

see from a tiny seed. A tiny seed, a pit that we throw out when we eat an apple or an orange that seed could be planted in the ground and from that seed comes a tremendous tree, a tree that gives forth many Peiros (fruits) for an extended period of time. That seed is the seed of this idea of Gan Eden Kodem Hacheit. A Shefa Beracha that just needs a little bit on which to be Chal. The Gan is a place of seeds a place of planting. A place of planting, whatever it is not just a planted seed but anything a person had would have that Beracha of a Ribui a Shefa coming from a little bit.

The Mishkan was a Gan Eden on this world, was a place of Adam Kodem Hacheit and to that degree a small amount of bread brings a Ribui Beracha. We know that the Magen Avraham says that when a person says Birchas Hamazon at his own table he should leave some bread on the table on which the Beracha will be Chal. We don't really understand what that means "on which the Beracha will be Chal." But the concept is this concept. That if there is something on which the Beracha could be Chal the miracle of Adam B'Gan Eden the Metzios of Adam Kodem Hacheit is such that from a little comes a Shefa of Beracha. This is the Ramban's Yesod here in this week's Parsha.

Rav Hutner in the Mamarei Pesach Maimar 89 adds to this Ramban. He says that in Ruchnios (spiritual things) the blessing of Gan Eden remains. Chazal say for example Adam Mikadeish Atzmo L'mata M'at Mikadshim Oso Milmala Harbei. Or the expression Pischu Li Pesach K'pischei Shel Machat V'ani Eftach Lachem Pesach K'pischei Shel Ulam. There is an idea that in Olam Hazei when a person does something, he begins, he starts something spiritual, there is a Shefa of Beracha that comes with it and a Ribui and a person who starts to learn with the right attitude a person who starts to do Mitzvos with the right attitude is Zoche to that Shefa of Beracha, where a person achieves more than he ever thought that he would achieve. Eretz Yisrael is called Eretz Zavas Chalav Ud'vash. Rav Hutner explains that Chalav (milk), Devash (honey) is found in every country it is not special about Eretz Yisrael, it is not the milk and honey. It is the Zavas (the flow), a Shefa. Eretz Zavas Chalav Ud'vash the Beracha of Eretz Yisrael when Eretz Yisrael is used properly it is a Beracha of this type of Shefa of Adam Kodem Hacheit. Therefore, in Ruchnios we have to understand that sometimes achieving certain things seems impossible. I am sure most people who started Daf Yomi imagined that it wouldn't last too long. It is just impossible to go so many years and continue every day to keep up with the pace of a Daf Yomi. It is very very difficult. Nobody thought that it would come easily. But there is a Beracha. You start with a little and there is a Shefa and a Hashpa'a, a Shefa of Beracha.

Agav, we are learning Maseches Kiddushin this year in Yeshiva. On Daf 7 there is a concept of Hispashtus which essentially means that if someone puts Kedusha on part of an animal it spreads to the whole animal. Hispashtus. Whatever that Din is the concept is this concept. That by Devarim Shebik'dusha the original Beracha remains. If there is a seed then it will grow, then it will spread, then it will expand. You just have to be Mikabeil it. When there is a Hispashtus of a little bit of Kedusha it spreads to the whole animal. The Gemara compares it to Kiddushin, to marriage. In marriage too if there is a small amount of effort, a small of desire to put Kedusha into a marriage it spreads, it has a Hispashtus that is the idea of a small amount spreading to a lot.

Now once I mention this Ramban, I would like to mention a Kasha that Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman asks in Parshas Chukas 20:11 (on page # 142) he asks on the Ramban. There in Parshas Chukas in the Ayeles Hashachar he brings the Ramban with the idea that for Beracha to work in Olam Hazei it has to be Yeish M'yeish, it has to come from a little bit and spread and that there is no Yeish Mai'ayin. Rav Aharon Leib asks from the Sela which gave forth water, the stone has no water in it from which the Beracha of the Mai Hasela would continue. Rav Aharon Leib asks that that Beracha, the fact that the stone gave forth water in the Midbar seems to contradict the Ramban's rule for miracles.

Rav Aharon Leib remains with a Tzorech Iyun. However, in fact we can say Farkert it is a Raya to the Ramban perhaps. Why? The Mishna in Pirkei Avos 5:5 says (עשרה דברים נבראו בין השמשות--פי הארץ, פי הבאר, פי האתון, והקשת,) (והמון, והמטה, והשמיר, והכתב, והמכתב, והלוהות (פי הבאר) Hashem created this B'air which would give forth water from a stone. Why did it have to be created during the six days creation any more than the jug by Elisha which gave forth a lot of oil? The answer according to the Ramban is simple. In the miracle of the jug of Elisha it was Yeish Mai'yeish there was something there that spread. Yeish Mai'yeish can exist in Olam Hazei. The Mayim Misela (the water from the rock) that could not exist in Olam Hazei unless it was created in the Sheishes Yemai Beraishis where it was the period of time of Yeish Mai'ayin. So it seems Farkert that it turns out to be a beautiful Raya to the Rayon of the Ramban.

3. I would like to end of with a question which I had hoped to answer but we are running out of time so I guess I will leave you wondering. We have in this week's Parsha in 25:8 (ועשו לי מקדש). Rashi says (ועשו לי בית קדוש) that the Bais Hamikdash has to be built Lishma. We find by numerous things that have to be done Lishma, the making of Tzitzis and the baking of Matzos, there are Halachos that requires Lishma like the working out the parchment of a Sefer Torah. So here too the Bais Hamikdash has to be built Lishma. It seems difficult because Hatnach by the Mishkan in the Midbar that was built by Jews, however, when you learn of the building of the Bais Hamikdash in the times of Shlomo Hamelech which is in the beginning of Sefer Melachim Aleph, you see that much of it was done by Goyim besides the general Pele I would think if someone would say we are going to build a Bais Hamikdash Jews would line up to do it why give the job to Chiron Melech Tzor and other Goyim? Nevertheless that is a fact. The fact is that it was farmed out and a lot of it was done by Goyim. If it needs Lishma and we have this concept that we don't trust a Goy to do Lishma or maybe a Goy is Halachically incapable as it says in a Mishna in Maseches Gittin then the question would remain how in the Bais Hamikdash it was done that way. I wish everyone a Mishenichnas Adar Marbim B'simcha. Klal Yisrael should know more Simchos and IY"Y it should be a wonderful period of Adar Rishon and Adar Sheini an extended period of Simcha for one and all. A Good Shabbos!

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SHAPING PRAYER EXPERIENCE: A STUDY OF SEPHARDIC AND ASHKENAZIC LITURGY

by Rabbi Hayyim Angel

Parts 1 and 2

Introduction

Over the centuries that they lived apart from each other, Sephardim and Ashkenazim developed different prayer liturgies. It is valuable to learn about the finer differences that emerged between Sephardic and Ashkenazic liturgies, to see how rabbinic interpretations and cultures shaped the religious experiences underlying prayer. This essay will briefly survey a few aspects of Sephardic and Ashkenazic liturgy.

Connection to Tanach

Although many rabbinic prayers draw inspiration from Tanach, Sephardim generally prefer an even closer connection to Tanach than do Ashkenazim. For example, the Pesukei DeZimra offer psalms of praise to get us into the proper religious mindset for the mandatory prayers—Shema, Amidah, and their blessings. On Shabbat morning, Sephardim read the psalms in order of their appearance in Sefer Tehillim. Ashkenazim read the psalms in a different

order, presumably arranged for thematic reasons. Rabbi Shalom Carmy recently wrote an article offering a conceptual explanation for the Ashkenazic arrangement.[1] To understand the reasoning behind the order of the Sephardic liturgy, however, just open a Tanach.

In a similar vein, in Shabbat Minchah, Sephardim and Ashkenazim usually recite three verses beginning with Tzidkatecha after the Amidah. Once again, Sephardim recite these verses in their order of appearance in Sefer Tehillim (36:7; 71:19; 119:142). Ashkenazim reverse the order, requiring explanation. Perishah (on Tur Orach Chaim 292:6) suggests that God's Name does not appear in 119:142; Elokim appears twice in 71:19; and God's Name appears in 36:7. Therefore, Ashkenazim read the verses in an ascending order of holiness. Others suggest that Ashkenazim arranged the verses so that God's Name is the last word before the Kaddish.[2]

The Talmud (Berachot 11b) debates the proper opening to the second blessing prior to the Shema in Shacharit, whether it should be Ahavah Rabbah or Ahavat Olam (Sephardim and Ashkenazim both say Ahavat Olam in the blessing of Arvit). Ashkenazim chose Ahavah Rabbah, and Sephardim chose Ahavat Olam. Mishnah Berurah (60:2) explains that Ashkenazim selected Ahavah Rabbah to parallel Eichah (3:23): "They are renewed every morning—ample is Your grace! (Rabbah Eunatecha)." In contrast, Rif, Rambam, and Abudarham explain that Sephardim preferred Ahavat Olam since that formula is biblical: "Eternal love (Ahavat Olam) I conceived for you then; therefore I continue My grace to you" (Yirmiyahu 31:2).[3] Piyut is an area where Sephardim and Ashkenazim diverge more significantly, since these poems were composed in the respective lands of Sephardim and Ashkenazim, rather than in earlier periods. Sephardim generally incorporated the Piyutim of Sephardic poets, and Ashkenazim generally incorporated the Piyutim of Ashkenazic poets. True to his Tanach-centered approach, Ibn Ezra on Kohelet 5:1 levels criticisms against several Ashkenazic Paytanim, including the venerated Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir, whose Piyutim are used widely in Ashkenazic liturgy: (1) Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir speaks in riddles and allusions, whereas prayers should be comprehensible to all. (2) He uses many talmudic Aramaisms, whereas we should pray in Hebrew, our Sacred Tongue. (3) There are many grammatical errors in Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir's poetry. (4) He uses Derashot that are far from Peshat, and we need to pray in Peshat. Ibn Ezra concludes that it is preferable not to use faulty Piyutim at all. In contrast, he idealizes Rabbi Sa'adia Gaon as the model Paytan.

