



BS"D

To: parsha@groups.io  
From: Chaim Shulman <cshulman@gmail.com>  
& Allen Klein <allen.klein@gmail.com>

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON @TERUMAH - 5785 ROSH CHODESH ADAR

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from: **TorahWeb** <[torahweb@torahweb.org](mailto:torahweb@torahweb.org)>

date: Feb 27, 2025, 10:06 PM

subject: **Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg - The Foundation of the Mishkan**

The pasuk says, "And you shall make the planks from shitim wood" (Terumah 26:15). Rashi comments that the Torah does not say "you shall make planks," but rather "you shall make the planks" because the beams of the Mishkan were not made from any ordinary wood; they were made from the trees that Yaakov Avinu planted in Mitzrayim. Chazal elaborate further (Midrash Rabbah, Vayigash 94:4) that Yaakov Avinu stopped in Be'er Sheva on his way down to Mitzrayim to take trees from Avraham Avinu's "eshel" so that he could replant them in Mitzrayim and later Klal Yisrael would be able to use wood from those trees for the planks of the Mishkan, and specifically for the middle beam, the briach ha'tichon, which kept all the planks together (see Targum Yonason, Terumah 26:28, for a different version of this Midrash).

Why did Yaakov Avinu want the middle beam to be made from Avraham Avinu's eshel? Chazal (Sotah 10a) cite two opinions as to whether the eshel was an orchard or an inn, but either way it was a place where Avraham Avinu would invite guests to eat and rest. This was where Avraham Avinu, the pillar of chessed, engaged in acts of kindness and generosity. It would seem that Yaakov Avinu wanted Klal Yisrael to use this eshel in building the Mishkan in order to infuse the middah of chessed in the very planks of the Mishkan, and especially in the briach ha'tichon, the middle beam, which kept the Mishkan together.

Why did the Mishkan require a foundation of chessed? The Ramban writes in his introduction to Parshas Terumah that the Mishkan was intended to be like Har Sinai; the goal was that the Shechina which rested on Har Sinai should dwell in the Mishkan. Before kabbolas haTorah, the pasuk says, "And (Bnei) Yisrael camped there (Yisro 19:2)" Chazal comment that the word "camped" - vayichan - is written in singular form to teach that Klal Yisrael camped before ma'amad Har Sinai "as one man with one heart" (see Rashi there).

In order for Klal Yisrael to experience the Divine Revelation of ma'amad har

Sinai, they first had to unite as one because the Shechina dwells among Klal Yisrael in its fullest sense only when they are united. This is the kind of perspective that Yaakov Avinu wished to instill in the Mishkan by using wood from Avraham Avinu's eshel. When Klal Yisrael would see the planks that symbolize the values of kindness and sensitivity, they would draw closer together and that would cause the Shechina to dwell in the Mishkan.

This idea is also highlighted by the keruvim that were placed on top of the aron. The pasuk says, "And the keruvim should be with their wings spread upward...with their faces toward each other (uf'neihem ish el achiv)...It is there that I will set My meetings with you and I shall speak with you...from between the two keruvim" (Terumah 25:20,22). Hashem spoke with Moshe and rested his Shechina so to speak between the two keruvim. Why specifically in that place?

The Kli Yakar (Kedoshim 19:18) suggests that the wings of the keruvim were spread upward to symbolize mitzvos bein adam l'Makom, while their faces were turned toward each other to symbolize mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro. Both types of mitzvos must be fulfilled properly in order to achieve perfection - shleimus. That is why, says the Kli Yakar, the ten commandments are split equally; the first five are bein adam l'Makom, while the second five are bein adam l'chaveiro. This shows that the two types of mitzvos are of equal importance.

When a prospective convert approached Hillel and asked him to teach him all of Torah on one foot, Hillel responded, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your friend. (Shabbos 31a)" In other words, he told him, "You should love your friend as yourself." The Kli Yakar explains that by asking to be taught all of Torah on one foot, the prospective convert was not playing games. He was really asking, "What is the one foundational principle of the Torah, on which everything else stands?" Hillel responded with the pasuk, "You should love your friend as yourself; I am Hashem. (Kedoshim 19:18)" This pasuk encapsulates the two types of mitzvos that encompass the entire Torah. "V'havta l'rei'acha kamocha" is the basis for mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro, while "ani Hashem" underscores the importance of mitzvos bein adam l'Makom.

The positioning of the wings and faces of the keruvim on top of the aron reflected this duality of mitzvos as well. Perhaps that is why Hashem specifically chose that space between the keruvim as his meeting place with Moshe, to emphasize that his Shechina will rest on the Mishkan only if Klal Yisrael maintains a proper balance between mitzvos bein adam l'Makom and mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro. It is not enough for them to focus their attention on serving Hashem through the avodah of korbanos and tefillah, with their arms outstretched to the heavens. Their faces must also be "ish el achiv" - acting toward each other with compassion and sensitivity.

The more we internalize the dual message of the keruvim, the more we can hope to merit the protection and the blessing of the Shechina.

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From: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <[rabiyy@theyeshiva.net](mailto:rabiyy@theyeshiva.net)>

reply-to: [info@theyeshiva.net](mailto:info@theyeshiva.net)

date: Feb 27, 2025, 4:40 PM

subject: **In a Dark Exile, Whispering Trees - Essay by Rabbi YY**

In a Dark Exile, Whispering Trees

A Father Plants Saplings 210 Years Early, Offering Solace to His Children

Rabbi YY Jacobson

The Smuggler

Tony comes up to the Mexican border on his bicycle. He's got two large bags over his shoulders. Joe, the border guard, stops him and says, "What's in the bags?"

"Sand," answers Tony.

Joe says, "We'll just see about that. Get off the bike." Joe takes the bags and rips them apart; he empties them out and finds nothing in them but sand. He detains Tony overnight and has the sand analyzed, only to discover that there is nothing but pure sand in the bags.

Joe releases Tony, puts the sand into new bags, hefts them onto the man's shoulders, and lets him cross the border.

The next day, the same thing happens. Joe asks, "What have you got?"

"Sand," says Tony.

Joe does his thorough examination and discovers that the bags contain nothing but sand. He gives the sand back to Tony, and Tony crosses the border on his bicycle.

This sequence of events is repeated every day for three years. Then Joe runs across Tony one day in a cantina in Mexico.

"Hey, buddy," says Joe, "I retired. I know you are smuggling something. It's driving me crazy. It's all I think about ... I can't sleep. Just between you and me, what are you smuggling?"

Tony sips his beer and says, "bicycles."

Cedar Trees

One of the most employed materials in the building of the Tabernacle—discussed in this week's portion, Terumah—was cedarwood ("atzei shitim.") Much of the structure and many of the vessels of the Tabernacle were fashioned from cedar.

Says Rashi, quoting the Midrash:

How did the children of Israel obtain [cedar wood for the construction of the Sanctuary] in the desert? Rabbi Tanchuma explained: Our father Jacob foresaw with his holy spirit that Israel was destined to build a Sanctuary in the desert; so he brought cedars to Egypt and planted them [there], and instructed his children to take them along when they left Egypt.[1]

This seems strange. Why carry trees from the Holy Land to plant in Egypt for use in a building to be constructed centuries later? Surely, there is no dearth of wood in wealthy Egypt, and, in any case, it could always be obtained for a price wherever their descendants might find themselves. Even the Sinai desert was not far from populated areas from where the Jews could obtain cedarwood.[2]

From the day Jacob descended to Egypt till the Exodus, 210 years passed. In life, it is good to plan long-term. I know people who pack for a trip one week before the flight. It is not my style, but I can respect them. Yet to pack up 210 years before a journey, seems like going overboard. Did Jacob feel that he needs to prepare the cedar wood 210 years before it was needed? Could he not have told his children to obtain cedars in or around Egypt?

