



To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com
From: crshulman@aol.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON VAYAKHEL - 5765

To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/join> or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Please also copy me at crshulman@aol.com. A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha> (hosted by onlysimchas.com). It is also fully searchable. See also torah links at www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha

[Note from crshulman@aol.com - I didn't have time to prepare the parsha sheet, so I am including Efraim Goldstein's excellent collection, which I'm sure you'll enjoy. I did add one dvar torah from Ateres Hashavua which is not in Efraim's collection. Chaim]

From: Avi Lieberman <AteresHaShavua@aol.com>
Subject: ATERES HASHAVUA
Mesivta Ateres Yaakov 1170A William Street Hewlett NY, 11557 (516)-374-6465 AteresHaShavua@aol.com
EMES LIYAAKOV
Weekly Insights from MOREINU
HORAV YAAKOV KAMENETZKY zt"l
[Translated by Ephraim Weiss]

The Gemara in Masseches Sanhedrin 20b states that Bnei Yisroel were commanded to fulfill three mitzvos upon their entrance to Eretz Yisroel. The three mitzvos were to establish a king, wipe out the nation of Amalek, and to build the Beis HaMikdash. It seems from this Gemara that the construction of the Beis HaMikdash was the last item on the agenda. However, we know that in actuality Bnei Yisroel were told to start work on this mitzvah right after they were forgiven for the chet ha'egel, through the assembly of the mishkan. Why did the fulfillment of this mitzvah start while Bnei Yisroel were still in the desert, as opposed to taking effect upon their entrance to Eretz Yisroel, as was originally intended?

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l offers two answers to this question. The chet ha'egel happened due to Bnei Yisroel's fear of losing their connection to Hashem. When Bnei Yisroel saw that Moshe was gone, they worried that they had lost their connection between the physical world and the world above. The egel was created to fill this void. In order to prevent this from occurring again, Hashem decided that the mishkan should be built right away. The mishkan served as a place in this world where the shechinah would rest. Whenever Bnei Yisroel would feel themselves losing their connection to Hashem, they could go to the mishkan in order to strengthen their emunah.

Rav Yaakov offers a second resolution to this difficulty. At the time of matan Torah there was tremendous achdus amongst Bnai Yisroel. As Rashi in parshas Yisro tells us, when Bnei Yisroel camped at Har Sinai in anticipation of matan Torah, they camped Ki'ish Echad Bi'lev Echad - As one man with one heart." However, this achdus was lost as a result of the chet ha'egel. At the time of the chet, there was such great disunion amongst the various shevatim, as the Yerushalmi in Masseches Sanhedrin relates, that each shevet made its own egel, as they could not agree what type to make. As such, Bnei Yisroel was given the mitzvah of building the mishkan, which would serve as a unifying force amongst Bnei Yisroel. Therefore when Moshe instructed Bnei Yisroel to build the mishkan, the Torah uses the word "LHQYW; and he gathered." The purpose of the command to build the mishkan was to gather the various arguing segments of Bnei Yisroel into one unified nation.

In 1925 at Agudas Yisroel's first Knessia Gedolah, Rav Meir Shapiro proposed the idea of Daf Yomi to serve as a unifying force amongst Klal Yisroel. This concept fulfills the dictum of joining Klal Yisroel and combining the different factions, that makes us a beautiful nation and Hashem's people. May the achdus displayed by Klal Yisroel at this past week's Eleventh Siyum HaShas serve as a zechus towards the final redemption, and join all of Bnei Yisroel for the subsequent Siyum HaShas in Eretz Yisroel with Moshiach Tzidkeinu and the geulah shleimah, bimheirah biyameinu amen.

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet Vayakhel 5765

[From Efraim Goldstein efraimg@aol.com]

Jerusalem Post Mar 04 2005

SLEEP by Rabbi Berel Wein

Like all matters of seemingly mundane life, sleep is a subject of discussion and guidance in Jewish tradition and halacha. Sleep is one of the necessary blessings of life, allowing a person to refresh one's body and spirit. Sleep deprivation causes serious pain, discomfort and great health hazards. One of the more modern methods of torture of prisoners and arrestees, perfected by the Soviet Union but in vogue in many other societies today as well, is sleep deprivation. The disorientation and distress that this sleep deprivation causes is usually enough to break the will and body of most human beings. Because Judaism views the gift of sleep as a Godly blessing, there is a ritual of blessing that precedes going to sleep for the night. The Talmud teaches us that sleep has a minute taste of death in it and therefore one notices in infants the tendency to fight sleep. The soul, so to speak, is returned to its Creator while one sleeps and is restored to the body when one awakes in the morning. The ritual blessing before going to sleep therefore includes our prayer to be able to wake up refreshed in the morning, that we be spared from nightmares and other nocturnal mishaps and that our rest and reawakening be gentle and peaceful. The tradition is that the prayer of Shema is also recited before retiring, accompanied by a number of appropriate psalms and verses. Thus a Jew prepares one's self for sleep by reiterating one's faith in the Almighty and entrusting one's soul and life to Him while sleeping.

Maimonides, the great doctor that he was, lists in his halachic work, Mishna Torah, his recommendation that people should get eight hours of good sleep per night. Reading from his own description of his most hectic daily schedule and reviewing in awe the tremendous amount of scholarly output that his books and letters represent, one can only surmise that Rambam, like many doctors, did not, himself, practice the advice that he gave to others. The Talmud is of the opinion that "night was created for the study of Torah." As such, Torah students in yeshivot and at home traditionally keep late hours while occupied in learning Torah. Since the morning shacharit prayers must be recited early, it is difficult to fit in eight hours of sleep into such a schedule. In Eastern European communities, the rabbi who was suspected of not studying Torah late into the night, often was discharged from his position. Sleep, or certainly a great deal of sleep, was thus transformed from a necessity into something akin to a luxury. The great men of the Mussar movement taught their disciples that there would be plenty of time for sleep in the grave. The Gaon of Vilna, Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer, for most of his life slept only two out of twenty four hours and then only in four thirty minute intervals! The Talmud records that this was also the sleep pattern of King David, whose magic harp awoke him to continue his efforts to serve God and Israel. Jewish tradition valued sleep, but it valued holy deeds and Torah study even more.

Shabat was given the blessing of being the day of rest and leisure. As such, sleeping on Shabat afternoon has become a time-honored Jewish custom. Even those of us who never sleep during the day during the week are loath to forego the pleasure of a Shabat afternoon nap. The Jewish people lovingly attributed an acronym to the letters of Shabat - sheina b'Shabat taanug - sleep on Shabat is a special pleasure. But, there are times when staying awake becomes a special pleasure. On the night of Shavuot, the custom of Jews is to stay awake all night and study Torah. This custom has been strengthened in recent decades by many synagogues sponsoring and formulating all night learning sessions and lectures. This is in compensation for the fact that the Jewish people overslept on the

morning of the revelation at Sinai and had to be roused by Moshe. The Jews therefore resolved that they would never again oversleep on the day commemorating the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. There is also a custom to stay awake in study and prayer on the night of Hoshana Rabah (the last day of Succot) and in many Jewish communities the night of Yom Kippur was also spent in meditation and prayer rather than in sleep. However, the rabbis warned that if one would not be able to pray effectively during the day if one stayed up all night, one should preferably go to sleep and thus be able to pray properly. Even though sleep is a personal matter, Jewish tradition and halacha have important things to say about it. Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha VAYAKHEL by Rabbi Berel Wein

The Mishkan and Shabat are inextricably connected. We are taught in the Talmud that all of the rules regarding the definition of the thirty-nine types of forbidden labor and work on Shabat are somehow derived from the work involved in constructing the Mishkan. In this week's parsha of Vayakhel, the opening paragraph of the parsha, which is otherwise exclusively occupied with reviewing the construction of the Mishkan, deals with the necessity for Shabat observance. Shabat is a priority in Jewish life, even trumping the construction of the Mishkan. This is a practical and simple view of the connection between Shabat and the Mishkan. But on deeper consideration, Shabat and the Mishkan have a great spiritual connection, transcending even the halachic relationship between the two.

Mishkan signifies the concept of sanctifying place. It was the forerunner to the later Temple in Jerusalem. It represents the special existence of holy space in this world. It teaches us that not all locations in the world are equal in spiritual potential and influence. It is the backdrop for our understanding of the importance and sanctity of the Land of Israel and the holiness of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount in our lives and spiritual development. The longing of the Jewish people throughout the long dark centuries of exile to return to the Land of Israel was not only one of nationalism and freedom, but was the longing of the Jewish soul to be reunited with the place where its spiritual potential could be expanded and realized. If in the world of commerce and real estate, location is everything, the same is true in the world of Jewish spiritual development as well. The Mishkan/Temple expresses that idea to us very clearly. Understanding this will enable us to somehow understand better all of the space and detail that the Torah devotes to the Mishkan in the book of Shemot.

Shabat naturally deals with the concept of the sanctification of time. This is one of the most radical ideas that Judaism introduced into world society – that time has not only a value but that it must be invested with holiness and spirituality. Only by sanctifying time can we exploit it efficiently and correctly. And the task of sanctifying time requires a guide, a blueprint in order to be accomplished. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the Mishkan – the paradigm of the sanctification of space – should be the model for Shabat, which is the prime example of the sanctification of time. And since time is the most precious commodity in human life, the one thing that is irreplaceable and irretrievable, it is also understandable why it is a priority in Jewish life even over its model, the Mishkan.

