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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYAKHEL - 5774

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from: TorahWeb torahweb@torahweb.org to: weeklydt@torahweb2.org
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subject: **Rabbi Benjamin Yudin**

It's Not How Much You Give, But How

At the beginning of Parshas Vayakhel Hashem enjoins the Jewish nation to observe the Shabbos. It is interesting to note how Anshei Knesses Hagedolah (Men of the Great Assembly) and our Mesorah unbroken tradition, teaches that we read the verse (Shemos 35:2), "sheishes yomim tai-a-se melacha - six days work is to be done", and not six days "ta-aseh melacha - you shall do work." The latter form is clearly the active form with man being the one charged to do and accomplish. The former however is the passive reflexive form, with the emphasis being on the result, i.e. the work will be done. The tai-a-se usage reminds man that his involvement and energy is crucial, but ultimately it is not he who is effecting and producing but rather a higher source is, namely Hashem.

With this understanding and orientation, it is much easier to accept and comply with the mitzvah of Shabbos. If man is ta-a-se - the producer, then the Divine edict to desist on the Shabbos from work is a major demand and imposition. It is asking much of man who is productive all week long to forgo some of his productivity in emulation of and submission to G-d. If however, man recognizes that all his successes are due to the help and assistance of Hashem and that Hashem, as we understand from tai-a-se (see Devarim 8:18 with Targum Unkelos), provides us with the intuition, ideas and notions to invest in a particular endeavor, then we can be confident that just as He provides all week long, so too will He provide for the Shabbos.

What emerges is an incredible display of sensitivity that Hashem affords man. There is a basic human condition called na-amah d'kisufah, literally bread of embarrassment (Ramchal, Daas Tevunos 1:18). If one is constantly receiving without working or earning his keep, in short time most individuals will experience a sense of shame, worthlessness and depression. Thus, it is a kindness of Hashem that He allows us to

participate in our earning a living, letting us feel that we are major players in earning our keep in this world.

I believe this idea might well be included in the introductory bracha to every Shmoneh Esrei, "gomail chasadim tovim" which literally means He performs and bestows good kindnesses. Why describe the kindness as "tovim - good"? Isn't kindness by nature good? The answer is based upon the above idea. That He sustains us is a kindness, and that He extends dignity to us at the same time is the fulfillment of tovim.

The 611th mitzvah is to emulate Hashem - "V'halachta b'drachav" (Devarim 28:9). The Talmud (Mishna Demai 4:7) uses the term gomlin as one of reciprocity, as in a situation that we are concerned regarding two individuals that each will perform a service for the next one, thereby each benefiting themselves. Ideally, this is the way we are to be gomel chesed to someone. Rather than perform an act of kindness in a fashion that the recipient feels put upon and feels indebted for the service, as they now "owe you one", ideally, one is to perform the kindness in a way that the one performing it communicates that he is actually receiving by giving and thanks the recipient for the opportunity to give. Through tai-a-se Hashem allows us to feel good while receiving, and we must strive in our personal and communal chassadim to do the same.

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from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** ryfrand@torah.org to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Wed, Feb 19, 2014 at 5:05 PM subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayakhel

Parshas Vayakhel These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #366, The Melacha of Tearing. Good Shabbos!

A Good Name Is Better Than Good Oil

There is an interesting Medrash on the pasuk "See G-d has called by name Betzalel son of Uri son of Chur of the tribe of Yehudah" [Shmos 35:30]. The Medrash references the pasuk in Koheles "A good name is better than good oil" [Koheles 7:1]. The Medrash elaborates that the scent of good oil may precede the oil by a mile or two at most, even if the oil has a very powerful aroma. However, a good name can precede a person even across continents. The Medrash then asks how far a person must remove himself from contact with the prohibition of Shatnez [the forbidden mixture of wool and linen]. The Medrash answers that even if a person is wearing 99 layers of clothing and none of them are Shatnez, he still may not wear a garment containing Shatnez as the one hundredth layer of clothing. What is the connection between distancing oneself from Shatnez and the pasuk that says, "A good name is better than good oil"? Rav Nissan Alpert gives the following interpretation of this Medrash (in his sefer Limudei Nissan):

Every time the Torah introduces Betzalel, it uses the following unique expression: "Look, I've called him by this name..." Why does the Torah give Betzalel such an introduction? The Medrash explains that the reason why Betzalel merited to be the master builder of the Mishkan was not because he had master architectural talents or special artistic ability. Betzalel's uniqueness was that he -- for some reason -- merited having a 'good name'. The Medrash then emphasizes how wonderful it is to have a good reputation (shem tov). G-d, in choosing someone to construct his dwelling place on earth (the Mishkan), did not want to be associated with anyone who had anything less than an impeccable reputation.

How does one obtain a good reputation? The Medrash answers this question by introducing the matter of Shatnez. The Medrash is teaching that the way a person acquires a good name is not by merely avoiding evil or sin, but by avoiding even the slightest hint of impropriety. It is not sufficient to merely 'play it by the book'. A person must distance himself to the ultimate extent from anything that even smacks of impropriety.

Shatnez is a peculiar prohibition, in that the two substances involved (wool and linen) are completely permitted when taken individually. Only a combination of the two is prohibited. The Torah is teaching us that a person merits a good name by staying away from Shatnez. Avoiding Shatnez represents staying away from anything that has even a minute mixture of something improper.

Those people in our communities who have achieved a good name are people who are above reproach. They have removed themselves from any taint of scandal or impropriety. Impeccable reputations are not achieved by playing it on the edge or bending the rules.

We all know that certain people's handshakes are more reliable than other people's signed contracts. The reason why is because the first group of people stay away from 'forbidden mixtures'. They stay away from the slightest hint of 'non-Kosher' business practices. Ultimately, this is what pays off for them in the long run. When G-d builds a Mishkan, He does not want it built by a person regarding whom people may have suspicions. He wants a Betzalel -- a person above reproach, who possesses a good name, which is superior to good oil.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. To Support Project Genesis- Torah.org

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from: Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org subject: Parsha - Shabbat Shalom from the OU 5773 [Last year]

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from Lord Jonathan Sacks
Orthodox Union / www.ou.org **Britain's Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

Two Types of Community A long drama had taken place. Moses had led the people from slavery to the beginning of the road to freedom. The people themselves had witnessed G-d at Mount Sinai, the only time in all history when an entire people became the recipients of revelation. Then came the disappearance of Moses for his long sojourn at the top of the mountain, an absence which led to the Israelites' greatest collective sin, the making of the Golden Calf. Moses returned to the mountain to plead for forgiveness, which was granted. Its symbol was the second set of tablets. Now life must begin again. A shattered people must be rebuilt. How does Moses proceed? The verse with which the sedra begins contains the clue: Moses assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them: "These are the things G-d has commanded you to do." (35:1) The verb *vayakhel* - which gives the sedra its name - is crucial to an understanding of the task in which Moses is engaged. At its simplest level it serves as a motiv-word, recalling a previous verse. In this case the verse is obvious: When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they assembled around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us." (32:1) Moses' act is what the kabbalists called a *tikkun*: a restoration, a making-good-again, the redemption of a past misdemeanour. Just as the sin was committed by the people acting as a *kahal* or *kehillah*, so atonement was to be achieved by their again acting as a *kehillah*, this time by making a home for the Divine presence as they earlier sought to make a substitute for it. Moses orchestrates the people for good, as they had once been assembled for bad (The difference lies not only in the purpose but in the form of the verb, from passive in the case of the calf to active in the case of Moses.

Passivity allows bad things to happen - "Wherever it says 'and it came to pass' it is a sign of impending tragedy". (Megillah 10b) Proactivity is the defeat of tragedy: "Wherever it says, 'And there will be' is a sign of impending joy." (Bamidbar Rabbah 13) At a deeper level, though, the opening verse of the sedra alerts us to the nature of community in Judaism. In classical Hebrew there are three different words for community: *edah*, *tsibbur* and *kehillah*, and they signify different kinds of association. *Edah* comes from the word *ed*, meaning "witness." The verb *ya'ad* carries the meaning of "to appoint, fix, assign, destine, set apart, designate or determine." The modern Hebrew noun *te'udah* means "certificate, document, attestation, aim, object, purpose or mission." The people who constitute an *edah* have a strong sense of collective identity. They have witnessed the same things. They are bent on the same purpose. The Jewish people become an *edah* - a community of shared faith - only on receiving the first command: "Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household" (Shemot 12:3). An *edah* can be a gathering for bad as well as good. The Israelites, on hearing the report of the spies, lose heart and say they want to return to Egypt. Throughout, they are referred to as the *edah* (as in "How long will this wicked community grumble against Me?" *Bamidbar* 14: 27). The people agitated by Korach in his rebellion against Moses and Aaron's authority is likewise called an *edah* ("If one man sins, will you be angry with the whole community? *Bamidbar* 16: 22). Nowadays the word is generally used for an ethnic or religious subgroup. An *edah* is a community of the like-minded. The word emphasises strong identity. It is a group whose members have much in common.

