



A Taste of Torah Fan The Flames

By Rabbi Eli Mozes

With the clarion call of the trumpet, the peaceful encampment kicked into high gear. Housewives hurriedly packed their belongings as their husbands disassembled the tents. Over at the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), the *Kohanim* (priests) and *Levi'im* (Levites) got to work taking apart the coverings and walls of the Tabernacle and loading them onto wagons. The Holy Vessels were carried on their shoulders as they headed off into the desert to an unknown destination. The Jewish People experienced this forty-one times throughout their forty-year sojourn in the desert.

One would think that all the *Mishkan's* function ceased during their traveling time; however, there was one constant which remained, even as they were in transit. In this week's parsha, it states, "An eternal flame shall burn upon it (the Altar), it shall not be extinguished." The Jerusalem Talmud (Yoma 5:6) expounds that when the Jews traveled, the flame wasn't extinguished; they would just cover it over with a large vessel.

One curiosity which many people wonder about is that the Torah devotes four parshios to the construction of the *Mishkan*; why the need to spend so much time discussing this one structure? This question becomes even starker when we realize how limited the intended duration of the *Mishkan* was. Had the Jews not sinned and been punished with forty years in the desert, they would have arrived in Eretz Yisrael in a matter of days (see Rashi Deuteronomy 1:2). Granted that, even after they entered Eretz Yisrael, they continued to use the *Mishkan* for an additional fourteen years while they conquered and divided the land, but fourteen years is but a blip within the context of Jewish history; why would the Torah spend so much time describing to us something which was so temporary?

Perhaps we can offer an explanation based on the writings of Rabbi Aharon Levine (1879-1941). First, we must understand that the *Mishkan*, just like the *Bais Hamikdash*

(Temple), was a location where we experienced the Divine Presence. However, there was an important distinction between the two; while the *Bais Hamikdash* was a complete structure with a defined location, the *Mishkan* was a portable structure which the Jewish People took with them wherever they went. With this in mind, we can say that the *Mishkan* was the prototype for how to build an environment which supports the Divine Presence wherever we are. If we look deeply into the design of the *Mishkan*, we can take out lessons in how to turn our homes and synagogues into areas where the Divine Presence is felt. This would explain the need for the Torah to spend so much time telling us the details of the *Mishkan* design, so that we can take these lessons and apply them to our lives.

One example of this is the eternal flame. It is one thing for us to turn our homes, synagogues and *batei medrash* (study halls) into Divine Presence-friendly environments, but much of our life is spent outside of these locations, oftentimes in environments which are beyond our control, while we are traveling, at work, shopping, etc. Should we resign ourselves to the fact that those parts of the day will just be mundane, completely devoid of the Divine Presence? The Torah teaches us that even when the *Mishkan* was in transit, the eternal flame on the Altar was never extinguished. So, too, in our lives, we must ensure that even when we are in transit, the eternal flame remains ignited. When traveling in the car, we can always take along an audio Torah class with us; even if we are traveling with someone else who wouldn't be interested in it, the very fact that is sitting in the glove compartment is keeping the flame lit. If we take a sefer along with us to work, even if we only glance at it for two minutes during our lunch break, its presence on our desk will bring the flame into the cubicle. Be creative and you will find many ways to fan the flames.

Stories For The Soul

Have A Great Shabbos

Yaakov Yosef Herman (1880-1967) was a pious Jew who lived in New York City during the first decades of the 20th century. Despite many challenges, he steadfastly adhered to the Torah and its mitzvos, and raised a family devoted to G-d and His Torah.

Mr. Herman was a furrier, and he owned a shop in Manhattan. One Shabbos, a police officer appeared at his door and informed him that his fur store was on fire. "You'd better get down there as soon as possible," said the officer.

Mr. Herman calmly explained to the stunned officer that today was his Sabbath, and he was unable to come to the store until the Sabbath ended. He then proceeded to conduct his Shabbos like any other, enjoying the Shabbos meals, singing zemiros, relating Torah thoughts, and engaging in the prayers.

After Shabbos was over, he went to survey the damage, expecting to find his shop in shambles. Except that his shop was perfectly fine! The store next door had caught fire, but his was spared.

This week's Shabbos is called Shabbos Hagadol, the Great Shabbos, because the Jewish People separated a sheep for the Pesach Sacrifice, knowing full well that the Egyptians would be enraged, as they worshipped sheep. But the Jews trusted that Hashem would protect them as they fulfilled His command, and the Egyptians were powerless to do anything. This event is commemorated annually the Shabbos before Pesach, for it is Shabbos that embodies the idea that Hashem is the only true Power in the world. Those who are fully cognizant of the message and reality of Shabbos can place their full trust in Hashem and not worry about what goes on in the world.

Kollel Happenings

KOLLEL CELEBRATION MEDIA CENTER

Would you like to view the *From Sinai to Denver* video shown at the Kollel's 17th Anniversary Celebration? View pictures or the Commemorative Journal? Order the exclusive publication *From Sinai to Denver*?

Visit the Kollel's Celebration Media Center at www.denverkollel.org, and click on the Media Center banner.

The M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD ADOPT-A- BUBBY PROGRAM

Do you know of a senior – a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, neighbor, fellow congregant – who would benefit from a weekly phone call to schmooze, share a thought on the parsha or Jewish calendar, or just say hello? Do you have a few minutes a week to call a senior in the community and make a difference in the life of another? Contact the Denver Community Kollel's M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Adopt-A-Bubby program! Call Joyce Litzman at the Denver Community Kollel at 303-820-2855, or email jlitzman@denverkollel.org.

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. The class will resume after Pesach break.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By: Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: What are the four customs (all currently practiced) as to when one recites the shorter blessing of *shalom rav* as the final blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei*, instead of the lengthier *sim shalom*?

A: 1) The Sefardic custom is to always recite the longer version of *sim shalom*. 2) *Nusach Ashkenaz* recites the shorter *shalom rav* at *mincha* and *maariv*. 3) Within *Nusach Sefard* (which is not the same thing as the Sefardic custom), there are some who say *sim shalom* at *mincha* and *shalom rav* at

maariv others say *sim shalom* at both, like the Sefardic custom. 4) Some have a custom to recite *sim shalom* at *mincha* on Shabbos even if *shalom rav* is recited at *mincha* during the week.

This week's question: Can you explain the reasoning for the four aforementioned customs of reciting *sim shalom* and *shalom rav*?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org

Ask the Rabbi For Sale?

GANZ wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

As usual I enjoyed another one of your responses, this time to Philip Americus about 'Scalping Tickets.' Your logic is commendable. However, could you reconcile for me your advice of not using tricks to get around a law, with the practice at Pesach of selling one's chametz - or even more astute - locking them up in a cupboard and selling "futures" to someone who will never pick them up.

Dear GANZ,

Selling your chametz before Pesach is not a trick, but a legally binding sale. When you sell your chametz it belongs to the buyer who has every right to use it.

In a certain community, all the chametz - including the kosher pizza shop - was sold to a police officer. During Pesach, a burglar broke in to the pizza shop. The policeman, who

happened to be on duty at the time, entered the pizza shop, arrested the robber, and exclaimed, "You're robbing MY business!"

And it's told of a whiskey producer in Europe who sold his entire business for Pesach. After Pesach, the buyer decided he wanted to own the business permanently, and so he refused to sell it back.

But you're right. Both buyer and seller should take the sale seriously and realize that it's not a 'trick.' I know of a Rabbi who, in order to show his congregants that the sale is no joke, told the buyer to enter a home during Pesach and ask for his chametz!

Sources:

-*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 448:3*

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