The combination of the Mishkan and Shabat, of the sanctity of space and time creates the boundaries of Judaism. It gives the Jew one's assignment in life – to be holy and to sanctify life in all of its aspects and details. This week's parsha tells us that these ideas were given to Israel bhakhel – all were present to hear the parsha. The task of sanctification of life is incumbent upon all of us. We create our own Mishkan and our own Shabat and it is necessary for us to continually enhance our spiritual growth. Shabat shalom.

For the week ending 5 March 2005 / 24 Adar I 5765

from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu

Parshat Vayakhel

OVERVIEW

Moshe Rabbeinu exhorts Bnei Yisrael to keep Shabbat, and requests donations for the materials for making the Mishkan. He collects gold, silver, precious stones, skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the menorah and for anointing. The princes of each tribe bring the precious stones for the Kohen Gadol's breastplate and ephod. G-d appoints Betzalel and Oholiav as the master craftsmen. Bnei Yisrael contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations. Special curtains with two different covers were designed for the Mishkan's roof and door. Gold-covered boards in silver bases were connected, forming the Mishkan's walls. Betzalel made the Holy Ark (which contained the Tablets) from wood covered with gold. On the Ark's cover were two figures facing each other. The menorah and the table with the showbread were also of gold. Two altars were made: a small incense altar of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for sacrifices made of wood covered with copper.

INSIGHTS

A Betzalel Production

It always amazes me how many people it takes to make a movie. The end credits of a major production read like the telephone directory of a small town - hundreds of people all involved in bringing us a couple of hours of fantasy. And yet at the beginning of the film there is always one name by itself. "A Francis Ford Coppola Film" or "A "Martin Scorsese Film" or "A Steven Spielberg Production." In spite of the myriad of workers on a film, the film is still called after its director, for it is his vision that makes the film.

Everything in this world is a marriage of form and matter. Take a spoon for example. The matter of the spoon is the metal. Its form is its shape. The form of something always reveals its purpose. The form of a spoon is that it has a handle at one end to grasp it and a receptacle at the other to contain soup, sugar and the like. The form of something always reveals its purpose, and the purpose of something is its spiritual dimension. Even a spoon has a spiritual side! Everything in this world reveals a marriage of the physical and the spiritual, of matter and shape, of potential and purpose.

Just as the lowest physical object unifies these two entities, so does the highest of physical existences. The Mishkan, the Tent of Meeting, was one of the most spiritual physical objects that existed. It was the 'house' in which the Shechina, the Divine Presence would dwell.

The Mishkan was constructed by many people. Moshe called upon every G-d fearing man and woman to assist by spinning and weaving tapestries and constructing the components of the walls of the Mishkan with their own hands. The special skill of the women was spinning goats' hair for the tapestries. The hair was both fine and stiff which made it difficult to work with.

G-d gave all those who worked on the Mishkan a measure of special know-how. This supernal wisdom was not limited only to humans. Even the animals that transported the beams of the Mishkan knew which route to take and did not require guidance.

The two people in charge of building the Mishkan were Betzalel and Oholiav. G-d gave them a special degree of insight to help them fulfill their task of fashioning the vessels of the Mishkan and to form even the most delicate of patterns, all of which were necessary for the vessels to perform their allotted spiritual functions.

However, in the Torah, the only one who seems to receive credit for the building of the Mishkan is Betzalel. The verses in the Torah repeat over and over "...and he made it."

The reason is that Betzalel not only exerted himself in the physical construction of the Mishkan, he labored more than anyone else to understand the spiritual depths in each of the mystical vessels of the Mishkan. Because of this effort, G-d rewarded him with the highest level of spiritual insight into the Mishkan and its implements.

Betzalel endowed the vessels of the Mishkan with lofty and holy thoughts. He was the spiritual maker of all that it contained and thus the Torah attributes the construction to Betzalel alone. It was a "Betzalel Production."
Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

**"RavFrاند" List - Parshas Vayakhel
No One Is Completely Immune From Envy**

Hashem commanded Moshe to anoint the sons of Aharon, "as he anointed their father" [Shmos 40:15]. The Meshech Chochmah [Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk] provides us with an insight on the expression "as he anointed their father."

The Meshech Chochmah says that when Moshe was instructed to anoint Aharon as the Kohen Gadol [High Priest], he had absolutely no problem doing that. In fact, Moshe had felt bad that he, as the younger brother in the family, had, in a sense, usurped the leadership role in Israel that rightfully belonged to his older brother, Aharon. Moshe was therefore consoled and even relieved that G-d commanded him to anoint Aharon in the unique leadership role of Kohen Gadol.

But, says the Meshech Chochmah, Moshe hesitated when anointing his nephews the sons of Aharon as Kohanim. The implication of this anointing was that Aharon's sons would succeed their father in the perpetual role of Jewish leadership ensconced in the priesthood. Perhaps, says Rav Meir Simcha, Moshe Rabbeinu felt a tinge of jealousy at this point. Moshe Rabbeinu had no assurance that his sons would inherit his position and in fact they did not. For this reason, G-d had to emphasize to Moshe "anoint them AS YOU ANOINTED THEIR FATHER." Just as you anointed Aharon with a fullness of heart and graciousness, so too you should put aside any twang of jealousy and likewise anoint his sons.

I find this teaching of Rav Meir Simcha very instructive. Certainly we cannot superimpose our petty human emotions onto Moshe Rabbeinu. However, we learn from this insight that even the great Moshe Rabbeinu can be tested by this experience of jealousy. Jealousy is such a basic human emotion and so much a part of the human condition that even Moshe Rabbeinu must be reminded, "Moshe, don't be envious and don't let jealousy get the better of you."

Jealousy is a destructive character trait. It has ruined people's lives. As the Mishneh teaches "it drives a person outside of the world" [Avos 4:21]. Jealousy can make a person crazy and drive him to do the most ridiculous, hateful, and spiteful acts.

The Medrash Shmuel on Avos says that the Satan came to two people. One person was a tremendously jealous individual who could not tolerate anyone having something that he did not have. He was envious of everything and everyone. The second person was a gluttonous and omnivorous person with an insatiable appetite for more and more and more. He ate whatever he could.

The Satan came to the two of them and made them an offer. One of them could pick whatever in the world he wanted. However, whatever the person who was given the right to chose would pick, his companion would get double the quantity of that same item. This was a real dilemma for such people. The envious person knew he would not be able to live with his companion receiving twice as much as he received. The gluttonous person knew he would never be satiated as long as the other fellow had twice as much as what he was given.

The jealous person was given the option of choosing. He chose that Satan gouge out one of his eyes.

The Medrash teaches us that a person can become so consumed and so warped by his jealousy that he will have his own eye gouged out, just so that someone else will have both eyes gouged out. This is how the Medrash Shmuel explains the statement in Avos that jealousy, lust, and the pursuit of honor drive a person out of this world.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org

**Ohr Torah Stone - Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom
Parshat Vayakhel 24 Adar I 5765, 5 March 2005**

Efrat, Israel - "Six days shall creative activity be done, but on the seventh day there shall be for you a holy Sabbath of Sabbath for the Lord" (Exodus 35:2).

When approaching the five biblical portions which conclude the book of Exodus, the greatest puzzle seems to be the seemingly convoluted order of their subject matter. The over-arching theme is obviously the Sanctuary: its various accoutrements and precise dimensions. The third Torah portion in the middle seems to veer away from the Sanctuary and repeat the commandment of the Sabbath: "But My Sabbath shall you observe ... six days shall your creative physical activity be done and on the seventh day a Sabbath of Sabbaths shall be sacred to the Lord ... because in six days did the Lord make the heavens and the earth and on the seventh He ceased from work and He became refreshed" (Exodus 31:12-17). What immediately follows is the idolatrous worship of the golden calf, Moses' breaking of the tablets, and G-d's ultimate forgiveness of the Israelites for their transgression. The fourth Torah portion, our portion of Vayakhel, then opens with the Sabbath once again (as cited above), after which the text continues with its accounting of the execution of the construction of the Sanctuary until the conclusion of the Book of Exodus. The order then becomes:

Sanctuary - Sanctuary - Sabbath - Golden Calf - Sabbath - Sanctuary - Sanctuary Especially if we take the position of the majority of Midrashim and of the most classical of commentaries Rashi, that the command to build the Sanctuary did not come until after the sin of the golden calf - and was actually a form of atonement for that very sin of idolatry - then the order of these five Torah portions seems absolutely incomprehensible. In order to further complicate the issue - but at the same time to begin to discover the solution to our problem - it is important to analyze the very special relationship between the Sanctuary and the Sabbath commandment. The Midrash utilizes the verse which appears after the initial command of the Sanctuary and its accoutrements, "And you shall speak to the children of Israel saying 'but My Sabbath shall you observe,'" (ibid. 12,13) as teaching the thirty nine forbidden acts of physical creativity; the Sages of the Talmud insist that it was precisely those activities necessary in the construction of the Sanctuary which we are forbidden to do on the Sabbath day. The construction of the Sanctuary defines the forbidden activities (melakhot) on the Sabbath. This connection expresses a most profound link between the Sanctuary and the Sabbath. Prof. Abraham Joshua Heschel takes note of this by referring to the Sabbath as "a Sanctuary in time". I would submit, however that the connection is far deeper. The Almighty created a world for us to dwell in;

He expects us to return the compliment by our creating a Sanctuary in which He may dwell. But the Almighty created an incomplete world, whose built-in freedom of will provides the possibility of evil as well as good, chaos as well as order, darkness as well as light. "The creator of light and the maker of darkness, the maker of peace and the creator of evil, I the Lord have done all of these." (Isaiah 45:7) What G-d expects of us is that we utilize the Torah which He has given us, choose good and reject the evil, in order to complete His incomplete world, in order to perfect His imperfect world. The Sanctuary is the ideal of the perfected world, the place where G-d himself may feel comfortable, the more perfect world in which His divine goodness will be felt throughout, so that He will not be forced to hide His face and to be concealed behind a cloud, to be glimpsed only "through a glass darkly." In this model, the six days of labor and seventh day of rest take on a major symbol. "Six days shall your physical creativity be done"; and it was during the primordial six days that G-d's world, an incomplete, imperfect world, was made. As an old Jewish story reminds us, when a disgruntled customer complained to the tailor who was late in delivering his suit, "It took the Almighty only six days to create an entire universe and you've kept me waiting 3 months for a jacket and trousers?", the tailor responded, "But do you want me to deliver the same problematic

product that G-d delivered?!" Indeed, it is our task to work during the six days of the week to attempt to make this imperfect world into a perfect Sanctuary, to assume our roles as agent-partners with G-d in completing His world.

