

Rabbi Buxbaum suggested that the message is the same. When Avraham Avinu planted the trees, it was also symbolic. Avraham Avinu was the original iconoclast. Iconoclast in the original sense of the word, means a person who broke the icons. That was what Avraham did! He broke the idols. He is called Avraham the "Ivri" (Hebrew) because "the entire world was on ever echad (one side) and he was m'ever ha'sheni (on the other side). He took on the entire world. He debunked paganism. It was a revolution. That takes a man with a steel level of courage. That takes a man who is going to be inflexible. Avraham Avinu planted those trees because it symbolized what he was about. Perhaps he knew that Yaakov Avinu would take these same arazim and plant them in Mitzrayim, not only for the Mishkan, but also because Yaakov Avinu knew that his descendants would be in Mitzrayim, a hostile spiritual environment of idolatry and immorality.

The avos instructed their descendants: Remember the arazim (and/or atzei shitim). Remember the ability for a Jew to be on one side and withstand the pressures of the people of the entire world, who remain on the other side of the moral divide. That is what defines us.

Yaakov felt that he needed to remind his descendants that they would need to adopt this hallmark of inflexibility of Avraham Avinu in Mitzrayim – that same characteristic of being strong like a cedar (and/or acacia). Under normal circumstances, this is not an admirable quality, but regarding the Mishkan and matters of religion – that's the time to emulate its firmness.

Why Is the Story of Building the Mishkan in Sefer Shemos?

I heard the following very interesting observation in a lecture from Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the late Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, which someone passed on to me via CD:

In sefer Shemos, from this point on, the parshios of Teruma, Tezaveh, half of Ki Sisa, all of Vayakhel and all of Pekudei, are about the Mishkan. Off handedly, we would assume that the story of the construction of the Mishkan belongs in Sefer Vayikra. Sefer Vayikra, after all, is "Toras Kohanim" – all about avodas hakorbanos (the sacrificial service), which was done in the Mishkan. Why then is the story of the building of the Mishkan put in Sefer Shemos?

Rabbi Sacks makes the following suggestion: There is something constant throughout the opening parshiyos of Sefer Shemos: Shemos, Vaera, Bo, Beshalach, and Ki Sisa as well: Throughout, people are complaining. In Shemos, they complain – rightfully so – about the slavery. Moshe Rabbeinu goes to Pharaoh and tries to improve the situation. It gets worse. The people complain. When they reach the Yaf Suf in Parshas Beshalach, they complain "Why did you take us out of Egypt?" After Krias Yam Suf, they complain about what Jews always complain about: They don't like the food. They complain about the water. The water is too bitter. The Ribono shel Olam gives them the Torah in Parshas Yisro. Forty days later, Moshe Rabbeinu is late in returning – at least according to their calculation. They complain: What happened to our leader? They make an eigel hazahav (golden calf). Complaining, complaining, complaining, complaining.

How can a nation be formed out of such people who are constantly arguing and complaining? Sefer Shemos is about "ish u'beiso ba-oo" (Shemos 1:1). This is about building Klal Yisrael. How can you build Klal Yisrael when everyone is always complaining?

Rabbi Sacks says that the Ribono shel Olam provided a plan: Build a Mishkan and then everyone works toward the common goal of building it. One person brings money, another person brings talent, another person brings time. They have a communal-wide project to build a Mishkan. The complaints stop because now they have a common purpose and a common goal. That is how a nation is formed.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky suggests a similar insight in Parshas Bamidbar. In Parshas Bamidbar, Klal Yisrael was given the mitzva of setting up degalim (flags) for each shevet (tribe) specifying their travel formation. He notes that this mitzva was only given in the second year following Yitzyas Mitzraim. What about the first year? How did they travel before the mitzva regarding the camps and the degalim?

Rav Yaakov explains that the concept of different degalim for each shevet could be a cause of rivalry and dissension. Had the unique degalim for each shevet been assigned the first year, it would have been counter-productive. The shevatim would again be at each other's throats! But once the Mishkan that rests in the center of the camp was inaugurated and everyone was focused on that one Mishkan, that provided a binding force which unified the disparate elements of the nation, such that the various shevatim could now tolerate the concept of different groupings under different degalim, all rallying around the same Mishkan in the middle.

That is why the construction of the Mishkan belongs in Sefer Shemos. Sefer Shemos is about creating Klal Yisrael. The creation came to fruition only after there was something present in their midst to unite them. That something was the construction of the Mishkan.

I once heard an observation from Rav Nachum Lansky: With the exception of Sefer Bereshis, every one of the five Chumashim all end with exceedingly similar closing words. In Sefer Shemos it is “l’einei kol Beis Yisrael b’chol ma’aseihem” (in sight of the entire House of Israel throughout their travels). Sefer Vayikra ends with the pasuk: “Eleh hamitzvos asher tzeevah Hashem es Moshe el Bnei Yisrael B’har Sinai” (These are the commands that Hashem commanded Moshe to the Children of Israel on Mt. Sinai). Sefer Bamidbar ends with: “...asher tzeevah Hashem b’yad Moshe el Bnei Yisrael B’arvos Moav al Yarden Yericho” (...that Hashem commanded in the hand of Moshe to the Children of Israel in the wilderness of Moav by the Jordan – Jericho). Finally, Sefer Devorim ends with the words “...l’einei kol Yisrael” (to the eyes of all of Israel).

There is only one Sefer which ends specifically with the formula kol Beis Yisrael. That is Sefer Shemos. That is because the essence of Sefer Shemos is building the house of Israel, building Klal Yisrael as a nation. A nation is built with individual batim (houses), the conglomerate of which is kol Beis Yisrael (all the households of Israel). In order to accomplish that, in order to join them all together, they needed a common goal. They needed the building of a Mishkan. We are all in this together. This common project unifies us as a nation.

