



הַמִּזְרָחִי

HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY



PARSHAT PEKUDEI
5782 • 2022

ISRAEL Parsha Picture

וְכִסֹּף פְּקוּדֵי הָעֵדָה... בְּקַע לְגִלְגָּלַת
מִחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ

שמות לה, כה-כו

A Mishkan built by the half shekel of all the Jewish People.

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Does it Matter What Other People Think?

Moshe and Accounting for Every Shekel



Rabbi Doron Perez
Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi

Why does Moshe record a reckoning of every *shekel* contributed by the populace for the building and functioning of the Mishkan?

This is the longest inventory list in the entire Chumash - all the gold, silver and copper collected; the hundreds if not thousands of items, articles and vessels of the Tabernacle, built by the people's contribution are all accounted for here.

אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכּוֹן הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר פָּקַד עַל-פִּי מֹשֶׁה

“These are the **reckonings** of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony that was **reckoned** by **Moses**...”¹

The Parasha begins with these words clearly headlining this reckoning at the very opening of the Parasha and highlighting that it indeed was Moshe himself who initiated it.

Why did Moshe feel the need to engage in this laborious accounting exercise when Hashem did not command him to do so? Did he not have more important spiritual endeavors to engage in?

Moshe reveals here a pivotal principle of success in life and leadership. He taught by personal example a critical lesson for every future community leader of what good governance is all about – **to be above suspicion and beyond reproach.**

Consider this. No one was more trusted by G-d than Moshe – he was handpicked

by Hashem against his will initially and became the reluctant savior and redeemer of the Jewish people. He then delivered them from backbreaking bondage to national freedom through unparalleled miracles of the ten plagues and splitting of the sea. He then gives the People the 10 Commandments in an unprecedented miraculous spectacle of Divine revelation. Yet, despite all of this and although he is the most humble of all human beings and a person of incredible selflessness, superhuman dedication to others and of sublime moral and spiritual character – integrity and honesty – beyond reproach, he still feels the need to give an exact accounting to the people of their contribution.

Moshe Rabbeinu understood human nature and the innermost workings of the human heart. People can be suspicious and judgmental when they don't know all the facts. Doubt breeds suspicion. We are called upon by the Torah and our Sages time and time again to judge all people favorably. We don't, however, always pass the test. This is especially true when we are personally invested in the person or cause we are judging. Every person had personally contributed their half shekel to the Mishkan and hence were personally invested in it's construction. Moshe understood that even he had no choice but to account for every penny if he was to be beyond any suspicion.

This principle is clearly articulated by our sages in the following way: ואדם צריך לצאת ידי הבריות כדרך שצריך לצאת ידי המקום - "and a person needs to be free of suspicion before man just as before G-d."²

The sages then continue to quote two pesukim to back up this assertion:

והייתם נקיים מה' ומישראל
"You should be beyond reproach before Hashem and before (the people of) Israel" (Bamidbar 32:22).

And then a second one from Proverbs that we all know from Bensching:

ומצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלוקים ואדם
"We should find favor and and good grace in the eyes of G-d and our fellow man" (Mishei 3:4).

This is quite remarkable. One might have thought that it should not really matter what people erroneously think of us or what we do, if what we are doing is the right and honorable thing. Surely, it

should be enough that G-d knows what the truth is. He knows everything we do and of course our most secret thoughts and intentions. Furthermore, surely we should not be dependent on what people think of us as we can never fully control that and our peace of mind should not be in the hands of others. While this is entirely true, we are being taught that we cannot discard the concerns of others in areas where suspicion may be evoked in circumstances of doubt and personal investment as we have mentioned. We have to make our efforts to dispel doubt and avert suspicion. **We should aspire where possible to find favor in the eyes of both Heaven and our fellow human beings.**

What an important lesson this is in life in general and particularly in the realm of leadership. **We have to display great accountability and have clear transparent practices of good governance.** Whether it be in the for

profit or not for profit sectors, specifically wherever money is concerned we have to account for every shekel.

May we all strive to judge others more favorably and less suspiciously. May we all strive to conduct ourselves in ways which don't evoke suspicion and aspire to be beyond reproach. May we all merit in finding favor both in Hashems eyes and in the eyes of our fellow person.

1. Shemot 38:21.
2. Masechet Shekalim, chapter 3, mishna 2.

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כָּל מָה שֶׁבָּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעוֹלָמוֹ, לֹא בָרָא אֱלֹא לְכַבּוֹדוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (שְׁעִיָּה מִג), כָּל הַנִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁמִי וְלְכַבּוֹדִי בָרָאתִי יִצְרָתִי אֶף עֲשִׂיתִי, וְאוֹמֵר (שְׁמוֹת טו), הִזְוֶה יְמִלְךָ לְעֵלְמָ וְגַד (אֲבוֹת ו:יא).

Pirkei Avot ends with a powerful and critical message for all mankind. Building off Sefer Yeshayahu, the Mishnah writes, “Everything that Hashem created in His world, He created only for His honor.” Though we may not be able to fully understand Hashem’s intentions, we know that — at least on some level — all of creation exists in order to honor Him.

For Hashem or For Us?

Interestingly, the Midrash (Kohelet Rabbah 7:19) uses the same formulation (“*kol mah she-barah*”) in a seemingly different way when it tells us that Hashem showed Adam Harishon the world and told him that He created it all for him. This Medrash makes it sound like everything Hashem created was for man’s use, as opposed to Hashem’s honor!

Rav Yosef Karo (Maggid Meisharim, Parshat Bereishit) and the Ramchal (Ramchal, Da’at Tevunot, *ot* 18) take this idea further by explaining that the world was created to give people the chance to develop their souls through personal choice and struggle. Instead of being naturally close to G-d in a spiritual world with no alternatives, Hashem gives us the opportunity to choose closeness to Him in a physical world where His presence is hidden. The Ramchal (Sefer Mesilat Yesharim 1) adds that our mission is to realize that real, meaningful pleasure is closeness to Hashem in the next world and a relationship with Him in this one.

These sources seem to imply that the world was created for us and our own personal development, not for G-d’s own honor. How can we reconcile these contradictory understandings of why the world was created?

Rav Chaim Freidlander¹ explains the relationship between these two ideas by distinguishing between the goal and the means. Obviously, G-d in no way needs this world nor the honor He “receives” from it. The world exists (as depicted by the Medrash, Rav Yosef Karo, and the Ramchal) in order to give us the opportunity to develop *ourselves*. The

Mishnah in Avot, on the other hand, is explaining the means — *how we achieve this growth*. The Mishnah teaches us that personal growth hinges on our appreciating that we and the world exist only to recognize and glorify G-d.

The Universe and Man

The centrality of *kevod Hashem* as the world’s goal helps us understand why the world is so vast and intricate. Dovid Hamelech exclaimed: “The heavens declare the glory of G-d, the sky proclaims His handiwork.” (Tehillim 19:2) *Pesukei D’zimra* reinforces this idea with the pasuk “Our Lord is great and full of power. His wisdom is beyond reckoning.” (Tehillim 147:5) The universe reflects the G-d who created it. Only Hashem could have created the boundless, sophisticated world we can only scratch the surface of understanding.

Obviously, man — created in the image of G-d — is able to appreciate and express this recognition on a higher level than the rest of creation. That is why we state in regards to man: “Blessed is He, our G-d, Who created us for His honor.” (Seder Birkot Hatorah) Man is created for the glory of G-d, to recognize and appreciate Him. That having been said, sometimes our unique, G-d-given abilities go to our heads and we come to believe that our lives are about ourselves. This forces G-d to remind us of our rightful place in His world.

Whose Name?

This tension expressed itself clearly in the world’s first generations. The snake told man that Hashem wanted to keep him down and that he should eat from the *Eitz Hadaat* in order to become like, rather than be dependent or focused upon, Hashem. In truth, the snake was right. Hashem does not want us to be like Him. We should know that we exist in order to serve and glorify His name, not in order to focus on ourselves.

This problem continued in the generation after the flood with their building of the tower. The stated goal of the builders was to “make a name” for themselves². To keep them from focusing upon themselves and

their own name, Hashem split them up by introducing different languages. When man recognizes G-d and aims to work on His behalf, he is entitled to enjoy the world and work together with others who share this sacred mission. When he is focused on his own name, Hashem foils his plans and breaks up the misguided unity. This is the backdrop to the words of Hillel at the end of Avot’s first perek- “One who advance his (own) name, destroys his name.” (Avot 1:13)

The contrast to the tower builders were Shem ben Noach and his descendants. Shem facilitated the first *kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of Hashem’s name) when his noble actions caused Noach to exclaim: “Blessed is Hashem, the G-d of Shem.” (Bereishit 9:26)

His descendant, Avraham Avinu, was the first to spread the name of Hashem to the masses. (Bereishit 12:8) Avraham saw his mission as bringing people close to Hashem. Understandably, Hashem promised to make Avraham’s name great. When we realize that we are here to serve and glorify Hashem’s name, the greatness of our name appropriately contributes to this higher goal.

The Medrash (Mishlei 18:10) attributes this message of the contrast between focusing on our name versus Hashem’s name to Avraham himself. Avraham responded to those who asked for his help in building the tower: “You’ve abandoned G-d’s name and you want me to help you make a name for yourselves?” (Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim 26, *remez* 703)

Avraham is our role model. Hashem chose Avraham’s descendants — the Jewish people — to be a nation focused on glorifying His name. Instead of being focused on a tower that celebrates our name and achievements, we build a Beit Hamikdash that marks Hashem’s name and centrality. We will learn more about this, *im yirtzeh Hashem*, next week.

● Transcribed by Yedidyah Rosenswasser.

1. See his comment on Siman 58 of Da’at Tevunot.
2. In this way they were a continuation of the problematic ‘anshei hashem’ (Bereishit 6:4).

HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

From Transcience to Permanence



Rabbanit Shani Taragin
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

This week's haftarah (Ashkenazim *Melachim I*, 7:51-8:21, Sephardim 7:40-50) once again reflects the parshanut on the parasha as it draws parallels between the establishment and inauguration of the Mishkan and the consecration of the Beit HaMikdash. In the parasha we read: "*And all the work of the mishkan, of the Ohel Mo'ed [Communion Tent], was finished.*" (39:32) and similarly in the haftarah: "*And all the work was completed... for the house of G-d.*" (7:51)

The similarities, however, highlight several differences. Though both words – “finished” (va-tekhel) and “completed” (va-tishlam) convey the same meaning, the word “va-tekhel” reminds us of the word “kilyon”. “Kilyon” is denoted both as “kilyon nefesh” (impatience), for finally reaching the goal of having Hashem’s presence reside among them, and also in the sense of physical “kilyon” (destruction), for the mishkan is a mobile tent designed to be assembled and disassembled. In contrast, the word “va-tishlam” by the Mikdash connotes completion (shlemut) and peace (shalom), especially since it was overseen by King SHLOMO. Similarly, we found the cloud and glory of G-d filling the Mishkan and the Mikdash in the parasha and the haftarah, respectively. Just as in the parasha “Moshe could not come into the Ohel Mo’ed because the cloud rested upon it” (40:35), so in the haftarah “the priests could not stand and serve because of the cloud” (8:11). This is because “G-d said that He would dwell in the thick darkness” (8:12). The difference, however, is that the cloud of the Mishkan represented transience – “and when the cloud lifted from upon the mishkan, Bnei Yisrael would travel on all their journeys” (40:36). The presence of the

Shechina in the Mishkan was temporary; at any time the people would move and then erect the mishkan elsewhere. The Mikdash, however, was meant to serve as a permanent structure – “A place for Your dwelling forever” (8:13), manifest through the ever-present cloud that “filled” (and not simply covered) the “House of G-d.”

There is also a difference between “avoda” (“all the avoda of the mishkan, of the Ohel Mo’ed”) and “melakha” (“and all the melakha was completed”) as found in the completion of the Beit HaMikdash and the Creation of the world (Bereishit 2:3). Chaza”l therefore explain that when Shlomo built the Temple, “the Holy One said, “Now the melakha of the heavens and the earth is complete” – “and all the melakha was completed”. Therefore he was called Shlomo, for G-d completed the work of the six days of Creation through the work of his hands...” (Pesikta Rabbati 6)

The root *k-h-l*, through which Moshe assembled and instructed the whole congregation of Bnei Yisrael concerning the Mishkan, does not appear at all earlier in Sefer Melachim. In chapter eight describing the dedication of the Mikdash, it is employed no less than seven times (of them four are found in our *haftara*)! Until that time, Shlomo oversaw the construction of the Mikdash through labor taxes and subservience of the people. Now that the Shechina is resting within Am Yisrael, the people are assembled as the king’s partners rather than as his subjects or slaves. Similarly, he initially gathered “the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes, the chiefs of the fathers” (8:1) i.e. just the leadership!

