



# הַמִּזְרָחִי

# HAMIZRACHI

## PARSHA WEEKLY

PARSHAT TERUMAH 5783 • 2023










### ISRAEL Parsha Picture

וְעִשִּׂיתָ מְנֹרֶת  
זָהָב טָהוֹר...









שמות כה:לא

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


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# Transforming the Giver



**Rabbi Doron Perez**  
Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi

One of the most important ideas in all of religious life and a central pillar of Judaism is that of contribution.

The unusual Hebrew word for contribution – *terumah* – used in the beginning of the Parasha, as well as how it is presented teaches a critical idea about the nature and impact of contribution.

The idea of giving of oneself and one's possession through contribution, loving-kindness and charity is core to so much of what Judaism is about. To the extent that the Rambam sharply summed up the centrality of Jewish communal responsibility and charitability when he said: 'We have never ever heard of or seen a Jewish community that does not have a Community Charity Fund'. (Mishne Torah, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 9,3). Avraham Avinu, the founding forefather of the Jewish people was of course renowned for his loving-kindness and his charitable interactions with all around him.

In this week's parsha though, which deals with the collective volunteer contribution towards the building of the Mishkan in the desert, a new word is introduced into the lexicon of charitable giving, a new word for contribution – *terumah*. From the *pesukim* themselves we see that not only is the unique word *terumah* introduced, but it is used three times in the opening verses and indeed is the name of this week's parsha – *Terumah*.

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת-תְרוּמָתִי:

וְזֹאת הַתְרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֲתָם

And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, that they take for me a contribution: of every man that that willingly gives, you should shall take my contribution. And this is the contribution that you should take from them.... (Shemot 25:1-3)

Two questions arise from this word usage that reveal a novel and transformative component to the spiritual nature of giving.

Firstly, the word *נדבה* – volunteer contribution would have been a more obvious word and is indeed used at other times in Tanach. Furthermore it is used as a verb describing the act of giving in the above verses (כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו) so it would have most logical to use the same word as the noun – *נדבה* – to describe the contribution. Why use a new and unusual word – *תרומה*? Indeed the word means – using the infinitive of the *להרים* – to elevate. Why is the word elevation used to describe the contribution?

Secondly and unusually points out Rav Kook, the command should be to give a contribution – we give to others. Yet the words *יתנו תרומתי* – they should give a contribution – is not used but rather – *ויקחו לי תרומה* – they should take for Me (for Hashem) a contribution. Surely, the

act of contributing is an act of giving to others and not taking? Are we giving to others or receiving something – why are we taking and not to giving?

### Elevation?

Two of the great Chassidic Rebbes of Ger (Chiddushei HaRim, beginning of the Parasha and the Sefat Emet, Teruma 1890) both highlight that the word “elevate” is used because when a person gives of themselves, all of their money and positions are elevated. Not only is a mitzvah of kindness done through the contribution, but it also impacts all their possessions – everything now has a quality of holiness as it was part of a mitzvah of giving to others and uplifting the community – everything has been elevated.

Furthermore, indeed, the person **themselves** has been elevated by giving charity. Not only has the recipient been elevated and transformed, but the charity has first and foremost transformed the life of the **giver**.

Through the act of charity, not only has the life of the recipient been changed but first and foremost it has transformed and elevated the life of the giver. They have been elevated from a regular person into a giver. A partner with Hashem to be a Divine vehicle of contribution and kindness. They are not the same person.

### Giving or Receiving?

This says Rav Kook explains the second question we asked – why the word take and not give is used. If the word give was used, we would have thought that the only recipient is the one who received the money. The verse highlights by using the word take – that the giver is the great recipient – they have been transformed to a higher spiritual plane. The purpose of charity is not only to enhance the lives of others, the recipients, but says Rav Kook, it is equally if not more important, aimed



**When we take what we have and give it to others, it not only changes someone else's life, but also our own.**

at uplifting the givers. People should not only be giving to others, but becoming more giving people. Less selfish, more selfless. Less self-centered, more other-centered. The person's individual spiritual status has been elevated in the process.

When we take what we have and give it to others, it not only changes someone else's life, but also our own. And it is this transformation of the giver, the Midrash says, that explains the order of what people gave. The order of the contribution of the fifteen materials that were given, is rather strange. We start with some precious commodities – gold, silver and copper – and then go on to the less valuable ones; wood, oils, skins, spices and at yet at the end return to the the precious stones; avnei shoham and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the choshen.

Why are all these less expensive items mentioned first and the precious stones after?

### Cheap Spices and Precious Stones

The Midrash answers that the precious stones belonged to the wealthier people, and many of them had trouble giving - parting with their rare and valuable possessions and commodities. They found it really hard and hence gave these last. Many of the poorer people, though, gave their wood, oils, skins and spices with much greater desire and intent. Since their act of giving was heartfelt it was a greater act of transformation that was more profound to the giver. Amazingly,

although the receiver received cheaper commodities - skins and spices as opposed to precious and rare stones - the former is considered a greater act of giving. The reason is that a spiritual act of charity and contribution is judged less by objective amounts given but rather by the impact it has on the giver. How much did the giver contribute relative to how much they have and with what intent and desire did they give.

As the Mishna beautifully highlights (Menachot 13:11):

שְׂאֵהָדָה הַמְרִבָּה וְאֵהָדָה הַמִּמְעֵיט, וּבִלְבָד שֶׁיִּכְוֶן אָדָם  
אֶת דַּעְתוֹ לְשָׂמַיִם:

‘Whether one gives a lot or a little, the most important thing is whether a person gives with Heavenly intent’.

The objective quantity is less spiritual impactful than the qualitative intent of the giver.

The essence of Judaism is the type of holy, good and G-d-like people we become by emulating G-dly acts of altruistic giving. As we transform community and society through such spiritual and moral acts, we elevate and transform ourselves in the process.

May we all, G-d willing, be able to improve the lives of others, and know that Hashem judges us not only by how much we give, but also by how much we give in proportion to what we have; the ease and manner in which we give. And how we, the givers, are changed by giving to others is ultimately what Judaism is about. To be more selfless and less selfish, to look more to others than to ourselves.



## PIRKEI AVOT

## If Not Now



## Rabbi Reuven Taragin

Educational Director, World Mizrahi

Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel

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הוא (הלל) הִזָּה אֲוֵמֵר... וְאִם לֹא עֲכָשְׁיוּ, אֵימָתִי (אבות א:ד):

Hillel closes his series of statements in the first perek of Avot<sup>1</sup> with a short, four-word question: “*Im lo achshav, eimatai?* — If not now, when?” Now is the time for us to focus on important and meaningful tasks.<sup>2</sup>

## Early Enough

The *mefarshim* explain Hillel’s contrast between now and later in a few different ways.

Rashi and the Bartenura<sup>3</sup> focus on this world, as opposed to Olam Haba.<sup>4</sup> We should make sure to do *teshuvah* and *maasim tovim* while we can — in this world.<sup>5</sup> Once we arrive in the next world, it will be too late for us to grow and receive reward.<sup>6</sup>

The Rambam<sup>7</sup> understands the “now” as referring to youth, as opposed to old age.<sup>8</sup> We should choose what is right at a time when we have the capacity and desire to potentially pursue what is wrong. Another reason to live properly in our youth is because of how hard it is to correct bad habits that have become part of our nature. Rabbeinu Yonah<sup>9</sup> compares a young man to a sapling and an old one to a tree. A sapling can be shaped easily, while a mature tree is already firmly formed.<sup>10</sup> We should choose the correct path early on in life and develop ourselves properly.<sup>11</sup>

## Right Away

Notwithstanding the importance of Rashi and the Rambam’s explanations, the *mishnah’s* simple language seems to go a step further. The *mishnah* implies that it is important to do things, not just in this world and while we are young, but also *achshav* — now, *right away*, as soon as possible.

Why is it important to do things right away?<sup>12</sup>

## Before It Is Too Late

Rabbeinu Yonah explains that delaying may cause us to miss the opportunity. We might forget to come back to the good deed or lose our will to fulfill it.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, the opportunity itself may pass us by. Shlomo Hamelech reminds us that “*lo teida mah yeleid yom* — you do not know what each day will bring.”<sup>14</sup> We often assume that tomorrow’s circumstances will be similar to today’s, but we are mistaken. The opportunity may be gone tomorrow.

In fact, we ourselves may no longer be here in the future.<sup>15</sup> This is how Rabbi Elazar explained his teaching (Avot 2:10) that we should do *teshuvah* the day before we die. When his *talmidim* responded that we do not know when we will die, Rabbi Elazar answered that this is why we should do *teshuvah* **today** and not wait until tomorrow.<sup>16</sup> We are mortals who do not know how long we have in this world. We should, therefore, do important things right away.<sup>17</sup>

This idea fits nicely with the etymology of the word Hillel uses to refer to now — “*achshav*.” Many suggest that the word is an acronym for “*atah, k’mo shehu* — now, as things are (in the present).” The word itself emphasizes the fact that reality changes quickly and dramatically.

## Maximizing the Moment

Rabbeinu Yonah<sup>18</sup> adds that even if we eventually perform the task, we will have wasted the earlier moment. Life is all about taking advantage of our time and opportunities. Every moment is

important. Even if we accomplish tomorrow, today has been lost and cannot be retrieved.

The Mishneh Berurah derives an important halachah from this idea. The context of his comment is the Shulchan Aruch’s discussion of the permissibility of writing down a Torah thought one comes to on Chol Hamo’eid. The Shulchan Aruch writes that one may write it down if they are afraid they will forget the idea.<sup>19</sup> The Mishnah Berurah<sup>20</sup> disagrees and permits recording the idea even if one is not afraid that they will forget it. One should not delay transcribing today’s thought till tomorrow because tomorrow is meant to be devoted to new additional ideas. Every day has unique potential meant to be actualized.

This idea applies even more significantly to *teshuvah*. The Rashbatz explains that delaying *teshuvah* not only wastes time and opportunities, but it also means that we live our lives longer than necessary. Doing *teshuvah* in the future helps us improve our subsequent life, but it cannot improve the lost years of the past.

## No Time Like the Present

Hillel’s formulation of his teaching as a question — “If not now, when?” — makes an additional point. We sometimes justify delaying by hoping that things will be easier in the future, but this may not be the case. Hillel himself teaches in Avot’s next perek:<sup>21</sup> “*Don’t say, ‘When I am free, I will learn,’* as perhaps you will not become free.” We have no reason to believe that things will become easier in the future. In fact, they may become even more difficult. “If not now, when” — there is no reason to assume that the future will be a better time. There is, therefore, no time like (or better than) the present.

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HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

# Mishkan & Mikdash



**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**

Educational Director, World Mizrahi

This week's haftarah reading (Melachim I, 5:26-6:13) of the construction of the Beit HaMikdash parallels the story of the construction of the Mishkan in Parashat Terumah. The closer we read and appreciate the similarities, the more we note striking differences, serving as *parshanut* on the parasha.

## A. Mishkan and Mikdash: Similarities & Differences

The first connection is evident through the names of the respective constructs. This week's parasha begins with the commandment, "And they shall make me a **Mikdash** (temple)..." (Shemot 25:8) followed by "Exactly as I show you—the pattern of the **Mishkan** (tabernacle) and the pattern of all its furnishings—so shall you make it." (ibid. v.9) Chaza"l teach us that "The Mishkan is (sometimes) called "Mikdash" and the Mikdash is sometimes called "Mishkan." (Eruvin 2a, Shevuot 16b) The Rambam explicates that the biblical source for building the Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim is found in this week's parasha with the construction of the Mishkan by Moshe Rabbenu. (Rambam, Hilchot Beit HaBechira).

