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date: Wed, Mar 9, 2016 at 9:15 PM subject: Rabbi Benjamin Yudin - Not All That Glitters Is Gold

**Rabbi Benjamin Yudin**  
**Not All That Glitters Is Gold**

As we take leave of the completed Mishkan built by the Jewish people in the desert, "all the work of the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, was completed" (Shemos 39:32), I'd like to look at a significant aspect of the Mishkan not necessarily visible at first glance. Among the obvious questions regarding His home is: why is it composed of earthly materials, gold, silver, and copper, when He could have made it from Divine materials? After all, the first set of luchos, those broken by Moshe, were "heavenly made", "stone tablets inscribed by the finger of G-d" (Shemos 31:18). The manna which nourished the Jewish nation for 40 years, was literally food from Heaven - "I shall rain down for you food from Heaven" (Shemos 16:4.) Why then, asks the Dubner Maggid (Ohel Yaakov, opening essay on Terumah), did Hashem not construct a more fitting holy abode for the Divine Presence in this world?

The Maggid answers that Hashem wants to build His Sanctuary with the love of the Jewish people. King Shlomo describes the special House of G-d as, "tocho ratzuf ahava - its foundation is paved in with love" (Shir HaShirim 3:10.) Because love is too abstract a commodity with which to build, Hashem chose precious metals that are dear to man and that man has an emotional attachment to, and by giving these metals one is really donating the emotional attachment contained therein. It is for this reason that the Torah that a constant refrain throughout the parshiyos dealing with the Mishkan is nedivas halev - "every man whose heart motivates him" (Shemos 25:2.) In actuality, the Sanctuary was built upon the nedivas halev that was contained within the gold, silver, and copper.

King David explains (Chronicles I 28:3) that because he has been a warrior, albeit to destroy the enemies of the Jewish people, and has shed much blood, he cannot build the Beis Hamikdosh. In (29:2) he declares, "with all my might I have prepared for the Temple of my G-d, gold for golden things, silver for silver things, and copper for copper things". The Maggid teaches that the apparent repetition is not to state the obvious, i.e. that gold was used for golden objects, but rather to communicate that ha'zahav, the gold, the

golden emotion of love, or the love in the gold, was utilized in the construction.

In many areas of Jewish law one can use an object of equal value as payment (shaveh kesef k'kesef). For example, one has to redeem their firstborn son with 5 silver coins, but if one does not have coins a Kohen can accept a silver wine cup in their place. We read last week about machatzis hashekel, the annual monetary contribution to the Beis Hamikdosh to fund communal offerings. If one did not have a half shekel he could give an object of equal worth which the Temple treasurer would exchange for money. When it came to donations for building the mishkan, however, Seforno explains that the word "this" in the passuk, "This is the portion that you shall take from them, gold, silver, copper" (Shemos 25:3) excludes the possibility of donating any other materials, including money, to exchange for these precious metals. Offering a substitute would be miss the key component, the nedivas halev. Once again the Torah is highlighting that it's not the gold per se that Hashem wanted as a contribution as much as that which is represented by the gold, i.e. man's love of it and his attachment to it. In essence, we are being taught that the Mishkan was built with the emotions and spiritual energy invested into the physical components.

There is another understanding of "tocho ratzuf ahava", namely, its foundation is that of continuous love. The establishment of the Beis Hamikdosh, this special meeting place for G-d and man, reflects the mutual outpouring of love between them. In reality, all that we do can either reflect our nedivas halev - our excitement, enthusiasm, and love for Hashem and His Mitzvos - or a laissez-faire, lackadaisical attitude towards mitzvos. One can daven with nedivas halev or by rote; one can give tzedakah with nedivas halev or be guilted into giving or give to have their name in lights. Even one's chessed can be performed with nedivas halev, exercising great sensitivity to safeguard the dignity of the recipient, or for personal self-aggrandizement; the manner in which we speak to our spouse and children can be either with nedivas halev, respect and admiration, or unfortunately demeaning.

As we take leave of the physical building of the Mishkan - "all the work of the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, was completed" (Shemos 39:32) - we must take the Mishkan with us. "B'l'vavi mishkan evneh" in our hearts - or more importantly, with our hearts - we too can build a Mishkan. "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them" (Shemos 25:8). The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 232) devotes an entire chapter to expounding the passuk, "B'chol derachecha da'ei'hu - in all your activities know Him" (Proverbs 3:6.) One's many hours engaged in earning a livelihood can be infused with nedivas halev by working to send one's children to yeshiva, to be able to give charity, to manifest in his business a kiddush Hashem, and to be able to create a home that is truly shehasimcha b'mono - that He has another place to live and love.

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**Rabbi Yissocher Frand**  
**If You've Got It, Don't Flaunt It**

Parshas Pikudei is the fifth parsha in Sefer Shmos dealing with the building of the Mishkan. If the parsha seems somewhat repetitive, it is because it is indeed very repetitive. For a Torah that is very economical in its use of words, it seems very strange to spend so much ink repeating the same story.

The Ramban comments on this in the beginning of Parshas Vayakhel. According to the Ramban, the repetition indicates how much the Almighty appreciates what the Jews did in building the Mishkan. We can compare it to receiving a gift from a person who is near and dear to us. We never tire of saying how wonderful the gift is, of explaining how it works, or of repeating how amazing it is. Especially if one wants to emphasize his love and appreciation for the benefactor of the gift, one constantly talks about the gift.

The Ramban says that this is the reason for the repetition. The Ribono shel Olam is showing His affection for us so he repeats what we did (in building the Mishkan) repeatedly.

Notwithstanding the Ramban's insight, it remains somewhat strange that the Torah should go into such detail in describing how to build the Mishkan. In these 5 parshios (Terumah, Tizaveh, Ki Tisa (in part), Vayakhel, and Pekudei) the Torah not only describes the keylim that were in the Mishkan, but even the structure of the Mishkan itself. We can understand that since the keylim were basically the same as those used later in the Beis HaMikdash, we need to know for future generations how big they were, how they were constructed, and out of what materials. If one of the keylim of the Mishkan was lost or damaged, they would need to replace or rebuild it. It was essential for Shlomo HaMelech and for later generations to have the blueprint of the keylim so that they could recreate the keylim in the future if necessary.

It is very noteworthy that concerning the construction of all the keylim and "furniture" in the Mishkan, the Torah uses the word "Va'ya'as" [and he made] whereas by the construction of the Aron – and only by the construction of the Aron – the Torah uses the words "Va'ya'as Betzalel" [and Betzalel made]. The Meshech Chochma explains that this is because the very same Aron that Betzalel built was the Aron that was used in the Beis HaMikdash. After the Aron was hidden and the first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, there was not an Aron in the second Beis HaMikdash! (There was merely a rock – the Even Shesiya – in its place). Therefore, the one and only Aron used in the history of the Sanctuary was the one that Betzalel built. Therefore, by all the other keylim the Torah writes "Va'ya'as" indicating they made them and others might make them in the future. The Aron was unique in that there was only one in history and that was the one made by Betzalel.

The potential need to provide "blueprints" for future generations to be able to recreate everything might explain the need for detail (and even repetitive emphasis) by the keylim, the furniture, and the Priestly Garments. However, the construction of the Mishkan itself was a once in history event. They built a Mishkan once. It was hidden after they built the Beis HaMikdash (which was a very different kind of structure) and it was never heard from again! We will never again need to know how to build such a structure.

The question thus needs to be asked – why do we need to know such detail about the boards and the sockets and the coverings of the Mishkan? Even in Messianic times, this knowledge will be of no practical use for us!

The answer is that we are supposed to learn certain lessons from the Mishkan. We do not need to know how to build a Mishkan, but we need to know certain lessons about it.

One of the lessons we learn from the Mishkan is about Derech Eretz. After they built this beautiful Mishkan with beautiful wood and silver sockets -- elegant construction throughout -- they covered it with goats' hide. Why would they cover such a beautiful building with such a pedestrian covering? It is the equivalent of buying a Mercedes and covering it up with cheap tarp and not letting anyone see the magnificent craftsmanship. When a person has something beautiful – why not show it off?

A very interesting pasuk that is actually in Parshas Teruma [Shmos 26:13] applies to our parsha as well: "And it (the goats' hair cover) shall be draped over the sides of the Tabernacle...to cover it". Rashi comments: "The Torah

taught proper conduct (Derech Eretz), that a person shall take care of that which is beautiful."