That is why the building of the Mishkan needed to appear in Sefer Shemos, rather than in Sefer Vayikra.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com

Edited by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org

from: **Rabbi Chanan Morrison** <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>

date: Feb 19, 2026, 8:34 AM

subject: **Rav Kook** on Terumah

Terumah: The Tachash and the Erev Rav

The Talmud gives an account of the enigmatic Tachash, a mysterious creature whose beautiful multicolored hide was used as a covering for the Tabernacle: "The Tachash that lived in the time of Moses was a unique species. The Sages could not determine whether it was domesticated or wild. It only appeared at that time for Moses, who used it for the Tabernacle. Then it vanished." (Shabbat 28b) What is the significance of this unique animal? What was its special connection to Moses, that it made its appearance only during his lifetime? And why did Moses incorporate the colorful Tachash in the Tabernacle, albeit only for its outermost covering?

Mixed Blessings from Mixed Multitudes In Aramaic, the Tachash is called Sasgona, for it was proud (sas) of its many vivid colors (gona). According to Rav Kook, the multihued Tachash is a metaphor, representing Moses' desire to include as many talents and gifts as possible when building the Jewish people — even talents that, on their own, might have a negative influence upon the people. The metaphor of the Tachash specifically relates to Moses' decision to allow the Erev Rav — “mixed multitudes” from other nations — join the Israelites as they left Egypt.

The Erev Rav were the source of much grief. They instigated the Sin of the Golden Calf and other rebellions against God in the wilderness. And their descendants throughout the generations continued to bring troubles upon Israel. Nevertheless, at the End of Days, all the troubles these difficult and diverse forces caused will be revealed as having been for the best, as the absorption of the Erev Rav served to enrich the Jewish people.

One disturbing aspect of the Erev Rav is the phenomenon of many dynamic forces abandoning the Jewish nation during its long exile among the nations. Yet this is not a true loss, since only that which was foreign to the inner spirit of Israel is cast off. These lost elements of the Erev Rav were ultimately incompatible with Knesset Yisrael, the national soul of Israel; thus they were unable to withstand the pressures and hardships of exile. It saddens us to lose that which we thought was part of Israel, but in fact, they were never truly assimilated within the nation's soul. This outcome benefits the world at large. As these ‘fallen leaves’ join the other nations, they bring with them much of what they absorbed from the holiness of Israel. As a result, other peoples have become more receptive to Israel's spiritual message.

Could the Tachash be Domesticated? The Sages were in doubt as to the ultimate fate of the multi-talented Erev Rav. Would they be truly absorbed within Israel, enriching the people and remaining forever a part of it? Or would they only serve as a positive influence on the world, outside the camp of Israel? The Sages expressed this uncertainty by questioning whether the Tachash was a domestic creature. A wild animal cannot be trained and will not permanently join man's home. It can only be guided indirectly. A domesticated animal, on the other hand, is completely subservient to man and is an integral part of his household. Would the Erev Rav ultimately be rejected, like wild animals which can never be truly at home with humanity? Or would they be domesticated and incorporated into the house of Israel? Moses and the Tachash Just as the Tachash only made its appearance in Moses' time, so too, this absorption of foreign talents was only possible in Moses' generation. No other generation could have taken it upon itself to accept alien forces into the nation. Once the contribution of the Erev Rav to Israel is complete, the nation's spiritual restoration requires that they will be purged from the Jewish people. “I will purge your dross... and then you will be called the city of righteousness, faithful city” (Isaiah 1: 25-26).

We usually avoid destructive forces which may delay and hinder the ultimate good. However, a far-reaching vision can detect the underlying purpose of all human activity, as all actions ultimately fulfill the Divine Will. The great hour of Exodus resonated with the highest vision; the first redemption of Israel initiated the historical process that will culminate with the final redemption. Moses, the master prophet, “the most faithful of all My house,” saw fit to include those varied forces that ordinarily would be rejected. And yet, like the skins of the Tachash, they were only suitable for the most external covering. “The new heavens and the new earth which I will make are standing before Me.” (Isaiah 66:22)

All of the wonderful forces of the future — “the new heavens and the new earth” — are not really new. They already exist. Even now, they are “standing before Me.” By accepting the Erev Rav, Moses planted these diverse gifts within the Jewish people. Like seeds, they decay in the ground; but ultimately they will sprout and bring forth new life. The brilliant future light, with all of its spectacular colors and breadth, is not new; it was secreted away long ago. This resplendent light is hidden, like the multi-hued Tachash, until the time will come for it to be revealed once more. (Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. III, pp. 105-107)

From: **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein** <ravadlerstein@torah.org>

to: targumim@torah.org

date: Feb 19, 2026, 10:18 AM

Parshas Terumah

Divrei Shaul - When the Chips Are Down, It's All Relative[1]

Make one cherub at the end of one side, and one cherub at the end of the other.[2]

Rambam's observation[3] about human nature is well known: personality traits and characteristics vary wildly between people, and you will find some who take those characteristics to the limit. The humility of some people can be so extreme, that no barb directed at them, no pain or inconvenience leads them to react with emotion. Some people are so full of themselves, that they never show compassion or deference to anyone at all.

Rambam's prescription for this finding has become known as the Golden Mean. The Torah Jew should avoid extremes, and locate himself at in the middle ground between the extremes of personality.

Yet, he argues, it is important not to abandon these extremes. There is a time and place to make use of them. The extremes, which we properly dismiss as beneath us, are important in serving Hashem. In dealing with dangerous sinners, it is improper to react with one's humility and compassion. To the contrary, a person must gird himself with a spirit of devotion to Divine honor. He should display anger, and even vengeance, against them.

It is in this way that the Rambam[4] explains R. Yehuda ben Teima's instruction: “Be bold as a leopard, light as a griffon-vulture, fast as a deer, and strong as a lion to do the will of your father in Heaven.” The animals all

signify the more debased character traits. But these, too, must be employed in the service of Hashem.