Kaddish and Kedushah[4]

Sometimes, minor text variations reflect deeper concepts. For example, Rabbi Marvin Luban notes a distinction between the Kaddish and the Kedushah.[5] In the Kedushah, we sanctify God's Name in tandem with the angels. In the Kaddish, we cry over the absence of God's presence in the world.

Tosafot on Sanhedrin 37b refer to an early Geonic custom where Kedushah was recited only on Shabbat. Although we do not follow this practice (we recite both Kaddish and Kedushah on weekdays and Shabbat), it makes excellent conceptual sense. Kedushah conveys a sense of serenity, setting a perfect tone for Shabbat. In contrast, Kaddish reflects distress over the exile, which is better suited for weekdays.

A relic of this practice distinguishes the Kedushah read by Sephardim and Ashkenazim for Shacharit on Shabbat. Ashkenazim incorporate the language of Kaddish into the Kedushah:

From Your place, our King, You will appear and reign over us, for we await You. When will You reign in Zion? Soon, in our days, forever and ever, may You dwell there. May You be exalted and sanctified (Titgaddal VeTitkaddash) within Jerusalem Your city, from generation to generation and for all eternity. May our eyes see Your kingdom, as it is expressed in the songs of Your might, written by David, Your righteous anointed (ArtScroll translation).

In contrast, Sephardim keep the Kaddish and the Kedushah separate. They insist that there is a time and a place for each type of prayer.

Haftarot[6]

Although the Sages of the Talmud codified the prophetic passages to be read as Haftarat for holidays, they left the choice of regular Shabbat Haftarat to the discretion of individual communities (Rabbi Yosef Karo, Kesef Mishneh on Rambam, Laws of Prayer, 12:12). Consequently, several Haftarah reading traditions have arisen.

VaYeira

Generally, when Sephardim and Ashkenazim read from same passage, Sephardim are more likely to have a shorter Haftarah. In BeShalach, for example, Sephardim read Devorah's song in Shofetim chapter 5, whereas Ashkenazim read the chapter of narrative beforehand as well.

One striking example of this phenomenon is the Haftarah of VaYeira. Melachim Bet, chapter 4 relates the story of the prophet Elisha and a woman who offered him hospitality. Elisha prophesied that this woman would give birth to a son as a reward for her hospitality, and indeed she did. These themes directly parallel elements of the Parashah: Angelic guests visit Abraham and Sarah; Abraham and Sarah offer their guests hospitality; and the angels promise them the birth of Isaac.

After these initial parallels to the Parashah, the story in the Haftarah takes a tragic turn in verses 18–23. The son dies, and the woman goes to find Elisha. As she leaves home, the woman's husband asks why she was going out if it was not a special occasion, and she replies, "Shalom." This is where Sephardim end the Haftarah. Ashkenazim read the continuation of the narrative in verses 24–37, which relate how the woman finds Elisha who rushes back to her house and miraculously revives the child. It appears jarring that Sephardim would conclude the Haftarah at a point where the child still is lifeless rather than proceeding to the happy and miraculous ending of the story.

Rabbi Elhanan Samet explains the surprising discrepancy by noting that the entire story becomes inordinately long for a congregational setting (37 verses). Sephardim therefore abridged the Haftarah to 23 verses at the expense of reading its happy ending. They conclude with the word "Shalom" to strike at least some positive note.[7]

In the final analysis, Sephardim did not want to burden the community with too long a Haftarah reading. Ashkenazim favored completing the story even though that meant reading a lengthy Haftarah. Perhaps the best solution would be to read the shorter Haftarah in synagogue and then to learn the story in its entirety.

Shemot

Parashat Shemot is an example where Sephardim, Ashkenazim, and Yemenites adopted passages from different prophetic books to highlight different themes from the Parashah.

Sephardim read the beginning of Sefer Yirmiyahu (1:1–2:3). In this passage, God selects Yirmiyahu as a prophet. Yirmiyahu expresses reluctance only to be rebuffed by God: "I replied: Ah, Lord God! I don't know how to speak, for I am still a boy. And the Lord said to me: Do not say, I am still a boy, but go wherever I send you and speak whatever I command you" (Yirmiyahu 1:6–7). This choice of Haftarah focuses on the parallels between Yirmiyahu's initiation and ensuing reluctance, and Moshe's hesitations in accepting his prophetic mission in the Parashah.

Ashkenazim read from Yeshayahu, focusing primarily on the theme of national redemption: "[In days] to come Jacob shall strike root, Israel shall sprout and blossom, and the face of the world shall be covered with fruit" (Yeshayahu 27:6). "For when he—that is, his children—behold what My hands have wrought in his midst, they will hallow My name. Men will hallow the Holy One of Yaakov and stand in awe of the God of Israel"

(Yeshayahu 29:23). Although there is rebuke in the middle of the Haftarah, the passage begins and ends with redemption. Yemenites read one of Yechezkel's harsh diatribes against the Jews for their infidelity to God since their inception as a nation. The prophet compares them to an unfaithful woman who has cheated on God by turning to idolatry and the allures of pagan nations: "O mortal, proclaim Jerusalem's abominations to her" (Yechezkel 16:2). Ashkenazim highlight the link between the national exile and redemption. Yemenites selected Yechezkel's caustic condemnation of the Israelites, implying that the Israelites deserved slavery as a punishment for having assimilated in Egypt. It likely was used as an exhortation to contemporary Jews to remain faithful to the Torah. Sephardim chose to highlight the development of the outstanding individual figure of the Parashah—Moshe.

Music And Mood During The High Holy Days

One notable practice in many Sephardic communities is to sing several tunes during the High Holy Day season that are lively, exciting, and even joyous. One of the most dramatic examples is the refrain in the Selichot (penitential prayers), Chatanu Lefanecha Racheim Aleinu, we have sinned before You, have mercy on us! Amidst our confession of sinning, this tune is rousing and upbeat. If an Ashkenazic Jew heard some of these Sephardic tunes, he or she might intuitively feel that the happiness of the music was inappropriate for Yom Kippur. If a Sephardic Jew heard some of the solemn Ashkenazic tunes, he or she might wonder why the music lacks this happiness. Yet, both sets of tunes are consistent with different aspects of the day. Rabbi Ovadyah Yosef discusses whether one should use joyous or fearful tunes on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur (Yechaveh Da'at 2:69). Among many authorities, he quotes Rabbi Hayyim Vital, who stated that his teacher, Rabbi Yitzhak Luria (Ari), used to cry while praying on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. Rabbi Yosef also quotes Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna (Gra), who ruled that people should not cry but rather should use festive holiday melodies. Rabbi Yosef concludes that if one is overcome with emotion, one certainly may cry. However, one otherwise should try to be in a festive, happy mood.[8]

Not only do melodic differences elicit different emotions, but the words do, as well. To take one prominent example, a central prayer of the Ashkenazic High Holy Day liturgy is the "UNetaneh Tokef," during which the congregation contemplates the gravity of being judged. Yet, this prayer—composed during the medieval period—is not part of the liturgy in most Sephardic communities.

Rabbi Simchah Bar Yehoshua, an Ashkenazic rabbi, traveled on a ship with Sephardim to the Land of Israel. He wrote: "On the entire voyage we prayed with the Sephardim. The Sephardim awoke prior to daybreak to say Selichot with a quorum as is their custom in the month of Elul. During the day they eat and rejoice and are happy of heart. Some of them spend their entire days in study (In J. D. Eisenstein, *Otzar HaMasa'ot*, 1969, p. 241)."

When Jews of different backgrounds live together, they have the opportunity to learn from the practices of one another, thereby appreciating other aspects of our rich tradition.

The Censored Verse in Aleinu

The Aleinu prayer is ancient, and initially was recited only during the High Holy Days. It appears to have entered the daily prayers around the year 1300. In the original text, we contrast ourselves with pagans, "Who prostrate to vanity and hollowness, and pray to a god who cannot save, Sheheim Mishtachavim LaHevel VaRik, UMitpallelim El Eil Lo Yoshi'a." This line derives from two verses in Sefer Yeshayahu: For the help of Egypt shall be vain and empty (Hevel VaRik). (Yeshayahu 30:7)

No foreknowledge had they who carry their wooden images and pray to a god who cannot give success (UMitpallelim El Eil Lo Yoshi'a) (Yeshayahu 45:20).