By contrast the word *tsibbur* - it belongs to Mishnaic rather than biblical Hebrew - comes from the root *tz-b-r* meaning "to heap" or "pile up". (*Bereishith* 41:49) To understand the concept of *tsibbur*, think of a group of people praying at the Kotel. They may not know each other. They may never meet again. But for the moment, they happen to be ten people in the same place at the same time, and thus constitute a quorum for prayer. A *tsibbur* is a community in the minimalist sense, a mere aggregate, formed by numbers rather than any sense of identity. A *tsibbur* is a group whose members may have nothing in common except that, at a certain point, they find themselves together and thus constitute a "public" for prayer or any other command which requires a *minyan*. A *kehillah* is different from the other two kinds of community. Its members are different from one another. In that sense it is like a *tsibbur*. But they are orchestrated together for a collective undertaking - one that involves in making a distinctive contribution. The danger of a *kehillah* is that it can become a mass, a rabble, a crowd. That is the meaning of the phrase in which Moses, descending the mountain, sees the people dancing around the calf: Moses saw that the people were running wild, and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughing-stock to their enemies. (32: 25) The beauty of a *kehillah*, however, is that when it is driven by constructive purpose, it gathers together the distinct and separate contributions of many individuals, so that each can say, "I helped to make this." That is why, assembling the people on this occasion, Moses emphasises that each has something different to give: Take from what you have, an offering to G-d. Everyone who is willing to bring to G-d an offering of gold, silver and bronze . . . All you who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the Lord has commanded . . . Moses was able to turn the *kehillah* with its diversity into an *edah* with its singleness of purpose, while preserving the diversity of the gifts they brought to G-d: Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses' presence, and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to G-d for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments. All who were willing - men and women - came and brought gold jewellery of all kinds: brooches, ear-rings, rings and ornaments . . . Everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn . . . Those presenting an

offering of silver or bronze . . . Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun . . . The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems . . . All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to G-d freewill offerings for all the work G-d, through Moses, had commanded them to do. (35:20-29) The greatness of the Tabernacle was that it was a collective achievement - one in which not everyone did the same thing. Each gave a different thing. Each contribution was valued - and therefore each participant felt valued. Vayakhel - Moses' ability to forge out of the dissolution of the people a new and genuine kehillah - was one of his greatest achievements. Many years later, Moses, according to the sages, returned to the theme. Knowing that his career as a leader was drawing to an end, he prayed to G-d to appoint a successor: "May G-d, Lord of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the community." (Bemidbar 27:16) Rashi, following the sages, explains the unusual phrase "Lord of the spirits of all flesh" as follows: He said to Him: Lord of the universe, the character of each person is revealed and known to You - and You know that each is different. Therefore appoint for them a leader who is able to bear with each person as his or her temperament requires. (Rashi on Bemidbar 27:16) To preserve the diversity of a tsibbur with the unity of purpose of an edah - that is the challenge of kehillah-formation, community-building, itself the greatest task of a great leader. To read more writings and teachings

from: **Rabbi Berel Wein** genesis@torah.org to: rabbiwein@torah.org date: Wed, Feb 19, 2014 at 6:05 PM subject: **Rabbi Wein** - Parshas Vayakhel Shabbath and the Jewish People

One of the main questions that all of the commentators to this week's parsha raise is why the Torah again discusses the prohibitions of the Sabbath. The Torah has done so a number of times in the previous parshiyot of Shemot so one might question this seemingly unwarranted repetition. One of the ideas presented in their comments I feel to be especially relevant to our world. We do not find that at the time of creation the Torah sanctified any given place or location on the face of the earth. The entire idea of the uniqueness of the Land of Israel does not appear in the Torah until the time of our father Abraham. And there it appears as a promise of a homeland to Abraham's descendants without any mention of holiness or sanctification.

Holiness only appears regarding a place and location in the story of our father Jacob and his heavenly dream at Beit El. However, already in the first section of the Bible, in the story of creation itself, we read that the Lord sanctified time. "Therefore did the Lord bless the seventh day and sanctify it." Time is the holiest of all factors in human life. It is the one thing that since creation has been blessed, sanctified and made very special. It is no wonder therefore that the holiness of the Sabbath is emphasized over and over again in the Torah. In human behavior and thought time is not as important as wealth or location or the accomplishment of any human ends. The Torah comes to warn us not to succumb to such a viewpoint or behavior pattern.

The holy Tabernacle according to most commentators was ordered and built after Israel sinned in the desert by worshipping a golden calf. These commentators saw this Tabernacle as an accommodation, so to speak, of Heaven to the human condition. People somehow require a tangible place of worship, a holiness of space and locality, something solid that can represent to them the invisible and eternal. So the Tabernacle in a sense came to replace the necessity for a golden calf created by human beings.

The Lord, gave Israel detailed instructions how this Tabernacle and its artifacts should be constructed and designed. Even though holiness of space, location and of actual structure is necessary for human service of God, it must be done solely under God's conditions. There can be many designs to build a golden calf. To build a Tabernacle to God there can only be one ordained and holy design and plan. Even when building a Tabernacle according to God's plan, the Jewish people were instructed and inspired to remember that holiness of time is always greater than holiness of place and of structure.

The Sabbath, which has accompanied us from the time of creation, takes precedence over all else except for human life itself. The Tabernacle and its succeeding Temples were all temporary and subject to the events of time. Even the holy Land of Israel disappeared from Jewish history for millennia. But the Sabbath never stopped accompanying the Jews wherever they lived and whatever their circumstances were. And this is why this lesson is drummed into us over and over

again in the narrative of the Torah. How pertinent this lesson is in our time and in our environment.

Shabbat shalom.

ON BECOMING LEFT-HANDED

Rabbi Berel Wein

While walking on a darkened street here in Jerusalem near my home last week while having an animated conversation with my wife over the frustration of the world's treatment of Israel, the Jews and Judaism, I neglected to look where I was going and tripped over a curb and fell heavily on my arm. Eventually I was diagnosed as having a crack or chip in one of the bones of the elbow. Originally, I was placed in a cast which I found to be most cumbersome and uncomfortable. I therefore decided to go for a second opinion. The new doctor removed the cast and placed my arm in a sling. This is a much more comfortable and bearable condition though my right arm remains pretty much unusable. I have had to become much more dependent on my left arm, something which I am not accustomed to and not extremely adept at. This magnificent piece of prose is possible not because I can type on my computer with my left-hand but rather because I have a voice dictation program which allows me to type, so to speak, in a hands-free fashion. But there are many other things that I simply cannot do with my left hand. I am therefore humbled by having to rely on others to do such mundane acts as buttoning my shirt and coat, tying my shoelaces and other daily tasks, the description of which I will leave to your imagination. The fact that I cannot by myself wrap my tefillin around my arm alone and am required to have a number of kind and generous souls to help me in this holy task is most sobering to me. I have always prided myself on being an independent person and I have deluded myself to believe that I am self-sufficient in every way. The Lord has shown me that that was a thought of hubris and unwarranted belief in one's self. In a book on physics that I once read, the learned professor stated that eighty-five percent of molecules suspended in space at random will flow to the right. What he found most interesting about this phenomenon is that it approximated the ratio of right-handed to left-handed people in the world. There is no doubt of the fact that God's world favors the right-handed. Just ask any left-handed person how he or she feels when seated in the middle of a dining table surrounded by all right-handed guests. In certain sports there is a premium paid to left-handed athletes. This seems to be true in baseball and perhaps also in tennis. But for most of the activities of the human race the right-handed person is preferred and the world and its gadgets are constructed to accommodate this majority. Since I am temporarily left-handed I am at a complete disadvantage because my left hand is not my dominant hand and thus I am in reality a right-handed left-handed person. None of the gadgets in my house are built for such a creature and therefore my helplessness has sorely bruised my otherwise healthy ego. I have gained a new insight as to why we right-handed people lay our tefillin on our left hand - our weaker hand. Why the Torah wanted us to place tefillin on the weaker hand instead of the stronger hand is most perplexing. After all tefillin is meant to remind us of the holiness of our service to God, of our loyalty to Torah and of the eternal concept of reward and punishment that exists in God's universe. As such, should it not be that our dominant hand - our strong hand, the one that we can accomplish so much with - should have the tefillin wrapped around it? But that is as I have ruefully learned the necessity for the employment of one's weaker hand in the service of God and in life is in itself a very necessary lesson. By using our weaker hand as the base for our tefillin we therefore signify to ourselves and to our Creator that even our stronger hand is in reality weak and fragile. The Torah constantly strives to remind us of our true condition - of how fragile we are and how dependent we are on God's goodness and constant support. Our weaker hand also reminds us of the necessity of family, society, community and the presence and help of good and compassionate people. I do not recommend injuring one's elbow in order to learn these lessons. Nevertheless there is something to be learned from all experiences in life and therefore the words of the rabbis that "all that Heaven decrees is for the good" applies even to the happenings of clumsy rabbis. Shabbat shalom Berel Wein Subscribe to our blog via email or RSS to get more posts like this one.

