

# Toras



# Aish

## Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

**RABBI DOV KRAMER**

### Taking a Closer Look

“**A**nd take for Me offering(s) from every person whose heart is willing. And the following are [the types of] offering[s] that you shall take from them: gold and silver and bronze” (Shemos 25:2-3). The Torah then lists the other materials needed to be donated for the Mishkan (portable Temple). As Rashi points out, though, the only silver “needed” for the Mishkan was not raised through voluntary gifts, but from the mandatory half-shekel “tax” that every male (20 and over) “had” to give (see 30:13-14). This silver was made into the bases (“adanim”) for the pillars that made up the walls of the Mishkan, and into the hooks from which the screen of the surrounding courtyard was hung (38:25-28). How could the Torah list silver as a material given voluntarily, if there was no option but to give it?

The Ibn Ezra says that even though silver was a mandatory donation, it can still be listed with the other materials. Since every other material was voluntary, it is not problematic to refer to all the materials as such. He compares it to the Torah referring to Ya'akov's children as having been born in Padan Arum, even though Binyamin was born in Canaan (Beraishis 35:26), and to the 70 individuals as having originally gone down to Egypt (Devarim 10:22), despite Yosef's sons being born in Egypt. Similarly, the Torah can refer to all the categories of donated items as being given willingly, even if the silver was not.

However, even if it were not inconsistent to list exceptions with the rule (i.e. silver with the other materials), that should only be true in a case where no action will be taken based on the categorization. In our case, though, by listing silver with the other materials being solicited for donations it might (mis)lead some to donate silver even though it was not really being requested! And, as the Netziv points out, the Torah indicates that silver was in fact given voluntarily (35:5, 24). So our question still stands- how could silver be listed with the materials that were given voluntarily?

The Abarbanel (25:3 and at the beginning of Ki Sisa) says that silver was solicited to be donated voluntarily, but because the silver that the nation had was in currency form (coins- which were needed for future purchases) not that much silver was given. Since there was not enough silver collected, the half-shekel

“tax” had to be levied, bringing in enough silver for what was needed for the Mishkan.

There are numerous problems with this approach - i.e. the Torah (36:5-7) says that there was enough of everything donated, and then some- but even as far as addressing our issue it does not answer the question completely. Sure, it explains why silver is listed as a material to be donated voluntarily. Nevertheless, it seems strange that G-d would ask for silver to be donated, even though He knew that not enough would be collected and a mandatory tax would have to be instated. Besides, we see that the Nesi'im (heads of tribe) donated the precious stones because no one else had donated them (35:27, see Rashi). If not enough silver was donated, why didn't they donate that too? We know that they had silver based on the gifts they gave when the Mishkan was consecrated (Bamidbar 7:13, etc.). It would seem, then, that the original plan was for the silver to be collected from the mandatory half-shekel. So why did G-d ask (or imply) that silver be donated voluntarily as well?

When the materials were collected, the Torah says that “anyone who had blue wool and (or) purple wool and (or) red wool and (or) linen, etc. brought it. Whoever donated silver and (or) bronze brought it as an offering to G-d. And whoever had acacia wood [that could be used] for the work to be done brought it” (35:23-24). In other words, not everybody had every type of material needed. Some had one type (or more) while others had the other types. Because each one donated what he or she had, there was enough for the Mishkan. But what about those people that only had silver to donate? If silver was not included as a potential donation, they would be left without anything to donate. It is therefore possible that even though the necessary silver would be collected via the half-shekel tax, G-d included it in the list of materials that could be voluntarily donated.

The only problem is, if all the silver needs were taken care of from the proceeds of the half-shekel tax, what would be done with the additional (donated) silver? Rashi (25:3) says that it was used to make utensils used in the Temple service. The Rambam (Laws of the Temple 1:18) tells us that these utensils (i.e. forks, spits, pans, bowls, etc.) can be made out of any type of metal. “If the community consisted of poor people, they could even be made out of tin. And if they became rich, they would make them out of gold” (ibid, 1:19). True, there was no need to make anything else out of silver,

**TORAS AISH IS A WEEKLY PARSHA NEWSLETTER  
DISTRIBUTED VIA EMAIL AND THE WORLD WIDE WEB.  
SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR MORE  
INFORMATION**

**EMAIL YITZ@AISHDAS.ORG**

**COPIES OF TORAS AISH ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE  
FOLLOWING ADDRESS ON THE WEB (WWW) :**

**HTTP://AISHDAS.ORG**

The material presented in this publication was collected from publicly available electronic mail, computer archives and the UseNet. It is being presented with the permission of the respective authors. Toras Aish is solely the work of the AishDas Society, and does not necessarily reflect the views of any given synagogue.

