

Kehillah

Chiddushim and Insights for Shabbos | 4 Adar, 5783 | 10



The Mikdash and the Art of Giving and Receiving

Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer

“They shall make a Mikdash for Me, and I shall dwell among them.”

This, perhaps, is the main source for the opinion of the Ramban, among other Rishonim, who maintain that the primary purpose of the Mishkan and the Mikdash was for the enshrinement of the Shechinah among the Jewish People. The same Shechinah that appeared at Sinai, the Ramban explains, is the Divine presence that dwells forever in the Mikdash.

Based on this understanding, the Ramban understands that there is a special mitzvah to fashion the Aron, which stands at the very heart of the Mikdash – the place where heaven and earth meet. The Aron, together with the tablets therein, represent the very covenant between Hashem and His people – the relationship that stands at the core of the Mikdash.

The Rambam, in contrast (*Sefer Hamitzos* 20), writes that the main purpose of the Mikdash was our Avodah – the sacrificial service. Based on his understanding, the Rambam explains that the principal vessel of the Mikdash is not the Aron, but rather the (external) altar on which the sacrifices were offered. In fact, there is no special mitzvah, according to the Rambam, to construct the Aron.

This position seems to emerge from a cursory reading of the book of *Vayikra*. Certainly, the strong focus on the sacrificial service and the unending attention to detail seem to indicate that this is the central function of the Mishkan and Mikdash.

So which is it – the dwelling of the Shechinah or the sacrificial order?

The answer is: both. The Mikdash is an embodiment of the connection between Hashem and His people. Yet, for this embodiment to be true it must include two sides – the side of Hashem and His Shechinah among us, and the side of the Jewish people and their offerings.

In the great scheme of things, the Jewish people are beneficiaries of Hashem’s infinite goodness. Yet, our receiving must take place in the context of a relationship that requires both sides to be fully present. If a connection

is defined exclusively by one side’s giving and the other’s receiving, the receiver will be in danger of effacement, of becoming an object of giving rather than a subject of a true relationship.

.....

There is no such thing as a one-way relationship; there is always both giving and receiving. The important thing is to know how to give, and, no less crucially, how to receive.

.....

The Shechinah thus descends on the Mikdash only in response to the sacrificial order, “gifts” that we give Hashem. This is not because Hashem requires our gifts, but because He desires to give as part of a relationship. We thus need to establish ourselves as subjects, part of a reciprocal relationship.

Throughout *Parashas Terumah*, we thus find repeated mention of the expression *nedivus lev*, “generosity of the heart.” Our contribution to the Mishkan must be made by choice and not by compulsion, because only through choice can we bring ourselves and be readied for receiving Hashem’s presence and His infinite bounty.

These principles apply to all our relationships. There is no such thing as a one-way relationship; there is always both giving and receiving. The important thing is to know how to give, and, no less crucially, how to receive. In both, the secret is to bring ourselves: to give ourselves when we give, and to bring ourselves fully so we can truly receive the other – not the object given, but the giver himself.

Even in group dynamics, we need to practice the art of giving and receiving. Bringing ourselves fully to the table renders us vulnerable, and to protect ourselves we are prone to taking rather than receiving and allowing others to take rather than giving. Both undermine the potential for being in a relationship.

By giving with integrity and receiving with candor we create homes and communities worthy of the Shechinah. May its light shine upon us.

When Is Forced Labor Legal? Rabbi Asher Meir

This week's *haftara* tells of the forced labor Shlomo Hamelekh imposed in order to build the Temple in Jerusalem (*Melakhim* 1:5):

King Solomon imposed forced labor on all Israel; the levy came to 30,000 men. He sent them to the Lebanon in shifts of 10,000 a month: they would spend one month in the Lebanon and two months at home.

King Shlomo's impressment seems similar to that of the Egyptians. After all, the Israelites in Egypt were not chattel slaves who were bought and sold. They were free people who were used by the king for legitimate public works. This point is emphasized by Chazal in the *Midrash* (*Mechilta deRebbe Yishmael Yitro* 5):

"Whom I took out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This was bondage to the king. Or was it perhaps bondage to [other] slaves [i.e., individual masters]? When [the Torah] says "Who redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh the king of Egypt," [this shows] they were subordinate to the king.

What, then, was so terrible about the servitude the Jews endured in Egypt, which has become a symbol of tyranny for all mankind?