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from: Rabbi Kaganoff ymkaganoff@gmail.com date: Tue, Feb 18,
2014 at 4:29 PM subject: Honor Thy Sefarim! attached

Honor Thy Sefarim! By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

A reader sent me the following series of questions.

Question #1:

"My teachers taught in Day School that one may not sit on a bench while a sefer rests on it. An elderly man with whom I share a bench in shul often puts his siddur down on the bench on which we are sitting. Do I need to pop out of my seat every time he does this?"

Question #2:

"I also learned that one does not place anything on top of sefarim. Yet, even in the frummet of shuls, I see people placing their tefillin bags, watches, and eyeglasses on top of sefarim. Am I mistaken?"

Question #3:

"Similarly, I recall being taught that one may not place any other sefarim on top of a Chumash. Next in importance comes a Navi, then other sefarim. Yet I see people piling sefarim in shul rather indiscriminately. Who is wrong? I or they?"

Question #4:

"I also remember once seeing that when stacking sefarim, a Chumash may be placed on a siddur and a siddur on other sefarim, but have subsequently been unable to find this halacha in a reputable source. Is this accurate?"

Question #5:

"When I notice sefarim placed upside down on the shul's bookcases, am I obligated to stand them upright?"

Question #6:

"We are moving. May I place boxes of sefarim on the ground?"

Yerachmiel Simons (name changed upon request)

Indeed, as our friend Yerachmiel points out, the halachos governing the proper respect due to sefarim are not as well known as one would hope. In fact, it appears that while his education in this regard was excellent, others seem to have received less instruction than he did, or have forgotten what they learned. Let us explain the sources for each of Yerachmiel's cases:

"My teachers taught in Day School that one may not sit on a bench while a sefer rests on it."

The halacha is that one may not sit on a bed that has a Sefer Torah on it (see Menachos 32b; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 282:7), nor may one place a Sefer Torah onto a bench upon which someone is sitting. To permit sitting on a bed or bench on which a Sefer Torah rests, the Sefer Torah should be placed on a box or some other secure object on the bed that is at least ten tefachim (about forty inches) tall. If such a box is unavailable, the sefer Torah should be placed on a secure item at least three tefachim tall (Beis Yosef). The Shach (282:8) contends that even one tefach high is sufficient. Therefore, it seems that if the elderly gentleman wants to place his siddur on the bench, he should first fold his talis bag until it is at least one tefach tall, place the bag on the bench, and then place the siddur atop the talis bag.

However, before we decide that Mr. Elderly Gentleman's practice is, indeed, incorrect, let us see whether we can justify his practice.

PRINTED SEFARIM

One could argue that the Gemara's prohibition applies only to cases where a hand-written sefer Torah is lying on a bench, but not printed sefarim. However, the vast majority of early authorities reject this approach: the Rama (Shu't #34) proves that this law indeed does apply to our printed sifrei kodesh, and both the Taz (Yoreh Deah 271:8) and the Magen Avraham (45:2) contend that we should treat printed sefarim with

the same respect that the Gemara requires for a sefer Torah. Similarly, the Aruch Hashulchan 282:22 explicitly rules that all printed sefarim have the same kedushah. Although some suggest that a sefer printed by a gentile does not have kedushah, few authorities rely on this, even under extenuating circumstances, and certainly not in our non-extenuating situation (Shu't Chavos Yair #184).

ANOTHER PRINTED HETER

One early source contends that this halacha applies only to sefarim printed in the same Hebrew alphabet as a sefer Torah, known as ksav ashuris (Shu't Rama #34). For reasons beyond the scope of this article, this source contends that one may sit on a bench that has English language sefarim, or sefarim printed entirely in a Rashi-type font. Since I found no later authorities quoting this approach, I am hesitant to rely on it, but I would not correct someone who placed such a sefer on his bench. However, this approach does not help Yerachmiel's predicament, since siddurim are normally printed in a standard type face that mimics the accepted Sefardic version of ksav ashuris.

UPRIGHT SEFER

I have seen many people place a sefer standing upright on the bench. I presume that they think that the prohibition of sitting on the bench applies only if the sefer is lying on the bench. However, this is clearly erroneous since the sefer is still resting on the bench. It is presumably worse to have the sefer stand on the bench, because the sefer is more likely to fall, which is certainly a denigration of its honor.

Does the prohibition to put a sefer down on a place where someone is sitting apply only to the person placing books on a surface that someone is sitting on, or does it apply equally to the person already sitting there, requiring him to stand up? In other words, may I remain seated if someone placed sefarim on the bench upon which I was sitting?

Presuming that it is disrespectful to sit on the same surface as a holy work, the prohibition applies not only to the person who placed the book there, but also to the person who was sitting there beforehand. Therefore, one must either remove the book, or rise from his seat.

CROWDED BATEI MEDRASH

In certain situations, it is permitted to place holy works on the bench where one is sitting. When a beis hamedrash is crowded and there is insufficient room for everyone to sit, many authorities permit placing printed sefarim on benches where people are sitting, due to the extenuating circumstances (Beis Yosef and Shach, Yoreh Deah 282:9, quoting Rabbeinu Manoach). Others disagree, contending that the situation does not create a reason to permit that which is otherwise forbidden (Beis Yosef). Notwithstanding the Beis Yosef's disagreement, the first approach is cited authoritatively by several prominent later authorities (Shu't Be'er Sheva #38; Aruch HaShulchan 282:12). Thus, if Yerachmiel's shul is crowded on Shabbos and Yom Tov, he may ignore the sefarim on the benches, and may even place his own siddur there. When it is less crowded, however, one should not sit on a bench upon which a siddur is resting.

Let us now proceed to another of Yerachmiel's questions:

"I also learned that one does not place anything on top of sefarim. Yet, even in the frummet of shuls, I see people placing their tefillin bags, watches, and eyeglasses on top of sefarim. Am I mistaken?"

Indeed, it appears that you learned these halachos very well, as I will explain:

The Gemara rules that one may place Chumashim on top of Neviim (works of the prophets) or Kesuvim (other Biblical works), but that Neviim or Kesuvim should not be placed on top of Chumashim (Megillah 27a; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 282:19). If holy writings may not rest on top of a Chumash, obviously, the same applies to mundane items, such as eyeglasses.

MAYBE ONLY CHUMASHIM?

Could one argue that one may rest mundane items on top of other sefarim, and that the prohibition applies only to placing items on

Chumashim? We can prove that this suggestion is inaccurate. In his discussion of these halachos, the Rama adds that one may place Kesuvim atop Neviim and vice versa (Rama 282:19). Clearly, the reason the Rama permits this is because Kesuvim and Neviim are considered of equal sanctity. This indicates that one may not place a holy item of lesser sanctity atop Neviim and Kesuvim, and certainly not mundane items.

KESUVIM VERSUS GEMARA

Is there any halacha governing whether Kesuvim have greater sanctity than Gemaras, or vice versa?

The Aruch Hashulchan 282:22 explicitly paskens that all printed sefarim have the same kedushah, although the lack of discussion among the earlier halachic commentaries concerning this shaylah implies that Kesuvim should be placed on top of Gemaras and not vice versa. Let me explain:

Even though written Mishnayos and works on Aggadah already existed in the time of the Gemara, the Gemara states that one is permitted to place Kesuvim atop Neviim, but does not mention placing Mishnayos on top of either of them. One can infer that although one may place Kesuvim atop Neviim, this does not apply to writings of Chazal.

EXCEPTIONS

Are there any exceptional situations when one may place something on top of a sefer? Let us examine some of these possibilities and see when they apply.

Some authorities contend that only hand-written Chumashim have greater sanctity than Neviim, but not printed editions (Aruch Hashulchan, Yoreh Deah 282:22). Others assume that since the Shulchan Aruch, the Rama, and the other major commentaries all lived after printed seforim were very common, that when they cite the halachos not to place Neviim or Kesuvim atop Chumashim, they presumably were also including printed Chumashim, Neviim and Kesuvim. We would thus conclude that one may not place printed Neviim atop printed Chumashim. If one may not place a printed sefer with kedushah atop another printed sefer with greater kedushah, one may certainly not place a mundane item on top of a printed sefer.

TO HELP ME DAVEN

Some people think that one may place an item on top of a sefer to assist one's davening, such as to prevent the page from turning. Unfortunately, this approach is also not borne out by the sources. The halacha is that one may not place one sefer atop another in order to elevate it to a comfortable level, although one may place a sefer beneath the first sefer so that it is available for later use (see Taz, Yoreh Deah 282:13). Thus, although one cannot place the siddur under the Chumash in order to make the Chumash easier to read, one may place it there in order to have it available for musaf.

At this point, we can address Yerachmiel's next question.

"I also remember once seeing that when stacking sefarim, a Chumash may be placed on a siddur and a siddur on other sefarim, but have subsequently been unable to find this halacha in a reputable source. Is this accurate?"

