



A Taste of Torah

A Sticking Point

Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

How do you carry an altar through the desert? How about a wood-and-gold table? Any ideas for an ark? No, no, wagons won't work; these special vessels must be carried by hand. This could have been quite a challenge, as metal and wood can be quite heavy, but the Torah provided a solution: place staves through rings attached to the sides of these vessels. These staves are then placed upon the shoulders of the Levites, who would carry the vessels during the Jews' sojourn in the desert.

There is a unique and puzzling mitzvah connected to these staves: while the staves may be removed from the other vessels, the Torah forbids their removal from the Aron (Ark). That's right, even when the Mishkan is erected and the vessels have been placed inside, the staves must remain in the rings, attached to the Ark.

While all mitzvos must be obeyed as G-d's command whether we comprehend them or not, we certainly have a greater appreciation of the mitzvah when we have some understanding of the reasoning behind it. To that end, I'd like to share an enlightening explanation of this particular mitzvah that I heard from Rabbi Nissan Kaplan shlit"א of the Mir Yeshiva of Yerusha-

layim.

The major vessels of the Mishkan represent various aspects of serving Hashem. For example, the Shulchan (Table) manifests wealth and sustenance, as it bears the Lechem Hapanim (Showbread). The Aron, which contains the Luchos (Tablets) given at Sinai, represents Torah study.

Often, people are willing to study Torah when it is convenient. Many a person has stated, "If it's not too far away, and I have the time, I'll squeeze a bit of Torah learning into my schedule." But the Torah is telling us otherwise. The staves are meant to facilitate travel and relocation. Yet they are constantly attached to the Ark, the symbol of Torah study. One must be ever-ready to pick himself up and go wherever he has to in order to study Torah. The staves must be ever-present! Don't make yourself comfortable; the Torah beckons! Need to travel half an hour to get there? Need to bend over a bit to make time? Make it happen anyway!

Torah study is of paramount importance in Judaism. The Torah, by requiring that the staves never depart from the Aron, teaches us that come what may, one must be in a constant state of preparedness to connect to the Torah.

Ask the Rabbi

Mass Email

Michael from Pittsburgh wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Does the "Cherem d'Rabbeinu Gershom" ["social

excommunication" ed.] against reading someone's mail also apply to email? At work we all share one email account, and sometimes I find it difficult to overcome my curiosity.

Stories For The Soul

The Lesson of the Cake

A young boy was once complaining to his grandmother how "everything" was going wrong. He hated school, had problems with his friends, and didn't get along with his sister.

His grandmother, meanwhile, was baking a cake, stirring the batter as she listened to his tale of woe.

"Would you like a snack?" she suddenly asked him.

"Yes," he eagerly responded.

"Here, have some cooking oil," she said.

"Yuck," came the reply.

"How about a couple raw eggs?"

"Gross, Grandma!"

"Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?"

"Grandma, those are all yucky!"

"Yes, all those things seem bad all by themselves," she replied, "but when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake!"

Hashem works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through difficult times. But Hashem knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good. We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful.

The Menora was fueled by olive oil. Olives produce their wonderful pure oil only after being beaten, pressed and crushed. Similarly, the persecutions and tribulations that the Jewish people have suffered serve to strengthen and purify us. Difficulties in life actually make us greater.

Reprinted with permission of Shul-Week by Rabbi Baruch Lederman

Kollel Happenings

SHLOMO FRIED, JAY KAMLET, HARVEY AND STEPHANIE MILZER, RICH AND ROCHELLE SOKOL TO CHAIR BENEFIT EVENT ON MARCH 20

Shlomo Fried, Jay Kamlet, Harvey and Stephanie Milzer, and Rich and Rochelle Sokol will chair the Kollel's 14th Anniversary Benefit Event. The theme of the event is "Heartbeat of our Nation" and will include an original musical experience composed and presented by the Kollel. Special guest speaker: Rabbi Yechiel Spero, author of the 'Touched by a Story' series.



DERECH HASHEM SERIES MON. NIGHTS

Join Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher for "Derech Hashem: Who is G-d and Why Did He Create the World?", a series for women based on Derech Hashem by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato. The classes are held on Mondays at 7:45 p.m., at EDOS. For info, contact Mrs. Tzippy Sommers at pit@denverkollel.org or 303-257-1089.



KNOW THY ENEMY TUES. AT AISH

Join Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers in studying the tactics and strategies of the Yetzer Hora, and develop your own battle plan for the greatest challenge of your life - the war against the Evil Inclination. Based on the classic work Chovos Halvevos. Tuesday mornings 7:55-8:25 at Aish. For information, please contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman at rmh@denverkollel.org or 303-820-2855.

Interpersonal Issues Returning Lost Objects

An item worth less than a p'rutah is exempt from the mitzvah or returning lost objects. For practical purposes, the obligation of returning lost objects applies only if the item is worth at least a quarter; otherwise, the item may be

kept or left behind.

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

Continued from front

Dear Michael,

Rabbeinu Gershom (960-1040 C.E.), "The Light of the Exile," was one of the earliest and greatest scholars of Ashkenazic Jewry, and led the most prestigious center of Talmudic learning of the day. In his times, there arose a need to institute a number of new measures, called "takanot." These included the banning of polygamy and the requirement of mutual consent in divorce.

Amongst his most well known enactments is the one you mentioned - the prohibition against reading people's mail. In those times, Jewish traders in different countries communicated in writing. Often their letters contained sensitive business information which could be very harmful if read by an outsider. As a safeguard against this, Rabbeinu Gershom legislated against reading people's mail.

What about email? Is reading email on a computer screen included in the "Cherem of Rabbeinu Gershom"? I posed this question to Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, shlit"a, and he made no distinction between regular mail and email.

You wrote, however, that you share a joint account. Here, the question can be asked, "Is an email message in a joint account like a post card?" Concerning post cards there is a doubt whether or not Rabbeinu Gershom's

decree applies, since the sender seems unconcerned if others read it.

On the other hand, perhaps the sender trusts that no one will push the button and "open" the message - just as when you send a letter, you expect that no one will open and read it.

I asked Rabbi Scheinberg about this as well. Here, too, he made no distinction between a joint account and a private account. People expect that no one read their messages, and it should not be done.

I hope this knowledge helps you overcome your curiosity. If not, let me remind you of the positive commandment of "v'ahavta l'reacha ka'mocha" - "Love your fellow person as yourself." Our Sages explain this as follows: One must not do to somebody else what he wouldn't want the other person to do to him. Would you like someone else to read your personal email?

Sources:

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 334:22.

Aruch HaShulchan 334:20.

Herald of Destiny, by Berel Wein, Shaar Press.

Leviticus 19:18, Shabbat 31a, Maharsha.

Reprinted with permission of Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem, www.ohr.edu