Around 1400, an apostate claimed that this line in Aleinu was intended to slur Christianity. He observed that the numerical value (Gematria) of VaRik is 316, the same as Yeshu, the Hebrew name of the Christian savior. This accusation led to the Christian censor striking this line from the Aleinu in France and Germany. In 1703, the Prussian government even placed guards in synagogues to ensure that Jews would not recite that line.

In their attempts to defend the original prayer, rabbis protested that the line is anti-pagan, and cannot be anti-Christian. Among other arguments, they noted that the verses are from Yeshayahu, who long pre-dates Christianity. Nevertheless, the censor required Ashkenazic Jews to remove that line, whereas Sephardim retained the original text. Today, several Ashkenazic communities have restored that line to their Siddurim.[9]

Conclusion

Most aspects of the Sephardic and Ashkenazic liturgy are strikingly similar. The biblical passages, ancient rabbinic prayers, and the structure of the service, are largely the same with minor variations.

In those areas where there were choices left to later generations, such as the order of the psalms, choosing between rabbinic interpretations, Piyutim, Shabbat Haftarot, and music, we can gain a better sense of what choices different communities made to shape their prayer experience. Occasionally, we also see evidence of persecution of Jews through the censorship of ancient prayers.

This article offers a small window into how we can gain a better understanding of the distinctive features of Sephardic and Ashkenazic prayer liturgies. More importantly, a careful comparative study of prayer should help us appreciate prayer itself more, and enable us to grow in our relationship with God.

[1] R. Shalom Carmy, "'I Will Bless God at All Times': Pesukei DeZimrah on Shabbat and on Weekdays," forthcoming in *Mi-Tokh Ha-Ohel: Shabbat Prayer Volume* (Jerusalem: Maggid).

[2] Macy Nulman, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer: Ashkenazic and Sephardic Rites* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1993), p. 327.

[3] Macy Nulman, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer*, pp. 11-12.

[4] This section is taken from Hayyim Angel, *A Synagogue Companion* (New York: Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, 2013), pp. 340-341.

[5] R. Marvin Luban, "The Kaddish: Man's Reply to the Problem of Evil," in *Studies in Torah Judaism*, ed. Leon Stitskin (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1969), pp. 191-234.

[6] This section is taken from Hayyim Angel, *A Synagogue Companion*, pp. 228-229, 240-241.

[7] R. Elhanan Samet, *Pirkei Elisha (Ma'alei Adumim: Ma'aliyot)*, 2007), pp. 281-284.

[8] R. David Brofsky, *Hilchot Mo'adim: Understanding the Laws of the Festivals* (Jerusalem: Maggid, 2013), pp. 93-94.

[9] Macy Nulman, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer*, pp. 24-26.

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PARASHAT TERUMA

Sicha of **HARAV BARUCH GIGI SHLIT" A**

"I Shall Build a Mishkan in My Heart"

Adapted by Immanuel Meier

Translated by Kaeren Fish

Rashi and Ramban disagree as to the role of the Mishkan and the sacrifices. Their respective views appeared earlier in the midrash on this week's parasha.

"The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: I have given over My Torah to you; it is as though I Myself have been given over together with it, as it is written, 'Let them take Me a contribution...'

This may be compared to a king who had an only daughter. A foreign monarch came and asked her hand in marriage. When he sought to return to his own country, taking his wife with him, the king said to him: My daughter, whom I have given to you, is my only one. I cannot part from her; at the same time, I cannot tell you not to take her, for she is

your wife. Do me this favor, then: wherever you go, make a small cabin for me, that I may live with you, for I cannot surrender my daughter.

In the same way, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: I have given you the Torah. I cannot part from it, nor can I tell you not to take it. So wherever you go, make Me a house, that I may dwell in it – as it is written, 'Let them make Me a Mikdash...' (Shemot Rabba, Teruma, parasha 33.)

According to this view, the Mishkan serves a positive purpose: God seeks a place where He can cause His Name to rest, somewhere close to the Torah and Am Yisrael. Ramban, who maintains that the parashot here follow the chronological order, likewise understands the command concerning the Mishkan as having followed directly after the giving of the Torah and the "covenant of the basins," as recorded in the parashot of Yitro and Mishpatim.

Assuming this perspective, what are we to make of God's command to construct a Mishkan at this particular point in time? The answer would seem to lie in the profound transition that came about at the Revelation at Sinai. Prior to that point, God had appeared in the clearest and most manifest way, in the miracles of the ten plagues and the splitting of the Reed Sea. At Sinai, however, the relationship between God and Israel moves to a different level. The bond becomes more personal, more intimate, and as such God's revelation accordingly shifts to a more private, concealed place.

Rashi adopts a different view. He maintains that the parashot do not record the events in their chronological order, and that the entire issue of the Mishkan arose only after the sin of the golden calf, and as a direct result of it. Had it not been for that sin, it is quite possible that there never would have been a Mishkan at all. Its entire essence and purpose, according to Rashi, is an atonement for the golden calf. Rashi's view, too, has its roots in the midrash cited above, which continues as follows:

"A different opinion:... 'Even from the rebellious ones' (Tehillim 68:19) – the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moshe: Concerning that which the idolaters claim – that I will not return to be with Bnei Yisrael because they worshipped idolatry, as it is written (Devarim 9), 'They have turned away quickly...' – even though they are rebellious, I will not abandon them, and I will dwell with them, as it is written, 'Even the rebellious ones, that the Lord God might dwell [there].'" [1]

This does not depict the Mishkan as "lekhat'chila" – i.e., the original ideal; rather, the situation is altogether "bed'avad" – an "after the fact" acceptance of reality. This midrash suggests that God would have preferred for there to be no Mishkan; we might even say that the Mishkan was not part of His original plan. The sins of Bnei Yisrael brought about a certain reality, with a need for "tikkun" (repair) that included also a Mishkan.

Personal expression in the service of God

Ramban's interpretation seems simpler and more likely. Beyond the logic indicating that the Mishkan is indeed what God wants, his view also sits better with the plain reading of the text, with no need to rearrange the parashot.

Why, then, does Rashi adopt his own view? Why does he feel the need to interpret the situation in a way that does not conform with the plain reading, and thereby to turn the entire phenomenon of the Mishkan into an accommodation of reality rather than an ideal?

Like Rashi, the Rambam in his Moreh Nevukhim argues that the sacrifices are commanded as a result of the sin of the golden calf. His view is based on the gap between the ideal reality and the real world. The original, supreme aim had been that Bnei Yisrael would attain faith in God through purely spiritual means and activity. This is what the Revelation at Sinai should have brought about. But in the real world it became apparent that the nation needed some tangible, material guideposts. This need caused them to create the golden calf – the same calf that returns in the form of the molten image of Mikha, and in the two golden statues set up by Yerav'am. This gap between the original spiritual ideal and the actual need for physicality, produced a sort of compromise: Divine service in the form of sacrifice. The Mishkan is a tangible expression of God, in accordance with His command.

However, it would seem that this is not what Rashi means. Even Rashi agrees that the verses at the end of parashat Yitro, concerning the altar of stones, were uttered immediately after the giving of the Torah, prior to the sin of the golden calf:

"God said to Moshe, So shall you say to Bnei Yisrael: You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make with Me gods of silver, neither shall you make for yourselves gods of gold. An altar of earth shall you make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings, your sheep and your oxen, in all places where I cause My Name to be pronounced, I will come to you and I will bless you. And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone, for it you lift up your sword over it, you have defiled it. Neither shall you go up by steps to My altar, so that your nakedness shall not be exposed on it." (Shemot 20:19-22)

This prompts the question: if the altar and sacrifices were commanded already prior to the sin of the golden calf, then what changed as a result of that episode, necessitating a Mishkan which (in Rashi's view) had not been necessary previously?

To answer this question we must take a closer look at the above verses, from the end of parashat Yitro, which are formulated in the singular. In Rashi's view, the ideal reality is one where individuals build 'bamot' – private altars, built wherever and however a person chooses. Each individual would be free to express himself freely in his Divine service, building altars of any shape and size and in any location, and offering sacrifices in accordance with his own desire. It is this sort of reality that is described by the prophet Malakhi, with regard to the relationship of the other nations to God:

"For from the rising of the sun until it goes down, My Name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is burned to My Name and pure offerings, for My Name is great among the nations, says the Lord of Hosts." (Malakhi 1:11)

This was meant to be the reality amongst Bnei Yisrael, too, until the sin of the golden calf. This sin showed that personal expression may lead to sin – bordering even on idolatry. Hence it became necessary to unify all the bamot and focus Divine service in one central location, with a fixed schedule of clearly-defined public sacrifices, and detailed laws concerning private offerings.

Although the personal style of expression in Divine service was for all practical purposes set aside, there is still importance to self-expression and there are still commandments in which this aspect is manifest. Perhaps the clearest example is the mitzva of the sukka.