This, I believe, is the symbolic message of the two cheruvim atop the aron. Each sat at “the end” of a side, i.e. represented midos taken to an extreme. In the next pasuk we learn that the cheruvim’s wings were “spread upwards.” All midos should be used to raise up, to elevate a person towards perfection. Therefore, they need to be focused on the aron and luchos. In doing so, they find the middle ground between the extremes. Each midah can look at its opposite, and together create a balance. “With this shall Aharon come into the Kodesh/Sanctuary.”[5] Once this balanced is achieved, one can enter into the holiness of Torah and mitzvos.

When the extremes of midos cannot coordinate with each other, the cheruvim do not look at each other, but past each other. They are not restrained; they don’t find the middle ground; extremes flourish. This is the meaning of the gemara’s[6] declaration that when Klal Yisrael acts in consonance with Hashem’s Will, the cheruvim face each other, and appear like a male and female intertwined in embrace. They coordinate with each other, each making their separate contributions of character. Despite their differences, they can create and raise a child between them.

However, when Klal Yisrael acts in opposition to His Will, the cheruvim remain apart, with different leanings and reactions, not noticing each other. That same gemara reports that when the conquerors entered the Kodesh Kodashim, they found the cheruvim locked in embrace. How could this be? We had acted so terribly, that Hashem’s anger was kindled against us, to the point that He reduced His house to rubble. We were certainly not acting in consonance with His Will!

The answer, I believe, is that He wanted to make it known that even when we were disappointing Him so thoroughly, we still showed greater perfected character than was found in the nations who had been allowed to conquer them. A consolation – even if small – at the time of great tragedy.

1. Adapted from Divrei Shaul by R. Yosef Shaul Nathanson, the Shoel U-Meishiv ↑ 2. Shemos 25:19 ↑ 3. Deos 1:1 ↑ 4. Perush HaMishniyos, Avos 5:20 ↑ 5. Vayikra 16:3 ↑ 6. Yoma 54a ↑

from: Kol Torah Webmaster <webmaster@koltorah.org> date: Feb 12, 2026, 9:56 PM

subject: Parashat Mishpatim

Hachazarah [חזרה]

By Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Halachah, Volume 35

5786/2026

Hachazarah Part 1.

Although we say Ein Bishul Achar Bishul, Chazal forbade returning food to the fire even if the food was totally cooked. Thus, one cannot take fully cooked chicken from the refrigerator and place it directly on a lit stove to reheat for Shabbat lunch. One who does so violates the rabbinic prohibition of Hachazarah.

The Rishonim articulate two reasons for the Hachazarah prohibition. Rashi (Shabbat 36b s.v. Lo Machzirim) explains that Hachazarah is prohibited because it “appears as if it is cooking” (Meichzi K’Mevashel). Rabbeinu Tam (Sefer HaYashar 235) writes that Chazal were concerned that one may come to stir the coals. Any manner of reheating food on Shabbat must address these two concerns, as Rav Mordechai Willig explains (The Laws of Cooking and Warming food on Shabbat, pp. 89-93). We must emphasize that we permit reheating food on Shabbat only if the solid food is entirely cooked, and Ein Bishul Achar Bishul applies.

Permitted Ways to Return Cooked Food to the Fire on Shabbat – The Blech The Mishnah (Shabbat 36b) teaches that one of the requirements to permit returning fully cooked food to the fire on Shabbat (Hachazarah) is that the fuel source of the stove is either removed or covered with ashes (גרוף או קטורה). Either option alleviates concern for stirring the coals. Rashi (ibid., s.v. Oh Ad) explains that placing ashes on the coals cools them. The Ran (15b in the pages of the Rif, d”h Oh Ad) explains that by removing the coals or

covering them with ashes, one demonstrates that he has resolved not to stir the coals.

The Mishnah Berurah (253:81) cites the Magen Avraham, who rules that placing a Blech over the fire is the equivalent of placing ashes on the coals. The Blech both cools the fire by diffusing the heat and concretely expresses that one has resolved not to stir the coals. The Chazon Ish (Orach Chaim 37:11) appears to be the lone authority to question this. He argues that the Blech merely covers the stove but serves no Halachic purpose since it does not directly impact the heat source. The Chazon Ish is not widely accepted. There is some question, though, about the Blech structure for modern gas ovens. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrat Moshe O.C. 1:93) writes that covering the fire suffices, even if the knobs are not covered. Covering the fire sufficiently demonstrates that one will not adjust the flame. He writes, however, that it is preferable to cover the knobs as well, because this further eliminates concerns about changing the flame. Rav Moshe firmly asserts, though, that it is insufficient to cover only the knobs.

On the other hand, Rav Aharon Kotler (cited by Rav Shimon Eider, Halachos of Shabbos, p. 338, note 800) adopts the opposite approach. Rav Kotler believes that while it is preferable to cover the fire as well as the knobs, it is vital to cover the knobs. Rav Kotler rules that, in the event of difficulty, covering only the knobs is sufficient. Rav Hershel Schachter (The Laws of Cooking and Warming food on Shabbat, p. 181) told me that Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik agrees.

A major ramification of this dispute is whether covering the knobs of a crockpot suffices to permit Shehiyah and Hachazarah. Rav Mordechai Willig told me that he believes that covering the knobs of the crockpot is insufficient.

Additional Requirements to Permit Hachazarah

The Shulchan Aruch and Rama (Orach Chaim 253:2) codify the two Talmudic opinions (Shabbat 38) that there are two other requirements to permit Hachazarah. These requirements are that the pot remains in one’s hand (Odo B’Yado) and that one intends to return the food to the fire (Da’ato L’Hachzir). Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrat Moshe O.C. 4:74:Bishul: 33) clarifies that, based on the Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 3:10), that one is not required to keep the pot from touching the ground to permit Hachazarah.