Though the building of the Beit HaMikdash by Shlomo haMelech was founded in the commandment to build a Mishkan, there are clear differences between them. The Mishkan was a relatively small and intimate structure (also called "Ohel Moed" – a Tent of meeting) with modest dimensions and constructed as a temporary dwelling to be assembled and disassembled. It was intended for the accessibility of Am Yisrael – for individuals (Vayikra 1:2) and national sacrifice and worship. The Mikdash, on the other hand, was a majestic, royal Temple with significantly larger dimensions, intended for permanence and worship both for Am Yisrael and nations abroad. Perhaps this

difference is most manifest through the respective sources of light. In the Mishkan, the menorah provided illumination, whereas in the Mikdash, light emanated from both inside and out, provided by the transparent sealed windows (v.14).

## B. Trees and Stones

The materials mentioned in the haftarah resemble those used in the construction of the Mishkan. Interestingly, the haftarah does not focus on the vessels built by Shlomo modeled after those found in Parashat Terumah for the construction of the Mishkan (though they will be mentioned in the ensuing chapters of Melachim I, 6-7). Instead, the primary building material of the Mikdash (mentioned five times in the haftarah) is stone as opposed to the wood (mentioned eight times in the parasha) of the Mishkan. Though precious stones are mentioned in this week's parasha (only twice) as donations for the jewels of the *choshen* and *ephod*, they are secured exclusively for the clothing of the Kohen Godel to be placed over his heart. Shlomo, however, hews these stones as the heart of the Mikdash itself – "the king commanded, and they transported great stones, expensive stones as the foundation of the House, hewn stones. Shlomo's builders and Chiram's builders and the masons sculpted and prepared timber and stone to build the House." (Melachim I 5:31-32). The stones of the Mikdash didn't just create greater permanence than the wood of the Mishkan. They transformed the Mikdash from a private expression of majesty into a colossal palace of precious magnitude! The wood materials reflect a similar difference; dominant in the construction of the Mishkan, the wood was *shittim* (white acacia), whereas Shlomo paneled the Mikdash with beams and planks of cedarwood, known for its durability and expense.

## C. Donation Vs. Duty

The Mishkan's construction overseen by Moshe and the Mikdash built by Shlomo both fulfilled the same mitzvah of building a sanctuary, but they were executed quite differently. Parashat Terumah opens with the command to accept voluntary contributions for the necessary building materials from the people – "...from every person whose heart so moves him" (25:2). King Shlomo, in contrast, "raised a tax from all of Israel" (5:27), recruiting thirty-thousand men and sending them off to Lebanon, ten thousand every month on a tri-monthly rotation for his Mikdash-building project. Though an efficient network was necessary for the massive scale of construction, the royal levy mitigated the people's identification with the wonderful task of building a "home" for Hashem. Instead of personalizing the project as an exalted religious opportunity, the individual worker resented Shlomo's demanding labor tax; instead of partners in Shlomo's project, the people viewed themselves as servants to Shlomo and his officers. Perhaps, for this reason, the Beit HaMikdash is referred to in the haftarah as "the house which King Shlomo built" (6:2) with all the verbs of construction attributed to Shlomo in the singular form. Throughout the parshiyot of the construction of the Mishkan, Moshe supervises, but the people are actively involved at every stage.

## D. Stages of Redemption

The haftarah reminds us that though a Mishkan is constructed soon after Am Yisrael are redeemed from Egypt, it took 480 years to complete that redemption to be manifest through the building of the Beit HaMikdash! Redemption occurs in stages and though it may begin with the promise of "I shall dwell amongst them" (Shemot 25:8), i.e., each individually, we

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# Halachic Q&A



## **Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon**

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council  
Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

### **Question: Is a poor person obligated to give matanot l'evyonim?**

Answer: As mentioned in the megillah (Esther 9:22), one of the mitzvot on the day of Purim is matanot l'evyonim – gifts to the poor. One way to look at this mitzvah is that the chachamim instituted that the mitzvah of giving tzedakah should be done on Purim (Pri Chadash). Based on this, all of the regular laws of tzedakah would dictate the way we do this mitzvah on Purim. For example, a poor person would not need to give, as he is exempt from the mitzvah of tzedakah.

However, most of the acharonim disagree with the Pri Chadash and understand that a poor person is in fact obligated in giving matanot l'evyonim. The Bach and Ritva explain that the mitzvah has its own independent nature as part of the mitzvot of Purim and connected to the simcha of the day. Therefore, a poor person is required to give matanot l'evyonim.

### **Question: What should be given for matanot l'evyonim?**

Answer: These different understandings mentioned above affect the way we view the purpose of giving. If the purpose is just to give tzedakah, there would be no need to connect the giving to the seudah. However, if this mitzvah is part of the simcha of Purim, then we may assume that the gift should help the poor fulfill their seudat Purim. Based on this, the Pri Megadim says that ideally one should give something which can be used for the seudah (money or food) as opposed to clothing or other gifts. This is the accepted halachic ruling (Ohr Sameach, Chazon Ovadia).

It seems, then, that both matanot l'evyonim and mishloach manot function to bestow a sense of caring and giving into the nature of the simcha of the day. The Rambam writes in Hilchot Megillah 2:17: "For there is no greater and more splendid happiness than to gladden the hearts of the poor, the orphans, the widows, and the converts. One who brings happiness to the hearts of these unfortunate individuals resembles the Divine Presence..."

### **Question: To whom should matanot l'evyonim be given?**

Answer: As we saw above, the mitzvah of matanot l'evyonim is part of the simcha of Purim and carries its own nature independent of the regular laws of tzedakah.

The Braita in Bava Metziyah says regarding money on Purim: "ain medakdekin bedaver – one does not scrutinize in the manner." The Yerushalmi's elaboration of this ruling is that we do not look into who we are giving, rather, we give to all who stick out their hand and ask.

We see here another difference between matanot l'evyonim and regular tzedakah. As opposed to the general mitzvah of tzedakah where we do look into who is asking (SA YD:251:10), on Purim we do not evaluate, and give to all who stick out their hand and ask (SA OC 694:3).

### **Question: Can one who is required to keep the 15th day of Purim give matanot l'evyonim to one who kept the 14th?**

Answer: It appears that the nature of matanot l'evyonim also impacts the question of who is receiving the gifts. According to most poskim (Chazon Ish, Rav Elyashiv, others), one celebrating Purim on the 14th should give matanot l'evyonim to others celebrating that day. This is true likewise for those celebrating the 15th. Because the nature of the mitzvah is connected to the simcha of Purim and helping for the seudah, it makes sense that the mitzvah should be fulfilled by giving to one celebrating on that day.

Nevertheless, if one needs, he can fulfill the obligation when giving to others not celebrating Purim that day (see Shu"t Kane Bosem who writes about gathering money in Chutz La'aretz on the 14th for the poor in Israel).

### **Question: How should a gabbai who collects matanot l'evyonim conduct himself?**

Answer: Generally, a gabbai, if needed, can use tzedakah that he collected for a different purpose of tzedakah than what was originally intended (SA YD 256:4). On Purim, however, a gabbai who collects money for matanot la'evyonim cannot choose to give to a different tzedakah project (SA OC 694:2). The Rosh explains that because the money given on Purim is not just for tzedakah but rather to increase simcha on Purim, a gabbai must follow through with the original intention.

● *Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.*



# דיון משפחתי: פרשת תרומה

הרבנית שרון רימון  
Tanach teacher and author



”בר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבוֹ תְּקֹחוּ אֶת תְּרוּמַתִּי” (שמות כ”ה, ב)

הציווי על בניית המשכן פותח בציווי על הבאת תרומה מתוך נדיבות, לצורך בניית המשכן. פרשת ויקהל חוזרת על רעיון זה בצורה מודגשת מאד: “וַיָּבֵאוּ כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂא לְבוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ אֹתוֹ הֵבִיאוּ אֶת תְּרוּמַת ה’ לְמִלְאֶת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְלִכְלֵ עֲבֹדָתוֹ וְלַבְגְּדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ” (שמות ל”ה, כא). המשכן נבנה בעזרת תרומות של בני ישראל, כל אחד לפי כישוריו ויכולתו, שהובאו לא מתוך הכרח אלא מרצון, ובנדיבות לב.

כאשר רוצים להרים פרויקט בעל ערך חינוכי, רוחני או חברתי, עולה השאלה – האם עדיף לבנות תקציב מסודר הבנוי על מקורות הכנסה קבועים, או עדיף לפנות אל הציבור בבקשה להשתתף בפרויקט ולתת תרומה.

אמנם ברור שתקציב מסודר וקבוע הוא הכרחי לניהול פרויקטים. אך לעתים, אין תקציב מסודר ונאלצים לפנות אל הציבור ולבקש תרומות.

אולם, האם בקשת תרומות נובעת רק מאילוץ?

האישי נובעת מהבנת ערך המשכן, מהזדהות פנימית עם הצורך, ורצון להיות שותף משמעותי בבנייה ובקיום המשכן כחלק ממחנה ישראל.

במשכן, התרומה היא בעלת ערך גבוה מאד. מאחר והמשכן הוא מקום לשכינת ה’, מקום קדוש ונשגב, הוא עלול להתפס כדבר מרוחק ומנותק מהעם, אשר רק משרתי הקודש קשורים ושייכים אליו.

אך התורה מבהירה שלא זו המטרה: את הציווי על בניית המשכן פותחת התורה בבקשה להביא תרומה. בכך התורה מדגישה שהמשכן שייך לכולם. המשכן איננו מקום שכינה מנותק מהעם אלא מטרתו “וַיַּעֲשֵׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשִׁכְנָתִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם” (כ”ה, ח), מקום שמאפשר חיבור של כל אדם מישראל אל השכינה.

החיבור של כל אחד מישראל אל הקודש מתבטא בכך שהמשכן נבנה מחומרים שאנשים תרמו למשכן מכיסם האישי ומרצונם החופשי, ובנדיבות לב.

במקרה של המשכן נראה שלא מדובר באילוץ, אלא זו הדרך הראויה מלכתחילה – ה’ איננו מבקש שיגבו מהעם כסף בצורה מסודרת (כפי שעשה שלמה כשבנה את המקדש), אלא שכל אחד יתרום וישתתף כפי יכולתו, ובנדיבות לב.

מה היתרון של שיטת התרומה לעומת שיטת הגביה המסודרת? ומדוע בבניית המשכן יש לה ערך חשוב?

פרויקטים המנוהלים ע”י תקציב קבוע ומסודר בדרך כלל אינם מובאים לידיעת הציבור הרחב, ולציבור אין חלק בהם. לעומת זאת, פרויקטים התנדבותיים משתפים את הציבור בעשייה, הן בתרומה כספית והן בשותפות מעשית. עצם הפניה אל הציבור והעלאת הצורך היא בעלת ערך בפני עצמה – היא מעלה את המודעות לנושא, חושפת את הצורך, ומביאה לידיעת הציבור את העשייה הברוכה. מעבר לכך, האפשרות של כל אדם להיות שותף באופן מעשי מביאה לחיבור אישי ולמחויבות כלפי הנושא.

כך גם בבניית המשכן –

משכן הנבנה מתקציב ציבורי מסודר, איננו דומה למשכן הנבנה מתרומות אישיות שאנשים הביאו מרצונם, ממה שיש להם בבית. אדם שתרם משהו אישי שלו למשכן, מרגיש מחובר. מרגיש שחלק ממנו נמצא במשכן. שהמשכן מבטא אותו. התרומה

Continued from page 4

When the yetzer hara sees that it cannot deter us from the proper course of action, he often reverts to a last “line of defense” — convincing us to delay. This delay often causes us to miss critical life opportunities. Additionally, even if we eventually accomplish the task, by delaying we have wasted critical opportunities and often significant segments of our lives.

Let’s make sure to show our passion for what is right by focusing on it right away. There is no time like the present.

● Summarized by Rafi Davis.

