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Gold – an Opportunity by Rabbi Avraham Chaim Carmell

“They hammered out the sheets of gold and he cut threads to weave into the blue wool...” (*Shemos* 39:3). The Ramban notes that the Torah singles out this one detail of craftsmanship for special mention.

Twice the Torah juxtaposes Shabbos with the instructions for building the Mishkan (*ibid* 31:12-17; 35:1-3). *Chazal* teach us that we learn from this that any type of creative act that was required to prepare the materials or construct the Mishkan is included in the list of thirty-nine *melachos* forbidden on Shabbos. Since the Torah writes, “Do not do *any* type of work [on Shabbos]” (*ibid* 20:10), it follows that all and any category of significant work was included in building the Mishkan. The final product was the ultimate in consecrating the entire range of human ingenuity toward creating a sanctuary for the *Shechinah*.

Yet out of all the numerous arts and crafts that the workmen employed, the Torah describes only the above technology of creating gold thread. What was so unique about it? The Ramban suggests that the idea of using gold as thread was an entirely new concept that was invented specially to make the garments of the Kohanim. This apparently was a two-stage process. The Seforno notes that the *passuk* begins, “they hammered”, and continues “he cut”. He explains that the donors prepared the gold sheets, while Betzalel cut the sheets into threads just the right width to blend well with the different color wools and linen.

To explain the significance of this let us turn to a verse in *parashas Vayakhel*. When the artisans told Moshe that within two days the Yidden had donated more than enough for all the work, Moshe issued an announcement: “No man or woman should do any more work (*melachah*) toward the donation for the Sanctuary. And the people stopped bringing” (*ibid* 36:6). The Ramban interprets the word *melachah* not to mean work, since the people were only bringing materials. Rather, it means possessions, as Yaakov said to Esav, “I will go slowly to the pace of the possessions (*hamelachah*) before me” (*Bereishis* 33:14), or the guardian who swears that he did not stretch out his hand to his friend’s property (*melechah re'eihu*) (*Shemos* 22:7).

Why does *Lashon Hakodesh* refer to possessions as “work”? The message may be to teach us that ownership is not an end in itself. Amassing wealth is

a self-imposed plague mankind has adopted, wasting divinely imbued faculties in futile pursuit of having more possessions to worry about (*Avos* 2:8). Our very language tells us that whatever we own is for a purpose to do something useful with it. Possessing money, gold and silver is of value to the extent that they can be used to do *melachah*. Rashi (*ibid*) translates *melachah* as moving forward, from the root *halichah*. We must ask ourselves to what extent do our possessions contribute toward our moving forward in the purpose of our lives?

Rav Dessler, *zt"l*, used to note that *Lashon Hakodesh* has no word for “mine”. We say “*sheli*” – that [which pertains] to me. In Rav Dessler’s language, possessions are *keilim*, wherewithals with which to carry out our mission in life. In this vein one can say that *melachah* is from the root *malach*, an agent for a mission.

Rav Dessler imbued this outlook into his *talmidim*. My father, *zt"l*, related in his later years that in the period immediately after World War II there was a real-estate boom in London. For a small investment one could buy up bombed out houses, renovate them and sell them for a sizeable profit. Quite a few *heimishe Yidden*, some of them refugees, became very wealthy during this period.

My father said that he received a number of offers to participate in such investments. However he said that he couldn’t see the point in spending time on making extra money, when he had a steady income and owned a few properties he had inherited from his father. His “*sheli*” was amply sufficient for his needs and responsibilities. Having for the sake of having was a concept that Rav Dessler had made alien to him.

Another of Rav Dessler’s early *talmidim* demonstrated this attitude in an even more poignant way. Rabbi Suliman David Sassoon, *zt"l*, was a long-time friend and colleague of my father, ever since the days they met as students under Rav Dessler’s tutelage. He came from an extremely wealthy family that had moved to England from Bombay. He lived a rambling private estate in Letchworth on the outskirts of London.

The family was internationally renowned for its generous support of Torah institutions and its large library of valuable manuscripts. Rabbi Sassoon, himself an erudite *talmid chacham* and deep thinker, personally edited and published a number of them.

Perhaps the most valuable of them all was an original manuscript of the Rambam’s commentary on the Mishnayos in Arabic. I recall how one *Chol Hamoed* visit, my father took us along and Rabbi Sassoon showed us some of his collection. He showed how he had proven that this was actually the Rambam’s handwriting. [One proof that I recall was that in a number of places a comment had been erased and a different explanation written. Only the author himself could do something like that!]

In his later years he acted as president of the Otzar HaTorah network of schools in Western Europe and North Africa. During one period the system ran into severe debt and was in danger of collapsing. Rabbi Sassoon then put this manuscript of the Rambam up for public auction. Eventually the Israeli government was persuaded to buy it for one million dollars, which he used to salvage the Otzar HaTorah.

As a true *talmid* of Rav Dessler he understood that owning a priceless family heirloom was of little lasting value compared to the opportunity to ensure the continued Torah education of thousands of children. Only someone who knows what owning such a treasure means to a collector, can appreciate what a true commitment to Torah valued that act demonstrated.

To come back to our *parashah*, the donors hammered out their gold into thin sheets. This was necessary for various aspects of the Mishkan. The boards were covered with gold leaf as were the *badim*, staves. Even though everything in the *Ohel Moed* was covered with gold, the Torah refers to them as wooden utensils. “Make an *aron* of *shittim* wood.” “Make boards of *shittim* wood” etc. This has halachic ramifications as the Tosafos points out with regard their susceptibility to becoming *tamei* (*Yoma* 72a, *shema amidim*).

Hammering the gold into thin sheets demonstrated that they understood that gold, the most coveted metal, was useful to serve something else. The very act of stretching it thin showed thrift by making a little go a long way. Betzalel went a step further. He formed the gold into threads, *pethilim*. The word *pethil* is from the root *pethaltol*, which means to bend and be convoluted. The quality of thread is that it can weave in and out of the fabric. Only by intertwining with other threads does it create a piece of cloth that has multiple uses that far exceeds the usefulness of a solitary thread. Betzalel received the insight for this new innovation to further demonstrate that the value of gold is enhanced when one realizes that it is there to be combined with other things to create something useful.

With this insight one can perhaps understand an esoteric interpretation given by Harav Moshe David Wahli, *zt"l*, a disciple of the Ramchal. He translates the words *pachei hazahav* (gold sheets) as “gold traps”! He writes that in the Zohar, the reddish-yellow color of gold represents the *middas hadin*, strict judgment. This was necessary to offset the *sitra achara*, the forces of evil that would blemish the purity of the priestly garments. Hammering the gold thin, created a trap (*pach*) to restrain the negative forces.

This may be a *remez* to the above idea. The priestly garments that were made “for honor and glory” (*Shemos* 28:2) contained a danger that the Kohanim wearing them may see the honor and prestige as an end in itself for their own self aggrandizement. The gold thread reminded them that this was all for a loftier purpose of *kavod haShechinah*.

The word used for hammered – *vayerak'u* has the same root as *raki'a*, the heavens. They showed that gold can be elevated to a heavenly-like existence. Rather than joining the gold-rush for an opportunity to amass gold, one should view it as a golden opportunity to do something useful.

From: Rabbi Goldwicht [rgoldwicht@yutorah.org] Sent: Friday, March 17, 2006 3:39 PM Subject: Parashat Parah 5766 **WEEKLY INSIGHTS BY RAV GOLDWICHT**

This Shabbat we will read the third of the four special parshiot leading up to Pesach: Parashat Parah. In discussing the parah adumah, the Torah says, “Zot chukat haTorah, This is the law of the Torah...that they bring you a red heifer” (BaMidbar 19:2). Why does this parasha open with “zot chukat haTorah” rather than “zot chukat hapharah, this is the law of the heifer,” as it does regarding the laws of the korban Pesach, “zot chukat hapesach”? The midrash explains that one who truly understand the laws of the parah adumah is as if he understands the entire Torah. In other words, although the reason behind the fact that parah adumah purifies the impure and contaminates the pure was beyond the comprehension of even Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of men, there is nevertheless some aspect of this mitzvah that, if we understand it correctly, will enable us to understand the entire Torah. What is this chok of the Torah?

The mishnah and gemara in Megillah imply that Parashat Parah must be read in Adar. Parashat Parah is thus typically read the Shabbat after Purim. Rashi writes in the name of the Yerushalmi that even though Parashat Parah should be read after Parashat HaChodesh, since chronologically Rosh Chodesh Nissan, when the Mishkan was established, precedes 2 Nissan, when the first parah adumah was slaughtered, we nevertheless read Parashat Parah earlier, during Adar. This clearly indicates some connection between the mitzvah of parah adumah and the month of Adar. What is this connection?

To answer these two questions, we must understand the distinction between two types of ketivah (writing): ketivah on the material (e.g., writing on paper) and ketivah in the material (e.g., engraving). In the case of the former, the ketivah is not part of the material and the material is not part of the ketivah. In the case of the latter, the ketivah and the material are intertwined and inseparable.

The first time we find ketivah in the material is when Hashem gave us the luchot, as the passuk says, “And the writing was the writing of G-d, engraved upon the tablets (charut al haluchot).” One of the reasons Hashem gave us the Torah in this way was so that we would understand that the Torah is not a book of laws detailing the permitted and the forbidden, but rather a book containing His soul, so to speak, as the gemara in Shabbat homiletically reads into the first word of the Aseret HaDibrot, Anochi – Ana Nafshi Katavit Yahavit, I wrote My soul and gave it. This is symbolized physically by the engraving of the Aseret HaDibrot in the tablets, making the inscription part of the rock and the rock part of the inscription.