When the people hear that that *Aron HaBrit* is to be brought up from the city, “all the men of Israel assembled to King Shlomo” (8:2). The exact reverse is found regarding the Mishkan; Moshe initially gathered everyone to contribute materials, skills and labor to the Mishkan for he needed their participation. The placement of the Ark, however, demonstrating that the Mishkan in a “sanctuary of the testimony”, he does alone – “And Moshe erected the mishkan... and brought the Ark into the mishkan...” (40:17-21). Shlomo, on the other hand, had the power to command the construction and provide for the necessary materials, but in order to bring up the holy Ark and to put it in its proper place, he needed the people of Israel!

The parasha teaches that the mishkan was inaugurated in the month of Nisan: “And it was in the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, that the mishkan was erected” (40:17). This was a significant date, marking the anniversary “birthday” of Am Yisrael, when a year earlier they were given their first mitzvah as a nation! The Mikdash was inaugurated in Tishrei, “in the month of Etanim, on the festival – that is the seventh month” (8:2), the month of Creation, a natural and appropriate beginning to mark the nation’s natural beginning in the Land as a unified, holy nation! We part from Sefer Shemot with Bnei Yisrael still in the midst of their journeying towards Eretz Yisrael, continuing their journey from the previous year of leaving Egypt. We read the haftarah reminding us that the journey continued and that the final stage of redemption is completed when the Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim is built and inaugurated!

Halachic Q&A



Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot

Question: Every week in shul on Friday Night, there is a group of people who leave after Lecha Dodi to make a faster Maariv minyan outside. Is it okay to join them? Is it considered poresh min hatzibur?

Answer: The halachic concept of “poresh min hatzibur” is brought up in the context of disconnecting oneself from the pain of the community (see Taanit 11). This concept seemingly does not apply to breakaway minyanim. It could potentially be an issue of “lo titgodedu,” but this concept also may not be relevant in this case.

Nevertheless, separating from the minyan is certainly not the right thing to do. Such breakaway minyanim can cause rifts in shuls, and these decisions should be made with consultation of the Rabbi/gaba'im before taking action. Therefore, if that is not the case, you should not join them.

Question: Does somebody without the ability to smell or taste need to make a bracha rishona/achrona on a food?

Answer: In this case, both a bracha rishona and bracha achrona should be made. Even though this person does not have the full enjoyment when eating, this is still halachically defined as eating as it will fill him up. Bracha rishona is made because a person cannot get enjoyment from this world without making a bracha (Brachot 35a) and this logic is relevant here as well. Additionally, bracha achrona is always made if the proper size is eaten and not enough time has passed for the food to totally digest.

Question: When I make hamotzi on Shabbat, should I cut the top or the bottom challah?

Answer: We generally have a rule that we do not pass over mitzvot (“ain ma'avirim al hamitzvot”). Many Rishonim bring this logic as support that the top challah should be cut first, as you should not “pass over” the top challah which is closer and cut the lower challah instead. Nevertheless, the Beit Yosef quotes that there is a reason based in kabbalah to cut the lower challah.

There are two minhagim for Sefardim. Some always cut the top challah (Ha'Ari, Chazon Ovadia), and others only cut the bottom based on the psak of the Shulchan Aruch (OH 274:5).

According to Ashkenazim, it depends on when. On Friday night, you should cut the lower challah but bring it closer to you. On Shabbat day, you should cut the top challah (ibid, Rema and Mishneh Brurah).

Question: If somebody ate a mezonot food and accidentally said birkat hamazon instead of al hamichya, does he need to repeat al hamichya afterward?

Answer: After he has already said birkat hamazon, he does not need to go back and say al hamichya (SA:OH 208, Mishneh Berura).

Question: I am making aliyah this coming week. Should I make a shehechyanu?

Answer: There are two compelling reasons that one should. 1) The Bach writes that shehechyanu is made

whenever there is “simchat halev,” (genuine happiness). 2) Some Rishonim write that a shehechyanu is made over a mitzvah that you do for the first time in your life. Both of these reasons should apply in this case. Nevertheless, there are those who paskin otherwise (Lev Chaim) and say not to make a bracha. The best thing to do is to bring a new shirt and make the shehechyanu on that as well. Alternatively, if you are seeing family members or friends you have not seen in thirty days or more, you could make bracha on seeing them and have in mind for both. You should merit to have an uplifting aliyah experience. Rav Aharon Lichtenstein would say that the advantage of being born in chutz la'aretz is the intense feeling of happiness that one can experience when making aliyah to Eretz Yisrael.

Question: There is a minyan that takes place right outside of our building, and it is impossible to come in and out of our building without passing in front of the minyan. Can my wife pass in front of them during tefillah?

Answer: Because a street is not a makom tefillah and we have the right to the reshut harabim, she can walk in front of the minyan. If there is no rush or she can easily walk a different way, that would be better.

● Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.

פרשת פקודי: סיכום

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מנהיג העם לפני ה' ומברר את רצון ה', מתוך ציפייה לעשות רצונו. כדי להגיע לקשר הגבוה של החושן, צריך קודם כל קישור בסיסי המתבטא באפוד ולכן האפוד הוקדם לחושן.

ייתכן שלעם ישראל היה צורך גדול בבירור העתיד ולכן הם השתמשו באפודים רבים לשאלה בה'. אלא שהשאלה באפוד עלולה להפוך לפולחן של ניחוש עתידות ואפילו לעבודה זרה ממש, כפי שקרה בימיו של גדעון ומיכה בספר שופטים. בתקופת הנביאים, מלאכת המקדש הפכה פעמים רבות לפולחן חיצוני של עם ישראל, כפי שקרה למשל עם הקורבנות ועם ארון העדות, וכך גם עם האפוד. הנביאים מוכיחים את עם ישראל על כך ומצפים מהם להבין את התוכן הפנימי של המקדש - את הקשר בין ישראל לה' ואת המחויבות של ישראל לעמוד לפני ה', לייצג את דרכו בעולם ולעשות את רצונו.

העמידה של ישראל לפני ה'. יחד עם זאת, לאפוד יש גם משמעות בתור בגד עצמאי ולא רק בתור בגד המחובר לחושן.

לאור דברינו, נראה שהחושן הוא הכלי המשמש לשאילה בה' ולא האפוד. אך בסיפורי הנביאים דווקא האפוד משמש לשאילה בה'. האבן עזרא מסביר שהיו שני אפודים, האחד הוא האפוד המחובר לחושן המשמש לשאילה בה'. השני, הוא אפוד בד פשוט שבו היו פונים אל ה' בתקופת הנביאים, ובו לא היו נענים בכל עת. האפוד הוא בגד בדרגה פחותה מהחושן ולכן היה נפוץ יותר, זו הסיבה שבשעות מצוקה השתמשו דווקא בו כפנייה לה'.

מטרת האפוד היא לברר את העתיד, אלא שבשונה מאסטרולוגיה וניחוש עתידות הפנייה דרך האפוד היא פנייה ישירה לקב"ה ע"י אמצעים קדושים. האפוד מעיד על החיבור הבסיסי בין עם ישראל לה', קשר של השגחה על התנהלות העולם. החושן לעומת זאת מבטא קשר עליון יותר, במרכז עומד

פרשת פקודי מתוארת עשיית בגדי הכהונה, עליהם הצטוו בפרשת תצווה. בציווי על בגדי הכהונה, החושן הזכר ראשון מפני חשיבותו הרבה ביחס לשאר בגדי הכהונה, ואילו בפרשת פקודי ובמקומות נוספים בתורה האפוד מוזכר לפני החושן. כדי להבין את טעם הדבר יש לברר מהו ייעודו של האפוד.

האפוד היה בגד העשוי כמין סינר. בכתפיות האפוד היו משובצות אבני זהב ובתוכן היו מונחות אבני שוהם ועליהן חרוטים שמות בני ישראל. בדומה לחושן, גם בציווי על האפוד מוזכרת העמידה לפני ה', אך עיקר תפקידו הוא דווקא "זיכרון לבני ישראל": "אֲבִי זָכָרוֹ לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִשָּׂא אֶהְרֹן אֶת שְׂמוֹת לְפָנֵי ה' עַל-שְׁתֵּי כְתָפָיו לְזָכְרוֹ" (כח, יב). האפוד מסמל את השגחת ה' המיוחדת על בני ישראל. החושן והאפוד היו מחוברים בשרשרת זהב, חיבור המבטא את הקשר של ישראל עם הקב"ה בשני מישורים: ההשגחה של הקב"ה על עם ישראל,

בסד

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Chazak! Chazak! Venitchazek!



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

Last year, after a difficult year, everything was coming back and we were learning to appreciate everything anew. One Shabbat, for the first time since the pandemic began, we were in the presence of many friends. The occasion was a Sheva Brachot celebration (held each day of the week following a marriage in honor of the new couple). I never thought I would get so excited over a conversation with friends around a dinner table. I never was so enthusiastic about candies thrown at the bridegroom when he received an aliyah to the Torah.

And then suddenly at the end of the Torah reading, I received an explanation for these wonderful feelings. In one of the final verses of the Book of Exodus, where an allusion is made to the journeys of the people through the desert, Rashi comments: “The place of their encampment is also called a journey.” Not only the times that they moved forward are called journeys, but the encampments or stopovers as well. Even those times when they are compelled to stay in place are parts of the journey too; even then the people could learn and move forward in their growth and development. Our commentators explain that during every chapter of their journey, especially during the stopovers, they gathered strength for the next chapter.

We are moving ahead following a stopover that lasted more than a year, but this was not wasted time, a void of nothingness. This was also a chapter in our life’s journey, during which we learned and moved forward, even if this was internal and hidden. And now we are moving again, only with increased strength.

Chazak! Chazak! Venitchazek! Be strong!
Be strong! And may we be strengthened!



Two years ago, I received the following message:

“Shalom Sivan, My name is Yehudit Cohen. I am writing from Sderot, from the Gaza border, with mixed feelings. Just a few hours ago, we were busy packing for the trip of our eldest daughter, Neta, to Poland. This is a most significant trip for us. My father, Yitzhak Gershoni of blessed memory, survived Auschwitz. He saw a world destroyed and then a world reborn and lived his life between these verses: ‘I shall not die but I shall live and tell the deeds of Hashem; Hashem has chastised me, but He has not delivered me to death’ (Psalms 128:17-18) and ‘It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing to Your name, One Most High’. (Psalms 92:2). And that’s how he educated us. For years he told his story wherever he was invited to tell it. And he asked to write on his tombstone the names of the many family members who did not survive.

The flight to Poland was scheduled to leave at five in the morning but tonight my daughter, like thousands of teenagers, received a disappointing announcement. Because of the coronavirus, the trip was postponed. We had not yet managed to digest the news when a siren was heard in Sderot. Another night of rockets. We ran to our shelter and just now received an announcement that school is canceled for tomorrow.

In the midst of this confounding turn of events, we tried to get a sense of proportion, to see the big picture. The new month of Adar starts this evening and Purim is coming soon. 80 years have passed since they tried to wipe out the Jewish people, including my father, but they did not succeed. 2000 years have passed since they tried to wipe out the Jewish people in ancient Persia, but they did not succeed. And we, the descendants

of Mordechai and Esther, descendants of Holocaust survivors, continue the journey, advancing on our way. Let us pray that we finally reach the complete fulfillment of the words of Megillat Esther: ‘For the Jews there was radiance and happiness and honor, so may it be for us’.

Happy new month from Sderot”.