It is true that Pharaoh imposed on the people "crushing" labor (*avodas pareich*). But King Shlomo's draft was also quite burdensome – three months a year of reserve duty! When King Shlomo dies, the people point out to his son Rechavam (*Melachim* 1:12) "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke that your father laid on us, and we will serve you." Rechavam acknowledges their claim, stating: "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father flogged you with whips, but I will flog you with scorpions."

Indeed, a sovereign has broad powers of taxation over his subjects (*Rambam Gezeila* 5:12), which include levies of labor (*Rambam Melachim* 4:1). We learn from the *Gemara* (*Bava Basra* 8a, SA CM 163) that a community is likewise empowered to impose participation in public works on its citizens.

What, then, was so terrible about the servitude the Jews endured in Egypt, which has become a symbol of tyranny for all mankind? The answer is that according to the Torah, kings do indeed have expansive powers but not unlimited or arbitrary ones. We can point to a few instances in which it seems that Pharaoh overstepped

his constitutional limits:

Levies must be equitable. The Rambam rules (*Gezeila* 5:14) "Any law that a king decrees to be universally applicable, and not merely applying to one person, is not considered robbery. But whenever he takes from one person alone in a manner that does not conform to a known law, but rather seizes the property from the person arbitrarily, it is considered to be robbery." The Torah makes clear that the crushing labor of the children of Israel was imposed by Pharaoh as an intentional hardship and not as part of his overall fiscal policy for Egypt.

King Shlomo's draft for building the Temple was also quite burdensome – three months a year of reserve duty!

Of course, equitable does not mean that everyone must be treated identically. It only requires clear, relevant criteria. The draft exemption given to yeshiva students since Israel's founding is agreed upon by the government, publicized, and administered according to clear criteria. Hence, it is clearly valid according to Torah law. Indeed Chazal urged exempting Torah scholars from various levies (*Bava Basra* 8a, SA CM 163). *Lehavdil*, numerous precedent-setting decisions of the Israeli Supreme Court also affirmed that this arrangement is not vulnerable to legal challenges under Israeli law. (High court rulings 40/70, 910/86.)

The Jews were not subjects of Pharaoh. They were a distinct community enjoying royal patronage. This consideration actually exempts Pharaoh from the equitability requirement. But a sovereign is not allowed to prevent foreign nationals from leaving his country. The *Ran* (*Nedarim* 28a) goes further and says that the basis of the king's authority is his power to expel anyone who doesn't accept his rule, seemingly implying that even subjects are entitled to leave. Since the Torah (*Shemos* 1:1) explicitly tells us that Pharaoh's concern was that the Jews might leave, they obviously did not have freedom of movement. Rashi understands this verse differently, but elsewhere (*Shemos* 18:9) affirms that the Jews were not only enslaved but also imprisoned.

This is in striking contrast to Shlomo Hamelech, who ruled with the full agreement of the entire Jewish people. After his coronation, even his rival Adoniyah and Adoniyah's supporters Yoav and Evyatar acknowledged Shlomo's kingship (*Melachim* 1:1-2). We see also from the negotiations of the people's representatives with Shlomo's son Rechavam that they had fully accepted Shlomo's sovereignty over them and that the rule of Rechavam would likewise be contingent on their





agreement – which was not forthcoming.

Hence, even apart from Hashem’s commandment, Moshe’s demand that Pharaoh allow the Jewish people freedom of movement was completely justified according to the universal human principles of legitimate use of public

authority. Torah law insists that authority be exercised only by those who obtained it by legitimate agreement of the people and their recognized representatives, and only in a consistent way based on law, not in an arbitrary way based on whim.

Sanctity in Terumah, Sanctity in Hekdesh Rabbi Yitzchak Adlerstein

“Take for me *terumah*...and make for Me a *Mikdash*, so that I will dwell amongst them (*Shemos* 25:2,8). The Jewish People are asked to take mundane objects and sanctify them. We typically call this *hekdes* – making something holy. Significantly, the Torah here chooses a different term: *terumah*, which means raising up a portion from a larger quantity. Thus, the portion of produce we give to a kohen is called *terumah*, not *hekdes*. Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlop, the *talmid-chaver* of Rav Kook explains.

You cannot make all of something *terumah*. To be legally effective, you must leave over part of the original that remains unchanged. There must be a *shirayim*, a residual. Should a person designate all of his gathered crop as *terumah*, none of it becomes *terumah*! On the other hand, a person can choose to make all of his possessions *hekdes*.