The Gemara (Sukka 9a) discusses the sanctity of the wood of the sukka. Other than Torah scrolls, tefillin, and mezuzot, this is the only other mitzva I know of where the object has its own intrinsic sanctity. And yet the form of the sukka, and the amount one uses it, are decided upon by each individual. Every person has his own experiences, different from those of his fellow, and in the mitzva of sukka this individuality has a chance to be expressed in the strongest possible way.

Prayer is another area in which there is personal expression. Reviewing the prayer text one is struck by how the words of Chazal, formulated so many generations ago, remain so vitally relevant. Nevertheless, there are elements that are relevant specifically to our times, and a person may mention these in his personal prayers. I once heard a rabbi talking about expressing personally relevant aspects of the various blessings in one's Amida prayer. His suggestion was that all such personal additions be inserted together, right at the end of the Amida, just before the concluding "yehi ratzon," so as not to interrupt or change in any way the prayer formula as set forth by Chazal.

This troubled me. From his words it would seem that one's prayer consists of two parts: an antiquated, no-longer-relevant section which, out of excessive conservatism, we leave printed in the prayer book and part of our service; and a contemporary prayer, relevant to our lives here and now, where a person means every word that he says.

This cannot be. The entire tefilla must be relevant to us and connected to our lives. In each and every blessing we must voice those aspects of it that resound within us. Each of us has personal issues that occupy us: when we reach the blessing of wisdom, we are thinking about an exam in which we hope to succeed; when we recite the blessing of healing, we mention those we know who are ill, etc. Our own lives and our reality must be part of each blessing.

There is also another level – the communal or national level. I heard recently that Rav Medan adds, in his blessing for redemption, a prayer for deliverance from the Iranian threat. This is a personal prayer for a public good, or a public outcome. This represents a continuation of the Mishkan through prayer, as the verse teaches, "In my heart I shall build a Mishkan..."

The Midrash describes Moshe questioning how God can confine Himself within the four walls of the Mishkan. God replies that He will look to the world, and to man, for the model. The world, and man himself, express the confinement of God. God confines himself within physical dimensions – the human body, the size of the universe. This is the whole basis of Kabbala.

Another midrash talks about the parallel between the basic elements of the Mishkan – including the dyed threads of tekhelet and argaman, and the goat skins – and the human body. God constricts himself within the Mishkan, and within man. Similarly, Nechama Leibowitz offers a fascinating analysis of the precise parallel between the order of the building of the Mishkan, and the order of the creation of the world.

What emerges from these parallels is that God's Name finds its place in the Mishkan, in the world, and in man. The Divine Name that rests within man should find expression in the sukka, in prayer, and in every commandment that we perform.

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

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>

reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com

subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Blog :: Rabbi Berel Wein

Nonsense

The famous legend is that while Rome burned to the ground, its emperor Nero entertained himself by fiddling on his violin. The current election campaign in Israel reminds me of that legend. Every nonsensical issue from returning used bottles and pocketing the deposits to the current contempt regarding the appointment, firing and reappointment of avowed leftists as judges for the awarding of the Israel prize in literature fill the media day in and day out.

All of this is occurring against the backdrop of the collapse of Arab states that surround us, the continuing progress of Iran towards nuclear capability and perhaps, most importantly, the challenges of the real domestic issues here in Israel. All of the political parties advance such nonsensical spin and engage in terribly vitriolic and unfair character assassinations of leaders other than the ones they follow.

Jews in major European capitals are being slaughtered simply because they are Jewish. There is no doubt that anti-Semitism in all of its guises – including and perhaps especially, anti-Israel activities and propaganda – is the popular program of the academia and masses of Europe. There is no need any longer for Holocaust denial – the Holocaust is simply irrelevant in today's Jew-hating world.

One could say, and I think there are many who do, that we are reliving the decade of the 1920s when officially backed and intellectually condoned anti-Semitism ruled Europe. The major difference, however, between then and now is the state of Israel. So what the state of Israel will do, if anything, to counteract this plague should be one of the major issues placed before us in this election. Sadly until now, it is completely missing from the rhetoric and discussion.

People are fascinated by nonsense and unimportant matters. To the sports fan there is nothing more important than the success or failure of the team that one is rooting for. Deep down in one's heart, one is well aware that in the long run of history, it really makes little difference which team wins the championship.

The fan is also well aware that one's team's winning or losing the championship cannot materially affect one's status in life, one's family relations and one's ultimate achievements and mission. Yet in spite of all of this knowledge and reality, millions of people the world over are more preoccupied with the relatively nonsensical sports page of the newspaper than with any other contents of that paper.

It is the nonsense of life that fascinates us and holds our attention and imagination. We almost willfully wish to ignore the dangers and challenges that face us and of which we are certainly aware. We concentrate on matters, which at best are very peripheral to our lives, success and future. Election campaigns are aware of this proclivity of ours and as a result we are forced to deal with the vastly unimportant issues raised by the political parties and to ignore the very real issues that should be discussed, debated and clarified. The elephant is always in the room here in Israel but no one wishes to recognize its presence and effect upon us.

To me, perhaps the most serious issue that exists in our country currently is the fact that there are large numbers and significant sections of Israeli society that do not share the ethos and accept the basic legitimacy of the existence of the state of Israel. The four Arab political parties, which have united to form one electoral bloc, will according to current polls, comprise at least ten percent of the Israeli Knesset after the elections. The Israeli Arabs have never been integrated into Israeli society. Many if not most of them feel themselves to be Palestinian and not Israeli. Even though very few of them would choose to give up their Israeli citizenship and live under the rule of the Palestinian Authority, their hearts and souls belong more to Abbas than to any Jewish Israeli political leader or head of government.

To me, again, what to do with our own Arab citizens and how to integrate them into Israeli society, while still allowing them complete religious autonomy, is a greater problem than how to deal with the Palestinian Authority. In addition, the splintered but numerous and politically important Charedi public, and all of its various political parties and organizations, appears to also have significant representation in the next Knesset. Yet, in its heart of hearts much of this section of Israeli society views the state as a sinful creation and is a form of exile of Jews amongst Jews.

How to deal with this strange but real condition should be a topic of debate, discussion and policy. Yet aside from the populist demand for army service for Charedim, nary a word is heard from either side of the divide as to how this problem should be tackled. It will take great shocks unfortunately to make us begin to ignore the nonsense and deal with the mortal dangers and challenges that truly beset us.

Shabbat shalom

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>

reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com

subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha Blog:: Rabbi Berel

Terumah

The initial and most successful building campaign in Jewish history is recorded for us in this week's Torah reading. The Torah, in recounting the event, teaches us that Moshe was to accept offerings of gold, silver, copper, precious stones, weaving materials, acacia wood, artistic talent and everything else that would be necessary for the construction of the great tabernacle/mishkan in the desert.

However, the Torah places a caveat on the donations of goods and services, wealth and talent that Moshe was to receive from the people of Israel. The Torah states that he was to accept all donations but only from those whose hearts and will motivated their generosity. We are all aware that it is much easier to write a check than to really feel good, excited and sincere about the donation.

The nature of human beings is to be less than forthcoming in their generosity and even if they are willing to part with some of their material possessions, the spirit and true intent of that generosity is often missing. Here the Torah is teaching us an important lesson. A building or any institution whose purpose is service of God and the spiritual enhancement of human beings cannot be built of human material generosity alone.

As the Talmud so succinctly phrases it, "God demands our heart."

Professional fundraisers employ all means and tactics to raise money for their goals and projects. However, after many decades of observing fundraising techniques, I know that it is very difficult to penetrate the heart of the donor. Without such a penetration, the fund-raising exercise becomes devoid of spiritual meaning and soulful uplift.

I think that the giving feeling that the Torah emphasizes here is achievable only when one feels that the cause or object of one's generosity is really worth more than the wealth that one is parting with. The example I use in teaching is that if one feels that giving charity is the equivalent of paying one's taxes then that donation is completely devoid of any spiritual content.

We all have to pay our taxes as a national duty and a practical necessity. Yet people do not feel any sort of spiritual achievement in paying their taxes. We may sign the check but our hearts are not in it.

This attitude, which after all is still acceptable when paying our material taxes is concerned (since no government is really interested in the spiritual effects of its taxes on the status of your soul), is not the attitude that will suffice when it comes to building a tabernacle/mishkan. In this latter case we are asked not only to give of our material wealth and personal talents but truly to give of ourselves as well.

The demand of the Torah is not only to give from our heart but to give our heart itself to the exalted cause and spiritual greatness of the tabernacle/mishkan. It is not a donation that the Torah asks of us, rather it is a commitment of self that is demanded. The tabernacle/mishkan has long ago disappeared from our physical view but its lessons remain relevant and important to us today as when they were taught millennia ago.

Shabbat shalom

from: Ohr Somayach <ohr@ohr.edu>

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subject: Torah Weekly

Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Teruma

For the week ending 21 February 2015 / 2 Adar I 5775

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Insights

Turning Faith into Truth

"And they will make for Me a Mikdash and I will dwell among them."
(25:8)

Someone stops you on the street and says, "Do you believe in G-d?"

"Of course I do!" you say.