Chodesh Tov! When Adar begins, we increase the simcha (happiness, joy), and it begins today. How do we rejoice? Here is a short paragraph from the new book by Rebbetzin Yemima Mizrahi, “Invitation to Rejoice”:

“We live in a joy-challenged society. Today, joy should be learned. It is precisely the joy, which everyone treats lightly, that requires serious consideration on our part. Joy is sometimes perceived as superficial, while the tragic, melancholic is perceived as something deep and serious. But this is not so. True joy is of great depth. It is a resolution, a decision, a choice. Women must choose to be joyful. Because, after all, women these days expect of themselves to do everything - to work, to educate, to succeed at home and outside, to host, to finish everything quickly. And I say: Cut yourself some slack on the way, a lot of it, just do not give up your joy. A messy bed can be made. A report for work can be prepared. But an unhappy woman is worse than all of these. So, it is true, you did not tell a bedtime story. You didn’t finish the to-do list you had to finish. You got angry again. But you forgot to write on your to-do list the task of smiling and enjoying. Choose your tasks properly, decide what to give up and what not to give up, but on one thing you should not give up on the way - on your joy today, now.”

Continued on next page

For the Shabbat Table



Rabbi Danny Mirvis
Deputy CEO, World Mizrahi

“**A**nd you shall dress Aharon with the holy vestments and you shall anoint him and you shall sanctify him and he shall serve Me as a priest” (Shemot 40:13).

Much of the second half of the book of Shemot has been dedicated to the construction of the Mishkan, which reaches its culmination this week. In addition to the physical structure and the different vessels, the production of the priestly vestments is also described in great detail. Whilst it may come as a surprise that so much attention and detail is dedicated to external and physical appearance, the Sefer HaChinuch explains that the purpose of the uniform was to have a spiritual influence:

“The agent who atones needs to focus all his attention and thoughts on the service, therefore it is suitable that he wears special clothes for it (the service), so that when he looks at any part of his body he will immediately be reminded ... before whom he serves” (Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah 99).

Great emphasis was therefore placed on these clothes, reflecting the importance and seriousness of the roles of the Kohanim and the Kohen Gadol. There was even a specific order in which the vestments were to be put on. Rambam (Hilchot Klei HaMikdash 10:1-3) writes that first, the Kohen Gadol had to put on the michnasayim (breeches), followed by the ketonet (tunic), avnet (sash), me'il (robe), ephod (short coat), choshen (breastplate) and mitznetef (turban), culminating with the tzitz - the golden head plate which was tied to the Kohen Gadol's forehead and engraved with the words, “Kadosh l'Hashem”.

From the fact that the Kohen Gadol could not tie the words “Kadosh l'Hashem” on his forehead until the rest of his attire was in order, Rabbi Berel Wein teaches an important lesson. One should not proclaim one's own G-dliness, to flaunt the name of G-d, so to speak, brazenly on one's forehead, unless one is certain that the lower part of one's body - one's everyday, mundane, human behaviour - is covered

with the proper ethics and modesty that the Torah ordains.

Unfortunately, there are those who rush to place the “tzitz” on their forehead and call out in the Name of Hashem, but fail to internalise that they must first be in good moral order in order to be entitled to do so. As individuals, as communities and as a nation we must seek to improve ourselves before we can go out and claim the moral high ground.

This should not discourage us from being a light to others and proudly showing or declaring our observance. However, we must ensure that our focus is not on whom we stand over and look down, but before Whom we stand and serve. By setting our behaviour and priorities in the right order, we can truly be “Kadosh l'Hashem.”

Shabbat Shalom

Continued from previous page

2. לא לפחד מדרך ארוכה. המספר הזה בלתי נתפס בעידן הפוליטי התזזיתי שלנו: בגין ישב באופוזיציה 9,490 יום, והמתין. אין תקדים למנהיג שהפסיד בשמונה מערכות בחירות וניצח בתשיעית. זהו שיעור אדיר על התמדה, מסירות, עמל וסבלנות. שלו, וגם של בוחריו.

3. *יהדות. הדור שלפנינו ניסה לחולל מהפכה – מהתנ"ך אל הפלמ"ח, בלי היהדות ה"גלותית" שתפריע. בגין התחיל לתקן. הציונות אינה מרד ביהדות אלא המשך טבעי שלה. לכן הוא אמר "ברוך השם" ו"בעזרת השם" ונלחם על כבוד השבת והגיוור. ציבורים רחבים שהודרו (יוצאי מחתרות, חרדים, מזרחיים, מסורתיים) קיבלו מקום של כבוד, בזכותו. בצוואתו ביקש שלא להיקבר בחלקת גדולי האומה, בהר הרצל אלא בהר הזיתים, "ליד לוחמי המחתרות, כיהודי פשוט".

לזכרו של מנחם בן זאב-דב.

איתו. ההרגשה שחושבים עליו – גדולה מהשוקולד הכי יוקרת ששנשים במשלוח.

אדר הוא חודש שמזוהה עם שמחה, ומתברר שכדי להשיג שמחה אמיתית ושלמה, אנחנו חייבים לשתף בה אנשים נוספים. אולי המילים האלה יגיעו למישהו בכיתה של הילדה הזו, ואולי הן ימנעו מילדות אחרות להרגיש ככה.”



השבוע, בד' אדר ב', לפני 30 שנים נפטר מנחם בגין. לדעתו הוא הותיר לנו שלושה מסרים רלבנטיים מתמיד:

1. לא למלחמת אחים. פעם קרבות בין מחנות לא התנהלו באינסטגרם, אלא בתותחים ובדם. בפרשת אלטלנה, אחרי שהיהודים הרגו יהודים על חוף ימה של תל אביב, בגין קיבל החלטה כבירה – להבליג, למרות הכול. הוא כאילו קרא על הסיפון את אגדות החורבן שלנו, והחליט ללמוד לקח.

“שלוש סיון, כאן גל כהן מירוחם, מטפלת חברתית. אתמול פורסמה בקבוצת אמהות בפייסבוק התמונה העצובה הזו, שאחת האמהות שיתפה בכאב גדול. זו תעודת המחצית של בתה, עם השאלה: במה אני רוצה להתקדם במחצית הבאה? הבת שלה ענתה: למצוא לפחות חברה אחת, כי אין לי. כמה כואב. לצערי אנחנו פוגשים תלמידים רבים שמרגישים כך, ולא רק תלמידים. הקורונה העצימה את הבדידות בעולם. כל השקופים נהיו שקופים יותר.”

ימי אדר וחג הפורים מחייבים אותנו להסתכל על האחר. מצוות הפורים ממש מכריחות אותנו להתייחס גם אל הדחויים ולא רק אל המקובלים. לתת מתנות לאבינונים זה אומר לחפש את החלש בחברה. אביון הוא לפעמים גם מי שאין לו חברים, שזקוק להתעניינות, להזמנה, לחיוך. יש בינינו אביונים רבים שלא צריכים כסף, אלא קרבה. גם מצוות משלוח המנות היא הזדמנות לדפוק על הדלת של השכן או של החבר בכיתה שאין לנו ממש קשר

Integrity in Public Life



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

There is a verse so familiar that we don't often stop to reflect on what it means. It is the line from the first paragraph of the Shema, "You shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your *me'od*" (Deut. 6:5) That last word is usually translated as "strength" or "might". But Rashi, following the Midrash and Targum, translates it as with all your "wealth".

If so, the verse seems unintelligible, at least in the order in which it is written. "With all your soul" was understood by the Sages to mean, "with your life" if need be. There are times, thankfully very rare indeed, when we are commanded to give up life itself rather than commit a sin or a crime. If that is the case then it should go without saying that we should love G-d with all our wealth, meaning even if it demands great financial sacrifice. Yet Rashi and the Sages say that this phrase applies to those "to whom wealth means more than life itself."

Of course, life is more important than wealth. Yet the Sages also knew that, in their words, *Adam bahul al mammono*, meaning: people do strange, hasty, ill-considered and irrational things when money is at stake (Shabbat 117b). Financial gain can be a huge temptation, leading us to acts that harm others and ultimately ourselves. So when it comes to financial matters, especially when public funds are involved, there must be no room for temptation, no space for doubt as to whether it has been used for the purpose for which it was donated. There must be scrupulous auditing and transparency. Without this there is moral hazard: the maximum of temptation combined with the maximum of opportunity.

Hence the parsha of *Pekudei*, with its detailed account of how the donations to the building of the *Mishkan* were used:

"These are the amounts of the materials used for the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Testimony, which were recorded at Moses' command by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the Priest." (Ex. 38:21)

The passage goes on to list the exact amounts of gold, silver and bronze collected, and the purposes to which it was put. Why did Moses do this? A Midrash suggests an answer:

"They gazed after Moses" (Ex. 33:8) – People criticised Moses. They used to say to one another, "Look at that neck. Look at those legs. Moses is eating and drinking what belongs to us. All that he has belongs to us." The other would reply: "A man who is in charge of the work of the Sanctuary – what do you expect? That he should not get rich?" As soon as he heard this, Moses replied, "By your life, as soon as the Sanctuary is complete, I will make a full reckoning with you."¹

Moses issued a detailed reckoning to avoid coming under suspicion that he had personally appropriated some of the donated money. Note the emphasis that the accounting was undertaken not by Moses himself but "by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar," in other words, by independent auditors.

There is no hint of these accusations in the text itself, but the Midrash may be based on the remark Moses made during the Korach rebellion:

"I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I wronged any of them." (Num. 16:15)

Accusations of corruption and personal enrichment have often been levelled against leaders, with or without justification. We might think that since G-d sees all we do, this is enough to safeguard against wrongdoing. Yet Judaism does not say this. The Talmud records a scene at the deathbed of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, as the master lay surrounded by his disciples:

They said to him, "Our master, bless us." He said to them, "May it be G-d's will that the fear of heaven shall be as much upon you as the fear of flesh and blood." His disciples asked, "Is that all?" He replied, "Would that you obtained no less than such fear! You can see for yourselves the truth of what I say: when a man is about to commit a transgression, he says, I hope no man will see me." (Brachot 28b)

When humans commit a sin they worry that other people might see them. They forget that G-d certainly sees them. Temptation befuddles the brain, and no one should believe they are immune to it.

A later passage in Tanach seems to indicate that Moses' account was not strictly necessary. The Book of Kings relates an episode in which, during the reign of King Yehoash, money was raised for the restoration of the Temple:

"They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty." (II Kings 12:16)

Moses, a man of complete honesty, may thus have acted "beyond the strict requirement of the law."²

It is precisely the fact that Moses did not *need* to do what he did that gives the

passage its force. There must be transparency and accountability when it comes to public funds even if the people involved have impeccable reputations. People in positions of trust must be, and be *seen to be*, individuals of moral integrity. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had already said this when he told Moses to appoint subordinates to help him in the task of leading the people. They should be, he said,

“Men who fear G-d, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain.” (Ex. 18:21)

Without a reputation for honesty and incorruptibility, judges cannot ensure that justice is seen to be done. This general principle was derived by the Sages from the episode in the Book of Numbers when the Reubenites and Gadites expressed their wish to settle on the far side of the Jordan where the land provided good grazing ground for their cattle (Numbers 32:1-33). Moses told them that if they did so, they would demoralise the rest of the nation. They would give the impression that they were unwilling to cross the Jordan and fight with their brothers in their battles to conquer the land.

The Reubenites and Gaddites made it clear that they were willing to be in the front line of the troops, and would not return to the far side of the Jordan until the land had been fully conquered. Moses accepted the proposal, saying that if they kept their word, they would be “clear [*veheyitem neki'im*] before the Lord and before Israel” (Num. 32:22). This phrase entered Jewish law as the principle that “one must acquit oneself before one's fellow human beings as well as before G-d.”³ It is not enough to do right. We must be *seen to do right*, especially when there is room for rumour and suspicion.

There are several instances in the early rabbinic literature of applications of this rule. So, for example, when people came to take coins for sacrifices from the Shekel Chamber in the Temple, where the money was kept:

They did not enter the chamber wearing either a bordered cloak or shoes or sandals or tefillin or an amulet, lest if

he became poor people might say that he became poor because of an iniquity committed in the chamber, or if he became rich people might say that he became rich from the appropriation in the chamber. For it is a person's duty to be free of blame before men as before G-d, as it is said: “and be clear before the Lord and before Israel,” (Num. 32:22), and it also says: “So shall thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of G-d and man” (Prov. 3:4).⁴

Those who entered the chamber were forbidden to wear any item of clothing in which they could hide and steal coins. Similarly, when charity overseers had funds left over, they were not permitted to change copper for silver coins of their own money: they had to make the exchange with a third party. Overseers in charge of a soup kitchen were not allowed to purchase surplus food when there were no poor people to whom to distribute it. Surpluses had to be sold to others so as not to arouse suspicion that the charity overseers were profiting from public funds. (Pesachim 13a.)