The lesson is that learning and fulfilling the Torah is to be connected to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. When we do this, the words of Chazal – read cheirut (freedom) rather than charut (engraved) – come to life, freeing us from galut, suffering, and death. This is not something abstract or theoretical, but real and practical. The gemara in Shabbat says that once David HaMelech found out that he would die on a Shabbat, he spent every Shabbat learning Torah, and the Angel of Death was unable to take his soul. When David HaMelech stopped learning for a brief moment one Shabbat afternoon to check the cause of strange noises in his backyard, then and only then was the Angel of Death able to take his soul. But as long as David HaMelech immersed himself in the Torah, connecting himself to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, he was free from death.

As such, learning and keeping the Torah is essentially connecting to the Eternal One. This is what we experienced at Har Sinai. But we forfeited this forty days later with the Golden Calf. Nevertheless, HaKadosh Baruch Hu forgave us and provided us a second chance to connect to Him: to enter Eretz Yisrael, the Land of the Living.

We forfeited this as well when the Meraglim spoke poorly of the land. HaKadosh Baruch Hu did not forgive this sin, and the entire generation died in the desert. Again, we were given a third chance to connect to Him and to live lives free of galut and suffering – this is through learning Torah. As the gemara in Berachot expounds: Zot haTorah, adam ki yamut b'ohel – this is the Torah: a person who makes himself as dead in the tent of Torah.

This is also why the haftarah for Parashat Parah deals with tumah of the soul, not of the body. When a person purifies his thoughts, focusing his energy to bring glory to Hashem, he can turn the eifer (ashes) of the parah to afar (dirt), representing potential. This is why the Torah refers to the ashes of the parah as “afar s'reifat hachatat” rather than eifer – when a person understands that through Torah and mitzvot we become attached to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, we gain new potential and new possibilities. This is what the midrash means when it says that one who understands parah understands the entire Torah – one who understands that the parah enables one to turn eifer into afar can comprehend the entire Torah through this.

This is exactly what happened with Mordechai. After going to the palace gates in sackcloth and placing ashes on his head, he went to go learn Torah. When Haman came to dress him up following Achasveirosh's orders, Mordechai realized his eifer had turned into afar.

This is why Parah is always read in Adar – Adar represents our ability to turn darkness into light, impure into pure, and eifer to afar.

May Hashem speedily fulfill the nevuah of this week's haftarah: And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you...And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Shabbat Shalom! Meir Goldwicht The weekly sichah is compiled by a student. (Sorry for the delay this week, I was a bit under the weather.) Please feel free to forward the weekly sichah to friends and family. If you aren't yet subscribed, you can subscribe here. A PDF version of this week's sichah can be found here. We would be delighted to hear your thoughts and suggestions at talliskattan@sbcglobal.net. Weekly Insights on the Parsha and Moadim by Rabbi Meir Goldwicht is a service of YUTorah, the online source of the Torah of Yeshiva University.

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PARSHAS VAYAKHEL

These are the objects that Hashem has commanded that they be made. (35:2) Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl, observes that the above pasuk, Eilah ha'davarim, "These are the objects," alludes to the various categories of labor required to construct the Mishkan. It represents the concept of meleches Shabbos, that which constitutes labor on Shabbos. In pasuk 4, the orders for building the Mishkan are introduced in a similar vernacular, Zeh hadavar asher tzivah Hashem laasos, "This is what G-d has commanded." Thus, the (eilah ha')devarim of the above pasuk refer only to those forms of labor which are vital to the construction of the Mishkan. These are the forms of labor which are specifically prohibited on Shabbos - even for the purpose of the construction of the Mishkan. Chazal posit that, indeed, all of the activities required for the construction of the Mishkan constitute and define that which is considered a melachah, acts of labor prohibited on Shabbos. Each one of the activities which are necessary laasos osam, "that they be made" (which means that they are requisites for the construction of the Mishkan) may only be undertaken during the six work days of the week.

Chazal compute thirty-nine avos melachos, heads of labor categories, which comprise meleches ha'Mishkan, and, thus, comprise the 39 avos melachah of Shabbos, the list of acts of labor prohibited on Shabbos. As Rav Hirsch explains, the building of the Mishkan is a sanctification of human labor for a sublime ideal. When man refrains from executing these forms of labor on Shabbos, he thereby acknowledges his allegiance to Hashem, since he now eschews that labor which has up until now been dedicated to Hashem. Every activity which was critical to the Mishkan is, likewise, represented among the 39 avos melachos of Shabbos. These activities are not merely acts of "doing." They must be laasos osam - with intention to produce the actual result of the action. Thus, melachah she'einah tzerichah l'gufah, labor that is not needed or performed for its purpose and result, is not prohibited. The same is true for: davar she'ein miskaven, work that is unintended; and mekalkel, destructive, non-productive labor. Creating-- production, with intention for the result-- defines the thirty-nine forms of restricted Shabbos labor.

Our Sages have divided the thirty-nine avos melachah into those labors critical for making bread, sewing, writing and building. Together, they amount to thirty-eight forms of productive labor. Finally, there is number thirty-nine, hotzaah, the act of transferring an object from one domain to another, such as from a public domain to a private domain, or vice versa, or carrying an object four cubits in a public domain. Hotzaah is called a melachah geruah, small, weak, example of labor. One would be hard-pressed to posit that transferring an object is a productive or constructive activity. Clearly, it is not on the same level of labor as the other thirty-eight. Nonetheless, despite being called a melachah geruah, it has distinction equal to that of the other melachos. Indeed, the Navi Yirmiyahu strongly exhorts the nation concerning the prohibition of carrying on Shabbos. How are we to understand the melachah of hotzaah in the context of the thirty-nine melachos?

Rav Hirsch masterfully explains the underlying motif of meleches Shabbos, thereby giving us an insight into all melachos, including melaches hotzaah. With regard to the melachos, we observe one common thread: they are all productive or constructive activities, by which the object becomes transformed by the intentional work performed. Man's power and mastery over matter is thus demonstrated. Therefore, when man refrains from exercising his "power" on Shabbos, it becomes his way of indicating his allegiance to the Creator, to Whom man, in his mastery over matter and with his creative powers, is nothing more than a leasee, a servant. It is only the last - the thirty-ninth melachah-- the transfer of an object from one domain to another, which does not seem to coincide with the other melachos with regard to our concept of productive or constructive activity. In transferring, nothing changes. The object stays the same. It has simply moved.

We have affirmed that all melachos show that man lords over physical matter. Hotzaah, however, is an activity that finds itself more closely associated with the social world. Social life means not living in an isolated world, devoid of friends and community. Social activity represents the individual's act of giving to the community and the reciprocity through which the community gives the individual. Likewise, what the individual takes from his private/personal possessions and pays to the community collective, and vice versa, what he receives from the community, and the furthering of

one's public purposes and needs in the public domain - are all represented by meleches hotzaah.

If, accordingly, the prohibition of meleches Shabbos expresses the idea of man's subordination of the use of his powers over physical matter to the will of Hashem, then, the prohibition of hotzaah may well express the notion of placing man's social life all under the dictates of Hashem. Thus, Shabbos provides us with the idea that, as the conceptualization of our world is comprised of both nature/physical matter and community, social engagement, so too, does G-d's mastery over the world include both nature and history. The establishment of Malchus Hashem, G-d's Kingdom, on earth will be built upon the recognition of the Shabbos: That man makes the rules for his own working life - both with regard to his connection with physical matter, and concerning his social/national life - all dedicated and adhering to Divine dictate. We now have an idea why Shabbos is so significant in the life and religious demeanor of a Jew. Without Shabbos observance one undermines, and, quite possibly, denies Hashem's sovereignty over the world.

We now better understand the dual motives that the Torah gives us for Shabbos observance: the creation of heaven and earth; the exodus from Egypt. These two motives actually complement one another. The creation of the world is the premise upon which Hashem's mastery over the world rests. The geulah, liberation from Egypt, represents Hashem's mastery over state/social life.

In summation: the prohibition of hotzaah places the Jewish community and the activities of the individual Jew vis-?-vis the community, as well as governance of all affairs of the Jewish community, obediently under the rule and law of Hashem. This is why the Navi Yirmiyahu was so adamant in his admonition of Klal Yisrael concerning their desecrating Shabbos by transgressing the prohibition of hotzaah. The prohibition of carrying on Shabbos imprints the seal of Hashem on the community of Klal Yisrael. Carrying on Shabbos wrests Hashem's banner from the collective community of the Jewish People.

And Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael, "See, Hashem has proclaimed by name, Betzalel ben Uri ben Chur, to the Tribe of Yehudah." (35:30)

Chazal teach that no deed goes unrequited. While, at times, we see individuals laboring in Torah, indeed, sacrificing themselves for the pursuit of Torah study and its dissemination, although their incredible reward does not seem to materialize. This is literally due to our shortsightedness. We must understand that reward does not necessarily occur immediately. It might take generations for that reward to be actualized, but it will definitely come. Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, quotes the Binah L'Itim, who notes that there are times when a person toils to understand a difficult Talmudic passage or halachah, which apparently, he is not destined to understand; he should not become dejected, for the greatest triumph is not understanding the concept - it is the toil, the labor that he expended in order to understand; this is his greatest gift. Furthermore, as the Shlah HaKadosh writes, not only is one rewarded for his toil; ultimately, in the World to Come, he also is taught the true explanation of those passages over which he labored. Whatever a person does not achieve in this world - if, in fact, he expended effort, but did not see fruits to his labor - he will be taught in the next world whatever he had been unable to achieve in this world.