Although I have never come across this ruling, there seems to be halachic basis for it. We have established that there is a hierarchy of holy writings of (1) Torah (Chumash) (2) Neviim and Kesuvim (3) Writings of Chazal

When placing holy works in a pile, one should stack them with the holier items on top. The question is: a siddur contains prayers written by Chazal, pesukim of Torah, Neviim, and Kesuvim, and certain chapters of Mishnah. Where do we place a siddur in our hierarchy? Can we find any sources for this question?

I believe that we can. The Rama rules that if the Torah, Neviim and Kesuvim are bound together in a Tanach, we are not concerned which is on top (Rama, Yoreh Deah 282:19). This implies that we treat a bound sefer as one entity, and that the entire sefer is elevated to the level of the highest form of holiness contained therein. If our assumption is correct,

one would conclude that it is perfectly alright to place a Tanach on a Chumash, or a Chumash on a Tanach, as, in fact, I was told by my eighth grade rebbe.

Based on this analysis, one might conclude that a siddur, which contains pesukim of Chumash, can be treated on the same level as a Chumash. However, I think that since the primary use of a siddur is for its prayers, it should not be treated on the same level as a Chumash, but close to it. I would therefore prioritize as follows: Chumash, Neviim and Kesuvim, siddur, and then writings of Chazal including Mishnah and Gemara. I subsequently discovered that some contemporary poskim feel that a siddur should be treated like Neviim, whereas others rule that it should be treated like the writings of Chazal (Ginzei Hakodesh page 56).

Let us now examine Yerachmiel's next question:

"When I notice sefarim placed upside down on the shul's bookcases, am I obligated to stand them upright?"

The Gemara prohibits leaving a written page of a sefer Torah upside down to dry, even though one's purpose is for its benefit (see Eruvin 98a). Based on this idea, the Rama prohibits leaving a sefer turned upside down (Darchei Moshe, Yoreh Deah 282:1 quoting Maharil; and in Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 282:5). Therefore, one is, indeed, obligated to straighten out any sefer that one sees.

I also find, often, that people place an open siddur upside down to keep their place. This is prohibited. Instead, find a slip of paper or a tissue to mark the place and then place the sefer right side up. However, even if one does not find a suitable marker, one may not leave a sefer upside down.

Question #5:

"We are moving. May I place boxes of sefarim on the ground?"

Anyone visiting a sefarim store witnesses piles of bagged or boxed sefarim lying on the floor. Are these stores violating the halacha that states "One may not place Sifrei Torah or other sefarim on the ground" (Rama 282:7)?

It seems that this is permitted, for two different reasons:

1. Most authorities permit placing printed sefarim on the benches where people are sitting in a crowded Beis Medrash. This is because when there is no place to put the sefarim, and people want to learn Torah, it is not a violation of the sefarim's honor. One could argue, similarly, that it is difficult, if not impossible, for a sefarim store to transport sefarim without placing the boxes or bags of sefarim on the floor, at least temporarily. Similarly, one can contend that while packing and moving, the most secure place to store the boxes of sefarim is on the floor.

2. One can argue that the Rama prohibited placing sifrei Torah or other sefarim on the ground only when they are not appropriately bagged or boxed. Once the sefarim are packed in a respectful manner, it does not show disdain to place the boxes or bags on the floor.

The Jewish people are often called the *am hasefer*, the People of the Book, because of the profound respect we place on learning and education. Included in this idea is that we observe the honor that halacha instructs is due to holy works.

from: Chanan Morrison ravkooklist@gmail.com to: Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com> date: Wed, Feb 19, 2014 at 4:37 AM subject: **[Rav Kook List] VaYakheil: Stars in the Tabernacle**

VaYakheil: Stars in the Tabernacle There is an interesting tradition concerning the beautiful tapestries covering the Tabernacle. The covering was comprised of ten large tapestries with patterns of cherubs woven into them. These colorful tapestries were sewn together in two sets of five, and the two sections were then fastened together with fifty gold fasteners.

We know that the structure of the Tabernacle corresponded to the entire universe. What did these metal fasteners represent?

Like the Stars

The Talmud (Shabbat 99a) tells us that from inside the Tabernacle, the gold fasteners would sparkle against the background of the rich tapestries like stars twinkling in the sky.

This analogy of fasteners to the stars requires further examination. Stars and constellations represent powerful natural forces in the universe, influencing and controlling our world. "Good are the luminaries that our God has created... He granted them strength and power, to be dominant within the world" (from the Sabbath morning prayers).

The Tabernacle fasteners, however, indicate a second function of the stars. The fasteners held the tapestries together. In fact, they emphasized the overall unity of the Tabernacle. By securing the two sets of tapestries together, they would "make the Tabernacle one" (Ex. 36:13).

Holding the Universe Together

In general, the design of the Tabernacle reflected the structure of the universe and its underlying unity. For example, the Tabernacle building consisted of wooden beams with pegs that slid into silver sockets, called adanim. The precise interlocking of the Tabernacle's supporting base of adanim with the upright beams symbolizes the harmonious synchronization of the universe's foundations with the diversified forces and mechanisms that regulate and develop the world. When we reflect on the beautiful harmony of the different parts of the Tabernacle, we begin to be aware of the fundamental unity of the universe and all of its forces. This insight allows us to recognize that everything is the work of the Creator, Who unites all aspects of creation in His sublime Oneness.

For all of their grandeur and apparent autonomy, the true function of the stars is to act like the Tabernacle fasteners. They hold together the great canopy of the cosmos, in accordance with the Divine plan of creation. Like the sparkling fasteners, the stars "are filled with luster and radiate brightness" on their own accord. Yet their true function is to bind together the forces of the world, making the universe one.

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 168-169. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. IV, p. 245)

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from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network shemalist@shemayisrael.com to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Feb 20, 2014 at 2:46 AM subject:

Peninim on the Torah

by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

PARSHAS VAYAKHEL Moshe assembled the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael... This is the word that Hashem has commanded. (35:1,4) Our parsha receives its name from the Hakhel, assembly of the people, so that they could receive their instructions concerning the building of the Mishkan. This gathering together of all the people was an essential prerequisite for the construction of the Mishkan. Why is this? To understand the significance of this gathering, it is important that we understand the power of "one." In order to do so, we should examine how breaking a large singular item into many parts reduces its potency.

Horav Mordechai Miller, zl, cites a powerful analogy from the Yalkut Shimoni on Sefer Tehillim. A king was angered by his son. In a moment of rage, the king declared that he would throw a large boulder which was in front of him - at his son. A few moments later, the king realized what he had said. What could he do? If he were to throw the boulder at his son, it would kill him. If he did not keep his word, his inaction would impugn the integrity of his word. The king was literally between a "boulder" and a hard place.

Then an idea dawned on him. He smashed the boulder into little pebbles and pelted his son with them - one by one. Thus, the king kept his word, but his son was not harmed. Likewise, Hashem does not inflict us with the full force of the punishment and strict justice which we deserve. He waits, meting out retribution in small doses, so that He does not destroy us. Perhaps the next time we feel that we are getting it from "all sides" or "one after another," we should realize that we are being struck by the "pebbles." The alternative would be devastating.

From the above analogy, we may derive a general principle: Breaking a large item into many parts has the effect of reducing its potency. Splintering a huge boulder into thousands of pebbles dramatically compromises its potential power. Likewise, the impact of Hashem's justice is minimized when it is fractured into many pieces.

The flipside is the power of a united entity whose degree of strength is incomparable with the sum of its many parts. They may both contain the same weight, but only the one which is cohesive, united, not fractured, is truly strong.

To become close to Hashem; to establish an attachment to Him, one must develop a similarity to Him. Otherwise, it is impossible for a human being to cleave to Him. Ma Hu af atah, "What He does, so should you." The obligation to emulate Him is incumbent upon us. As G-d is One - so, too, must we be one.

With this principle in mind, Rav Miller explains why an assembly of people was a vital prerequisite for constructing the Mishkan. The Mishkan was a place where the Shechinah, Divine Presence, could repose. The word, Shechinah, is related to the word, shachen, neighbor, which clearly indicates the nature of the Mishkan. It was a place where the immediacy of Hashem was readily apparent. It was the venue in which the intimacy between Hashem and Klal Yisrael was achieved. Closeness with Hashem, however, can only mean being similar to Him. This can only be effected by total solidarity within the Jewish People. As He is one, so, too, is the demand for unity among Jews - without compromise. It is a demand for the ultimate harmony which once existed, as every Jew was connected to one another as part of the conglomerate of all men within the body of Adam HaRishon, Primordial Man. Whereas we are physically separated, our souls are inextricably bound together.