The Sabbath day itself, the day on which G-d rests, symbolizes a world of peace and harmony, the ultimate world of messianism and redemption. The Sabbath is the goal, the end-game, towards which we all aim and for which we all yearn. The Sabbath expresses the time when we will have overcome our imperfect nature and our imperfect society. Whatever it took by the sweat of our brow for us to remake the world that we were given, is not to be done on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is the ultimate promise and the ultimate vision. It is a foretaste of the world-to-come. The Sanctuary is our Sabbath-in-place, the world which is wholly Sabbath! Now the order of our Torah portions is clear. The purpose of G-d's having given us the Torah at Sinai is for us to create a Sanctuary, a more perfect world. Hence, after the command to build the Sanctuary, comes the commandment of the Sabbath: our "work" as partners with G-d to perfect the world during the six days and our taste of the more perfect world to come on the Sabbath itself. The cost of failure at that effort is our dancing at the feet of the golden calf, explained by our Sages as embodying the idolatry of false values, the immorality and licentiousness of materialism, and even the murder which comes from lawlessness. But when we fall, we must raise ourselves up by means of the standard and the vision of the Sabbath. Then and only then will Sabbath and Sanctuary merge into one as "the world is filled with the knowledge (and presence) of G-d as the waters cover the seas." And so the order: Sanctuary, Sabbath, Idolatrous Calf, Sabbath, Sanctuary.

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Parshas Vayakhel

You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Shabbos day. (35:3)

Shabbos is one of the basic tenets of Judaism. The Torah teaches us that nothing takes precedence over Shabbos, even the construction of the Mishkan. Quite often, those who have returned to a life of Torah-observance have done so after experiencing the beauty and serenity of a Shabbos. This is what makes the following episodes all the more compelling. A family in Eretz Yisrael who had been living on a non-observant kibbutz decided to embrace a life of Torah Judaism. They were giving up the emptiness and sterility that are so much a part of life devoid of mitzvos. They decided to leave the kibbutz and the environment of spiritual negativity that it bred in order to move to the Meah Shearim section of Yerushalayim.

They quickly progressed in their Yiddishkeit, the husband soon becoming a devout and pious Jew. He seized every opportunity to study Torah. His wife, however, had one problem: It seems that she enjoyed smoking cigarettes, an addiction that became especially difficult to overcome on Shabbos. It was almost as if the onset of Shabbos brought about a sudden urge to smoke a cigarette. She did not know what to do. She chose the Torah way of life, a choice to which she meant to adhere. Yet, she had this overwhelming urge to smoke. What could she do?

One of the individuals who was guiding the family on the path of Torah observance decided to approach Horav Yosef Eliyashuv, Shlita, and seek his sage advice. The rav suggested that they thoroughly research this woman's pedigree to confirm that her mother, grandmother and great-grandmother had all been Jewish. One can only imagine the shock when they discovered that the woman's great-grandmother had not been Jewish. This woman, who was having such a difficult time overcoming her urge to smoke on Shabbos, was not Jewish after all!

When the man who made the discovery returned to Rav Eliyashuv with the news, the rav explained the following to him, "Hashem saw that this woman was extremely dedicated to becoming an observant Jewess. She was prepared to eschew her entire past for a future of devotion to Torah

and mitzvos. Hashem, however, was aware of something concerning this woman that did not cross anyone else's mind: She was not Jewish. If she were to observe Shabbos as a gentile, she would be guilty of a capital punishment. In order to spare this righteous woman the onus of guilt, Hashem increased her urge to smoke - specifically on Shabbos, so that she would not observe the holy day as a gentile."

When this was all explained to the woman, she gladly accepted upon herself to convert to Judaism. Incidentally, on her first Shabbos as a Jewess, she no longer had an urge to smoke.

In another episode, a woman who had recently been chozeres b'teshuvah, returned to a Torah way of life, came to her rav and complained that her husband, regrettably, was not progressing with her toward Torah and mitzvos. To make matters worse, on Shabbos, the day that meant so much to her, he would blatantly smoke cigarettes.

The rav gave her meaningful advice: She should request of her husband that, out of a sense of respect for her and her beliefs, he should not smoke while the Shabbos candles were burning. The husband agreed and, for a few hours, the sanctity of Shabbos was maintained in their home.

After awhile, the rav suggested that she use thicker candles that would burn longer. Once again, the husband respectfully acceded to her request, and his Shabbos observance was extended. A few weeks later, when the moment was propitious, the woman chose a new type of candle - a yahrtzeit candle that burned for a full twenty-four hours! The husband accepted this new challenge and became a shomer Shabbos. The case is especially interesting when we consider what might have crossed the mind of an innocent spectator. He might have thought that the woman was either eccentric or foolish, when, indeed, she was extremely sagacious and deliberate.

This brings to mind an anecdote that should give us something to ponder. A middle-school girl was enrolled in an afternoon Talmud Torah. She looked forward to learning all about her religion, but was upset when her parents blatantly refused to adopt any of the mitzvos or practices that were encouraged in her school. Their response was the usual, "It is always nice to learn about 'those things' in school, but we do not observe them in our home."

One mitzvah was very important to the young girl, more so than anything else: She wanted her mother to light Shabbos candles. Most of the girls in the class had responded affirmatively when queried if their mothers lit candles. Regrettably, her mother's response was the usual, "We do not do that in our home."

Having given up on her mother, the girl decided to light candles herself. She went to the Jewish bookstore and asked the proprietor for the candles that she should light for her father and mother. Her parents were not home that Friday night, but the girl, who had lovingly saved the candles all week for the special moment, did not forget. She ushered in Shabbos by lighting two candles. Proud that she had fulfilled the mitzvah, she waited enthusiastically for her parents to come home. Her parents came home. When confronted with the sight of the two lit candles, they were horrified. They immediately demanded to know why those candles had been lit. "I lit one for you, mommy, and one for you, daddy," she innocently replied. "But those are Yizkor candles, not Shabbos candles!" her parents explained.

"I do not know what you mean," she said. "What is the difference anyway?"

Needless to say, the parents were impacted by the spectacle and their daughter's response. From that Shabbos on, candles were always lit in their home.

Every wise-hearted person among you shall come and make everything that Hashem has commanded. (35:10)

The commentators write that one who has a great desire to perform a mitzvah should do so immediately, with alacrity. Idle talk about what one is planning to do only delays the actual performance. This is implied by the pasuk: "Every wise-hearted person" - one who is truly a chacham, wise - should act immediately - not just talk about it. The Gaon, zl, m'Vilna interprets this into the pasuk in Mishlei 1:8, "The wise of heart

will seize good deeds, but the foolish one's lips will become weary." The wise man does not procrastinate. He acts immediately, carrying out the mitzvah, while the avil sfasayim, "foolish one's lips," talks and makes plans - and in the end does not even do the mitzvah.

The Chida, zl, cites Chazal who says, "The righteous say little but do much, while the wicked talk a lot, and they do not even do a little." He explains that the righteous do not waste precious time talking about the mitzvah. They perform it. The reshaim, wicked people, talk and talk and make grandiose plans, until they have wasted so much time that the opportunity to perform the mitzvah has passed them by.

Meetings - this is what the yetzer hora, evil-inclination, wants. Talk and more talk, meeting after meeting, just as long as the mitzvah does not get done.

Moshe Rabbeinu instructed Klal Yisrael about the construction of the Mishkan. Their response was immediate: "The entire assemblage of Yisrael left Moshe's presence." (Shemos 35:20) Where did they go? asks Rabbeinu Bachya. They went home immediately to bring their contributions. Indeed, when the men came home, they noted that their wives had already left with their jewelry. So great was their alacrity for the mitzvah.

Zerizus is an attitude necessary for mitzvah performance. It denotes devotion, enthusiasm, diligence, ability and fervor in carrying out the Divine will. It is indicative of an overwhelming desire to please Hashem and a preparedness to perform His mandate. Avraham Avinu was noted for his zerizus. When given the command to sacrifice his beloved Yitzchak, he did not tarry, but rather, he rose at the crack of dawn and personally saddled the donkey, eager to carry out Hashem's command.