1. Masechet Avot 1:14.

2. The *meforshim* explain that Hillel refers to *mitzvah* performance, Torah learning and *teshuvah*.

Bereishit Rabbah (21:6) sharpens the association between *teshuvah* and the present by asserting that “*ein v’atah’ ellah teshuvah* — the word ‘*atah* (now)’ refers to *teshuvah*.”

3. Rashi, Bartenura to Avot 1:14.

4. A basis for this can be found in the gemara (Masechet Eruvin 22a) which defines “*hayom*” as the time to do *mitzvot* in this world and “*machar*” as the next world where we receive our *sechar*.

5. See Avot 4:17.

6. See also the gemara (Masechet Avodah Zarah 3a) which explains that only those who work on *erev Shabbat* (this world) will benefit on *Shabbat* (the next world).

7. Peirush Hamishnayot L’Rambam, Avot 1:14.

8. See Kohelet 11:9-12:1.

9. Rabbeinu Yonah to Avot 1:14.

10. See Sefer Tehillim 144:12.

11. The Ri ben Shoshan adds that when we delay a deed, it becomes harder to do, as we become used to not doing the task. The Sifrei (Devarim 48) quotes a famous statement: “*Im ta’zveni yom, yomayim a’zvecha* — If we abandon doing the

right thing for a day, it abandons us for two days,” becoming harder to do.

12. See Rashi (Avot 1:14 quoting Sifra (Parashat Tzav)) who connects Hillel’s teaching to the principle of “*zerizin madkimim l’mitzvot*.” (See Masechet Pesachim (4a) and Masechet Yoma (28b). See also Mesilat Yesharim’s Perek 6). People who care about a *mitzvah* will try to fulfill it as soon as possible. Hillel’s formulation, though, seems to go further by challenging the reasonableness of delaying.

13. See Sha’arei Teshuvah 2:26.

14. Sefer Mishlei 27:1.

15. Sefer Chareidim 70.

16. Masechet Shabbat 153a.

17. See Yalkut Yehudah, who explains that Hashem created us this way so that we don’t delay important things.

18. Rabbeinu Yonah to Avot 1:14.

19. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 545.

20. Ibid. 545:47.

21. Masechet Avot 2:4.

# The secret to happiness



**Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir**  
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

**A** profound educational principle is concealed in this week's Torah portion. Until now, we were always on the receiving end of G-d's benevolence. We saw the miracles and wonders of the ten plagues, we experienced the Exodus, crossed on dry land when the Red Sea split, and stood at the foot of Mount Sinai when we received the Ten Commandments. G-d had continually showered us with abundance. In response, we were not always satisfied, we complained, and even sinned.

But now the rules have changed. In parashat Terumah we are given numerous detailed commandments, a multitude of instructions for building the mishkan (portable sanctuary) that would accompany us on our desert journey. For the first time we are not on the receiving end, but are asked to give – to initiate, build, act on our own. We are no longer passive spectators, but active participants. And so we discover the secret that G-d's greatest gift to us is not a gift in the literal sense, but rather a demand to take responsibility, to replace a sense of entitlement with one of obligation.

The results of this new way of thinking are astonishing. Our complaints disappear in favor of an outburst of positive action. Because when we give, we become more committed, connected, and happy. This is true in our relationship with G-d and with other people as well.

I shared this idea last year in the “Nifgashot” workshop for girls and asked for examples from their lives. One participant

mentioned that when she puts her room in order by herself, she feels better and more responsible for it than when someone else does it for her. Another girl said when she prepares dessert for Shabbat, she feels more attached to the entire meal, and waits expectantly to serve her part of it. Another girl related that when she learns the meaning of the words in a prayer, she prays with greater seriousness, intention, and focus. And someone else said that when she makes notes in a notebook and reviews them assiduously prior to an exam, she absorbs the material better since she feels that it belongs to her. I encourage all of you to find such examples from your own lives.



How many sandwiches will you make tomorrow morning? How many dishes did you wash yesterday? Our commentators explain that such unspectacular everyday acts can perpetuate the spirit of the holy work done on the construction of the Mishkan.

Parashat Terumah describes in detail how the Mishkan was built. Dozens of small, mundane, physical acts were performed. Some are mentioned several times and some must have been exhausting, but the hard work and persistence created, in the end, something precious and holy.

What is our Mishkan today? According to the Ramban, Rabbi Moshe Ben Nachman, the first Mishkan – the first place where the shechinah or divine presence dwelt, even before the desert Mishkan was built – was the home: It was the tent

of Avraham and Sarah. The desert Mishkan was an attempt to recreate the same atmosphere, the same refinement, the same sense of brotherhood and closeness that existed in that tent.

Our commentators explain that this model pertains to the four walls around us, to our own homes: places that demand a variety of ordinary acts which, in demanding constant attention and devotion, transform our homes into sanctuaries of content and meaning.

If only we can feel such sanctity the next time we put the living room in order.



לאן נעלמה הרוחניות? למה אחרי עשרת הדברות, אחרי מעמד הר סיני המרגש, פרשת תרומה נותנת לנו כל כך הרבה הוראות מעשיות? למה עשרות פסוקים מוקדשים לקרשים וליריעות של המשכן, ואז להדלקת המנורה, ואז לבגדים של הכהן הגדול? מה זה בכלל משנה?

פרשנינו מסבירים שרוחניות אינה השראה שנוחתת עלינו מהשמיים. היא דורשת עבודה רבה ועמל מתמשך. הרוטינה היומיומית לא סותרת את הקדושה, היא-היא הדרך להגיע לקדושה. הפרשות האלה מחנכות אותנו לסדר יום קבוע, למחוייבות ולמסירות, למשימות קטנות וסדרתיות שמשנות אותנו, לטווח ארוך.

תומס אדיסון, ממציא נורת החשמל, אמר פעם שגאונות היא אחוז אחד של השראה, ותשעים ותשעה אחוז של השקעה. הרב יונתן זקס ציטט את המשפט הזה ואמר שמה שנכון באומנות, במדע, בעסקים ובתעשייה – נכון גם בחיי הרוח. כדי לצמוח מבחינה רוחנית צריך מאמץ מתמשך ושגרה יומיומית. הפרשה מזכירה לנו לדאוג היטב לתשעים ותשעה אחוזי המאמץ, כדי לקבל בסוף גם השראה.

*Continued from page 5*

must not tarry in catalyzing the fulfillment of Hashem's promise to Shlomo – “I shall dwell amongst Bnei Yisrael and I shall not abandon My nation Israel” (Melachim 1) – as a single unit. The end

of the Haftarah reminds us that the stages of redemption are in our hands to propel and maintain: “This house which you are building, if you follow My statutes and perform My judgments and guard all My

commandments to follow them...[then] I shall dwell amongst Bnei Yisrael and I shall not abandon My nation Israel.” (6:12-13)



# For the Shabbat Table



**Rabbi Danny Mirvis**  
Deputy CEO, World Mizrachi  
Rabbi of Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“**A**nd you shall make a Sanctuary for me and I shall dwell in them” (Shemot 25:8).

After listing the required donations and materials, Hashem commands us to make a Sanctuary so that He “shall dwell in them”. At first glance, the end of this verse seems grammatically incorrect. Seeing as the verse commences, “And you shall make a Sanctuary for me”, surely it should conclude, “and I shall dwell in IT” (“betocho”) in the singular form. Why does the verse end, “and I shall dwell in THEM” (“beto cham”) in the plural?

Numerous commentators reflect that in truth, the role of the Mishkan was not for Hashem to dwell within its walls, planks and curtains, but for Hashem to dwell inside each and every Israelite. Rather than dwelling “in it” (the Mishkan), Hashem was to dwell “in them” (the people).

Along these lines, Rabbi Lord Sacks zt”l pointed out that there were two major construction projects in the Torah – The Tower of Babel and The Mishkan – yet these two projects represent two entirely opposing ideologies. Regarding the Tower of Babel, the Midrash informs us:

“If a person fell and died, their hearts would not go out to him, but if a brick fell, they would sit, and weep, and say: When will another one go up in its place?” (Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer, 24).

At the Tower of Babel, the people existed for the structure. Though people fell and died without being noticed, any damage to the structure would be a cause for great mourning. When it came to the Mishkan, however, rather than the people existing for the structure, the structure existed for the people. The aim of the Mishkan was, “I shall dwell in them” – for Hashem to reside in the midst of the people.

In the world today, there are two major forms of government. On the one hand, there are regimes where the people exist for the structure. The loss of innocent life goes by unnoticed, with the control of the ruling power as the top priority. Conversely, there are democracies and governments where the structure exists for the people. The nation is not required to serve its leader, but the leader must serve their nation.

The message of the Mishkan does not only apply to Presidents and Prime Ministers, but to every level of leadership. A leader must never let their own importance, control or position take priority over the needs of their followers.

By ensuring correct priorities and only acting with pure motivation, may Hashem feel comfortable in our midst.

Shabbat Shalom!



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# The Gift of Giving



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

It was the first Israelite house of worship, the first home Jews made for G-d. But the very idea is fraught with paradox, even contradiction. How can you build a house for G-d? He is bigger than anything we can imagine, let alone build.

King Solomon made this point when he inaugurated another house of G-d, the First Temple: "But will G-d really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain You. How much less this house I have built!" (I Kings 8:27). So did Isaiah in the name of G-d Himself: "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. What house can you build for Me? Where will My resting place be?" (Is. 66:1).

Not only does it seem impossible to build a home for G-d, it should be unnecessary. The G-d of everywhere can be accessed anywhere, as readily in the deepest pit as on the highest mountain, in a city slum as in a palace lined with marble and gold.

The answer, and it is fundamental, is that G-d does not live in buildings. He lives in builders. He lives not in structures of stone but in the human heart. What the Jewish Sages and mystics pointed out was that in our *parsha* G-d says, "Let them build Me a sanctuary that I may dwell in them" (Ex. 25:8), not "that I may dwell in it."

Why then did G-d command the people to make a sanctuary at all? The answer given by most commentators, and hinted at by the Torah itself, is that G-d gave the command specifically after the sin of the Golden Calf.

The people made the Calf after Moses had been on the mountain for forty days to receive the Torah. So long as Moses was in their midst, the people knew that he communicated with G-d, and G-d with him, and therefore G-d was accessible,

close. But when Moses was absent for nearly six weeks, they panicked. Who else could bridge the gap between the people and G-d? How could they hear G-d's instructions? Through what intermediary could they make contact with the Divine Presence?

That is why G-d said to Moses, "Let them build Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." The key word here is the verb *sh-ch-n*, to dwell. Never before had it been used in connection with G-d. It eventually became a keyword of Judaism itself. From it came the word *Mishkan* meaning a sanctuary, and *Shechinah*, the Divine Presence.

Central to its meaning is the idea of closeness. *Shachen* in Hebrew means a neighbour, the person who lives next door. What the Israelites needed - and what G-d gave them - was a way of feeling as close to G-d as to our next-door neighbour.

That is what the patriarchs and matriarchs had. G-d spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah intimately, like a friend. He told Abraham and Sarah that they would have a child. He explained to Rebecca why she was suffering such acute pain in pregnancy. He appeared to Jacob at key moments in his life, telling him not to be afraid.

That is not what the Israelites had experienced until now. They had seen G-d bringing plagues on the Egyptians. They had seen Him divide the sea. They had seen Him send manna from heaven and water from a rock. They had heard His commanding voice at Mount Sinai and found it almost unbearable. They said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have G-d speak to us or we will die." G-d had appeared to them as an overwhelming presence, an irresistible force, a light so bright that to look

at it makes you blind, a voice so strong it makes you go deaf.

So for G-d to be accessible, not just to the pioneers of faith - the patriarchs and matriarchs - but to every member of a large nation, was a challenge, as it were, for G-d Himself. He had to do what the Jewish mystics called *tzimtzum*, "contract" Himself, screen His light, soften His voice, hide His glory within a thick cloud, and allow the infinite to take on the dimensions of the finite.