In his Michtav Mei'Eliyahu, Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl, writes that, prior to Adam's sin, all souls were centralized within him. The entire mankind was concentrated in one man. Had Adam and Chavah not sinned, they alone would have achieved the purpose of Creation. Everything could have been accomplished by Adam and Chavah in only one day, through one act of free choice. Sadly, after the sin, the world was shattered into multiple shards. Instead of six days, it would now take six millennia and millions of people to fulfill the mission that could have been completed in one day. When all is concentrated together in one concerted effort, the power is awesome.

Rav Dessler takes this idea further, citing Horav Moshe Cordovero, zl, who explains why Yom Kippur is not mechaper, does not atone, for sins committed between man and his fellowman. On Yom Kippur we penetrate to the pure origins of each person's soul. If antagonism exists between two people, these people are separate, creating a rift with the Source. In order to facilitate the reception of the Divinely bestowed Heavenly Light, it is crucial that complete unity between people be established.

We see from the above that the unanimity connected with the Mishkan must be manifest in the manner of its construction. If there were to be a lack of harmony associated with the construction of the Mishkan, it would be considered a work of diversity and difference. Therefore, the Shechinah could not repose in this edifice, because it would lack the necessary closeness with One G-d. Unity in all areas was the prerequisite needed to achieve closeness with One G-d. The Hakhel experience was needed to catalyze strengths that otherwise would have been impossible to achieve. Everyone's work melded closely together, as if only one person had built the Mishkan.

In closing, Rav Miller observes that an application of this idea is particularly relevant to those who are members of Torah institutions and organizations. If a multitude of people coalesce, all sharing similar goals and objectives, this group will be able to attain overwhelming results. By soldering diverse wills and strengths into a commonly accepted identity, all devoted to Hashem, the united entity can have an awesome affect. K'ish echad b'lev echad, "As one man, with one heart." Each individual discovers hidden strengths and abilities, which he would never otherwise have deemed possible.

On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you... whoever does work on it shall be put to death. (35:2)

In the previous parshah (Ki Sisa), the Torah addressed the mitzvah of Shabbos observance, detailing the punishment for its desecration. Why does the Torah reiterate it yet again in this parshah (Vayakhel)? Furthermore, if the primary point is to prevent us from working on the seventh day, why does the Torah preface it by saying, "Six days you shall work"? Why not get to the point? Horav Tzvi Pesach Frank, zl, quotes his brother-in-law, Horav Aryeh Levine, zl, who heard the following explanation from a well-known gaon, Torah scholar.

At the beginning of Meseches Pesachim, Tosfos explains why the Torah is more stringent with regard to the prohibition of chametz on Pesach than with other prohibitions which are assur b'hanaah, forbidden to have pleasure from them. Chametz must be destroyed prior to Pesach. One may not keep chametz in his possession. This is unlike other issurim, prohibitions, in which the object of the issur does not have to be destroyed. Tosfos explains that other prohibitions are perpetually forbidden. Chametz, however, is permitted throughout the rest of the year. Its prohibition is in effect for only the eight/seven days of Pesach. Man is used to refraining from other prohibitions. Thus, the Torah prefaces the prohibition

of Shabbos with the fact that we are accustomed to working six days a week. This might cause us to forget that Shabbos is different. The Torah adds the reasons for this stringency. In order to keep us aware of the prohibitions of Shabbos; and explain why the Torah repeats the prohibition.

The commentators wonder why the Torah precedes the commandment concerning the Mishkan's construction with the mitzvah of Shabbos. Indeed, in Parashios Terumah, Tetzaveh and Ki Sisa, the instructions regarding the Mishkan precede that of Shabbos. Veritably, why does the Torah repeat the prohibition against work on Shabbos? In his Devash L'Fi, the Chida offers an insightful explanation which goes to the very core of sinful behavior and grants us a perspective for understanding the mindset of the sinner. The Talmud Shabbos 118b states, "One who observes Shabbos according to halachah (properly) - even if he had worshipped idols as was done during the generation of Enosh - Hashem will forgive his past sins." This is the power associated with shemiras Shabbos.

The Bais Yosef explains why Shabbos has such an immense power to catalyze atonement for the sin of idol worship, which is ostensibly an unpardonable infraction. Shabbos is equal to all of the mitzvos in that its observance demonstrates one's belief in Hashem as the Creator of the world and its Supreme Guide. A Shabbos-observant Jew demonstrates that he believes Hashem to be the G-d of Creation, as well as the G-d of History. He believes that Hashem is the Divine Author of the Torah. If so, how could he worship an idol, which is inconsistent with his belief? Obviously, he does not really believe in the idol or in what he is doing. It might be peer pressure, acting under the influence of a depraved environment, but he is not acting with malice or with a rejection of the Divine. Therefore, there is room for forgiveness. He has not completely severed his ties to Hashem.

The Chida suggests that this is why Parashas Ki Sisa precedes the sin of the Golden Calf. We are being taught that, even if one were to sin with the eigel ha'zahav, Golden Calf, through the medium of Shabbos he may seek atonement for his sin. Indeed, this was the sin of the generation of Enosh. They thought that, since G-d created the constellations that were so powerful, they, too, should be revered and accorded a certain degree of divinity. They did not mean to deny Hashem as G-d, but only to add honor to His close adjutants. This was the error of their misguided belief. Such erroneous belief can achieve atonement through shemiras Shabbos. K'motzei Shalal Rav cites the Tzitz Eliezer, where its author, Horav Eliezer Yehudah Valdenberg, zl, employs this logic to explain a question raised by the Mechilta in Parashas Ki Sisa, and also discussed in the Talmud Yoma 85a. The Taanaim ask: From where do we derive the halachah that pikuach nefesh, saving a life, is docheh, supersedes, the prohibition of Shabbos. Various responses are given. Ostensibly, this is not a question that is applicable specifically to Shabbos. Indeed, every mitzvah in the Torah - barring the three capitol sins of idol worship, murder and adultery - is vitiated by pikuach nefesh. Why would we require a specific pasuk for Shabbos, more so than any other mitzvah in the Torah?

Rav Valdenberg explains that one who desecrates Shabbos is tantamount to one who worships an idol. Therefore, had we not had a special medium for deriving that pikuach nefesh is docheh Shabbos, we might conjecture that, indeed, it does not. Shabbos is like idol worship, which is not overridden by the requirement to save a life. Just like one must give up his life rather than worship an idol, so, too, should he die rather than desecrate Shabbos. This is why we need a special proof to circumvent this notion.

Incidentally, we derive two important lessons herein. First, the value of Jewish life takes precedence over all the mitzvos. Shabbos is equal to all the mitzvos, and we move it aside when human life is in danger. There is nothing as important as the life of a Jew. Second, we see that sin has its degrees. There are sinners who sin because they are influenced by others - not because they believe in what they are doing. They do not choose maliciously to rebel against Hashem. They are weak! Sadly, there are those who have strayed far beyond this degree and those who maliciously or foolishly believe that what they are doing is correct and proper. We can only pray that one day they will realize the error of their false beliefs and acknowledge the truth.

As noted, the power of Shabbos is incredible. It is unlike any other mitzvah. Shabbos is much more than the negation from work, it is a holy experience. It is an opportunity to spend a day immersed in the Divine. Horav Matisyahu Solomon, Shlita, posits that the observance of Shabbos has a special healing power, through which one cleanses his psyche from any impious, revisionist thoughts. Questions which often undermine one's conviction and ultimate commitment are ameliorated through sincere Shabbos observance. People often err in defining Judaism as the religion of "no," thus engendering a sense of negativity regarding Jewish belief and observance. It cannot be further from the truth. One only has to experience the beauty of a Shabbos, sense the calm and feel the spiritual emotion generated by the

day of rest. Regrettably, when Shabbos is painted as a day of negativity, when one may not do "this and that," the beauty is somehow lost.

The Brisker Rav, zl, took every mitzvah very seriously. Torah was his life. Shabbos, however, generated within him a sense of fear like no other. The mere thought that he might in some way skirt the transgression of Shabbos terrified him more than anything else. At the beginning of World War II, the Brisker Rav had to travel from Moscow to Odessa, the departing point for ships traveling to Eretz Yisrael. It was a two-day trip, with the next train scheduled to depart on Wednesday. This would hopefully allow him to arrive in enough time before Shabbos. The Russian train system was not known for its punctuality, and this terrified the Rav. What if the train was late and arrived on Shabbos? They would be compelled to disembark on Shabbos, thereby desecrating the holy day.

The Rav deliberated about what he should do. It was a matter of life and death if he were to remain in war-torn Europe. On the other hand, Shabbos was something he could not ignore. In the end, with much trepidation, the Brisker Rav together with the Mirrer Rosh Yeshivah, Horav Eliezer Yehudah Finkel, zl, set out together on the train.

The train had traveled only a few hours, when the Rav looked at his watch and noted that they were already quite behind schedule. If the train continued at this pace, they would arrive on Shabbos. The mere thought of such a possibility caused the Rav great anxiety. He tensed up and could think about nothing else. Those who had traveled with him on that train remarked later on that mere words could not describe the dread that enveloped him concerning the possibility of chillul Shabbos.