Probably up to that minute the last thing you were thinking about was G-d. Maybe you were thinking about your overdraft, or what you were going to buy your wife for your twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, or what you were going to have for dinner.

Many are the thoughts that pass through our minds — and few of them are of G-d.

I'm not talking about when we're praying, although I'm not sure how many of us would score more than four out of ten when it comes to kavana (concentration) even in prayer. What I'm talking about is a feeling of holiness, of closeness to G-d.

We believe that G-d fills the entire universe, that He sustains everything every single second. But how much of our lives is filled with a palpable awareness of the Divine?

"Avodat Hashem" — Divine Service — is about turning "Faith" into "Truth".

We can go through life with a bagful of unexamined, untested and un-lived "beliefs" which never really impinge on the "truths" by which we conduct our existence.

"Make for me a Mikdash..."

The word Mikdash comes from the root kodesh, meaning "holy". G-d tells us to connect everything we do to Him; that all our actions should be done with the awareness that we are in this world to elevate ourselves; that we are here to make ourselves a fit "dwelling" for the Divine Presence.

The more we focus on our everyday actions and think, "G-d and only G-d is giving me the power to do this action," the more we will realize, "Therefore I must dedicate my actions to becoming someone who is kinder, more thoughtful, less selfish, less conceited, less angry, less lazy, and less indulgent — because that's what He wants me to be; because that is why he is giving me the strength to do this action."

The more we use the minutiae of our lives to create a "Holy Space" — "Make for me a Mikdash" — the more G-d will respond by filling us with feelings of closeness to Him. "And I will dwell within them."

Sources: Sfat Emet

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Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha

Orthodox Union / www.ou.org

Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

The Gratitude of Labour

There is an important principle in Judaism, a source of hope and also one of the structuring principles of the Torah. It is the principle that God creates the cure before the disease. Bad things may happen but God has already given us the remedy if we know where to look for it.

So for instance in Chukkat we read of the deaths of Miriam and Aaron and how Moses was told that he would die in the desert without entering the Promised Land. This is a terrifying encounter with mortality. Yet we read before any of this, we first hear the law of the red heifer, the rite of purification after contact with death. The Torah has placed it here to assure us in advance that we can be purified after any bereavement. Human mortality does not ultimately bar us from being in the presence of Divine immortality.

This is the key to understanding Terumah. Though not all commentators agree, its real significance is that it is God's answer in advance to the sin of the golden calf. In strict chronological terms it is out of place here. It (and Tetzaveh) should have appeared after Ki Tissa, which tells the story of the calf. It is set here before the sin to tell us that the cure existed before the disease, the tikun before the kilkul, the mending before the fracture, the rectification before the sin.

So to understand Terumah and the phenomenon of the mishkan, the Sanctuary and all that it entailed, we have first to understand what went wrong at the time of the golden calf. Here the Torah is very subtle and gives us, in Ki Tissa, a narrative that can be understood at three quite different levels.

The first and most obvious is that the sin of the golden calf was due to a failure of leadership on the part of Aaron. This is the overwhelming impression we receive on first reading Exodus 32. We sense that Aaron should have resisted the people's clamour. He should have told them to be patient. He should have shown leadership. He did not. When Moses comes down the mountain and asks him what he has done, Aaron replies: "Do not be angry, my lord. You know how prone these people are to evil. They said to me, 'Make an oracle to lead us, since we do not know what happened to Moses, the man who took us out of Egypt.' So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewellery, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!" (Ex. 32: 22-24). This is a failure of responsibility. It is also a spectacular act of denial ("I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!").[1] So the first reading of the story is of Aaron's failure.

But only the first. A deeper reading suggests that it is about Moses. It was his absence from the camp that created the crisis in the first place. "The people began to realize that Moses was taking a long time to come down from the mountain. They gathered around Aaron and said to him, 'Make us an oracle to lead us. We have no idea what happened to Moses, the man who brought us out of Egypt.'" (Ex. 32: 1).

God told Moses what was happening and said: "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have wrought ruin" (32: 7). The undertone is clear. "Go down," suggests that God was telling Moses that his place was with the people at the foot of the mountain, not with God at the top. "Your people" implies that God was telling Moses that the people were his problem, not God's. He was about to disown them.

Moses urgently prayed to God for forgiveness, then descended. What follows is a whirlwind of action. Moses descends, sees what has happened, breaks the tablets, burns the calf, mixes its ashes with water and makes the people drink, then summons help in punishing the wrongdoers. He has become the leader in the midst of the people, restoring order where a moment before there had been chaos. On this reading the central figure was Moses. He had been the strongest of strong leaders. The result, though, was that when he was not there, the people panicked. That is the downside of strong leadership.

But there then follows a chapter, Exodus 33, that is one of the hardest in the Torah to understand. It begins with God announcing that, though He would send an "angel" or "messenger" to accompany the people on the rest of their journey, He Himself would not be in their midst "because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way." This deeply distresses the people (33: 1-6).

In verses 12-23, Moses challenges God on this verdict. He wants God's presence to go with the people. He asks, "Let me know Your ways" and "Pray let me see Your glory." This is hard to understand. The entire exchange between Moses and God, one of the most intense in the Torah, is no longer about sin and forgiveness. It seems almost to be a metaphysical inquiry into the nature of God. What is its connection with the golden calf? It is what happens between these two episodes that is the most puzzling of all. The text says that Moses "took his tent and pitched it for himself outside the camp, far from the camp" (33: 7). This must surely have been precisely the wrong thing to do. If, as God and the text have implied, the problem had been the distance of Moses as a leader, the single most important thing for him to do now would be to stay in the people's midst, not position himself outside the camp. Moreover, the Torah has just told us that God had said He would not be in the midst of the people — and this caused the people distress. Moses' decision to do likewise would surely have doubled their distress. Something deep is happening here.

It seems to me that in Exodus 33 Moses is undertaking the most courageous act of his life. He is saying to God: "It is not my distance that is the problem. It is Your distance. The people are terrified of You. They have witnessed Your overwhelming power. They have seen You bring the greatest empire the world has ever known to its knees. They have seen You turn sea into dry

land, send down food from heaven and bring water from a rock. When they heard Your voice at Mount Sinai, they came to me to beg me to be an intermediary. They said, 'You speak to us and we will hearken, but let not God speak to us lest we die' (Ex. 20: 16). They made a calf not because they wanted to worship an idol, but because they wanted some symbol of Your presence that was not terrifying. They need You to be close. They need to sense You not in the sky or the summit of the mountain but in the midst of the camp. And even if they cannot see Your face, for no one can do that, at least let them see some visible sign of Your glory."

That, it seems to me, is Moses' request to which this week's parsha is the answer. "Let them make for Me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst" (25: 8). This is the first time in the Torah that we hear the verb sh-kh-n, meaning "to dwell," in relation to God. As a noun it means literally, "a neighbour." From this is derived the key word in post-biblical Judaism, Shekhinah, meaning God's immanence as opposed to His transcendence, God-as-One-who-is-close, the daring idea of God as a near neighbour. In terms of the theology of the Torah, the very idea of a mishkan, a sanctuary or Temple, a physical "home" for "God's glory," is deeply paradoxical. God is beyond space. As King Solomon said at the inauguration of the first Temple, "Behold the heavens and the heavens of the heavens cannot encompass You, how much less this house?" Or as Isaiah said in God's name: "The heavens are My throne and the earth My foot-stool. What house shall you build for Me, where can My resting place be?"

The answer, as the Jewish mystics emphasized, is that God does not live in a building but rather in the hearts of the builders: "Let them make for me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them" (Ex. 25: 8) – "among them," not "in it." How, though, does this happen? What human act causes the Divine presence to live within the camp, the community? The answer is the name of our parsha, Terumah, meaning, a gift, a contribution.

"The Lord spoke to Moses, saying 'Tell the Israelites to bring Me an offering. You are to receive the offering for Me from everyone whose heart moves them to give.'" This would prove to be the turning point in Jewish history.

Until that moment the Israelites had been recipients of God's miracles and deliverances. He had taken them from slavery to freedom and performed miracles for them. There was only one thing God had not yet done, namely, give the Israelites the chance of giving back something to God. The very idea sounds absurd. How can we, God's creations, give back to the God who made us? All we have is His. As David said, at the gathering he convened at the end of his life to initiate the building the Temple:

Wealth and honour come from you; you are the ruler of all things ... Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. (I Chronicles 29: 12, 14)

That ultimately is the logic of the mishkan. God's greatest gift to us is the ability to give to Him. From a Judaic perspective the idea is fraught with risk. The idea that God might be in need of gifts is close to paganism and heresy. Yet, knowing the risk, God allowed Himself to be persuaded by Moses to cause His spirit to rest within the camp and allow the Israelites to give something back to God.