But that, as it were, was the easy part. The difficult part had nothing to do with G-d and everything to do with us. How do we come to sense the presence of G-d? It isn't difficult to do so standing at the foot of Mount Everest or seeing the Grand Canyon. You do not have to be very religious, or even religious at all, to feel awe in the presence of the sublime. The psychologist Abraham Maslow, whom we encountered in *parshat Va'era*, spoke about "peak experiences," and saw them as the essence of the spiritual encounter.

But how do you feel the presence of G-d in the midst of everyday life? Not from the top of Mount Sinai but from the plain beneath? Not when it is surrounded by thunder and lightning as it was at the great revelation, but today, just a day among days?

That is the life-transforming secret of the word *Terumah*. It means "a contribution." G-d said to Moses: "Tell the Israelites to take for Me a contribution. You are to receive the contribution for Me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give" (Ex. 25:2).

The best way of encountering G-d is to give. The very act of giving flows from, or leads to, the understanding that what we give is part of what we were given. It is a way of giving thanks, an act of gratitude.

That is the difference in the human mind between the presence of G-d and the absence of G-d.

If G-d is present, it means that what we have is His. He created the universe. He made us. He gave us life. He breathed into us the very air we breathe. All around us is the majesty, the plenitude, of G-d's generosity: the light of the sun, the gold of the stone, the green of the leaves, the song of the birds. This is what we feel reading the great creation psalms we recite every day in the morning service. The world is G-d's art gallery and His masterpieces are everywhere.

When life is a given, you acknowledge this by giving back.

But *if life is not a given because there is no Giver*, if the universe came into existence only because of a random fluctuation in the quantum field, if there is nothing in the universe that knows we exist, if there is nothing to the human body but a string of letters in the genetic code, and to the human mind but electrical impulses in the brain, if our moral convictions are

self-serving means of self-preservation, and our spiritual aspirations mere delusions, then it is difficult to feel gratitude for the gift of life. There is no gift if there is no giver. There is only a series of meaningless accidents, and it is difficult to feel gratitude for an accident.

The Torah therefore tells us something simple and practical. Give, and you will come to see life as a gift. You don't need to be able to prove G-d exists. All you need is to be thankful that you exist – and the rest will follow.

That is how G-d came to be close to the Israelites through the building of the Mishkan. It wasn't the quality of the wood and metals and drapes. It wasn't the glitter of jewels on the breastplate of the High Priest. It wasn't the beauty of the architecture or the smell of the sacrifices. It was the fact that it was built out of the gifts of "everyone whose heart prompts them to give". *Where people give voluntarily to one another and to holy causes, that is where the Divine Presence rests.*

Hence the special word that gives its name to our *parsha: Terumah*. I've translated it as "a contribution" but it actually has a subtly different meaning for which there is no simple English equivalent. It means "something you lift up" by dedicating it to a sacred cause. *You lift it up, then it lifts you up*. The best way of scaling the spiritual heights is simply to give in gratitude for the fact that you have been given.

G-d doesn't live in a house of stone. He lives in the hearts of those who give.

**AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:**

- Where do you feel closest to Hashem?
- When you give to others, (whether you are giving them your time, thought, help, or gifts) does it bring you closer to them? Why?
- Do you think giving to your community brings you closer to Hashem in the same way as the Israelites' contribution to the Mishkan brought them closer to Hashem?



The banner features a world map background. On the left is the Mizrahi logo (120 years of independence). In the center is the World Orthodox Israel Congress logo. On the right, a diagonal banner says "REGISTER TO REPRESENT YOUR ORGANIZATION". Below the map, text reads "6 CONTINENTS • 50 COUNTRIES • 250 CITIES • 1,000 ORGANIZATIONS". A blue box contains the dates "Wednesday Evening April 26 – Friday April 28, 2023" and "1-2 אייר תשפ"ג" in Hebrew, and the location "Binyanei Ha'uma, Yerushalayim". To the right of this box is a list of activities: "Opening Gala Dinner", "Plenary and breakout sessions", "Evening of inspirational learning together with yeshivot and seminaries", and "Launching global forums and initiatives". Below this is the heading "FEATURED LEADERS INCLUDE" followed by nine portraits of leaders with their names and titles: Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Rabbanit Shani Taragin, Chief Rabbi David Lau, Sivan Rahav-Meir, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, Rabbanit Rachele Fraenkel, Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon, Miriam Peretz, and Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter. At the bottom is the website "ORTHODOXISRAELCONGRESS.ORG".



# The Role of the Purim Miracle



**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

The Netivot, in his commentary to Megillat Esther,<sup>1</sup> writes that on the occasion of the *nes Purim* (Purim miracle), the Sages of that generation perceived that this episode would, in some way, serve as an *atchalta deGeula*, a preparatory step towards the building of the Second Beit HaMikdash. As such, Purim **did** conform to the rules and regulations of Megillat Ta'anit, and therefore, the prohibition of *bal tosif* did not apply to it. Therefore, Purim could already be established in its time as a *Yom Tov*, just as the other *Yamim Tovim* in Megillat Ta'anit were enacted due to their role in the improvement and preservation of the Beit HaMikdash.

The Netivot argues<sup>2</sup> that the Sages felt that Purim was an *atchalta deGeula* because the eradication of the descendants of Amalek, the stage immediately prior to *binyan Beit HaMikdash*, was accomplished through the downfall of Haman HaAgagi and his sons.<sup>3</sup>

We may suggest, however, that it was from a political point of view that the Sages viewed the events of Purim as an *atchalta deGeula*. They felt that having Esther in the palace would facilitate the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash. In fact, Rashi<sup>4</sup> comments that the son of Achashveirosh and Esther was Daryaveish (Darius), who succeeded his father and granted the Jews permission to resume building the Beit HaMikdash.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the *navi* recounts an incident in which Nechemiah, the cup-bearer in the Persian royal court, appeared downcast before King Artachshasta (identified

as Daryaveish), distressed over the news he received about the state of ruin of Yerushalayim. The king acted benevolently towards Nechemiah, sending him to go and rebuild Yerushalayim. At this encounter, the king is described with the phrase, והשגל יושבת אצלו – “with the queen sitting beside him.”<sup>6</sup> The Malbim interprets this unclear expression as a reference to the Queen **Mother**, Esther, who must have interceded on behalf of the Jewish people at this time.

This suggestion explains why this non-Jewish king would be interested in supporting, both politically and financially, the enterprise of rebuilding the Beit HaMikdash. Esther must have persuaded her son, due to their Jewish roots, to support this cause, and that is why the king acquiesced.

Indeed, the Gemara<sup>7</sup> understands that the fact that he was a Jewish king ruling over Eretz Yisrael did have meaning to Daryaveish. The Gemara, in discussing which month to use to mark the new year of Daryaveish's reign, considers his kingship a *malchut Yisrael*, and therefore counts from the month of Nissan. Only later, after he “spoiled,” is his reign reckoned like that of non-Jewish kings, from the month of Tishrei. Presumably, this occurred after Esther had already passed away and his government became so secularized that he no longer identified himself as a Jewish king ruling over Eretz Yisrael.

Purim was viewed by the Sages as an *atchalta deGeula*, but not because it involved a defeat of Amalek. After all, the defeat was

not through the waging of a war by the Jewish army sponsored by a Jewish government, and it was therefore not actually a fulfillment of eradicating the offspring of Amalek.

Rather, it was seen as an *atchalta deGeula* because the Jewish Queen Esther would have the political power to assist in the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, and it seems that Esther did indeed enable the *binyan haBayit* through her son, Achashveirosh's successor. Chazal were able to perceive this event as an *atchalta deGeula* despite its otherwise tragic consequences – that Esther was forced to marry the non-Jewish Achashveirosh and remain with him after the conclusion of the Purim episode. As such, they declared the day a *Yom Tov*.<sup>8</sup>

1. Megillat Setarim 9:19.

2. As does the Sfat Emet, Purim 5643, s.v. *inyan*.

3. The Yerushalmi in Yevamot (2:6), though, cites an opinion that Haman is described in the Megillah as *ben Hamdata* (the name of the son of Agag, king of Amalek) not because Haman was an actual descendant of Amalek, but rather because he was similarly an enemy of the Jews.

4. Chaggai 1:1.

5. Ezra 4:24.

6. Nechemiah 2:6.

7. Rosh Hashanah 3b.

8. See *B'Ikvei HaTzon*, pp. 113-114, 218-221.

● Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Moadim.

# The Keruvim of Shlomo Hamelech



**Rabbi Yisroel Reisman**  
Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Torah Vodaas

On top of the Aron in the Mishkan stood two Keruvim. When Sholomo Hamelech built the Beit Hamikdash, he built an additional two Keruvim besides the two that were in the Kodesh Hakadashim. The two Keruvim in the Mishkan were on top of the Aron. Shlomo Hamelech's two Keruvim stood in the Kodesh Hakadashim and their wings were spread out over the Aron. There were two sets of Keruvim.

Chazal taught us that at the time of the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, the two Keruvim were M'urav Zeh Im Zeh – they were hugging each other. However, at that point, Yoshiyahu Hamelech had already hidden the Aron. How could it be then that the Keruvim were hugging each other? Now that we know that there were two sets of Keruvim the answer is clear. The Keruvim on top of the Aron were hidden together with the Aron. However, Shlomo Hamelech's Keruvim were still there.

The Vilna Gaon, brought down by Rav Hutner in the Pachad Yitzchak on Pesach, has a wonderful insight into why Shlomo

Hamelech built two Keruvim. He explains that the Keruvim were not just decorative, not just a Cheftza Shel Mitzvah, but were actually the source of Torah She'baal Peh. We know that Moshe Rabbeinu received Nevua everywhere, but the Nevua that was specifically instruction of Halachot of Torah She'baal Peh he got Mi'bain Shnei Hakeruvim – between the two Keruvim. That's where Hashem spoke to Moshe from when instructing Torah She'baal Peh.

The Keruvim were also the source of Ahava – love. When Klal Yisrael behaved, the Keruvim were hugging each other and looking towards each other. When Klal Yisrael didn't behave, G-d forbid, the Keruvim turned away from each other. Because the Kodesh Hakadashim is the location for the source of Ahava, it is also called the Beit Hamittot – the bed house – as it's the private bedroom of Klal Yisrael and the Ribbono Shel Olam. It is a source of Ahava, and from there Torah comes forth. The Vilna Gaon explains that Shlomo Hamelech built in the Beit Hamikdash a source for the Ahava of the Avodah that he was building in the Beis Hamikdash.

The Mishnah in Yedayim 3:5 teaches:  
שְׂאִין כָּל הָעוֹלָם כְּלוּ כְּדָאֵי כְּיוֹם שֶׁנִּתְּנוּ בוֹ שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁכָּל הַכְּתוּבִים קִדְּשׁ, וְשִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים קִדְּשׁ קִדְּשִׁים

“For the whole world is not as worthy as the day on which Shir Hashirim was given to Israel; for all the writings are holy but the Shir Hashirim is the holy of holies.”

The Mishna refers to the day that Shir Hashirim was given to Klal Yisrael and says that the whole word is not as worthy as that day. Rav Hutner explains that that day was the day that the Aron was built and brought into the Kodesh Hakadashim by Shlomo Hamelech. It was at that point that he then gave forth Shir Hashirim. What does the Aron have to do with Shir Hashirim? The Aron is the source of Ahava. Just Keruvim in the Mishkan were the source of Ahava that dealt with the Torah, so too Shlomo Hamelech, who built the Beit Hamikdash, was the source of the Ahava of the Avodah of Klal Yisrael and that is why he made an extra set of Keruvim.

● Edited by Yehuda Kaufold and Josh Harris.