What is the Derech Eretz in covering something that is beautiful? The Derech Eretz is that people should not show off what they have. If a person has something beautiful, do not show it off – keep it hidden. We live in a society in which the mantra of society is "If you've got it, flaunt it!" This is a very un-Jewish value. The Jewish ethic is "If you have it, cover it up!" Not everyone needs to know that you have it.

The pasuk in Shir HaShirim says, "I went down to the nut garden to see the green plants of the valley, to see whether the vine had blossomed, the pomegranates were in bloom..." [Shir HaShirim 6:11]. Rashi states: Why is Yisroel compared to nuts? Just as a nut appears to be nothing more than wood, but when cracked open, reveals the delicious contents, so too Yisroel is modest and humble; the scholars amongst them are not readily recognized. A Talmid Chochom covers up what he knows. He does not brag and engage in self-aggrandizement. However, someone who "one opens one up a little" sees how much content is in that Talmid Chochom.

The Torah spends so much time describing a Mishkan that we will never again need to build in order to teach us Derech Eretz. People donated a lot of money for this beautiful structure. Do not rub it in people's faces. Do not flaunt it. Keep it to yourself.

Look at nature. All the things that are beautiful and extraordinarily valuable in this world are hidden. To mine gold, one has to go to the depths of the earth and first remove tons and tons of rock. We need to remove tons and tons of rock to find a few diamonds. The same is true with silver. All this is a lesson. That which is beautiful and that which is dear is kept hidden. This should be a lesson to human beings as well – to keep hidden that which is beautiful.

It is for lessons like these that the Torah spends all this time and space telling us about the Mishkan.

Eishel Avrohom Defends Ramoh Against Magen Avrohom's "Proof"

The following is a beautiful observation from the Eishel Avrohom.

The Ramoh writes in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim Siman 147: A person should not make a Sefer Torah cover out of materials that were already used for mundane purposes. For example, a person should not embroider an old table cloth and make it into a "mantle" for a Sefer Torah. Since it was used for secular purposes, it cannot be subsequently used for a holy purpose such as covering a Torah scroll.

The Magen Avrohom qualifies this ruling and says that it only applies if one uses the item "as is". However, you may change its form and make it into a different type of utensil. This is the principle of "Panim Chadoshos Ba'oo l'kahn" – it acquires a new identity and is now something different. The Magen Avrohom "proves" his point by citing the example of the Laver in the Mishkan, which was made from copper that was originally part of the women's mirrors, used to beautify themselves in Egypt. [Shmos 38:8]. Rashi explains (as we have discussed many times in the past) that Moshe Rabbeinu originally rejected this donation from the women, feeling that it was a tool of vanity so it was inappropriate for the Temple Service. HaShem overruled Moshe, telling him "This donation is dearer to me than everything else" (because these mirrors enabled the women to make themselves beautiful for their depressed husbands and encouraged them to procreate and raise future generations.)

The Magen Avrohom argues based on this precedent that if the form of an item is changed, the reformed material must become permitted for use in Divine Service.

The Eishel Avrohom (printed in the back of the Shulchan Aruch – haGaon m'Botchach) says a beautiful refutation of the Magen Avrohom's proof, which reinstates the unqualified ruling of the Ramoh on this issue. The Eishel Avrohom says the "mirrors" are not a proof because the "mirrors" were not used for a mundane purpose (tzorech hedyot). The mirrors were used for a spiritual purpose (tzorech gavo-hah). Anything that enhances the love between a man and his wife is a tzorech gavo-hah, not a tzorech hedyot!

This is something about which the Almighty states, "This is dearer to Me than all the rest."

A woman using a mirror to put on makeup and make herself desirable and beautiful to her husband, resulting in increased love between husband and wife is the greatest "tzorech gavo-hah" [spiritual purpose].

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com  
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD  
dhoffman@torah.org This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A listing of the halachic portions for Parshas Vayakeil/Pikudei is provided below: A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

In honor of Rosh Chodesh later this week, and Purim in two more weeks, I present: Bensching in the Dark on Rosh Chodesh

By **Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Question #1: Rosh Chodesh arrival - "I began eating dinner before Rosh Chodesh, but when I finished, it was dark. Do I recite Yaaleh Veyavo?"

Question #2: Rosh Chodesh departure - "I began eating dinner on Rosh Chodesh, but when I finished, it was dark. Do I recite Yaaleh Veyavo?"

Introduction When we recite birchas hamazon on Shabbos, Yom Tov, Chol Hamoed, Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah and Purim, we include special prayers to commemorate the holiday: On Shabbos, a passage beginning with the word Retzei; on Yom Tov, Chol Hamoed, and Rosh Chodesh, the prayer Yaaleh Veyavo; and on Chanukah and Purim, Al Hanissim. However, it is inappropriate to recite these prayers on an ordinary weekday. What does one do when the date changes between the beginning of the eating of the meal and the bensching? Do we recite the bensching appropriate to the day on which the meal began or appropriate to when the meal ended?

Weekly seudah shelishis Let us start this discussion with a very common application. Many people eat the last meal of Shabbos, colloquially but not accurately called shalosh seudos, late in the afternoon, finish after dark, and then recite Retzei in bensching. (The correct way to refer to this meal is seudah shelishis or seudah shelishit.) Most of us are unaware that this practice is disputed by early authorities. The Rosh (Shu't HaRosh 22:6; Pesachim 10:7) asserts that once Shabbos is over, one cannot say Retzei. He compares this to davening a Shabbos prayer after the conclusion of Shabbos, which is certainly inappropriate. Just as the fitting prayer is determined by when one is praying, so, too, the correct text of bensching is determined by when one is reciting it. Similarly, in the Rosh's opinion, a meal begun on Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah or Purim that continues into the night following the holiday should not include mention of the special day on which the meal began. This position is followed by the Rosh's son in the Tur (Orach Chayim 695). According to this approach, the common practice of completing the Purim seudah after the day is over and including Al Hanissim in the bensching is incorrect. A disputing opinion is quoted in the name of the Maharam (see Hagahos Maimaniyos, Megillah 2:14:1), which states that a meal begun on a holiday maintains its special mention, even when one benschtes after the day is over. Thus, when one benschtes on seudah shelishis after it is dark, one still recites Retzei. Similarly, if one's Purim seudah extends into the night, one still recites Al Hanissim in the bensching. These laws apply, as well, on Yom Tov, Rosh Chodesh and Chanukah (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 188:10). The practice, already cited in earlier authorities, of completing the Purim seudah after the day is over and then reciting Al Hanissim is based on this position of the Maharam (Rema, Orach Chayim 695:3). What is the Maharam's rationale? According to one approach, his position is based on the concept that one can extend the

sanctity of Shabbos, even after the day is technically over (Dagul Mei'revavah, end of Orach Chayim 188). Of course, the question is how this affects Purim. The Maharam is quoted as ruling that one who began his meal on Purim, and completed it after the holiday is over, should still recite Al Hanissim in bensching. However, there is no Talmudic source to say that Purim has a concept of tosefes kedusha. According to the Dagul Mei'revavah's approach to understanding the Maharam, one must assume that there is tosefes kedusha on Purim, Chanukah and Rosh Chodesh to the extent that one then recites the appropriate addition to the bensching. Ending Shabbos before bensching