A person who fails out of indolence may not see his failure to be a result of his laziness. He will invariably attribute it to other factors. Some will give the excuse that they lack the acumen or skills for successful achievement. Others place the onus of guilt on others; parents, teachers, friends - everyone - but themselves. They rationalize everything in order to cover up the real reason: They are lazy. Psychologists note that the more intelligent one is, the greater is his ability to rationalize his lack of success. The most sophisticated are the most difficult to help, because they believe their own lies.

In his Mesillas Yesharim, The Ramchal cautions us about falling prey to the yetzer hora's cunning. He says that any desire that tends to ease one's burdens should be considered suspect. The alarm clock rings in the morning, waking us to go to davening. Immediately, the arguments for sleeping in and attending a later Minyan begin. They are generated by a desire to remain in bed, a decision that he will likely regret later on. A chasid once asked the Rhiziner Rebbe, zl, for advice in maintaining proper conduct. After all, one does not always have access to the Shulchan Aruch, Code of Jewish Law, nor is a rav always available. The Rebbe replied, "Do as a tightrope walker does. The way he maintains his delicate balance is that when he senses himself drawn to one side, he leans towards the other side. When you feel yourself tempted to one side, to do something that might be improper, as you process the arguments that would satisfy your desire, give greater credence to the arguments that negate gratification. Those arguments that are pro-gratification are usually nothing more than spurious rationalizations."

Shlomo Hamelech says in Mishlei 26:13, "A lazy person says, 'There is a young lion on the path, a lion between the streets.'" What does this mean? If there really is a lion out there, then the person has something to fear. If there is no lion, why is he called indolent? He is a liar! My rebbe, Horav Chaim Mordechai Katz, zl, explained that, indeed, there is a lion on the road, but a person who is a zariz, filled with alacrity, who is diligent and agile, will find a way around the lion. Nothing stands in the way of he who is a zariz. One who has a mission and is dedicated to carrying it out will surely find a way around, under, or over the lion.

Chazal teach us that the Nesiim were chastised for not coming forward to donate to the Mishkan. They said, "We will wait until everybody else has contributed, and we will then complete whatever is missing. The commentators see a laxity on their part and suggest that, had they acted with greater alacrity, they would have come forward to contribute. When

we think about it, what did they really do wrong? They wanted to make sure that everything needed for the construction of the Mishkan would be supplied, so they waited until the end to contribute their share. Their intentions were certainly noble, as well as practical.

Horav Reuven Grosovsky, zl, explains that man's function in this world is not to complete the Mishkan, but instead to complete himself. Hashem will take care of the Mishkan. The nesiim should have been concerned with themselves, with their personal completion. They should have manifest greater zerizus, which they, regrettably, did not.

Every man and woman whose heart motivated them to bring for any of the work... Bnei Yisrael brought a donation to Hashem. (35:29)

The pasuk seems to have a redundancy. It begins by saying that every man and woman contributed towards the Mishkan and then concludes with the phrase, "Bnei Yisrael brought a donation." Are these not the same people that were mentioned earlier as "every man and woman"? Horav Avraham Pam, zl, in Ateres Avraham, cites the Kehillas Yitzchak that offers a noteworthy explanation, which conveys a powerful lesson. He relates a story that occurred concerning the Maharasha, Horav Shmuel Eidlish, zl, who had a yeshivah in the city of Ostrova. This yeshivah was a Torah center for students from Eastern and Central Europe.

As the yeshivah's popularity grew and students flocked to it from throughout Europe, it was necessary to initiate a building campaign, since space had become a major issue. A fund-raising campaign was launched with the usual opportunities for eternalizing one's name through support of the yeshivah. There was even an auction to sell the z'chus, privilege, of laying the cornerstone of the new building. On the designated day of the auction, an individual approached the gabbai, sexton, in charge of the auction, with a unique request. He wanted to purchase the z'chus of laying the cornerstone, but he wanted to remain anonymous for the time being. Would the gabbai bid for him? The gabbai agreed, and the auction was held. At the end, the gabbai bid 500 rubles, a considerable sum of money which was unmatched by anyone. The anonymous gentleman had won the z'chus of placing the cornerstone.

All eyes were on the gabbai to see whom he would approach with the privilege. Everyone wanted to know the identity of the anonymous donor. Perceiving this problem, the anonymous benefactor had prearranged with the gabbai that this distinction would be reserved for the Maharasha, himself.

The ceremony was over, and the crowd dispersed and went home. The Maharasha asked the gabbai if he could arrange to have the elusive benefactor come to his house, so that he could personally express his gratitude for his generous contribution and for honoring him with the cornerstone laying. When the benefactor arrived at his home, the Maharasha was surprised to discover that the benefactor was not wealthy. "What motivated you to make such a large contribution?" the Maharasha asked. The man replied, "I have no children, and I wanted to do something to promote the growth of Torah in Ostrova."

The Maharasha was impressed with the man's generosity, but it was his modesty that especially left an impact on him. He gave the man the blessing that had heretofore eluded him: He would have a son. Moreover, that son would one day be a student in the yeshivah to which the man had contributed so generously.

One year later, the man's wife gave birth to a son. Thirteen years later, after his son's Bar Mitzvah, the benefactor brought his son to be enrolled in the yeshivah. The hanhalah, yeshivah administration, refused to admit him, claiming that the boy was too young. The man was not deterred. He went to the Maharasha and reminded him of his blessing and his pledge to accept his son as a student in the yeshivah. The Maharasha remembered his pledge and honored his word. The boy was immediately accepted as a student.

The Kehillas Yitzchak wonders why the man was blessed with a child just because he undertook to sustain Torah? He explains that the purpose of a Mishkan is to be a place where the Shechinah can repose. In reality, however, the primary resting place of the Shechinah is not in

an edifice, but on the people themselves. When Hashem notices that people labor to build a Mishkan or a similar edifice, such as a yeshivah for Him, He rewards them with banim tzaddikim, righteous children, who will themselves one day be worthy of being receptacles for His Shechinah.

The architecture of our religious buildings is not our greatest asset. >From an artist's point of view, the architecture of a religious edifice may be impressive, but in reality Klal Yisrael's greatest natural resource is not its magnificent buildings, but its pious and virtuous children. Their faces radiate kedushah, holiness, and it is their souls that are the veritable Mishkan for Hashem's Presence. Thus, the meaning of the extra phrase, "Bnei Yisrael brought a donation." This is written to emphasize the notion that when the Jewish People responded with great generosity to building the Mishkan, they were blessed with righteous children who would themselves embody the Divine Presence. When parents appreciate and value the significance of the Mishkan and its contemporary counterpart, its role and function in Klal Yisrael, they merit children that embody and continue this legacy.

Rav Pam gleans from the Maharasha that a segulah for being blessed with children is to involve oneself in building a center for Torah and Tefillah. Hashem compensates us in the manner that we demonstrate devotion to him.

I think this idea is conveyed to us by way of the primary component of which the walls of the Mishkan were constructed. Chazal tell us that the Atzei Shittim, special Shittim wood - or as some translate, Acacia Trees - which comprised the walls of the Mishkan, ein oseh peiros, "do not bear fruit." There is a profound lesson to be derived herein. It is not the structure that bears fruit, nor will the beautiful and impressive architecture produce the spirit of holiness. The soul of Yiddishkeit, the continuing legacy of our People, is the teaching that goes on in the building. We make the building, but Hashem's Shechinah reposes b'socham, within the people that study and pray in the building. Our hope for a future is in the children. The finest teachers, the greatest scholars, can only plant the seeds. The building produces the suitable climate for the inspiration to grow, but it is children who must learn, who must be encouraged to study and to daven with kavanah, devotion, or all will be in vain. The reward is commensurate with the value one places on the endeavor.

Va'ani Tefillah

Ki hakol hevel - For (all man's efforts) are for naught.

After all the thousands of years of civilization, we see that man's superiority over the animals is really nothing. We might have more intelligence, but where has that brought us? Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, has an excellent explanation of this Tefillah. When we look at its construction, we note that it is based upon the pasuk in Koheles 1:2, "Futility of futilities," said Koheles. "Futility of futilities! All is futile!" There are a total of seven havalim, terms, applying to futility (if we count the plural form as two havalim). In the Midrash, Chazal explain that these seven futilities constitute a reference to the seven time periods of a man's life, from birth to old age. Shlomo Hamelech refers to all of these as hevel, nothingness. Furthermore, the word mah, what (are we), describing our weaknesses, is used seven times in this Tefillah.

However, when the Tefillah focuses upon our inherent joy in being amcha, bnei brisescha, Your nation, Your covenanted children, these seven futilities are offset by seven expressions of praise. When we study the structure of Tefillah, we see how much chochmah, wisdom, Chazal applied in creating it. We now leave the world of futility to focus on our role as Hashem's nation and His children. While we recognize that we have, regrettably, failed in our mission to improve the world, we note that we have, at least, succeeded in maintaining our separatism as Hashem's nation.

l'zchus u'refuah sheleima for Malka Chaya bas Chana

The prohibition of carrying on Shabbos is fundamentally different than the first thirty-eight melachos that one cannot do on Shabbos. Although all of the thirty nine melachos were done in the construction of the mishkan and are derived from the juxtaposition of Shabbos and mishkan, Chazal derive the prohibition of carrying from a separate source. In parshas Vayakhel Moshe instructs the Jewish people to stop bringing materials for the mishkan. Chazal in maseches Shabbos (96b) interpret this event as referring to Shabbos. They were told not to carry materials on Shabbos, thereby teaching us that carrying is forbidden on Shabbos. Tosafos in maseches Shabbos (2a) question the necessity for an explicit prohibition against carrying. If carrying was involved in the process of constructing the mishkan, it should be included in the definition of melacha which includes all mishkan oriented activities. Just as there is no distinct source to prohibit the other melachos, so too carrying should not require its own prohibition.