Imagine, a fellow by the name of Jacob Isakson (son of Isaac) is relocating from Russia to the US in 1810. He brings with him cedar saplings to plant in America. He tells his children that one day in 2020 they might leave America to go build a sanctuary in the desert and they will need cedarwood. It would be strange; we could buy the wood in America!

It is not like Jacob came to Egypt empty-handed, so he had nothing to take along, but some cedar trees. Jacob, at the age of 130, was relocating his entire life, family, livestock, and his enormous wealth, to Egypt. The last thing he needed to add to the wagons were cedar trees!

Finding Comfort

The answer to this question I heard from the Lubavitcher Rebbe at an address on Shabbos Parshat Terumah, 6 Adar, 5747, March 7, 1987.[3] I can still vividly recall the profound emotion with which the Rebbe shared this insight—and it moves me deeply to this day.

The answer, the Lubavitcher Rebbe suggested, is intimated in the name of the Sage who transmitted this tradition: Rabbi Tanchuma. As a rule, Rashi rarely quotes the authors of the teachings in Talmud and Midrash he quotes in his commentary. Here is one of the exceptions. Because it is the name of the rabbi who shared this teaching, Tanchumam which explains why Jacob would engage in this seemingly unnecessary toil, two centuries before his descendants would need the cedar.

The name "Tanchuma" means to comfort and console. Jacob our father knew that one day the very country which has been so hospitable to him and his family, the country saved by his son Joseph, would turn its back on the Hebrew tribe and transform their lives into purgatory. Egypt would impose one of the most torturous conditions upon the young Hebrews. Jacob knew that the people of Israel would need something to hold on to, something tangible to remind them that they don't belong here; something concrete to imprint upon their tormented hearts that they come from somewhere else, and they will one day leave this hellish concentration camp and return home.

A promise? Yes. He and Joseph promised the family that they would leave Egypt one day. But a verbal promise is insufficient. People can't live on words alone. Jacob needed to give them something tangible that could comfort them and offer a measure of relief as they walked in a valley of tears and watched their infants plunged into a river.

Whispering Trees

Hence, the cedar trees. Jacob transported from the Land of Canaan young, tender saplings of cedar and lovingly planted them in the soil of Egypt, instructing his children, that one day, when they depart from this country, they must take these trees with them.

Jacob dies. Joseph dies. All the siblings die. Then all the grandchildren die. The first generations of Jews who still knew Jacob and his children passed on. A new Pharaoh began to enslave the young nation. Brutal labor and the extermination of Jewish babies began to become the Jewish plight.

And throughout this entire horrific ordeal, the crushed Hebrew slaves watched these cedars grow. And with it, their hope grew. They harbored the knowledge that long before their enslavement by the Egyptians, these trees had grown in the soil of Holy Land—the land promised to them as their eternal heritage. Each generation of Jews pointed out these cedar trees to their children, transmitted to them Jacob's instructions to take these trees along when they would leave Egypt, to be fashioned into a Sanctuary for G-d.

And so, throughout their long and bitter exile, these cedars had whispered to the Jewish slaves: This is not your home. You hail from a loftier, holier place. Soon you will leave this depraved land behind, to be reclaimed by G-d as His people. Soon you will uproot us from this foreign land and carry us triumphantly to Sinai, where you will construct of us an abode for the Divine presence, which shall once again manifest itself in your midst.

These cedar trees stood as a permanent, tangible, silent but powerful, and tall symbol of courage, dignity, and hope in a bright future. They gave a nation of tormented, wretched slaves something to "hold on to" in a very concrete way, as they struggled under the yoke of their Egyptian oppressors. These trees offered the Jews some measure of "Tanchumah," of solace and fortitude, during their darkest moments.

When the Jewish people held on to Jacob's "prehistoric" cedar trees, for a brief moment, they felt free. And that's what you need in order to endure. It reminded them that in their essence they were not slaves, they did not deserve to be beaten and oppressed; they were inherently free and one day they would see that freedom.

Staves of Faith

"The Tzaddik shall bloom as a palm," sings the Psalmist, "as a Cedar of Lebanon, he shall flourish." [4] Jacob planted cedars in Egypt, and G-d plants exactly such cedars in our midst throughout our long and turbulent history. [5] These are the Tzaddikim, the Rebbes, the spiritual giants, defined in Psalms as "cedar trees," providing us with a link to the past and hope for the future.

The Tzaddik is a soul that towers above the transience and turbulence of exile; a soul that is rooted in Israel's sacred beginnings and pointed toward the ultimate Redemption—a soul whose two feet stand on earth, but whose head touches heaven. When our subjection to the temporal and the mundane threatens to overwhelm us, we need only look to the cedars implanted in our midst. In these timeless staves of faith, we find guidance and fortitude, comfort, and encouragement. We remember who we are and what we are capable of becoming.

Above Exile

This is the function of every Rebbe, every leader among our people—and in today's age, who of us is not in a position to influence one or more of our brothers and sisters. The Rebbe is the Jew who by his sheer presence and love reminds us that we are "higher," that we must never surrender to a life of quiet desperation; that we are Divine ambassadors of love, light, hope, and redemption.

When we connect to a Rebbe, a Tzaddik, we too become, at least for a moment, free. We are all exposed to challenges, obstacles, and pressures; we must face trauma, darkness, pain, addiction, depression, disappointment,

filth, and degradation.

We can become apathetic, cynical, and indifferent. But when we gaze at the cedars in our midst, and at the cedar inside each of our souls, we remember that we are fragments of infinity, sent to this world to transform its landscape. We remember that we are on a journey from Sinai to Moshiach; that as beautiful as America is it is not our true home; it is but a temporary stop in our journey toward Moshiach. As comfortable as this great country is and as much as we cherish it, it is not the place we call home. A child who has been exiled from the bosom of his father, even if he is living in the Hilton, is living in exile.

That is the function of every spiritual "cedar tree" teacher in Judaism: [6] To remind all of us that even as we are in exile, our souls can soar on the wings of eternity.[7]

[1] Rashi to Exodus 25:6 [2] Indeed, this is the view of some of the commentators. See Divrei David (Taz), Ibn Ezra, Baalei HaTosfos and Chizkuni on the verse (Exodus 25:6). [3] Part of the address was published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 31 Terumah pp. 142-148. [4] Psalms 92:13 [5] The Hebrew word Nassi ("leader") is an acronym of the phrase nitzotzo shel Yaakov Avinu, "a spark of Jacob our father." The soul of every leader of Israel is an offshoot of the soul of Jacob, father of the people of Israel (Megaleh Amukot, section 84). [6] See Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5752, 1992—explaining why the first idea Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said as a leader was that we are obligated to mention the Exodus of Egypt also during nighttime. This captures the role of the leader: To help people experience Exodus even when night prevails, and darkness overwhelms.

[7] My thanks to Rabbi Yanki Tauber for his rendition of this address. I used some parts from his essay: <https://www.meaningfullife.com/prehistoric-cedars/>

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from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>

to: ravfrand@torah.org

date: Feb 27, 2025, 11:14 AM

subject: **Rav Frand - "And You Shall Take for Me Teruma" — Doing for Oneself**

Parshas Terumah

This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #87, Microphone on Shabbos. Good Shabbos!

"And You Shall Take for Me Teruma" — Doing for Oneself

When the Jewish people were commanded to bring a donation to Moshe Rabbeinu for the purpose of erecting a Mishkan (Tabernacle), the pasuk (verse) uses the expression, "v'yikchu Li (and take for Me) a donation..." (Shemos 25:2). The obvious question is that this is a peculiar choice of words. The more appropriate expression would have been "v'yitnu Li (and give to Me) a donation..."