At the heart of the idea of the sanctuary is what Lewis Hyde beautifully described as the labour of gratitude. His classic study, *The Gift*, [2] looks at the role of the giving and receiving of gifts, for example, at critical moments of transition. He quotes the Talmudic story of a man whose daughter was about to get married, but who had been told that she would not survive to the end of the day. The next morning the man visited his daughter and saw that she was still alive. Unknown to both of them, when she hung up her hat after the wedding, its pin pierced a serpent that would otherwise have bitten and killed her. The father wanted to know what his daughter had done that merited this divine intervention. She answered, "A poor man came to the door yesterday. Everyone was so busy with the wedding preparations that they did not have time to deal with him. So I took the portion that had been

intended for me and gave it to him." It was this act of generosity that was the cause of her miraculous deliverance.[3]

The construction of the sanctuary was fundamentally important because it gave the Israelites the chance to give back to God. Later Jewish law recognised that giving is an integral part of human dignity when they made the remarkable ruling that even a poor person completely dependent on charity is still obliged to give charity.[4] To be in a situation where you can only receive, not give, is to lack human dignity.

The mishkan became the home of the Divine presence because God specified that it be built only out of voluntary contributions. Giving creates a gracious society by enabling each of us to make our contribution to the public good. That is why the building of the sanctuary was the cure for the sin of the golden calf. A people that only received but could not give was trapped in dependency and lack of self-respect. God allowed the people to come close to Him, and He to them, by giving them the chance to give.

That is why a society based on rights not responsibilities, on what we claim from, not what we give to others, will always eventually go wrong. It is why the most important gift a parent can give a child is the chance to give back.

The etymology of the word Terumah hints at this. It means, not simply a contribution, but literally something "raised up." When we give, it is not just our contribution but we who are raised up. We survive by what we are given, but we achieve dignity by what we give.

[1] In Deuteronomy 9: 20, Moses discloses a fact which has been kept from us until that point: "God also expressed great anger toward Aaron, threatening to destroy him, so, at that time, I also prayed for Aaron."

[2] Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006.

[3] Shabbat 156b.

[4] Maimonides *Hilkhot Shekalim* 1: 1, *Mattenot Ani'im* 7: 5.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks is a global religious leader, philosopher, the author of more than 25 books, and moral voice for our time. Until 1st September 2013 he served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, having held the position for 22 years. To read more from Rabbi Sacks or to subscribe to his mailing list, please visit www.rabbisacks.org.

www.matzav.com or www.torah.org/learning/drasha
Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha Parshas Terumah **by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky** **Ark of Inclusion**

In this week's portion, Hashem commands the Jewish nation to build the Mishkan. Each one of the utensils is specified as to how it should be constructed, its width, its length, and its height. The type of material whether it was gold, silver, or copper, is enumerated and the details of its ornaments are provided.

The procedure for the construction of each vessel is preceded by a command stated in the singular form: "And you shall make" "And you shall make a show bread table." "And you shall make a Menorah." "And you shall make an Altar."

The command is directed toward Moshe to delegate the construction. The Aron Kodesh, the Holy Ark is different. Its command is not stated in the singular form, rather in the plural. The Torah does not say and you shall make a Holy Ark, it states, "And they shall make a Holy Ark." The commentaries ask, why was the command to build the Ark the only one that was given to a group?

In a small shul in Yerushalayim, a daily Daf HaYomi shiur (Talmudic folio class) was held each morning before Shacharis. An elderly Russian immigrant attended the shiur. Quiet as he was, his behavior in the shiur intrigued the lecturer. He would never ask a thing. Often he would nod off. Sometimes, when the Rabbi quoted a particular Talmudic sage, the old man's

face would light up - especially when the Rabbi mentioned an opinion from an obscure Talmudic personality.

This behavior continued throughout the summer. Always quiet, the man would sometimes nod off, and at other times he would perk up. Then winter came. The group of men would gather around the table in the frigid mornings huddled close as they would warm to the strains of the Talmud and the straining heater in the old synagogue. The old man never missed a class. One morning a rare snow blanketed Jerusalem. No one showed up to the shiur except the Rabbi and the elderly Russian Jew. Instead of giving his usual lecture, the Rabbi decided he would ask the old Jew a little bit about himself.

"Tell me," he inquired, "I watch you as I say my shiur. Sometimes you look intrigued but at other times you seem totally disinterested. The trouble is I would like to make the shiur more interesting for you during its entirety, but I can't seem to make out what perks you up and makes you doze?"

The old man smiled. "I never had a Jewish education. I can barely read Hebrew. I do not come to the shiur for the same reasons that the other men come." He paused as his eyes pondered his past. "You see, I was a soldier in the Red Army during World War II. Every day our commander would herd us into a room and put a gun to our heads. He commanded us to recite the names of every member of the Politburo. And we did. We learned those names backwards and forward. I come to this class to hear the names of every rabbi in the Talmud. If I cannot learn at least I will know the names of all the great sages! "That," he smiled "is my Daf HaYomi!"

Although the show bread table, the Menorah, and the Altar can be constructed by individuals -- the Ark that holds the Torah is different. One man cannot make it alone. It must be a communal effort. Just as the Torah cannot be learned by one man alone, its Ark cannot be built by an individual either.

The Torah is given for everyone to learn and to experience - each one according to his or her own level and ability. Lighting a Menorah is a clear-cut ritual delegated to the Kohain. The Altar is used for the sacrifices brought by the kohanim. The Torah is for everybody. And each individual has his own Shas and Daf HaYomi. Each person has his share in Toras Yisrael. Everyone extracts something holy from the Torah. To some it may be extrapolative halachic theory, while for others it may be the refinement of character. And still for others it may be the names of Abayai and Rava. Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Toras Chaim at South Shore and the author of the Parsha Parables series.

Questions or comments? Email feedback@torah.org. Project Genesis, Inc.

The Blogs :: Ben-Tzion Spitz

Truma: Bread of Faith

February 19, 2015

There is hunger for ordinary bread, and there is hunger for love, for kindness, for thoughtfulness; and this is the great poverty that makes people suffer so much. -Mother Theresa

The Baal Haturim on Exodus 26:9 states that in the merit of the service of the Table of the Showbread in the Temple, the entire world was bestowed with blessings.

Story: A simple baker was reading the Torah portion. He read about the Showbread that the priests placed in the Temple every week. He felt bad for God that since the destruction of the Temple, nobody was giving God bread anymore. He decided that in honor of the Sabbath, he would place two loaves of Challah, the traditional bread for the Sabbath, in the Ark of the Torah in the synagogue. He was so excited about his decision, he woke up before dawn Friday morning and placed the very first loaves he had baked in the Ark, with a short prayer to God to accept his offering.

In the same synagogue there was a poor caretaker who had fallen on hard times. He couldn't afford Challah for that Sabbath. That Thursday night in the synagogue, he cried and pleaded to God to help him, that he should not

come to his family empty-handed. As was his ritual, every Friday morning, he cleaned up the synagogue for the Sabbath. He opened the Ark to check on the Torah, and lo and behold! Two warm fresh Challahs were waiting there for him. The caretaker cried for joy, thanking God for this miracle, for remembering him after all and listening to his prayer.

The baker arrived early Friday afternoon to the synagogue, curious as to what had happened to his loaves. He opened the Ark, and to his surprise, the loaves were gone! God had accepted his humble offering! Encouraged, the baker did the same thing the following Friday. The caretaker was humbled and moved each time he found the warm, fresh bread. This cycle continued for months, both the baker and the caretaker filled with an extraordinary joy, yet unaware of each others actions.

One Friday, the Rabbi of the synagogue woke up early and decided to do some studying in the back of the synagogue. Unnoticed, the Rabbi saw the baker bring in his loaves and put them in the Ark and reverently bestow them to God. Later, he saw the caretaker gingerly, lovingly, removing them and thanking God. The Rabbi understood immediately the error these simpletons were making. He called them both and berated them: "You fools! God is not placing or receiving the Challah. It is your own human hands that are responsible." Both the baker and the caretaker stood there ashamed, while their foolishness was brought to light and their simple faith shattered.

That night, the Prophet Elijah came to the Rabbi in a dream: "You evil man!" Elijah screamed at the Rabbi. "God has not had as much joy in the world, since the service of the Showbread in the Temple was stopped, as when the baker delivered the Challah, and the caretaker received it, and they both displayed a pure, simple faith. Know that the evil you have done cannot be undone and you have caused great anguish to God!"

Sometimes, simple faith is the best.

Shabbat Shalom

Dedication:

To our baker, Netanel, on his first batch of successful and tasty biscochos!

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Arutz 7

The "Eved Nirtza" - Slave by Choice - of Today

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Is it possible to perform an act that does not appear in the criminal code of the Jewish People, yet its implications are an affront, an indignity; indeed, an abuse of the Holy One Blessed Be He?

After receiving the non-specific Commandments at Mount Sinai, the Torah continues with the functional halachic details of the 613 mitzvot. When our forefathers left Egypt, after 210 years of denigration and servitude, they possessed a distorted slave mentality, unsustainable for a people designated to become Hashem's chosen nation. It would take another 40 years of Torah study under Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses) to prepare them for the great spiritual mission they were to perform when they would enter the Holy Land.

In order for the newly downtrodden freed slaves to be able to appreciate the subtle grandeur of the Torah, Moshe began by instructing them in an issue with which they could easily empathize - avdut (slavery). I will not use the word "master" (literal translation for 'adon') or "slave" (literal translation for 'eved') words associated with brutal, inhumane treatment, because Jewish avdut (slavery) is far from that, and instead use the Hebrew terms..