The Shulchan Aruch rules that charity collection must always be done by a minimum of two individuals so that each can see what the other is doing.⁵ There is a difference of opinion between Rabbi Yosef Karo and Rabbi Moshe Isserles on the need to provide detailed accounts. Rabbi Yosef Karo rules on the basis on the passage in II Kings – “They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty” (II Kings 12:15) – that no formal accounting is required from people of unimpeachable honesty. Rabbi Moshe Isserles however says that it is right to do so because of the principle, “Be clear before the Lord and before Israel.”⁶

Trust is of the essence in public life. A nation that suspects its leaders of corruption cannot function effectively as a free, just, and open society. It is the mark of a good society that public leadership is seen as a form of service rather than a means to power, which is all too easily

abused. Tanach is a sustained tutorial in the importance of high standards in public life. The Prophets were the world's first social critics, mandated by G-d to speak truth to power and to challenge corrupt leaders. Elijah's challenge to King Ahab, and the protests of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah against the unethical practices of their day, are classic texts in this tradition, establishing for all time the ideals of equity, justice, honesty and integrity. A free society is built on moral foundations, and those must be unshakeable.

Moses' personal example, in giving an accounting of the funds that had been collected for the first collective project of the Jewish people, set a vital precedent for all time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do these discussions indicate that people tend to be more suspicious of each other than they should be?
- How might this alternative translation of the word “*me'od*” in the Shema affect your *kavanah* when reciting the *tefillah*?
- Does the idea of Moses' supererogation, (doing more, in a positive sense, than the law requires), tell you more about his own ethics, or the ethics of the Children of Israel?

1. Tanchuma, Buber, Pekudei, 4.
2. A key concept in Jewish law (see, e.g., Brachot 7a, 45b, Bava Kamma 99b), meaning supererogation, doing more, in a positive sense, than the law requires.
3. Mishnah, Shekalim 3:2.
4. Ibid.
5. Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 257:1.
6. Ibid., 257:2.

The Mitzvah of Joy & Torah Learning on Purim



Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef zt"l
Former Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel

There is a Mitzvah to eat heartily during the Purim Feast. One should preferably eat bread during this meal.

The Rambam (Chapter 2 of Hilchot Megillah, Halacha 15) writes: “What is the extent of one’s obligation during this feast? One should eat meat and prepare a delicious meal to the best of one’s ability. One should drink wine and become intoxicated until one dozes off in one’s drunkenness.” The Meiri (Megillah 7b) writes: “On Purim, one is obligated to increase one’s joy, eating, and drinking etc. Nevertheless, we are not commanded to drink so much and become so drunk to the extent that we will cause ourselves self-degradation through our happiness, for we were never commanded in a joy of frivolity and foolishness; rather, we were commanded to observe a joy of enjoyment through which we can reach the love of Hashem and praising Him for the miracles He has performed for us.”

Based on this, even if one feels that it would be uncharacteristic of him to start speaking words of Torah and singing songs of holiness, nevertheless, one should certainly do so at least during this feast on Purim day which has the potential of being a meal laden with joy of the Mitzvot and love for Hashem or turning into, G-d-forbid, an empty meal surrounded by foolishness and silliness. By asserting one’s self in this manner, one will merit being respected by all those who see him and one will thereby transform one’s household into one of love of Torah and fear of Heaven.

It is proper that every single individual sit down and learn for one hour before

the Purim Feast, either some Midrashim or commentaries surrounding Megillah Esther, to each his own. Indeed, the verse states, “The Jews had light and joy” and our Sages expound in Masechet Megillah (16b) that “light” refers to Torah. This is especially true since, during the times of the miracle of Purim, the Jewish nation joyously accepted upon themselves all of the laws of the Torah, as the Gemara in Masechet Shabbat (88a) states that they accepted the Torah once again in the days of Achashverosh.



Since everyone is busy with the Purim feast and the other Mitzvot of the day, it is imperative to learn Torah on this day, for Torah learning is what causes the world to continue to exist.

Since everyone is busy with the Purim feast and the other Mitzvot of the day, it is imperative to learn Torah on this day, for Torah learning is what causes the world to continue to exist, as the verse states, “Were it not for my covenant (i.e. Torah learning) day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth.” The great Poskim have already brought up this point.

A story is recounted that the great Rebbe, Harav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk once told his disciples that it once occurred on a certain Purim that the entire world was busy with the various Mitzvot of the day and precisely at that moment, the Gaon of Biala sat down to learn Torah; in his

merit, the entire world continued to exist. This caused a great stir in Heaven, for without him, there would have been an hour where the world was devoid of Torah learning. He was therefore rewarded by Heaven with a son who possessed a lofty soul, none other than the Gaon, Rabbeinu Avraham Borenstein of Sochatchov, the saintly author of the “Avnei Nezer,” who illuminated the eyes of the Jewish nation with his Torah (and would eventually become the son-in-law of the Kotzker Rebbe).

Thus, one must be certain to leave at least one spare hour on Purim day for Torah learning and one will indeed be handsomely rewarded by Heaven. It is preferable to do so immediately upon returning home from Shacharit prayers at which time one should learn whatever one wishes for as long as possible. This can also be done while one is still in the synagogue. One should see to it not to be idle from Torah on this great and holy day.

Acting Correctly



Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

This week's parasha of Pekudei is remarkable. Most of the portion provides for us a detailed balance sheet. After the construction of the Mishkan we're told exactly what the nation contributed and how Moshe used every single item in a responsible way. In this manner, Moshe wanted us for all time to know that what he had done was carried out faithfully and correctly.

Moshe was sensitive to what we call Marit Ayin מראית עין. He knew how important it is not only to do what is right, and to be seen to be doing what is right. For example, we are conscious of Marit Ayin if, let's say, a person goes into a non-kosher butchery in order to buy some bones for his or her dog. Someone who sees this happening might conclude 'ooh that's terrible; they're buying traif meat for themselves. Or alternatively an onlooker could say 'ah I didn't know that that butchery is kosher.' It's right always to do what is right and to be seen to be doing what is right.

'He knew how important it is not only to do what is right, and to be seen to be doing what is right'

In this spirit the Talmud tells us that in Temple times the tax collectors were instructed never to have pockets in their clothes nor folds in their garments. They would hold the monies that they had taken in their hands and similarly we are told that when raising funds for charity we should go around not as single individuals but in pairs.



'He knew how important it is not only to do what is right, and to be seen to be doing what is right'

The Mishnah tells us about the Garmu family. They were responsible for baking the shewbread in the Temple, and they kept the recipe secret within their family circles from generation to generation, and

they had a tradition; they never served baked goods in any of their homes, They didn't want the thought to cross anybody's mind that they were using Temple ingredients for the baked goods that they were serving. Similarly the Mishnah adds that the Avtinas family were responsible for preparing the incense in the Temple, and they had a family custom when it came to their family simchas – none of the women ever wore perfume, lest it crossed the mind of anyone that these women were using some of the sweet fragrances of the Temple for their own personal needs.

The Torah is well-known to be exceptionally concise. Often we learn major laws from just one word, sometimes even from one single letter. But this week's portion provides all the space necessary to provide the balance sheet, in order to let us know how sensitive Moshe Rabbeinu was to Marit Ayin. And so too should we be sensitive to it. Always to do that which is right, and to try to guarantee that we will be seen to be doing what is right.

Return of the Shechinah



Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

The Ramban, in his introduction to Chumash Shemos, comments that the overall theme of this Chumash is the galus in Mitzrayim and the ge'ulah therefrom. Even though Bnei Yisrael did not enter Eretz Yisrael by the conclusion of this Chumash, this Chumash is still considered to include the ge'ulah. The Ramban explains that the primary tragedy of galus is not that we are dwelling outside of Eretz Yisrael per se. Rather, the tragedy is that we no longer experience hashra'as haShechinah (Divine Presence).

In the days of the Avos, paraphrasing the passuk in Iyov (29:4), Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov experienced a state of "the counsel of Hashem above their tents." The Midrash Rabbah comments similarly on the passuk, -

"ויכל לדבר אתו ויעל אלקים מעל אברהם"

And when He had finished speaking with him, Hashem ascended from upon Avraham" (Bereishis 17:22), הן האבות הן הן, "המרכבה" - the Avos, they themselves were the Divine chariot." The Avos experienced a continuous hashra'as haShechinah, and that departed upon Bnei Yisrael's descent to Mitzrayim.

Once the Mishkan was built, we read in the concluding passages of Sefer Shemos (40:34-38), that the Shechinah returned:

ויכס הענן את אהל מועד וכבוד ד' מלא את המשכן...כי ענן ד' על המשכן

The cloud covered the Ohel Mo'ed, and the glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan ... For the cloud of Hashem would be on the Mishkan.

In that sense, Bnei Yisrael attained their ge'ulah, and it is with this that Chumash Shemos closes.

Thus, the definition of ge'ulah is the building of the Beis HaMikdash with hashra'as haShechinah, and Bnei Yisrael were therefore able to experience ge'ulah even without entry into Eretz Yisrael. The converse is also true. Although we have today returned to Eretz Yisrael and the Yishuv grows larger and larger, absent a Beis HaMikdash, we have not yet experienced ge'ulah. After the establishment of the State of Israel, the Chazon Ish was quoted as saying, "This is the sof hagalus, but it is not yet the ge'ulah." The Chazon Ish was presumably using the Ramban's terminology. It is the conclusion of the galus because we are now free to reside in Eretz Yisrael, but it is not yet the ge'ulah, as we lack hashra'as haShechinah.

The Gemara in Rosh Hashanah (11a) famously tells us:

בניסן נגאלו בניסן עתידין ליגאל - In Nissan, they were redeemed; in Nissan, they are destined to be redeemed."

It would seem that the first statement is not as much based on the fact that yetzi'as Mitzrayim occurred in Nissan as it is based on the dedication of the Mishkan in Nissan one year later. Similarly, the basis for the second statement of Chazal is the pessukim in Yechezkel (45:18-25), which describe the special korbanos that will be brought for the chinuch of the Third Beis HaMikdash for more than six months - from Rosh Chodesh Nissan, at which time the construction of the Beis HaMikdash will be complete, until the middle of the

following Tishrei. The future "ge'ulah in Nissan" corresponds to the completion of the building of the Third Beis HaMikdash at that time.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin (20b) teaches that Bnei Yisrael were commanded to perform, in specific order, three mitzvos upon their entry into Eretz Yisrael: to establish a Jewish government, then to wage war to eradicate Amalek, and then to build the Beis HaMikdash. The Sefer HaChinuch (mitzvah 95) writes that "entry into Eretz Yisrael" means that the majority of the world Jewish population lives in Eretz Yisrael. The Acharonim explain that according to this opinion, the building of the Second Beis HaMikdash must have been a hora'as sha'ah (temporary ruling), not the principal mitzvah of "ועשו לי מקדש" - They shall make a Sanctuary for Me" (Shemos 25:8), because the majority of the Jewish population remained in Bavel and did not return to Eretz Yisrael with Ezra. This is clearly the case because at that time, the first prerequisite was also not fulfilled, as there was no independent Jewish government until the days of the Chashmona'im, two hundred years later.

May we merit to complete these mitzvos, speedily in our days.

● From 'Rav Schachter on the Parsha'.

Teaching Torah



Rabbi Yisroel Reisman
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In Parshat Pekudei, we encounter the placement of all of the utensils in the Mishkan. After building the entire Mishkan, and all of the different parts, the Jews are now commanded to place everything in the Mishkan. However, we find some difficulty in the wording of the Pesukim which describe the placement of the utensils, as the Torah seems to arbitrarily alternate between a language of “ויתן” and a language of “וישם”. For example, by the Shulchan we find the pasuk saying “וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-הַשֻּׁלְחָן”, while by the Menorah we find the usage of “וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת-הַמְנֹרָה”. The Pasuk says they would “ויתן את אדניו”, referring to the base of the walls, while they would “וישם”, describing the placement of the actual beams of the walls. We have a constant back and forth without any obvious pattern between the word ויתן and the word וישם, and we must understand what the difference between them is, and why the Torah uses each one in different places.