Rather, it suffices to keep one’s hand on the pot, even if the pot touches the ground. Rav Zvi Sobolofsky reports that Rav Mordechai Willig implemented this ruling at the Morasha Kollel when the Shabbat afternoon Chulent was served on Friday night.

Significantly, the Mishnah Berurah (253:56) rules that in case of need, either Odo Be’Yado or Da’ato L’Hachzir suffices. Although the Rama (Orach Chaim 253:2) requires both conditions, the Bi’ur Halachah (253:2 d”h Vlo Hinichah) notes that many Rishonim, such as the Meiri, Ra’ah, and Ri’az, suffice with either condition. The Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata (1:73) and Rav Mordechai Willig (The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat, p. 141) follow the Mishnah Berurah. However, Rav Hershel Schachter (The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat, pp. 181-182) notes the many major Rishonim, including the Rambam, Rashi, the Rashba, and Tosafot, who require both Odo B’Yado and Da’ato L’Hachzir. Thus, Rav Schachter concludes that one may be lenient only in case of pressing circumstances.

For Sephardic Jews, Odo B’Yado is the critical requirement (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 253:2, Bi’ur Halachah 253:2 d”h V’Lo Hinichah, and Yalkut Yosef Orach Chaim 253:8).

The Magen Avraham (253:36) believes that there is another requirement to permit Hachazarah. He requires that the food not cool down completely, even if the food is fully cooked and solid. The Vilna Gaon (Biur Hagra O.C. 253:5 s.v. U’bilvad, as explained by Biur Halachah d”h U’bilvad) disagrees.

He believes that Hachazarah is permitted for a completely cooked solid food that remains in one’s hand if he intends to return it to the fire, even if it is completely cooled. The Mishnah Berurah (253:68) and Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrat Moshe 4:74:Bishul:31) follow the Magen Avraham. Rav Yosef Adler and many others report that Rav Yosef Dov

Soloveitchik follows the Vilna Gaon. Significantly, the Magen Avraham does not cite the Gemara or Rishonim as support. Rather, he argues that if the food is completely cooled, it is equivalent to an initial placement on the fire, not returning it.

Permitted Means to Reheat Food for Shabbat Lunch – The Controversial Ran

The above conditions for Hachazarah only facilitate returning food to the fire soon after it is served. However, what can be done to reheat food for Shabbat lunch? One way is to rely on the controversial Ran and the aforementioned Vilna Gaon.

The Rama (O.C. 253:2) cites a great leniency from the Ran (Shabbat 17b in the pages of the Rif, s.v. U'mihu). The Ran derives from the Yerushalmi that the Odo B'Yado and Da'ato L'Hachzir requirements apply only when the food was removed from the fire before Shabbat. However, if the food was on the Blech at the beginning of Shabbat, one may return it to the fire later on Shabbat, even if the food did not remain in his hand and he did not intend to return the food to the fire. The Ramban (Shabbat 38b, s.v. Machzirin) agrees. However, the Rambam, Rif, and Rosh do not record this leniency.

The Rama (ibid.) records the custom of relying on the Ran. However, the Rama recommends that one should be strict and not rely on this lenient ruling. This is primarily because most Rishonim disagree (Taz Orach Chaim 253:12). Similarly, the Aruch HaShulchan (253:19) notes that the custom is to rely on the Ran, but recommends stringency because most Rishonim reject the Ran's opinion. However, Rav Yosef Adler quotes Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, who permits relying on the Ran. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe O.C. 1:94) disagrees.

According to Rav Soloveitchik, one may remove fully cooked solid food from the refrigerator and place it on the Blech if the food was already on the Blech at Shabbat's beginning. He follows the Ran and the Vilna Gaon's leniencies.

Although some follow Rav Soloveitchik's approach, it is best to avoid it. Even Rav Hershel Schachter ("Hilchos Bishul B'Shabbos," min. 52-55) and Rav Mordechai Willig (Am Mordechai, Shabbat, p. 47), leading Talmidim of Rav Soloveitchik, do not advocate following it. They note that the Sheyarei HaKorban (to the aforementioned Yerushalmi) interprets it differently than the Ran, noting that the Ran's Yerushalmi text differs from ours and that the Chazon Ish (Orach Chaim 37:8) supports the Sheyarei HaKorban.

The Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata (1:20) only permits relying on the Ran in case of great need (he will not have hot food for Shabbat). However, the Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata does not allow this if the food is completely cooled. Moreover, he prefers that in such a case, he at least place the pot on an upside-down plate.

In this manner, he satisfies some opinions regarding Kedaira Al Kedaira, a topic we shall address in our next section, where we present practical and well-accepted ways to warm food for Shabbat lunch.

Hachazarah Part Two

In the previous discussion, we began discussing practical ways to reheat food for Shabbat lunch. We cited Rav Soloveitchik's approach, but recommended not following it since most Poskim do not accept it. In this section, we present a range of practical and widely accepted options.

Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 253:5) rules that one may place fully cooked solid food on top of a pot filled with food cooking on the fire (Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira) "because this is not the way of cooking (Ein Derech Bishul B'Kach)." Since people do not cook food this way, Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira obviates concern for Hachazarah. It does not appear like cooking, and the fact that one is reheating the food in this unusual way demonstrates that he is not interested in stirring the coals (or adjusting the flame).

"Kedaira Blech"

The "Kedaira Blech" has been introduced with the approval of Rav Hershel Schachter to implement the Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira method conveniently. It is a rectangular metal box with a flat surface. One places water in it

before Shabbat so that it is considered a pot that contains food. Placing food on its large and flat surface is a practical way to warm fully cooked solid food than putting the food on top of a cooking pot.