Rav Galinsky supports the concept of unrequited reward from the Midrash's commentary to our parsha: "Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael, 'See, Hashem has proclaimed by name, Betzalel, ben Uri, ben Chur, of the Tribe of Yehudah'" (ibid 35:30). What is the meaning of Reu, 'see'? What is there about Betzalel being addressed by name that is so important? Furthermore, why does the Torah detail Betzalel's lineage back to his grandfather? Also, why is his appointment as the Mishkan's architect repeated again in Parshas Vayakhel? The Midrash explains that Betzalel's maternal grandfather, Chur, stood up to the mutinous Jews who were bent on creating a molten replacement for Moshe Rabbeinu. As a result of his courageous stand, Chur was brutally murdered by the mutineers. Hashem said to Chur, "By your life, I will reward your devotion." The reward was a grandson, Betzalel, who became the Mishkan's architect. To explain this idea further, Chazal present an analogy. A group of disgruntled soldiers were preparing to rebel against their king. Hearing of the incursion, a general admonished them, "How dare you rebel against our king?" The soldiers were going forward with their rebellion. Anyone who stood in their way was a danger and an impediment to their cause. They killed the general. When the king heard of this, he said, "Had he (the general) laid out an enormous sum of money on my behalf, I would certainly have repaid him. Now that he paid with his life, I will reward him commensurately. His descendants will all receive noble positions in my kingdom."

Chur's reward was not simply to have his grandson receive a noble position. Indeed, it was much greater, for the Mishkan served as an atonement for the very Golden Calf, the creation of which he gave his life to prevent.

This pattern, notes Rav Galinsky, has occurred throughout history. (Perhaps, if we would peruse history with an eye for Hashgachah, Divine Providence, we would

observe this phenomenon occurring constantly.) Avraham Avinu dedicated himself to disseminating Hashem's Name throughout a world replete with paganistic belief. He turned thousands towards the monotheistic faith. He changed the course of a world gone mad with idol worship. Where did this all begin? What was our Patriarch's genesis? Why was he specifically the one who changed the world? Chazal teach that Avraham was a unique personality, a prolific and captivating orator, who had an uncanny ability to draw people into his circle and inspire them. According to one Midrash, our Patriarch had a special diamond that he wore around his neck. This diamond had the ability to heal anyone who looked at it. Nonetheless, this does not explain his personal z'chus, merit: that he was designated to triumph over paganism.

The Midrash (Tanna Dve'i Eliyahu) comments on the pasuk, V'lo yevoshu ami l'olam, "And my nation will forever not be ashamed" (Yoel 2:27). What is the meaning of l'olam, forever? Chazal explain that a person can, at times, endeavor with great self-sacrifice for the glory of Heaven - but, for all intents and purposes, it appears that his labors were for naught. He did not succeed in his goals. The pasuk is rendering an assurance that one's toil in the vineyards of endeavor for Hashem will never go unrequited. It might take time - even a number of generations - but he will ultimately be rewarded. Shem ben Noach prophesized for four hundred years, reaching out to four centuries of paganistic dogma. He did not succeed. His reward, however, was that his descendant Avraham would emerge triumphant where his great ancestor had failed. Nachas came a little late - but it came.

Shlomo Hamelech built the Bais Hamikdash, but it was his father, David Hamelech, who sacrificed himself to see its construction. David did not actually build the Temple; yet, it is referred to as the House of David. Mizmor shir chanukas ha'Bayis l'David, "A Psalm - a song for the inauguration of the Temple - by David" (Tehillim 30:1).

We never know in whose merit we achieve success. Rav Galinsky relates the story of a young teenager from the unobservant kibbutz, HaShomer HaTzair, who arrived at the Ponevez Yeshivah, intent on enrolling as a student. He was accepted, and eventually became a Torah scholar of note. How did a boy raised in an environment totally antithetical to Torah dictate, to the point that they actually revile and prevent one's ability to observe the Torah, come to Ponevez and develop into such a scholar?

The Chazon Ish, zl, explained to Rav Galinsky, that this boy was the product of parents who had rebelled against their own parents by eschewing the yoke of religious observance. When this boy's father left home to join the kibbutz, his father (the boy's grandfather) cried bitter tears and sat shivah, mourned over his son's spiritual demise. "The tears of the grandfather did not help his son; but the tears were not wasted.

Hashem saved those tears, and they became the 'ticket' for the grandson's return to Torah Judaism. This boy became a scholar as a result of his grandfather's bitter tears." Nothing is ever wasted.

PARSHAS PEKUDEI

And they made... as Hashem had commanded Moshe. (39:1)

The Torah emphasizes the fact that all of the work for the Mishkan was done according to Hashem's command to Moshe Rabbeinu. This means that they followed the word of G-d to a "T." One wonders concerning the superfluity of this statement. Is there a question for one moment that Hashem's instructions would not be followed to the most minute detail? What, then, is the meaning of underscoring the people's adherence to Hashem's command to Moshe? Horav Meir Rubman, zl, derives a powerful lesson from here. Being Jewish means being completely, totally and unequivocally Jewish. "Almost" - "just about" - "sort of" - is not Jewish. One either does it right, or it is not done - period!

Every mitzvah has halachos that guide us in the proper and correct observance of the mitzvah. Anything less than total commitment is no commitment. Imagine owing someone five thousand dollars and paying half of the loan. Certainly, this would not be acceptable. Why should Judaism be any different?

We are taught that one must toil in Torah. Without exerting toil, the actual study is not only deficient, it will lead to a lack of mitzvah observance-which is the beginning of one's ultimate alienation from Judaism. Why is this? Just because he did not follow the required path of Torah study, does that make him a deficient Jew? It is "almost" right - is it not? Apparently, "almost" is nothing! One either carries out the mitzvah in accordance with the prescribed outline given by Hashem as interpreted by Chazal - or he does not. There is no grey area in our allegiance to Hashem. One is either loyal - or he is not. Likewise, diligence in Torah study is determined by the pasuk V'higissa bo yomam valaylah, "You should delve in it day and night." In Mishlei 2,

Shlomo Hamelech writes that one should seek Torah "like silver and precious jewels." Are we at that point yet? One can be studious, diligent and committed, but if his Torah devotion does not meet the above standards, he is failing. True, he is doing well, but "doing well" and "almost there" do not achieve one's obligation as a Jew. This is why the Torah underscores the phenomenon of completing everything in accordance with Hashem's command.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, personified the concept of total immersion in Torah. The Rosh Yeshivah was concerned that this would be a problem for the American mindset, which viewed material achievement as a primary goal with which to infuse their children. He worried that the American Jewish parent would want to raise a frum, observant, child, but not one who would place gadlus, greatness, in Torah as his overriding priority in life. In a letter to Jewish parents, he wrote, "If Jewish parents wish to guarantee a truly Jewish life of mitzvah performance (for their child), they must expend the greatest possible effort and they must sacrifice to help create outstanding Torah personalities from among the American youth." A frum Jew who is a mediocre scholar and who views Torah study as secondary to everything else is risking his observance. One is either "in" or "out."

"We understand the need for a Jonas Salk to combat the crippling effect of infantile paralysis, but we do not even begin to comprehend our need for the Torah giant who will combat the paralysis caused by superficiality in Jewish life, and, because of this, we fail to respond to the most compelling needs of our time."

"Kaasher tzivah Hashem es Moshe" is viewed from a spiritual perspective as the recipe for mitzvah observance: all or nothing. We do not settle for partial observance. It must be executed accurately, according to Hashem's command. Perusing through Rabbi Yechiel Spero's biography of Rav Gifter, I came across an episode that teaches the significance of this perspective from a practical point of view.

The Rosh Yeshivah traveled to Mexico on a fund-raising trip on behalf of the yeshivah. He attempted to meet with a man who was well-known both for his wealth and for his lack of time for appointments. It was hardly possible to meet with him, he was so immersed in his businesses. Finally, Rav Gifter was able to obtain an appointment for very early in the morning, a few hours before the traditional workday began. When he entered the office, he saw the man was completely immersed in his business. The man was respectful, and he told the Rosh Yeshivah, "I am very sorry, but I simply do not have the time to talk to you now."

Rav Gifter was undeterred, "Let us not converse about money. I simply want to ask you a question. When I first tried to meet with you, I went to your house. I was greatly impressed by its beauty, its sheer magnificence, and the various amenities that adorn the rooms of your mansion. My question is: Since you work so hard and are so engrossed in your business, when do you have the time to enjoy your home?"

The Jew looked at Rav Gifter, somewhat incredulously, and said, "Rebbe, the house is not for me. I have nothing from my mansion. It is for my wife and children. My life is my business, and this is where I spend my every waking moment. Rebbe, oib mir villen matzliach zein, broch men ligger in gesheft. 'If one wants to achieve success (in business), he must be totally immersed in (his) business.'"

Rav Gifter looked at the man, and said, "You do not have to give me any money. You have given me something more precious than money. You have taught me a lesson which I can impart to my students. If you want to succeed, you must be totally immersed in your business. Our business is Torah!"

Oib mir villen matzliach zein, broch men ligger in gesheft. One is either in the business or he is out. Part time businessmen are not very successful.

In the first month of the second year on the first of the month that the Mishkan was erected. (40:17)

In an earlier commentary (ibid 39:33), Rashi explains how the Mishkan was erected. Apparently, the people presented the finished components to Moshe Rabbeinu, who had not previously been involved with the actual construction of the Mishkan. Hashem had left the placement of the Mishkan, its erection, up to Moshe. The reason for this was quite simple: It was too heavy. No one was able to erect the Mishkan due to the weight of the Kerashim, beams. Moshe was able to stand them upright - by himself. How did he do it? True, he was strong, but not that strong. Moshe asked Hashem, "How can the erection of the Mishkan be facilitated by man?" Hashem replied, "Involve yourself in erecting the Mishkan with your hand and it will appear as if you were setting it up, but (actually) it will stand upright by itself." This is the meaning of *hukam ha'Mishkan*, "The Mishkan was erected." The passive verb implies that it was set up on its own.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, comments that this idea was also true with regard to the construction of the Bais Hamikdash. In *Melachim I:6:7*, the Navi states, *V'haBayis b'hibanos*, "And the House (Bais Hamikdash)." The Midrash explains the use of the passive conjugation that, *meiatzmo hayah nivneh, lefichach b'maasei nissim nivnah*, "From itself it was built; therefore, it was built miraculously."