**TO DEDICATE THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE CALL  
973-472-0180 OR EMAIL YITZ@AISHDAS.ORG**

and the silver collected from the mandatory tax was enough for those things that needed to be made out of silver. Nonetheless, any silver that was donated (voluntarily) could still be used in the Temple (by increasing the amount of silver "secondary" utensils) without risking not having enough silver (due to the tax).

In the end, everyone had a part in the Mishkan (thanks to the tax), and anyone with any materials used in the Mishkan that wanted to (voluntarily) donate it—even if all they had was silver— could do so.

May we all be able to do our share to help (re)build the Temple, and may those in a position of leadership find a way to allow all who want to contribute play a role in all of our divine projects. © 2004 Rabbi D. Kramer

#### **RABBI LABEL LAM**

### **Dvar Torah**

**“T**hey shall make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell amongst them.” (Shemos 25:8)

Intersecting the same time zone within these next few weeks we have the holiday of Purim and the building of the Tabernacle. Is there any commonality between these two subjects or are they merely coincidentally occupying the same space if even temporarily? There is an oft repeated question that might help jumpstart the discussion. The verse should have read; I shall dwell in "it". Why does it say, I shall dwell "amongst them"?

I recently heard a moving story about a certain Rebbe that had many followers that came to him for advice and blessings. His personal attendant was a particularly devoted servant who gave selflessly to the Rebbe all his days and nights. This servant suffered from a leg problem that caused him to limp noticeably and only with great effort was he able to move about. In spite of his obvious handicap his heroic dedication was unyielding.

One day the Rebbe approached this servant and launched a complaint. He told him, "I don't think you believe that I am a truly effective Rebbe!" The attendant was shocked and inquired as to where he had fallen short in his service. The Rebbe explained that many people come to ask advice and receive blessings for all kinds of personal and practical matters and that his loyal attendant had never asked him what to do about his own personal health issue. Obviously he didn't really believe that the Rebbe can be of any help.

The attendant realized the truth of his Rebbe's words and asked what he should do. The Rebbe invited him to join in the meal to be eaten immediately after Shabbos. At that meal, where it is customary to tell stories of great people the Rebbe called on his loyal servant and asked him to tell a story.

The servant looked at the Rebbe reluctantly and declared, "I'm no story teller! I only know one story that my father told me about how the Baal Shem Tov danced." The Rebbe insisted he tell the story. In the telling of the episode the servant became very animated and started to dance. By-the time he had finished the telling of the story he was walking and moving about normally!

The point here is not to tell about "faith healing" or anything nearly miraculous. What made this man better? He merely emulated, however superficially, the actions of a great person. In doing so he became improved. The "Path of the Just" states an important psychological principle, "Outward movements awaken a corresponding internality!"

Similarly the "Duties of the Heart" declares, "Thoughts are shaped by speech!" As one speaks or acts so the corresponding inner world is created. These are potent tools for shaping our very beings. Although, it may seem at first inauthentic or disingenuous, results are guaranteed. Also what might be authentic to the external part of our being may be incongruous with our deepest and truest inner yearning.

Therefore, we need not be surprised that the process of building a Sanctuary actually builds the inner world of its builders. With regard to Purim as well, although the name of The Almighty is conspicuously absent His presence is palpable in deed. Through the animated reading of the Megillah, by describing actions of greatness in the story of all stories, life's most powerful lessons are imbibed like an extra-fine wine and we are all automatically improved from without to within.

© 2004 Rabbi L. Lam and torah.org

#### **RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN**

### **Shabbat Shalom**

**“A**nd they shall make for Me a Sanctuary and I shall dwell in their midst". The Sanctuary was the fore-runner of the Holy Temples—the special shrines of our nation during both Commonwealths and the future vision foretold by our

prophets and anticipated at the conclusion of each Yom Kippur fast and each Passover seder ceremony. The Holy Temples stood aloft on the Temple Mount of Jerusalem—and indeed the unique sanctity of Jerusalem emanates from the special quality of the Temple Mount. World Jewry was electrified on June 7, 1967, at the zenith of the 6 Day War, when Motte Gur triumphantly and tremblingly announced, "The Temple Mount is in our hands." What national secret does the Temple Mount hold, what national dream does the Temple Mount anticipate? Is it worth disputing over with our Moslem cousins, fighting about, dying for? Apparently the self-appointed architects of "Geneva" didn't think so, because they gave it up without batting an eye-brow. But since our traditional texts consider it to be the most sacred piece of real estate in the world, and since Jewish groups are now visiting it in droves every day despite the fact that the Moslem Wakf refuses to allow Jews to pray there, it would behoove us to understand the message and mission, the magic and mystery of a mountain which seems to hold the key to our eternity.