However, Rav Mordechai Willig (Am Mordechai, Shabbat, p. 28 and "Cooking and Warming food on Shabbat" p. 108), though, questions this ruling since the water inside the "Kedaira Blech" is not meant to be consumed, unlike the traditional Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira. Rav Dovid Ribiat (the 39 Melochos, 2:624-625) strongly argues against the Kedaira Blech, arguing that Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira is permitted only because a pot is made for cooking the food contained in it and not food placed on it. Therefore, since there is no intent for the Kedaira Blech to cook its contents, Rav Yisrael Belsky rejects it as a valid form of Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira. Rav Ribiat cites Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv and other Poskim who reject the Kedaira Blech.

Hot Tray or Warming Table

Contemporary authorities debate whether a non-adjustable hot tray or warming table constitutes a permissible method for reheating food on Shabbat. Those who adopt the lenient approach argue that since people do not cook on a hot tray or warming table, it is a permissible method to reheat food, similar to Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira. Rav Mordechai Willig (The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat, pp. 145-148) and Rav Hershel Schachter (The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat, p. 182) rule leniently, but the Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata (1:25) rules strictly. The debate is whether we can say Ein Derech Bishul B'Kach regarding such devices. If the hotplate is adjustable, the knobs must be covered with multiple layers of tape to make it extremely difficult to remove, thereby preventing mistaken adjustments to the temperature (see The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat, pp. 124-127).

Rav Ovadia Yosef and Blechs

Rav Ovadia Yosef (Teshuvot Yechaveh Da'at 2:45) wholeheartedly endorses the lenient opinion, arguing that a non-adjustable hot plate avoids concern for adjusting the flame and the appearance of cooking. Moreover, he argues that even simply placing a Blech successfully obviates these concerns. Other authorities do not accept this last point, since the Bi'ur Halachah (253:3, s.v. V'Yizaheir) follows the Pri Megadim, who argues that Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira does not appear as cooking only if the bottom pot is filled with food. Rav Ovadia, on the other hand, follows the Magen Avraham (318:26), who permits Kedaira Al Gabei Kedaira for solid food even if the bottom pot does not contain food.

Rav Benzion Abba Sha'ul (Teshuvot Or Letzion 2:30:13) agrees with Rav Ovadia but is only lenient if one does not place the food directly over the fire.

However, Ashkenazim should follow Rav Schachter (The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat, p.180) and Rav Willig (The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat, p. 111), who follow Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik's ruling like the Pri Megadim.

Warming Drawers

The Chicago Rabbinical Council follows Rav Shmuel Fuerst and Rav Gedalia Schwartz, who permit reheating foods in a warming drawer whose temperature is low (i.e., one never cooks at that temperature, such as below 225 degrees Fahrenheit) and whose knobs are covered. Rav Fuerst sees warming drawers as identical to hot plates. On the other hand, Rav Moshe Heinemann sees warming drawers as Halachically identical to conventional ovens, and forbids returning food to a warming drawer at a temperature higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Rav Mordechai Willig (The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat pp.124-125 and 127) permits reheating food in a warming drawer but requires placing "many pieces of tape on the warm drawer's adjustable knob in a way that they cannot be all be pulled off at once so that is extremely inconvenient to remove the tape to adjust the temperature." Merely covering the knob is insufficient in his view since one is not covering the fire (following Rav Moshe Feinstein's understanding of a Blech), and does not create a Grufa/Ketuma equivalent. Rather, what one is doing is

making an equivalent of Tach B'Tit, plastering the oven opening. The Gemara (Shabbat 18b) states that Tach B'Tit eliminates concern for stoking coals.

Conclusion – Hot Food for Shabbat Lunch

One may be tempted to survey the many options for preparing hot food for Shabbat afternoon and conclude that, since it is challenging to find a practical solution that satisfies all opinions, he will settle for cold food on Shabbat afternoon.

However, this is not acceptable. The Rama (following the Ba'al HaMaor to the third Perek of Shabbat) writes that it is a Mitzvah to make sure there is hot food for Shabbat afternoon as part of the obligation to honor and enjoy Shabbat. He even writes that there is concern that those who refrain from doing so are heretics who reject belief in the Oral Law. One should consult with his Rav to develop a protocol on how to manage the many issues raised in this series.

Postscript – Ovens and Timers Although some permit reheating food in ovens under certain circumstances or using timers, or Nochrin, in the Jachter home, we avoid these controversial steps. We follow the guidance of Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe Orach Chaim 1:94), Rav Schachter (The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat pp. 180, 181, and 185), and Rav Willig (The Laws of Cooking and Warming Food on Shabbat pp. 97, 127, and 149-152) to steer clear of these options.

from: **Rav Immanuel Bernstein** <ravbernstein@journeysintorah.com>

date: Feb 19, 2026, 7:00 AM

subject: Morals and Meanings in Terumah

Where does the Divine Presence Reside?

When commanding the Jewish People regarding the construction of the Mishkan, Hashem says: וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם They shall make for Me a Sanctuary, and I shall dwell in their midst.[1]