As we just explained, the Maharam rules that one recites Retzei on motza'ei Shabbos for a meal that began on Shabbos. However, if someone recited havdalah and has not yet benschted for seudah shelishis, he must omit Retzei, since recital of havdalah ends Shabbos. The same is true not only regarding havdalah, which clearly ends Shabbos, but even when one does anything implying that Shabbos is over – such as davening maariv or even simply answering Borchu, since these activities occur only after the conclusion of Shabbos (Shu't Maharil #56). The Magen Avraham (188:17) notes that someone who davened maariv before Shabbos is over (which is halachically permitted under extenuating circumstances) does not say Retzei when he subsequently benschtes, even though he is still required to observe Shabbos (since it is before nightfall). This ruling is followed by the Mishnah Berurah (188:32) and other authorities. The Magen Avraham (263:33) and other authorities are uncertain whether one who said hamavdil bein kodesh lechol after Shabbos is over, but has as yet not benschted after seudah shelishis, may still say retzei. Halachic deciders - How do the halachic authorities decide regarding the dispute between the Maharam and the Rosh? The Rema consistently follows the position of the Maharam (Orach Chayim 271:6; 695:3). However, it is a bit unclear how the Shulchan Aruch rules. He discusses these laws in three different places in Orach Chayim. In the laws of bensching (188:10), he concludes according to the Maharam that the structure of the bensching follows the beginning of the meal, whether it is Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, Purim or Chanukah. When discussing a Purim seudah that continues into the night, the Shulchan Aruch (695:3) cites as the main opinion the position of the Maharam that one recites Al Hanissim in bensching, yet he quotes the Rosh as an alternative opinion that one omits Al Hanissim once Purim is over. However, regarding someone who concludes a meal on Friday afternoon immediately before Shabbos and who will be bensching on Shabbos, the Shulchan Aruch requires the person to include Retzei (271:6), even if he did not eat anything on Shabbos. The Bach (188 and 695) views the Shulchan Aruch as being inconsistent, arguing that this last decision contradicts the position of the Maharam, which the Shulchan Aruch himself follows in 188 and 695. The Bach understands, as do other authorities (e.g., the Aruch Hashulchan 188:23), that, according to the Maharam, the essential factor is when the meal began, whereas, according to the Rosh, the determining factor is what day it is at the moment of bensching. According to the Bach's understanding of the Maharam, someone who began a meal before Shabbos and continued it into Shabbos should omit Retzei, which contradicts the conclusion of the Shulchan Aruch. The Bach's approach is consistent with the ruling of the Rema. There are other approaches how to resolve the conflicting rulings of the Shulchan Aruch. The Magen Avraham (271:14) explains that when a ruling is contingent on the dispute between the Maharam and the Rosh, one should say Retzei. That is, someone who eats Friday afternoon and is bensching on Shabbos should say Retzei, following the approach of the Rosh, whereas someone who eats on Shabbos and is bensching after Shabbos should recite Retzei, in accordance with the opinion of the Maharam. However, other authorities contend that the Shulchan Aruch is following the Maharam consistently, but they understand the Maharam's position differently from the way the Bach did. Whereas the Bach understood the Maharam to be saying that the sole determinant is when the meal began, they understand that either the beginning of the meal or the time of bensching determines whether we recite

the special holiday prayer. In their opinion, if one began a meal on a holiday but bensched only after the holiday was over, one recites the appropriate holiday passage (Taz 188:7; Elyah Rabbah 188:20).

Tosefta The Magen Avraham (271:15) raises a question on the Rema's position. We find that the Tosefta (Berachos 5:4) states that someone whose meal began before Shabbos, who bensch on Shabbos, should recite Retzei in benschung. This appears to conflict with the position of the Rema, who rules that when one did not eat the meal on Shabbos, one does not recite Retzei. The Magen Avraham answers that the Rema and the Tosefta are discussing different situations. The case of the Rema is where he did not eat anything on Shabbos; the meal is therefore not considered a Shabbos meal, and Retzei is omitted. The case of the Tosefta is where the meal began before Shabbos and continued into Shabbos. In this case, Retzei is recited. The Mishnah Berurah (271:30) implies that this is true even if he ate only a small amount on Shabbos.

A compromise position Until now, we have cited two early authorities, the Rosh and the Maharam, as the basic positions on this topic. There are later authorities who present a middle ground that clearly disagrees with both the Maharam and the Rosh (Magen Avraham 188:18, quoting Maharash, quoted by the Shelah and the Eimek Beracha; see also Shu't Rema 132:5). This approach draws a distinction between a Shabbos meal extending after Shabbos and those of Rosh Chodesh and Chanukah extending after the respective holiday. Since there is a concept of tosefes Shabbos, i.e., the mitzvah to extend the day of Shabbos, the extension of the day retains sanctity, and therefore the meal is still considered a Shabbos meal warranting the recital of Retzei. However, since neither Rosh Chodesh nor Chanukah have a concept of tosefes kedusha, and, in addition, they have no requirement to eat special meals, the special prayer associated with them should not be recited once the day has passed. Rosh Chodesh arrival -At this point, we can discuss our opening question: "I began eating dinner before Rosh Chodesh, but when I finished, it was dark. Do I recite Yaaleh Veyavo?" We need to ask a few questions: Did he eat on Rosh Chodesh? If he did, then according to Magen Avraham, Taz, Elyah Rabbah and Mishnah Berurah he should recite Yaaleh Veyavo, whereas according to the Aruch Hashulchan, and probably several other authorities, he should not. I would personally rule that he should follow the majority opinion and recite Yaaleh Veyavo in this situation. If he did not eat on Rosh Chodesh, according to the Rosh and Magen Avraham, he should recite Yaaleh Veyavo. I refer our reader to his own posek for an answer what to do under these circumstances. Rosh Chodesh departure -As far as our second question is concerned: "I began eating dinner on Rosh Chodesh, but when I finished, it was dark. Do I recite Yaaleh Veyavo?" Assuming that he did not yet daven maariv, according to the Magen Avraham, Taz, Elyah Rabbah, Aruch Hashulchan and Mishnah Berurah, he should say Yaaleh Veyavo, whereas according to the Rosh, Tur, Maharash and Shelah he does not. It would seem to me that, in this instance, the halachah should not be affected by whether he ate after it became dark. Conclusion -When we show how careful we are to honor Hashem with the appropriate wording of our benschung, we demonstrate our concern and our priorities. Whatever conclusion we reach regarding whether we recite these special inserts, we should certainly pay careful attention to the meaning of the words of one's benschung at all times.

Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com> date: Wed, Mar 9, 2016 at 4:14 PM subject: Parshat Pekudei 5776- Rabbi Berel Wein

PEKUDEI The end of the book of Shemot describes the culmination of the events of the exodus from Egypt, the revelation at Sinai and the construction of the Mishkan/Tabernacle. All of these events are certainly on the positive side of the historical ledger. On the other side of that historical ledger sheet that the book of Shemot represents there is the sin of the Golden Calf and the constant carping and complaining of the Jewish people against Moshe and against the God of Israel. In effect, this sets the template for all further Jewish history. There are always ups and downs, plus and minuses in the national

behavior of the Jewish people. The book of Shemot ends on a triumphant note – the spirit of God, so to speak, invests and dwells within the Jewish people and the Mishkan/Tabernacle that they so lovingly built –promises an eternal relationship. Jewish tradition teaches us that this is the ultimate result of the long story of our existence. It will end triumphantly but there will be many serious bumps on the road before we arrive at our ultimate destination. And therefore it seems especially appropriate that at the conclusion of this holy book, the entire congregation rises to proclaim that we will be strengthened in our lives and experiences. We will attempt to strengthen the positive side of our ledger and minimize the entries on the other side. The Torah expended much detail and space to the construction of the Mishkan/Tabernacle. Part of the reason for the need to adhere to the laws in this regard is that the devil lies in the details. All of history instructs us that seemingly unimportant details shape great events, with unexpected results. The ineptness of Archduke Ferdinand's chauffeur, who drove the car back into the teeth of the assassins' ambush after first escaping from it, helped bring about the cataclysmic events that are called World War I. The Jewish people questioned why Moshe was late on returning from his ascent on Mount Sinai and thus the conditions for the construction of the Golden Calf somehow presented themselves. All of Jewish law and halachic decisions are built upon recognizing and analyzing the details of the issues involved. It is the small detail that builds the general rule, not the other way around. We are all aware how in architecture, manufacturing and construction for example, it is the smallest detail that is the difference between success and failure, achievement or disaster. This is in line with the details regarding the Mishkan/Tabernacle, which in turn reflect the Torah itself, which in its turn reflects and represents all of human life. Today's parsha teaches us the requirement of accountability in all aspects of our lives. All of these ideas are taught to us to help us form a proper ledger book on the basis of whose entries we will be eventually judged. This book of Shemot stands as the book of human judgment and understanding. Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

From: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com>

Date: Thu, Mar 10, 2016 Pekudei (Exodus 38:21-40:38)

### **Don't Sit: Walk**

**by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

Sitting is the new smoking. So goes the new health mantra. Spend too much time at a desk or in front of a screen and you are at risk of significant danger to your health. The World Health Organisation has identified physical inactivity as the fourth greatest health hazard today, ahead of obesity. In the words of Dr James Levine, one of the world's leading experts on the subject and the man credited with coining the mantra, says, "We are sitting ourselves to death." The reason is that we were not made to sit still. Our bodies were made for movement, standing, walking and running. If we fail to give the body regular exercise, it can easily malfunction and put us at risk of serious illness. The question is: does the same apply to the soul, the spirit, the mind? It is fascinating to look at the sequence of verbs in the very first verse of the book of Psalms: "Happy is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful" (Ps. 1:1). That is a picture of the bad life, lived in pursuit of the wrong values. Note how the bad man begins by walking, then stands, then sits. A bad life immobilizes. That is the point of the famous verses in Hallel: Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but do not speak, eyes but do not see, ears but do not hear, noses but do not smell. They have hands but cannot feel, feet but cannot walk, nor can they make a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them; so will all who trust in them. (Ps. 115:4-8) If you live for lifeless things - as in the bumper sticker, "He who dies with the most toys, wins" - you will become lifeless. Except in the House of the Lord, Jews do not sit. Jewish life began with two momentous journeys, Abraham from Mesopotamia, Moses and the Israelites from Egypt. "Walk on ahead of Me and be blameless," said God to Abraham (Gen. 17:1). At the age of ninety-nine, having just been circumcised,

