

went as far as to show him a *Menorah* made of fire. Still, Moshe felt uncertain concerning making the *Menorah* in accordance with Hashem's plan. It was then that Hashem instructed Moshe to fling the ingot into a fire, such that a completed *Menorah* miraculously emerged. In other words, the *Menorah* came into being without human intervention – other than Moshe throwing the ingot into the fire. Veritably, it is this way with all of life's endeavors. We do not complete anything. We only initiate. We are *mishtadel*, endeavor. Hashem does the rest. As *Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl*, was wont to say, "Man does not make a living; man takes a living". Hashem provides everything. We only initiate His action by our act of *hishtadlus*.

Horav Aharon, zl, son of the *Chafetz Chaim, zl*, related a thought concerning the future redemption which will occur in the merit of the Torah that he heard from his saintly father. We are well aware that Moshe *Rabbeinu* had no problem creating the vessels of the *Mishkan* as prescribed by Hashem until he came to the *Menorah*. He simply could not visualize or make the *Menorah*. In the end, it was necessary for Moshe to throw the ingot into the fire and Hashem (so to speak) made the *Menorah*. Why was the *Menorah* different from all the rest? What made it stand out as so difficult that Moshe, our quintessential leader and master of prophecy, just could not seem to grasp its production?

The *Chafetz Chaim* quotes the commentators (*Malbim* and others) who explain that each of the *Keilim*, *Mishkan's* vessels, alluded to elevated spiritual concepts, which were symbolized by the *Keilim*. For example, the Aron *HaKodesh*, Holy Ark, alluded to Heavenly wisdom, which is unfathomable to man without Divine Intervention, such as the power of *nevuah*, prophecy. The *Shulchan*, Table, together with its *Lechem HaPanim*, Showbread, represented the physical needs of the Jewish People with the bread symbolizing material sustenance. The *Mizbayach*, Altar, is the go-between, bridge, link that conjoins *Klal Yisrael* with their Heavenly Father. The *Menorah* is the eternal light, symbolizing the eternal nature of the Jewish People.

The *Zohar HaKadosh* writes that Hashem instructed the Heavenly Angels to make a Heavenly *Menorah* corresponding with the *Menorah* in the *Mishkan/ Bais HaMikdash*. When the *Kohen* lit the *Menorah* in the *Mishkan*, the Heavenly *Menorah* would likewise light up. It was this light that illuminated the lives of *Klal Yisrael*. Thus, says the *Chafetz Chaim*, when Hashem instructed Moshe to make the *Menorah* which would symbolize the light of *Am Yisrael*, the eternal light of our nation, Moshe stopped and gazed into the future. He saw the millions of Jews persecuted, slaughtered and annihilated in various countries throughout the world, and he wondered: There will be so much darkness in the lives of our nation, so much pain and suffering, that our People will despair of the Final Redemption. Moshe had extreme difficulty making a *Menorah* that would serve as a point of illumination when, in fact, we would be subject to such extreme darkness. How do you present light when there is such

incredible darkness?

Hashem replied, "Throw the ingot into the fire and a *Menorah* will emerge. It is not what people see that represents reality. During times of fire, when there is unparalleled destruction, in times of persecution and murder, when what appears to be darkness seems to reign, specifically from these circumstances, the eternal light of *Klal Yisrael* shall shine brightly forth. From the midst of despair will emerge overwhelming salvation.

The *Chafetz Chaim* concluded that our function during the ambiguous times of *Ikvesa d'Moschicha*, closing days when the heel of *Moshiach* is being felt, is to shine the light of Torah study on this world, so that we may hope for the Heavenly Illuminator to concur and shine down upon us.

Va'ani Tefillah

והחירינו בתשובה שלמה לפניך

V'hachazireinu b'seshuvah shleimah l'fanecha

Why do we not return to Hashem? We entreat Him thrice daily to help us return to Him, yet we continue along our way of spiritual estrangement. It is all about peer pressure, claims the *Chafetz Chaim*. We mean well and are often sincere, but when we look around, we receive very little support in our commitment to *teshuvah*, repentance. The *Chafetz Chaim* compares this to an epidemic that spread throughout a town, infecting all of its citizens. Everyone was dying. No one had any form of therapy to prevent the illness from taking its toll. One person heard that, in a nearby town, a doctor had successfully treated this illness. He immediately asked one of his friends, who lived out of town, to ask the doctor to come and heal him. His friend countered, "Why rush? Why not wait until all of the sick people have a meeting together and decide upon a course of action?"