The commentators note that Hashem does not say He will dwell בתוֹכוֹ — in it, i.e., the Mishkan, but rather בתוֹכָם — in them, i.e., the Jewish People.[2] What is it exactly about the Mishkan that will cause the Divine Presence to dwell within the Jewish People? The Vilna Gaon explains that the very fact that the people are united around the holy endeavor of building the Mishkan is what will cause the Divine Presence to dwell among them.[3] In other words, it is not the existence of the Mishkan per se that brings Hashem close to His people, but the fact that it serves as a focal unifying point around which they encamp and live their lives! Moreover, this unification continues to a certain degree even if the Mishkan or Beis Hamikdash is not there. There is a well-known halachah that when we pray we face toward Israel, and if we are in Israel we face toward Jerusalem. Why is facing Israel when we pray so important? On a simple level, it is because of the special sanctity of the Land of Israel, making it the place through which we wish to direct our prayers to Hashem. However, the Vilna Gaon explains that here, too, the idea is that since everyone is facing toward the same place, Jews from all over the world are united in their prayer, which, as mentioned above, has the effect of bringing the Divine Presence close to us and helping to ensure that our prayers will be accepted. This is a truly fascinating concept, for it is certainly very easy for someone to face toward Israel in an entirely personal and private capacity without it ever occurring to him that in so doing he is joining together with the rest of the Jewish People. According to the Vilna Gaon, he has missed the point. With this idea we can appreciate why our strength or vulnerability as a people depend on whether or not we are unified. The source of the success and well-being of the Jewish People is their special connection with Hashem. This basic idea is so fundamental it literally runs through the entire Torah, Nevi'im, and Kesuvim. When Hashem is with us, we are unstoppable; when He is distant from us, we are vulnerable. Everything depends on our connection with Him. As we have seen, this connection is only meaningfully attained when the Jewish People are united as one, and this is why unity is such a crucial prerequisite for our national success. This fundamental theme forms much of our path toward salvation in the Purim story, and is one we should endeavor to emulate as we

seek to be victorious over those who harbor evil designs toward us – in those days, in our times!

[1] Shemos 25:8. [2] See e.g. Commentary of Alshich to our verse. [3] Vilna Gaon to Shir HaShirim 1:17.

Terumah 5786: From Mikdash to Beis Knesses **By Michal Horowitz** on February 19, 2026 michalchorowitz@gmail.com

With Parshas Terumah, we begin the third and final section of Sefer Shemos, also known as Sefer Ha'Geula - the Book of Redemption.

In essence, Shemos is divided into three main chalachim (sections): Shibud v'Yetzias Mitzrayim - the enslavement and Exodus from Egypt. This section is narrated in the first four parshios of the sefer: Shemos, Va'eira, Bo and Beshalach. This chelek tells the story of our physical redemption and freedom from slavery. Matan Torah - the second section of Shemos is made up of the parshios of Yisro and Mishpatim. These two parshios - different, yet complementary - relay to us the great Revelation at Sinai, our acceptance of the Torah, and the many laws related to the nation in the aftermath of Revelation. This chelek tells the story of our spiritual freedom. For as the Sages teach us "ein lecha ben chorin elah mi she'osek b'talmud Torah - a free person is only one who lives a life of Torah" (Avos Ch 6). Meleches u'binyan ha'Mishkan - the work, and building of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). The final, and third, section of Shemos begins in our parsha, Terumah, and continues through the end of the sefer: Tetzavah, Ki Tisa, Vayakhel and Pekudei. Our freedom is only complete once the Shechina descends (keviyachol) and dwells in our midst. When we build an abode for HKB"H to dwell amongst us, and within us, our freedom is fully realized. As the pasuk tells us in our parsha (Shemos 25:8): "And they shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell within them." Hence, the entirety of Sefer Shemos narrates our journey to freedom, through these three stages: physical, spiritual, and dwelling alone-together with G-d.

The Mishkan that was built in the desert was a precursor to the Batei Mikdash that stood in Yerushalayim Ir Ha'Kodesh. Though mortal man cannot understand how Infinity can contract (metzam'tzem) to dwell in a finite space, HKB"H did so to dwell amongst us. Even King Shlomo wondered at this great act of Divine tzimtzum, when he said: Ki ha-umnom yeisheiv Elokim al ha'oretz? Hinei hashamayim u'shmei hashamayim lo yechalkelucha, af ki habayis hazeh asher bonisi. But will G-d indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; much less this temple that I have erected (Melachim I 8:27). And this entire narrative - Klal Yisrael and the Shechina dwelling alone-together - began in our parsha, with the command to Moshe to instruct the nation regarding Mishkan.

However, with the destruction of the Batei Mikdash - the first by Bavel in 586 BCE and the second by Rome in 70 CE - what happened to the intimacy between Am Yisrael and the Shechina? How would we maintain our kesher - our connection - to Hashem throughout the lands of our dispersion and places of our exile? Without a central place of worship, how would our nation survive, and thrive?

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z'l writes that, "It is hard to understand the depth of the crisis into which the destruction of the First Temple plunged the Jewish people. Their very existence was predicated on a relationship with G-d symbolised by the worship that took place daily in Jerusalem. With the Babylonian conquest in 586 BCE, Jews lost not only their land and sovereignty. In losing the Temple, it was as if they had lost hope itself. For their hope lay in G-d, and how could they turn to G-d if the very place where they served him was in ruins?" (Covenant & Conversation, Exodus, p.189). Rabbi Sacks notes that it was in Bavel, the very land of the first catastrophic national exile, that an answer began to take shape. It is the navi Yechezkel - unique amongst the prophets, for he prophesied in Bavel, outside the land of Israel - who references "a radically new institution that eventually became known as the Beit Knesset, the synagogue" (ibid., p.190).

Thus, so says Hashem Elokim Ki hirschaktem ba-goyim, vechi hafitzosim ba-aratzos, va'ehi lohem le-mikdash me'at ba-aratzos asher bo'u shom.

Although I have removed them far off among the nations and although I have scattered them in the lands, yet I have become for them a minor sanctuary in the lands where they have come (Yechezkel 11:16). Rabbi Sacks teaches that “The synagogue... came into being not through words spoken by G-d to Israel, but by words spoken by Israel to G-d (C&C, Exodus, p.190) ... The Divine Presence lives not in a building but in its builders; not in a physical space but in the human heart. The Sanctuary was not a place in which the objective existence of G-d was somehow more concentrated than elsewhere. Rather, it was a place whose holiness had the effect of opening hearts to the One worshipped there. G-d exists everywhere, but not everywhere do we feel the presence of G-d in the same way. The essence of ‘the holy’ is that it is a place where we set aside all human devices and desires and enter a domain wholly set aside for G-d.