On a simple level, since Hashem really owns everything (as it says "...to Hashem is the Earth and all that it contains..." (Tehillim 24:1)), it is impossible to give Him anything. Giving usually implies that I have ownership and I transfer that ownership to someone else. Therefore, when we talk about giving to Hashem, we don't use the expression "giving." Instead, we use the expression "taking." In other words, Hashem already owns everything, we are merely 'allowing' Him to take that which is already His.

In Parshas Vayera, Rav Shlomo Breuer shares a beautiful thought on this concept of "v'yikchu Li." Whenever we 'give,' whether by doing chessed (kindness) with our bodies or with our money, every giving is actually 'taking.' Whenever a person performs chessed, he is really doing more for himself than for the person to whom he is giving.

The Medrash in Parshas Vayikra says, "More than what a ba'al habayis does for a poor person, the poor person does for the ba'al habayis." (Literally, a ba'al habayis is the master of the house, but in this context, it means a benefactor.) When someone gives a donation, the money is very temporary. Perhaps it pays for the next meal. Perhaps it pays for the rent. In actuality, it is very, very finite. On the other hand, a person who 'gives,' in addition to

acquiring olam haba (the world to come), he accumulates something else as well... He acquires that which giving does to his personality, his soul, and his self-esteem. A person who helps another person is taking far more than he is giving.

Rav Breuer points this out the first time that the Torah describes an act of chessed: by Avraham Avinu and the malachim (angels). The invitation extended by our Patriarch Avraham to the malachim, offering them a place to eat and sleep, is the first overt mention of an act of chessed in the Torah.

In that parsha, the Torah repeatedly uses expressions such as "yukach nah me'at mayim" (let water be taken) (Bereishis 18:4) and "va-ekcha pas lechem" (I will take bread) (18:5)? What kind of expressions are these? Avraham should have said "I will give water. I will give bread."

The answer is that Avraham Avinu is instructing and teaching his children, "My children, you should know for all future generations, that when you help someone else, you are not giving. You are taking!"

When a person helps someone, he does more for himself than he does for the other person. This is what the Torah is teaching us with the expression "V'yikchu Li teruma." Whether a person gives to an individual or to an institution, he is really receiving more than he is giving.

Getting Our Priorities Straight: Kemach vs Torah

When the Torah explains how the kaylim (vessels) of the Mishkan were set out, the pasuk says: "You will then place the cover on the Ark of Testimony in the Holy of Holies. And place the Table outside the curtain and the Menorah should be placed opposite the Table, toward the southern wall; and the Table should be toward the northern wall." (26:34-35)

Anyone who examines the pasuk carefully sees a redundancy. The Torah first says to put the Shulchan (Table) in front of the curtain and then immediately says to put the Menorah opposite it on the southern side. Any person with the power of deduction knows that as a result, the Shulchan is on the northern side. Why does the Torah need to repeat and reiterate the fact that the Shulchan is on the northern side?

I once heard a beautiful interpretation of this from Rav Kulefsky (previous Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Yisroel). The sefer "Sifsei Kohen" asks the following question: We know that the Shulchan symbolically represents parnasa (livelihood), the ability for the Jewish people to sustain themselves physically and materially. The Menorah symbolically represents Torah. The light of the Menorah symbolizes the light of Torah. Why then, asks the Sifsei Kohen, was the Shulchan placed first, before the Menorah? After all, the Menorah is more significant than the Shulchan.

Rav Kulefsky answers, "If there is no kemach (flour), there is no Torah" (Mishna Avos 3:17). If there is no livelihood, there can be no Torah. Therefore, first we put out the Shulchan, representing parnasa and then we put out the Menorah, representing Torah.

Rav Kulefsky asks further that the same Mishna says, "If there is no Torah, there is no kemach!" So what did the Sifsei Kohen accomplish by quoting the Mishna? The question remains, why give the Shulchan priority over the Menorah?

Rav Kulefsky quotes a very important comment from the Gaon of Vilna's commentary on Mishlei. The Mishna also says "If there is no chochma (wisdom), there is no yirah (fear) of G-d." Then the Mishna says, "If there is no fear of G-d, there is no wisdom." The Gaon asks, what does this mean? Which way is it?

The Gaon answers that when we speak in terms of chronological priorities, wisdom needs to precede fear of Hashem, because "the ignoramus cannot be pious" (Avot 2:5). Simply, someone who does not know anything, cannot be observant. However, in terms of 'tachlis' — in terms of our goals and purpose in life, priority is given to fear of Hashem. In other words, if wisdom is not going to lead to observance, (for example, writing 'chidushei Torah' (novel insights into Torah) on Shabbos while smoking a cigarette), the wisdom is worthless. The person can learn a blatt Gemara, but if he is not an honest person, his learning is not worth much.

The same is true here as well. In terms of chronological priorities, unless a person establishes a viable means of supporting himself — one way or another — if there is no kemach, there is no Torah. If a person must go

around begging, he is not going to be able to sit and learn.

But in terms of ultimate goals and purposes, in terms of tachlis, if it doesn't lead to Torah, if someone is just accumulating money for the sake of making money, then the money is worthless. If a person does not use his kemach for the right reasons, it is of no value.

This is what the Torah is teaching: First we place the Shulchan, because "If there is no flour, there is no Torah." Then we put the Menorah opposite the Shulchan because we need the Shulchan to be there for the Torah, represented by the Menorah, to exist.

Then the pasuk reiterates that the Shulchan should be on the northern side. Now that we have reached the point where we have established the Menorah / Torah, we must realize that the Shulchan's only purpose is to be opposite the Menorah. At this point, we need to realize that the Shulchan's reason for existing is only to support the Menorah. Merely having a Shulchan, in and of itself, serves no purpose. We need to have our priorities straight: Without Torah, the kemach serves no purpose!

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com

Edited by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org

This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209

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from: The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust <info@rabbisacks.org>

subject: Covenant and Conversation

COVENANT & CONVERSATION

**Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l**

**The Architecture of Holiness Terumah**

From here to the end of the book of Exodus the Torah describes, in painstaking detail and great length, the construction of the Mishkan, the first collective house of worship of the Jewish people. Precise instructions are given for each item – the Tabernacle itself, the frames and drapes, and the various objects it contained – including their dimensions. So for example we read:

"Make the Tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim woven into them by a skilled worker. All the curtains are to be the same size - twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide... Make curtains of goat hair for the tent over the Tabernacle - eleven altogether. All eleven curtains are to be the same size - thirty cubits long and four cubits wide... Make upright frames of acacia wood for the Tabernacle. Each frame is to be ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide..."

Ex. 26:1-16

And so on. But why do we need to know how big the Tabernacle was? It did not function in perpetuity. Its primary use was during the wilderness years. Eventually it was replaced by the Temple, an altogether larger and more magnificent structure. What then is the eternal significance of the dimensions of this modest, portable construction?

To put the question more sharply still: is not the very idea of a specific size for the home of the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, liable to mislead? A transcendent God cannot be contained in space. Solomon said so:

"But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain You. How much less this Temple I have built."

1 Kings 8:27

Isaiah said the same in the name of God Himself:

"Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where is the house you will build for Me? Where will My resting place be?"

Isaiah 66:1

So no physical space, however large, is big enough. On the other hand, no space is too small. So says a striking Midrash:

When God said to Moses, 'Make Me a Tabernacle,' Moses said in amazement, 'The glory of the Holy One blessed be He fills heaven and earth, and yet He commands, Make me a Tabernacle?' ... God replied, 'Not as you think do I think. Twenty boards on the north, twenty on the south and eight in the west are sufficient. Indeed, I will descend and confine My presence even within one square cubit.'

Shemot Rabbah 34:1

So, what difference could it make whether the Tabernacle was large or small? Either way, it was a symbol, a focus, of the Divine Presence that is everywhere, wherever human beings open their heart to God. Its dimensions should not matter.