The first "message of the mount" is the sacredness of sacrifice. For Maimonides, "the most established place (of the Temple) is that of the altar, and it must never be changed for all eternity... There is a tradition in the hands of all that the place where (Kings) David and Solomon built the altar is the very place where Abraham erected the altar upon which he bound Isaac.... It was likewise (the altar) built by Noah when he emerged from the ark; it was the altar upon which Cain and Abel offered their sacrifice when he was created, and from there (its dust) was he (Adam) created..." (Maimonides, Laws of the Chosen House, 2:1,2).

Maimonides is teaching us that the very world (Adam's as well as Noah's) was created from the altar of sacrifice—and that our nation Israel was born from the near-sacrifice of Isaac on the altar of the Temple Mount. The paradox of the story of the binding—"And (G-d) said (to Abraham), 'Take now your son, your only son, the son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the Land of Moriah and offer him up there as a whole burnt offering'" (Genesis 22:2) -- is that the Almighty is teaching the first Hebrew the most paradoxical message of all: you will only merit a future if you're willing to risk your future, you will only be worthy of descendants if you have the courage to bring your only son to the altar of sacrifice.

I thought often of this painful lesson when I accompanied each of my sons to their army posts not long after we made aliyah; Abraham and Sarah are all too realistic prototypes for a nation reborn which is now experiencing its fifth difficult war in less than six decades. As the prophet Ezekiel expressed it: "And I see that you are rooted in your blood. And I say unto you, 'By your blood shall you live, by your blood shall you live.'"

The altar of the Temple Mount expresses yet a second message, crucially significant in this period of suicidal homicide bombers promised by their god-Satan seventy-two virgins in Paradise. "This is the very place where Abraham erected the altar where he bound Isaac," teaches Maimonides; bound, but not sacrificed. The Almighty amends his initial command: "Abraham, Abraham... do not send forth your hand against the lad and do not do him any harm" (Genesis 22:11,12). I only meant for you to uplift and dedicate him, not to slaughter him; I want him committed to Me in life, not sacrificed to Me in death. I am first and foremost the G-d of those who live by My word, not the G-d of Shahids who bear testimony to Me by dying and murdering (cf. Rashi, Genesis 22:2, and B.T. Taanit 4a).

The third "message of the mount" is what Maimonides calls its "eternal sanctity of the Divine Presence, a sanctity which can never be nullified, "not even by the most cruel and powerful of enemies" (Maimonides, Laws of the Chosen House, 6,16). Obviously Maimonides cannot possibly believe that the Divine Presence is a physical quantity, since he is the arch-philosopher-theologian who teaches the absolute non-corporeality of the Divine. Apparently Maimonides is referring to the word of the Divine, "the Torah which will come forth from Zion and the word of G-d from Jerusalem," the idea of Jerusalem (literally, the City of Peace) which is the crowning glory of our mission: "And it will come about at the end of the days when the nations will all rush (to the Temple Mount), to learn from its ways, to walk in its paths... They shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, humanity shall not learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2, Micah 4). The vision of Jerusalem is the dream of world peace.

And the final "message of the mount" is that of pluralism over exclusivism, acceptance of all who follow the seven fundamental laws of morality centering around "Thou shalt not murder" rather than rejecting—and even preaching to kill by the sword—all who refuse to believe in a particular ritual life-style or prophetic belief system. Everyone is welcome on the Temple Mount as long as they believe in—and practice—the ideal of peace;

"let every individual call on the name of his god, and we shall call upon the Lord our G-d forever and ever" (Micha 4).

The messages of the Temple Mount are the sacredness of sacrifice, the sacredness of life, the sacredness of peace, and the sacredness of humanity. Is this worth disputing over, fighting about, dying for? Is Judaism worth disputing over, fighting about, dying for? The Temple Mount holds the secrets of our past and the visions of our future, the principles which are the very bedrock of our teaching and our mission. The only life worth living is a life dedicated to ideals more

precious than any individual life, then it becomes a sanctified life which participates in eternity. © 2004 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

## AISH HATORAH

# What's Bothering Rashi?

by R' Dr. Avigdor Bonchek

**P**arshat Trumah details the preparations necessary for the building of the Mishkan—Israel's Sanctuary as they traveled through the desert.

There is a dispute between the Talmudic Sages and, as a consequence, between the Torah commentaries regarding when the commandments for the Mishkan were given to Moses. One opinion (the Ramban, for example) writes that the building of the Mishkan was commanded before the sin of the Golden Calf (as is the order of the Parshas—Trumah comes before Ki Sisa, where the sin of the Golden Calf is mentioned).

The other opinion (Rashi, see Exodus 31:18) claims that the Mishkan laws came afterwards, and thus not in accordance with the order of the Parshas—because as the Sages have said "ain mukdam oh m'uchar baTorah"—there is no "earlier" or "later" in the Torah—which means that chronological sequence is not always adhered to in the Torah.