“If the concept of the Mishkan is that G-d lives in the human heart whenever it opens itself unreservedly to heaven, then its physical location is irrelevant. Thus the way was open, seven centuries later, to the synagogue: the supreme statement that of the idea that if G-d is everywhere, He can be reached anywhere... The frail structure described in this week’s parasha became the inspiration of an institution that, more than any other, kept the Jewish people alive through almost two thousand years of dispersion - the longest of all journeys through the wilderness” (ibid., p.192).

May all our tefilos be answered la’tova, from the recesses of our hearts, the thoughts of our minds, the yearnings of our souls and the mikdashei me’at that we have constructed for Hashem in our lands of exile.

And in the merit of our prayers, and our limud Torah, may we welcome the final redemption, and the building of the third Temple, speedily and in our days.

בברכת בשורות טובות ושבת שלום
Michal

from: Ira Zlotowitz <Iraz@klal.govoa.org>

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levanah was at 8:30 PM EST on Thursday night, February 19th. The final opportunity is Monday night, March 2nd. Daf Yomi - Shabbos: Bavli: Menachos 41 Perec Hacheles
Shabbos Parashas Zachor is next week, Shabbos Parashas Tetzaveh, February 28th. Taanis Esther is on Monday, March 2nd. Purim is on Tuesday, March 3rd.

from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>

date: Feb 19, 2026, 8:53 PM

Rabbi Mordechai Willig

Yeshiva University: A L’chatchila Vision

I. The Gemara teaches in Masseches Ta’anis (29a):

“Just as when Av enters we diminish our joy, so too when Adar enters we increase our joy.” At first glance, this comparison is perplexing. What is the connection between Av and Adar? Av marks tragedy, the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, while Adar culminates in Purim, a time of celebration. Why are they linked in a single formulation of Chazal?

HaRav Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht zt”l, Rosh Yeshiva of Kerem B’Yavneh, suggested (Asufat Ma’arachot, Purim, p.95-102) that the roots of Av’s tragedy go back far earlier than the churban. The Mishnah (Ta’anis 26b) lists five tragedies that occurred on Tisha B’Av, the first of which was the sin of the spies. When the nation wept that night, Hashem declared: “אתם בכיתם בכיה - you cried a baseless cry” (ibid 29a). But what exactly was the sin? Chazal note that the spies were leaders, “כולם אנשים ראשי בני ישראל המה.” (Bamidbar 13:3) They feared that upon entering Eretz Yisrael they would lose their positions of prominence. At face value, this sounds like a crass concern for power and privilege. But Rav Goldvicht explained it differently. The generation of the wilderness lived in a wholly spiritual reality. They were sustained by manna, protected by the Clouds of Glory, given water from Miriam’s well. They did not farm; they did not wage ordinary war. They were the dor de’ah, immersed in Torah study in a rarefied, almost angelic atmosphere.

Entering Eretz Yisrael meant exchanging that incubator for a life of planting, building, governing, fighting, a life embedded in material reality. And yet, that was precisely Hashem’s will.

The Kotzker Rebbe famously interpreted the verse “וּאֲנֹשִׁי קֹדֶשׁ תְּהִיִן לִי” - You shall be men of holiness to Me” (Shemos 22:30, see Iturei Torah). Hashem says: I have enough angels. What I want are anshei kodesh, human beings living within the world, sanctifying it.

The Medrash Rabbah (Parshas Kedoshim 25:2) teaches that when we enter the Land, “וּנְטַעְתֶּם כָּל עֵץ מֵאֲכַל”, we must plant trees (Vayikra 19:23). It likens Hashem to a bird who feeds and protects her young while they are vulnerable. When they mature and return for food, she nudges them away: go, provide for yourselves. So too in the wilderness Hashem provided for us miraculously. But upon entering the Land, He commanded us to work, to cultivate, to fight, to build, to live as holy human beings within the natural order.

The sin of the spies was the mistaken belief that the desert existence was the l’chatchila, the ideal. They viewed engagement with the material world as a spiritual decline. Hashem declared the opposite. The mission was to enter the Land and live as anshei kodesh in the fullness of human life. This misunderstanding is the root of “כִּשְׁם שׁוֹכֵנֵם אֵב מִמַּעַטֵּיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה” It was a rejection of the Divine plan.

II. What, then, is the connection to Adar? Rav Goldvicht explained that Amalek represents the ideological opposite of anshei kodesh. Amalek insists there is no synthesis between the physical and the spiritual. If you are worldly, you cannot be holy.

Chazal describe a symbolic “agreement” between Esav (ancestor of Amalek) and Yaakov: you take olam haBah, I will take olam haZeh (Tana Dbei Eliyahu Zuta, 19). Esav separates heaven and earth. He said “הֲלֵעִיטְנִי נָא מִן הַלְעִיטְנִי הַזֶּה” (Bereishis 25:30) a demand for immediate gratification. On that same day, he committed adultery and murder (Bava Basra 16b).

Some explain the name Amalek from the root “melika,” severing the head from the body. Indeed, Chazal teach that Esav’s head rolled into the Me’aras HaMachpelah (Targum Yonasan, Bereishis 50:13). His body lived a life of depravity.

Judaism rejects that dichotomy. We do not choose between heaven and earth. Through Rivka’s intervention, Hashem’s hashgachah arranged that Yaakov received both berachos, the physical, (טל השמים ומשמני הארץ) (Bereishis 27,28), and the spiritual, ברכת אברהם (28:4).