I came across an answer in an unexpected and indirect way some years ago. I had gone to Cambridge University to take part in a conversation on religion and science. When the session was over, a member of the audience came over to me, a quiet, unassuming man, and said, "I have written a book I think you might find interesting. I'll send it to you." I did not know at the time who he was.

A week later the book arrived. It was called 'Just Six Numbers', subtitled 'The deep forces that shape the universe'. With a shock I discovered that the author was the then Sir Martin, now Baron Rees, Astronomer Royal, later President of the Royal Society, the oldest and most famous scientific body in the world, and Master of Trinity College Cambridge. In 2011 he won the Templeton Prize. I had been talking to Britain's most distinguished scientist. His book was enthralling. It explained that the universe is shaped by six mathematical constants which, had they varied by a millionth or trillionth degree, would have resulted in no universe or at least no life. Had the force of gravity been slightly different, for example, the universe would either have expanded or imploded in such a way as to preclude the formation of stars or planets. Had nuclear efficiency been slightly lower the cosmos would consist only of hydrogen; no life would have emerged. Had it been slightly higher there would have been rapid stellar evolution and decay leaving no time for life to evolve. The combination of improbabilities was immense.

Torah commentators, especially the late Nechama Leibowitz, have drawn attention to the way the terminology of the construction of the Tabernacle is the same as that used to describe God's creation of the universe. The Tabernacle was, in other words, a micro-cosmos, a symbolic reminder of the world God made. The fact that the Divine Presence rested within it was not meant to suggest that God is here not there, in this place not that. It was meant to signal, powerfully and palpably, that God exists throughout the cosmos. It was a man-made structure to mirror and focus attention on the Divinely-created universe. It was in space what Shabbat is in time: a reminder of creation.

The dimensions of the universe are precise, mathematically exact. Had they differed in even the slightest degree the universe, or life, would not exist. Only now are scientists beginning to realise how precise, and even this knowledge will seem rudimentary to future generations. We are on the threshold of a quantum leap in our understanding of the full depth of the words: "How many are Your works, Lord; in wisdom You made them all" (Ps. 104:24). The word "wisdom" here – as in the many times it occurs in the account of the making of the Tabernacle – means, "precise, exact craftsmanship".[1]

In one other place in the Torah there is the same emphasis on precise dimensions, namely, Noah's Ark:

"So make yourself an Ark of cypress wood. Make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The Ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around."

Gen. 6:14-16

The reason is similar to that in the case of the Tabernacle. Noah's Ark symbolised the world in its Divinely-constructed order, the order humans had ruined by their violence and corruption. God was about to destroy that world, leaving only Noah, the Ark, and what it contained as symbols of the vestige of order that remained, on the basis of which God would fashion a new order.

Precision matters. Order matters. The misplacement of even a few of the 3.1 billion letters in the human genome can lead to devastating genetic conditions. The famous Butterfly Effect – the beating of a butterfly's wing somewhere may cause a tsunami elsewhere, thousands of miles away – tells us that small actions can have large consequences. That is the message the Tabernacle was intended to convey.

God creates order in the natural universe. We are charged with creating order in the human universe. That means painstaking care in what we say, what we do, and what we must restrain ourselves from doing. There is a precise choreography to the moral and spiritual life as there is a precise architecture to the Tabernacle. Being good, specifically being holy, is not a matter of acting as the spirit moves us. It is a matter of aligning ourselves to the Will that made the world. Law, structure, precision: of these things the cosmos is made and without them it would cease to be. It was to signal that the same applies to human behaviour that the Torah records the precise dimensions of the Tabernacle and Noah's Ark.

1. See Maimonides, The Guide for the Perplexed, III:54

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from: **Ira Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.org>

date: Feb 27, 2025, 9:14 PM

subject: Tidbits • Parashas Terumah - Shekalim 5785

**In memory of Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz ZT"l**

Parashas Terumah - Shekalim • March 1st • Rosh Chodesh Adar 5785

מִשְׁכָּנֵנוּ אֶדְרָךְ מֵרֵבִין בְּשָׁמְיָהּ - as we enter Adar we increase in joy.

Over the Shabbosos leading up to Purim and Pesach, four Shabbosos are designated for the leining of the Daled Parshiyos - four special maftir aliyos and haftaros. On these Shabbosos, Av Harachamim is omitted and the Kel Malei (recited before Mussaf by one who has yahrzeit upcoming) is also not said. This week we will lein the first of the Daled Parshiyos, Parashas Shekalim.

This Shabbos is the second day of Rosh Chodesh Adar. Yaaleh Veyavo is included in Shemoneh Esrei and Bircas Hamazon. Hallel is added after Shemoneh Esrei of Shacharis. Many congregations say yotzros for Parashas Shekalim after Shacharis; Av Harachamim before Mussaf is omitted. Shabbos Rosh Chodesh's "Ata Yatzarta" replaces the standard Mussaf text of Shabbos. Many shuls say yotzros for Parashas Shekalim during chazaras hashatz of Mussaf. Borchy Nafshi is said at the end of davening.

This Shabbos, three Sifrei Torah are taken out; after leining (the complete) Parashas Terumah in six aliyos from the first sefer, the Rosh Chodesh leining is read for the seventh aliya from the second sefer. The third sefer is used for maftir of Parashas Shekalim followed by it's haftarah.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levana is Sunday night, March 2nd. The final opportunity in the USA is Thursday night, March 13th.

Tzidkas'cha is omitted at minchah on Shabbos (Rosh Chodesh).

Daf Yomi - Shabbos: Bavli: Sanhedrin 74 • Yerushalmi: Shabbos 95 • Mishnah Yomis: Shavuos 5:4-5 • Oraysa: Tannis 19a-21a • Kitzur Shulchan Aruch: 66:7-10 Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to connect with them as well!

Parashas Zachor is next Shabbos, Parashas Tetzaveh.

Taanis Esther is on Thursday, March 13th.

Purim is on Friday, March 14th.

TERUMAH: Campaign to collect materials for the Mishkan structure and its vessels • "They shall make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them"

• The Aron • The Kappores and Keruvim, from between which Hashem's voice is heard • The Shulchan • The Menorah • The curtain layers of the roof • The beams and the foundation sockets • The Paroches • Arrangement of the k'lei haMishkan • The outside Mizbe'ach • The courtyard curtains and their pillars and sockets.

Shevi'i: The special seventh aliyah (Bamidbar 28:9-15) discusses the added korbanos of Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh.

Maftir: Parashas Shekalim (Shemos 30:11-16): The Bnei Yisrael are to be counted through shekalim to avoid counting the people directly • Only men twenty years of age and above are counted • Whether rich or poor the

amount should be specifically one-half shekel coin • The shekalim should be used towards the Beis Hamikdash's avodah expenses.

Haftarah: The special haftarah for Parashas Shekalim (Melachim II 11:17 [or 12:01] - 12:17) describes the contributions of the Bnei Yisrael to the Beis Hamikdash, in the campaign led by King Yeho'ash and Yehoyada the Kohen Gadol.

Parashas Terumah: 96 Pesukim • 2 Obligations • 1 Prohibition

1) Assemble the Mishkan and its accompanying vessels. 2) Do not remove the Aron's poles from its rings. 3) Arrange the Lechem Hapanim on the Shulchan each week.

Mitzvah highlight: When one performs a mitzvah, Hashem bestows His blessing in a manner that corresponds to the means with which the mitzvah is performed. By performing the mitzvah of Lechem Hapanim with bread, we draw Hashem's blessings on our bread so that we will have sufficient food and sustenance.

“וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה”

“And they shall take for Me a donation” (Shemos 25:2)

The Parashah discusses the donations of Bnei Yisrael toward the construction of the Mishkan. However, instead of the pasuk stating "veyitnu li terumah", "and they shall give to Me a donation," the Torah says "veyikchu" "and they shall take". Why say that every Jew will "take" his donation for Hashem's Mishkan?