Rashi's view, that the laws and the conception of the Mishkan itself came after the sin of the Golden Calf, leads to the idea that the Mishkan was offered as an atonement for that sin, and perhaps would never have been given had the People not sinned. The necessity of having some concrete manifestation of God on earth, among the People (in the form of a Sanctuary) was seen as a necessity only once they had sinned by making the Calf. This sin was evidence of their need for some physical presence of the Almighty to which they could relate.

The Ramban, on the other hand, saw the creation of the Mishkan as unrelated to this sin and independent of it. The need to relate to a spiritual entity (God) is an inherent human need. This need existed long before the sin of the Golden Calf. That sin was but a distortion of this normal and acceptable human striving for the spiritual that can be "tangible" to mortals.

In light of the above, let us look at a brief Rashi-comment. "And they shall make for Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst." (Exodus 25:8) "And they shall make for Me"—RASHI: They shall make for My name's sake a House of Holiness." Rashi adds but one crucial word (in the Hebrew) "for My Name's sake." He changes "for Me" to "for My Name's sake."

Why would he do this? What is bothering him? An Answer: Rashi sensed that one doesn't make a Sanctuary for God. He neither needs it nor could He possibly reside in it. As King Solomon said when he dedicated the Temple (Kings I, 8:27): "Would God truly dwell on earth? Behold the heavens and the highest

heavens cannot contain You, and surely not the Temple that I have built."

So Rashi had to interpret the Hebrew word "li" not as "for Me" but in another way. Rashi reinterpreted the word "li" to mean "for My Name's sake." Otherwise it would make no sense.

Rashi also adds the words "a house of holiness" as a substitute for the Hebrew "Mikdash" (Sanctuary). This may be necessary to make explicit what the word Mikdash means here. Since the pagans also had their "holy places" but their worship in these places was far from holy. They were often places of "holy" prostitution or other kinds of scatological rituals. We needn't study history to be aware that pagan acts of "holiness" can include such audacities and blasphemies as suicide bombers and wanton murderers. We need only read today's newspapers! In clear distinction from such perverse behaviors done in the name of some "god"-idea, Hashem's House was to be a place of pure holiness, where human beings elevated themselves and in the process, elevated the whole world with them.

This is the purpose of the Yom Kippur ceremonies performed in the Sanctuary. In fact, according to Rashi, the laws of the Mishkan were given the day after the first Yom Kippur. © 2004 *Rabbi Dr. A. Bonchek and torah.org*

## RABBI NOSSON CHAYIM LEFF

# Sfas Emes

**T**he Sfas Emes begins by citing the first Medrash Rabbah on the parsha. That Medrash poses the following question. How can one ascertain the nature of a given business deal? (The transaction that the Medrash has in mind is our acquiring the Torah from HaShem.)

The Medrash answers: to know the nature of a transaction, look at the commission that the broker received for intermediating it. In the case of the Torah, we can learn about the transaction by considering the commission that Moshe Rabbeinu earned for brokering our receiving the Torah from HaShem. In fact, Moshe's 'commission' was truly extraordinary. When we accepted the Torah, Moshe Rabbeinu's "panim" (face) glowed (Shemos, 34:29). Moshe Rabbeinu's panim shone with such radiance that Moshe had to wear a face-covering when people wanted to talk to him.

What did this shining of Moshe's panim signify? Radiance comes across easily, as enhanced spirituality. But more is going on here. Remember that the word "panim" has two meanings. It means both "face" (i.e., external appearance) and "inner being" (i.e., essence). Moshe's "commission", then, shows what we acquired when we received the Torah—access to enhanced inner and external spirituality. (Note: Sefer Koheles generalizes this real-world phenomenon—that being involved with Torah lishma can transform a person. The pasuk in Koheles (8:1) says: "Chochmas ahdahm ta'ir

panav, ve'oz panav ye'shuneh". (ArtScroll: "A man's wisdom lights up his face, and the boldness of his face is transformed".) This generalization is crucial. Why? Because it tells us that the phenomenon of transformation—"ye'shuneh"—applies to all people, each at his own level. A person does not have to be a Moshe Rabbeinu to benefit from this growth process.)

The Medrash Rabba that the Sfas Emes is quoting continues: "Sometimes an item is sold, and the vendor himself is included as part of the sale. In this instance, HaShem said to Bnei Yisroel: "I have transferred ownership of my Torah to you. I come along too, as part of the deal". The Medrash continues: "As the pasuk says: "Ve'yikchu li" ("And they will acquire me".)

