



Terumah 5775

February 20, 2015

# A Taste of Torah Carry On

By Rabbi Akiva Stern

The Talmud (Sotah 35a) tells us a fascinating fact about the Aron (Ark of the Covenant). It relates that during the Jewish Nation's travels in the desert, the Mishkan (Tabernacle) would be dismantled and reassembled. The Torah tells us that the Aron was not to be put on a wagon, but, rather, was "borne upon the shoulders" of the Levites. The Gemara tells us that an astounding thing would occur each time the Aron traveled. The Aron would levitate on its own, and the Levites tasked with bearing its burden would be taken along for the ride.

This miraculous event highlights a curiosity found in our Torah portion. Of the many vessels, ornaments, and parts of the Mishkan, one stipulation seems unique and somewhat strange. We are told that one is never allowed to remove the staves used to carry the Aron from their rings set on the side of the Aron. This prohibition carries the full weight of a negative Torah commandment, and its transgression is akin to eating pork or stealing. As far as I am aware, no other stipulation is made regarding the storage of any other part of the Mishkan which entails such a condition or prohibition.

Allow me to present the apparent difficulty: There is but one vessel which is unique in that it carries itself and its bearers. The Torah clearly indicates that it must be carried. The Torah also singles out only this vessel for a strict prohibition against removal of its staves from its rings, ostensibly so it may be carried at all times. What could possibly be the meaning of all this? Why insist on keeping the purely ornamental handles attached to an item that really does not need to be carried at all? Why bother to tell me

that it should be carried on the shoulders?

My rebbi, Rabbi Nissan Kaplan, often points out that a closer look at the terminology of this passage of the Talmud will not only answer our query, but also provide a beautiful insight into how we must approach the holy Torah.

We are told that the Aron contained the Torah and is therefore symbolic of the Torah. The Talmud states that the Aron "bears its bearers". The obvious difficulty with these words is that if the Aron carried them, they were in fact not "bearers" of the Aron; au contraire! The Aron bore them! Rabbi Kaplan explains the words as follows: Only those willing, ready and able to bear the full brunt of the heavy Aron were subsequently carried by it. Their willingness to bear the weight was the prerequisite for them to be borne; hence, they are known as its bearers. This, too, is the reason for the prohibition against removal of the staves. The Torah is stressing that it must be abundantly clear to all, at all times, that without the commitment to carry (symbolized by the ready state of the carrying staves), one can never be carried. There are no free rides.

The ultimate application intended is our approach to the Torah. Many have witnessed the pure joy and sweetness of Torah study. The delicious satisfaction and feeling of closeness with G-d it brings begets more and more Torah study. In this sense, the Torah carries those who carry it. But some wonder what the whole hullabaloo is all about. They find the Torah to be dry, tedious, unrewarding and even burdensome. "Wait!" they might cry, "Where is my free ride?!" The answer so clearly shown is that

## Stories For The Soul

### Cornerstone of Generosity

When Rabbi Ben Zion Brodie and Rabbi Betzalel Rudinsky founded Yeshivas Ohr Reuven in Monsey, the cornerstone for the building was donated by Rabbi Brodie's grandfather, Mr. Yaakov Rosenbaum, for the sum of \$25,000.

Not long after the building was completed and the yeshiva was functioning normally, Rabbi Rudinsky realized that he would be unable to meet an upcoming payroll. He asked Rabbi Brodie if he could ask his grandfather for a \$10,000 loan to carry them over. Mr. Rosenbaum agreed, but told his grandson that, as a businessman, he expected the loan to be paid back - and on time. The two agreed on a three-month period in which to repay the loan.

It was nearly three months, and both rabbis realized that they'd have a hard time coming up with money to repay the debt. As the due date approached, Mr. Rosenbaum reminded Rabbi Brodie of the loan; Rabbi Brodie, with confidence he didn't feel, told his grandfather they'd have the money.

The day before the loan was due, Mr. Rosenbaum called Rabbi Brodie and asked him to come over to his home. Rabbi Brodie nervously entered the house, not sure what he'd tell his grandfather.