The man became angry. "Why should I wait and waste valuable time, my life, until everyone gets together to make a decision? Meanwhile, I am slowly dying every day!" Likewise, if each and every one of us would acknowledge the severity of our spiritual ills, we would realize that there is no time to wait. After all, asks the *Chafetz Chaim*, since we feel such urgency concerning our physical ills, why should our spiritual ailments be any different?

In memory of
our parents, grandparents
and great-grandparents

ר' נפתלי מכאל בן נתנאל ז"ל
מרת שרה ריבע בת ר' יעקב מאיר הכהן ע"ה

The Rothner Family

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פנינים
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Parashas Terumah

תשע"ז

פרשת תרומה

ויקחו לי תרומה מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי

And have them take for Me a *terumah* offering. From every man whose heart impels him to generosity, you shall take My *terumah* offering. (25:2)

Rashi writes that the words, *v'yikchu li*, "and take for Me," indicate that the contributors for the *Mishkan* must be dedicated *lishmah*, exclusively for Hashem's Name. From the fact that the Torah follows up the *v'yikchu li* with *asher yidvenu libo*, whose heart impels him to generosity, we may suggest that the determining factor in *li*, "for me," is that it is motivated by the heart. The heart is the seat of one's emotions and, thus, expresses his truthful feelings. *Nidvas ha'lev*, a contribution from the bottom of one's heart, is an honest contribution.

The concept of *lishmah* was a requirement in the building of the *Mishkan*, because an edifice that serves as the resting place for the *Shechinah* may not have any personal admixture. It must be solely for Hashem. Thus, *Chazal (Tosefta, Megillah 2:10, cited by Horav Shimon Schwab, zl)* say that *keilim*, vessels, that were made for everyday use cannot subsequently be used in the *Bais HaMikdash* (since they were not made expressly for use in the Temple). Likewise, precious stones or beams cut for personal use may not be incorporated into the building of the *Bais HaMikdash*. Even the *Mizbayach*, Altar, must be made *lishmah*. *Mizbayach adamah taaseh Li*, "An Altar of earth shall you make for Me" (*Shemos 25:8*). It is all about *Li*, making an edifice purely *l'Shem Shomayim*, for the sake of Heaven. Personal interests preclude the *l'Shem Shomayim* factor and impugn the purity of the Sanctuary.

Rav Schwab observes that this stands in stark contrast to a statement made by *Chazal* concerning *limud haTorah* study. They say (*Nazir 23b*), *L'olam yaasok adam b'Torah u'b'mitzvos shelo lishmah. She'mitoch shelo lishmah ba lishmah*; "A person should forever occupy himself with Torah study and *mitzvah* fulfillment, even with ulterior motives, for this will eventually bring him to do the *lishmah*, purely for Hashem's sake". The standard of spiritual integrity required for the construction of the *Bais HaMikdash* does not apply to Torah study. Why?

Perhaps we might say that Torah study is our contribution; it represents man. Thus, it does not require such perfection. It is hopeful that, by consistent attachment with the Torah, a person's learning will ultimately achieve perfection, *lishmah*, learning solely for Hashem. The *Bais HaMikdash* represents Hashem. It is His home where His Divine Presence reposes. It must be perfect. Near perfect does not suffice. "Almost" and

"ultimately" are terms that are not consistent with the need for the *Bais HaMikdash* to be spiritually flawless. A higher standard is required for the *Bais HaMikdash* – and for anything that is to serve as an abode for Hashem.

In his collection of *Rav Schwab's* Torah thoughts on the *parsha*, *Rav Meir Schwab* relates that, speaking at a *Bris Milah*, his father cited the story of *Elisha ben Avuya*, who at one time was a distinguished sage, *Rebbe* to Rabbi Meir, but, sadly, ended his life as a heretic. What went wrong in his life to drive him *meigra rama l'bira amikah*, from a high position to a deep pit, from the apex of spirituality to the nadir of depravity? The *Rav* begins with the premise that while one may perform *mitzvos* for ulterior motives, this approach applies neither to the building of the *Mishkan*, nor to a parent's obligation to educate his children. Nothing less than flawless motive suffices. A Jew is a mini-*Mishkan*, a place in which the *Shechinah* may reside within the heart. Nothing less than pure motivation will work.