Tosafos answers that carrying is a "melacha geruah" - an inferior category of melacha. If not for its distinct source of prohibition, it would have been permissible notwithstanding its role in the construction of the mishkan. What is inferior about carrying that differentiates it from other melachos? The other melachos involve a physical change in the object. Actions such as cooking, lighting a fire and writing cause a physical change, whereas an item that is carried remains the same. If carrying is so different than the other melachos, why does the Torah prohibit it? If Shabbos is the commemoration of Hashem resting from creation, it is understandable that we refrain from "creating" by changing physical objects. Why should carrying be included in this commemoration if it is not an act of creation?

When Yosef is appointed as the second in command to Pharaoh (Braishis 41:44), he is told that no one will lift up a hand or foot in Mitzrayim without his permission. These words define what an absolute ruler is. One cannot lift an object or walk without the permission of the ruler.

Shabbos observance is the expression of the acceptance of Hashem as Creator and King. The other thirty-eight melachos declare Hashem is the Creator and the melacha of carrying declares Hashem is the King. One does not lift an object and carry it without the permission of the King.

Perhaps it is this connection between Hashem the King and carrying on Shabbos that prompted Chazal to institute an otherwise very difficult halacha to understand. The Gemara (Rosh Hashana 29b) tells us that we do not blow the shofar when Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbos. Chazal were concerned that someone may forget it is Shabbos and carry the shofar. Given that the mitzvah of shofar is an essential aspect of Rosh Hashana, how can Chazal say that the remote possibility that someone may carry the shofar outweighs the entire Jewish people not hearing the shofar? The primary theme of Rosh Hashana is the accepting of Hashem as our King. The shofar is blown just as trumpets are sounded at a coronation. The shofar itself being carried on Shabbos would be the greatest contradiction to the kingship of Hashem. To lift up an item the King Himself prohibits and use it for His coronation is inconceivable. When Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbos, we coronate Hashem in a very different way. Rather than blowing the shofar, we strengthen our observance of the melacha of carrying, thereby accepting Hashem as our King in the true spirit of Rosh Hashana.

Of all the thirty nine melachos, the halachos of carrying are given the most attention by Chazal. In addition to many sugyas in maseches Shabbos almost the entire maseches Eruvin deals with the complexities of this melacha. The numerous prohibitions instituted by Chazal to safeguard this melacha date back to Shlomo Hamelech (Eruvin 21b). Such care is given not to violate this melacha. Although it is technically a "melacha geruah - an inferior melacha" - its message is central to Shabbos. The proper observance of its intricate details is our expression of kabolas ol malchus shomayim. May we merit to study the laws of Shabbos and observe it properly, thereby declaring that Hashem is our Creator and King.

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5765

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt, Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights

A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav PROPER CONDUCT WITH FOOD ITEMS

QUESTION: Reference is made throughout the Talmud(1) to the importance of properly disposing of leftover pieces of bread. What is the correct procedure for disposing of leftover bread?(2) What should we do with crumbs?

DISCUSSION: The answer depends on the condition and amount of the leftover bread:

Crumbs and leftover pieces of bread which are either moldy, inedible or have fallen on the floor and will no longer be eaten, may be thrown directly into the garbage can.(3)

Pieces of bread larger than a k'zayis [approx. 1 fl. oz.] may not be thrown into the garbage.(4) If, after the meal is over, such pieces are left over, they should be stored [or frozen] for the next meal. If it is clear that for some reason the piece will not be eaten in the future, then it is permitted to wrap the piece [or several pieces together] in a bag, seal the bag, and dispose of it in the garbage can.(5)

Edible crumbs or pieces of bread smaller than a k'zayis which are left on the table should be treated in a dignified manner; they may not be swept off the table onto the floor, stepped upon,(6) soaked with the mayim acharonim water(7) or otherwise abused.(8) While it is halachically permissible to carefully place crumbs in the garbage, some poskim recommend that they be disposed of in the same manner described earlier for larger pieces of bread, especially if one is disposing of many crumbs or pieces of bread at one time. If, however, this is difficult to do, it is permitted to carefully put the crumbs in the garbage.(9)

QUESTION: May leftover pieces of food be given to animals or birds to eat?

DISCUSSION: Leftovers which are smaller than a k'zayis [or leftover drinks less than a revi'is], or even if they are bigger than a k'zayis but are no longer edible or likely to be eaten, may be given to animals or birds to eat.(10)

Edible leftovers which are larger than a k'zayis should, preferably, not be given to an animal. Several poskim, however, have allowed doing so if there is no other food available for the animal or if animal feed is much more expensive than regular food.(11)

QUESTION: Is it permitted for the head of the family to toss the slices of ha-motzi bread to those assembled around the table, or must they be handed to them?

DISCUSSION: If the bread will become dirtied or ruined when tossed, or even if there is a chance that it will, it is forbidden to toss the bread. (12) [This is true of all other foods as well.]

If, however, the bread(13) will not get dirty or ruined when thrown, the Rishonim disagree(14) whether or not it may be tossed. Most poskim, including the Mishnah Berurah,(15) rule stringently on this issue.(16) [Other foods, however, may be tossed if they will not become dirty or ruined.]

But handing the slice of ha-motzi bread directly into the hand of the person who will eat it is also frowned upon by the Shulchan Aruch.(17) It is considered bad mazal to do so, since this is the manner in which we serve a mourner when he is sitting shivah.(18) It follows, therefore, that since neither tossing the piece of bread nor handing it directly to him is appropriate, the correct method is to place the bread slices on the table within easy reach of the diners, or to pass around slices of bread on a plate, etc.

QUESTION: Is it permitted to eat food or drink that was mistakenly brought into a bathroom?

DISCUSSION: Although eating in the bathroom is forbidden,(19) we do not find that the poskim expressly prohibit bringing food into a

bathroom. Surely b'diavad, food, drinks, vitamins or medicines that were stored there do not become forbidden to ingest.(20)

Similar halachos apply in other cases where a ruach ra'ah, an evil spirit, may affect food. For instance:

It is prohibited to touch food or drink prior to washing one's hands in the morning upon awakening. But if, inadvertently, the food [or drink(21)] was touched before washing, it does not become forbidden to eat.(22)

It is forbidden to store [raw or cooked] food or drinks(23) under a bed [even if the food is wrapped and sealed in metal containers or in a suitcase] in which someone will sleep.(24) But if, inadvertently, food or drink was stored under a bed and someone slept on the bed, many poskim hold that the food does not become forbidden to eat.(25)

Mayim acharonim may not splash on food or dishes used as eating utensils.

(26) B'diavad, if mayim acharonim splashed over dishes, the dishes should be washed well before they are used.(27) If mayim acharonim splashed over a food item, the food may be eaten.(28)

QUESTION: We previously mentioned that food or drink may not be stored underneath a bed. How, exactly, do we define "underneath a bed" as regards this halachah?

DISCUSSION: "Underneath a bed" means that it was stored on the ground(29) under a bed in which someone was sleeping. Therefore:

It is permitted to place food on top of the bottom bed of a bunk bed, even if someone is asleep on the top bed.(30)

It is permitted to place food underneath a baby's carriage, even if a baby is sleeping in the carriage.(31)

Most poskim permit storing food under a couch or bed which is not being used for sleeping.(32)

It is permitted to place food underneath a bench [or an airplane seat], even if the bench is used for sleeping, since a bench is not a bed.(33)

Rabbi Neustadt is Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights. He may be reached at 216-321-4635 or at jsgross1836@yahoo.com

FOOTNOTES: 1 See Berachos 52b, Pesachim 111b and Chullin 105b. See also Zohar, quoted by Kaf ha-Chayim 180:13. 2 Cakes and pasties are included in this halachah as well. 3 See Beis Baruch on Chayei Adam 45:22. 4 O.C. 180:3. 5 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv and Harav Y.Y. Fisher, oral ruling quoted in V'zos ha-Berachah, pg. 18. 6 For this reason, the dining area should be swept after the meal, so that the crumbs which fell to the floor will not be stepped on; Ben Ish Chai, Pinchas 12. 7 See Mishnah Berurah 180:9. 8 One should be extremely careful not to mishandle crumbs and small pieces of bread as doing so can cause poverty; O.C. 180:4. 9 See Mishnah Berurah 180:10, Aruch ha-Shulchan 180:4 and V'zos ha-Berachah, pg. 18. 10 Chayei Adam and Beis Baruch 45:5. 11 See Machatzis ha-Shekel 171:1, Mishnah Berurah 171:11 and Ketzos ha-Shulchan 39:30. [When feeding animals at the zoo, therefore, the animals should be fed with animal food, not pieces of food fit for human consumption.] 12 O.C. 171:1. 13 Or cake and pastries; O.C. 171:4 and Mishnah Berurah 22. 14 See Beis Yosef O.C. 171:1 who brings the various opinions of the Rishonim. See also Rambam, Berachos 7:9 and Levush O.C. 171. 15 167:88; 171:9. 16 Note, however, that some poskim permit it; see Rav Chaim Sanzer's notes to O.C. 171:1 and Hisorerus Tehshuvah 1:121 who writes that his father, the Ksav Sofer, used to toss the pieces of ha-motzi to those assembled around his table. 17 167:18 based on Rambam, Berachos 7:5. Although this halachah is quoted unilaterally by all of the poskim, it is not practiced everywhere; see Nefesh Chaya O.C. 167 for a possible explanation. 18 Mishnah Berurah 167:90. 19 Be'er Heitev O.C. 3:2. 20 Minchas Yitzchak 3:63. See Otzros Yosef 1:13. 21 See Beir Halachah 4:5 s.v. lo concerning beer. 22 Mishnah Berurah 4:14. Food which does not get ruined from washing, like fruit, should be washed three times; ibid. 23 Although vitamins are also included, medications are not considered food and may be stored under a bed; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Shelomo, Tefillah, 13:17). 24 Y.D. 116:5, based on Pesachim 112a. See also Rashbam, Bava Basra 58a. 25 See Rav Akiva Eiger, Yad Efrayim, Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 116:4-5 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 116:11. The Gaon of Vilna, however, was extremely stringent even b'diavad; see Binat Adam 63:3. See also Halichos Shelomo, Tefillah, 13:17 quoting Harav S.Z. Auerbach's stringent rulings on this issue. 26 O.C. 181:2. The same halachos apply to the water used to wash one's hands in the morning upon awakening; O.C. 4:8-9. 27 See Ta'amei ha-Minhagim, pg. 11. 28 Based on Darkei Teshuvah 116:35. Food which will not get ruined from washing, like fruit, should be washed three times; based on Mishnah Berurah 4:14. 29 In the opinion of some poskim, if the ground below the bed is a finished floor, the prohibition does not apply at all; see Darkei