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# The Four Secrets of the Megillah



**Rabbi Shlomo Goren zt"l**  
Former Chief Rabbi of the IDF

**T**he worldwide standard for measuring good and bad, progress and retreat, the highs and lows of mankind – is the People of Israel. The way in which the nations of the world relate to us, on the one hand, and the ethical tensions within Am Yisrael itself, on the other, are the ways in which the world can measure whether it is progressing towards the ultimate goal, or whether it is in a stage of reversal.

This is the fundamental principle on which the teachings of the Prophets are founded. It is the basic truth on which the Torah's ideal of the End of Days for all of humanity is based.

A most enlightening historic lesson, one which reflects the struggle of the great powers of good and bad, of Amalek and Israel – a struggle that is manifest in a deep-rooted hatred of the nations of the world towards the Eternal People – is provided for us in the Book of Esther, which we read on Purim. Esther herself, the Talmud teaches, asked the Sages to accord “her” Book a distinctive stature among the Holy Scriptures, and for Purim to become a special holiday and be granted a special status in our Torah tradition. As the great Maimonides wrote:

“All the Books of the Prophets and the Writings will become null and void during the times of the Messiah – except for the Megillah [Scroll] of Esther, which will stand forever just like the Five Books of Moses and the laws of the Oral Torah that will never be nullified. And even though the memory of all our suffering will be forgotten..., the days of Purim will never be erased, as is written [Esther 9, 28], “These days of Purim will not fail from among the Jews, nor their memory perish from their seed.””

## THE QUADRUPLE SECRET

What is the secret of the eternity of this Megillah? What is the vision of the future that is hidden in it and in the days of Purim for the End of Days? The answer lies in four eternal fundamentals of Judaism that came to the fore in a concrete way for the Jewish people during the critical period in which the events of Purim occurred. It is in these four tenets that the holiness and supremacy of Megillat Esther are shown.

The frantic pace of events that occurred during the story of Purim reflected the excellent qualities of Israel. The Book of Esther was not written to teach us only about that specific period or about the kingdom of Persia – but rather about the future and about the entire world.

### Fundamental 1: The complete and utter negation of the Exile.

The events of Purim teach us that the presence of Am Yisrael [the Nation of Israel] in Exile is not only a national and spiritual danger for Israel, but also a genuine physical and spiritual threat to each and every individual Jew, Heaven forbid. As far as the Jew is concerned, the nations of the world have no grasp of elementary social laws that will safely guarantee his individual and national existence. The Torah's decree, “You will not find calm amongst the nations,” is well in force, and has almost always expressed the bitter and true reality of the relationship between the Jews and the nations.

### Fundamental 2: Divine Providence over Israel.

The Megillah teaches us that it occurs in hidden ways, buried among the myriad details of events, each of which is a link in one long and involved chain. We see

that the details of time, of place, of form, come together in a great maze of events and people that, in the end, prove to have been intricately woven in advance into one complex and uniform picture. The final picture is what we call a “miracle,” even though when it is broken down into its individual pieces we do not see anything unusual.

### Fundamental 3: Amalek.

Another aspect that is hidden among the events of Purim is the memory of the eternal war and hatred from Amalek towards Israel. In this case, it was manifest by Amalek's descendant Haman. The concept of Amalek, the source of all corruption and evil in the world, always appears in an individual or a group, weaving itself in wherever hatred and killing are being perpetrated against Israel. This war is the symbol of the contrast between light and darkness, and between good and bad, and it is for this reason that the Torah commanded us to remember what Amalek stands for and to increase our hatred for the root of the world's evil. “By the L-rd's throne, the L-rd will have war with Amalek throughout the generations.” [Ex. 17,16]

### Fundamental 4: Integrity and Purity in Warfare.

The Torah concept of “Your [army] camp shall be holy” is a constant reminder that the purpose of war in Israel is for the defense and personal and national security of Israel. The Megillah repeats three different times that the Jews “did not take from the booty.” This is the true standard for the holiness of the army during battle and victory. For it was not the personal interest of the fighters that stood before them, but rather the salvation and honor of the entire nation, as is written, “The

*Continued on next page*



# Gold On The Inside And Outside



**Rabbi Shalom Rosner**  
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

In this week's parsha we are instructed to build the various *keilim* to be included in the Mishkan. With respect to the Aron, it is stated: "v'tzipita oso zahav tahor mibayit umihutz tezapenu (Shemot 25:11). The Aron was to be made of wood overlaid with pure gold both on the inside and the outside.

From this pasuk, the Gemara in Yoma (72b) derives that "kol talmid chacham she'en tocho kevaro eno talmid chacham" – a scholar whose inner life does not correspond to his outer appearances is not an authentic scholar. The Aron, as the repository of the *luchot* is symbolic of a *talmid chacham*. Zahav tahor, represents purity of character. The scholar must conduct himself in a manner that exemplifies "tocho kevaro", that his inner and outer self are consistent. That there is no clash between inner reality and outer appearance.

Rabbi Lamm in his sefer Drashot L'Dorot raises a fascinating question with respect to this statement in the gemara. There are occasions where Jewish law does distinguish between private and public conduct. In particular with respect to the principle of "marit ayin"- when one should avoid an act that may be perceived by others as a transgression, irrespective of whether or not that is the reality. Does this not contradict the precept of "tocho kevaro"? If in one's heart it is clear there is no violation, why not ignore suspicions of others? Are we to conclude that halacha does not always maintain the principle of *tocho kevaro*?

Rabbi Lamm explains that we must read carefully the specific idiom that the gemara uses. It states that one should strive for *tocho kevaro*, that our inside be similar to our outside, but it does **not** ask us to develop *baro ketocho*, an outer appearance that conforms to an inner reality. There is no demand that our external image be reduced to the dimensions of what we really are like within ourselves. Chazal demand consistency in one direction only – *tocho kevaro*! Develop a great outer life and reputation and then transform your inner life to live up to it. Thus, we may understand the significance of the concept of *marit ayin*. It protects one's public image and the social model one projects, and then one has something to live up to as they strive for the realization of *tocho kevaro*.

Modern man tries to be intellectually honest and avoid hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is a conscious misleading of people, acting out a role that they don't believe in. This is not relevant for example in a scenario where one comes to shul on *Shabbat* although he does not observe all the laws of *Shabbat* at home, because he is confused and desires to be inspired. As the *Sefer Hachinuch* suggests: *acharei hapeulot nimshachim halevavot* (our hearts are influenced by our actions). We should continue to fulfill *mitzvot* even if we are angry or confused. Eventually our actions will have a positive impact on our inner reality.

This applies in the social realm as well. We are commanded to love our neighbor.

The Torah states, "ve'ahavta l'reacha kamo-cha". The term "l'reacha" seems erroneous. What should have been stated is "et re'echa". The way it is written would be literally translated as: "love to your neighbor", rather than love your neighbor! Rabbi Shimshon Refael Hirsch suggests that this language reflects the following. Genuine love of a neighbor may come at a later stage, first one must play the role of loving his fellow man – and ultimately, he will come to love him. First build an image and then by the process of *tocho kevaro*, one comes to achieve a new inner transformation.

Another example of this phenomenon which is quite relevant to this time of year is with respect to the statement of Chazal – "mi shenichnas Adar marbim besimcha" – when the month of Adar enters one must increase his joy. How can one command a person to be happy? What if I am miserable? Happiness is a state of mind. If one acts happy, one eventually emerges from the state of sadness. Create an image of happiness and eventually your reality will conform to that image. Modern psychologists have expressed the contagiousness of a smile and its impact on one's inner feelings and emotions.

As the Aron is overlaid with pure gold on its inside and outside, may we be able to transform our inner reality to mimic our outward appearance, achieve *tocho kevaro* and act in a consistent manner to be *mekadesh shem shamayim*.

*Continued from previous page*

other Jews in the other nations of the King gathered to protect themselves, and had rest from their enemies – and did not lay their hands on the plunder."

These are the eternal basics of Am Yisrael, and within them hides the secret of the holiness and supremacy of Megillat Esther

and Purim for Am Yisrael in general and for its army in particular.

# Standing and Growing



**Michal Horowitz**  
Judaic Studies Teacher

In Parshas Terumah, we are introduced to the Mishkan, the Sanctuary to be built by the Israelites in the desert, under the direction of Moshe Rabbeinu and Betzalel, the master craftsman. The Mishkan which would accompany the Jews during their long years of desert wanderings, was the precursor to the Beit Ha'Mikdash that would one day be built on Har Ha'Moriah.

It is within the Mishkan that Hashem's Shechina, Divine Presence, would rest, so to speak: וְעָשׂוּ לִי, מִקְדָּשׁ; וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם – Make for Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them (Shemos 25:8).

The people were given the opportunity to contribute materials to the Mishkan “collection fund,” as much, or as little, as their hearts motivated them to give. Needed for its construction was gold, silver, copper; blue, purple and crimson wool; linen and goats hairs; ram skins dyed red, techashim skins (skins of an ancient, colorful animal that only existed during that time), and acacia wood; oil and spices; shoman stones and filling stones for the clothing of the kohen gadol (High Priest) (See Shemos 25:1-7).

In regard to the acacia wood, more accurately identified by the Torah as עֲצֵי שֵׁטִים, the Sages wonder: From where did the Israelites have עֲצֵי שֵׁטִים along with them in their desert travels? The answer is that Yaakov Avinu foresaw with ruach ha'kodesh (Divine inspiration) that in the future, the Israelites would build a Mishkan in the desert, and he brought trees with him – from the land of Israel to Egypt, and he planted them there. And he commanded his sons to take them with when they left Egypt (see Rashi to Shemos 25:5).

The wood was used in the construction of the Aron kodesh – the Holy Ark; in the

construction of the Shulchan, the Golden Table; as well as in the construction of the Mizbayach ha'nechoshes – the Copper Altar used for animal sacrifices, and the Mizbayach ha'zahav – the Golden Altar used for ketores, incense, offerings.

In addition, the wood was used as planks for the Mishkan around: וְעָשׂוּ אֶת-הַקִּרְשִׁים, עֲצֵי שֵׁטִים, עֲמֻדִים – And you shall make planks for the Mishkan of עֲצֵי שֵׁטִים, acacia wood, עֲמֻדִים, standing upright (Shemos 26:15).

What do we learn from the unusual usage of the word עֲמֻדִים – standing upright?

R' Soloveitchik teaches that, “This verse is utilized to teach the rule that the planks for the Mishkan must be cut from the acacia tree parallel to the direction of the tree's original growth and laid so the lower part of the board corresponds to the lower part of the original acacia tree, דרך גידולו, the way that it naturally grows. If the board were to be turned upside down, with the upper part of the tree corresponding to the lower part of the board, it would be invalid for building the Mishkan.

“Deriving from this rule regarding acacia planks, the Gemara (Sukkah 45b) generalizes that all mitzvos which are based on plant life, such as the lulav, hadasim and aravos, must be done דרך גידולם, held in their original growth orientation. This generalization of the Gemara suggests that דרך גידולו is not merely a condition for properly observing the mitzvah, but that in the lack of דרך גידולו, the object itself is invalid. An acacia plank erected in the wrong configuration is not considered an acacia plank at all, and a lulav that is held upside down is not considered a lulav... When a specific species is stipulated for the fulfillment of a mitzvah, the

cheftza (object) becomes invalid through improper orientation.”

What lesson can we derive from this halacha regarding the wood used in the Mishkan?

Perhaps the Sages are teaching us a profound truth when it comes to our avodas Hashem as living “plants”: living, breathing human beings of this world, who always strive to reach higher heights. We must be sure we are standing, planted upright, in the direction of natural growth. While our feet are certainly down in this world, our hearts, our heads, our goals must be growth-oriented as we reach upwards to the next world.

About his rebbe, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Etzion, R' Aharon Lichtenstein zt'l, Rabbi Ron Yitzchok Eisenman, Rav of Congregation Ahavas Israel, in Passaic NJ, writes: “During the Yom Kippur War when the busses arrived at the Yeshiva to pick up the boys and to bring them to the front, the boys asked their commanders for one minute to go to the Beis Medrash and ask Rav Aharon for a brocha before they went out to defend the Jewish people.