Chazal (Yerushalmi Chagigah 2:1) relate that *Elisha's* father, *Avuya*, invited many of *Yerushalayim's* greatest scholars to his *Bris*. The scholars spoke *divrei Torah* among themselves with such fervor and intensity that a Heavenly fire enveloped them, to separate them from the rest of the guests. Seeing this remarkable Heavenly acknowledgement of their distinguished nature, *Avuya* said, "My son (*Elisha*), whose *Bris* is being performed today, will also become a Torah scholar (and I will enable him to do so). While *Avuya* wished for his son to achieve distinction in Torah learning, it was not for the correct reason – *lishmah*. Instead, he wanted his son to advance in Torah learning for the honor that comes with erudition. As a result, *Elisha* became a heretic. His Torah education was built on a faulty and misconceived foundation.

What did *Avuya* do wrong? What is wrong with wanting one's son to achieve distinction as a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar? Would it have been better if the father wanted the son to excel in secular disciplines? Furthermore, *Chazal* permit us to learn Torah and perform *mitzvos shelo lishmah*, for ulterior motives, in order to achieve a personal goal. Why is this different? The answer is (as mentioned above) that a human being is a *mikdash me'at*, a miniature sanctuary. Thus, at the beginning of life, the human being must be consecrated solely for Hashem. This is probably difficult for parents to accept, since they feel that they own their child's life, that they are in charge of their child's destiny.

This idea applies equally to those well-meaning -- but no-less mistaken -- parents who simply want to have *nachas* from their

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child. When parents raise a child their sole intention should be that their child grow up to be a *nachas* for Hashem, that he increase Hashem's glory in the world. There can be no personally vested reasons. If the child makes it and just happens to give his parents *nachas*, this is a fringe benefit, but may not be a goal. One must never raise children for the purpose of achieving personal glory.

This concept also applies to those who do everything possible in order to have their child enrolled in the finest schools – for the wrong reason. In some cases, the child lacks the ability and acumen to excel in such schools. The pressure to achieve is overwhelming and may be beyond his ability. The parents do not seem to care. It is all about self-advancement. If my son studies at a certain *yeshiva*, if my daughter is accepted to a top seminary – I look better. This certainly is not an example of *v'yikchu li*. They are focusing in on the wrong *li*.

ונשו לי מקדש ושכתי בתוכם

They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them. (25:8)

The *Alshich HaKadosh*, *zl*, notes the use of the word, *b'socham*, in them, rather than *b'socho*, in it. This teaches that every Jew must serve as a veritable *Mishkan*, Sanctuary, for Hashem. Every Jew is a *mikdash me'at*, miniature sanctuary. This should be our self-view, and likewise, the way we look at others. While one can accept this idea concerning *gedolei Yisrael*, individuals who truly represent *Kavod Shomayim*, the glory of Heaven, what about the ordinary person? Is the ordinary person also a *mikdash me'at*?

First, the term “ordinary” is too general a term. I refer rather to someone who has allowed himself to stagnate and remain mediocre; an individual who is, for the most part, indifferent and uninspired about achieving his own potential. Anyone who so chooses is able to grow in accordance with his potential. Thus, not achieving one's potential, by simply “settling”, is what may be termed as “ordinary”. We are all born with abilities, talents, acumen, etc. What we make of ourselves defines us in light of the situation we are in and the circumstances with which we must cope. Two students might begin in the same classroom, and one will achieve distinction in life, while the other does not care enough. What happened? Upon being confronted with circumstances that were challenging, one persevered while the other faltered and gave up. The following thesis from *Horav Tzvi Nakar, Shlita*, in his *Emunah Sheleimah*, underscores this idea.

In *Parashas Balak (Bamidbar 24:21)* the Torah records, *Vayaar es Hakeini vayisa meshalo vayomar, eisam moshavecha v'sim basela kinecha*. “He saw the Keini, and proclaimed his parable and said, ‘Strong is your dwelling and set in a rock is your nest.’” *Rashi* explains that the Keini were the family of Yisro, Priest of Midyan, who had left their own people to join the Jewish People. He was also Moshe *Rabbeinu's* father-in-law. Bilaam noted that, despite their geographic proximity to Amalek, the Keini were a rising spiritual people. Amalek, however, would ultimately suffer a well-deserved, ignominious end. Yisro's descendants became an integral part of the Jewish People, having placed their “nest” with the Jews, rather than with their powerful-- but wicked -- neighbors, Amalek. Bilaam also praised Yisro for having given his daughter's hand to Moshe in marriage.