Abraham saw three strangers passing by and "ran to meet them." On the verse, "Jacob dwelled [vayeshveh, the verb that also means "to sit"] in the land where his father had stayed," Rashi, citing the sages, commented: "Jacob sought to live in tranquility, but immediately there broke in on him the troubles of Joseph." The righteous do not sit still. They do not have a quiet life. Rarely is the point made with more subtlety than at the end of this week's parsha and the book of Exodus as a whole. The Tabernacle had been made and assembled. The closing verses tell us about the relationship between it and the "cloud of glory" that filled the Tent of Meeting. The Tabernacle was made to be portable.[1] It could be dismantled and its parts carried as the Israelites travelled on the next stage of their journey. When the time came for them to move on, the cloud moved from the Tent of Meeting to a position outside the camp, signalling the direction the Israelites were to take. This is how the Torah describes it: When the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, the Israelites went onward in all their journeys, but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journeys. (Ex.40:36-38)

There is a significant difference between the two occurrences of the phrase "in all their journeys." In the first, the words are meant literally. When the cloud lifted, the Israelites knew they were about to begin a new stage of their journey. However in the second instance, they cannot be meant literally. The cloud was not "over the Tabernacle" in all their journeys. To the contrary, it was there only when they stopped journeying and instead pitched camp. During the journeys the cloud went on ahead. Rashi notes this and makes the following comment: A place where they encamped is also called massa, "a journey" ... because from the place of encampment they always set out again on a new journey, therefore they are all called "journeys." The point is linguistic, but the message is remarkable. In a few brief words, Rashi has summarised an existential truth about Jewish identity. To be a Jew is to travel. Judaism is a journey, not a destination. Even a place of rest, an encampment, is still called a journey. The patriarchs lived, not in houses but in tents.[2] The first time we are told that a patriarch built a house, proves the point: Jacob traveled to Sukkot. There he built himself a house and made shelters [sukkot] for his livestock. That is why he called the place Sukkot. Gen. 33:17) The verse is astonishing. Jacob has just become the first member of the covenantal family to build a house, yet he does not call the place "House" (as in Bet-El or Bet-lechem). He calls it "cattle-sheds." It is as if Jacob, consciously or unconsciously, already knew that to live the life of the covenant means to be ready to move on, to travel, to journey, to grow. One might have thought that all this applied only to the time before the Israelites crossed the Jordan and entered the Promised Land. Yet the Torah tells us otherwise: The land shall not be sold in perpetuity because the land is Mine: you are strangers and temporary residents as far as I am concerned. (Lev. 25:23) If we live as if the land is permanently ours, our stay there will be temporary. If we live as if it is only temporarily so, we will live there permanently. In this world of time and change, growth and decay, only God and His word are permanent. One of the most poignant lines in the book of Psalms - a verse cherished by the French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas - says, "I am a stranger on earth. Do not hide your commands from me" (Ps. 119:19). To be a Jew is to stay light on your feet, ready to begin the next stage of the journey, literally or metaphorically. An Englishman's home is his castle, they used to say. But a Jew's home is a tent, a tabernacle, a sukkah. We know that life on earth is a temporary dwelling. That is why we value each moment and its newness. Recently a distinguished British Jew, (Lord) George Weidenfeld, died at the age of 96. He was a successful publisher, a friend and confidant of European leaders, an inveterate fighter for peace and a passionate Zionist. In 1949-50, he was political adviser and Chief of Cabinet to Chaim Weizmann, first President of Israel. One of his last acts was to help rescue 20,000 Christian refugees fleeing from ISIS in Syria. He was alert and active, even hyperactive, to the very end of a long and distinguished life. In an interview with The Times on his ninety-second

birthday he was asked the following question: "Most people in their nineties slow down. You seem to be speeding up. Why is that?" He replied, "When you get to ninety-two, you begin to see the door about to close. I have so much to do before the door closes that the older I get, the harder I have to work." That is a good formula for staying young. Like our bodies, our souls were not made for sitting still. We were made for moving, walking, traveling, learning, searching, striving, growing, knowing that it is not for us to complete the work but neither may we stand aside from it. In Judaism, as the book of Exodus reminds us in its closing words, even an encampment is called a journey. In matters spiritual, not just physical, sitting is the new smoking.

NOTES: 1. This was especially true of the ark. It was carried by staves that passed through rings on the side of the ark. It was forbidden to remove the staves, even when the Israelites were encamped (Ex. 25: 15). The ark already had to be ready to travel at a moment's notice. See the commentary of S. R. Hirsch ad loc. 2. Note that Lot, in Sodom, lived in a house (Gen. 19: 2). So did Laban (Gen. 24: 23).

from: Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein <ravadlerstein@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: mchochmah@torah.org date: Wed, Mar 9, 2016 at 6:05 PM subject: Meshech Chochmah - Parshas Pekudei

### **Meshech Chochmah**

by **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein**

Who Needs The Ketores? You shall place the golden altar for ketores before the ark of testimony.

Meshech Chochmah: The pasuk certainly does not tell us to place the golden altar immediately in front of the aron, either within the Holy of Holies, nor right in front of it. We know where this mizbeach stood; it was displaced a considerable distance from the aron. It was further removed, in fact, than the shulchan and the menorah, both of which stood closer to the kodesh ha-kodashim. The simple reading of our text is an instruction that wherever it is placed, it should line up directly with the aron inside the kodash ha-kodashim, and not be displaced neither to the left nor the right.

Such a reading, though, is unsatisfying. If this were the Torah's intention, the instruction belongs elsewhere. It would seem more appropriate in the section describing how Moshe set up the mishkan, and where he placed the kelim. A good candidate would be the pasuk that describes how Moshe placed the golden altar "in front of the paroches." [2] Similarly, the Torah even earlier [3] describes this altar as standing in front of the paroches. At either one of these places the Torah could have underscored that the altar should line up in a straight line (along the front-to-back axis of the mishkan) with the aron that stood behind the paroches.

We could imagine a different purpose for our pasuk: informing us about the function of the ketores itself. There were those - notably the Rambam [4] - that the aromatic ketores was meant to displace the otherwise foul odors that would seep into the structure of the mikdash. We know the stench associated with abattoirs; the mikdash was a place in which not only were animals slaughtered and butchered, but their fats were then burned day and night. The lingering effects would naturally be overpowering. The Torah, according to these sources, instructed as to burn powerful but sweet-smelling incense twice daily to counteract the less desirable smells.

Others strongly objected to this approach. If the function of the ketores were simply instrumental, why would the Torah list the ingredients of the ketores with great specificity, and forbid any change in the recipe, as well as using the special blend for any other purpose? Ketores figured in the avodah of the week of the mishkan's inauguration, before many animals had been slaughtered, and when the structure was taken apart and reassembled each day.

We must conclude that the purpose of the ketores was not for the practical benefit of those who would come to the mishkan. Rather, it was what Chazal call tzorech Govoha/ a Divine need. This means that it was a necessary component in the precise manner in which Hashem wishes to be served in the mikdash. Nothing in the avodah is arbitrary; the precise formulation of its requirements flows from its source in esoteric mysteries. Those privileged

to have penetrated some of those mysteries are well aware of the lofty messages are incorporated in the ketores.

This, then, is the Torah's intention in our pasuk. It describes the avodah of the ketores as "before the ark of testimony." We are meant to understand that its purpose is not to serve any practical human need, but to serve the Divine Presence that rests upon the ark of testimony.

[1] Based on Meshech Chochmah, Shemos 40:5 [2] Shemos 40:26 [3] Shemos 30:6 [4] Moreh Nevuchim 3:45

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From: Shabbat Shalom <[shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org](mailto:shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org)> reply-to: [shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org](mailto:shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org) date: Thu, Mar 10, 2016 at 6:37 PM subject: A Megillah for Everyone; A Rabbinic Achilles Heel; Sushi Hamentaschen  
**Parshat Pekudei: Time, Space, and Man** Excerpted from **Rabbi Norman Lamm's Derashot Ledorot: A Commentary for the Ages Exodus**, co-published by OU Press & Maggid Publishers

In our traditional Jewish literature, especially our Kabbalistic literature, all of life, experience, and existence are conceived of as consisting of three dimensions: olam, shana, and nefesh. Literally, these mean world, year, and soul. Actually, what is intended by these terms is Space, Time, and Man.