R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains: The pasuk is teaching us that while it appeared on the surface that the Bnei Yisrael contributed their own wealth for the construction, the truth is that all wealth belongs to Hashem; He grants people wealth as a safekeeping, until the time that it can be contributed for a worthy cause, in this case, the building of the Mishkan. When one dedicates his wealth to the Mishkan or other worthy causes with a full heart, he is justifying his acquisition of the money in the first place - to be a reliable agent in allocating it in accordance with its Owner's wishes. Therefore, the pasuk accurately states that Bnei Yisrael 'shall take [their wealth knowing that it is meant to be passed on] for Me a donation.

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fw from allen.klein@gmail.com

www.matzav.com or www.torah.org/learning/drasha

Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky  
Drasha

**By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky**

**Parshas Terumah Job Placement**

The winged seraphs that rest atop the Aron Kodesh in the Holy of Holies are known as the cherubim. These cherubs, the Midrash explains, have the faces of innocent children — a young girl and boy. The Aron Kodesh contains the most sacred of our physical entities,— the Luchos (Ten Commandments). In the sacred box lay both the Tablets that Moshe carved and the shattered pieces of the G-d written ones that Moshe smashed upon seeing the Golden Calf.

The two cherubs sit atop of a lot of history. They also protect a lot of sanctity. So they must be endowed with great spiritual symbolism. Yet this is not the first reference to cherubim in the Torah. In fact cherubim are mentioned at the onset of creation where they did not sit innocently upon an Aron Kodesh. They stood guard to block Adam and Chava (Eve) from re-entering the Garden of Eden after their expulsion. "Hashem placed the cherubim and the flame of the ever-turning sword to guard the entrance of Gan Eden." (Genesis 3:24)

The apparent contrast is striking. How is it possible that the very same beings who guard the sanctity, chastity, and purity symbolized by the Aron Kodesh could be flashing fiery swords at the gates of observer the rest of his life, he also became a strong supporter of Torah institutions."

The speech ended. The crowd shuffled out. But one elderly man remained fixed in his chair. His face was ashen and his eyes were focused directly at the Rabbi. Slowly he got up and approached the lectern. "Where did you hear that story?" he demanded. "Do you know who that boy was?"

The Rabbi shook his head in nervous innocence. "No," he stammered. He could not imagine where the conversation was leading.

"It was me!" cried the old man. "And you know what the Chofetz Chaim told me?"

Again, the Rabbi, not knowing what to say, shook his head with nervous ignorance. "I have no idea," he pleaded. "Honestly, I have no idea. What did the Chofetz Chaim say?"

The man smiled. "The Chofetz Chaim said absolutely nothing." As his mind raced back more than half a century the old man repeated the words again. "Absolutely nothing just held my hand — the one that held the cigarettes — and began to cry. Then the Chofetz Chaim slowly began to whisper the words 'Shabbos, Shabbos' over and over in a sad singsong. And the words mingled with the tears that were dripping on my hand that had held a cigarette just hours earlier.

"He sat there without looking at me. Crying. He felt the pain of the Shabbos. And I felt his pain, too. Just being there with him for those 15 minutes changed the hand that held the cigarette to the hand that would hold up the Torah."

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l used to comment that the same cherubim that held swords as they stood guard at the gates of Eden are not doomed to that position. They can change drastically when they are placed upon an Aron Kodesh. When they are on top of the Aron, they guard it and cherish it. Young children are affected by their whereabouts. Place them as a guards and they will brandish swords. Put them with the Aron Kodesh — let them feel the sanctity and they will become the cherubim we all cherish and aspire to emulate.

In memory of Edith Gluck by the Gluck Family

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from: **Rabbi Kaganoff** <ymkaganoff@gmail.com>

reply-to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com

to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com

date: Feb 26, 2025, 12:52 PM

subject: More on Seudah Shelishis

Question #1: Double on Friday!

Does someone who eats two meals on Friday night and only one on Shabbos day fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals on Shabbos?

Question #2: Split Feature

May I divide my Shabbos morning meal in half, thereby fulfilling seudah shelishis?

Question #3: Early Seudah Shelishis How early may I eat seudah shelishis?

Answer

In an article I published recently, we discussed the mitzvah to eat three meals on Shabbos, which might be required min haTorah. We learned of the dispute between tanna'im whether the requirement is to eat three meals during the course of the entire Shabbos, or whether it is to eat three meals during the daytime of Shabbos, plus a Friday evening meal, for a total of four meals. We also learned that the rishonim disagree on whether the last of the Shabbos meals must include bread. The conclusion of the Shulchan Aruch and most late authorities requires eating bread for the third Shabbos meal, and that this should be done by reciting hamotzi upon two whole loaves of bread or rolls (lechem mishneh). Both men and women are obligated to fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals on Shabbos, despite the fact that it is a time-bound positive mitzvah (mitzvas aseih sheha'zeman grama).

We have not yet discussed or resolved several halachic issues germane to the mitzvah of eating three seudos on Shabbos. Is there a time frame within which these three meals must be eaten? For example, may I eat all three meals Friday night? Let's say that after the Friday night seudah, Reuven decides to make hamotzi when attending a neighbor's shalom zachor. Or, perhaps, he joined a Friday night sheva berachos for dessert and made hamotzi to satisfy the requirements of a minyan. Upon returning home after the bread, beer, peanuts and chickpeas of the shalom zachor, or the bread, cake, pareve ice cream and wine of the sheva berachos, Reuven makes hamotzi again and has a third seudah. Has he now fulfilled eating the three meals of Shabbos and can sleep (or diet) the entire Shabbos day?

Alternatively, Shimon is invited to a sit-down hamotzi kiddush after an early minyan Shabbos morning. His wife, who prefers to catch up on some much-needed shuteye on Shabbos morning, sleeps until eleven, and then, when Shimon returns from the morning kiddush, joins him for a splendid repast that ends with plenty of time for him to learn with each of his seven sons before he leaves to catch the earliest mincha gedolah minyan in the neighborhood. His wife still needs to eat seudah shelishis, but has Shimon now fulfilled his obligation to eat three meals on Shabbos, one on Friday night and two on Shabbos morning?

Or, an actual shaylah that I was once asked. A mohel had a Shabbos bris to perform that was a considerable distance from his home, and he could not join them for the bris

seudah. In order to daven in shul

and attend the bris, his only option was to leave his home early Shabbos morning, daven in a shul near the bris, perform the bris and then walk back, arriving home on Shabbos afternoon. Does he fulfill the three meals of Shabbos by eating two of them either on Friday night or on Shabbos afternoon?

A similar shaylah often presents itself among nurses, doctors, other emergency personnel or family members who must be in the hospital on Shabbos or in another setting in which they have little control over their schedule. Does one fulfill the three meals of Shabbos by eating two of them either Friday night or Shabbos afternoon?

Rabbi Chidka

To answer these questions, we will discuss a beraysa that records a dispute between the tanna kamma and Rabbi Chidka, whether we are required to eat three meals on Shabbos or four (Shabbos 117b-118a).

The pasuk in the Torah says, "And Moshe said, eat it today, for today is Shabbos for Hashem. Today you will not find it [the mann] in the field" (Shemos 16:25). The requirement to eat three meals on Shabbos is derived from this pasuk, because the word hayom is written three times. The tanna kamma understands that the requirement is to eat three meals over the course of Shabbos, whereas Rabbi Chidka learns that three meals required during Shabbos day, with an additional requirement to eat a meal on Friday night — for a total of four meals.