The Rosh Yeshivah quotes the Ponevezer Rav, zl, who posits that concerning anything involving *Olam Haze*, this mundane, physical world, nothing is accomplished without *siyata d'Shmaya*, Divine assistance. When it concerns Torah and building a place of Torah study, there is no need for Divine assistance, because Hashem does it all alone. He is neither "assisting" nor "enabling" - He is "doing." The Bais Hamikdash and the Mishkan were built solely by Hashem (with man placing his finger/hand on it to make it seem that there was human input). Likewise, every *makom Torah*, Torah edifice, is built by Hashem.

The Ponevezer Rav undertook the seemingly impossible; yet, he succeeded. He said the following in a speech delivered at the yeshivah's *Batei HaNetzivim*, "People are in the habit of extolling the Ponevezer Rav as being larger than life... *chas v'challilah*, Heaven forbid... I have no special abilities... Rather, there are those who make calculations regarding building costs and only do what common sense justifies. Whereas we are building Ponevez without making those calculations, without knowing from where the necessary funds will come. Everything is being erected by, 'He, Who performs great wonders alone' (*Tehillim 136:4*)." True to his word, the Ponevezer Rav placed no limits on his undertakings. He did what was necessary, and placed the 'burden' on Hashem.

Rav Gifter asks what man's *tafkid*, role, is in building a Torah edifice. He quotes the Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni, Melachim I,6 (182)*) that relates that when Rabbi Chaninah ben Dosa would observe the *olei regel*, pilgrims ascending to Yerushalayim for the Festival, he, too, badly wanted to join them. Sadly, he was unable to do so, as a result of his abject poverty.

Rav Chaninah went outside and chanced upon a large rock: "I will bring this stone to Yerushalayim." With great skill, he was able to cut it down to size, and then he went to the market in search for porters to carry it. Heaven sent angels in the guise of porters to help him. They insisted, however, on one condition, "You must place your finger alongside us" (to make it appear as if he was participating in carrying it). He did this, and immediately (miraculously), he found himself in Yerushalayim. The angels had vanished. This story teaches us that the only endeavor expected of a man who sincerely wants to build a *makom Torah* is to "place his finger," apply himself to (what is not much more than) superficial endeavor. Hashem will do the rest. He will complete the project.

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Weekly Blog :: Rabbi Berel Wein

Impudence And Impotence

It has been a strange and difficult winter weather-wise both in the United States and here in Israel. Jerusalem has absorbed two major snowstorms and the country as a whole felt bitter cold and even snow in areas of our land that are certainly not accustomed to such happenings. The United States has been in the grip of an Arctic polar vortex that has made snow and cold very unpopular words over most of the country.

Not long ago, the world was coming to an end because of global warming. However, since over the past decade no discernible warming is taking place and empirically we are experiencing more bitter winters than what we have felt to be usual, the mantra has now been changed from global warming to climate change. The only problem with climate change is that climate always changes and that there is little that human beings can do to prevent, control or regulate those changes.

Science is convinced – at least in the public pronouncements of many leading scientists – that somehow steps can be taken to alter climate change. By so stating, they crossed the line that separates scientific fact from oftentimes impudent hubris and wishful thinking. When it comes to nature, and weather is definitely a function of nature, we humans remain pretty much impotent when it comes to dealing with its vagaries.

I am not an expert in science or weather and am not one to venture an opinion as to whether carbon emissions that are man-made are the main culprit for climate change. However, I think that in light of all of the adjustments, refinements and retractions of previously sacredly held theories advanced by scientists of note over the ages, caution would be wise when discussing the causes of climate change.

Perhaps climate has always changed and has always moved in cycles, as is true for many other facets of the natural world. We are fascinated by nature and a great deal of this fascination is due to its mystery and nonconformity. Science could learn a great deal from religion in terms of humility. Religion itself can also benefit greatly from its own lesson of humility. Religion can also benefit from the methodology, curiosity and knowledge that science brings to our civilization.

One of the main lessons of religion is that no matter how great, wise, ingenious and innovative human beings are, there are limits to human abilities and that many of the basic questions of life and nature will remain unanswered. Many of the major human and social disasters over the millennia of human existence can be laid at the doorstep of unjustified certainty, impudent arrogance and an unwarranted exuberance of self. It is this self-importance and self-aggrandizement that allows experts in one field of academia to also assume the mantle of expertise in politics, diplomacy and government even though they may be woefully unequipped to do so.

The Talmud teaches us that in pre-messianic times impudence will increase and become the norm of human behavior. The lack of humility on the part of many of the world's leaders has made us uncomfortable and vulnerable. The senior partner in the law firm that I once worked for had a sign on his wall that read: "Do not confuse me with the facts. My mind is made up!" Unfortunately, much of the world believes and behaves in such a fashion as well.

Because we are blessed with extensive knowledge and amazing technological advances it is difficult for us to admit that in many areas of life we are still powerless and ignorant. What results is that oftentimes the most learned and expert of us are the most arrogant and insufferable of all humans.

The Talmud held up the great Hillel and his descendent Rabi Yehuda HaNassi, as role models of Jewish leadership, not so much for their Torah erudition as for their humility, self effacement and acceptance of the

Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

imperfect human state in life. The Talmud emphasizes that the only human characteristic where extremism is allowed, and in fact encouraged, is that of humility.

Humility saves one from impudence and serves as the necessary trait for the refinement of our ideas and behavior. The person who feels that he or she is always right is usually wrong. In fact, belief in one's own infallibility is, in my opinion, the punishment itself for that arrogance of soul. Perhaps we should enjoy the climate change that we are apparently undergoing, to the extent possible, and realize that Mark Twain's dictum that there is not much we can do about the weather remains true and valid.

Shabbat shalom

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Weekly Parsha Blog:: Rabbi Berel

Vayakhel – Pekudei

The main lesson of this week's Torah reading, which may possibly be obscured by the wealth of Mishkan detail that appears in these closing chapters of the book of Shemot., is the basic Jewish concept of accountability. Moshe accounts for all of the work that was done in the construction of the Mishkan/tabernacle and for every shekel that was expended in that project.

Moshe was troubled when he could not initially account for the one thousand shekels that were apparently missing and that did not allow him to balance the books fully. Only later, when he was able to recall that the missing silver was used to fashion the hooks that held the curtains of the structure, was his account complete and fully accurate.

In the last analysis of life, accountability is the main challenge and test that faces us. King Solomon in Kohelet informs us that all of our actions and behavior will be accounted for in God's system of justice. It is this concept of accountability that allows the basic axiom of Jewish life, reward and punishment, the temporal and eternal, to function.

One of the great weaknesses of individuals and societies is that they somehow feel that they are not accountable for their errors, sins, omissions and failures. We live in a world where everyone and everything is entitled to a pass. In our Torah-only educational system, the older the student becomes and the higher the level and reputation of the institution he or she attends, the weaker the demands of accountability become.

Without a system of testing, and with no realistic goals for scholarship there is a complete lack of accountability. In the long run this is destructive to the individual and to the system itself.

In democracies, elections held periodically are meant to hold political leaders accountable. Though in practice this does not always work, the theory of accountability is at least present in the society and the political system. In a dictatorship there never is any voluntary day of reckoning or demand for accountability.

No one likes to be beholden to the judgment of others, therefore we see that in businesses, educational institutions, social agencies and religious institutions, mini-dictatorships abound. The prophets of Israel held the leaders and the people of Israel accountable to the moral teachings of the Torah and to God Himself, so to speak. Thus the prophets of Israel served as the necessary brake to an otherwise dictatorial, all-powerful monarchy.

The rabbis of the Talmud were acutely aware that they were accountable for their decisions and behavior. Often times that sense of accountability focused on the presence of another individual rabbi to whom one somehow felt accountable. The great Mar Shmuel mourned the death of Rav by saying that the "person that I feared and was accountable to is no longer with us." The idea of accountability stretches over generations. We are all accountable for the past and for the future. And it is in that light that we will certainly be judged, and how the accomplishments of our lifetime will be marked and assessed.

Shabbat shalom

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Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Vayakhel – Pekudei

For the week ending 14 March 2015 / 23 Adar I 5775

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Insights

Vayakhel: Holy For You

"And you shall guard the Shabbat for it is holy for you..." (31:14)

The secular world often views life as a battle between indulgence and abstinence, between the body and the soul — in which indulgence usually wins.

It could be that at one moment a person might choose to have an extra large Baskin/Robbins with the latest exotic mega-calorie topping, and the next moment go into his local place or worship and confess some wrongdoing. But at any one moment the motivation is either physical indulgence or spiritual abstinence.

The idea that abstinence is not synonymous with spirituality is Judaism's gift to the world.

Shabbat is a day of calculated physical pleasure, and it is the most spiritual day of the week.

The genius of Judaism is that it does not see the body as an enemy — but as a resource. True, it is a very powerful resource, and like any powerful resource can be highly destructive in the wrong hands. You don't let the local school children run the nuclear power plant. But as powerful a resource as is the body, it can be — and should be — elevated in the service of G-d. The Talmud tells us that the festivals — Pesach, Succot, and maybe Shavuot too — are to be half "for G-d", and half "for you." Meaning, half of the time should be spent in prayer and learning Torah, and the other half in eating and physical pursuits. No such division is mentioned with regard to Shabbat. Shabbat has the power to turn even the half "for you" into "for G-d".

"And you shall guard the Shabbat for it is holy for you..."

Even the "for you" of Shabbat is holy.

Shabbat has the power to turn even the eating and drinking and the other physical delights of the body into holiness.

Pekudei: A World of Blessing

"A hundred sockets for a hundred kikar..." (38:27)

There's an elderly lady that sits in a nursing home in New York. Every day this is what she says: "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift of G-d. That's why we call it the Present."