One of the distinguished rabbis of the State of Israel, Rabbi Shelomo Yosef Zevin, sees this triadic structure in the opening verses of today's sidra. We read, "vayak'hel Moshe et kol adat Benei Yisrael," that Moses assembled the entire congregation, and there he taught them the commandments of the Shabbat and Mishkan, the construction of the Tabernacle. The act of assembling all of Israel represents the element of nefesh of Man. The Mishkan is that which occupies a specific place. And Shabbat recurs every week, and hence represents the dimension of time.

It should be understood that this is not merely a way of describing the world or experience. It is a framework that has high spiritual significance, for it means that Judaism considers that these three elements interpenetrate each other and are interdependent.

This view teaches that, on the one hand, man needs the awareness of time and space; that is, he needs the spiritual implications and the consciousness of the spiritual potentialities, of both history and geography, the realms of shana and olam. Thus, Judaism speaks of kedushat hazeman, the sanctity of time, as in the celebration of Shabbat and the various festivals. And Judaism speaks too of kedushat hamakom, the holiness of place, as, for instance, the Mishkan or, today, the synagogue.

On the other hand, both time and space are significant in the divine economy only because of man, because of nefesh. Thus, Shabbat, which is a symbol of time, requires the participation of man (nefesh) in order to make it meaningful. According to the Torah, on the seventh day of Creation, God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; nevertheless man was commanded, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," i.e. man too must sanctify the seventh day. It is not enough that time be sacred on

its own; it requires the affirmation of man, the participation of his nefesh.

The same holds true of the category of space. The holiness of the Sanctuary is contingent upon the initiative of man. In the very commandment in which God makes known His will that we make a sanctuary for Him, we read: "ve'asu li mikdash veshakhanti betokham," "and let them make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." Rabbi Moshe Alshikh observed that the expression is "betokham," "among them," and not "betokho," "in it." In other words, God did not want a Sanctuary because He was homeless and needed someplace to live. Rather, the Sanctuary, symbol of the sanctity of space, is important only because it allows man the opportunity to have God dwell within him, "betokho." Thus, both time and space depend upon man. Olam and shana require nefesh.

This same pattern of Time, Space, and Man may be observed not only in our regular Torah reading for today, but also in the special reading for

Parashat haHodesh. We read this morning, "hahodesh hazeh lakhem rosh hadashim," that this month of Nisan is to be for us the chief of months. This means that Nisan is Rosh HaShana.

But do we not have another Rosh HaShana, one which begins on the first day of Tishrei? What then is the difference between the Rosh HaShana of Nisan and the Rosh HaShana of Tishrei?

The answer is that Rosh HaShanah of the fall, of Tishrei, is that of olam or Space, whereas the Rosh HaShana of spring, of Nisan, is that of shana or Time. In Tishrei we celebrate the anniversary of creation, of geography; this is the day on which God created the natural world. In Nisan we celebrate the Exodus from Egypt. We commemorate a great historical event, something that occurred in time and that made a difference for all time.

In both of these, Man, the possessor of nefesh, plays a crucial role. The two Rosh HaShana's are not merely birthdays of mute nature, or anniversaries of some impersonal historical event. Rather, the Rosh HaShana of Tishrei emphasizes the element of din in which man is brought to the bar of divine justice. At this occasion we are told that man has within himself the capacity to overcome the limitations of the natural world, to transform the inexorable fate determined by the blind laws of nature. Thus, at the height and climax of our Rosh HaShana service in Tishrei, we proclaim, "uteshuv utefilla utzedaka ma'avirin et ro'a hazezera," that by the exertion of his moral nature, by repentance and prayer and charity, man can actually change the decree of his future, the natural result of his conduct and misconduct in the past. So too, the Rosh HaShana of Nisan is not mere mechanical memorialization of some remote detached occurrence. It is a time of redemption, and therefore a signal for us that we are to strive for redemption during this month. Perhaps that is why we recite the "mi she'asah nisim" every Sabbath that we welcome or bless the new month. For the regular appearance of the new moon, on any month, now becomes the occasion to recall human redemption. Moreover, as the Rabbis pointed out, the Torah specifically tells us that, "hahodesh hazeh lakhem rosh hadashim," this month is "lakhem, "to you," that is, the human court has the right to set the calendar and therefore to determine when the month of Nisan will fall. This is symbolic of the fact that the human element prevails, that man can determine what to do with his time, and hence with his fate and with his destiny. He can fashion his own history. In Judaism, Time, Space, and Man are inextricably bound together. This thesis has received remarkable confirmation by one of the most brilliant men alive today, Prof. R. Buckminster Fuller, inventor of the geodesic dome, in a recent address reprinted in the latest issue of *The American Scholar*. Prof. Fuller points out that for many years now scientists have maintained that the entire universe is running down. The energy within the world is dissipating into a kind of randomness, which means that everything is becoming successively more disorganized and chaotic and therefore the world, physically, must come to an end. Prof. Fuller points out, however, that there is an opposite tendency to this physical dissipation of the world, this "increase in entropy" – that is the activity of men on earth, and intelligent beings elsewhere in the universe, who by their intellectual and spiritual capacity constantly organize their lives, their thought, and their experience more and more sharply. This tendency to organize runs counter to the disorganization tendency within the material universe. Man, by his systematic intellect and his creative spirit, represents the opposite of the chaotic and the destructive. Hence, even from the point of view of a distinguished scientist, Man, through the exertion of his nefesh, may yet be the one who will save and redeem the world of olam and shana, of Space and Time!

It is a pity that we do not recognize that fact with sufficient force in our daily experience. Too often we underestimate the role of man in the world, the significance of nefesh in our universe. Symbolic of this failure is what happened a couple of years ago in Copenhagen, Denmark. A television station received many protests when it scheduled a program of bull-fighting. Many irate citizens wrote in that this was an example of cruelty which they resented. Thereupon the television station substituted for the bull-fighting

program a film on war, consisting of naval battles. This time no one called in to protest!

The same is true of many of our humane societies who agitate for public acceptance of human laws – which is as it should be. Unfortunately, however, the same people who are so concerned about the welfare of animals, are totally oblivious to man's cruelty to man – especially when the man who is the victim happens to be a Jew.

A more heartening example of the creative role of man in the world came in recent weeks when an Israeli citizen decided to make a dramatic gesture for peace by flying a small plane to Egypt to see President Nasser, and thereafter proceeding to Rome to see the Pope, then to Paris for President de Gaulle, and then probably on to the United States. It matters little whether or not his effort was motivated

by self-glorification, cheap publicity, or a general flair for self-projection. The important thing is that in this terrible Cold War, with great power blocks and stubborn nations locked in deadly hostility, controlled by giant bureaucracies, one single human individual was able to emerge from anonymity and obscurity to make his presence felt and move the hearts of his fellow men. The nefesh somehow prevailed, even momentarily, over the olam and the shana.

The time is long past for us to take a good, long, and deep look at Jewish education from the point of view of this triadic structure of Time, Space, and Man. I believe that the failure of so much of Jewish education to date is a result of the fact that there is olam and shana, but no nefesh. There is a place called "school" to which children are sent, and a certain time limit which they must serve, generally to Bar Mitzva. But there is all too little of the one element which can redeem the entire procedure and make it more meaningful and effective; the child, his nefesh, his own interest and heart and soul. Too often children feel that they merely "take up space" and "do time" as if they were juvenile convicts condemned to the agonizing boredom of Jewish education. What is needed is nefesh – and that can be provided by parents who understand that school is not a place to send children but to bring them, and that the home must serve not as a counter-pressure to school, but as a model laboratory where the principles and ideals taught in the Jewish school are carried out in practice. The teachers, too, must re-emphasize as never before the elements of the child's own nefesh. A great deal of research is needed in Jewish education if all the investment we have put into it and all the dreams we have dreamed for it are to come true. Much too much of Jewish education today is irrelevant. It is simply a matter of relearning and re-teaching new techniques of instruction and pedagogy. What a pity if in this age of technological and methodological progress in so many fields Jewish education should remain backward and retrogressive. Parents, teachers, and the community at large must bring back nefesh to the Jewish educational world of olam and shana.