Mr. Rosenbaum told his grandson that he'd been doing some thinking, and had decided that the cornerstone he had dedicated several years earlier had been a bargain at \$25,000. "I think the price was too cheap. So I've decided to forgive the \$10,000 you owe, plus add another \$1,000. This will make it \$36,000 for the cornerstone. Still a great deal - but at least I don't feel guilty."

In this week's parsha, Hashem tells Moshe to obtain the materials for the Mishkan (Tabernacle) from those who are generous-hearted. It is one thing to donate to a cause. But to be a generous-hearted individual is a whole different level.

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## Kollel Happenings

### KOLLEL'S 17TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MARCH 17TH

The Kollel will hold its 17th Anniversary Celebration on Tuesday, March 17th, 6:30 pm at Aish Denver. The event will feature an exclusive new publication and video presentation, *From Sinai to Denver*. The Kollel will recognize Andy and Rana Kark with the Torah Partners Award. For ads and reservations email [journal@denverkollel.org](mailto:journal@denverkollel.org), visit [denverkollel.org](http://denverkollel.org) or call 303-820-2855.

### LEARN 2 LEARN

You have long dreamed of acquiring the tools to achieve proficiency in learning Gemara on your own. But how? The Denver Community Kollel offers a comprehensive, step-by-step, level-by-level program crafted for people just like you. All you need is the ability to read Hebrew; we will teach you the rest. For more information, contact [rmh@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmh@denverkollel.org).

### INSIDE THE ALEPH-BAIS

There is a unique fascination with the Hebrew language and the aleph-bet. Mystical sources explain that the letters of the aleph-bet are the building blocks of the whole world. Discover the world of the aleph-bet with Rabbi Heyman in this informative, dynamic class. For time and location, contact [rmh@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmh@denverkollel.org).

# Increase Your Jewish IQ

By: Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: Amen is not usually recited after one's own blessing. One exception to this is following the third blessing of Birchas Hamazone. What other exceptions can you think of?

A: The Sefardim answer *amen* following the morning prayers blessing of *yishtabach*, the evening prayers blessing of *hashkiveinu*, and the final blessing of Hallel. An individual of Ashkenazic descent, though, would not say *amen* to these blessings when only he recites the blessing. If, however, he concludes the blessing simultaneously with someone

else, he would say *amen* – even though normally, one does not respond *amen* when he hears someone conclude a blessing if he himself is concluding that blessing at the same time. (see Mishnah Berurah 51:3)

**This week's question:** How is it possible for one to smell an item on two different occasions and make a different bracha each time?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email [ryz@denverkollel.org](mailto:ryz@denverkollel.org)

## Ask the Rabbi

### Bedtime Shema: Reading & Talking Afterwards; Women's Obligation

R. Berzack wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I'd like to know the details of the commandment of the bedtime shema regarding women's obligation. I've heard that you are not allowed to talk after you have said it, is this true? And what about reading a book afterwards?

Dear R. Berzack,

Women should recite shema and the *hamapil* blessing immediately before retiring at night. Married women customarily say the blessing with their hair covered.

One shouldn't interrupt between the *hamapil* blessing and sleeping. Therefore, one should not eat, drink, or talk after saying *hamapil*. Some even have the custom to omit *hampil* altogether, or they say it but omit G-d's Name and the phrase "King of the universe," out of concern that they will converse afterwards.

If one says the bedtime shema and then has difficulty sleeping, he should keep repeating the first paragraph of the shema or other supplicatory verses until sleep overtakes him. Thinking Torah thoughts is also permitted, so reading a sefer, a book of Torah thoughts, is okay.

Rav Yehuda Segal, the late Rosh Yeshiva in Manchester, used to actually fall asleep while reciting the bedtime shema, and he would wake from time to time and carry on exactly from the place he left off!

Sources:

*Shulchan Aruch* 239:1

*Mishna Berura*, *ibid.* 4,7

*Halichos Bas Yisrael* 2:40, Rabbi Y.Y.

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## A Taste of Torah

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we must first accept upon ourselves the yoke of Torah study. We must realistically commit time to spend learning, to never miss our study sessions if at all possible, to endeavor to learn difficult concepts in

a foreign language, all in all, to toil in our Torah study! It is then, and only then, that we find ourselves gently rising on the wings of our own commitments. As true bearers of the Torah, we are borne aloft!

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