The Jewish nation was now aware of the humanity and kindness of the Torah, as it appears in the Torah's treatment of avadim (slaves), not as possessions or chattel, but as people whose independence had been compromised, whose image of God within them must be carefully preserved. A Jewish "eved" is not a "slave" in the accepted sense; he is closer to being an employee under contract for a specific number of years.

A Jew is "sold" into avdut ("slavery") when he has stolen and is unable to repay the value of the item, or when sells himself due to dire poverty. In each case the servitude ends at the end of six years, or when the Yovel (Jubilee) year arrives, or in the case of one who sold himself, at the end of the number of years agreed upon between him and the adon.

In both cases, he enters the relationship with rights which the adon must respect. The eved brings with him his wife and children who are supported by the adon despite the fact that only the eved is required to work. He may be given work only within his profession; a teacher may not be sent out to plow a field.

If there is only one bed, the eved sleeps in it; only enough for one meal, the eved gets the food.

And upon the conclusion of his "time", the owner must give him a handsome severance gift.

The gemara summarizes the adon-eved relationship with the principle: "Whoever purchases an eved purchases for himself an adon."

When the term of service draws to a close, the Torah presents the eved with the option to resume his service until the coming Jubilee year, after performing a ceremony. The adon and eved appear in the court where they stand near the entrance door. The adon then punctures the eved's right ear with a metal awl, and the eved now resumes the status of an eved until the next Jubilee year, as the Torah states:

Then his adon must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his eved for life (actually, only until the Jubilee).

Rabban Yochanan ben Zachai in the Yerushalmi (Kiddushin chap. 1 and quoted by Rashi)) explains that the ear was chosen to be pierced because it was the ear that heard at Mount Sinai that we are the servants of Hashem, and this man threw off the yoke of heaven to enter under the yoke of man - that ear shall be pierced.

The Adon-Eved Relationship

The Jewish nation has collectively heard, seen and experienced the miraculous evolution of our people from one man - Abraham who set out to change the world. He created the ethical code and brought forth the inner feelings of human conscience.

3400 years ago, we all stood at Mount Sinai to become part of the covenant with Hashem, when he became our Adon and we his avadim

The ride has not been easy. The Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Christians and Moslems and so many more have left us scarred. But not one iota less fresh or less mentally or physically alert.

We traversed 2000 years of galut (exile) over the world's continents and outlived all our enemies (the Germans and their allies are next in line) in order to miraculously return to our land - Medinat Yisrael.

It is here that we have revived the direct adon-eved relationship between the Creator and His people Israel.

Choosing to be an Eved to an Eved

Now to return to the original question: Is it possible to perform an act that does not appear in the criminal code of the Jewish People, Am Yisrael, yet its implications are an affront, an indignity; indeed, an abuse of the Holy One Blessed Be He?

Yes!

It is not forbidden for one to become a willing eved nirtza (one whose ear is pierced) but it is an affront to Hashem. It is tantamount to declaring that to be a direct servant of Hashem is insufficient. One who needs the providence of a human adon to provide security and sustenance, insinuates that to be an eved to an eved (one man subservient to another) is preferable to being an eved to Hashem.

Let every Jew in the galut know that he is in a great respect an "eved nirtza". He chooses to be under the wings of another eved - this time a gentile one - who he believes will supply him with security and sustenance. The implication is that these two major factors in life which, in his mind, Hashem

is unable to do in His own land, Eretz Yisrael, the gentile will provide for him in the galut.

This is an affront, an indignity; indeed! An abuse of the Holy One Blessed Be He. It is a chillul Hashem, sacrilege, of the first order.

And it will not go unchallenged by Hashem, who protects His people in Medinat Yisrael who believe and trust in Him - and only in Him - with every passing moment

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Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Terumah: The Iron Wall

The Torah describes in great detail the vehicle for bringing God's Presence into our world: the Mishkan (Tabernacle), the forerunner of the holy Temple in Jerusalem.

The Beit HaMikdash, the holy Temple in Jerusalem, was a focal point of Divine service, prayer, and prophecy; a vehicle to bring the Shechinah into the world. The current state of the world, without the Beit HaMikdash, is one of estrangement from God. When the Temple was destroyed, the Talmud teaches, the gates of prayer were locked and a wall of iron separates us from our Heavenly Father (Berachot 32b).

Why did the Sages describe this breach of communication with God as a 'wall of iron'? Why not, for example, a 'wall of stone'?

A World Ruled by Iron

The metaphor of an iron wall, Rav Kook explained, is precise for several reasons. A stone wall is built slowly, stone by stone, layer by layer. An iron wall is more complex to construct; but when it is erected, it is set up quickly. The Temple's destruction and the resultant estrangement from God was not a gradual process, but a sudden calamity for the Jewish people and the entire world, like an iron gate swinging shut.

But there is a deeper significance to this barrier of iron. The fundamental aim of the Temple is the exact opposite of iron. Iron is a symbol of death and destruction; implements of war and slaughter are fashioned from metal and iron. Iron is a material used to shorten life. The Temple, on the other hand, is meant to lengthen life. Its purpose is to promote universal peace and enlightenment - "My House will be called a house of prayer for all the nations" (Isaiah 56:7). The incompatibility between iron and the Temple is so great that iron could not be used to hew the stones used in building the Temple (Deut. 27:5, Middot 3:4)

With the Temple's destruction, the sweet music of prayer and song was replaced by the jarring cacophony of iron and steel, reaping destruction and cutting down life. At that tragic time, the spiritual and prophetic influence of the Temple was supplanted by the rule of iron. Only when justice and integrity will be restored, when the world will recognize the principles of morality and truth, will this wall of iron come down, and the Beit HaMikdash will once again take its place as a world center of prayer and holy inspiration.

(Silver from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. I on Berachot 32b (5:76).)

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Complex Clearings or Removing Muktzah from the Table

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

It is Mrs. Friedman's* unmistakable and excitable voice on the phone. "Rabbi," she begins in her trademark high pitch, "I am married almost twenty years, and have been clearing my Shabbos table the same way all these years: I brush the small items off the tablecloth and pick up the large ones. Last week, a guest, Aviva, politely suggested that I

ask my rabbi whether I am doing this correctly. She was taught that she may not remove pistachio shells and used napkins by hand; instead, to place a disposable clear cover on the tablecloth before setting the table, and after clearing the dirty dishes at the end of the meal, to simply roll up the plastic. However, I place my candlesticks in the middle of the Shabbos table; furthermore, I do not consider it Shabbos-dik to have a cover on my exquisite linen tablecloth! Am I indeed doing something wrong for the last twenty years! I was never told this during all my years in Beis Yaakov!"

What would you tell Mrs. Friedman? In order to answer her accurately, we need to understand these halachos well.

In parshas Terumah, the Torah discusses building the Mishkan, which are the same activities that are categorized as melacha activity on Shabbos. As a fence around the Torah, Chazal banned moving items that do not have a use on Shabbos, a law we refer to as muktzah (see Rambam and Raavad, Hil. Shabbos 24:13). For this reason, we may not move on Shabbos items that are not considered utensils, such as stones and pieces of wood. The rules of muktzah are highly complex, and yet at the same time affect each of us every Shabbos. Although we deal with removing items from the table several times every Shabbos, most of us do not realize all the detailed laws that this simple, common activity entails.

HOW, WHAT, AND WHEN

Certain specific questions about the laws of muktzah directly influence how one may clear the table.

I. HOW

How does one remove a muktzah item without violating the laws of Shabbos?

II. WHAT

Which items commonly left on a table are muktzah?

III. WHEN

When may I move an item, notwithstanding that it is muktzah?

Answering these three questions will explain what Aviva was taught and provide Mrs. Friedman with some practical, level-headed advice to keep her table Shabbos-dik.

I. HOW

Since it is likely that the remnants of a meal contain muktzah, how does one remove them on Shabbos? The Mishnah (Shabbos 143a) permits tilting the tabletop, thereby tumbling the muktzah to the floor. However, this leads us to question: If one may not move a muktzah item, how may I tilt the tabletop? This is also moving muktzah!

INDIRECT CARRYING - TILTUL MIN HATZAD

The answer is that (under certain circumstances) Chazal permitted lifting a permitted item that indirectly moves something muktzah.

In addition to tilting the tabletop, the Shulchan Aruch (308:27) suggests two other options to clear the table, both of which permit carrying the entire tabletop to a place where one can then tilt off the muktzah:

A. If there is bread on the table in addition to something muktzah, the muktzah item is treated as bateil, nullified, to the piece of bread. For this reason, one may now carry the entire table or tabletop to a place where it is convenient to drop off the muktzah. One may even place bread on the table expressly for this purpose (Rosh, as explained by Magen Avraham 308:51).

Based on the above, if nutshells, which are muktzah, ended up on a plate during Shabbos, one may place some bread on the plate and then remove it from the table. Upon arrival in the kitchen, one may tilt the muktzah items into the garbage can. Bear in mind, that when one empties the muktzah items into a garbage can, one can no longer move the garbage can itself. (In all likelihood, the garbage can is already muktzah because of other items it contains. My observation is that people are sometimes not meticulous to treat their household garbage cans as muktzah. One should always leave the garbage can in place. Only under certain unusual circumstances, beyond the scope of this article, may one remove the garbage.)