Teshuvah 116:37. L'chatchilah, we do not rely in this leniency; see Kaf ha-Chayim Y.D. 116:42-44. 30 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Shelomo, Tefillah, 13:17). 31 Minchas Yitzchak 4:117. 32 Darkei Teshuvah 116:38 quoting Toras Chaim; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Shelomo, Tefillah, 13:17). A minority opinion holds that food should not be placed underneath a bed even if no one is sleeping there; Darkei Teshuvah, ibid. quoting Ohr Yitzchok. 33 See Kaf ha-Chayim Y.D. 116:43.

Weekly-Halacha, Copyright © 2004 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. The Weekly-Halacha Series is distributed L'zchus Daniel Meir ben Hinda. The series is distributed by the Harbotzas Torah Division of Congregation Shomre Shabbos, 1801 South Taylor Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118 HaRav Yisroel Grumer, Marah D'Asra.

YatedUSA Parshas Vayakhel March 4, 2005

Halacha Talk - Knotty Situation

by Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Mrs. Goldstein ties her tichel on Shabbos the way her mother always did. Her son Yankie explains that she should not tie or untie her tichel this way since it is a double knot. Must Mrs. Goldstein tie her tichel differently? And may she untie the knot that is holding the tichel on her head?

Yankie's older brother, Reuven returns from yeshiva and tells his mom that it is okay to tie the baby's shoes with a double knot. Mom has never done this, always assuming that one cannot tie a double knot on Shabbos, even though baby Rivka's shoes almost never stay tied on Shabbos as a result. Of course, Yankie does not miss the opportunity to disagree with Reuven and emphasize that one may not tie the shoes on Shabbos just as one may not tie the tichel.

What's a mother to do?

She calls the Rav, who begins to explain....

As we see, these and many other shaylos in regards to knots affect our weekly observance of Shabbos. We must learn these halachos thoroughly to be certain that we are keeping Shabbos correctly.

Tying and untying knots are two of the 39 melachos prohibited on Shabbos. Several types of knots were tied in the course of constructing the mishkan, which is our source for what is forbidden on Shabbos. For example, it was necessary to tie and untie the nets used to catch the chilazon that provided the techeiles dye. Also, the weavers of the mishkan curtains had to tie knots whenever a thread tore (Gemara Shabbos 74b).

KNOTTING MIN HATORAH

The Mishnah and Gemara teach that some knots are prohibited min haTorah, others are prohibited midirabbanan, while others are completely permitted. They also state that any knot that may not be tied may not be untied either. If tying it involves a Torah prohibition, then untying it is forbidden min haTorah (Mishnah Shabbos 111b). If tying the knot is only midirabbanan, then untying it is midirabbanan. If one is allowed to tie a particular knot, one may also untie it (Rambam Hilchos Shabbos 10:7). Although several examples of prohibited and permitted knots are mentioned in the Mishnah and Gemara, exactly what defines a "prohibited knot" is never discussed. This issue is left for the Rishonim to discuss, who have two approaches to define the issue, that of Rashi and that of the Rif.

RASHI'S DEFINITION

Rashi and most Rishonim contend that it is prohibited min haTorah to tie a permanent knot, midirabbanan to tie a semipermanent knot, and that it is permitted to tie a temporary knot.

But where does one draw the line between a prohibited semipermanent knot and a temporary knot that is permitted?

Although there are different opinions concerning this, everyone agrees that Rashi permits tying any knot that will be untied within 24 hours from when it is tied (Beis Yosef 317). A knot of such short duration is considered temporary and is permitted (Mishnah Berurah 317:6, quoting Pri Megadim).

On the other hand, everyone agrees that Rashi forbids tying a knot that is left untied for a week or more. This is long enough to be considered semi-permanent and tying it on Shabbos was prohibited by Chazal.

What Poskim dispute is whether Rashi prohibits or permits tying a knot meant to last more than 24 hours but less than a week, some viewing this knot as semi-permanent and others as temporary (Rama 317:1). One may follow the lenient opinion under extenuating circumstances (Biyur Halacha 317:4 s.v. she'einam kevuim).

JUMPROPE AND SHOELACES

Thus, according to Rashi, tying two lengths of jump rope together to make a longer jump rope may be prohibited min haTorah since one might leave the knot permanently. Tying a knot attaching a boat to a pier is prohibited midirabbanan since it may be left for a long period of time. It is not prohibited min haTorah since it will definitely be untied eventually (Gemara Shabbos 111b with Rashi). One may tie shoes since they will be untied later the same day. (It should be noted that one may not put a new shoelace into a shoe on Shabbos because it is considered completing a vessel, see Magen Avraham 317:7).

RIF'S DEFINITION

The Rif and Rambam present a different approach to explain why one may tie some knots on Shabbos but not others. In their opinion, a knot that is permanent is prohibited min haTorah only when it is a type of knot that a craftsman would use, called a "keshet uman." A permanent knot that would not be used by a craftsman is only prohibited midirabbanan. In addition, a knot that a craftsman would tie but is not permanent is also only midirabbanan, whereas a knot that is neither permanent nor used by a craftsman is totally permitted.

There is some uncertainty as to what is considered a "craftsman's knot." Because of this question, some poskim rule that one should not tie any knot very tightly even though one intends to untie it shortly (Shiltei HaGibborim).

In the Rif's opinion, there is no intermediate category for semi-permanent knots. According to most interpretations, he considers any non-permanent knot as temporary even if it remains tied for a long time. Thus, tying a knot and leaving it for several months will be permitted so long as it is not a craftsman's knot according to these interpretations of the Rif's opinion (Pri Megadim; Aruch HaShulchan 317:3; Avnei Nezer #178; Mishnah Berurah 317:5; However, compare Taz 317:1 and Graz 317:2).

Furthermore, according to this approach, tying a craftsman's knot with intent to untie it after several months will only be midirabbanan according to the Rif because it isn't permanent.

WHAT NOT TO KNOT

Here are some examples of knots that are prohibited min haTorah. In the time of the Mishnah, boatmen would tie a knot at the prow of a boat or ship that was never removed. Such a knot is prohibited min haTorah on Shabbos. According to Rashi, this is because the knot is permanent while according to the Rif it is only forbidden min HaTorah because of the additional factor that it is tied by trained boatmen.

Similarly, knots tied by shoemakers or sandal makers of Talmudic times were prohibited min haTorah (Gemara Shabbos 112a), since they were tied permanently (and according to the Rif because they were also craftsmen's knots). Tying knots of tefillin and tzitzis is a Torah violation since these are craftsman's knots and permanent (Gemara Eruvin 96b; Shabbos 131a). Tightening the knots of one's tzitzis may also violate a Torah prohibition.

Suturing stitches is prohibited min HaTorah because the knot tied after each stitch is a permanent skilled knot (Nimla Tal Kosheir #16). Therefore, whenever possible, a non-Jew should perform this suturing on Shabbos (see Rama 328:12).

WHAT KNOT TO KNOT

According to both Rashi and the Rif, one may tie a knot that will be untied within 24 hours if it is not extremely tight. Thus according to all opinions, one may tie a gartel on Shabbos or the belt on a bathrobe or any other garment that is usually untied as it is removed and is not tied very tightly. Similarly, a woman may tie her tichel in place because a

woman always unties this knot when she removes it so that she does not dishevel her hair.

MAY I KNOT THIS KNOT?

In conclusion, there are three disputes between Rashi and the Rif.

PERMANENT, BUT NOT CRAFTY

1. According to Rashi, a permanent knot is prohibited min HaTorah even if it isn't a craftsman's knot, since permanence is the only criterion for the Torah's prohibition. However, the Rif will consider such a knot midirabbanan if it is not a craftsman's knot. Thus, knotting a bag of garbage on Shabbos violates a Torah prohibition according to Rashi since the knot will never be untied (see Rashi Sukkah 33b), whereas according to the Rif it is only midirabbanan unless one used a craftsman's knot. It should be noted that a knot that will never be untied is considered permanent even if one does not need the knot anymore.