The train continued to fall farther and farther behind schedule. It soon became apparent that there was no way it would reach Odessa before Shabbos. Suddenly, the train began to pick up steam and gained momentum, roaring down the tracks at a speed unheard of in Russia. The train pulled into the station a full half-hour before Shabbos. The Mirrer Rosh Yeshivah commented that the Brisker Rav had catalyzed a miracle of kefitzas ha'derech, shortening the road. His unabiding love for Shabbos, his overwhelming fear and anguish concerning the possibility of being mechallel, desecrating, Shabbos, interceded with Heaven to cause this miracle to occur.

As they disembarked the train, those accompanying him suggested they take a taxi to the village of their destination. The Brisker Rav demurred, saying, "One miracle is enough." They had no choice but walk forty-five minutes in the accompaniment of a gentile who carried their luggage. That Motzoei Shabbos they boarded the ship which took them to Eretz Yisrael.

And the ability to instruct he installed in his heart, he and Ahaliav ben Achisamach, of the tribe of Dan. (35:34)

Rashi notes that Ahaliav ben Achisamach was min ha'yerudin she'b'shevatim, one of the lowliest of the tribes, "Yet Hashem equates him to Betzalel regarding the works of the Mishkan, and Betzalel was from Shevet Yehudah, which was from the greatest of tribes." The lesson to be derived is quite simple: when it comes to building the Bais Hamikdash, all Jews are equal. Yichus, lineage, regardless of its illustrious origins, does not play a role in granting a person a position of distinction.

Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita, explains that all of the various masks that exist in the world, masks that often conceal one's true essence, even the mask associated with yichus d'kedushah, holy and illustrious lineage, only reach up to the actual point of kedushah. The source of holiness, the point from which holiness emanates, nullifies and reveals that which is under the masks. There only one entity exists: Hashem; and, before Hashem, we are all equal. Thus, when one came close to the makom ha'Mikdash, the place of kedushah, the Bais Hamikdash, the individual must achieve total self-abnegation, as if he is absolutely nothing. In the presence of the Almighty, masks have no place. The masks are for us - simple people who often act clueless with regard to the emes, truth, of our existence. In other words, when we confront the reality of Hashem, we must "get real" and put an end to the sham that often, by our choice, controls our lives.

Rav Rabinowitz cites from the Siddur Rav Yaakov Emdin, in the Seder Erev Pesach, who quotes from the Sefer Shevet Yehudah, testimony from a Roman officer who witnessed Yerushalayim in its beauty, when the Bais Hamikdash stood and the avodah, service, was an ongoing reality. In describing the service of the slaughter of the Korban Pesach, he says, "By decree of the Jewish people, when they would go out to prepare this service, no man would come close, or push forward (each person in his place), regardless of the individual's stature, even if (it meant that) Shlomo Hamelech or David Hamelech was relegated to stand in the back of the line. I asked the Kohanim, Priests, "Is this appropriate? (That those who descended from distinguished lineage or who were prominent personages should have to wait behind those whose pedigree was not of their exalted caliber?)." They replied, "There is no grandeur before Hashem. At this point of the service, when we all stand before the Almighty, all Jews are equal."

Rav Gamliel underscores this thought. While it is true that distinction is made in deference to a person's age and scholarship, this is only for the purpose of external kavod, honor. After all is said and done, however, we must realize that when it comes to Hashem we are all equal - regardless of the individual's pedigree and self-generated honorariums.

Jewish literature is replete with the notion that all Jews-- regardless of pedigree, financial status, scholarship and acumen-- are equal before Hashem. Regrettably, this idea has a tendency to slip our mind. While it is, of course, understandable, it does not have to be so glaringly obvious. Adults are used to it; children, however, have greater difficulty in processing the irreverence.

Many of us have paid our dues and raised children of whom we are very proud. This does not, however, grant us license to blast in in everyone's face - especially those who have recently become Torah-observant, and whose children have not bought into the package. They, too, would like to brag about something, but, sadly, it is too late for their children. I recently was reviewing Gemorah with my grandson over the phone. I was sitting in the corner of the shul prior to a shiur. A young man who is a wonderful ben Torah, having studied for years after becoming frum, said to me, "I guess my children will never know what it means to learn with their zayde." I replied, "Neither did I, nor did most of my generation. Hitler, yemach shemo, saw to that." I am not sure if this ameliorated his problem, but it was a rejoinder that conveyed a simple message: we are all equal; we all have our issues with which to contend.

In relating to the child who was less fortunate than his peers, Horav Aryeh Levine, zl, made his special mark. The Tzaddik of Yerushalayim was known for his empathy to all Jews, of all backgrounds and religious beliefs. It was in his role as Menahel of Yeshivas Eitz Chaim that his care for the young child who was less fortunate was manifest. There was an old established custom at the school that whenever a student reached bar-mitzvah age, his classmates would all share in purchasing a sefer for him. Each boy gave his portion, after which the sefer was given to Rav Aryeh for his personal words of inscription in it, and then given to the bar-mitzvah boy. Without Rav Aryeh's good wishes, the gift was hollow and empty.

One boy was poorer than the others. His parents lived in abject poverty. As such, there was no way that they could contribute to the gifts that the students gave one another. Sadly, children do not understand what parents go through - especially when it is someone else's parents. Therefore, when this boy's bar-mitzvah approached, no one in the class wanted to contribute for his bar-mitzvah sefer. They felt that he deserved to receive exactly what he had given: nothing.

Rav Aryeh asked the rebbe of the class why no one had brought him a sefer to inscribe for this boy. The rebbe had no alternative but to tell him the truth: no one wanted to give him anything.

Rav Aryeh asked the rebbe, "Please go to my house and ask my wife to give you the Chumashim that are on top of the bookcase." The rebbe quickly went to Rav Aryeh's house and brought the sefarim. Rav Aryeh took one look and emitted a small groan, "I did not mean these Chumashim. I meant the new ones which were given to my son as a present. He never used them, and now that he is grown up and out of the house, he will never really need them. Please bring those. I do not want to give this child a used set of Chumashim."

The rebbe returned, and Rav Aryeh wrote a beautiful inscription. "Who knows," he said, "what kind of anguish the boy would have experienced if he saw his classmates coming empty handed to his bar-mitzvah. He would have been devastated! This is murder. Is it his fault that his parents are poor and, as a result, he cannot share in buying presents for the other boys? If there is any way to save a child from disaster, we must do everything that we can!" He concluded his dedication in the name of all of the students in the class.

Va'ani Tefillah l'havah es Hashem Elokeichem u'lavdo b'chol levavchem u'b'chol nafshichem. To love Hashem, your G-d, and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul.

Horav Isser Zalmen Meltzer, zl, published his fourth volume of Even HaEzel during World War II. He lived in Eretz Yisrael, but, nonetheless, he acutely felt the pain and anguish suffered by his European brothers and sisters. In his preface, he attempts to offer divrei tanchumin, words of consolation, concerning the sea of Jewish blood that was spilled in Europe. Among the many observations, he writes: "The chevlei Moshiach, birth pangs of Moshiach, are incredibly painful. (This is a reference to the Holocaust, which is viewed as one of the strong pains that accompany the advent of Moshiach tzidkeinu.) Our sages foreshadowed these terrible pains as we near the End of Days. It reached the point where they exclaimed, Yeisi v'lo achminei, "May he (Moshiach) come, may I not see him" (Sanhedrin 98b). (He would rather witness this than endure the suffering that will accompany it.) However, if we accept these periods of extreme adversity with love (understanding that it is our Heavenly Father Who is meting out this judgment for a purpose), then they are much more endurable. Indeed, this is what is meant by the

words, "to love Hashem with all your heart and all your soul." Regarding the command of b'chol nafshecha (written in the singular, since it is addressing the individual), our sages teach, "Even if He takes your soul/life," one must continue his love for Hashem - surely this applies when it is b'chol nafshechem (written in the plural, addressing the collective community). We must accept His decree with love. Those who feel this sense of love are among the holiest of souls, who have great pleasure in having had the merit to give up their moral lives to sanctify Hashem's Name. To encapsulate what Rav Isser Zalmen writes: The Jew who has unabiding love for Hashem understands that, at times, this love means giving up his life for the Almighty. This does not cause him distress; rather, it is a source of great pleasure to merit the worthiness of performing such a service for Hashem.

Dedicated l'zechar nishmas R' Moshe Yehuda Leib ben R' Asher Alter Chaim z"l t.n.tz.v.h.

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from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network shemalist@shemayisrael.com to: Potpourri <parshapotpourri@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Feb 20, 2014 at 8:35 PM
subject: [Parshapotpourri] **Parsha Potpourri** by **Rabbi Oizer Alport** - Parshas Vayakhel

Shema Yisrael Torah Network 8:35 PM (1 hour ago)
to Potpourri Parshas Vayakhel - Vol. 9, Issue 22 Compiled by **Oizer Alport**
Vayeitz'u kol adas B'nei Yisroel mi'lifnei Moshe (35:20) Parshas Vayakhel begins by relating that Moshe gathered together all of the Jews to instruct them about observing Shabbos and building the Mishkan. Nineteen verses later, after he concluded his instructions, the Torah relates that the Jews left "from in front of Moshe." As the Torah doesn't write an unnecessary letter, why was it necessary to emphasize a fact that should have been obvious, as Moshe gathered them together at the beginning of the parsha and they hadn't gone anywhere in the interim?