“The Rebbe was nowhere to be found. Crestfallen, the boys disappointedly began to board the buses. Suddenly an apparition appeared; it was the figure of a tall, lanky figure clad totally in a white Kittel running towards the buses carrying something white.

“As the figure neared, the boys were awestruck as they realized what they were witnessing. They were witnessing greatness. Rav Aharon was the apparition and he was running towards the busses with his hands laden with rolls of toilet paper. As he breathlessly approached the boys he blurted out, ‘I want to help in some way; so I figured that in everyone's haste to

*Continued on next page*

# ‘Hester Panim’ and its Prophetic Message



**Rabbi Menachem Leibtag**

Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

Considering that Megillat Esther is part of the Tanach, we would expect it to carry a prophetic message (just as every other sefer in the canon does). In regard to the Megilla itself, it is usually understood that Megillat Esther teaches us **how** to see the ‘hidden hand’ of G-d in a series of historical events that ultimately lead to Bnei Yisrael’s salvation. In fact, this is usually the explanation given for its name – **Esther** – which may stem from the Hebrew verb “l’hastir” – to hide. The Megilla teaches us that we must always find and recognize the hidden hand of G-d in our history.

Why then is the Megilla not more specific in this regard? Why is G-d’s Name not mentioned? Almost every other sefer in Tanach expresses this point explicitly. Why is **Megillat Esther** different?

Furthermore, almost all other seforim in Tanach explain not only **how** G-d saves Am Yisrael, but also **why** He **punishes** them in the first place. This theme of divine retribution is explicit in the Torah in the **tochachot** and reiterated over and over again by all of the prophets. In fact Chazal’s explanation of the name **Esther** reflects this very same concept:

“Esther min haTorah minayin? (What is the source in Torah for [the story of] Esther?)

‘V’Anochi hasteir astir panai bayom hahu. [I will surely hide my face from you on that day.]”

Based on this Midrash, it is commonly understood that the name **Esther** relates

to the ‘hidden’ manner by which G-d **saves** Am Yisrael. However, the pasuk quoted by the Midrash implies quite the opposite – it explains how G-d **punishes** Am Yisrael:

“And G-d told Moshe, after you die... this nation will leave Me and break My covenant... And My anger will be kindled against them on that day and I will forsake them, v’**histarti** panai – and I will **hide** My face from them... and many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say on that day, ‘Are not these evils among us, because G-d is **not** among us.’ V’**anochi hasteir astir** panai bayom hahu – and I will **hide** My face from them on that day because of all the bad that they have done... Now write down this **song** and teach it to Bnei Yisrael, so that it will be My witness...”

In these psukim, G-d warns Bnei Yisrael that at times He may not come to the immediate aid of His people. Even though it may appear to Bnei Yisrael that G-d has left them, **Shirat Ha’azinu** teaches Bnei Yisrael to recognize that G-d only appears to be ‘hiding His face’ [“hester panim”]. This manner of punishment is intentional, for G-d hopes that by doing so, Am Yisrael will contemplate their predicament and relate their punishment to their wayward behavior. For this reason, Moshe must teach Bnei Yisrael Shirat Ha’azinu, for it teaches us how to relate to such situations. In that song, we are told:

“Z’chor yemot olam, binu shnot dor vaddor... – Remember the days of

old, consider the years of ages past.” (Devarim 32:7)

The Shira teaches us to reflect on our history in order to realize **why** we are being punished. If something goes wrong, it is Am Yisrael who is at fault, not G-d!

Even though G-d may hide His face, Shirat Ha’azinu does promise that G-d will ultimately redeem His people; however, this will not necessarily be because they deserve redemption. Rather, G-d will have mercy on our pitiful predicament and save us at the ‘last minute.’

Almost all of the prophets deliver a very similar message. They explain to Bnei Yisrael **what** they have done wrong, and hence **why** they are being punished. Prophecy teaches man not only to thank G-d for salvation, but to recognize his faults and correct his mistakes.

Therefore, precisely the pasuk in Chumash that alludes to the story of Megillat Esther implies that we search the Megilla to understand **why** Bnei Yisrael are being punished; why did they reach a predicament of imminent destruction during this time period?

Even though the Megilla does not provide an **explicit** reason for their impending punishment, we should expect that reason to be **implicit** (or at least ‘hidden’). To find that reason, we must consider the prophetic and historical setting of that time period – which we will do in next week’s dvar Torah.

*Continued from previous page*

leave on Yom Kippur perhaps no one had remembered to bring this vital necessity!

“His head was in the heavens” R’ Eisenman concludes, “however, his feet were firmly planted in this world.”

וְעִשְׂתִּי אֶת-הַקְּרָשִׁים, לְמִשְׁכָּנוֹ, עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים, עֲמֻדָּים – As were the planks of the Mishkan, we must be sure we are growth-oriented and planted in the right direction. While our feet are stationed down in this world,

our heads, hearts, aspirations and goals, must be always reaching upwards, Heaven-ward, as we grow and rise to ever higher heights of avodas Hashem.



# The Permanence of the Torah



**Rabbi Eli Mansour**

Edmond J Safra Synagogue, Brooklyn

In commanding Beneh Yisrael to construct the Aron (ark), in which the Luhot (tablets) and Torah were kept, G-d instructed that four rings should be attached to the corners of the Aron, and two transport poles should be inserted through the rings. When the time came to travel, and the Aron needed to be transported, the Leviyim assigned this role would carry the ark by holding the poles.

Surprisingly, G-d added the prohibition, “Lo Yasuru Mimenu” – “They should not be removed from them” (25:15). Meaning, the poles must be permanently affixed to the sides of the ark, and never be removed, even when the Aron is in its place. We would have naturally expected the transport poles to be placed alongside the Aron only when they were needed for carrying it. But G-d specifically forbids removing the poles at any time, and this is counted as one of the Torah’s 365 prohibitions.

How should we understand this law? Why were the transport poles kept at all times on the sides of the Aron?

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch (Frankfurt, 1808-1888) explained that the poles signified the fact that the Torah, represented by the Aron, must always be ready to be “transported,” to be carried with us. The Torah’s authority and relevance are not confined to any particular time or place. It remains binding upon us in every generation and in every society. To teach us this vitally important lesson, G-d instructed that the Aron should always have the transport poles at its sides, indicating



**The Torah’s authority and relevance are not confined to any particular time or place. It remains binding upon us in every generation and in every society.**

that the Torah accompanies us wherever we go.

We read in Megillat Ester that after Mordechai heard of Haman’s decree to annihilate the Jews, he went out into the city square dressed in mourners’ garb, and cried. When Ester heard, she sent her servant to Mordechai to ask “Ma Zeh Ve’al Ma Zeh” (4:5) – what this was all about. The Gemara in Masechet Megilla (15a) explains that Ester here was alluding to the Torah’s description of the tablets which Moshe brought from Mount Sinai, which were engraved “Mi’zeh U’mi’zeh” – on both sides (Shemot 32:15). She was asking Mordechai whether perhaps the Jews were being punished for transgressing the laws which were engraved “Mi’zeh U’mi’zeh,” on both sides of the stone tablets.

Why did Ester mention this particular aspect of the Torah’s laws – that they were engraved on both sides of the tablets?

Rav Yosef Salant (1885-1981), in his Be’er Yosef, explains that when a stone is etched all the way through to the other side, the text cannot then be erased. If only one side is etched, one can erase what is written by etching around the inscription. But once

the inscription has penetrated the width of the stone, it is permanent. The text of G-d’s commands was engraved on the tablets “Mi’zeh U’mi’zeh,” on both sides, to teach us that these laws are permanent and eternally binding. And this is the connection between the inscription of the tablets and Haman’s decree. The Gemara earlier teaches that the Jews of that time were deserving annihilation because they participated in Ahashverosh’s feast. Mordechai urged them not to attend, as their participation violated the Torah’s principles, but they dismissed him as “old-fashioned.” They felt that the Torah laws and values which Mordechai was trying to preserve were “outdated” and no longer relevant. And thus Ester was hinting to Mordechai that the Jews were threatened with this calamity because they denied the concept of “Mi’zeh U’mi’zeh,” of the Torah’s eternal relevance and authority.

The society we live in is rapidly changing. There are constantly new fads and new ideas that become popular, and, living and participating in this society, we face enormous pressure to embrace these fads and ideas. One of the messages of Purim is the recognition of the Torah’s permanence, that its “poles” are always alongside it, that it accompanies us and must inform our lifestyle and our conduct at all times, in every generation, and in every society. Even when our society’s values change, our values must remain constant.

# Letting Him In



**Rabbi Moshe Weinberger**  
Congregation Aish Kodesh, Woodmere

**T**he commentaries offer a variety of explanations of the pasuk (Shmos 25:2), “And they shall take a gift for Me...” Why does Hashem command the Jewish people to “take” a gift for Hashem, rather than “give” Him a gift? The Sefer Habahir, one of the earliest Kabbalah seforim by the Tanna, Rabbi Nechunia ben Hakaneh, offers an amazing explanation. He writes, “What does the pasuk ‘And they shall take a gift [תרומה] for Me’ mean? This is what Hashem told the Jewish people: I shall be lifted [the word תרומה also means to lift]. Lift Me up with your davening. And who [shall do this]? ‘From every person whose heart inspires him to generosity;’ the tzadikim and the pious of the Jewish people who lift Me up over the world with their merits.”

I once saw a parable that describes the evolution of man’s understanding of the nature of his place in the world. At first, before Avraham Avinu, when our ancestors were idol-worshippers, they believed the world was like a puppet theater. Each person is like a puppet on the stage and one or more gods were pulling the strings, controlling every action. They believed that while it appears to the audience each puppet is acting of its own volition, this outward appearance is illusory. In reality, each person is like a puppet in the hands of the gods. The best each person can hope for is to bring offerings to appease the gods and hope they do not move him into the grave at a young age.

But then Avraham Avinu, the Avos, and the Sinai experience enlightened creation with a new understanding of man’s place in the world. The Torah revealed that there are no strings attached. People are not puppets, mere subjects of the whims of the gods. Rather, the Creator gives each person free will. We are free agents, not puppets. We

can choose whether to do good and receive reward or do evil and be punished.

But the evolution of our understanding of the nature of man’s place in the world does not end there. The Sefer Habahir and other Kabbalah seforim reveal even more. It turns out that there are strings connecting Heaven and Earth, but not strings used to control people like puppets. Rather, Hashem places the strings in our hands. He gives us the ability to affect the higher worlds through our actions and bring the Divine Presence into the world or push it away from the world according to our deeds.

It goes without saying that this does not mean that any human being can affect G-d’s Essence. That is completely beyond this world. But there are many levels above this world which Hashem places in man’s hands like the Sefiros, the upper worlds, and an aspect of revelation called the “Divine Presence.” While we cannot literally affect Hashem Himself, He gives every Jew, through his thoughts, words, and actions, the power to reveal or conceal the Divine Presence in the world. The pasuk (Tehillim 22:4) therefore says, “And You are holy, who sits on the praises of Yisroel.” Hashem gives our davening the power to determine the extent of the revelation of how Hashem’s dwells in the world.

As the Sefer Habahir says, “Lift Me up with your davening... with their merits.” It is well-known that people asked Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, as a small child, “Where does G-d live?” He answered, “Wherever you let Him in.” The main distinction between people is not how easy or difficult their lives are. Rather, the main difference between them is how they perceive life. Do they invite Hashem into their lives? Do they hold the strings pulling Heaven down to Earth or do they throw them out?

Rav Neriah recounts that when Rav Kook lived in Yaffo, he was close with the famous writer, Yosef Chaim Brenner. Although Yosef Chaim grew up religious, he had become irreligious and was then vocally anti-religious as well. Nevertheless, he greatly admired Rav Kook. Rav Kook was known for holding a very deep Shalosh Sheudos meal every week in his home, where a wide range of people could always be found.