Chazal tell us (Menachos 73b) that if a nochri wants to bring a korban shelamim, we’re allowed to accept the korban but we bring it as an olah, a burnt offering. The whole idea of shelamim is ואכלתם לפני השם אלוקים, to eat before Hashem (Devarim 12:7). A non-Jew can’t grasp this concept. No anshei kodesh. If you’re someone who’s holy, you have to separate yourself from the world. In certain religions, the spiritual leaders are supposed to remain celibate. It’s the opposite of what we stand for. Kedoshim tihyu (Vayikra 19:1) in all of our aspects of our lives, in our married lives, in our eating, in our drinking, bechol derachecha da’ehu (Mishlei 3:6), וְכָל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יִהְיוּ לִשְׁם שְׂמִיּוֹת (Avos 2:12).

On Purim we are marbim besimcha, we celebrate through eating and drinking, achilah u’shtiyah. Even here, halachah disciplines joy: the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 695:2, see Biur Halachah) speaks of measured drinking, only a revi’is or two of wine (Am Mordechai, Moed, p. 113), and only during the day.

This is our victory over Amalek. When Adar enters, we increase our joy, not because we escape the world as the meraglim did, but because we affirm that the world itself can be holy.

III. Our Yeshiva embraces this as a l’chatchila vision. We educate talmidim to sanctify Hashem’s Name in every sphere of life, in two categories. One is parnassah, earning a livelihood.

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 156:1) teaches that after prayer and Torah study, one must go to work. Chazal state (Avos 2:2): “כָּל תּוֹרָה שֶׁאֵין עִמָּה” מְלָאכָה טוֹפָה בְּטִילָה וְגוֹרֵרָת עוֹן.”

Yes, Torah is primary and work secondary, both in importance and, ideally, in time allocation. In the Rambam's era, a person might work three hours and learn nine (Hilchos Talmud Torah 1:12). Today's professional world rarely allows such ratios. But the principle remains: career choices must preserve space for Torah, family, and spiritual growth.

The Bi'ur Halachah cites the Gemara (Berachos 35b): "זה וזה נתקיים בידו." Following Rabbi Yishmael, working and learning can be fully l'chatchila. There are select individuals, yechidim, following Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who devote themselves entirely to Torah. They too serve Hashem l'chatchila. But the overwhelming majority serve Hashem l'chatchila through engagement in the world. The Shulchan Aruch does not present employment as a concession. It is the normative path.

Chazal (Ta'anis 21b) tell of Abba Umna, a bloodletter who received heavenly greetings daily, more frequently than Abaye or Rava. Through modesty with his female patients, and care for others, especially talmidei chachamim, he sanctified Hashem's Name. Professional life, lived properly, is itself avodas Hashem.

IV. The second dimension is the Hirschian model - Torah Im Derech Eretz. On the verse (Vayikra 18:4) "את הקחי תשמרו ללכת בהם," Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch quotes the Sifra "עשם עיקר ואל תעשם טפילה," make Torah primary, not secondary. Says Rav Hirsch: it is clearly implied that as a tfeila, as something secondary, it is allowed and even lechatchila. This as we well know was the Hirschian view, which the Hirschians to this day say was not a hora'as sha'ah as some would say. But this was Rav Hirsch's approach, which, I believe, we here in our yeshiva, perhaps, continue that legacy more than any other place.

A beautiful sefer called Shaarei Talmud Torah was written by a former neighbor of ours here in Washington Heights. His name was Professor Leo Levi, Harav Yehuda Levi, who himself wrote a number of beautiful seforim and ma'amorim based on his <דך ארץ> background that he received here in this community. After citing Rav Hirsch (p. 251), he describes the beautiful things, the wonderful mitzvos that can be accomplished not merely in the pursuit of parnasa, but in the Hirschian view of having the chochmas umos ha-olam as tfeilos la-Torah.

Of course, if these chochmos contradict the Torah, Torah wins. But by and large, there are large segments of these chochmos which do not contradict the Torah. To the contrary, they complement the Torah. Those who have these other chochmas umos ha-olam, as the Rambam (Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah 2:2) writes, can appreciate Hakadosh Baruch Hu better. The Rambam asks, "V'hei'ach hi haderech l'avhaso v'yiraso – what is the path to loving Him and fearing Him?" He answers: by understanding the incredible wisdom of the world at large, biology, chemistry, physics, the natural sciences (Shaarei Talmud Torah, p. 256-258).

There is also the importance of history. "זכור ימות עולם בינו שנות דור ודור שאל" (Devarim 32:7, ibid p.283). And yes, there's the written and spoken language which are taught here in this college, which are important to be able to express yourself properly (ibid p. 284-285), to be a greater kiddush Hashem when you're out in the world (ibid p. 262-265). All these things are taught here.

The Rambam, Rabbeinu Bachya, the Vilna Gaon, all use the same mashal, rakachos tavachos ve-ofos (ibid p. 252). These are the types of wisdom which are all centered around Torah. Secondary to it, certainly in importance, and when possible, even in time allotted. We continue the Hirschian model in this yeshiva. This too is l'chatchila.

Not every individual must study these disciplines, just as not everyone must go to work. A yachid can devote himself exclusively to Torah study. So too engagement with general wisdom varies by individual calling. But properly integrated, it is a vehicle for ahavas Hashem and kiddush Hashem.

Our Yeshiva is not perfect. No institution is perfect. No individual is perfect. Only Hashem and His Torah are perfect. But imperfection does not mean that our vision is not l'chatchila. Our l'chatchila vision is to produce anshei kodesh, people of holiness living and involved in the world.

We avoid repeating the cheit hameraglim of Av, which diminishes simcha, and increase simcha in Adar, by eating and drinking on Purim as anshei kodesh.

When every one of our actions, physical and spiritual, is lesheim shamayim, we defeat Amalek. When the head and body reunite in sanctity, Amalek will be erased (Shemos 17:14). "כסא שלם" will replace "כס י"ה" (Rashi 17:16). May we merit that fulfillment speedily in our days.