A question: How in the world do the Medrash and the Sfas Emes understand the word "Ve'yikchu" as referring to a sale? The word's obvious translation is "they will take". And it comes here in the context of collecting resources for building the Mishkan; ("Ve'yikchu li teruma"). How can the Medrash Rabba and the Sfas Emes move us from a collection of resources to a purchase—and—sale transaction? To take us even further from the pasuk's p'shat, the transaction that they present is bizarre: a transaction in which the seller—in this case, HaShem—goes along with the item being transacted—in this case, the Torah.

An answer: The Medrash is working with the word "Ve'yikchu", from the shoshon (root) L'K'Ch'. Chazal's every day language was Aramaic. And in Aramaic, the shoshon L'K'Ch' has the meaning of a purchase or sale. (Some examples: "mekach umemkar" means: buying and selling; "Lekuchos" means: customers.) Thus, for Chazal, "Ve'yikchu"—from the root L'K'CH'—came across as an obvious allusion to an item being sold.

Following the Sfas Emes, we move to a new line of thought. The Medrash quoted above has told us that when we accept the Torah, HaShem comes along as part of the deal. This idea points to a serious potential problem and/or a serious potential opportunity in our Avoda. The potential pitfall: How easy it is to be a shomer Torah u'mitzvos—i.e., an apparently observant Jew—but one who fails to recognize that HaShem can come along together with the mitzvos. Thus, the person does not have a meaningful relationship (one on One) with HaShem. The potential opportunity: To deepen our relationship. HaShem has made us aware that He is available, by telling us that if we accept the Torah, He can come with it, as a bonus of sorts, as part of the deal. Ashreinu!

The Sfas Emes proceeds directly from this Medrash to say: "Ki haTorah nitna leYisrael k'fi hachanas kabalasam". That is, the Torah is given to us in accordance with our preparation to receive it. At first sight, it is totally unclear how this statement fits into the flow of the Sfas Emes's thoughts here. One possible interpretation is the following. The Sfas Emes has been talking of our acceptance of the Torah in terms of a

business metaphor. In business transactions, a person can buy more of what he wants if he has more money. The Sfas Emes may be saying, by contrast, how much Torah we receive depends not on our resources, but rather on how much Torah we really want ("k'fi retzono be'emes").

The idea is that notwithstanding HaShem's awesome majesty and distance from us, our relationship with Him depends totally ("hakohl") on us. The Sfas Emes recognizes that this idea is not intuitively self-evident. For this reason, living with this reality requires bitachon (confidence/ trust). Elaborating on this theme, the Sfas Emes cites a pasuk in Tehillim (37:3): "Betach BaShem ve'asei tov; shechohn erez ure'ei emuna". (R. Hirsch: "Trust in the Lord and do good; rest on earth and nourish faith".) To this pasuk, the Sfas Emes appends a comment from the Zohar. The Zohar tells us that the principal area in our lives in which bitachon should apply is in our Avoda. That is, we should have confidence that HaShem will help us serve Him.

Note that the Sfas Emes seems to have contradicted himself. Earlier, he told us that our relationship with HaShem depends wholly on retzon ha'adahm (the person's volition). Now he says that we should count on HaShem, for He will help us in our Avoda. The Sfas Emes is not afraid of apparent inconsistencies or paradoxes. Indeed, in this paragraph, he goes on to cite more apparent contradictions. Thus, he mentions "emes", (truth—that which is apparent and explicitly revealed), and "emuna" (faith—that which we accept on trust). Similarly, "Make a Mikdash for Me". The word Mikdash comes from "kadosh," which indicates HaShem's separateness from us. And the pasuk continues: "And I will dwell in their midst".

Far from viewing emes and emuna as mutually inconsistent, the Sfas Emes sees them as having the potential for a mutually-supported upward spiral. A person can start the process with emuna. That is, he takes on trust the view that that all life and existence come from HaShem. That perspective is then validated as emes, for the person is then able to perceive HaShem's Omnipresence. In fact, the more emuna that a person has, the more truth about the real world will he have. Thus, as a person becomes aware that everything he has and everything he does exist only because of the Presence of HaShem, he recognizes the kedusha—sanctity—of all creation. The person is, in effect, expanding HaShem's Presence in the world.

Unfortunately, the interaction between emuna and emes also operates on the downside, with the possibility of a dreadful downward spiral. That is, if a person does not take the initial step of trusting that HaShem is the Source of all existence, his view of life will be obscured by hester panim....

Continuing, the Sfas Emes points out the analogy to the relationship between weekdays and Shabbos. To handle the weekdays ("yemei ha'avoda"),

we need emuna. And to the degree that we relate to the weekdays with emuna, HaShem will give us access to emes on Shabbos. You see the analogy: emuna is to emes as weekdays are to Shabbos.