One week at the Shalosh Sheudos meal, Rav Kook was singing and teaching Torah in the dining room but Yosef Chaim Brenner was pacing back and forth in the kitchen, looking very agitated. Someone asked Yosef Chaim what was bothering him. He answered “I cannot understand Rav Kook. All he speaks about is light, light, light. But I can only see darkness.” Two people can live in the same city, seeing and hearing the same things every day. Rav Kook let Hashem into his life, so he saw light everywhere. Yosef Chaim, unfortunately, did not invite Hashem in and therefore only saw darkness. Hashem always exists everywhere, but His Presence is only revealed in this world where man chooses to let Him in.

The most opportune time to invite Hashem into our lives, just as Rav Kook did, is when we are davening. “Lift Me up with your davening.” When we daven to Hashem, we open ourselves up to the G-dliness hidden in the world and recognize that Hashem is with us at all times. And even though the Sefer Habahir says that the ability to lift Hashem up as Master of the world is the role of the “tzadikim and the pious of the Jewish people,” the pasuk (Shmos 25:2) says that “every person” can bring Hashem’s Presence into the world in this way.

But we must understand that the strings we hold in our hands can only “affect”

*Continued on page 23*

# The Id, the Yid, and the Super-Ego



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A Jew ends up sleeping in the same cabin as a Russian General of the Czar's army. He tells the conductor to wake him up at 4:00 a.m. so he can get off at his stop. He is awakened at the proper time, yet due to the darkness he mistakenly puts on the cloth of the general instead of his own.

When he arrives home, his wife asks him if everything is all right with him. When he takes a look in the mirror and sees that he is wearing the general's uniform, he tells his wife, "It seems like the conductor woke up the general instead of me."

## Three Arks

The holiest article in the Tabernacle that the Jewish people constructed in the desert was the Ark, which housed the Tablets of the Ten Commandments. In this week's portion (Terumah), the Torah commands the Ark to be made of acacia wood and to be covered within and without with gold.

To fulfill this stipulation the Jews made three boxes, tucked into each other. The larger visible box was made of pure gold. Inside it, they placed a box of acacia wood. Then a second golden box was made and it was put inside the wooden one. Thus, the middle wooden box was covered with gold inside and out.

But why did they need to build three arks in order to fulfill this condition? Why could they not build one ark of wood and plate it inside and out with gold?

## Three Layers of the Soul

Gold is an inanimate metal, while wood belongs to the botanic world of growth and development. Yet wood has nothing of

the brilliant glitter and splendor of gold. And while wood may be developed into a magnificent structure, it can also - unlike gold - deteriorate and rot.

The spiritual masters teach that the psychological structure of every human being consists of three strata, one "beneath" the other: The deepest, often invisible, stratum is the quintessential soul that may be unknown even to a person himself or herself (even if its impact is present in some form). Then there is the conscious personality - including all of our instinctive thoughts, feelings, moods, instincts, and desires. Finally, there is the layer of behavior - the active thoughts, words, and deeds we express and carry out during our daily lives and interactions.

The three arks that the Jewish people constructed three millennia ago in the Sinai desert represented these three dimensions of the human structure. The most inner ark, made of pure gold and tucked inside the other two arks, reflected the most inner dimension of the soul, which can be defined as "pure gold." This is the Divine, spiritual essence of our identity, displaying a brilliant luster of sacredness, integrity, and love. At the core, you are a "derivative" of infinite oneness, a manifestation of G-d's light in this world.

Just as gold coming from the inorganic world is not subject to real change, so too the golden essence of the human soul cannot be altered, tarnished, tainted, or compromised. No matter how much we were abused or we abused ourselves - the core of our consciousness remains a piece of gold. Just as G-d is indestructible, so are you. In that Divine space, you remain fully intact, full of confidence, fortitude, joy, possibility, love, compassion, and courage.

The middle ark made of wood reflected the more visible conscious personality of the human soul. Just like wood, our feelings and attitudes go through many changes during our lives. We may develop and refine our "wooden" character so that it becomes exquisite and beautiful, or our personality may experience decomposition.

Our "wooden" self may vacillate between extremes. At times we may feel idealistic, virtuous, and spiritual, but at other times we find ourselves consumed by bleak emotions, negative cravings, and dark ambitions. We feel rotten and decayed inside.

Finally, the third and outer ark, conspicuous for all to see, was made of pure gold. This reflected the Torah's blueprint for the most external stratum of the human structure - a person's behavior.

Though we may feel our personalities to be torn inside, and at times even saturated with gloom and pain, we need not grant them permission to dictate our behavior. We need to remember always that even while our conscious moods may gravitate toward decadence, our essence remains pure gold.

This is Judaism's fundamental code of human behavior. Even while you feel selfish, unholy, and obnoxious inside, your behavior - what you do, how you talk, and how you consciously think - can reflect the beauty and splendor of your innate G-dliness and infinite holiness. You can feel your "wood" in all of its nuanced manifestations and then choose the golden path.



# Terumah: We Carry Each Other



**Rabbi Judah Mischel**

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**R**av Baruch Ber Leibowitz, zt'l, was a renown gaon and *lamdan*. The Rosh Yeshivah of Kamenetz was a *talmid muvhak* of Reb Chaim Brisker, and respected as one of the great Torah minds and *mechadshim*, innovative teachers of the generation. Rav Baruch Ber once wondered aloud to his *talmidim*: On what grounds can I expect to gain entry into *Olam haBa*? Will I be rewarded for my *chidushei Torah* in *Sefer Birkas Shmuel*? No, for how insightful will my ideas be relative to those of the *Tannaim*, *Amoraim*, *Rishonim* and *Achronim*?

Will it then be as a reward for my *mesirus nefesh* for Torah and *mitzvos*? That too is unlikely, for many generations of Jews have paid the ultimate sacrifice and given their lives *al Kiddush Hashem*.

Turning to his students, Reb Boruch Ber opened his heart: “Even if not for my learning, or for my sacrifice for *Mitzvos*, what is certain is that I will be rewarded for my *ahavas Yisrael*, for I love every Jew, exactly as he is. I have never met a Jew in the street and not wished them well with all my heart...”



Our sedra details the construction of the *Mishkan* as well as the vessels that are found within it. First among them is the *Aron*, the Ark containing the *Luchos*. Atop the Ark was the *Kapores*, a golden lid upon which rested the *Keruvim*, the Golden Cherubs:

וְעָשִׂיתָ שְׁנַיִם כְּרָבִים זָהָב מְקֻשָּׁה תַעֲשֶׂה  
אֹתָם מִשְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַכַּפֹּרֶת:

And you shall make two golden *Keruvim*; you shall make them from hammered work from the two ends of the Ark's cover. (25:18)

These childlike angelic figures were fashioned of a single piece of gold. They were specifically not to be soldered together, rather formed as a *miksheh*, ‘a hammered out form’ from the same source.

וְהָיוּ הַכְּרָבִים פְּרָשֵׁי כְנָפִים לְמַעַלָּה סְכָכִים  
בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם עַל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל-  
אָחִיו אֶל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת יִהְיוּ פְּנֵי הַכְּרָבִים:

“The *Keruvim* shall have their wings spread upwards, shielding the ark cover with their wings, with their faces toward one another; [turned] toward the Ark cover shall be the faces of the *Keruvim*.” (25:20)

The gaze of the *Keruvim*, directed both toward the Ark and toward each other, represents the essence of a life of Torah. *Yidishkeit* is meant to cultivate in us the ability to experience the *hashraas haShechinah*, the resting of the Divine Presence, but precisely in the mode of “their faces turned toward one another”. This radiant symbol of *ahavas Yisrael*, of a people looking toward each other, rooted in a single soul and hammered out and formed from the same Source, was situated above the *Luchos*. *Ahavas Yisrael* crowns the Torah.

Rav Dovid Feinstein, zt'l, insisted: “When *Yidden* get up after learning a *sugya*, they should be more compassionate, kinder, and with more room in their heart for others. If that doesn't happen, then they didn't really learn it, and they should sit down and learn it again.”

וְעָשׂוּ אֲרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים... וְצִפִּיתָ אֹתוֹ זָהָב טְהוֹר  
מִבֵּית וּמְחוּץ תְּצַפְּנֵנּוּ וְעָשִׂיתָ עָלָיו זָר זָהָב סָבִיב:

They shall make an ark of acacia wood... Overlay it with pure gold inside and out and make upon it a gold molding surrounding it. (25:10-11)

While other vessels in the *Mishkan* were constructed of solid gold, the Ark was constructed of acacia wood and only plated with gold. This would seem to diminish the honor of the Torah that rested within it. However, during the travels of Bnei Yisrael in the Desert, the Levi'im had the privilege and responsibility to carry the heavy *Aron*. Chizkuni suggests that the instruction to make the Ark out of wood lightly plated with gold shows deliberate sensitivity to the Leviim. And this provides a lesson for all of us in how to live a Torah life. It is a reminder that the goal of Torah is expressed when we alleviate the physical, emotional or spiritual burdens of our fellow.

There are times where living a Torah observant life can feel heavy, and carrying the *zechus* of *mitzvos* not always easy. Yet *Kavod haTorah* is enhanced when we turn toward our fellow, cover them with our wings of love, and lighten their load with our friendship. And this is part of the goal of Creation itself, as Rabbeinu Bachya comments: “The attribute of kindness pervades all of existence in its eternity, the heavenly realms and the lower realms, and these realms have no possibility of continued being without it; everything needs kindness and kindness has no end or boundary (*Kisvei Rabbeinu Bachya*, p. 327).

The construction of the *Mishkan* and its vessels gives us models of how to ‘carry’ the Torah as individuals and as a community, and to grow closer to Hashem and each other. May we internalize these lessons in kindness, and may the *Shechinah* dwell within all of us, together — *v'shochanti b'tocham*: “And I will dwell in them.”

# Tribute to Tachash

## Mrs. Shira Smiles

International lecturer and curriculum developer

While most of the materials Hashem asked Bnei Yisroel to contribute to the building of the *mishkan* are familiar, there is one that is unknown to us. This is the skin of the *tachash* which was used as a covering above the *mishkan*. The Gemara Shabbos explains that this was a beautiful, multi colored animal that existed only at that time, neither from before creation nor after. Onkelos writes that the *tachash sos gavna*, rejoices and prides itself in its colors. Shenayim Mikra explains the words differently. *Sos* can be read as six (*shesh*) colors. Ohel Yosef writes that this represents the six emanations through which G-d is manifest in the world. The seventh *sefirah* is *malchut*, the sovereignty of G-d Himself, above all the others and above the *mishkan*.

The Shvilei Pinchas questions, haughtiness is antithetical to G-d's presence. How could the *tachash* who was prideful be used for the *mishkan*? The Tal Hashamayim answers that the *tachash* took pride for the short time that it was in the service of Hashem. Even a Torah scholar can have a small bit of measured pride for doing Hashem's will, writes Hashir Veha-shavach. Therefore the *tachash* must be otherworldly, created from outside this world to exist for only a short time to help us feel Hashem's presence, for only in the *mishkan* where Hashem presence is manifest can we find pride (haughtiness) and greatness (*ga'avah u'gedulah*) together.