How does a person sensitize himself to the present that is the here-and-now?

Our Sages mandated that we make at least one hundred blessings every day.

Making blessings helps to remind us constantly of all the blessings that surround us: The ability to see, to think, to enjoy the smell of fruit and flowers, the sight of the sea or great mountains, the sight of royalty, of eating a new season fruit, or seeing an old friend for the first time in years. We have blessings when a baby is born, when a loved one dies.

When we surround ourselves with blessings, we surround ourselves with blessing.

The Hebrew word beracha (blessing) is linked to the word beraicha, which means a pool of water. G-d is like an Infinite Pool of blessing, flowing goodness and enrichment into our life.

Amongst other things a beracha must include is the Hebrew word which means "L-rd", which comes from the root Adon. In the construction of the Mishkan (the portable Temple on which G-d caused His Presence to dwell), there were exactly one hundred "sockets." These sockets were called adanim. What is the connection between the hundred adanim and the hundred times that we call G-d by the name Adon in our daily blessings?

Just as the adanim were the foundation of the Mishkan through which G-d bestowed his Holy Presence on the Jewish People, so are our daily blessings the foundation of holiness in our lives.

Source: Chidushei HaRim

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Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

The Spirit of Community

What do you do when your people has just made a golden calf, run riot and lost its sense of ethical and spiritual direction? How do you restore moral order – not just then in the days of Moses, but even now? The answer lies in the first word of today's parsha: Vayakhel. But to understand it we have to retrace two journeys that were among the most fateful in the modern world. The story begins in the year 1831 when two young men, both in their twenties, one from England, the other from France, set out on voyages of discovery that would change them, and eventually our understanding of the world. The Englishman was Charles Darwin. The Frenchman was Alexis de Tocqueville. Darwin's journey aboard the Beagle took him eventually to the Galapagos Islands where he began to think about the origin and evolution of species. Tocqueville's journey was to investigate a phenomenon that became the title of his book: Democracy in America.

Although the two men were studying completely different things, the one zoology and biology, the other politics and sociology, as we will see, they came to strikingly similar conclusions – the same conclusion God taught Moses after the episode of the golden calf.

Darwin, as we know, made a series of discoveries that led him to the theory known as natural selection. Species compete for scarce resources and only the best adapted survive. The same, he believed, was true of humans also. But this left him with serious problem.

If evolution is the struggle to survive, if the strong win and the weak go to the wall, then everywhere ruthlessness should prevail. But it doesn't. All societies value altruism. People esteem those who make sacrifices for the sake of others. This, in Darwinian terms, doesn't seem to make sense at all, and he knew it.

The bravest, most sacrificial people, he wrote in *The Descent of Man* "would on average perish in larger number than other men." A noble man "would often leave no offspring to inherit his noble nature." It seems scarcely possible, he wrote, that virtue "could be increased through natural selection, that is, by survival of the fittest."^[1]

It was Darwin's greatness that he saw the answer, even though it contradicted his general thesis. Natural selection operates at the level of the individual. It is as individual men and women that we pass on our genes to the next generation. But civilization works at the level of the group.

As he put it, "a tribe including many members who, from possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, were always ready to give aid to each other and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection." How to get from the individual to the group was, he said, "at present much too difficult to be solved."^[2]

The conclusion was clear even though biologists to this day still argue about the mechanisms involved.^[3] We survive as groups. One man versus one lion: lion wins. Ten men against one lion: the lion may lose. *Homo sapiens*, in terms of strength and speed, is a poor player when ranked against the outliers in the animal kingdom. But human beings have unique skills when it comes to creating and sustaining groups. We have language. We can communicate. We have culture. We can pass on our discoveries to future generations. Humans form larger and more flexible groups than any other

species, while at the same time leaving room for individuality. We are not ants in a colony or bees in a hive. Humans are the community-creating animal.

Meanwhile in America Alexis de Tocqueville, like Darwin, faced a major intellectual problem he felt driven to solve. His problem, as a Frenchman, was to try to understand the role of religion in democratic America. He knew that the United States had voted to separate religion from power by way of the First Amendment, the separation of church and state. So religion in America had no power. He assumed that it had no influence either. What he discovered was precisely the opposite. "There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America."^[4]

This did not make sense to him at all, and he asked Americans to explain it to him. They all gave him essentially the same answer. Religion in America (we are speaking of the early 1830s, remember) does not get involved in politics. He asked clergymen why not. Again they were unanimous in their answer. Politics is divisive. Therefore if religion were to become involved in politics, it too would be divisive. That is why religion stayed away from party political issues.

Tocqueville paid close attention to what religion actually did in America, and he came to some fascinating conclusions. It strengthened marriage, and he believed that strong marriages were essential to free societies. He wrote: "As long as family feeling is kept alive, the opponent of oppression is never alone."

It also led people to form communities around places of worship. It encouraged people in those communities to act together for the sake of the common good. The great danger in a democracy, said Tocqueville, is individualism. People come to care about themselves, not about others. As for the others, the danger is that people will leave their welfare to the government, a process that ends in the loss of liberty as the State takes on more and more of the responsibility for society as a whole.

What protects Americans against these twin dangers, he said, is the fact that, encouraged by their religious convictions, they form associations, charities, voluntary associations, what in Judaism we call chevrot. At first bewildered, and then charmed, Tocqueville noted how quickly Americans formed local groups to deal with the problems in their lives. He called this the "art of association," and said about it that it was "the apprenticeship of liberty."

All of this was the opposite of what he knew of France, where religion in the form of the Catholic Church had much power but little influence. In France, he said, "I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions. But in America I found they were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country"^[5]

So religion safeguarded the "habits of the heart" essential to maintaining democratic freedom. It sanctified marriage and the home. It guarded public morals. It led people to work together in localities to solve problems themselves rather than leave it to the government. If Darwin discovered that man is the community-creating animal, Tocqueville discovered that religion in America is the community-building institution.

It still is. Harvard sociologist Robert Putnam became famous in the 1990s for his discovery that more Americans than ever are going ten-pin bowling, but fewer are joining bowling clubs and leagues. He took this as a metaphor for a society that has become individualistic rather than community-minded. He called it *Bowling Alone*.^[6] It was a phrase that summed up the loss of "social capital," that is, the extent of social networks through which people help one another.

Years later, after extensive research, Putnam revised his thesis. A powerful store of social capital still exists and it is to be found in places of worship. Survey data showed that frequent church- or synagogue-goers are more likely to give money to charity, regardless of whether the charity is religious or secular. They are also more likely to do voluntary work for a charity, give money to a homeless person, spend time with someone who is feeling

depressed, offer a seat to a stranger, or help someone find a job. On almost every measure, they are demonstrably more altruistic than non-worshippers. Their altruism goes beyond this. Frequent worshippers are also significantly more active citizens. They are more likely to belong to community organisations, neighbourhood and civic groups and professional associations. They get involved, turn up and lead. The margin of difference between them and the more secular is large.

Tested on attitudes, religiosity as measured by church or synagogue attendance is the best predictor of altruism and empathy: better than education, age, income, gender or race. Perhaps the most interesting of Putnam's findings was that these attributes were related not to people's religious beliefs but to the frequency with which they attend a place of worship.[7]

Religion creates community, community creates altruism, and altruism turns us away from self and toward the common good. Putnam goes so far as to speculate that an atheist who went regularly to synagogue (perhaps because of a spouse) would be more likely to volunteer or give to charity than a religious believer who prays alone. There is something about the tenor of relationships within a community that makes it the best tutorial in citizenship and good neighbourliness.

What Moses had to do after the golden calf was Vayakhel: turn the Israelites into a kehillah, a community. He did this in the obvious sense of restoring order. When Moses came down the mountain and saw the calf, the Torah says the people were *peruah*, meaning "wild, disorderly, chaotic, unruly, tumultuous." He "saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies." They were not a community but a crowd.

He did it in a more fundamental sense as we see in the rest of the parsha. He began by reminding the people of the laws of Shabbat. Then he instructed them to build the mishkan, the sanctuary, as a symbolic home for God.

Why these two commands rather than any others? Because Shabbat and the mishkan are the two most powerful ways of building community. The best way of turning a diverse, disconnected group into a team is to get them to build something together.[8] Hence the mishkan. The best way of strengthening relationships is to set aside dedicated time when we focus not on the pursuit of individual self interest but on the things we share, by praying together, studying Torah together, and celebrating together: in other words, Shabbat. Shabbat and the mishkan were the two great community-building experiences of the Israelites in the desert.

More than this: in Judaism, community is essential to the spiritual life. Our holiest prayers require a minyan. When we celebrate or mourn we do so as a community. Even when we confess, we do so together. Maimonides rules that "One who separates himself from the community, even if he does not commit a transgression but merely holds himself aloof from the congregation of Israel, does not fulfil the commandments together with his people, shows himself indifferent to their distress and does not observe their fast days but goes on his own way like one of the nations who does not belong to the Jewish people — such a person has no share in the world to come." [9]

That is not how religion has always been seen. Plotinus called the religious quest the flight of the alone to the Alone. Dean Inge said religion is what an individual does with his solitude. Jean-Paul Sartre notoriously said: hell is other people. In Judaism, it is as a community that we come before God. For us the key relationship is not I-Thou, but We-Thou.

Vayakhel is thus no ordinary episode in the history of Israel. It marks the essential insight to emerge from the crisis of the golden calf. We find God in community. We develop virtue, strength of character, and a commitment to the common good in community. Community is local. It is society with a human face. It is not government. It is not the people we pay to look after the welfare of others. It is the work we do ourselves, together.

Community is the antidote to individualism on the one hand and over-reliance on the state on the other. Darwin understood its importance to human flourishing. Tocqueville saw its role in protecting democratic

freedom. Robert Putnam has documented its value in sustaining social capital and the common good. And it began in our parsha, when Moses turned an unruly mob into a kehillah, a community.