Finally, all three elements merge together in one paean of praise to Almighty God as we welcome the new month of Nisan this coming week. Man, indeed, has a positive function as a new season of the year comes about in which nature is aroused to life once again. The Talmud put it this way: When a man goes abroad in spring, and notices the trees blossoming and the first green blades of grass pushing their way through the crunchy earth, he ought to make a blessing to his God. He should say, "Blessed are thou O Lord, King of the Universe, shelo hisar be'olamo kelum, uvara bo beriot tovot ve'ilanot tovot, lehitantot bahen benei adam, who has made His world perfect, lacking nothing, creating therein beautiful creatures and wonderful trees, in order to grant thereby pleasure and joy and benefit to the children of men."

With the coming of Nisan and spring, the fullness of God's beautiful world, His olam, and the onset of the most delightful of His regular seasons of the shana, must be sanctified by the dedication and gratitude of human beings who, each possessed of a true nefesh, will offer to Him a berakha, and themselves be blessed thereby.

From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Mar 10, 2016 subject:

**Peninim on the Torah**  
**by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum –**  
Parshas Pekudei

These are the reckonings of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony, which were reckoned at Moshe's bidding. (38:21)

A person's perspective, his viewpoint on circumstances, his outlook concerning people and situations, is most often molded by his interests, his endeavors, the areas of life in which he is personally involved. In other words, a person's outlook is controlled by where his "head" happens to be. Let us see how this preface fits into explaining a statement which Chazal made concerning Moshe Rabbeinu's decision to give a full accounting of every ounce of gold, silver and copper that the people contributed towards the construction of the Mishkan.

The Yalkut Shimoni, as cited by Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita, relates that, when Moshe would leave his tent to walk through the camp, two types of onlookers commented about their leader. One type viewed our quintessential leader in the positive manner that he should: "Fortunate is the one who gave birth to him; all of his days, Hashem speaks to him; all of his days he is complete with Hashem." These people characterized Moshe as an individual who had reached the apex of spiritual distinction, a human being who was closely connected with Hashem. Others harbored more jaundiced opinions of Moshe. They looked at his physical build and saw what they felt was a well-fed specimen of humanity. This prompted these miscreants to suggest that our leader was nourishing himself on that which rightfully belonged to all of the Jews. They intimated that not all of the contributed funds had made it to the Mishkan, some of them lining our leader's pockets.

Such ludicrous slander is mind-boggling. To think that money played a role in Moshe's life; to suggest that he was pocketing some of the till was laughable - and sad. How low could these people descend? To what nadir of perversity could they plunge?

Rav Levinstein feels that this is an example of what had earlier been suggested: a person views life, the world around him, people and situations, through the lens of his own context. We are different from one another; thus, we each view things and people in the context of our own personal perspectives. We will be most sensitive to that which affects us personally and manifest less empathy towards that for which we have no personal concern.

Rav Levinstein relates that years earlier, sitting in the Arab Shuk in Yaffo, his friend noticed two men of differing professions sitting on chairs in front of their shops. One was a barber; the other was a shoe maker. They were talking to one another over cups of coffee. Interestingly, whenever a passerby went by, each man took notice. It was on that which they each seemed to be focusing that spelled the disparity between their perspectives. The barber would glance at the passerby's head of hair, while the shoemaker set his sights on the man's shoes. One gazed upward; the other looked downward. A similar variance presents itself when an electrician and a carpenter enter a room. One looks at the lighting; the other looks at the chairs and tables.

Horav Mordechai Mann, zl, explains that this is the reason that an infant puts everything he touches into his mouth. An adult understands that, as a mature person, he requires many different items in order to function properly: food to eat; clothing to wear; transportation vehicle for enabling him to get around, etc. Everything has its specific purpose and place in his life.

A child's world is very limited. His parents provide everything for him. The only thing that the child thinks about, his only area of concern, is satisfying his immediate hunger. Therefore, from his limited perspective, everything revolves around his mouth! Therefore, whatever is in his hand, he immediately places in his mouth.



We return to Moshe Rabbeinu and the discrepant perspectives through which the people viewed him. The individual whose life revolved around materialism-- for whom the mighty dollar regulates his life and defines the value of individuals with whom he comes into contact -- looked at Moshe and wondered what happened to the millions that he had gathered for the Mishkan. If Moshe were dressed impeccably in clothing that bespoke an individual who was materially comfortable, the question that would come to mind was how did he come into so much money? After all, he did not really have a job. "Clearly," he must be skimming off the top. When a person's head is always in the mud, it is not surprising for him to come up dirty.

The other viewpoint of Moshe was held by he who understands that there is more to life than money: Our leader neither knows nor cares about money. Someone whose life revolved around money wondered what Moshe did with the gold and silver.

Chazal teach (Shabbos 112b), "If the earlier ones (Torah leaders) are (viewed by us) as angels, then we are like human beings. If, (however), the earlier ones (in our eyes) are viewed as human beings, then we are mere donkeys." What are Chazal teaching us?

Horav Yechezkel Sarna, zl, explains that, when a donkey views a man, he thinks to himself, "This is no ordinary donkey. This is a special donkey, one that walks on two legs, instead of four. This donkey is capable of doing incredible things, which no ordinary donkey could achieve." In short, the human being seen through the eyes of a donkey is a super donkey!

Now, how do human beings view angels? An angel can fly, can achieve in a moment what might take a human being a year to accomplish. An angel must be a superman! Man thinks like a donkey. Thus, a human being must be a super donkey!

Veritably, we all know that an angel is no more a man than a man is a donkey. It all depends on the context of the perspective of the individual. We must understand that it is impossible to fathom the greatness of the sages who preceded us, because they were more than simply of a different caliber - they were completely different entities! They are not like us in any way!

The individual who feels he can judge Moshe Rabbeinu through the context of his human perspective is wrong. Moshe was beyond our ken. We cannot grasp Moshe Rabbeinu. To judge him and ascribe to him the frailties which are common to us is like a donkey judging a human - or a human judging an angel. We are just not on the same page as Moshe.

They brought the Mishkan to Moshe. (39:33)

The Midrash offers a perspective on the concept of reward in Olam Hazeh, this world. Klal Yisrael was asked to donate towards the Mishkan. Everyone came forward with his free-willed offering. The Midrash relates that a student of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai left his yeshivah and moved to chutz la'aretz, the diaspora. He returned a while later a wealthy man, having successfully navigated the world of commerce, earning a pretty penny. Apparently, Rabbi Shimon's remaining students manifested envy concerning this student. They, too, indicated a desire to leave the yeshivah and attempt to be successful making it in the world of business. After all, why should they not also be wealthy?

Rabbi Shimon was acutely aware of their desire to leave. He brought them out to a valley, not far from the yeshivah. He began to pray, "Valley, valley fill up with golden coins." The valley "complied," filling up with an enormous amount of gold! He then turned toward his students and said, "If it is gold which you are seeking - here is all the gold you would ever need. Take whatever you want, but, remember one thing - whoever takes gold now is actually appropriating his portion from the World to Come. The only remuneration for Torah study is in Olam Habba. If you decide to "collect" it while you are here in this world you are taking your nitzchiyus, eternity, and squandering it here (author's free translation).

This Midrash presents us with a number of questions. First, are we to believe that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's students would be moved by money? Would they be willing to leave their esteemed Rebbe and travel to chutz

la'aretz just to earn money? Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was a giant among giants. How are we to understand the allusions in the Midrash?

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, offers an insightful explanation to this Midrash. He suggests that the student who returned a wealthy man did not set up shop as a business man. Absolutely not. He returned to the bais hamedrash once again, attending his revered Rebbe's shiurim, discourses, as if he had never left. There was, however, one difference. Now, he was rich. He was no longer a poor student attending Rabbi Shimon's shiur. He was wealthy - and he probably had not missed out on that much.

We now understand why they were envious. They had never left. As a result, they did not have the means for donating gold and silver to various charities, as did the student who had left. He was similar to them in learning, but, in charitable acts, he was way ahead of them. He had achieved the best of both worlds. This is why they were jealous of his achievements. He had taken a break from the rigid schedule of Torah learning that they had been maintaining. Yet, he was now back with them and, quite possibly, just as proficient in his knowledge - and, unlike them, he was able to carry out acts of charity and kindness. When you think about it, why would anyone not be jealous? Why not me?

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was acutely aware of what coursed through the minds of his students. They were not simply looking for a way out, an easy way to make some money. His students would never exchange the bais hamedrash for material wealth and power. It would take much more to motivate them to leave the hallowed halls of Torah study. It was the opportunity to satiate themselves from both tables: Torah and maasim tovim, good deeds. While in the bais hamedrash, they were unable to enhance their Torah study with acts of kindness, because they lacked the wherewithal. If they could take some time off, however, to earn a good living and then return to the bais hamedrash - would that not be optimal? Would that practical application not elevate their level of Torah study?