Many commentators on the Chumash, including the חתם סופר and the עמק דבר, suggest a beautiful explanation to this question. “ויתן”, most closely translated as “to put down”, describes putting something down responsibly, but without specific precision. One “puts” his coat down when he comes home, or “puts” his briefcase down. However, “וישם”, translated as “to place down”, describes placing something down precisely, with great care and in an exact location. Now going back to some of the examples in the Parsha, the usage of ויתן vs. וישם becomes much clearer. The Shulchan was put down in the Mishkan, with a certain location

that it had to be in, but without requiring extreme precision, and therefore the pasuk uses “ויתן את השלחן”. In contrast, after the Shulchan was put down, the Menorah had to be exactly opposite the Shulchan, and therefore required an exact location, warranting the phrase “וישם את המנרה”. Similarly, with regards to the אדנים vs. the קרשים, the base of the walls as opposed to the actual beams of the walls, the same explanation can be used. Certainly, when they would first



Teaching Torah cannot be done haphazardly, without intentionality. It cannot just be to put the Torah in their mouths, but rather specifically to place.

put the base of the walls down, there was no exact spot that it had to go. But naturally, the wooden beams that went into the sockets of the base had to be placed with exact precision, so that each beam fit perfectly into the base and stood exactly next to the beam next to it. Therefore, we can now understand why the Torah uses ויתן by the base of the walls, but וישם by the beams of the walls themselves.

If we now take a step away from our Parsha, we can use this new understanding of “וישם”, and apply it to many other concepts that we find in Chazal, and gain new insight about them. The first is with regards to the Mitzvah on the night of Pesach to tell over the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim. The Torah makes

it very clear that our obligation to tell our children about what Hashem did in Egypt, “וְאֶת-אֲתֹתַי, אֲשֶׁר שְׁמַתִּי בָם”, and about the miracles that Hashem placed there. We are commanded to not only tell our children about the miracles, but convey to them that the Makot were not just a collection of arbitrary ways of causing pain to the Egyptians, but rather the exact punishment that they needed to get, and precisely what Hashem intended to give them. However, even more generally, this lesson can apply to our obligation to learn and teach Torah.

“וְעַתָּה, כְּתִבּוּ לְכֶם אֶת-הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת, וְלַמָּדָה אֶת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, שִׁמָּה בְּפִיהֶם”

This pasuk talks about our obligation to teach Torah, and once again uses the phrase of *placing* it in our mouths. Teaching Torah cannot be done haphazardly, without intentionality. It cannot just be to *put* the Torah in their mouths, but rather specifically to *place*. To inspire the next generation, we must teach Torah with a precise accounting for each and every child. As it says in Mishlei, “הִנְחֵךְ לְנִעֵר, עַל-פִּי דַרְכּוֹ”, that we must exercise exact understanding of each child’s needs in order to properly give over the lessons of the Torah. This is the deeper understanding of the Torah describing our teaching of Torah as “שימה בפייהם”, to properly place it to each person.

● Edited by Jay Eisenstadt and Ari Levine.

The Significance of Washing One's Hands



Rabbi Shalom Rosner
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וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר בֵּין־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּבֵין הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּתֵּן שָׁמָּה מַיִם לְרִחֻצָּה:

He placed the washstand between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and there he put water for washing (Shemos 40:30)

Bnei Yisrael were instructed to construct the *Kiyor*, the washstand in which the *kohanim* washed their hands and feet prior to serving in the *Mishkan*.

Interestingly, the placement of the *Kiyor* is not where we would expect. It was placed out of the way of the *kohanim*, far from where they entered the *Mishkan*. It was placed between the alter and Ohel Moed. Additionally, the Torah prescribes the death penalty for failing to wash before engaging in the *avoda*. What is the importance of their washing their hands and feet even if they knew they were clean?

Rabbi Eliezer Kashtiel of Eli (BeNefesh Hashabbos) explains that this washing was not about becoming pure, because even *kohanim* who were completely pure had to wash. There is a deeper message. Often, although we are involved in mitzvos and good activities all the time, we forget that the purpose is not just about getting things done, acting out of routine. Rather, we need to focus on and realize what we're about to do, and that is what sanctifying oneself is about. If we prepare before acting, sanctify ourselves before performing a mitzva, our mitzvos would have so much more depth. To underscore the importance of the washing, the *Kiyor* was placed at a distance so that the *Kohanim* had to go out of their way to wash themselves.

With respect to the significance of washing one's hands, an interesting explanation is offered in the Tiv Hahaggadah by Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch. Washing one's hands is referred to as "*netilas yadayim*". What does the word *netilah* mean? Most *rishonim* suggest that the word is derived from the Aramaic word *natlah*, a utensil. We refer to it as *netilas yadayim*, because we use a utensil, a *kli*.



Often, although we are involved in mitzvos and good activities all the time, we forget that the purpose is not just about getting things done, acting out of routine. Rather, we need to focus on and realize what we're about to do, and that is what sanctifying oneself is about.

Rav Rabinovitch posits that *Litol* means to take something, to remove something. *Netilas yadayim* is the removal of the hands. What does that mean? Throughout the Torah and in statements uttered by Hazal, hands represent one's power. As it is stated: *kokhi v'otzem yadi asa li es hakhayil hazeh (Devarim 8: 17)*. One's *yad* (hand) symbolizes one's power. One's earnings are referred to in the Talmud as *maaseh yadayim* (the work of your hands). *Yadayim* symbolizes one's accomplishments.

Netilas yadayim, then may refer to removal of one's hands – symbolizing, removing one's perception of power. Before the *Kohanim* engaged in the *avoda*, they need

to wash their hands to remind themselves that their hands serve merely as a conduit on behalf of Bnei Yisrael in the service of Hashem. Perhaps this is also why the *Kiyor* was built from mirrors. Every time the *kohanim* went to wash themselves, they saw their reflection, a reminder to look inside themselves to make sure they were focused on the *avoda* they were about to perform.

We perform *netilas yadayim* on a daily basis for the same reason. Before we eat, we acknowledge that all we have is gifted to us by Hashem. Before we daven, we need to perform this act of *netilah* to highlight that Hashem is in charge. May we internalize these lessons: (i) prepare ourselves for the performance of each mitzva like the *Kohanim* had to do before their *avoda* and (ii) recognize our humility as we stand before Hashem.

Mishkan and Kedusha



Dr. Yael Ziegler
Matan

There is an element of reciprocity in the construction of the mishkan; humans and the divine consciously make space for each other. G-d had contracted His infinite Being to create a space for humans to live, instructing them to fill the world and conquer it (מלאו את הארץ וכבשה). Humans cordon off space for G-d to fill; indeed, the construction of the mishkan concludes with G-d filling that space:

וּכְבוֹד ה' מָלֵא אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן.

There is an instructive element as well; in constructing the Mishkan humans imitate G-d; they consecrate the Mishkan, making it holy space. Without G-d's example humans could not fathom the possibility of introducing kedusha into a material realm. Indeed, G-d demonstrates for humans that one may introduce kedusha into our mundane, finite world. First (in sanctifying the Sabbath day, Gen. 2:3) G-d illustrates the idea of kedusha, the notion that the temporal arena can and should be infused with holiness. Next, G-d sanctifies space, informing Moses that the place that he stands at Har Horev is hallowed ground (Shemot 3:5). Finally, by consecrating the first-born sons (Shemot 13:2), G-d introduces the notion of kedusha, the possibility that humans beings can become a vessel for kedusha.

G-d creates a precedent and sets an example; humans follow through by consciously bringing sanctity into these realms. Israel brings sanctity into a temporal arena by consecrating the new month, thereby determining the dates of the holidays: מוֹעֲדֵי ה' אֲשֶׁר-תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ. Moses consecrates the nation at Har Sinai, following G-d's model of kedusha (Shemot 19:14). The Mishkan constitutes the human implementation of consecrating space; just as G-d drew Moses' attention to the notion of hallowed ground, humans follow up by cordoning off space and sanctifying it (Shemot 40:9-10).

The tripartite structure of the book of Shemot revolves around these three areas

of kedusha. The first section of the book (Chapters 1-15) frees Israel from slavery, from a situation in which they have no control over their time and no ability to introduce sanctity into time. To launch the exodus from Egypt, G-d commands them to begin to mark time (הַדָּשׁ הַזֶּה). (לְכֶם רֵאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים רִאשׁוֹן הוּא לְכֶם לְחֹדֶשׁ הַשָּׁנָה). Every year, we follow Passover Eve by observing the ultimate temporal mitzvah, where Israel counts each day, accruing a sense of time-consciousness – the possibility of kedusha – alongside its newfound ability to do with time as they wish. The second section of the book describes Matan Torah, which teaches the nation how to introduce kedusha into the person. The third and final section of the book revolves around the construction of sacred space, the mishkan.

The mishkan – appearing at the end of Sefer Shemot – actually fuses together these three arenas of kedusha. It is certainly a holy space. But there are also specific times during the year when G-d commands Israel to visit G-d's sanctuary (Devarim 16:16). The mishkan creates another context for consecration of humans, as kohanim are consecrated for service of G-d (Shemot 29:44). עבודת יום עבודת הכיפורים as a prime example of the confluence of these three arenas in the mishkan, featuring the holiest person moving into the holiest space on the holiest day of the year.

The book of Vayikra, which we will begin next week, can also be broadly divided into three parts, each of which seems devoted to illustrating the introduction of kedusha into one of these three arenas. Vayikra's opening section (chapters 1-16) explores the kedusha of space, how to enter the Mishkan and how not to enter it, culminating in the quest to enter the kodesh kodashim (chapter 16). [An epilogue to this section describes shchita outside the confines of hallowed space (Vayikra 17).]

The middle section of Vayikra (and the central axis of the Torah, appearing at

the middle section of the middle book) revolves around kedushat haadam (Chapters 18-22). The section is enveloped by the forbidden relationships, designed to construct a pure vessel for kedushat haadam. At the center are a list of mitzvot that opens with the words: קְדָשִׁים תְּהִיוּ (Vayikra 19:2), which feature at their center the pivotal command to love your neighbor as yourself. Kedushat haadam stems from recognizing the worth of one's fellow man, his dignity and אלהים. The third section of ספר ויקרא lengthily describes the notion of kedushat hazeman, in the seminal chapter delineating the holidays (Vayikra 23).

As the book of Vayikra draws to its conclusion, it focuses our attention on one mitzvah, which ties together all the arenas of kedusha. Shemitta and yovel involve kedushat hamakom (releasing the land of Israel to G-d and to its original owner in the 50th year), kedushat hazeman (the seventh year and the fiftieth) and kedushat haadam, which is especially realized in the yovel year, when all slaves are released. Vayikra 25:10 references the three arenas of kedusha:

וְקִדְשְׁתֶּם אֶת שְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וְקִרְאתֶם דְּרוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ לְכָל-יִשְׂבֵּיָהּ.

Today, we do not yet have the opportunity to worship in the Mikdash. But we acknowledge with gratitude and awe the great privilege and grave responsibility that we have today in observing the mitzvah of shemitta. This mitzvah encourages us to consciously celebrate the great opportunity presented to Am Israel in this unique era, where we can build a state in the land of Israel, establishing a place of freedom and dignity for all. More than at any point in the last 2000 years, Am Yisrael today can construct a world where kedusha is woven into the fabric of its existence, a world that makes room for G-d in our own lives (קדושת האדם), as we live day by day (קדושת הזמן) in our land (קדושת המקום).

Proper Balance



Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

Tallying the Gold & Silver

In Parshat Pekudei we learn that Bnei Yisrael were permitted to donate as much gold and copper ["Zahav" & "Nechoshet"] as they chose. The primary use of the gold was to make the "Keilim" [vessels] of the Mishkan ("Aron", "Shulchan", "Menorah", etc.), while the copper was used to make the "Keilim" of the "Chatzer" - i.e., the "Mizbach N'choshet" and the "Kiyor". [This donation totalled approx. 30 "Kikar" of gold, and 70 "Kikar" of copper / note that the weight of a "Kikar" was about 30 kilos] To our surprise, there was no donation of silver! In contrast to the gold and copper, the only silver collected was taken from the mandatory donation, known as the "Machazit Ha'shekel" - where each member of the male population age 20 (and up) gave a half a shekel (see 38:26). Since the total census was 603,550, the amount of silver collected totaled 301,775 shekel. As 'everyone' knows, every 3,000 shekel equals one "Kikar" [just ask your banker], thus the total amount of silver collected was 100 "Kikar", with a remainder of 1,775 shekel. What did they do with so much silver?