[1] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, Princeton University Press, 1981, 158-84.
[2] *Ibid.*, 166.

[3] This is the argument between E. O. Wilson and Richard Dawkins. See Edward O. Wilson, *The Social Conquest of Earth*, New York: Liveright, 2012. And the review by Richard Dawkins in *Prospect Magazine*, June 2012.

[4] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, abridged with an introduction by Thomas Bender, New York, Modern Library, 1981, 182.

[5] *Ibid.*, 185.

[6] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

[7] Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010.

[8] See Jonathan Sacks, *The Home We Build Together*, Continuum, 2007.

[9] Maimonides, *Hilkhot Teshuvah* 3: 11.

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha *Parshios Vayakhel & Pekudei* by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky *Mirror Image*

This week we read Vayakhel-Pekudei, the final portions that detail the construction of the Mishkan. Amongst the vessel discussed is the *kiyor* - the laver used by the kohanim to wash.

The Torah tells us "He made the Laver of copper and its base of copper, from the mirrors of (women who reared) the legions who massed at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting" (Exodus 38:8).

Mirrors? Where did they get mirrors from? And why would women's mirrors, which clearly are a symbol of vanity, if not indulgence, become the very essence of the utensil used to prepare the kohanim for sanctity?

Rashi tells us that Moshe had those exact reservations. He too, was hesitant to accept mirrors as part of the Mishkan's makeup. How did they become an integral part of the holy Mishkan?

After my grandfather, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, of blessed memory, had officially retired from his position as Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Voda'ath and had moved to Monsey, New York, he still remained very active not only in the needs of Klal Yisrael as a whole but in discussing Torah with almost any student of Torah who would cross his threshold.

One afternoon a young scholar came to speak to my grandfather and share his novella on the Talmud with him. As he sat at the table and was about to begin sharing his self-concocted discourse, my grandmother entered the room with a freshly baked piece of cake for my grandfather and the guest. Before my grandfather had a chance to thank the Rebbitzin, the young man, obviously steeped in his own thoughts, flippantly discarded her generous offering. "That's all right," he said, "but I already ate. I really don't need another shtikel (piece) of cake."

My grandfather remained silently shocked. He said nothing. The rebbitzen returned to the kitchen and then the young man began to speak.

"I would like to share with the Rosh Yeshiva a shtikel (piece of) Torah thought that I formulated relating to a sugya in the Gemara in Yevamos."

My grandfather was quiet and then responded. "That's all right," he said, "but I already heard Torah on that sugya. I really don't need another shtikel Torah on that sugya."

When my grandfather saw that the boy realized that Rav Yaakov was chiding him on his reckless indifference to the Rebbitzin, he went on to explain: "You see, that piece of cake was her shtikel Torah. That was something that she prided herself in. That is how she wanted to make me and you feel comfortable. One has to appreciate that as well!"

Rashi explains in the name of the Midrash how Moshe was instructed by Hashem to use the mirrors: "The Israelite women possessed mirrors of copper into which they used to look when they adorned themselves. They not hesitate to bring these mirrors as a contribution towards the Tabernacle. Moshe wanted to reject them since they were made to pander to their vanity, but the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, 'Accept them; these are dearer to Me than all the other contributions, because through them the women reared those huge hosts in Egypt. When their husbands were tired through the crushing labor they used to bring them food and drink and induced them to eat; Then they would use the mirrors to endear themselves to their husbands and awaken their husbands' affection. They subsequently became the mothers of many children, as it is said, (Shir haShirim :8:5) 'I awakened thy love under the apple tree'; This is what it refers to when it states, Maros Hatzovst "t he mirrors of the women who reared the legions." The Ribono Shel Olam saw the greatness of those mirrors. They were used to enhance the harmony of the home and induce the love and appreciation of husbands and wives. We have the power to transform the most mundane object - even a most vain object into an item of immense value. Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Toras Chaim at South Shore and the author of the Parsha Parables series. Questions or comments? Email feedback@torah.org. Project Genesis, Inc.

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei

The Real Purpose of Gold, Technology, Etc.

Parshas Pekudei provides an accounting of all that was given for the Mishkan and an explanation of how all of the donations were used. The Torah begins with the accounting of the gold: "All of the gold that was used for the work (kol hazahav he'assui la'melacha) -- for all the labor of the Sanctuary -- the offered-up gold was twenty-nine kikar and seven hundred thirty shekels, in the shekel of the Sanctuary" [Shmos 38:24].

Rav Chaim Dovid Yosef Azulai (better known as the Chida -- the prolific author of some 60 or 70 volumes) in one of his lesser known works called Chomas Anach cites, in the name of someone called Rav Vital HaTzarfati, a different twist on the previously cited pasuk. He parses and translates the pasuk as follows: Kol hazahav he'assui -- all the gold that was EVER IN THE WORLD WAS MADE SO THAT IT WILL BE USED -- la'melacha bechol meleches haKodesh -- for the work in all the labor of the Sanctuary. In other words, really, there should not be such a metal in the world as gold. Since the beginning of time, gold has been a very precious commodity. Indeed, to this very day, gold is an extremely expensive metal. The Medrash Rabbah states that the world was not worthy to use gold. The metal should never have been brought into existence. However, the Almighty created such a metal only for the Mishkan and for the Beis HaMikdash.

Despite the fact that it was hundreds and hundreds of years from the time gold was first put on this planet until it was actually needed, it was brought into existence from Day One, so that when needed it would be available for the Sanctuaries of G-d. Even though in the interim, gold was put to many other secular and mundane uses, the Divine plan in allowing it to originally

come into existence was for no reason other than its future use in the Mishkan.

I would like to make a suggestion which is perhaps not so far-fetched in light of the previously cited Medrash.

Today we have many technologies and devices -- computers, satellites, laptops, ipods, tablets, and so forth -- that are utilized to bring Torah to the masses in unprecedented ways. Think of the technology that goes into pulling off a "Siyum HaShas". Think of what inventions were necessary to create the Torah Conferencing Network. Think of all the patents and technologies that are used today to promote the study of Daf Yomi and dissemination of other forms of Torah lectures and Torah lessons globally and ubiquitously!

Just as all gold in the world was made -- not for the secular and mundane purposes but -- for the Service of G-d in the construction of the Mishkan, so too the Ribono shel Olam created all this technology so that Jews everywhere are able to have Torah learning at their fingertips like has never been possible before. The Almighty gave people the insight, talent, and brains to create all these technologies and devices for "Meleches haKodesh" -- the Divine Service of Torah learning and Torah dissemination.

I remember once my meeting Rebbe, Rabbi Kulefsky, zt"l, in Giants Supermarket. He took his wife to shop but he always had a sefer with him. He told me, "I have to tell you a "vort" [Torah insight]. He told me this "vort" next to the freezer section in Giants. He prefaced it by saying "The entire Giants Supermarket was created so that I would have a place to tell you this 'vort'". This is the idea expressed by this Medrash: All the gold was made -- in order to be used in Divine Service.

The Almighty gives us gifts, which sometimes lay dormant for thousands of years until they are used for their eventual tachlis [purpose] that there should be Limud haTorah [Torah learning]; that there should be Avodas haKodesh (Divine Service); and that there should be Avodas haMikdash [Temple service]. That is the ultimate purpose of all these special gifts from Heaven. Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD
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Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

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Parshat Vayakhel-Pekudei: The generosity of the female heart

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

March 12, 2015 Thursday 21 AdarI 5775

At some point, every man understands that without being part of a couple that allows him to give of himself and develop compassion and generosity, he would remain lacking and risk being "not good."

This week's Torah reading, actually two Torah portions read together: Vayakhel and Pekudei, seems at first glance like minutes of a meeting. It reports on the collection of contributions toward building the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, that same temporary temple that accompanied Am Yisrael for centuries, and reports on making all the parts of the Mishkan, from its wooden boards to the last thread used to stitch the clothing of the kohanim (priests).

But the truth is that hidden in the dry report are many messages of great significance. One of them regards the status of women according to Judaism. This is a topic with a wide scope that is hard to cover, but we can find a hint in this week's reading that teaches us about the way in which the Torah looks at humanity, women, and relationships between members of a couple.

The section describing bringing contributions to the Mishkan begins: "The men came with the women; every generous hearted person brought bracelets and earrings and rings and buckles, all kinds of golden objects..." (Exodus 35, 22) The wording of the verse is so unusual that we cannot continue reading without trying to ascertain the meaning of the phrase "The men came with the women."

Many commentaries were written about these words.

We will focus on a few commentators from the Middle Ages who said that this phrase means that the women came first to bring their jewelry, and only later were joined by the men who also contributed to the building of the Mishkan.

Why did the women come before the men? The commentators found two explanations for this, one practical and the other fundamental. The practical explanation was that the women's gold was on their bodies, as jewelry, versus the men who had their gold hidden in safes or other hideaways. The second, more fundamental, reason is that being "generous hearted" is a more female trait. When the nation was asked to contribute of its money to build the Mishkan, it was the women who generously rushed to contribute while the men needed more time to absorb this request.

What we see here is a feminine characteristic that the Torah went out of its way to note. Women are more generous than men; their hearts are more open and they hurry to help others. There is no greater compliment.

The emphasis of this point clarifies another parasha of the Torah that speaks about men and women. In the description of the creation of man, it then says, "And the Lord G-d said, 'It is not good that man is alone; I shall make him a helpmate opposite him.'" The result of this was the creation of woman. At the end of the description, man stands in front of woman and declares in amazement, "This time, it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh!" The entire description is completed with a comment that says, "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

There are those who saw this description as man being in a higher position. Was woman created only for man? Is she not worthy of standing on her own? Careful reading will help us discern a completely opposite statement. When man was alone, it was said that it was "not good." When man is alone, he is dangerous to himself and to his surroundings. He does not always have the necessary compassion, softness, or generosity of heart. Only once woman was created, were the necessary traits created that allow for the world to exist. Only by complementing man's traits, was the world able to go from being "not good" to being "very good."