Proof from a Mishnah

The Gemara endeavors to prove whether a Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma, like Rabbi Chidka, or perhaps like neither. Before quoting this Mishnah, I need to provide an introduction. The Mishnah (ibid. 117b) discusses a situation in which a house is burning on Shabbos, but there is no risk to life from the fire (see Rema, Orach Chayim 334:26) — for example, all the people in the house can exit safely, and there is no risk of the fire spreading to another building; perhaps it is a farmhouse or exurban house very distant from any neighbors. It is also discussing a situation in which taking items out of the burning house does not involve any prohibition against carrying on Shabbos — in other words, there is an eruv or other halachically acceptable way to carry the items out of the house.

Under the above conditions, Chazal allowed removing from the burning house only as much food as is needed to provide for the meals of Shabbos.

In these circumstances, why do Chazal limit how much one may carry out of the house?

The Gemara explains that the concern is that since a person becomes confused when he may lose money, he might violate Shabbos in ways that are not permitted, such as by extinguishing the fire (Shabbos 117b). The concern is that once someone gets involved in saving things from a fire, he may forget that it is Shabbos (see Tosafos Yom Tov). By providing very specific rules as to what he may save from the fire and what he may not, Chazal ensure that he will not forget that it is Shabbos, and he will be attentive to what he is permitted to do even under stressful circumstances. This demonstrates the absolute brilliance and depth of understanding of the human psyche that Chazal displayed in the way they created their takkanos.

The Mishnah mentions a dispute concerning how much food may be removed from the fire. The unnamed first opinion (stam Mishnah) rules that it is permitted to save enough for the meals that he intends to eat on Shabbos, but no food for after Shabbos — not even for melaveh malkah, the meal of motza'ei Shabbos. Therefore, the tam Mishnah states that if a fire began on Friday night, it is permitted to remove from the burning house three Shabbos meals. If the fire started Shabbos morning, it is permitted to remove food for two meals. And if it is in the afternoon, which the Mishnah calls "mincha," it is permitted to save only one meal.

Rabbi Yosi disagrees, ruling that it is always permitted to remove three meals. He contends that once it is sometimes permitted to save three meals, the gezeirah of how much to remove is not contingent on when during the Shabbos day the fire is discovered — it is always permitted to save three meals (Rashi to the Mishnah, Shabbos 117b).

How much can you drink?

By the way, according to all opinions it is permitted to remove as much beverage as you can possibly drink, even late in the afternoon, since a person is never certain how much he might want to drink (Tosefos Shabbos, cited in Biur Halacha 334:1 s.v. Uveshacharis). I am unaware of any distinction made between soft drinks and harder beverages. Thus, although chas veshalom that anyone should ever have a household fire, bear in mind that, within the eruv, you can haul out your entire supply of Chivas Regal on Shabbos.

Tanna kamma or Rabbi Chidka?

In order to understand the proofs regarding whether the three meals of Shabbos must be eaten at certain times of the day, we need to analyze a passage of Gemara. The Gemara seeks clarity as to whether the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma that there is a requirement to eat three meals on Shabbos, or like Rabbi Chidka, who requires four meals. Ultimately, this depends on how we understand the Mishnah. When the

Mishnah permits saving three meals from a burning house on Friday evening, was it discussing someone who had already consumed his Friday night repast when he discovered the fire, or someone who had not yet eaten his meal? This technical question will reveal to us whether the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma or like Rabbi Chidka. If he has already eaten his Friday night meal, yet the Mishnah still permits saving three meals, clearly the Mishnah holds according to Rabbi Chidka that three additional meals are to be consumed on Shabbos.

If the Mishnah's case was when he has not yet eaten the Friday night meal, the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma, since it allows saving three meals and not four, thus not allowing for the fourth meal required by Rabbi Chidka. Since there is no way to know whether the Mishnah's fire was discovered before or after he ate his Shabbos meal, we cannot prove from this part of the Mishnah on its own whether its author held like the tanna kamma or Rabbi Chidka.

A similar discussion takes place regarding the case in the Mishnah when the homeowner discovers a fire on Shabbos morning – and there, the Mishnah rules that he can save two meals. If the Mishnah refers to someone who has not yet eaten his Shabbos morning repast, and yet it holds that he saves two meals, the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma. On the other hand, if he has already eaten his Shabbos morning repast, and the Mishnah permits saving two meals, the Mishnah must hold like Rabbi Chidka, who contends that he has two more meals to eat. As with our case above, it is unclear whether this Mishnah is describing someone who discovered the fire before he ate his morning meal or after. Although it is clear that the Mishnah's author had an opinion regarding the dispute between the tanna kamma and Rabbi Chidka, we cannot determine which way he held on the basis of this part of the Mishnah alone.

The same analysis is germane to the Mishnah's ruling regarding saving only one meal on Shabbos afternoon, a time period which the Mishnah calls "mincha." If the Mishnah refers to someone who has not yet eaten his Shabbos afternoon meal, yet it holds that he can save only one meal, then we know that the Mishnah holds like the tanna kamma. On the other hand, if he has already eaten his seudah shelishis and the Mishnah holds that he can save another meal, the Mishnah must hold like Rabbi Chidka, who contends that he has yet to eat a fourth meal. Here, too, we cannot determine which way the Mishnah holds.

Before we discuss the Gemara's conclusion about whether the Mishnah requires three or four seudos, let us note several important observations. Although the beraysa mentions the position of Rabbi Chidka, there is no allusion as to when Rabbi Chidka holds that the three meals should be eaten, other than that they must all be eaten during the daytime part of Shabbos.

Now, if the Mishnah is according to Rabbi Chidka, it could be possible that on Shabbos afternoon a person could still have two meals to eat. Yet the Mishnah allows only one meal to be saved at "mincha" time. This implies that, according to Rabbi Chidka, he is required to eat one meal Shabbos morning, a second before the time called mincha, and a third sometime thereafter.

Based on the assumption of the Mishnah that mincha time is before someone has eaten their last meal of Shabbos, Tosafos rules that seudah shelishis must be eaten after mincha time (Shabbos 118a s.v. Bamincha). This is also the opinion of several other rishonim (Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 30:9; Hagahos Maimoniyos ad loc. quoting Rabbeinu Tam; see Mordechai, #397). Thus, according to these rishonim, Shimon, who ate two seudos on Shabbos morning, did not fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals on Shabbos, since he ate his third meal in the morning and did not wait until the afternoon to eat it. Certainly, Reuven, who ate all three meals at night, did not fulfill this mitzvah correctly.

Ba'al Halachos Gedolos

The Ba'al Halachos Gedolos (usually abbreviated Behag) has a different approach. He rules that it is permitted to split the Shabbos morning meal in half, bensch in the middle of the meal and wash again – and thereby it qualifies as two meals, (Shabbos 6:19:2). The rishonim cite other evidence to this practice from other passages of Gemara: one passage that discusses how much chometz you can leave over when erev Pesach falls on Shabbos, and another regarding washing dishes on Shabbos that will be used in the course of Shabbos. Tosafos notes this to have been a common custom, but raises two objections to the practice. First, seudah shelishis must be eaten in the afternoon, as is implied by the Gemara in Shabbos quoted above, and these people ate in the morning.

This objection is deflected by other rishonim. The Mordechai (Shabbos #397), quoting Rabbi Eliezer of Metz, the author of Sefer Yerei'im, and others, explains that the Mishnah is simply estimating how much food a person would usually consume during that part of the day, but not delineating when the meal must be eaten (see also Rosh, Shabbos 16:5).

Beracha she'einah tzerichos

The second objection of Tosafos is that the method suggested by the Behag involves reciting berachos she'einah tzerichos – berachos that are unnecessary, since a person is bensch and reciting new berachos of netilas yadayim and hamotzi only in order to count one meal as two.

Obviously, the Behag was not concerned that this practice generates berachos

she'einah tzerichos. Some authorities explain that since the purpose of splitting the meal this way is to fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals on Shabbos, that itself makes all the berachos purposeful. A beracha she'einah tzericha is, by definition, a beracha recited without any purpose at all.