B. Even if there is no bread on the tabletop or plate, the Shulchan Aruch permits moving them to remove muktzah if one needs to use the area. Since this is often the situation, one usually does not need to place bread on the table or plate to remove the muktzah.

(All cases in this article assume that both the table and the plates do not qualify as a basis ledavar he'asur, meaning that it was not intended to be a base for the muktzah [see Tosafos, Beitzah 2a s.v. Uveis; Magen Avraham 308:50]. An item that is a basis ledavar he'asur, intended to be a base for a muktzah item, becomes muktzah and cannot be moved on Shabbos, even if somehow the muktzah item was removed. Detailing the laws of basis ledavar he'asur is beyond the scope of this article.)

DISPOSABLES TO THE RESCUE!

Similarly, someone who places a disposable plastic cover atop the tablecloth may remove the plastic cover and dispose of it even though it is covered with muktzah, provided there is some bread on the plastic cover. As we explained, even if there is no bread on the table, one may remove the plastic if one needs to use the table on Shabbos and cannot do so with the muktzah items still there.

AVIVA'S PSAK

Based on the above halachic discussion, Aviva was taught that the easiest way to clear the table without concern about moving muktzah is to remove a plastic table cover with everything on it. In this method, any potential muktzah is being carried indirectly.

For those who do not like placing plastic covers over their tablecloths, one could follow the same rule by removing the plates with the muktzah items on them, and then removing the tablecloth. Alternatively, one could simply lift the entire tablecloth to a different area and shake it out -- then return it to the table.

However, what may one do to clear the table if one leaves the candlesticks on the table, thus making it impossible to remove the tablecloth, and one does not cover the tablecloth with a plastic?

CLEARING MRS. FRIEDMAN'S TABLE

Certainly, Mrs. Friedman will not be satisfied with any of the above methods of clearing her table. Although her son Yanky may like the Mishnah's method of tilting the tabletop, or the Shulchan Aruch's suggestion of lifting the entire table, I would elect to be absent should he tilt her table and dump her candlesticks along with the leftovers onto the carpet. Therefore, to avoid receiving her phone call should Yanky clear the table this way, we should explore other options how to do so.

My best advice in this situation is to place the muktzah shells, pits, and napkins directly onto a plate rather than on the tablecloth. Afterwards, one may remove the plate with the muktzah on it. Following the conclusion of the Shulchan Aruch, if one places some bread on the plate, one may remove the plate even without knowing that he has any need to use that particular part of the table. If one knows that he will need that part of the table later on Shabbos, then one may remove the plate even without any bread on it. However, what does one do if someone errantly placed their muktzah item directly on Mrs. Friedman's gorgeous linen cloth, and there is no practical way to remove the tablecloth from the table?

In this situation, may one remove the muktzah items by picking them up or brushing them off the tablecloth? This is what Mrs. Friedman was doing that attracted Aviva's attention.

Let us first analyze if indeed Mrs. Friedman's pristine post-dinner table contains any items that are muktzah. This takes us back to our second original question:

II. WHAT

Which items commonly left on a table are muktzah?

BONES AND SHELLS

When humans consume food, we often leave behind bones, shells and pits that we consider inedible, although other creatures consider them a delicious dinner. Are these leftovers considered useless and therefore muktzah, or are they functional, permitting one to move them?

Indeed, the Mishnah discusses whether bones and shells are muktzah, ruling that food remnants that animals do not eat are muktzah, whereas those that they will eat are not (Tosafos, Shabbos 143a s.v. Atzamos).

However, this definition requires refinement since one can find some creature that will consume virtually every organic substance. Does this mean that no biodegradable substances are muktzah? The answer is that only substances eaten by normally available animals, birds, and fish are not muktzah.

What type of animal food is included?

Items eaten by an animal or bird that someone in your neighborhood may own are not muktzah. Therefore, provisions eaten by dogs, cats, gerbils, hamsters, rabbits, parakeets, or even household aquarium fish are not muktzah since it is not unusual to find these as pets. For this reason, bones that dogs may lick are not muktzah (see Shulchan Aruch 308:27). Similarly, crumbs are not muktzah, even though no one will be eating them. Halachically, these are still considered feed since one could leave them for animals.

ZOO ANIMALS

On the other hand, items that are eaten only by animals not commonly owned by people in your area are muktzah (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 308:29). Specifically, the Gemara concludes that items considered food only by a raven, an ostrich, or an elephant are muktzah since it is uncommon to find these as pets in someone's house. Items eaten only by these types of creatures are muktzah unless one owns them. Therefore, a zoo may consider the feed common for any animal it keeps as non-muktzah, whereas in a private home, nutshells, bones, pits, and peels not suitable to feed locally available animals are muktzah unless there is some food still attached to them (Mishnah Berurah 308:114).

Potentially, other muktzah items could easily end up on a table, particularly if there are young children around who have a knack of placing crayons and similar items on the table. Furthermore, some authorities consider used napkins and tissues to be muktzah since no one utilizes them anymore.

MAY ONE REMOVE MUKTZA?

We therefore see that one could easily find muktzah items on the table after a meal. How does one remove these items?

We noted above, that one may remove muktzah items if they are placed on a non-muktzah surface, particularly if some bread is placed on the same surface. Therefore, after licking clean a bone or pit one should place it onto a plate or other item that will later be removed. When shelling pistachios or other nuts, one should be careful to place the shells on a plate, and one should follow the same approach when one finishes using a tissue or napkin.

But what do you do with the shells that missed the plate? One now has muktzah items on Mrs. Friedman's deluxe linen cloth!

This takes us to our third original question:

III. WHEN

When may I move an item by hand, notwithstanding that it is muktzah? Let us explore a possibility.

GRAF SHEL RE'I

The halacha is that a malodorous or otherwise disgusting but muktzah item that ends up in a residential place may be removed. For example, after changing a baby, one may remove the soiled Pampers notwithstanding that it is now muktzah. This halacha is called removing a graf shel re'i, a chamber pot, which one may remove from a residential place where its presence disgusts people.

Why may one remove a graf shel re'i? Chazal permitted the removal of a graf shel re'i, even when it is muktzah, because of their concern for kavod habriyos, human dignity (Pri Megadim, Eishel Avraham 308:58; Aruch HaShulchan 308:60). This means, that although moving muktzah is an ancient and sacred prohibition, Chazal permitted moving a muktzah item that affects one's sense of self-dignity if the malodorous item is located in a place where one lives.

However, this halacha only permits the minimum necessary to restore one's self dignity. For this reason, one usually may not create a kavod habriyos situation in order to facilitate removing muktzah. For example, if the unpleasant muktzah item is located in a part of the house that one does not normally use, one cannot decide to use that area on Shabbos to be able to remove the muktzah. (There is an exception to this rule that is beyond the scope of this article.) Similarly, one may not have a Jew move a graf shel re'i when a gentile could move it (Aruch HaShulchan 308:60).

The question we need to resolve is whether shells and dirty napkins are included under the heading of graf shel re'i. Perhaps one may remove only items far more disgusting, such as vomit and human soil (see Shulchan Aruch 308:34).

Furthermore, even though the lenience of graf shel re'i may not exist for bones, many authorities permit brushing them away with an implement (Taz, 308:18; however, the Chazon Ish 47:14 prohibits.)

Indeed, we find three opinions among the Rishonim regarding this subject. The Raavad prohibited moving muktzah bones and shells even if they are in a residential area, even by sweeping them and certainly by picking them up. He contends that only truly repulsive items are muktzah, and he further maintains that whereas removing a plate or cloth containing muktzah is considered moving muktzah indirectly, pushing muktzah with an implement is considered moving it directly.

On the other hand, the Rashba permitted sweeping away muktzah bones as an extension of the lenience of graf shel re'i (Ran, end of Tenth Chapter of Shabbos). The Ramban allowed sweeping these bones with a broom or other utensil because he considers it removing muktzah in an indirect way, but did not consider them to be a graf shel re'i.

CONCLUSION

The Shulchan Aruch and the Rama (337:2) both imply that one may remove shells and bones even when they are muktzah. The later authorities dispute whether they permitted sweeping muktzah only because this is removing it indirectly (see Shaar HaTziyun 337:7) or because we treat them as a graf shel re'i and permit removing them even by hand (Magen Avraham 337:4; Gra'z 337:2). This last dispute affects Mrs. Friedman's table tremendously. The rav who advised Aviva suggested an approach that avoids all these questions: By lifting up the plastic tablecloth with all the rubbish on it, one avoids the entire question, since everyone rules that this is permitted. Whether Mrs. Friedman must push the muktzah items off the table with a knife or napkin or whether she may pick up some of the objectionable items by hand depends on the last dispute quoted. However, it is still preferable that as the muktzah items are created, one should place them directly on a plate.

Observing the halachos of muktzah properly forces us to constantly focus on what we move and how we use it. Thereby, these laws imbue our whole Shabbos observance with greater focus and meaning!

*all names have been changed