For this reason, man leaves his father and mother and chooses to cleave to his wife. At some point in his life, every man understands that without being part of a couple that allows him to give of himself and develops within him the feminine traits of compassion and generosity, he would remain lacking and risk being "not good."

It is this same "generosity of heart" that we find in the contribution to the Mishkan. It is that same ability to give that women bring to the world, to society, and to their families. This amazing ability is emphasized in the Torah and praised so that we, who read the Torah, will appreciate it and try to learn from it.

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Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Vayakheil : The Dual Nature of the Tabernacle

An obvious question strikes anyone reading the portions of Vayakheil and Pekudei. Why did the Torah need to repeat all of the details of how the Tabernacle was built? All of these matters were already described at great length in Terumah and Tetzaveh, which record God's command to build the Mishkan.

Command and Execution

Rav Kook often spoke of the divide between the path and the final goal. We tend to rush through our lives, chasing after goals - even worthwhile goals - with little regard for the path and the means. The path is seen as a stepping stone, of no importance in its own right.

With these two sets of Torah portions Terumah-Tetzaveh and Vayakheil-Pekudei, we observe a similar divide, between the command to build and the actual construction. This is the difference between study and action, between theory and practice.

Just as our world emphasizes goals at the expense of means, so too it stresses deed and accomplishment at the expense of thought and study. But a more insightful perspective finds a special significance in the path, in the abstract theory, in the initial command. The Sages imparted a remarkable insight: "Great is Torah study, for it leads to action" (Kiddushin 40b). This statement teaches that Torah study - the theory, the path - is preferable to its apparent goal, mitzvah performance. Torah study lead us to good deeds; but it has an intrinsic worth above and beyond its value as a way to know how to act.

The Talmud in Menahot 42a discusses whether a blessing should be recited when constructing a sukkah-booth. After all, the Torah commands us to build a sukkah - "The holiday of booths you shall make for yourselves" (Deut. 16:13). Nonetheless, the rabbis determined that no blessing is recited when building the sukkah, only when living in it during the Succoth holiday. Why not?

Maimonides explained that when there is a command to construct an object for the purpose of fulfilling a mitzvah, one only recites a blessing on the final, ultimate mitzvah (see Hilkhos Berakhot 11:8). Thus we do not recite a blessing when preparing tzitzit or when building a sukkah.

According to this line of reasoning, if Torah study were only a means to know how to keep mitzvot, no blessing would be recited over studying Torah. The fact that we do recite blessings over Torah study indicates that this study is a mitzvah in its own right, independent of its function as a preparation to fulfill other mitzvot.

These two aspects of Torah may be described as Divine influence traversing in opposite directions, like the angels in Jacob's dream. The Torah's fulfillment through practical mitzvot indicates a shefa that flows from above to below, the realization of God's elevated will, ratzon Hashem, in the lower physical realm. The intrinsic value of Torah study, on the other hand, indicates spiritual movement in the opposite direction. It ascends from below to above - our intellectual activity without expression in the physical world, our Torah thoughts without practical application.

Dual Purpose

The repetition in the account of the Mishkan reflects this dichotomy. The two sets of Torah readings are divided between command and execution, study and deed.

And on a deeper level, the repetition expresses the dual function of the Mishkan. On the practical level, it was a central location for offering korbanot. The Mishkan served as a center dedicated to holy actions. But on the abstract, metaphysical level, the Mishkan was a focal point for God's Presence, a dwelling place for His Shekhinah. "They shall make for Me a Temple, and I will dwell (ve-shekhanti) among them" (Ex. 25:8).

Like the converse influences of Torah, one descending and one ascending, each of the Tabernacle's functions indicated an opposite direction. Its construction, the dedication of physical materials and talents to holy purposes, and the offering of korbanot to God, flowed upwards - an ascent from the physical world below to the heavens above. The indwelling of the Shekhinah, on the other hand, was a descending phenomenon from above to below, as God's Divine Presence resided in the physical universe.

1 Thus we find that Maimonides (in Hilkhos Beit HaBehirah 1:1) defines the function of the Temple as a place of worship, where korbanot can be brought and the Temple service can be fully observed. Nachmanides (in his commentary to Exodus 25:1), on the other hand, emphasizes the intrinsic value of the Mikdash, as a place where God's Divine presence may dwell among the Jewish people.

(Adapted from Shemuot HaRe'iyah, Vayakheil-Pekudei (1931), pp. 353-356)

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

The Spectrum of Muktzah Utensils

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Our parsha opens by mentioning the supremacy of the importance of observing Shabbos. We therefore bring...

In the period of the construction of the second Beis HaMikdash, Nechemiah noticed that many Jews were extremely lax in Shabbos observance. In his own words, "In those days, I saw people in Judea operating their winepresses on Shabbos and loading their harvest on donkeys; and also their wine, grapes, and figs and all other burdens; and transporting them to Yerushalayim on Shabbos... the Tyrians would bring fish and other merchandise and sell them to the Jews" (Nechemiah 13:15-16). Nechemiah then describes how he succeeded in closing the city gates the entire Shabbos in order to keep the markets closed.

To strengthen Shabbos observance, Nechemiah established very strict rules concerning which utensils one may move on Shabbos. These rules form the foundation of the halachos of muktzah (Gemara Shabbos 123b). Initially, he prohibited using and moving on Shabbos virtually all utensils, excluding only basic eating appliances such as table knives. We will call this Nechemiah's "First Takanah." By prohibiting the moving of items even indoors, he reinforced the strictness of not carrying outdoors on Shabbos (Gemara Shabbos 124b; Raavad, Hilchos Shabbos 24:13). Furthermore, observing the laws of muktzah protects people from mistakenly doing forbidden melacha with these tools. In addition, the laws of muktzah guarantee that Shabbos is qualitatively different from the rest of the week even for someone whose daily life does not involve any manual labor (Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 24:12-13).

As the Jews became more careful in their Shabbos observance, Nechemiah gradually relaxed the rules of muktzah, permitting limited use of some utensils on Shabbos. Eventually, Nechemiah established rules whereby most utensils may be moved and used on Shabbos when necessary, whereas certain utensils that one usually would not use on Shabbos remained prohibited (except for unusual circumstances such as danger). When discussing the halachos of muktzah as they apply today, I will refer to Nechemiah's "Final Takanah."

Nechemiah's Final Takanah established four distinct categories of utensils:

1. Not Muktzah. Items that one may move without any reason whatsoever. This category includes food, sifrei kodesh and, according to many poskim, tableware (Mishnah Berurah 308:23) and clothing (see Shitah La'Ran 123b s.v. Barishonah).
2. Kli she'me'lachto l'heter, which means a utensil whose primary use is permitted on Shabbos, such as a chair or pillow. One may move this utensil if one needs to use it, if it is in the way, or if it may become damaged. However, one may not move it without any reason (Gemara Shabbos 123b-124a; Shulchan Aruch 308:4).
3. Kli she'me'lachto l'issur, which means a utensil whose primary use is forbidden on Shabbos, such as a hammer, a saw, or a needle. Items in this category may be moved if they are in the way or if one has a need to use it for a purpose that is permitted on Shabbos (Gemara Shabbos 124a). Under normal circumstances, one may not move it for any other purpose.
4. Completely Muktzah. These are utensils that one may not move under normal circumstances.

I will now explain the four categories.

1. NOT MUKTZAH

One may move food and sifrei kodesh without any reason, and, according to many poskim, also tableware and clothing. Why may I move certain items on Shabbos without any purpose, whereas I may move other items only if I have a purpose?

The answer to this halachic question is historical. When Nechemiah declared his original gezeirah prohibiting muktzah, he applied the gezeirah only to utensils, not to food, and also excluded table knives and similar appliances. Thus, Nechemiah never declared food and table knives muktzah, even during the First Takanah. However, a kli she'me'lachto l'heter was included in the First Takanah, and at that time was completely muktzah. Later, Nechemiah relaxed the takanah to permit moving these utensils under the circumstances mentioned above; however, when these circumstances do not apply, the original prohibition declaring them muktzah remains in effect.

As mentioned above, many poskim rule that forks, spoons, dishes, and drinking glasses are also excluded from any halachos of muktzah (Mishnah Berurah 308:23, quoting Shiltei HaGibborim), although there are opinions who consider them keilim she'me'lachtam l'heter (Ben Ish Chai, 2:Mikeitz). The lenient opinion contends that Nechemiah permitted moving tableware just as he permitted moving table knives. The strict opinion contends that Nechemiah excluded only table knives, but no other tableware. They hold that forks, spoons, dishes, and drinking glasses are included in the gezeirah of muktzah as members of category # 2, kli she'me'lachto l'heter. (This means that they may be moved when needed but not otherwise.) I will soon explain the practical difference between these opinions.

2. KLI SHE'ME'LACHTO L'HETER

A utensil that is used primarily for a task that is permitted on Shabbos, such as a chair or pillow, is categorized as a kli she'me'lachto l'heter. I may move such a utensil for one of three reasons:

- A. I want to use it on Shabbos. The Gemara (Shabbos 123b) calls this l'tzorech gufo, literally, for its own use.
- B. It is in my way. The Gemara calls this l'tzorech m'komo, literally, to use its place.
- C. I am concerned that it might become damaged. The Gemara refers to this as moving the utensil from the sun to the shade.

However, I may not move a kli she'me'lachto l'heter without any purpose, nor may I use it when I do not really need a utensil. Thus, I may not use a kli she'me'lachto l'heter to help me with a task that I can do it without any tool (Gemara Shabbos 124a; Shaar HaTziyun 308:13).