Rav Elyahu Lopian explains that when encountering a person in the street, it is generally impossible to discern from his appearance and actions where he is coming from. The apparently superfluous wording is coming to indicate that in this case, it was clear to any passerby that the Jews had just left the presence of Moshe.

In what way was this recognizable? Although they had just spent time learning about Shabbos and the Mishkan from Moshe, this factual knowledge wasn't discernible to the naked eye. Rather, their conduct and interactions with other people were on such a lofty level that it was apparent that they had just been studying Torah.

The Gemora in Yoma (86a) teaches that part of the mitzvah to love Hashem is to cause Hashem to be loved and praised through our actions. The Jews who merited learning Torah directly from the mouth of Moshe reached such levels in sensitivity and caring that anybody who saw them would immediately understand from where it originated and would bless Hashem and His Torah for producing such conduct.

This lesson is illustrated in a story about the Brisker Rav, who was renowned for his diligence and toil in the study of Torah. When his daughter once returned home with an axe that she found, he realized that this was a golden and rare opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of returning a lost object to its owner (Devorim 22:1-3). The Brisker Rav recognized that it belonged to a man who lived several miles away on the edge of the forest. He took his daughter and the axe and set out on the long, arduous journey. They finally arrived at the owner's home and knocked on his door.

The Brisker Rav assumed that the owner would express his gratitude for their efforts and exertion in returning his axe to him, but he was taken by surprise by what happened next. When the man answered his door and realized what had transpired, he was so moved by the Rav's actions that he literally bowed and prostrated himself on the ground, exclaiming, "Blessed is the Jewish G-d Who has given His people a Torah which causes them to act with such compassion and mercy!"

The message of Parshas Vayakhel is that we should conduct ourselves in a manner which loudly declares that we study the Torah and are elevated by it. The typical person with whom we interact will not be able to discern this from the number of penetrating insights we deliver into the words of the Ketzos or even the weekly Torah portion, but rather through our acts of kindness and exemplary interpersonal conduct, which will sanctify the name of Hashem and His Holy Torah.

Vayavo'u ha'anashim al ha'nashim (35:22) The Daas Z'keinim writes that in the merit of the women's joyful and generous contribution of their jewelry to the Mishkan, which stood in sharp contrast to their refusal to donate their jewelry for the building of the golden calf (32:2-3), they merited a personal holiday on Rosh Chodesh, on which they are accustomed not to do work. Why is Rosh Chodesh uniquely suited as a reward for their pious actions?

The Shemen HaTov explains that the women in that generation repeatedly excelled in their solid trust in Hashem and failure to give up hope even in the darkest moments. In Egypt, the men succumbed to the back-breaking labor and diabolical decrees of Pharaoh to kill their sons and despaired of the future. Nevertheless, the women continued to hope, skillfully enticing their husbands to help them bring more children into a world of pain and uncertainty. They invoked this merit when they joyfully contributed the mirrors which they had used for this purpose to the construction of the Mishkan (Rashi 38:8).

Similarly, when the men miscalculated Moshe's return from Mount Sinai and fell prey to the Satan's argument that Moshe had died, the women held out hope and refused to take part in the sin of the golden calf. After this tremendous national sin, it would have been easy and natural to give up hope. Yet the Mishkan offered a new prospect for Divine closeness even in this dark post-sin era, and it also represented Hashem's forgiveness of the sin of the golden calf (Rashi 38:21). Recognizing this tremendous and unique opportunity to inject new life into the crestfallen and forlorn nation, the women leaped into action to donate to the cause with great joy and enthusiasm.

Rosh Chodesh symbolizes the concept that when all appears bleak, one must hang on and trust in a brighter future. Just when the moon disappears and the night sky seems totally dark, the process of rebirth and renewal continues as the moon returns and grows ever larger, reminding us of the lesson that the women always knew.

V'ham'lacha haysa dayam l'kol ham'lacha la'asos osah v'hosar (36:7) There seems to be an internal inconsistency in our verse with which a number of commentators grapple. The Torah says simultaneously that the communal work for the Mishkan was both sufficient, which would seem to imply that it was exactly enough, and that there remained leftovers. How can these two apparently contradictory statements be resolved?

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh answers that in reality, the Jews enthusiastically donated so much so quickly that the total contributions were actually more than was necessary for the building of the Mishkan. Hashem was afraid that if there were leftovers after the Mishkan was complete, some Jews may be saddened at the thought that their donations hadn't been used. He therefore made a miracle and arranged that everything should be put to use, causing the excessive donations to appear to be just right.

The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, suggests that this lesson applies to all matters of spirituality. Even if a project appears to have yielded no practical results, no pure action performed for Hashem's sake ever goes to waste.

For example, at the time of the sin of the golden calf, Chur attempted to protest the sinful actions of the people and was killed for his zealotry (Rashi 32:5). The Daas Zkeinim writes (35:30) that Betzael was chosen as the primary builder of the Mishkan specifically in the merit of the actions of his grandfather Chur, as one of the purposes of the Mishkan was to atone for the sin of the golden calf.

Although the society in which we live attempts to convince us that nothing matters but the bottom line, the Torah teaches that Hashem cares about our sincere intentions and efforts to increase His glory, and they will never go to waste.

Answers to the weekly Points to Ponder are now available! To receive the full version with answers email the author at oalport@optonline.net. Parsha Points to Ponder (and sources which discuss them):

1) The Torah records (35:10) that Moshe commanded the "wise of heart" to make everything necessary for the Mishkan. Hashem earlier told Moshe (31:6) that He had placed wisdom into the hearts of those are wise to allow them to do so. From this latter verse the Gemora in Berachos (55a) derives that Hashem only gives wisdom to one who already possesses it. How did these wise-hearted individuals escape the apparent catch-22, and from where did they attain their initial wisdom? (Baal HaTurim 28:3, Nefesh HaChaim 4:5, Sichos Mussar, Atarah L'Melech pg. 133)

2) Rashi writes (35:27) that the tribal leaders were punished by the removal of the letter "yud" from their titles. They decided that after the people had completed their contributions for the building of the Mishkan, they would donate whatever was missing. Why wasn't Moshe similarly punished for his lack of contribution to the Mishkan (see Vayikra Rabba 1:6), and to the contrary, Rashi writes (39:33) that because Moshe hadn't participated in the Mishkan, Hashem miraculously arranged that nobody should be able to erect it except for Moshe in order to give him a part in its construction? (Mishmeres Ariel and Tal'lei Oros Parshas Vayikra)

3) Rashi writes (35:27) that the tribal leaders were punished by the removal of the letter "yud" from their titles. Why did they specifically lose the letter "yud"? (Kli Yakar, Chiddushei HaRim, Emunas Itecha, Outlooks and Insights Parshas Terumah)

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from: Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org date: Thu, Feb 20, 2014 at 5:30 PM subject: Shabbat Shalom from the OU A Gentle Giant: Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein commemorates the legacy of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's yahrtzeit on 20 Adar.

A Gentle Giant : Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l

by Aharon Lichtenstein

February 20, 2014 in Tribute

This article originally appeared in the fall 1995 issue of Jewish Action

That Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, was relatively unknown to the general Israeli public — the secular press was astounded by the attendance of a quarter of a million people at his funeral — was largely to his credit. The ignorance derived, in essence, from his studied lifelong avoidance of the confrontational arena.

Reb Shlomo Zalman was, in effect, the Israeli Reb Moshe Feinstein, zt"l. That equation does some injustice to each, as it ignores particular qualities which energized and enriched their lives and beings. And yet, it relates, surprisingly, to major elements regarding role, status, personality and perspective which were critical to their position as gedolim of our generation. Both were, formally roshei yeshivah, for decades, and yet were preeminent as untitled poskim. Both fused humility and authority, and both sought, by precept and example — by what they did and refrained from doing — to promote harmony and diminish confrontation. In the specific area of psak, each dealt with the cutting edge of "modern" issues, particularly as regards medicine and technology; and each approached sheilot animated by sensitivity to human concerns as well as fidelity to halachah.

Finally, while both were deeply rooted in the charedi world throughout, they maintained genuine rapport with the full range of the Torah community.