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai brought them outside the walls of the bais hamedrash and filled up a valley with gold and silver: "Nu - take all that you want! Perform your mitzvos. Carry out your good deeds! But, remember: whatever you take, it is your Olam Habba that you are taking. Do not think that one can grab Olam Habba by force. One must earn it. Giving up Torah, just so that one can earn the Olam Habba associated with maasim tovim is not the way to earn Olam Habba. In fact, you should be aware that, had your purpose in life been to support Torah study and carry out acts of charity and kindness, Hashem would have provided you with the ability and wherewithal to do so. If He has not, it is because you are destined to learn - learn - and continue learning! Your portion in Olam Habba is based upon uninterrupted Torah study. No wealth, no enhancements - just simply Torah study in its unhindered way. If you want both, then remember that you are diminishing your reward in Olam Habba. It will never be the same."

For the cloud of Hashem would be on the Mishkan by day, and the fire would be on it by night, before the eyes of all of Bnei Yisrael throughout their journeys. (40:38)

Clearly, this pasuk has ramifications concerning the future of our people as our tenure in galus, exile, continues. The Jew should not think that the darkness which encompasses us in galus is so pervasive that we are unable to penetrate it; or that it completely envelops and stifles us. No! V'eish tiheyeh laylah, "And fire would be on at night." The light of Torah will illuminate the darkness of exile. The daled amos shel halachah, four cubits of Jewish law, will light for us the path of darkness, as we will be able to make our way, as others have before us.

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, relates that he heard from the Ponevezer Rav, zl, an incredible insight regarding Chazal's statement that from the time the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed, Ein lo l'Hakadosh Baruch Hu ela daled amos shel halachah bilvad. "All that Hashem has/maintains in this world is four amos of halachah." What do Chazal mean with this statement? Are they intimating that since the Bais Hamikdash has been gone, Hashem reposes His Presence only in the daled amos shel halachah, because there is nowhere



else. Nothing is left. Earlier, we at least had the Temple. Now that it is gone, all that Hashem has left is our learning. In other words, the four cubits of Torah learning represent the "after." The "before" was the Temple.

The Ponevezer Rav explains that, with regard to Hashem's relationship with the Torah, nothing has changed. Even when the Bais Hamikdash was standing in all of its glory and the korbanos, offerings, and the priestly service were in full force, Hashem's world revolved around the Torah study of His People. When the Bais Hamikdash stood, Hashem rested His Presence also in the Temple. Now that it no longer exists, He only has His daled amos shel halachah. A talmid chacham, Torah scholar, is Hashem's world. Thus, the home of a scholar is a veritable Bais Hamikdash. It is to him that Klal Yisrael turns day and night to seek the dvar Hashem, word of G-d. Is it any wonder that when a righteous talmid chacham takes leave of this world, Hashem considers it as if the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed? Perhaps we should keep this in mind upon coming in contact with a gadol b'Yisrael, Torah giant. He represents the apex in a human being's relationship with Hashem.

<http://5tjt.com/the-exo-protein-bar-and-halacha/>

### **The Exo Protein Bar and Halacha**

**By Rabbi Yair Hoffman**

No, this article is not about Kashrus. It is about another Torah halacha. Exo, is a startup company based in Silicon Valley that sells protein bars. And while it is true that the Exo protein bar is most definitely not kosher, this article is about the concept of Bal teshaktzu – making oneself disgusting. The Exo protein bar, by the way, is made out of crickets. Gross? No question. And it may be a bit shocking that investors have backed this venture thus far to the tune of \$5.6 million in financing thus far. Why has so much money been invested in this venture when the majority of Americans are so thoroughly disgusted by it? These investors believe, no doubt, that with the right marketing, these views can be changed. Our concern, however, deals with probing the nature of this prohibition of Bal teshaktzu. Indeed, the classical case of Bal Teshaktzu as discussed in the Torah, as the Torah tells us (Vayikra 11:43), "You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps about, neither shall you make yourselves unclean with them, that you should be defiled." The prohibition is listed as negative Mitzvah #179 in the Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvos and is found in Shulchan Aruch YD 116:6.

**NOT JUST BUGS** The prohibition of Bal Teshaktzu is not restricted to bugs and creepy crawly things. It is violated whenever someone consumes something completely disgusting – such as anything with vomit in it, or a disgusting liquid.

**BIBLICAL OR RABBINIC?** There is, however, a debate as to whether this prohibition is Rabbinic or biblical (See PMG 13:1 who cites various views in this debate). The Bais Yosef (YD 116 "V'assur") is unsure as to whether the Rambam's view is that it is Rabbinic or whether it is Biblical and it is just that one does not receive malkos – lashes – for violating it, rather receiving makas mardus – Rabbinic lashes. The Sefer Yereim (#73) holds that the violation is biblical as does the TaZ. Most other Acharonim, however, hold that it is Rabbinic (See Levush YD 116:6, Ritvah Makos 16a). Thus, whenever, the Talmud cites the verse in the Torah (as in Shabbos 90b and Makkos 16b) it would be considered, an Asmachta according to this view, an allusion. Yet there is more to it than this. Some are of the opinion that it is only Rabbinically forbidden when the item is disgusting only to him. If the item is considered disgusting according to most people – then it is still considered a Torah prohibition (See Shoel UMaishiv MB Vol III #122). The Shoel UMaishiv's opinion, in fact, is a bit more nuanced. He compares it to the laws of Chol HaMoed, where the parameters are left to Chazal to determine what are the borders of the Biblical violation.

**BEYOND FOOD** And it is not just the food that could be considered a violation of Bal Teshaktzu. Martha Stewart fans take note: Bal Teshaktzu

can be violated in the manner of eating, such as with one's hands, as well as from very disgusting vessels (YD 116:6).

**FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES** There is, of course, an exception to the violation of Bal Teshaktzu. When done for medicinal purposes, there is no violation (See PMG 384:3, Pri Chadash 81:3).

**NOT GOING TO THE BATHROOM** Holding it in when one must use the bathroom is also a violation of Bal Teshaktzu, as the Gemorah in Makkos 16b states, but here it depends upon how badly one must go. In Orech Chaim 92:2 the Shulchan Aruch writes that if one has such an urge in the middle of Shmoneh Esreh one delays until one finishes the prayer. The Ramah qualifies this as only if it is a minor urge. If it is a strong one than one stops the Shmoneh Esreh. There is also a debate in halacha as to whether the prohibition applies to passing water as well or whether it is limited to the excretion of solid matter. The Mishna Brurah (3:31) rules that it applies to both. There is no prohibition in these areas regarding non-liquid and non-solid states. There is also an exception to the prohibition if one delays on account of seeking a place that would be more Tznius (Mishna Brurah ibid). What if someone has to go to the bathroom but other people are davening Shmoneh Esreh and one would have to walk in front of them? The Aishel Avrohol (Botshash Siman 102) writes that one is certainly permitted to do so, in order to avoid violating Bal Teshaktzu. It would seem that if there is another way around, one should take that one, however. Parenthetically, Rav Elyashiv zatzal once ruled (see Chashukei Chemed Megillah 22b) that one may rely on this Aishel Avrohom to permit returning a Sefer Torah to a room where people are in the middle of davening.

**BACK TO THE EXO BAR** So, matters of Kashrus aside, will a change in attitude about how revolting consuming crickets might be, remove the prohibition of Bal teshaktzu on these bars? The answer is that it would not, because the verse talks about this very case. The debate as to whether it is Rabbinic or biblical only revolves around the applications of the violation on matters beyond bugs, but all would agree that the bug consumption itself is forbidden and not subject to majority opinion or not.

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### **Why Not Use an Eiruv?**

**by R. Daniel Mann**

Question: Why would someone not trust an eiruv constructed under respectable rabbis' supervision?

Answer: The main reason that some people do not carry on Shabbat in an area with an eiruv is actually not a lack of trust in a given rabbi's expertise, as it is more commonly on fundamental grounds. Rather, they (including some rabbis who are responsible for eiruvim) are not convinced that an eiruv can be effective in the place in question. While all agree to the efficacy of eiruvim, some trust them only for small areas, not city or neighborhood eiruvim. Why?

What most people call an eiruv (a slight misnomer) is a collection of various structures, including walls and sets of strings connecting poles (tzurot hapetach). When an area is sufficiently encompassed with structures, it is a reshut hayachid (private domain, where one may carry, if certain other requirements are met). With all the possible places things that can go wrong in a big eiruv, including a need to rely on certain leniencies and the chance of changes (e.g., fallen or disqualified tzurot hapetach) since the last check, there is concern that something will. An eiruv is only as strong as its weakest link.