Sockets for the Beams

The answer is quite simple. The primary use of the silver was to make "Adanim" [weighted base sockets] to support the "Kerashim" [wooden planks] of the Mishkan. To set up the Mishkan - a total of 100 "Adanim" were needed. The first 96 "Adanim" were used to support the 48 "Kerashim" that formed the walls of the Mishkan. [The northern and southern walls were 20 "Kerashim" each, and the western wall needed 8 "Kerashim"

(20+20+8=48); the eastern side was 'open.'] As each "Keresh" required TWO "Adanim" [sockets], a total of 96 "Adanim" were needed. Plus, four additional "Kerashim" were needed to support the "Parochet", but each of these "Kerashim" needed only one "Eden" for support. To summarize, a grand total of 100 [96+4] "Adanim" were needed to form the base support of all the "Kerashim" of the Mishkan. [See Shemot 26:15-25.]

These 100 "Adanim" were made from the 100 "Kikar" of silver - or simply each "Eden" was made by pouring 1 "Kikar" of melted silver into the mold. These 100 "Adanim" thus formed the base for the walls of the Mishkan. The leftover 1775 shekels of silver were used to make some hooks ["Vavim"] to connect the curtains to the poles of the outer courtyard ["Chatzer"], and a silver plating for the heads of those poles as well.

Who Counts?

So why is this detail so important? One could suggest that this silver from the "Machazit Ha'shekel" was intentionally chosen to form the "Adanim". Considering that these "Adanim" formed the very BASE of the Mishkan (and supported the entire structure), it may be significant that they were manufactured specifically from the material that was donated EQUALLY by every member of Am Yisrael. In contrast to the vessels of the Mishkan, that were manufactured from the 'donated' gold and copper, the sockets that formed the very base of the Mishkan remained unique and special - and hence were made from silver.

Similarly, one viewing the Mishkan from afar, would see the silver coating on

the very top of each of the poles of the courtyard ["Amudei Ha'chatzer"], and on the hooks connecting the curtains to these poles. This detail created a silver-like 'perimeter', that may have appeared like a silver crown surrounding the Mishkan. This 'crown', just like its 'base', was made from this 'everyone is equal' donation of the silver from the "Machazit Ha'shekel".

Therefore, the very base at the bottom, as well as the shiny crown at the top, reflect the 'collective' donation - where each member of Am Yisrael is equal. However, in between them, we find the vessels made from the extra donations of gold and copper from private individuals.

The Proper Balance

This may reflect the proper balance between the need on the one hand for everyone to be equal and work together at the very base level of Judaism, yet at the same time allowing everyone to make their own personal contribution in any additional realm that he may choose. Yet, all said and done, when one looks from the outside, the 'finishing touches' [the silver crown surrounding the Mishkan] must reflect the very same unity that forms its base.

● Edited by Aron Lipczer.

The Foundation



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The Torah at the beginning of Parashat Pekudeh presents an accounting of the precious metals that Beneh Yisrael donated for the Mishkan, which included silver which was provided through the Mahasit Ha'shekel – the obligatory half-shekel tax. This tax was collected each year and used for the purchase of public sacrifices. But at the time Beneh Yisrael constructed the Mishkan, there was a special Mahasit Ha'shekel tax that was collected. The silver that was received from this Mahasit Ha'shekel tax was used to produce the “Adanim,” the sockets that formed the foundation of the Mishkan, as the wooden planks were implanted in these sockets.

The question arises, why were specifically the sockets produced through a mandatory tax, while the materials for the rest of the Mishkan were collected through voluntary donations? If we would have been asked to suggest one part of the Mishkan that needed the participation of the entire nation, we would have likely pointed to the Aron (ark), the most sacred article in the Mishkan. We would have certainly understood if G-d had demanded that each and every Jew donate towards the construction of the Aron. Surprisingly, though, even the Aron was made through voluntary donations, and it was only the sockets that required the mandatory participation of each and every member of Beneh Yisrael. Why?

The answer relates to the symbolic significance of the sockets, which formed the foundation of the Mishkan. Every part of the Mishkan represented a different

aspect of Judaism. The sockets, naturally, represented the foundation of Judaism – which is Emuna, faith. The prophet Habakuk (2:4) proclaimed, “Ve'sadik Be'emunato Yihyeh” – “A righteous man lives by faith.” Our Sages explained that Habakuk here presents the foundation of Judaism. All the many different laws and ideals of the Jewish faith rest upon the fundamental principle of Emuna, that G-d created and continues to govern the world.

There are many different levels of religious observance, necessarily so. We are each expected to serve G-d to the best of our ability, and continually strive to improve, but the reality will always remain that some will achieve more than others. And thus the Mishkan, which symbolizes religious life, was constructed through voluntary donations, each person offering what they could. The one exception is the “Adanim” – the sockets, the foundation. When it comes to the foundation upon which Judaism is built, Emuna, we must all participate, without any exceptions. Nobody can say, “I'm not ready yet for Emuna.” The belief in G-d and G-d's providence is something expected of us all, from the most learned scholars down to the simplest layman.

This explains why the silver for the sockets was collected specifically through the collection of a half-shekel. The half-shekel symbolizes the fact that we only know half the story. Emuna requires us to acknowledge that as human beings, our vision and understanding are very limited. We see and understand very little of how G-d runs the world. The half-shekel

donation thus reminds us that there is always more we do not understand – and this realization is vital for faith.

Tradition teaches that at the time when the Asara Harugeh Malchut – the ten great Sages who were killed by the Romans – were martyred, the angels in heaven protested. G-d replied by threatening to undo creation and return the world to its primordial state of chaos if the angels persisted in their protests. This has been explained by way of an analogy to a tailor who was accused of stealing the precious material that he was given for the purpose of making special garments for the king. In order to prove his innocence, the tailor needed to unravel the royal garment to show that all the material was accounted for. Similarly, G-d was telling the angels that the only way He can prove His “innocence,” that all His ways are just, would be to “unravel” the world, to take it apart and show how everything that happens falls precisely in place. The way the world runs, we see only a small part of what is really happening. If we want to see everything, G-d would have “take apart” all of creation to show us that everything is exactly the way it should be.

This is the foundation of our Mishkan, of Torah life, one in which we must all participate. We see only a “half-shekel,” only a part of the story. Once we lay this foundation of faith within our hearts and minds, we can then proceed to build our “Mishkan,” a rewarding and fulfilling life of Torah devotion.

Partners in Creation – Every Jew a Kohein



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In halacha, the first thing a Jew does when he gets up in the morning is wash each of his hands three times, *netilas yadayim*. The Rashba maintains that the source for this halacha is in this week's parshas (Shmos 40:30-32): "And you shall place the *kiyor* [wash basin] between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall place water into it for washing. And Moshe and Aharon shall wash their hands and feet from it..." We see from here that the Torah calls *netilas yadayim* "washing." Chazal, on the other hand call the kohanim's use of the *kiyor*, "sanctifying the hands and feet" (see, e.g., Tamid 1:4).

Chazal knew that the Torah's description of *netilas yadayim* as "washing" could have been misunderstood to refer to a physical cleansing. They, therefore, made sure to dispel any mistake by calling it "sanctification." Its purpose is not to remove impurity or dirt. Rather, *netilas yadayim* is a positive act, designed to sanctify the kohanim in preparation for their service in the Beis Hamikdash. But what is the connection between the kohanim's *netilas yadayim* and a Jew doing *netilas yadayim* when he or she first wakes up in the morning?

The Torah explains in this week's parsha that there were three steps involved in the kohanim's inauguration to their service in the Mishkan: (1) immersion in the mikvah; (2) donning the garments of the kohanim; and (3) being anointed with oil (Shmos 30:12-13). After they were first brought into service in the Mishkan, the kohanim's preparation for each day's service differed with respect to the third step on the list; sanctifying the hands and feet with the *kiyor* (ibid. 20-21) rather than being anointed with oil.

We see therefore that the kohanim's use of the *kiyor* to sanctify their hands and feet with water was an integral part of their service in the Beis Hamikdash. The pasuk even says that the obligation to sanctify their hands and feet was so critical that a kohein would be subject to the death penalty in the Heavenly court if he even entered the Beis Hamikdash without having washed (ibid.; Rambam, Frankel edition, Bias Hamikdash 5:1, 9:1). Why is it so important for the kohanim to rededicate themselves to their service by sanctifying their hands and feet before each day's service? Why is this a continuing obligation?

Perhaps we can understand this by contemplating the corollary of the kohanim's sanctification of their hands and feet – our mitzvah to do *netilas yadayim* every morning. Just before we wash in the morning, we say, "I acknowledge before You, living and enduring King, that You returned me my soul..." We see from these words that a Jew is like a newborn child every single day. Hashem wants us to look at the world every day with fresh eyes. He wants us to see our family, friends, the Torah, our surroundings, and the world at large as if it was for the first time.

This is reflected in the simple but powerful words of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (2:6): "Because a person, when he rises from his bed in the morning, is like one newly formed to serve the Creator, he must sanctify and wash his hands using a vessel like a kohein who would sanctify his hands every day from the *kiyor* before his service."

Rav Ganzfried (author of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch) is teaching us that the reason we do *netilas yadayim* in the morning is in order to rededicate ourselves to a brand

new service of G-d each day. And by comparing this service in our daily lives to the kohanim's service, he is telling us that the world around us in which we service G-d is like the Beis Hamikdash! Every kitchen, office, campus, basement, or train in which we find ourselves each day is like the courtyard of the Beis Hamikdash to us. That is why we must approach those places with proper preparation, by doing *netilas yadayim* with a sober recognition of the gravity of the holy activities in which we are about to involve ourselves. Daily life has a *purpose*.

The pasuk (Iyov 19:26) says, "In my flesh I see G-d." How can we relate to this? We know that the seforim hakedoshim teach that Hashem created and creates the world through ten attributes called *sefiros*. The Sefer Hayetzira (1:3) also teaches that the ten fingers of our hands, through which we fulfill the mitzvos, correspond to the ten *sefiros*. Putting aside what this means on a kabalistic level, we can now understand why we must sanctify our hands every morning. With our ten fingers, we are partners with Hashem in creating and rectifying the world around us. We must look at everything, at shul, home, work, and on the street, and ask: What is missing here? What can I do to fix G-d's world and make it better? Recognizing that I am like a kohein in the Beis Hamikdash in my daily life, I must sanctify my hands because I must use them to complete G-d's creation of the world.

Brothers Without Borders



Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi
Popular Torah teacher and author

Again they return, pictures of refugees near the border, looking out from crowded trains, the sounds of babies crying, begging for water and food.

Hours upon hours they drive, a cloud of fear upon them by day, flashes of fire upon them by night, just wanting to get home, to cross the border.

It is both challenging and easy for the Israelis and Jews. It's more complicated because it's a reminder of dark days, an awful *deja vu*; easier because they know that the representatives of our people will stand there at the border crossing - in the cold and lacking sleep - but they will be there to reach out to their brothers and sisters, help them get home.

Perhaps now one can understand the sadness of the 7th of Adar. The day Moshe stood at the border crossing after traversing an entire desert, unable to enter Eretz Yisrael. He begged, he was sick with hope and prayer ("And Moshe implored"), he was willing to forget the whole Torah, to be an animal or a plant, as long as he would reach the Promised Land. (Midrash Vezot Habracha).

There he stood, in infinite sorrow. Bnei Yisrael came and went. But Moshe saw the land from the other side - and did not go.

Right there, on the border, he left his wondrous will, his eternal doctrine, more significant than any other doctrine.



It's more complicated because it's a reminder of dark days, an awful *deja vu*; easier because they know that the representatives of our people will stand there at the border crossing - in the cold and lacking sleep - but they will be there to reach out to their brothers and sisters, help them get home.

"Remember Moshe, your servant, who ran before you like a horse, and his bones fell in the wilderness." Don't let any of your brothers go through such terrible grief. You who remember what sadness is, bring your brother from wherever he is. You will be Doctors Without Borders, Ambassadors Without Borders, Apostles Without Borders.

"But when I wanted, you did not want!" We can say to the one who hid when the bush burned, "Where have you been until now?" We can ask those who did not want to come, who did not heed warnings, to those who thought that they could always fly and live in Uman. We don't say a word of criticism, because we remember Moshe's horrible, tired look at the border, his great hand waving goodbye to us as we passed into our home, the wings of the Divine Presence enveloping him at the edge of the desert in endless solitude.