The Shvilei Pinchas notes that each side of the *mishkan* represented one of our forefathers. The right side represented Avraham and his attribute of *chesed* (kindness); the left side represented Yitzchak and his attribute of *gevurah* (strength). But there was a center bar that went from one side



The *mishkan* itself is exact, but the *tachash* that surrounds it represents our diversity and individuality.

to the other, bridging the gap and joining the two. This represents Yaakov whose attribute was *tiferet*, glory and splendor which is the point at which *chesed* and *gevurah* meet in balance. The Shvilei Pinchas cites the Alshich in noting that the first *beit hamikdosh* was in the merit of Avraham but was destroyed because of Yishmael. The second *beit hamikdosh* was in the merit of Yitzchak but was destroyed because of Esav. The third *beit hamikdosh* will be built in the merit of Yaakov and will incorporate the hidden elements of the *mishkan* within it. Likewise, as the middle link in attributes, Yaakov incorporates within himself the attributes of Avraham and Yitzchak. This idea brings us back to the *tachash*. Avraham is the white of kindness and Yitzchak is the red of strength. Yaakov is represented by green. (Green is the middle color of the rainbow, bridging the opposite extremes.) The *tachash* was important because its skin had the ability to incorporate many colors and create a beautiful synthesis to create *tiferet*, splendor. *Tachash* is an anagram for Torah, *chaim* (life) and *shalom* (peace). Yaakov represented each of these elements. He sat in the tents of Shem and Ever and studied Torah. The Gemara says Yaakov never died, (*chaim*), and he was able to create the balance and peace between the gentle *chesed* of Avraham

and the harsh strength of Yitzchak, hence *shalom*. However, when the forces of evil corrupt this balance, we get the reverse anagram, *shachat*, destruction. Like the *tachash*, Yaakov takes pride in synthesizing these elements and creating a new and beautiful "color." It is this synthesis that covers the entire *Mishkan* and is the source of *shalom*. The Chasam Sofer adds that unity of purpose creates this peace.

Rabbi B. Z. Firer explains that just as the *tachash* contained many different, beautiful hues so too although *Bnei Yisroel* are centered around one unchanging body of law, each group brings their individual beauty and perspective in the form of custom and tradition. The *mishkan* itself is exact, but the *tachash* that surrounds it represents our diversity and individuality. Therefore there were twelve distinct tribes. Each of us is a unique combination of nature and nurture with a unique path and goal to serve G-d. In the same manner, the *tachash* was also created to fulfill a unique purpose in a specific moment of time, notes Rabbi Frand. Like the *tachash*, continues Rabbi Brazil, we can each be happy and proud when we realize that there is none other like me who can fulfill my specific purpose on earth. The *tachash* teaches us that our diversity and multiple hues present a beautiful and textured setting for Hashem's presence to rest among us, for although each of us is unique, together we represent the glorious multiplicity of the universe and our unique placement within it.

# Contributing to the State



**Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi**  
Popular Torah teacher and author

**T**his week, in the course of another large demonstration in front of my house, an ultra-Orthodox man on his bicycle argued loudly with one of the demonstrators, who was carrying a large flag and on her shirt the words, “Loyal to the Declaration of Independence.” “I am much more Jewish than you are,” she responded passionately to his argument, which I could not hear. “I contribute to this country!” And suddenly something melted in my heart.

When I saw the protests in the morning, I tried to define for myself whether we were arguing about something religious, about something sectarian, or about something in my opinion, and in any case, according to these three criteria, I am on the wrong side of the demonstration... Only when I heard these words, spoken in pain, did I feel that the dispute was precisely about our parsha, the parsha of contributing to the common house.

The phrase “and you shall make” is repeated over and over in the parsha: “And you shall make a golden altar,...and you shall make two cherubs...and you shall make a table...and you shall make the cloths.” But in one place the Torah says, “And they shall”, all together: “And they shall make an Aron of acacia wood.”

“‘And they shall make the Aron’ – why regarding all these vessels it is written ‘and you [singular] shall make’ but regarding the Aron it is written ‘and they shall make’? R. Yehudah the son of Shalom said:

The Holy One said to him [Moses] – all can come and busy themselves with the Aron, so that all come and merit the Torah...” (Midrash Rabbah)

Ramban comments: “The ‘busy themselves’ of which the Rabbi speaks means that they should each offer one golden vessel [for the making of the Aron, in addition to their general offering for the building of the Tabernacle], or that they should help Bezalel in some small way, or that they should have intent [of heart in the making thereof].”

Contributing to the common scroll of this nation recognizes the fact that everyone has something to contribute. It can be substance, but it can also be intent. The intention that this house stands, the intention to give wholeheartedly to the society in which we live.

This Shabbat, I will be in the United States speaking at the annual conference of major rabbis involved in kiruv. There, over the years, I became familiar with the very American concept: unaffiliated Jews, which literally means “the unengaged Jew.” By and large, this is a much softer term than the word “secular” because it does not embody opposition, but it seems to me that the very term “secular” will express the connection to the house. A relationship full of pain, perhaps, but a relationship.

“Therefore, all the dimensions of the Aron were halves, to teach that every person

should view himself as if he is lacking in complete wisdom and that he still needs to fill his deficiency... That is, each partial dimension teaches about some deficiency that a person needs to rectify. The principle, “Where will wisdom be found?” concerns one who considers himself as being deficient. One who is wise in his own eyes incorrectly evaluates himself, saying that he has already achieved the goal of wisdom. Who is wise? The one who learns from every person. That is, the one who evaluates himself as lacking in wisdom and that he needs to learn more.”

The cubits, the measurements of the Aron, are halved and broken, unlike the table or the altar. The teaching of this people needs the contribution of all, it is the teaching of the broken people who all want to contribute what they know and understand. On this common Aron will be two cherubim: “one cherub at one end and the other cherub at the other end.” But both will “spread their wings upward.” The controversy will be over this Aron of the covenant. We will feel it strongly when the two cherubim “face the house,” when they argue about the common house. But there will always be those rare, redemptive moments when we reconcile, just when we are arguing about who is more Jewish, because there is a value here that we are all connected to and committed to. In those moments, the two cherubim will stand humbly, “each facing his brother.”

*Continued from page 19*

Hashem’s Presence within the boundaries of the halachic process. With the recent debates regarding women and tefillin, it seems that there are some precious and sincere Jews now who do not fully understand the halachic process and think they can pull Hashem according to their

view of what is right notwithstanding the system of halachic precedent. That does not work. At some point the strings simply snap. G-d does not follow man into a fictitious world created by his own imagination and personal preferences.

May we and all of our brothers and sisters merit to invite Hashem into our lives, may our lives conform to the parameters of halacha, and may we live up to the ideal of “I shall be lifted” through the righteousness of our thoughts, words, and actions.



# Hebrew Language in the Parsha



David Curwin  
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Parashat Terumah contains the instructions for making the various vessels for the *mishkan*. For example, Moshe is commanded to make the *menorah*:

וְעָשִׂיתָ מִנְרַת זָהָב טָהוֹר מְקֻשָּׁה תַעֲשֶׂה הַמְנוֹרָה יְרֻכָה וְקִנְיָה גְבִיעֵיהָ כְּפֹתְרֵיהָ וּפְרָטְרֵיהָ מִמְּנָה יְהִי:

“You shall make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be made of hammered work; its base and its shaft, its cups, calyxes, and petals shall be of one piece.” (Shemot 25:31)

The verse describes the various components of the *menorah*. I'd like to focus on one of them: *כְּפֹתְרֵיהָ*.

In our translation it's rendered as “its calyxes.” Other translations for *כְּפֹתוֹר* include knob, sphere, and bulb. Elsewhere in the Tanakh, in Amos 9:1 and Tzefania 2:14, it refers to the capital of a column. However, none of those fit the meaning in modern

Hebrew – “button”. Where did that sense originate?

According to one linguist, while in biblical Hebrew *כְּפֹתוֹר* meant a kind of ornament, the sense of button came from influence from German and French. The German *knopf* and the French *bouton* meant both “knob” and “button.” So Hebrew speakers, accustomed to the dual meanings of these words in their native languages, added the meaning of “button” to the existing “knob” when using the word *כְּפֹתוֹר*.

Going back to the biblical word *כְּפֹתוֹר* – what is its origin? One theory is that it's an expansion of the word *כֶּתֶר* – “crown.” Some say that *כֶּתֶר* originally denoted anything round, including knobs, crowns, and the round tops of the columns.

A second theory says that *כְּפֹתוֹר* is an expansion of the root *כפת* – “to bind, tie”, and a third theory says it may come from a compound of two roots: *כפר* and *כתר* – “to cover.”

The reason so many theories are presented is the fact that *כְּפֹתוֹר* has a four-letter root, which is atypical to biblical Hebrew, certainly a word found all the way back in the Torah. Often in these cases we look for a word borrowed from a foreign source. That leads us to a fourth theory.

Aside from *כְּפֹתוֹר* as an ornament, the word also refers to the Island of Crete (for example in Devarim 2:23). Crete was known for its use of calyx in designs, so maybe that's where this type of decoration originated. And in fact, the Talmud (Menachot 28b) says that the *כְּפֹתוֹר* of the *menorah* was shaped like “Cretan apples.”

And what were these “Cretan apples”? According to botanists, it refers to the herb *salvia fruticosa*, found widely on the island of Crete. It also grows in Eretz Yisrael (known in Hebrew as *מִרְוֶן*), and to tie this all together – often grows in a form which highly resembles the shape of the *menorah*.

## Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh  
Mizrachi Melbourne

In the section dealing with the Aron (Ark), every letter of the Alef Bet appears except for one. What is the missing letter?

### Answer to the Parsha Riddle

The letter “ג” is the only letter not appearing in the section dealing with the Aron. The *klei Yakar* (25:31) explains that the letter “ג” alludes to reward, being the first letter of the word “גמול” which means “reward”. The Torah is hinting to the warning given in *Pikrei Avot*: “Do not be like servants who serve their master with the aim of receiving a reward”. The message of the missing gimmel in the section of the Aron which held the Luchot and the Torah is “Don't learn Torah for the sake of a reward”. Despite that, we are told that there is great reward in this world and the next for those who learn Torah. This is hinted to by the following portions of the *Shulchan (table)* alluding to a royal table, symbolizing wealth in *Olam Hazeih*, and the *Menorah* whose light symbolizes the spiritual wealth of *Olam Haba*. Both will be granted to the learners of the Torah.



### THIS WEEK in Jewish History

- Feb. 25, 1842:** Birthday of Peretz Smolenskin, pioneer of the Hebrew novel, and founding member of the Jewish national revival movement.
- Feb. 26, 1147:** Crusader massacre of the Jews of Wurtzburg.
- Adar 6, 2488 (1273 BCE):** Moshe completed his review of the Torah, blessed the Jewish people and placed the Sefer Torah he wrote into the Holy Ark.
- Adar 7, 2368 (1393 BCE):** Birth of Moshe; 2488 (1273 BCE): Death of Moshe
- March 1, 1920:** Joseph Trumpeldor killed while defending Tel Chai against an Arab attack.
- Adar 9, 3826 (66 CE):** Traditional date of the first controversy “for the sake of Heaven” between Shammai and Hillel.
- March 3, 1912:** Hadassah, now one of the largest women's organizations in the world, was founded by Henrietta Szold on Purim.

The above is an abridged weekly version of *Dust & Stars*. To receive a free comprehensive post every day about the events and remarkable Jews who have changed the world, please subscribe: <https://dustandstars.substack.com/subscribe>



# HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY

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Midreshet Eshel  
Midreshet HaRova  
Midreshet Rachel vChaya  
Neve Hagiva'a  
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Torat Reva Yerushalayim  
Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi  
Yeshivat Hakotel  
Yeshivat Orayta

#### BEIT SHEMESH

Tiferet Midrasha  
Kehillat Nofei Hashemesh  
Yeshivat Ashreinu  
Yeshivat Hesder Lev HaTorah

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Mizrachi OU-JLIC Herzliya

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Mechinat Ruach HaNegev

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Yavneh Academy  
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Kingsway Jewish Center  
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Merkaz Yisrael of Marine Park  
North Shore Hebrew Academy  
Young Israel of Merrick

NYC Department of Correction  
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Young Israel of New Rochelle  
Young Israel of North Woodmere  
Young Israel of Oceanside  
Young Israel of Scarsdale

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