We conclude with one more thought of the Sfas Emes. We know that Shabbos is "mei'ein olam haba"—similar to olam ha'ba (the World to Come). What does this mean? The Sfas Emes explains that the emes that we reach on Shabbos is only a foretaste of the emes that will be revealed to us on when we reach olam ha'ba. One implication: it would be naive to expect much access to metaphysical emes on our own in olam ha'zeh (this World). © 2004 Rabbi N.C. Leff and torah.org

### YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

## Virtual Beit Medrash

STUDENT SUMMARIES OF SICHOT OF THE ROSHEI YESHIVA HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT"A

*Adapted by Dov Karoll*

**“S**peak to the children of Israel, and let them take a collection for Me; from every man whose heart motivates him shall you take My portion.” (Shemot 25:2)

The opening phrase in this verse, "Speak to the children of Israel," comes up a number of times in the Torah. One notable example is at the beginning of the parasha of tzitzit (Bemidbar 15:37). One simple explanation for the appearance of this phrase here is that this parasha, the beginning of the unit dealing with the Mishkan (which will dominate the rest of Sefer Shemot), is addressed to the Jewish people on a communal level. In contrast, the preceding parasha, Mishpatim, deals mostly with laws that pertain to individuals (other than the parasha's closing section). The laws of a Jewish male servant or maidservant, laws of damages, guardians and loans, to give but a few examples, deal with personal interactions. While these laws serve as the basis of a great part of Jewish civil law, as codified in the Choshen Mishpat section of the Shulchan Arukh, the clear emphasis is on the individual.

The Torah's discussion of the Mishkan, the Sanctuary, on the other hand, is addressed to the Jewish people as a group. The construction is an undertaking for the entire community working together. While we regularly think of categorizing mitzvot by the Rambam's division between positive and negative commandments, the Ba'al Halakhot Gedolot, known by his acronym the Behag, as well as Rav Sa'adya Ga'on, categorize mitzvot based on a distinction between personal mitzvot and communal ones. The mitzva of building the Mishkan clearly is included in this latter category. While there is some discussion with regard to the number of mitzvot to count in the process, what is clear is that the mitzva of building the Mishkan applies to the community.

Let us bring a few examples to highlight this distinction. The Shulchan Arukh (Orach Chayim 144:3)

rules that if one has only one Sefer Torah on an occasion where there is more than one Torah reading, one should roll the Sefer Torah, rather than read it from memory. Notwithstanding this law, which is of Talmudic origin (Yoma 70a), the Gemara states (mishna Yoma 68b, Gemara 70a) that when the Kohen Gadol read from the Torah in the service of Yom Ha-kippurim, he would recite the second reading from memory rather than rolling the Sefer, because of "kevod ha-tzibbur," respect for the assembled, not wanting to take their time unnecessarily.

The Magen Avraham (144:7) asks why reading from memory is preferred for the Kohen Gadol, whereas rolling the Torah is preferred otherwise. He answers that there is a fundamental difference between the assembly in a regular synagogue and those assembled in the Temple on Yom Ha-kippurim. He explains that in the Temple, the assembly is "all of Israel," and they cannot waive the honor due them as a group. In a regular synagogue situation, on the other hand, it can be assumed that the relatively small group assembled would forego its honor to fulfill the mitzva properly.

Answering this same question, the Rav zt"l once explained this without making reference to foregoing one's honor, for it may be problematic for any "community" to forego that honor. The Rav claimed that the difference lies in the nature of the Torah reading in each scenario. On Yom Ha-kippurim in the Temple, the Torah reading is considered to be for the entire Jewish nation, even though they are not all there. In a synagogue situation, in a regular "community," this special status is absent, and the preferred option is to cause the slight delay by rolling the scroll.

Another area where this is clear is with regard to the daily schedule of offerings in the Temple, which revolved around the communal offerings. While the communal sacrifices had fixed times, the individual offerings were brought at irregular times and were not generally factored in to the schedule. Why is this? Communal offerings, unlike offerings shared by a smaller group (korbenot shuttafin), reflect and represent the organic whole of the Jewish people.

The Gemara (Yoma 51a) deals with the status of the Korban Pesach in this regard. The Gemara explains that since the Korban Pesach was brought by all of the Jewish people together, it was like a communal offering with regard to laws such as overriding Shabbat and impurity.

In light of these sources, we can say that the realm of the Mishkan generally, and the construction of the Mishkan specifically, represent a communal project and mitzva. While it is true that certain individuals answered the call in a more active way, the project was still one of a communal nature.