Rashi explains that the knot used to bind the aravos and hadasim to the lulav is considered permanent since one never bothers to untie it. This is true even though this knot will not be needed for more than a few days and then the lulav will be discarded.

SEMI-PERMANENT, BUT NOT CRAFTY

2. We mentioned that tying a semi-permanent non-craftsman's knot is prohibited according to Rashi, but permitted according to the Rif. Therefore, Rashi would prohibit tying a plastic bag with a simple single knot that is meant to last for more than a week (and possibly even for more than a day) since this knot is semi-permanent although it is certainly not a craftsman's knot. The Rif would permit this since it is neither a craftsman's knot nor a permanent knot.

CRAFTY AND TEMPORARY

3. A temporary craftsman's knot is prohibited according to the Rif, albeit only midirabbanan, but is permitted according to Rashi (who considers a craftsman's knot no different from any other knot). Thus, securing a rope in order to rappel down a hill is prohibited midirabbanan according to the Rif since one would certainly use a craftsman's knot for this purpose. Rashi permits tying this knot if one intends to untie it after a few hours.

HOW TO WE PASKIN?

Most poskim rule that we should be stringent like both opinions (Rama 317:1). Therefore, one may not tie a craftsman's knot even if it is temporary (even though Rashi permits this), and it is also prohibited to tie a semi-permanent knot even if it is not a craftsman's knot (and would be permitted according to the Rif). Therefore, one may not knot a bag closed with a semipermanent knot, nor may one tie a craftsman's knot even for a few hours' use.

Under extenuating circumstances, one may tie or untie a temporary knot even though it qualifies as a craftsman's knot and rely on Rashi, or tie a non-permanent knot that is not a craftsman's knot and rely on the Rif (Maamar Mordechai; see Avnei Nezer #178:6). In both of these situations the dispute is only whether tying the knot involves an issur dirabbanan. Although we usually rule stringently, as explained above, in an extenuating situation one may rely on the lenient opinion.

TYING A KNOT IN A PIECE OF STRING

Tying a knot with a piece of string or length of rope around itself so that it does not slip through a hole or unravel is usually prohibited min haTorah according to all opinions (Gemara Shabbos 74b; Rama 317:1). This knot usually remains permanent and thus is certainly a Torah violation according to Rashi. Even according to the Rif that only a craftsman's knot incurs a Torah transgression, this is a very tight knot that a craftsman would use for this purpose. (It is interesting to note that some people call this "a stevedore's knot," implying that it is a craftsman's knot.) Thus, tying a knot on a threaded needle to hold it in place is prohibited min haTorah.

For the same reason, making a knot on the end of one's tzitzis to prevent them from unraveling is prohibited min haTorah. Similarly, it is prohibited min haTorah to tie a balloon on Shabbos. Therefore, one may not blow up a balloon on Shabbos because of the possibility that one may come to tie it (Nimla Tal Melech Kosheir #12).

WHAT IS CONSIDERED A CRAFTSMAN'S KNOT?

The definition of a craftsman's knot is difficult to ascertain.

Obviously it has to be very tight, but are there other requirements? Because of this uncertainty, a custom developed not to tie any knot on Shabbos that involves tying one knot on top of another (Shiltei HaGibborim; Rama 317:1) which is how most knots are tied. Thus, it would seem that Mrs. Goldstein may not tie her tichel with a double knot as Yankie told her. However, most poskim permit tying the tichel as Mrs.

Goldstein has been doing and as her mother did before her.

This is because of a combination of several reasons:

Several poskim contend that the custom not to tie a double knot is only when one ties a knot very tightly (L'vushei S'rad and Pri Megadim on Magen Avraham 317:4; also see Chazon Ish 52:17) whereas a tichel is tied fairly loosely. Other poskim contend that the custom not to tie a double knot is only if one intends to leave it tied for more than a day (Aruch HaShulchan 317:10). Thus there is substantive reason to permit tying a tichel with a double knot (Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchasah 15:ftn 167).

It should be noted that many poskim permit double knotting a child's shoes for the same reason since the knot is not very tight. Others prohibit it because the reason for the upper knot is to make the lower knot and bow very tight and that is considered tying a double knot tightly (Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchasah 15:53).

ANIVAH

The Gemara concludes that it is permitted to tie an "anivah" on Shabbos. What is an anivah?

Any knot that can be untied without undoing the original knot, but by pulling the string on one side of the knot is an anivah and is permitted. This includes tying bows (without additional knots, see below) and slipknots (Mordechai, Halachos Ketanos #940). A slipknot is so called because it slips easily along the cord on which it is made.

The poskim dispute whether one may tie a temporary knot and then a bow on Shabbos. Does the bow make the knot more permanent and therefore a problem? Most poskim prohibit tying a bow onto a temporary knot, considering the knot thus created a semi-permanent knot that is prohibited (Rama 317:5;

Taz; Magen Avraham ad loc.).

TYING RIBBONS AND BOWS

According to what we have explained, one may not tie a ribbon around a package on Shabbos in the usual fashion because this involves tying a double knot. However, one may tie the ribbon without a knot by making two bows even if one ties the bows very tightly (Mishnah Berurah 317:29; Biyur Halacha 317:5 s.v. anivah).

If someone forgot to tie the aravos and hadasim to the lulav before Yom Tov, one cannot tie with a knot and bow on top of it unless it is a type of knot that one unties every day. One may tie it with a bow on top of a bow (Taz 317:7).

SUMMARY OF KNOTS

We have learned that one may not tie a permanent or semipermanent knot or a craftsman's knot, and also that one may not tie one tight knot on top of another. According to many poskim, one may tie a loose knot on top of another loose knot and therefore a woman may tie her tichel with two knots one on top of the other. Tying a bow or slip knot is permitted since the knot is taken apart without undoing it but by pulling it apart. Thus, Mrs. Goldstein may continue to tie her tichel and there are poskim who even permit double knotting baby Rivka's shoes. (Although others prohibit double knotting shoes.)

PERMANENT BONDING

Tying knots in a permanent way not only affects halacha but also has hashkafic ramifications. When Moshe Rabbeinu asked to understand Hashem's ways, Hashem told him that as long as he was alive he would only be able to recognize Hashem "from behind." Chazal explain that Hashem showed Moshe the knot of His tefillin, which represents the permanent attachment that exists between Hashem and the Jewish people.

Just as tefillin are tied with a permanent knot, so too Hashem's relationship with the Jewish people is a permanent bond. And just as the tefillin straps tie what is below to what is above, so too their knot connects our mundane world below to the Heavenly world above.

MEANING IN MITZVOT by Rabbi Asher Meir

Each week we discuss one familiar halakhic practice and try to show its beauty and meaning. The columns are based on Rabbi Meir's Meaning in Mitzvot on Kitzur Shulchan Arukh.

Intercalation

The Jewish calendar is based on a lunar month (about 29½ days) and on a solar year (about 365¼ days). Since a solar year is not an exact multiple of the lunar month, it is necessary to add months every so often. Nowadays this is done seven out of every nineteen years on the basis of a calculation, but when the Sanhedrin exists it is their job to decide exactly when to add an extra Adar in order that the festivals should fall in the appropriate seasons.

Rav Natan of Breslav has a fascinating Chasidic perspective on this intercalation.

It has been known since antiquity that the sun is a source of light and that the moon merely reflects the sun's light. By extension, in Chasidic thought the sun is often a symbol for a supernal source of G^dliness, whereas the moon is the symbol for the ability of this world to reflect the Divine light which reaches it from on high. The fact that the moon is completely or partially obscured for part of the month reminds us that at times our physical reality hides itself from holiness, but the power of renewal remains. We pray each month that G^d should repair the "deficiency" of the moon; this corresponds to restoring the world's ability to fully express its potential for good and holiness.

In addition, many Jews who adopt a more mystical approach to mitzvot (mostly Chasidim and Sefaradim) customarily recite a short "intention" before performing mitzvot, stating that they intend to unite two different aspects of G^dliness - precisely those represented by sun and the moon, in order that G^d's indwelling in this world should be united with His lambence. (This is the L'shem Yichud statement found in many prayer books.) (Chasidic thought also discerns worlds of holiness higher than those symbolized by the sun. Nowadays, we would probably symbolize these as the physical processes which enable the sun to radiate.)

Rav Natan explains further that the lack of correspondence between the aspects of sun and moon expresses itself not only in the obscuring of the moon during part of the month, but also in the fact that the sun and moon are not synchronized with each other. Even when the moon fully reflects the light of the sun, there is still a lack of harmony because of the varying cycles. Thus, reconciling the cycles through establishing leap years is also part of the process of uniting the sun and the moon. The moon is deficient not only in its light, but also in its role as time-keeper.

"And this is the deeper significance of the intercalation, that we are commanded to reconcile the year, in order to equalize the twelve lunar months with the solar years in order to fill the deficiency of the moon." By adding months in accordance with the needs of the calendar and of the people, the moon is restored as an effective guide to the seasons.

Rav Natan then goes on to explain why this reconciliation must be done specifically by the Beit Din, whose job is usually to administer justice to earthly litigants.

"Therefore, this is dependent specifically on the Beit Din, for the Beit Din represents the aspect of truth, for they need to judge truth". The "real" truth, according to Rav Natan, is neither the supernal truth of the sun nor the earthly truth of the moon but precisely the appropriate reconciliation of the two. There is no monolithic source of truth; the two aspects must always be present and judgment is always required to reconcile them. So the need for judges to discern truth in a court case is not merely a technical necessity because it is generally difficult to unravel all the facts but rather an existential necessity because the facts

are by their nature "out of synch" and require a Torah-based judgment to reconcile.