He will remind us of another Jewish man. Not one who strikes another Jewish man, but the Jewish man who stands at the border crossings wherever they are, and opens the sea for them, until the nation passes with G-d.

We remember you, Moshe...How you traversed an entire desert. You will be our eyes.

Our Relationship with Money



Rabbi YY Jacobson
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A woman called a local hospital. “Hello,” she said. “I’d like to talk with the person who gives the information regarding your patients. I’d like to find out if the patient is getting better, doing as expected or getting worse.” The voice on the other end of the line said, “What is the patient’s name and room number?” “Sarah Cohen in Room 302,” the woman answered. “I will connect you with the nursing station.”

“3-A Nursing Station. How can I help you?”

“I would like to know the condition of Sarah Cohen in Room 302.”

“Just a moment, let me look at her records. Oh, yes. Mrs. Cohen is doing very well. In fact, she’s had two full meals, her blood pressure is fine, her blood work just came back as normal, she’s going to be taken off the heart monitor in a couple of hours and, if she continues this improvement, Dr. Weiss is going to send her home Tuesday at noon.” “Thank G-d!” the woman said. “That’s wonderful! Oh! That’s fantastic, what wonderful news!”

The nurse said, “From your enthusiasm, I take it you must be a family member or a very close friend!”

“Not exactly,” the woman said. “I’m actually the patient herself; I’m Sarah Cohen in 302! Nobody here tells me anything.”

At the opening of the Torah portion of Pekudei, the work is complete. Soon, the sanctuary would be erected and the Divine presence would reside therein. This is a charged moment, a dramatic peak in a long and turbulent journey of a people. After all of the ups and downs, G-d is about to “move-in” with the Jewish people.

The hero of the story is, no doubt, Moses. With courageous selflessness, he triumphed, over G-d, as it were. He is the

man responsible for bringing the people — and G-d — to this extraordinary moment when humanity would reintroduce G-d to a world that banished Him.

But wait. Right at this moment, the Torah interrupts the narrative, shifting the story from creating a space for G-d in this world to the realm of bookkeeping. Moses, at this point, presents a detailed account of all the wealth contributed to him for the construction of the tabernacle. He reports to the people how many pounds of gold, silver, and copper he received, and how exactly it was used in the structure. He gives an account for every last piece of jewelry and metal that came into his hands.

Why? The Midrash relates that some Jews murmured about Moses stealing some of the money, using charity funds for his own purposes. Thus, Moses gave a detailed account of the destination of every “dollar” collected in the grandiose “building campaign.”

Moses, let us recall, is the spiritual giant of history, whom Maimonides defined as the greatest human being to ever walk the earth. “G-d would speak to Moses face to face, as a man would speak with his friend,” the Bible says. “Not so my servant Moses,” G-d thunders on Aaron and Miriam after they had gossiped about him. “In My entire house, he is the trusted one. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him, in a clear vision and not in riddles; he gazes at the image of G-d. Why do you not fear to speak against My servant, Moses?”

Does a man who speaks to G-d face to face really need to prove that he is not using money for a cruise in the Caribbean, for a new BMW or to build his portfolio? The Jews, observing Moses’ unparalleled devotion and love to them in the most trying of circumstances, knew full well that Moses was no charlatan. If G-d trusts him, they

could trust him too. Even if some Jewish rabble-rousers murmured about Moses stealing some of the money, we would expect Moses to ignore them.

“Who do they think they are to question my integrity,” we would expect Moses to think to himself. “I gave my life for these rebels when G-d wanted to destroy them. After all, it was G-d Himself who appointed me to my present position, against my will. How dare they challenge my honesty?”

These feelings would be understandable. Yet, astonishingly, without even being asked or instructed to do so, Moses, in total humility, stands up and gives an accounting for every last penny that came into his hands.

The “Bach,” derives a law from this episode: Even the most beloved and believable collectors of charity are obliged to give a detailed account to the community of the destination of every cent they collected for charity. Nobody, writes the Bach, could be trusted more than Moses, the man whom G-d Himself trusted. Yet even he felt compelled to give an accounting of all the contributions.

This is one of the great moral messages of Judaism: When it comes to somebody else’s money, be accountable for every dollar. Don’t cover up, don’t lie, and don’t deceive. You can’t lie to people and then be honest with G-d, with your wife, with your children, with your friends.

We all need and thus appreciate money. Some of us love money. Even spiritual leaders need money and often cherish it deeply. Rabbis are also only human beings. That is not evil. The story turns ugly when we become dishonest with our money. We must learn from Moses: to always be able to give an account for every dollar that came into our hands.

100 Brachot



Charlie Harary

One of the most powerful, and maybe misunderstood, mitzvos in Torah is Me'ah Berachos. We have an obligation to make one hundred brachos each day. The Gemara states:

מנחות מ"ג ב:ט"ו

תניא היה רבי מאיר אומר חייב אדם לברך מאה ברכות בכל יום שנאמר (דברים י, יב) ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלהיך שואל מעמך

Tosafot (quoting Rashi) connects the pasuk to the mitzvah

תוספות על מנחות מ"ג ב:ט"ו:א'

ובקונטרס פירש אל תקרי מה אלא מאה כלומר שחייב ק' ברכות

The word מה is extrapolated to be מאה, creating a source for the obligation to count one hundred brachot a day.

Incredibly this mitzvah is connected to a major moment in our history, as explained by the Tur.

טור, אורח חיים מ"ו:א'

כי בכל יום היו מתים ק' נפשות מישראל ולא היו יודעין על מה היו מתים עד שחקר והבין ברוח הקודש ותקן להם לישראל ק' ברכות

During the days of Dovid Hamelech a terrible plague broke out, every day a hundred Jews died. Through ruach hakodesh Dovid instituted the mitzvah of one hundred brachot and through the practice of this mitzvah, the plague stopped.

What!? Why?

Why is this mitzvah, as opposed to so many others, the antidote to the plague? What is so powerful about making 100 brachos?

This week's parsha gives us an answer.

The parsha speaks about the אדנים, the sockets. The Torah tells us:

שמות ל"ח:כ"ז

וַיְהִי מֵאֵת כֶּפֶר הַכֶּסֶף לְצִקּוֹת אֵת אֲדָנֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֵת אֲדָנֵי הַפְּרִכֹּת מֵאֵת אֲדָנִים לְמֵאֵת הַכֶּפֶר כֶּפֶר לְאֲדָן:

There were one hundred silver casts used to make one hundred sockets, their purpose in the mishkan was to serve as the foundation, holding the structure all together.

The Baal Haturim explains that these hundred sockets are connected to the hundred brachot.

קיצור בעל הטורים על שמות ל"ח:כ"ז:א'

מאת אדנים כנגד מיוסדים על אדני פז וכנגדם תקנו ק' ברכות בכל יום:

What is the connection between the sockets and the berachos? And what does that have to do with stopping a plague?

The Chiddushei Harim has an incredible insight:

מאת אדנים הוצרכו למשכן ומאה ברכות צריך האדם לברך בכל יום, וכמו שהאדנים היו היסודות של המשכן כן הם ברכות היסודות של קדושת ישראל, של קדושת כל יהודי ויהודי, אדן מלשון אדנות וע"י הברכה מעידים שהקב"ה הוא אדון של הבריאה כולה, מאת הברכות הרי הם ממלאים את מאה האדנים למשכן של כל יהודי.

The Chiddushei HaRim explains that the Mishkan is not merely a physical structure that was built once, but rather a metaphor for the structure that is constantly being built, inside each of us.

As the pasuk says "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי" בתוכם. Hashem says build me a mikdash and I will dwell in them, not in the physical structure but rather among the Jewish people.

The mishkan is the infrastructure that provides a kli, a vessel, for the Shechina. We used to have it physically, now we have it spiritually. It still exists, but inside each and every one of us.

Maybe that why reciting brachot were able to dispel the plague in Dovid Hamelech's days. How do we rid ourselves of negativity and darkness? With greater light. The way to rid the world of tumah is with more kedusha. The way to overcome our physical challenges is with more spirituality.

Dovid understood that the way to end the plague is with more Shechina. Bnei Yisroel had to build stronger vessels for Hashem in themselves. The 100 berachos are connected to the 100 adanim, the foundational sockets of the mishkan. Each person is a mishkan and so every bracha is another socket. By saying a hundred brachos everyday, they were building stronger vessels that brought it more shechina that dispelled the negative forces of the plague.

That was then, but it still applies now. When we build ourselves a greater mishkan, we enable more shefa from shomayim to come to us. Maybe that's why the Zohar calls these brachos, keys, because they unlock a treasure that is right before us and access the bounty waiting for us.

● Edited by Ian Schwartz.

Rosh Chodesh Adar 2 / Pekudei



Rabbi Judah Mischel

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Rav Zelik Epstein, zt'l, the beloved Rosh Yeshiva of Sha'ar haTorah Grodno in Queens, New York, was renowned for his incisive brilliance and remarkable humility. A member of the Moetzes Gedolei Torah, many considered Rav Zelik, zt'l, to be the greatest talmid of the Mirrer Mashgiach, Reb Yeruchem Levovitz. A masmid more shy by nature, Rav Zelik was most comfortable in the confines of the Beis Medrash, and avoided publicity and controversy.

At Rav Zelik's levaya, his son Rav Kalman, shlit'a, related that his father would often tell him that at the end of our lives we will not be certain if the Torah we studied and taught was understood correctly. Nor will we be certain that our *tefillos* were prayed with appropriate *kavanah*, holy intention and clear focus. There is, however, one merit that we can be sure we will retain: any time we have met a Jew in need, feeling broken, depressed, fearful or sad, and left them smiling.



This weekend marks *Rosh Chodesh Adar Sheini*, the start of a month-long celebration of the miraculous turnaround of Purim:

"...The days wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies, and **the month** which was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the needy." (Esther, 9:22)

The mitzvah of *mishloach manos*, or "sending portions" of food to each other, strengthens the bonds of community and provides a festive meal for friends and neighbors who may lack the means or provisions to enjoy a seudah of their own. Thus, essential to our Purim joy is ensuring that our neighbors are able to enjoy the day as well. And while Haman sought to sow disunity and define us as a people that is *mefuzar u-mefurad*,

"scattered and dispersed", we share gifts of food with one another and break bread and sip wine together, bringing us closer to each other and unifying Am Yisrael.

Rav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, zt'l, was one of the great *roshei yeshivah*, poskim and Jewish intellectuals of our century, the head of Hildesheimer Rabbinic Seminary in Berlin, and was also well-versed in secular academic knowledge. Author of the collection of classic responsa, *Seridei Eish*, Rav Weinberg addresses the fact that there is no specific *birkas ha-mitzvah* (blessing) said over the giving of *mishloach manos*:

"...It also seems to me that the purpose of *mishloach manos* is to increase *shalom*, love, and friendship. And even though there's a general principle in *mitzvos* that the one who does a mitzvah because he is 'commanded' is more praiseworthy (than one who is not specifically commanded), and (merits to) recite the blessing *v'tzivanu*, "and has commanded us" — nevertheless, regarding *mishloach manos* it is better to give them motivated by free will (rather than a 'command'), from a place of love for one's Jewish brothers and sisters. And if a person gives *only* because they were commanded to do so, the quality of love is actually lessened.

"And this is also the reason that there is not a bracha upon giving tzedakah: it is better to give out of compassion or Ahavas Yisrael than a sense of obligation and coercion."

Moreover, the *Seridei Aish* suggests a 'chidush', a new understanding of the nature of *mishloach manos* as a מצווה תמידית, an ongoing, year-round mitzvah. On Purim, this ongoing obligation is 'activated' and we actively fulfill it, yet this once-a-year mitzvah should remind us of the always-relevant value of giving, sharing, and increasing connectivity and friendship among us. (1:61)

In *Manos Ha-Levi on Megillas Esther*, Rebbe Shlomo HaLevi Alkabetz, zy'a, draws a difference between 'reason-based' and 'authority-based' *mitzvos*. 'Reason based'

mitzvos are acts that we would have intuited even without being commanded. One who does not desire to violate these has greater merit than someone who overcomes his *yetzer ha-ra*, his urge to negativity. However, those who overcome the temptation to violate 'authority-based' *mitzvos* are greater than those with no desire to violate 'reason-based' *mitzvos*. In other words, doing a *mitzvah* because it is commanded is the greatest merit.