There is a similar concept in the Ramban's comments on the beginning of the parasha (25:1, s.v. ka'asher), where he speaks of the Mishkan as a perpetuation of Ma'amad Har Sinai. Chazal emphasize

the unity that came along with the arrival at Har Sinai—"As one person, with one heart" (Rashi Shemot 19:2, s.v. va-yichan, based on Mekhilta Yitro 1). Ma'amad Har Sinai was a communal experience, and the Torah was given to the community qua community, as well as being addressed to the individuals included therein.

Throughout the generations—and especially through the centuries of exile -- the Temple and Yerushalayim (which is the extension of the Temple) have served as unifying factors for the Jewish people. In the halakhic sense, Yerushalayim takes the place of the camp of Israel in the desert, as the outer circle surrounding the Temple. Har ha-bayit, the Temple Mount, corresponds to the camp of the Leviyim, and Yerushalayim corresponds to the camp of Israel, with regard to laws such as the consumption of kodashim kalim and Ma'aser Sheni. Yerushalayim is referred to as "Tel Talpiyot—Tel she-kol piyot ponot elav," "The mount to which all mouths turn [in prayer]" (the original phrase appears in hosha'not, and the homily is based on Shir ha-shirim Rabba 4:6). Throughout the exile, Jews scattered all over the globe have centered their hopes and prayers on returning to Yerushalayim and the Temple, though they may not have had a common language or common government.

With the Emancipation and Haskala, this feeling of unification around Yerushalayim was weakened in parts of the Jewish people. And, sadly and ironically, with the return to Israel and the establishment of the State, this has become even more problematic. Much to our chagrin, much of the disagreement among the Jewish people has centered around the issue of how we relate to Yerushalayim and the Temple. While at the moments of great excitement, during the Six Day War, with Motta Gur's pronouncement, "Har ha-Bayit beyadenu," "The Temple Mount is in our hands," there was great unity, this has been far from true during other times. It has served as a source of strife and disagreement between the religious and non-religious elements of the Jewish people.

In this context, the emergence of a party in recent years whose platform is the hatred of fellow Jews is particularly troubling. When they emerged in the last elections, from nowhere, and achieved six seats, it was quite alarming. When they more than doubled that in the recent elections, rising to fifteen seats, it should both sadden us and awaken us to the seriousness of the problem. The phenomenon of hatred of fellow Jews is saddening per se, and the fact that they are specifically opposed to religious Jews, taking issue particularly with groups of people for whom service of God is a priority, make it even more troubling.

In combating these and other such phenomena, we need to measure steps taken on the communal level in terms of their long-term ramifications, rather than always looking for short-term gains. Taking actions that have seemingly yielded short-term "fruits" has actually

yielded some "rotten fruit," when taken in perspective, one of which is the emergence of Shinnui.

A few years ago, I was asked to speak at the Tel Aviv University Law School, which is not exactly a bastion of Religious Zionism. I spoke about the message of two familiar verses, "Lema'an achai ve-re'ai adabbera na shalom bakh," "For the sake of my kin and friends, I pray for your well-being," and "Lema'an beit Hashem E-lokeinu avaksha tov lakh," "For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I seek your good" (Tehillim 122:8-9). Ideally, the achievement of these two ends, the good of my kin and friends and the good of the house of God, should come together. Unfortunately, in contemporary society, we are sometimes forced to choose between acting "For the sake of my brethren" and acting "For the sake of the house of God." May it be God's Will that that we should be able to achieve both goals, "For the sake of my brethren" as well as "For the sake of the house of God." [*This sicha was delivered at se'uda shelishit, Shabbat parashat Teruma 5763 (2003).*]

**RABBI AVI WEISS**

## Shabbat Forshpeis

**R**abbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik of blessed memory, points out that prayer and prophecy are two sides of the same coin. Both involve dialogue between the human being and God—with one major difference. In prophecy God initiates the dialogue, in prayer the human being is the initiator.

But how can the limited finite person interface with the unlimited infinite God—the chasm is vast, the expanse great.

It is here that the mishkan (tabernacle)—constructed by the Jews at God's behest in the desert—plays a crucial role.

Clearly, God does not command that the tabernacle be built for Himself. This because God is everywhere, His Being fills the entire world. No wonder the text in our parsha states: "And they shall build for Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them (betokham)." (Exodus 25:8) Note the text does not say "that I may dwell in it (betokho)" as that would imply the mishkan can contain God.

Rather the formulation of the text stresses that through the mishkan people would be able to more profoundly feel the presence of God. From this perspective the mishkan was not built for God but for am Yisrael. The mishkan offers us the potential to bridge the tremendous abyss between the human being and God.

This does not mean that the mishkan is automatically holy. It's sanctity very much depends on how holy the people make it.