More fundamentally, the gemara (Eiruvim 6a-b) says that tzurot hapetach do not work in a reshut harabim (public domain, in which carrying more than four amot is forbidden by Torah law). Only in a karmelit (an area with reshut harabim-like status based on Rabbinic law) do tzurot hapesach make an area into a reshut hayachid, in which one may carry. Only actual physical

impediments, such as walls and doors/gates can turn a reshut harabim into a reshut hayachid in which one may carry, and these are rarely feasible in municipal settings. Thus, in order to use our standard eiruv, we need to assume that the areas in question are not reshuyot harabim. Are they?

The only Talmudicly explicit requirements of a reshut harabim are that it is sixteen amot wide (Shabbat 99a), it is not roofed over (ibid. 98a), and perhaps that is frequented by people (Eiruv 6b). Such places abound (see Rambam, Shabbat 14:1).

How, then, can the great majority of Shabbat-observant Jews use an eiruv that relies on tzurot hapetach? First, rest assured that usage of such eiruv is indeed the Ashkenazi minhag, supported by leading poskim for hundreds of years (see Magen Avraham 345:5) and to this day (see Igrot Moshe, OC I:139). The main source of leniency, which the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 345:7) cites, albeit as a secondary opinion, is that a reshut harabim requires the presence of 600,000 people. The Magen Avraham (ad loc. 5) says that this is the more accepted opinion. The Beur Halacha (ad loc.), while citing many Rishonim who accept it, cites even more Rishonim who are stringent. He also questions the Shulchan Aruch's contention that the 600,000 must be on an individual street in the course of a normal day. Another "disqualification" of reshuyot harabim is when they are not mefulash (i.e., if streets are lined by buildings on their sides and their openings end or they curve before making it through the city (see Shulchan Aruch, ibid. and Magen Avraham ad loc. 10).

There are other theses to explain our lenient practice (see Aruch Hashulchan, OC 345:20; Chazon Ish 107:5). Perhaps the strongest, found in the Avnei Nezer (OC 273), is that the idea that tzurot hapetach are ineffective in a reshut harabim is just a Rabbinic stringency. After erecting the classic eiruv, then, the worst-case-scenario is only a Rabbinic prohibition, making it is easier to rely on the lenient opinions that a reshut harabim requires 600,000 people.

While we have confirmed the validity of the practice of most of us to rely on eiruv, we have seen that there are often also strong reasons to refrain from usage, even if an illustrious rabbi vouches for the eiruv. Although we would warn people of the dangers of being machmir on this matter (e.g., due to communal and family dynamics), one should not misinterpret the intention of those who do so.

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#### Jonathan Rosenblum

Mishpacha Magazine

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#### Remembering the Yaldei Teheran

The final effort of the so-called Children of Teheran to be recognized as Holocaust survivors for the purposes of the reparations agreement between Germany and Israel was rejected by the Israeli Supreme Court last week. The Court did, however suggest that the Knesset should cure the problem by statute. The youngest of the Yaldai Teheran are already in their late seventies or early eighties, and the memory of their story will likely perish with them, if it has not been already among the younger generation of Mishpacha readers. But that story, which was a cause celebre in the Orthodox world seventy years ago, continues to powerfully affect the Israeli chareidi mindset until today.

So for a younger generation: Who were the Yaldai Teheran?

Approximately 1,000 orphaned Polish Jewish children made their way to Teheran during the first years of World War II, where they were under the formal protection of the Polish-government-in-exile. Of those children, between 80-90% came from religious homes, and many had studied in chadorim and Bais Yaakov schools in Poland. The Jewish Agency ran the camp in which the children were housed with the goal of turning the children from their previous lives as religious Jews. The food was non-kosher, and when a group of children refused to eat it, the camp director, a member of the rabidly anti-religious Hashomer Hatzair movement, responded, "Let one or two die of starvation, and the rest will soon forget about kosher food." Other children were forbidden from reciting Kaddish for their parents. So intent was Jewish Agency on preventing the children from receiving any religious instruction from a number of European rabbis who were then in Teheran that it informed the Polish-government-in-exile that it would forego any funding if it insisted on religious instruction being made available. The second major issue was the placement of the children once they reached

Palestine. Eleven camps were created for them, eight secular and three under the auspices of Mizrahi. Agudath Israel prepared 600 places for the children to no avail. In one of the camps, 29 boys had attended cheder and 3 girls Bais Yaakov, yet not one was placed in an Agudah institution. And in another camp, the vast majority of the 446 children under 14 had attended chadorim or Bais Yaakov, yet again not one was placed in an Agudah institution. Ultimately, only 30 out of the 1,000 children were placed in Agudah institutions. Yet another 70, who allegedly did not come from chareidi homes or were over 14 and had allegedly opted not to go to Agudah institutions eventually made their way to Agudah schools and yeshivos. So outraged was Chief Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Herzog by what one Ha'aretz writer characterized as the blatant "soul-snatching" that he called for a boycott of diaspora funding for the Jewish Agency. WHY DO THE YALDAI TEHERAN continue to matter today seventy years later? Because the Kulturkampf against religion in the early days of the state continues to color chareidi perceptions of the state until today. The treatment of the Ya'dai Teheran was not an isolated incident. When the Jews came from Yemen on Operation Eagles' Wings ten years later, the batei Knesset they set up in the absorption camps were put under lock and key. Children were, in Rabbi Herzog's words, prevented from "the study of Torah and G-d's commandments." The children were separated from the parents – in order to subject them to reeducation. In the children's homes established, the peyot of the Yemenite boys, which served as the clearest mark of their distinction as Jews in Yemen, were cut. Parents who attempted to register their children for religious education were told that they would thereby lose their Histadrut work cards, rendering them basically unable to work.

Again during the massive North African aliyah of the '50s and '60s, Youth Aliya made every effort to convince parents to send their children ahead of them to Israel. The parents were assured that their children would be placed in religious environments, but the promise was rarely made good. All this was done for the most humanitarian of reasons – the desire to save the children from their parents' primitive religious beliefs. A writer in Jerusalem's Kol Ha'ir, writing about the newly arrived Ethiopians in the early '90s, recalled the lessons of the '50s and '60s: "In order that at least the young would have some chance, the tradition had to be destroyed, the family structure had to be destroyed, respect for parents and elders had to be destroyed. The same sad, cruel choice – tradition or integration – returns today with respect to the Ethiopians . . . This time, too, circumstances force us to face the cruel fact – better the salvation of the young, so that at least they can integrate." The sustained efforts of the Jewish Agency to uproot religious belief, often with the acquiescence of the government, gave credence to the charge that the purpose of the state was to destroy religion. And it was during that period that the chareidi attitude of complete separation from the surrounding society and cultural isolationism took hold most fiercely. For if the dominant ethos of Israeli society could condone deliberate attempts to uproot Torah and mitzvos from among the Jewish people, then obviously the state and its institutions all fell under extreme suspicion. NOW, the chareidi impulse towards insularity and separation did not start with the Yaldai Teheran in the '40s. The Torah itself describes Israel as "a nation dwelling alone." Our national mission is to create an ideal society among ourselves based on the dictates of the Torah, and in that way to become a light to the nations. In exile, the ghetto walls continued to externally enforce Jewish separation. But when they fell, many Jews, long cut off from the world, rushed to see what was on the other side. Torah leaders sought to recreate new ghetto walls to shield the remaining faithful. There was, however, another response to the fall of the ghetto walls – that of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch. He viewed the end of the ghettos with great optimism -- as a moment of extraordinary opportunity for Jews to now place on display before the world the nature of a life shaped by the dictates of Torah. The great Torah leaders of Eastern Europe respected Rabbi Hirsch, but nevertheless felt that his optimism was only appropriate when melded to his fierce yiras Shomayim. And they knew from bitter experience that such yiras Shomayim is not the norm. STILL it could be asked today in Eretz Yisrael: Is there any place yet for a bit of the Hirschian optimism? We are no longer the small and embattled community of the '50s. We are a significant and ever growing percentage of Israel's Jewish population. The threats we face as a community are more often from within than without. And in those circumstances, is it possible to ask: Must fearfulness always be the dominant impulse and defensiveness the only strategy? Or is it possible that one way to strengthen ourselves internally is by instilling in ourselves the confidence that the Torah we possess is so powerful that it is non-observant Jews who should be afraid that they will be changed by the encounter when we meet, and not we who are terrified of them? The Yaldai Teheran remain a powerful warning. But they may no longer constitute the entire story.