Despite Tosafos' objections, the Behag's approach is quoted approvingly by the Ran, who explains that it is not necessary to fully interrupt the meal; it is sufficient, he says, to bensch, throw a cloth on top of the food, recite hamotzi again, uncover the food, eat another kebeitzah-size piece of bread and bensch a second time.

Gemara's conclusion

Ultimately, the Gemara demonstrates that the Mishnah does not hold like Rabbi Chidka because of a different reason. A principle of the Mishnah and the Gemara is that when a dispute is recorded, this is the only matter in which the two disputants disagree. Based on this, we can prove that Rabbi Yosi – who permits saving three meals any time of the day -- holds like the tanna kamma in the dispute of the beraysa between the tanna kamma and Rabbi Chidka. If Rabbi Yosi held like Rabbi Chidka, he would permit removing four meals from the burning house, since there are times that one might need to evacuate the house before eating any Shabbos meals. Yet, Rabbi Yosi permits removal of only three meals – meaning that the maximum number of meals that you are ever required to eat on Shabbos is three!

So the dispute between the stam Mishnah and Rabbi Yosi is not how many meals you are required to eat on Shabbos, but whether Chazal permitted the same number of meal retrievals regardless of the time of day. Therefore, we can demonstrate that the stam Mishnah also held according to the tanna kamma and not Rabbi Chidka (Shabbos 118a with Rashi).

On an ordinary Shabbos, fulfilling the mitzvah of eating three meals should not present any major difficulty or require extensive planning. One should simply follow the conclusion of the Shulchan Aruch, who requires that all three Shabbos meals be bread-based, one on Friday night, a second in the morning, and the third on Shabbos afternoon.

This sequence is halachically preferable. However, we have endeavored to determine what the halacha is in unusual situations. As we have seen, according to most authorities, eating the three Shabbos meals by combining two or more of them into one part of the day does not fulfill the mitzvah. Nevertheless, since there are authorities who rule that this practice fulfills the mitzvah, someone who cannot follow the optimal way to fulfill the mitzvah should still try to have three meals on Shabbos and fulfill the mitzvah according to the Behag's opinion, namely, that one must eat three meals over the course of Shabbos, but the time when one eats them is not a halachic concern.

Next week's exciting article will outline how we observe, in practice, these laws on Erev Pesach.

Conclusion

The entire takkanah of saving food from a fire is highly unusual. While observing Shabbos, we need to focus constantly on what we do and how we do it. The laws of moving muktzah fulfill a similar goal. Implementing the laws of muktzah requires the details of Shabbos observance to be on our minds constantly.

Creating a beautiful Shabbos entails much planning and organization. Studying all the halachos of Shabbos helps us appreciate Shabbos more, and enables us to achieve maximum joy and growth on this special day.

fw from allen.klein@gmail.com

from: Rabbi Chanan Morrison <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>

to: rav-kook-list@googlegroups.com

subject: [Rav Kook Torah]

**Rav Kook Torah**

**Terumah: Tachash Skins in the Tabernacle**

The uppermost covering of the Mishkan, the mobile Tabernacle of the desert, was made from the colorful skins of the Tachash. The exact nature of this unusual animal is not clear. The Sages (Shabbat 28b) were not even sure whether the Tachash was a kosher animal. According to Rabbi Meir, it was a unique, multi-colored creature, with a single horn in its forehead. After the Tachash made its appearance in the time of Moses, it disappeared from sight. How could the holy Tabernacle be constructed from an impure animal? What purpose would this serve?

The difference between pure and impure is similar to the difference between good and evil. These distinctions are true and valid, and it is necessary for our moral development to recognize and emulate good, while abhorring evil and corruption. However, these distinctions are really only by way of comparison. Good and evil are in fact relative terms. On a very fundamental level we recognize — at least intellectually — that everything has some ultimate purpose and value. Nothing can exist, nothing was created, which is absolute evil. Everything must relate, on some level, to the underlying good



of the universe.

This abstract recognition of the hidden value of evil has no practical application, since morality is based upon the strongest possible feelings of hatred for evil and love for good. Therefore, when it comes to fulfilling mitzvot, which are practical ethical guidelines, it is not appropriate to use impure objects.

The Tabernacle, however, may have been an exception to this rule.

The generation of Jews who lived in the desert for forty years was a special generation. Their spiritual achievements were for all times. They encompassed the essence of all future generations, so that the covenant they made with God — and the Torah which they accepted upon themselves — obligated not only their generation, but all future ones as well.

Like the special generation of the desert, the Mishkan embodied timeless aspects of the universe. The holy sanctuary of the desert was not a matter of specific morality for a particular era, but encompassed the expanse of all times and all things. It reflected the beautiful harmony of the entire universal order, and the divine aim of elevating all of creation. It was therefore possible that its outermost covering was made from an impure animal. The Tachash, with its many hues and colors, represented the ultimate value of the many forces in the world, in all their variations. Its inclusion in the Tabernacle, albeit in its outermost layer, enabled an expression of our intellectual recognition of God's essential unity, that nothing exists outside of Him, and that all was created in His Glory.

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from: **Ohr Somayach** <ohr@ohr.edu>

to: internetparshasheet@gmail.com

date: Feb 27, 2025, 3:35 PM

subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Terumah

Parshat Terumah

by **Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair** - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

#### PARSHA OVERVIEW

Hashem commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Jewish People are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard there is an Altar for the burnt offerings and a Laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the Kohanim, the descendants of Aharon. This contains the Table of showbread, the Menorah, and the Golden Altar for incense. Entrance to the innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, was permitted only for the Kohen Gadol, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone which Hashem gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the instructions for the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

#### PARSHA INSIGHTS

A Deeper Understanding of Terumah

“...and let them take for Me Terumah” (25:2)

There's a hidden message in the name of this week's Torah portion: Terumah.

The entire Oral Torah begins with a Mishna that asks the question, “When should one recite the Shema prayer in the evening?” It answers, “When the Kohanim come in to eat their Terumah.” If this is the first Mishna in the whole of the Oral Law, it must be that there is an essential message for us here.

Also, why is the commandment to say Shema linked to the mitzvah of Terumah? What connection is there between the two?

Our Sages teach the spectrum of how much a person needs to separate from his produce and give it to the Kohen. One-sixtieth is minimal, one-fortieth is admirable, and one-fiftieth is the median amount. The Vilna Gaon explains that the word terumah is an allusion to *trei m'meah*, two out of one hundred, which is one-fiftieth, and alludes to the median fraction of produce one should give as Terumah.

But this begs the question: If the Torah wanted to hint that a person should give one-fiftieth, why express it as two parts in a hundred? Wouldn't it be

simpler and more direct just to say one part in fifty? And the word “Terumah” should be a word like “Chadmish” – or something like that. Why didn't the Torah use a word that expressed a fiftieth in its most basic form?

The Gaon explains that the essence of Shema lies in the first verse of “Shema Yisrael...” and in the second phrase “Baruch Shem kevod malchuso leolam vaed” - Blessed is the Name of the Honor of His Kingship for ever and ever.”

The essence of Shema is *yichud Hashem*, unifying Hashem's Name by expressing that every detail in creation – everything - ultimately is Him alone. The Gaon observed that there are twenty-five letters in the first verse of “Shema Yisrael...” and twenty-four letters in the phrase “Baruch Shem....” Together, they equal forty-nine. And since we recite Shema twice daily, each time we are expressing forty-nine in terms of the spoken letters, plus two expressed by the twice-daily recitation itself. The result is *trei me'eah*, two out of one hundred – Terumah.

The *Yichud*, the unifying of Hashem's name, comes from the ‘one’ that follows the ‘forty-nine,’ but which we do not - we cannot – count. This we do twice daily. And that totals fifty.

This is a deeper meaning of why the Mishna uses the time when the Kohanim come in to eat their Terumah to tell us the time to recite the Shema.