I mentioned above that the poskim dispute whether we categorize tableware as not muktzah at all, or as kli she'me'lachto l'heter. Ben Ish Chai and others, who contend that it should be considered kli she'me'lachto l'heter, rule that if one placed extra pieces of silverware on the table, one may not move them back into the kitchen simply because they serve no purpose on the table. He points out that this fulfills none of the three conditions mentioned above necessary to move a kli she'me'lachto l'heter. (Ben Ish Chai agrees that one may remove the silverware from the table if they are in the way or if one is concerned that they might become damaged.) However, the other opinion contends that silverware is not muktzah at all and may be returned to its correct storage place even without any other need.

3. KLI SHE'ME'LACHTO L'ISSUR

A utensil whose primary use is forbidden on Shabbos, such as a hammer, saw, or needle, may be moved if I need to use it for something permitted on Shabbos or if it is in the way of something I need to do. Thus, I may use a hammer to crack open a coconut on Shabbos or a needle to remove a splinter (Mishnah Shabbos 122b). (When removing the splinter, one must be careful not to intentionally cause bleeding [Magen Avraham 328:32; see also Biur Halacha 308:11]. Also, one may not sterilize the needle on Shabbos [Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 12:1].) Similarly, on Shabbos I may remove a hammer or saw that was left on a table, counter, or chair, if I need to put something else there.

However, I may not move a kli she'me'lachto l'issur to save it from becoming broken. When Nechemiah relaxed the takanah that treated kli she'me'lachto l'issur as completely muktzah, he only allowed it to be moved if I need it or its place on Shabbos, but for no other reason.

If I know I will need a kli she'me'lachto l'issur later today, and I am afraid it will get broken or ruined and be unusable by then, I may save it from breaking (Tehillah LeDavid 308:5). This is because moving it now makes it available to me later and thus it is considered l'tzorech gufo.

Once someone picks up a kli she'me'lachto l'issur for a permitted reason, he may put it wherever he chooses (Gemara Shabbos 43a). Some poskim extend this rule further, permitting someone who picked up a kli she'me'lachto l'issur by mistake to place it down wherever he pleases since the item is already in his hand (Magen Avraham 308:7). However, many poskim dispute this, arguing that this lenience applies only when one has permission to pick up the utensil but not when it was picked up in error (Gra, Yoreh Deah 266:12). Thus, someone who picked up a hammer, saw, or needle by mistake may not continue to hold it. Mishnah Berurah (308:13) implies that one may follow the lenient approach when necessary. Therefore, in an extenuating situation, one may hold the kli she'me'lachto l'issur until he finds a convenient place to put it down.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KLI SHE'ME'LACHTO L'HETER AND SHE'ME'LACHTO L'ISSUR

After Nechemiah's later takanos, both kli she'me'lachto l'heter and kli she'me'lachto l'issur have an interesting status: sometimes they are muktzah and sometimes not, depending on why one wants to move them. Even within this in-between category of sometimes-muktzah items, there is a "pecking order" whereby kli she'me'lachto l'heter is less muktzah than kli she'me'lachto l'issur. Several differences in halacha result:

- A. As mentioned above, one may move a kli she'me'lachto l'heter if one is concerned it may become damaged, whereas a kli she'me'lachto l'issur may not be moved.
- B. A kli she'me'lachto l'issur may not be moved when a kli she'me'lachto l'heter is available to do the job (Mishnah Berurah 308:12; Elyah Rabbah 308:32).
- C. One may carry a kli she'me'lachto l'heter early in the day even though he does not anticipate needing it until much later that day (Taz 308:2). This is considered as using the kli. On the other hand, a kli she'me'lachto l'issur may only be picked up when one needs to use it.

D. Many poskim contend that a kli she'me'lachto l'issur that was intentionally left for Shabbos lying on top of a permitted item conveys the law of a kli she'me'lachto l'issur onto the lower item (Tehillah LeDavid 266:7 & 308:1; Aruch HaShulchan 310:9). The lower item becomes a "bosis l'davar ha'asur," literally, a base for a prohibited item. Thus according to these poskim, if a hammer was intentionally left on a chair in the backyard for Shabbos, one may not move the chair afterwards if one is concerned that the chair may become damaged, just as one may not move the hammer itself. However, according to the poskim who contend that there is no concept of bosis l'davar ha'asur for a kli she'me'lachto l'issur, one may bring the chair into the house to save it from damage (Pri Megadim, introduction to 308). (We will leave a full discussion of the subject of bosis l'davar ha'asur for a different time.)

However, to the best of my knowledge, no posek contends that a kli she'me'lachto l'heter creates a "bosis l'davar ha'asur." Thus, if someone intentionally left an ice cream scoop on top of a basket of fruit, the fruit does not have the laws of a kli she'me'lachto l'heter but retains the status of the fruit, which is not muktzah at all.

IS SOMETHING MELACHTO L'HETER OR MELACHTO L'ISSUR?

What is the halacha of an appliance that has two equal usages, one l'heter and the other l'issur? This appliance has the halachic status of a kli she'me'lachto l'heter (Magen Avraham 308:9). Thus, if I use an index card as a place mark although I also might write on it, it is melachto l'heter.

What about a utensil whose primary use is for a prohibited purpose, but its typical use includes a permitted purpose, such as a pot? Its primary use, cooking, renders it a kli she'me'lachto l'issur. However, it also functions as a storage vessel after the food finishes cooking, which is a permitted purpose on Shabbos. What is its status?

A FIFTH CATEGORY OF MUKTZAH UTENSIL

This type of utensil has an interesting status: It changes in the course of Shabbos from being a *kli she'me'lachto l'heter* to a *kli she'me'lachto l'issur* and back again. When storing food, it has the status of a *kli she'me'lachto l'heter*. However, when the food is emptied out, it reverts to its primary status and again becomes a *kli she'me'lachto l'issur* (Rashba, Shabbos 123a s.v. *ha disnan*, quoted by Pri Megadim, Eishel Avraham 308:9 and Mishnah Berurah 308:26).

Therefore, while it has food inside it, I may move it if I am concerned it might become damaged. However, once the food has been removed, I may not. I may still move it if I want to use the pot or it is in the way. (Furthermore, I may move a used pot out of the way because it looks disgusting [Gemara Shabbos 124a]. However, this is another topic that we will leave for a different article.)

4. COMPLETELY MUKTZAH

Most items categorized as muktzah are not utensils and are muktzah because they usually have no Shabbos use. Thus, pieces of scrap wood, dirt, money, ashes and a useless broken item are all muktzah because we do not expect to use them on Shabbos. Even if a use presents itself on Shabbos, or the item is in one's way, one may not use or move them.

(There are a few instances when one may move such items, such as when someone might get hurt, or when they are very disgusting.)

MUKTZAH MACHMAS CHISARON KIS

Several utensils are completely muktzah. One category includes specialized tools whose primary use is prohibited on Shabbos and are not used for other purposes lest they become damaged. Such utensils are muktzah machmas chisaron kis, muktzah because of financial loss. Since the owner would never use them for any other use, and their primary use is prohibited on Shabbos, he never expects to use them on Shabbos, which renders them muktzah (Tosafos Shabbos 123a s.v. *basichi*). Thus, a musical instrument, a mohel's or shocheit's knife, craftsman's tools or any other specialty equipment whose owner would not allow it to be used except for its intended purpose is muktzah. Since a shocheit will not use his knife to carve a turkey or slice salami his knife is muktzah. However, an old shechitah knife that its owner no longer uses for shechitah is not muktzah.

MERCHANDISE

Merchandise that one intends to sell is usually muktzah on Shabbos, since one does not intend to use it oneself (Rama 308:1).

A *kli* that is muktzah machmas chisaron kis that becomes damaged on Shabbos so that it is no longer valuable, remains muktzah machmas chisaron kis for that Shabbos, although for future Shabbosos it will be treated like a *kli she'me'lachto l'issur*. This is because once a utensil is muktzah at the beginning of Shabbos, it remains muktzah the whole Shabbos (Magen Avraham 308:19; Tosafos Beitzah 2b).

Example: I sell fancy merchandise out of my house that I would never use myself.

On Shabbos, a child opens the package and uses one of the items, so that I could never sell it. Although I will now use the item myself, I must treat it as muktzah until Shabbos is over, since it was muktzah when Shabbos began.

BROKEN UTENSIL

A utensil that broke or tore on Shabbos does not become muktzah unless it has no use whatsoever. This is true even if you immediately threw it into the garbage. However, if it broke before Shabbos and you threw it into the garbage before Shabbos, it becomes muktzah (Gemara Shabbos 124b). Since it was in the garbage when Shabbos arrived, that renders it muktzah.

Thus, a shirt that tore on Shabbos does not become muktzah since you might use it as a rag, even if you threw the torn shirt into the garbage on Shabbos. However, if it tore before Shabbos and you disposed of it before Shabbos, it is muktzah.

TEFILLIN

Where do tefillin fit into the muktzah spectrum? Most people assume that Tefillin are muktzah since we do not wear them on Shabbos. However, the halacha is otherwise. Some poskim rule that Tefillin are *kli she'me'lachto l'heter* since one may don tefillin on Shabbos as long as one does not intend to fulfill the mitzvah (see Rama 308:4), whereas most poskim treat them as *kli she'me'lachto l'issur* (Taz, Magen Avraham and others ad loc.). Therefore, if a pair of tefillin are lying in an inconvenient place, one may remove them and then put them wherever is convenient.

Of course, this article cannot serve even as a primer in hilchos muktzah, but merely intends to mention some interesting aspects of the halachos of muktzah.

The entire takanah of muktzah is highly unusual. While observing Shabbos, we constantly need to focus on what we move and how we use it. Thus, hilchos muktzah become more absorbing than the halachos of Shabbos that the Torah itself mandated. Nechemiah instituted these halachos precisely for these reasons. By implementing the laws of muktzah, he accomplished that Shabbos observance is constantly on our minds.