So too, with the everyday mishkan, the synagogue itself. If void of spiritual meaning, the synagogue becomes an empty shell, bricks without

soul. Our challenge is to lift our houses of worship to the full potential of their spiritual heights—a place through which God will dwell in us. © 1997 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA

### RABBI SHLOMO KATZ

## Hamaayan

“**T**he poles shall remain in the rings of the Aron/Ark, they may not be removed from it.” (25:15) R' Yaakov Kamenetsky z"l writes: The Aron represents those who study Torah, and the poles represent their financial backers. The prohibition to remove the poles from the Aron alludes to the teaching of the Gemara (Pesachim 53b) that those who support Torah study will be seated in Heaven right next to the scholars they supported.

But how can this be? R' Kamenetsky asks. In Heaven, souls "sit" and "discuss" Torah topics. And, since Torah knowledge can be acquired only with much toil, how will a person who spent his whole life toiling in business (and not in Torah) take part in the discussion with the great scholars that he sits amongst?

He explains: When a baby is in the womb, it is taught the entire Torah. Then, just before birth, it forgets what it learned. Why? Because, in the words of the prophet (Iyov 5:7), "Man was born to toil." Man must toil in this world to reclaim the Torah knowledge which he forgot at birth.

A person who toils in business during his lifetime so that he can support Torah scholars has also toiled, R' Kamenetsky observes. Because he has toiled for the sake of Torah study just as the Torah scholar has, he, too, is able to reclaim his lost Torah knowledge. (Emet Le'Yaakov: Shmot 25:15 & Devarim 33:18)

R' Pinchas Halevi Ish Horowitz z"l (18th century rabbi of Frankfurt, Germany; author of several widely used Talmud commentaries) writes that the entire construction of the Aron alludes to the founding fathers and leaders of the Jewish people:

The two keruvim allude to Avraham and Yitzchak. Two times the gematria of "keruv" equals 456, the gematria of "Avraham" and "Yitzchak."

The Aron itself alludes to Yaakov, who said (Bereishit 28:17): "How 'nora'/awesome is this place." The letters of "nora" are the same letters that spell "Aron." [Ed. note: In addition, Yaakov is the Patriarch most associated with Torah study, and the Aron housed the Torah.]

The four walls of the Aron allude to the twelve tribes, which traveled in a four-sided formation. [Ed. note: In addition, as noted on page 1, the combined area of the four walls of the Aron was 12 square amot.]

The two poles for carrying the Aron allude to the two leaders—Moshe and Aharon. Finally, the Luchot Ha'berit / Tablets of the Covenant inside the Aron allude

to Yosef because a person who guards his morality, as Yosef did in the face of Mrs. Potiphar's seductions, is traditionally referred to as a "Guardian of the Berit." (Panim Yafot)

"You shall make two keruvim / cherubs of gold... (25:18)  
"... with their faces toward one another." (25:20)

The Gemara (Sukkah 5b) states that the word "keruvim" is related to the Aramaic word for "baby," teaching that the keruvim were baby-faced. Regarding the second verse quoted above, the Ba'al Ha'turim explains that the keruvim faced each other "like two friends discussing a Torah topic."

R' Meir Rubman z"l (Israel; 20th century) asks: Aren't these mixed metaphors? Babies don't discuss Torah topics with each other!

He explains: Every person has hidden powers far in excess of his everyday abilities. These powers manifest themselves, for example, when a person is in danger. A person's powers are like a storekeeper's merchandise; a small amount is on display, and the rest is in the back room.

Most people use only their "visible" powers, but a great person strives to use his hidden powers. This is because the typical person feels no need to strive for greatness, while a select few do. Indeed, this is one way to differentiate between a "regular" person and a great one.

The lesson of the baby-faced keruvim who face each other like friends engaged in a Torah discussion is that every person, even if his powers are hidden like a baby's, can bring out his full potential and achieve greatness, just as a person who is engaged in a Torah discussion with his friend uses all of his intellectual powers to prove his point. (Zichron Meir)

R' Shimon Sofer z"l (19th century rabbi of Krakow, Poland) offers another reason why the keruvim were baby-faced. The appearance of the keruvim teach us that one should approach the Torah as a baby relates to his father, not with preconceived notions and faith in our own knowledge, but as completely blank slates and with trust in the Torah's wisdom. (Michtav Sofer)

Malbim (19th century) writes: The two keruvim were on the cover of the Aron, which held the two luchot. Thus, one of the keruvim covered one of the Tablets, and the other covered the second.

On one of the luchot were engraved five obligations of man to G-d; on the other were engraved five obligations of man to his fellow man. One of the keruvim represents the kohen gadol, whose role is to inspire man to perform his obligations toward G-d. The other keruvim represents the king, whose role is to enforce man's obligations to his fellow man.

The two keruvim faced each other, to teach that Israel's political and religious authorities should work together. (Quoted in Sha'ar Bat Rabim) © 2004 Rabbi S. Katz and torah.org