Analogies aside, however, Reb Shlomo Zalman could certainly be appreciated on his own merits. Reb Shlomo Zalman was endowed, as a lamdan, with a set of qualities which served him, ideally, as a posek. He had encyclopedic knowledge — and he had it, as mechudaddim beficha, at his fingertips. His temperament was remarkably judicious, invariably level-headed, and never pedestrian. He was deferential to the views of others, and yet genuinely self-confident. He could be innovative, and even daring. His view, for example, contrary to that of the Chazon Ish, that the application of lifnei iver, the proscription against enabling others to violate an issur, needs to consider long-range effects* rather than immediate concerns, has potentially radical implications. But his innovations do not bear a forced aspect and never appear improvised. Finally, he had a sharply honed sense of balance — of general principle as distinct from detail, of textual and logical analysis in juxtaposition to his rootedness in a specific tradition.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l

He brought to the interpretation and application of halachah a profound sensitivity to the human dimension. Along the continuum of psak, he was far from being amongst the most radical mekilim, and he worked within clearly perceived parameters. But an awareness of the human element was always a significant factor — and not only in deviant situations. Moreover, in many contexts, he regarded this as a halachic interest, quite apart from the personal. Some of his pesakim concerning Shabbat, for instance, were informed by the sense that the day should be experienced as pleasant rather than as an obstacle course.

This element was no doubt related, in part, to his own personality. One did not see in him emotional extremes. He was a blend of composure and joy — and that, within the context of a remarkably integrated life. There was in him a streak of temimut in the sense of naivete. He could, for instance, express amazement over a report that in America there are people who regard themselves as wholly observant, and yet cut corners with respect to income tax. An astute judge of people and situations, he yet combined innocence with perspicacity. Above all, however, he was a tamim in the best and fullest sense of the term, "hit'halech lefanei ve'hyeh tamim," as commanded to Avraham. He led a wholly organic life, without fissures and devoid of conflicts, in the service of the Ribono Shel Olam. It was not exceedingly dramatic, but it was manifestly joyous: "uleyishrei lev simchah."

The human touch was manifest in yet another aspect — simplicity and, concurrently, accessibility. He lived in a very plain apartment — by no means ascetic but quite modest — where he would receive anyone who had a sh'eilah. The line at the foot of the steps would form daily around two o'clock, and one didn't need an introduction to enter. Every question, even if, from a certain perspective, it may have been trivial, was treated seriously. If it mattered enough to a person who presented it, it was important enough to Reb Shlomo Zalman as well. And above all, not just the questions but the people were treated with respect. He knew how to listen — and not just to halachic inquiries. He communicated a sense of genuine respect to interlocutors; he gave you a sense of worth. In all my

discussions with him, I found him reassuringly paternal, but never condescending; and that was the typical response.

Finally, he was marked, quite strikingly, by a measure of openness. Let there be no mistake. He himself was deeply rooted — intellectually, emotionally, hashkafically — in the world of the yishuv hayashan, and its values and priorities guided his own life and what he sought for his children and talmidim. But he could recognize and acknowledge the worth of those who were cut from different cloth and appreciate their needs and their accomplishments. He not only abjured factional politics but abhorred it, and he judged people on their merits rather than by labels.

Cloistered in many respects, he was nevertheless very much in touch with others. He was, of course, grounded in the charedi world, living in Sha'arei Chesed — an area marked by the very best features of charediyut — intensive commitment to Torah learning and halachic observance, and a deep awareness of tradition, classical and recent, and marred by none of the worst features. Its culture does not denigrate labor and its walls are not plastered with hate-mongering posters. It is an area within which the impact of such figures as Rav Zvi Pesach Frank and Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlop is still felt; within which Rav Kook's memory has always been very much esteemed. Reb Shlomo Zalman was inextricably engaged in this neighborhood for many decades and, indeed, left his imprint upon it.

Reb Shlomo Zalman was of this world and he served to guide it. While not a philosophic devotee in the narrow sense of the term — he was, generally, not much involved in philosophic thought — he had great respect for Rav Kook. And beyond that, while certainly not an ideological Zionist, he had an intuitive appreciation of the significance of the enterprise of shivat Zion and the building of Eretz Yisrael. Hence, he related positively to the whole gamut of the religious spectrum, and datileumi bnei Torah turned to him no less than others. And they found a ready ear and an open mind.

Hence, precisely because he had an empathetic appreciation for much of the broader scene, he was saddened in more recent years, as he felt much was going awry in that scene. His response was not so much anger as concern, disappointment — at times, even anguish. What troubled him primarily was the socio-cultural scene, rather than the political arena — progressive secularization, on the one hand, and divisive polarization, on the other. He no longer felt fully comfortable within his Jerusalem streets. That concern cast a shadow. And yet, what is left with us, and what we shall so sorely miss, is the memory of that remarkable gadol, at once overawing and benign, who bestrode us like a Colossus, and yet related to us, great and small, at the core of our innermost being.

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*Ed. note: For example, he permitted serving food and drink to a non-religious person who would become upset if asked to wash and make the blessing because, in the long run, the negative impact of not serving him would result in a graver sin. He reasoned that there was no "michshol" in serving him since the sin created by serving was less than the future, anticipated sin. (See *Minchat Shlomo*, chapter 35).

A Gaon in Deed It has been said that Reb Shlomo Zalman's everyday actions were as much a lesson to us as his scholarly discourses and halachic rulings. In this, too, "he was a gaon," writes long-time disciple, Rabbi Yehoshua Neivirt. He truly exemplified the injunction to behave in a manner which "would cause the name of God to be beloved on your account."

The parents of a retarded child came to Reb Shlomo Zalman to discuss institutionalizing him. When he asked what the boy said about the proposal, they replied that it had not occurred to them to ask him. Reb Shlomo Zalman was irate. "You intend to evict him from his home and consign him to a strange place with a regimented atmosphere," he told them. "He must be encouraged and not allowed to feel that he is being betrayed." He asked to see the youngster and the parents fetched him. "What is your name, my boy?" the gaon asked. "Akiva." "Akiva, my name is Shlomo Zalman. I am the gadol hador, the greatest Torah authority of this generation, and everyone listens to me. You will be entering a special school now; I would like you to represent me and look after all of the religious matters in your new home." The boy's eyes were riveted to Reb Shlomo Zalman's face and the awestruck parents sat with their mouths agape as the Rav continued. "I shall now give you semichah which makes you a rabbi and I want you to use this honor wisely."

For many years, the local grocery store in Reb Shlomo Zalman's neighborhood was run by a widow. To operate such a store consumed every ounce of the woman's strength. Delivery vans would pull up at dawn and the truckers would deposit crates of milk and dairy products on the sidewalk. Later, the widow would drag them

inside when she opened the store. One day, to her delight, she saw that the crates had been placed at the front entrance, considerably easing her workload.

This phenomenon recurred the following morning and continued day after day. One morning, the widow felt that she should thank the drivers personally, so she made a point of arriving at the store very early. However, to her amazement, when the vans appeared the men deposited her delivery on the edge of the sidewalk as they had always done in the past. Perplexed, she stood on the pavement wondering how the heavy crates had transported themselves to her door, when suddenly the figure of Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach appeared, tallis bag under his arm. One by one, he lifted the heavy crates, deposited them in front of the grocery store, and hurried off to shul.

Reb Shlomo Zalman once confided to Reb Meir Goldvicht that when he was young he was easily irritated. "So," he explained, "I informed my fiancée as soon as we became engaged that I wished to establish a simple method whereby I would never come to anger. She agreed to give me her full support, whatever that method should be. Then, in the cheder yichud, when we were alone for the first time after the chuppah, I told her the method I had devised." He concluded with a twinkle in his eye, "The method was that if we were ever to disagree about anything — she is right!"

After 54 years of marriage, the Rebbetzin passed away. At her funeral Reb Shlomo Zalman was heard to utter the following remarkable words: "It is customary to request forgiveness from the deceased. However, I have nothing to ask you forgiveness for. During the course of our marriage never did anything occur that would require either of us to ask the other's forgiveness..." —

When Rav Shlomo Zalman passed away, a beggar in Sha'arei Chesed sobbed in her anguish: "Now who will say 'good morning' to me every day?" (Mi yagid li boker tov?)

Towards the end of her life Reb Shlomo Zalman's mother-in-law lost her sight and she could no longer recite Tehillim as she had so loved to do in the past. Reb Shlomo Zalman taped the entire book of Tehillim, so she could continue her practice.

Shortly before he passed away he advised a young family member, "Learn well. Eat well. Sleep well. And always smile."

Dr. Abraham of Shaarei Zedek Hospital recalls that Reb Shlomo Zalman never disparaged an individual with whom he disagreed. He would merely say, "Aich zeh yachol lihyot? (How can that be?)"

Though he was the greatest halachic authority of our day, and was particularly skilled at solving modern-day questions, Reb Shlomo Zalman abhorred any and all titles appended to his name. In his will, he requested that his headstone be no higher than that of his parents and he stipulated that "you may add to the headstone the following words. 'He developed disciples in the Yeshiva Kol Torah and disseminated Torah to the many.' Should someone wish to say words of eulogy, I strongly request that they be concise and not say words of praise about me."

Most of the vignettes above are adapted from the book by Hanoch Teller, *And From Jerusalem His Word*, distributed by Feldheim Publishers.