Bilaam and Yisro had been contemporaries in Pharaoh's

court. The Egyptian ruler had three advisors: Yisro, Bilaam and Iyov. The *Talmud Sanhedrin* 106A notes that Bilaam had marveled (and was probably quite envious) that Yisro, who was with him in Pharaoh's court, had achieved such distinction. He had conveniently forgotten that his response to the “Jewish question” had been to destroy the Jews, while Yisro expressed his feelings by fleeing Egypt in protest (and also) for self-preservation, since Pharaoh did not take kindly to protest. Iyov, however, remained silent.

Bilaam looked back over the years and ruminated, his jealousy obvious: “How did you do it? Were we not both together in Pharaoh's Court? We both achieved prominence, having *parshios* in the Torah dedicated to us. The difference lies there, with *Parashas* Yisro describing his greatness, while *Parashas* Balak addresses Bilaam's infamy. Two students: in the same school; same class; similar backgrounds. One makes it, while the other does not. Sadly, it happens more often than we care to admit. Veritably, a multitude of factors play a role, but ultimately, it is hard work, perseverance, focus on proper direction and goals – inspired and nurtured by loving, knowledgeable parents (if they are less than knowledgeable, they should at least be willing to listen to the advice of Torah educators), perseverance and commitment. A good, healthy dose of *Tehillim* recitation is, of course, vital to any form of success in life.

Veritably, Bilaam was the greater of the two. The Torah (ibid 24:16) records that *yodea daas Elyon*, he knew the knowledge of the Supreme One. How did the tables turn on him? How did Yisro surpass Bilaam? At first, it began with little differences, subtle changes in their behavior and reactions. When Pharaoh sought advice concerning the Jews, Iyov felt, “What can I do? I cannot argue against the king. I will remain quiet.” Yisro could not tolerate an injustice. He spoke up, even if it would mean that he would have to flee for his life. Bilaam conjectured, “Regardless, Pharaoh will do what he wants. Why should I challenge him? I might as well suggest that the Jews should be destroyed, since this is where he is leaning”. Later on, it was Yisro who “heard” about the wonders and miracles that Hashem wrought in Egypt. This catalyzed his decision to leave his home in Midyan, to travel to the wilderness to be with the Jewish People. Bilaam also heard, but, when he was asked by the pagans what the incredible sound that they heard was, whether G-d was going to bring another flood and wipe out the world, Bilaam told them not to worry. G-d had promised never to destroy the world again. Instead, He was giving His treasure to the Jewish People: His Torah.

At a certain moment, the nations “heard” and were inspired. Unfortunately, that is all they did – hear, but did no more. Bilaam could have encouraged them to join. He did not. Now, he was jealous of Yisro.

It is all about the choices we make in life. The right choices set the foundation for success. Poor choices are the beginning of failure: “But we sat in the same row; in the same classroom. What happened? Why is he a Torah leader, and I barely make it to a *shiur*, Torah class?” Now is not the time to ask. You should have thought about this earlier in life: when you decided that the vocation you chose was more exciting than learning Torah; when you felt a badly-needed vacation was more beneficial than spending the summer working in camp, especially with children who probably would not appreciate it anyway. The list goes on.

The common denominator is the same: we make choices, and we live by them. It does not help to look back in envy at the fellow who made a better decision than we did. It is never too late to change – or support the fellow who did.

The following story is well-known to many. It is about two students in the same *yeshivah* who both made wise choices. One grew up to be a *gadol* in Torah; the other became a *gadol* in *chesed*. They both chose appropriately, selecting goals that they felt were most compatible with their personality and goals.

Horav Mashe Schneider, zl, was *Rosh Yeshivah* in Frankfurt, Germany until the Nazis closed down the *yeshivah* in 1939. Fortunately, he was able to move his *yeshivah* to London, where he was able to continue inspiring the next generation of Torah scholars. Being that it was wartime, the Jewish community was hard-pressed for funds to support the *yeshivah*. The *Rosh Yeshiva* and his *rebbeitzin* did everything to provide for the wellbeing of the students – both spiritually and physically.

A family in Golders Green, the Grodzinskys, who owned a bakery, told the *Rosh Yeshivah* that they would donate to the *yeshivah* all of the rolls and cake that had not been sold after three days. There was one stipulation: they could not deliver. It would mean having a student arise early in the morning, take a bus to the bakery and then haul back a large, heavy bag filled with staples for the *yeshivah*.

A rotation was set up whereby every day another student had the responsibility to pick up and deliver the daily “order”. Understandably, some students did not relish rising early in the morning and making the round trip. One boy, by the name of Moshe, not only never missed his turn, but he often also gladly covered for others. To him, performing *chesed* for others, thereby enabling them to learn Torah better, was an honor and a privilege.