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date: Feb 27, 2025, 3:10 PM

#### Hostages Connected to Judaism to Help Them Survive

by **Yehudis Litvak** February 26, 2025

Recently released hostages recall that reconnecting to their faith and to Jewish observance gave them strength to survive the harsh conditions of captivity

#### Keith Siegal

While held in captivity in Gaza, American-Israeli hostage **Keith Siegal** began saying the Shema prayer, “just connecting with God,” he began on a social media reel. Born and raised in Chapel Hill, NO, Keith had moved to Israel over 40 years ago, where he met and married his wife Aviva. They lived in the Kibbutz Kfar Aza, where they raised their four children. Throughout those decades, Keith did not have much occasion to remember any of the Jewish liturgy he had learned as a child in his family's Conservative synagogue.

On October 7th, Hamas terrorists kidnapped 65-year-old Keith and 63-year-old Aviva from their home in Kfar Aza and brought them to Gaza. Aviva was released in November 2023, in the first hostage deal. Keith remained in captivity for 484 days. For about half a year, he was held alone, in a locked room.

At a rally in Tel Aviv, Aviva described the horrors her husband experienced in captivity: most of the time, he was “lying on a mattress on the floor in a very small room, hungry, with the only food he got being moldy pitas or burnt ones, unfit for human consumption. On one of the days, the terrorist who was with him came over, kicked him in the ribs with full force, spat on him, and called him ‘you dog,’ for no reason, just because he wanted to. One day, the terrorist pointed a gun at him and said, ‘Now I'm going to shoot and kill you.’”

Keith lost 30 kg (66 lbs) in captivity. He experienced both physical and psychological abuse and was moved from one place to another 33 times. He did not think he was going to come out of Gaza alive.

Keith Siegal being embraced by his wife, Aviva, upon his release from Hamas terrorists

Under such unimaginable circumstances, Keith found strength and comfort in reconnecting to his Judaism. “We had a pita bread for every meal, that was the first thing I would eat after I said the bracha [blessing],” says Keith. The blessing on bread was the only one he remembered. Later, he saw a bit of Israeli TV that his captors had turned on. The TV episode was showing good places to eat in Tel Aviv, and one of the people in the show made a blessing “*borei minei mezonot*” recited on pasta and baked goods. When Keith heard



the blessing, he decided to recite it before eating things other than pita. "I thought it was appropriate," he said. "But it was the only one I knew." "In that inferno, he remembered that he is a Jew and that there is significance to his people and to where he came from. This gave him a lot of strength." After Keith returned from captivity, Shir asked him what he would like for the first Shabbat dinner they would spend together as a family. She thought he would ask for a special dish. Instead, Keith said to her, "What I want most is a kippah and a kiddush cup." Shir was surprised. She reflects that it's especially when our enemies force us to abandon our traditions that we remember how our parents had lived their lives and resolve to follow in their footsteps. In Gaza, the terrorists had tried to talk to Keith about Islam and convince him that it was the true religion. Keith refused to listen to them. Instead, he clung to his own religion.

### **Omer Shem Tov and Shabbat**

Even before Omer was released after 505 in captivity, he became famous as the hostage who made kiddush on Friday nights. Kidnapped from the Nova music festival,

22-year-old Omer was originally held together with his friend Itay Regev, who was released in the first hostage deal in November 2023.

Upon his return, Itay told Omer's parents Shelly and Malki that Omer had begun observing Shabbat in captivity. Though the Shem Tov family did not observe Shabbat fully, they always had a Shabbat dinner on Friday nights, where Omer would always make kiddush. While in Gaza, Itay and Omer spoke about how much they missed Friday nights at home.

"Creator of the World, thank you for being with me every moment!"

Soon afterwards, the terrorists that held them brought them a bottle of grape juice. Itay and Omer made sure to keep track of the days of the week. They saved the grape juice for Shabbat. When they received some salted pretzels, they scraped off the salt and saved it for Shabbat too. On Friday nights, they would cover their heads with pieces of toilet paper instead of a kippah, and Omer would recite kiddush. Then they would make a blessing on a pita and dip it in the salt from the pretzels.

Omer would also refrain from actions forbidden on Shabbat. Itay shared that in the place where they were held, the power would go out every evening at 5 PM. The hostages were given flashlights for their own use. On Shabbat, Omer refused to turn on his flashlight, remaining in the darkness.

As Omer's family left no stone unturned advocating for his release, his mother Shelly also felt inspired to strengthen her connection to Judaism. Exactly a year before Omer's release Shelly attended a Shabbat event for families of hostages, organized by the Keshet Yehudi movement, where she fully kept Shabbat for the first time in her life. "This was a Shabbat I will never forget," Shelly wrote in a social media post on Friday before her son's release<sup>2</sup>. "...On that day, I decided to keep Shabbat. Since then, I have kept Shabbat for a year, and more than I kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept me. And God willing, this Shabbat I will hug my Omer, exactly a year later. It's amazing!"

After Omer was released and reunited with his family, his parents shared that Omer had grown stronger in captivity, despite losing significant weight. For much of his time in

Gaza, he was held alone in a tunnel and was abused, deprived of food, and humiliated. Nevertheless, he retained his optimism and contagious smile.

Shelly publicly thanked God for answering her prayers and returning Omer home. She also expressed her gratitude to the late Ori Danino, who had saved Omer's life at the Nova festival, was also taken hostage, and was murdered in captivity. Shelly thanked the Israeli government, the IDF, and everyone who was involved in bringing her son home.

In his first social media post since his release, Omer wrote<sup>3</sup>, "Creator of the World, thank you for being with me every moment!" He also acknowledged Ori Danino and thanked the IDF. On the picture, he was wearing tefillin and a tallit.

### **Ohad Ben Ami and Havdallah**

When 55-year-old German-Israeli hostage Ohad Ben Ami was released from Hamas captivity, he wanted to learn how to conduct havdallah, the ceremony at the end of Shabbat. In Gaza, he had participated in havdallah conducted by other hostages, and he drew closer to Judaism.

Ohad, father of three, was kidnapped from Kibbutz Be'eri together with his wife Raz, who was released in a previous hostage deal in November 2023. After his wife's release, Ohad was held together with five other hostages in a tiny room, 6 square meters (65 square feet) in size. He returned to Israel emaciated and frail.

Ohad's daughter Yulie said at a news conference, "My father lost much of his weight, but not his spirit. My father is strong, and I admire him. He survived hell."

"I got stronger in captivity," Ohad said in a social media reel showing him conducting havdallah at home. "I really felt that there was Someone Above watching over me, and I needed to be strong."

Ohad wearing tefillin

In another social media reel, Ohad, wearing tefillin, said, "What unites us is faith in God. On a personal level, it strengthened me and saved me. Thanks to God I am here now, after captivity... Our faith gives us strength at times when we feel crushed."

Havdallah at Beilinson Hospital

After they were released on Shabbat, former hostages Omer Shem Tov, Eliya Cohen, and Omer Wenkert were taken to Beilinson Hospital. After Shabbat, they gathered around Eliya's grandfather, Aharon Rabi, as he conducted havdallah.

It was an emotional ceremony, with everyone present praying for the success of the Israeli government and the IDF and the wellbeing of the hostages and wishing everyone a good week.

The released hostages, finally returned to the embrace of their families, have a long road ahead of them. Undoubtedly, their faith and connection to Judaism will support them on this road, inspiring the rest of us along the way.

1. Aviva Siegel reveals: The terrorist pointed a gun at Keith and threatened to kill him. Israel National News, Feb 18, 2025. Available at <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/404086>, accessed on February 25, 2025.

2. Available at <https://www.bhol.co.il/news/1687186>, retrieved on February 25, 2025.

3. Available at <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sloyues5yx>, retrieved on February 25, 2025.

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