Based on Likutei Halakhot Dayanim III:11, 12
The OU/NCSY Israel Center - TORAH tidbits

WEEKLY DAFOOTNOTES

For the week ending 26 February 2005 / 17 Adar I 5765

from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu

SIYUM OF THE ELEVENTH CYCLE OF DAF HAYOMI

How appropriate it is that our concluding item in the "Weekly Daf" should deal with the subject of becoming wise in Torah. It is the joy of acquiring such wisdom which is the cause for tens of thousands of Jews throughout the world this week to celebrate the completion of the eleventh cycle of Daf Hayomi.

When one completes a single mesechta, let alone the entire Shas, he makes a siyum which is celebrated with a festive meal which the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 246:26) defines as a "seudas mitzvah." The source for this practice is the Sage Abaye (Mesechta Shabbos 119a) who declared that when he saw one of his disciples complete a mesechta he made a festive meal for all of his disciples.

One reason for this simcha, says the Gaon of Vilna, is the explanation given by the Sages (Bava Basra 121b) for the Fifteenth of Av being such a special day of joy. It was on that date that the cutting of wood for use on the Beis Hamidkash altar was completed for the year. Reaching the climax of a mitzvah is a cause for joy, and so is reaching the climax of a mesechta.

Maharsha, however, suggests another source. The Midrash states that we learn from the feast which King Solomon made for his entire court upon being blessed with the extraordinary wisdom he had requested in his nocturnal dialogue with Hashem (Melachim I 3:15), that we should also make a feast when completing the study of the Torah. This is the source for our celebration on Simchas Torah when we complete the reading of the entire Torah, and for our celebration of the siyum of a mesechta. Just as Solomon understood that there could be no greater cause for joy than the gift of wisdom, so do we celebrate the acquisition of wisdom which comes from a year's reading of weekly portions of the Torah and which results from the completion of a mesechta.

To all participating in this great Siyum Hashas of Daf Hayomi we wish a hearty "Mazal Tov" with best wishes to complete the cycle again and again.

...

Jerusalem Post Mar. 3, 2005

End of Talmud study cycle celebrated by Jews worldwide

Sam Ser And Uriel Heilman,

"Hadran alach, Talmud Bavli" – I shall return to you, Babylonian Talmud – "who ever heard such beautiful words?" said Rabbi Nossan Tzvi Finkel, addressing more than 6,000 English-speakers who had come to the Jerusalem International Convention Center on Wednesday to mark the culmination of seven and a half years of one-folio-a-day Talmud study.

Shaking from Parkinson's disease, the emotional head of the Mir Yeshiva said the celebration of the 11th Daf Yomi Siyum Hashas was in essence the celebration of "a father teaching Torah to his children, sharing the sweetness of the Torah." Indeed, among the throngs of black-clad participants were many fathers proudly pointing out to their sons the several dozen "giants of Torah" gathered on the stage for the event.

"The eyes of Moses are upon us tonight," said the Kaliver Rebbe, an octogenarian Auschwitz survivor. Relating the story of a man who, on the way to his death at the extermination camp, admonished him to "say the Shema for us if you survive," the rabbi asked the entire hall to stand and recite the quintessential Jewish prayer together with him. And they did: rising in unison, the thousands in attendance placed their hands

over their eyes and called out, “Shema Yisrael!” as the rabbi’s voice boomed through the loudspeakers. While the Holocaust was a prominent theme of each of the speakers, it was still secondary to the larger theme of Torah study. A choir of young boys belted out a song with a single line, repeating over and over the words of Isaiah (42:21): “God desired to facilitate righteousness, and therefore made the Torah great and glorious.”

All over the world, hundreds of thousands of Jews celebrated the completion – and immediate renewal – of the 7,211-page Daf Yomi cycle initiated by Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Poland in 1923.

In New York alone, tens of thousands of Orthodox Jews turned out on Tuesday night to celebrate at Madison Square Garden.

Like so many others there, Dovid Chait was choked up as he looked around at the arena that is home to the NBA’s Knicks, which had been taken over for the night by a sea of dark suits and black hats.

In place of the Knicks’ Jerome Williams’s name in lights up on the JumboTron, there was Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, the Novominsker Rebbe, his words booming around the arena. Instead of thousands of raucous, beer-drinking fans cheering on 2.10-meter basketball players, there were furrowed brows on sober men who stroked their beards as they listened to words of Torah from aged sages. And in place of cheers for the athletic prowess of basketball players, the masses at the Garden were celebrating Jewish scholarship.

“This is what this arena was built for,” said Chait, a native of Queens who now lives in Jerusalem. “They think it’s for the basketball, but it’s really for this.”

After the last page of the Talmud was read, followed by special prayers for the occasion, thousands of men in dark suits and black hats took to the aisles, dancing fervently as hassidic music blasted from the arena’s speakers. In the upper tiers, the women mostly watched.

“This is the eternity of the Jewish people,” Chait said. “In what other society do people celebrate knowledge as much as ours?” The 11th Siyum Hashas was believed to have been the biggest in history. An estimated 120,000 people attended siyum venues in North America, including sold-out crowds at the Garden and at Continental Airlines Arena, home to the NBA’s New Jersey Nets. A roughly equal number attended events in Israel and around the world.

In New York, the celebrations began the evening before the siyum at Gracie Mansion, the official residence of New York City’s mayor. Wearing a black velvet yarmulke and tossing around Yiddish phrases liberally, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who is Jewish, talked to his mostly Orthodox guests about the significance of the worldwide synchronized study of the Talmud – and promised to clean the city’s streets of the snow that was falling in time for the next day’s siyum.

Then he and the city’s police commissioner posed with rabbis and their wives eager for photographs as guests mingled and snacked on a kosher sushi spread. A few took a tour of the house to the tunes of the hassidic music piped through the mansion’s speaker system.

The celebration at the Garden the next day was a bit more parochial, with lengthy speeches in Yiddish sending the event into overtime. It ended with the symbolic restarting of the Talmud from the first tractate, reflecting the Simhat Torah tradition of restarting the Torah from Genesis immediately after its conclusion.

“Our work is never finished,” one of the rabbis said at the event. “This is the work of the people of Israel.”

Dei’ah Ve Dibur

Daf Yomi — Innovation and Inspiration

Daf Hayomi is a wonderful example of a modern innovation within the Jewish religion. It shows that there is room for new initiatives, that the Torah community can come up with things that are genuinely new even while remaining strictly within the bounds of the Torah.

Rather than tearing down time-honored practices as so many illegitimate innovators did, the Daf Yomi innovates by building up the genuine Jewish tradition. It strengthens limud haTorah, the great unifying

treasure of the Jewish people. Moreover, the personal discipline from the rigorous schedule, and the knowledge acquired from the content of the 2,711 dapim (folio pages) that are studied, are quintessentially Jewish goals that stand proudly against the flow of modern society rather than pander to the latest fad as so much else of what passes for innovation does. Of course, we do not value innovation for its own sake, but that should not stop us from pointing it out when it happens.

The way it is being observed and celebrated takes full advantage of what modern technology has to offer. Though we reject the social and cultural messages of modern society, we have no problem with its technology. There will be satellite broadcasts and video feeds all over, in order to bring lomdei Torah from all over the world together for the completion of this wonderful achievement. (Note: Our publication schedule requires us to go to press before most of the events this week take place.)

The American Siyum HaShas, by far the single largest siyum, is expected to bring together some 120,000 participants, most of them in America but with important hookups elsewhere such as Central and South America, Australia, and Eastern Europe. The largest Israeli siyum in Yad Eliahu stadium in Tel Aviv is expected to draw upwards of 15,000. Dozens of independent siyumim all over Israel and throughout the world, from the United Kingdom, to South Africa, to Australia and numerous locations in between, have already brought together thousands more.

Although the celebration itself is very public in that tens of thousands are participating, it does not celebrate specific individual “celebrities.” The gedolei Torah who are participating are certainly giving more to the audience with their words and their presence than what they are getting. (They are not being paid to come.)

What is celebrated is very personal — again a sharp difference from contemporary values. The achievement of having studied the 2,711 folio pages is a private one. The successful student, of whatever age, will have fulfilled the words of Mishlei (3:3): “Write them upon the tablet of your heart.” He will have absorbed the wisdom of the Talmud and made it a part of himself. This is not an achievement that is detectable from the outside, though it is patently clear to the Giver of the Torah.

This is the end of a seven-year effort but also the beginning — or better the continuation — of a lifelong task: to generally serve Hashem and specifically to learn and promote Torah learning. The thousands who are celebrating their personal achievement of completing the cycle are certainly not going to sit back and rest on their laurels.

There are no short cuts. “If you have learned a lot of Torah, do not pat yourself on the back — for that is why you were created” (Ovos 2:8). One will not stop, but continue. The siyum is a way-station. One must continue to study daily.

Along with the inspiration and encouragement of the siyum let us also hope and pray that it will bring a tremendous increase in kovod Shomayim that will prevail not only on that day alone, but in all the years to come, ad bi’as Goel Tzedek, bimheiroh beyomeinu.

Along the Talmudic Trail

by Rabbi Aryeh Markman

[see article at <http://www.aish.com>]

**Please address all comments and requests to
HAMELAKET@hotmail.com [or efraimg@aol.com]**