Another student, also by the name of Moshe, also provided a vital daily service for the *yeshiva*. The *Rosh Yeshivah* felt that it was inappropriate for a student to run into *shul* at the last minute and begin *davening*. He, therefore, instituted a *sefer*, learning period, one hour before *davening*, during which the students would learn. The problem was waking up the students an hour before *davening*. The other Moshe came to the rescue by accepting upon himself the responsibility of waking up the *yeshivah* students every day. Shortly before 5:00 a.m., the other Moshe would begin his rounds, waking up the students to come to learn.

One day, during the *Rosh Yeshivah's shmuess*, ethical discourse, he declared, “Moshe Reichman, who goes for the bread unflinchingly, and Moshe Shternbuch, who arises early every day to see that others should learn, should both be blessed. Moshe Reichman should be blessed with such incredible wealth that the entire world should know of him. Moshe Shternbuch, who enables others to learn, should achieve such distinction in Torah knowledge that the entire world should know of his wisdom.

Two students made good choices and both were blessed for it. Reb Moshe Reichman later in life remarked, “I wish I had been the individual who woke up the students in the morning”. He never regretted his original choice; he just wanted to do more. The choices of these two students greatly benefitted the Jewish People.

ככל אשר אני מראה אותך את תבנית המשכן...וכן תעשו Like everything that I show you, the form of the Mishkan...and so shall you do. (25:9)

Rashi comments, *v'chein taasu – l'doros*; “And so shall you do” – for generations. This means that, if for some reason it was necessary to make more vessels for the *Mishkan*, or later for the *Bais HaMikdash*, the form should be similar to the original vessels used in the *Mishkan*. Alternatively, the *Nefesh HaChaim* explains the *tzivui*, command, of *l'doros*, for ensuing generations, based upon a statement of the *Gaon, zl, m'Vilna* who posits that the entire *Bais HaMikdash* was redolent with a sweet fragrance emanating from the Torah housed in the *Aron HaKodesh*, situated in the *Kodesh HaKedoshim*, Holy of Holies.

This teaches that the *Mishkan* edifice was ancillary to the Torah within its confines. Furthermore, we derive that essentially each and every one of us has the potential and obligation to serve as a veritable sanctuary for Hashem. We should achieve a level of connection with the Torah that we are able to serve as an abode for Hashem's Divine Presence. The external edifice of the *Mishkan* is no more than a repository for the *Aron HaKodesh*, which serves as the receptacle which houses the Torah. It is the Torah that inspires, consecrates and whose fragrance permeates the entire environment around it. Likewise, it is our intrinsic *Mishkan*, our actions, deeds and total spiritual demeanor which determines our spiritual qualification to warrant being a *mikdash* for the *Shechinah*.

With this idea in mind, *Horav Shmuel Auerbach, Shlita*, explains an incident cited by *Chazal* in *Meseches Yoma*. Following the completion of the *Yom Kippur* service, the *Kohen Gadol* left the *Bais Hamikdash* accompanied by a throng of worshippers. The *Kohen Gadol* would make a festive celebration for his loved ones when he emerged unscathed from the Holy of Holies. It was an indication that Hashem had forgiven the nation. Relief led the overwhelming joy, as everyone walked the *Kohen Gadol* home. The *Talmud Yoma* 71 relates that one time as the people accompanied the *Kohen Gadol*, they met the two Torah leaders of the generation: Shmaya and Avtalyon. Immediately, everyone left the *Kohen Gadol* and joined these two *gedolim*, Torah giants. It was clear that the high position of *Kohen Gadol* and the reason for celebration aside, the position of pre-eminence in Torah achieved by Shmaya and Avtalyon took precedence.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that the people realized that the true sanctuary of *Klal Yisrael* is the Torah and concomitantly the scholars who devote their lives to its mastery. Thus, on *Yom Kippur*, the holiest day of the year, even the *Kohen Gadol* who entered the Holy of Holies -- a place where no other man may enter -- and emerged safely, in spiritual triumph over having effected the atonement of *Klal Yisrael*, was secondary to the Torah and its disseminators. The Torah is our greatest and holiest treasure.

מקשה תיעשה המנורה

Hammered out shall the Menorah be made. (25:31)

The *Menorah* consisted of a number of shapes and forms, all of which were hammered out from one large ingot of gold. Nothing was made separately and attached. The *Midrash* relates that Moshe *Rabbeinu* had great difficulty in creating the *Menorah*. He could not visualize the finished product. Hashem