Our sedra details an accounting of the gold, silver and copper donated toward building the Mishkan. Close to twenty times, the Torah emphasizes that Moshe Rabbeinu and the builders followed the instructions כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה', "according to Hashem's command".

The special privilege of building the Mishkan and creating a holy space to 'meet' the *Ribbono Shel Olam*, was accompanied by so much anticipation and desire that there was a possibility of getting emotionally carried away. Therefore, the Netziv explains, the Torah emphasizes that Moshe's intentions were tethered to Hashem's instructions, כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' — *l'sheim shamayim*, 'for the sake of Heaven'.

Purim is the headquarters of *Ad d'lo yada*, 'going beyond reason', and 'getting carried away' in realizing how much we really don't know. Do I truly understand the Torah I learn? Will the divrei Torah I share make sense and be received well? Is my davening *b'kavana*? Are my intentions pure? Am I doing *mitzvos only* because they are commanded obligations, or also out of love and free will? *Ad d'lo yada* — we really don't know. What is clear however, is the meaningful impact of sharing *mishloach manos* with neighbors and friends, and providing for the needs of others.

May we merit to fulfill the mitzvos of Purim both as the *ratzon Hashem*, "according to Hashem's command", and also with desire, loving intent, inner motivation and celebration of their intuitive 'reasons'.

Inspired Intentions

Mrs. Shira Smiles

international lecturer and curriculum developer

Parshat Pekudei includes a review of many of the components of the *Mishkan* as they are completed. When all is ready, the people try to erect the *Mishkan* but are unsuccessful. Then the Torah states: “They brought the Tabernacle to Moshe, the tent and all its utensils: its hooks, its planks, the cover.” The Commentators ask, if they brought all the separate parts to Moshe, as *Ramban* understands it, why does the Torah say they brought the Tabernacle, seemingly already built. This is especially hard to understand since the Torah later states that the *Mishkan* was erected, in the passive voice, intimating that the *Mishkan* miraculously built itself, as *Rashi* explains.

Medrash Tanchuma explains that Moshe was saddened because, although he delivered all the instructions for the *Mishkan*, he had no personal involvement in the construction. Hashem understood that Moshe wanted to be part of this great mitzvah. When the workmen couldn't erect the Tabernacle on their own, they brought it to him. Although Moshe was not physically strong enough, Hashem told him to begin building and He would then “lend His hand” and complete the process. Moshe would nevertheless be credited for building the *Mishkan* based on his deep desire for the mitzvah.

Why was it necessary for Moshe to erect the *Mishkan* when he too needed Hashem's help? Hashem could have helped the workmen just as easily. *Rabbi Zev Leff*, citing the *Meshech Chochma*, notes that no object or time has intrinsic holiness except that which is conferred upon it by Hashem through the Torah and its teachers. Moshe represented the Torah, and only he could invest the *Mishkan* with the holiness it needed to serve as a

dwelling place for Hashem. In doing so, Hashem taught us that Torah directives are given to us through the sages and that we cannot sacrifice Torah law to achieve something sacred, whether it's building the BeitHamikdash or preserving the sanctity of Shabbat.

Along these lines, *The Sichot Ba'avodat Hashem* notes that the intention at the beginning of any activity or time frame will imbue the entire time with that essence. For this reason, we recite *kiddush* right at the onset on Friday night, so that the entire Shabbat will be invested with sanctity. The early Christians, *lehavdil*, understood this concept and therefore decided mistakenly to make the first day of the week their “holy day.” What they neglected to remember, however, was that we begin our day at night, and we end Shabbat by extending it into the evening, thereby investing the beginning of the following week with sanctity. He explains the adage, “*Kol hatchalot kashot*,” to mean that everything must begin with hard and strong resolve. Before performing any mitzvah, one must first resolve to do the mitzvah properly for the sake of Heaven, so that even if one falters, that initial intention remains in place.

With these two concepts in mind, one can understand why it was necessary for Moshe to erect the *Mishkan*. As the *Shaarei Chaim* explains, Moshe possessed the qualities necessary to erect the *Mishkan* for Heaven's sake. He had spiritual and physical strength, as well as the humility to nullify his ego completely. Thus only he could imbue the *Mishkan* with the proper sanctity from the moment of its inception.

If Moshe's passion to participate in the physical building of the *Mishkan* was already there, why did Hashem require

him to act on this desire? The *Chochmat Hamatzpun* notes that Bnei Yisrael were commanded to bring the sheep to their homes in front of the Egyptians, tie it to the bedposts, and then slaughter it. Wasn't their belief in Hashem after so many plagues enough to prove their loyalty to Him? Since the intention is so important, why go through such a tedious, dangerous, process? But in Judaism, intention alone is not enough. Just as *Bnei Yisrael* were required to act on their faith, so Moshe needed to act on his passion before Hashem would help him complete the process.

Rabbi Wolbe writes that Hashem wants us each to build a sanctuary within ourselves so He can dwell there. It is not enough just to believe in God, we must act to create sanctity in our lives by performing the mitzvot with love, intent and focus. The *Tiv Hatorah* notes that Moshe perceived the task of erecting the *Mishkan* as daunting. But Hashem demanded that he begin and only then did He help him. So too, we must begin our daily battles with the *yetzer hara* even if we feel weak and count on Hashem to help us. For that reason, says *Rabbi Rabinowitz*, if we have indeed invested all of our energy, we should not berate ourselves if we fail. Hashem alone determines our success and will reward us immeasurably for our efforts.

The Yearning and the Hope

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Rabbi Hanoch Teller
Author, lecturer and producer

Israel is a story of a homeless people that kept a dream alive for millennia, of a people's redemptions from the edge of the abyss, of a nation forging a future when none seemed possible. The Jews had dreamed for 2000 years of returning to their ancestral homeland. Their daily liturgy was replete with references to Jerusalem and with pleas that God restore them to Zion. When they prayed, wherever they were, they faced Jerusalem.

Since the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in the year 70 CE the Jews who were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire had fervently prayed for a return to Zion. "Next year in Jerusalem" was, and is, the hope expressed at the end of the Passover Seder and at the conclusion of the Yom Kippur service.

For two millennia, wrote Sir Martin Gilbert, the dream of such a return seemed a fantasy. So, bereft of a land of their own, the Jews learned to adapt to their exile addresses, and when they were expelled – which happened frequently – they learned to adapt to their new temporary address. The hope to return to their homeland of Zion or Israel seemed an unrealistic hope.

How could Jews ever fulfill their wish to return to Zion which had been under Muslim rule since the 7th century and under the rule of the Ottomans since the 16th century?

For the diehards prepared to undergo the significant perils of the journey of which about one third died enroute, they still had to face the hardships of an unfriendly region and climate and a government extremely undisposed against them.

Before 1880 the Jewish population in Palestine was less than 25,000 people, most of them in Jerusalem where they made up half of the population, after 1890 more than half. The overwhelming majority of those who lived or had come to Jerusalem were devout Jews who were supported by the system of chalukah.

The majority were immigrants from Poland and Lithuania who survived on charity, regularly sending letters back to their home communities begging for help, sometimes even sending back emissaries to raise funds. By and large they were people

without political ambitions, and they were pious Jews who had come to Israel to die. To the Arabs, the Jews of Palestine were known as "children of death."

In 1882, there was an upswing of violent attacks against Jews and the threat or actuality of pogroms that made getting out of Russia became a matter of life.

Only about one percent of Russian Jewry who fled for their lives ever ended up in Palestine, the United States being the preferred destination. But just from this one percent about 25,000 Jews come on Aliyah from Russia between 1882-1903 in what will come to be called the First Aliyah.

At that time, (the early 1880s) three Jewish settlements were established that will become – at least two of them – major urban centers in modern Israel. They were: Zichron Yaakov financed by Baron Edmond de Rothschild and named after his father.

Petach Tikvah (Opening of Hope), which nearly collapsed from malaria and attacks from nearby Arab villages, was also rescued by the Baron (as he was called) who provided money to clear the swamps.

The third settlement was Rishon LeTzion. Here too funds ran short and the water in the shallow well ran dry, so an emissary traveled to Paris to appeal to Baron Edmond de Rothschild who provided sufficient funds to dig a deep well.

The early settlers in Israel had turned to him for his financial assistance, and as a kind, generous and benevolent man, he could have simply dispensed funds and be done with it. But clearly the Baron, understood what Maimonides writes about as the highest level of charity is when you put someone on their own feet.

So, the Baron, wishing to fulfill the highest level of charity sent representatives to Israel who were experts in agriculture and wine-making to assess the growing conditions and returned with favorable reports that the climate in Israel was similar to Bordeaux, and recommended planting vineyards for the production of wine.

The result was the Carmel winery which has been and remains to be a successful commercial venture. Rothschild stipulated that his contributions not be made public. And that policy has been maintained. There

is a Rothschild Family foundation in Israel that distributes large sums of money and their name is never associated with those that they support. Hence, he was known as HaNadiv Hayadua the well-known benefactor. "Well known" yet nameless.

Eventually he was simply known as the "Benefactor" and by the turn of the century he had contributed \$six million to the Zionist settlements, in today's dollars that is 188 million.

The determination and faith of the pioneering settlers captured the Baron's imagination and his heart. "Not because of your poverty did I support you and take you under my wing," he declared to the farmers of Zichron Ya'akov during his visit to the colony in 1893, "but due to your passion to work and live in the Holy Land, and to live in accordance with the spirit of the Torah..."

Forty-four colonies were established and financed under the auspices of the Baron and his descendants, from Metulla in the north to Mazkeret Batya in the south; kibbutzim, moshavim and moshavot, and towns. Some of these bear the names of Rothschild family members: Zichron Ya'akov, named for the Baron's father James (Ya'akov); Mazkeret Batya, commemorating his mother Betty (Batya), and Givat Ada, in honor of his wife Adelheid (Ada).

The Baron invested enormous amounts of energy and financial resources in the development of industry and infrastructure in the Yishuv, convinced that this would lead ultimately to independence for the growing Jewish community.

The early struggle to build the State of Israel is beautifully and dramatically portrayed in the podcast "Teller From Jerusalem." Each episode reveals another aspect of the tenacity, ingenuity and the Divine blessings bestowed upon those who – against all odds – gave birth to a nation.

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Hebrew Language in the Parsha



David Curwin
balashon.com

The opening verse of Parashat Pekudei uses the root פקד twice:
אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר פָּקַד
עַל־פִּי מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדְתָּ הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן־
אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן:

“These are the accountings (פְּקוּדֵי) of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of Testimony, which were recorded (פָּקַד) by Moses’ order – the work of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.” (Shemot 28:21)

The root פקד has many meanings, as we shall see. One of them is “to count, to number,” and that is the sense used in this verse. As Rashbam notes, this was a count of the silver, gold and copper contributed to the Mishkan. More than just a simple counting, it was a review of what had

been contributed, and so some suggest that “accountings” or “inventory” are the best translations of the word.

The root has many other meanings, including: to attend to, to observe, to remember, to seek, to miss, to visit, to punish, to appoint, and to command. Common words derived from these meanings include פְּקִיד - “clerk, official”, מְפָקֵד - “census”, תְּפִקִיד - “role, function, job”, פְּקֻדוֹן - “deposit”, מְפַקֵד - “(military) commander”, and פְּקוּדָה - “(military) command” (like the Home Front Command - פיקוד העורף).

But how did one root end up with all these meanings? Linguists offer two theories.

One is that the original meaning of the root was “to give one’s attention to.” From

this sense, other meanings, also related to paying attention developed, like “attending,” “counting,” “remembering,” and “seeking.” According to this theory, the meaning “to miss” developed from the sense “to seek” via a more specific seeking – “seeking in vain.”

A second theory says that the original meaning was “to miss.” Just as in English “to miss” can mean both “to fail to hit” and “to long for,” both senses were found in this original פקד. So an absentee soldier is נִפְקָד, and he is also being looked for, sought out, perhaps longed for. From there developed the other meanings, where פקד means “to attend to, to visit, to observe.” Later the verb came to mean also “to appoint,” “to command”, and “to count” – as in our parasha.

Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh
Mizrachi Melbourne

As a continuation of last week’s riddle, find two people, the letters of whose names, can be rearranged to make a word also appearing in the sedra.

Answer to the Parasha Riddle

*(A)לוס (שירת)

(40:3)

לוס = אלו

(40:30)

לוס = שירת*



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