Hekdes is localized. It takes effect only in what you isolate and invest with *kedushah*. *Terumah* does more than that. It elevates the portion that you designate, of course, but elevates all that remains as well. More accurately, it acts upon a *kedushah* that exists within the *shirayim*. Typically, we are not sensitive to this inherent *kedushah* at all. All we see is *chol*. *Klal Yisrael* acting in concert as they did in building the *Mishkan* has the capacity to bring out the latent *kedushah* in the ordinary. In other words, when they donated gold and silver for its construction, they potentiated the *kedushah* in the rest of the valuables in their possession, securing them for *Klal Yisrael* in the future.

Analogous to this is a *tallis*. We think of only the *tzitzis*, not the garment, as possessing *kedushah*. In fact, the *tzitzis*, draw *kedushah* from the garment! Because we cannot appreciate or process the *kedushah* of the garment, we treat it as non-sacred.

Tzaddikim can sense a bit of this *kedushah* in the ordinary. Because they are meticulous in their business dealings, their property is not contaminated in the slightest by theft and impropriety. Only completely legal owners are capable of uncovering the *kedushah* of the *shirayim*. The *tzaddik* values his property because of this *kedushah*. Thus, Chazal tell us (*Shemos* 25:1,8) that his property is more dear to him than his body. For the same reason, Yaakov went back for the “small vessels,” not willing to abandon sacred objects. Because of the enormous power of *terumah* to create the *kedushah*

of the *shirayim*, the Torah emphasizes “take for Me,” i.e., take it entirely *lishmah*. Restore it to its real nature as being fully connected to Hashem. Any disconnect between the taking and HKB”H will diminish its potency.

.....
Klal Yisrael acting in concert as they did in building the Mishkan has the capacity to bring out the latent kedushah in the ordinary.

Disconnect – separation – is the cause of so much that is evil and tragic. The disconnect between people – the essence of *sinas chinam* – destroyed our *Beis Hamikdash*. Separating between *nes* and *teva* – between the miraculous and the ordinary – means opening a space between the Four Letter Name and the Name *Elokim*. In truth, there is no separation between them.

Amalek creates separation where there should be nothing but unity. With our triumph over Amalek at the time of Purim, “For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor (*Esther* 8:16). The *Gemara* (*Megillah* 16B) identifies each of these with a different *mitzvah*. Light is Torah; gladness is *Yom Tov*; joy is *bris milah*; honor is *tefillin*. We may think that the two parts of the matched pairs are only related to each other. We think that there is no real light without Torah and that Torah inexorably leads to more light. It is incorrect, however, to regard these pairs as different concepts that are simply linked.

Chazal are teaching us that they form identities. When Amalek’s power ceases, separation and division disappear. With that, Jews realize that Torah is light. They experience *Yom Tov* as the ultimate *simchah*. They know of no joy that parallels *bris milah*. And they find no greater honor than wearing the *tefillin* that announces to the world that “the Name of Hashem is called upon you (*Devarim* 28:10).

This, then, is part of what the Torah declares with the instructions to prepare for the *Mishkan*’s construction. Take the sundry materials you need to create an abode for the *Shechinah* on earth. Take them for Me. Take them as if I were taking them Myself! *Yisrael v’orayso v’Kudsha Brich Hu* are one, without any distance between them.

This article is based on Mei Marom, Terumah, Maamar 65.

Gold-Plated Judaism Rabbi Yaakov Haber

G-d commanded Moses: “Make an ark of acacia wood, 2-1/2 cubits long, 1-1/2 cubits wide and 1-1/2 cubits high. Cover it with a layer of pure gold on the inside and outside, and make a gold rim all around its top” (*Shemos* 25:10).

The Talmud explains that the practical way of doing this is to make three boxes: a large one of gold, a smaller one of wood, and a smallest one of gold. The three are then placed one inside the other, so that the Biblical commandment is fulfilled.

Since it is written, “Cover it with gold on the inside and on the outside,” the Talmud (*Yoma* 72) derives from this that any *talmid chacham* whose inside does not match his outside is not really a *talmid chacham*. The level of spirituality that we display on the outside should match our true level of spirituality – that which is found on the inside.

But if the Ark represents a *talmid chacham*, why is it not made of solid gold? What is the acacia wood doing there? Should not the Torah scholar be pure rather than just veneered with spiritual beauty?

While studying in *yeshiva* in Jerusalem 45 years ago, I was sitting at a table with some friends during a Shabbos *kiddush* and discussing a trip to Bnei Brak. A friend suggested I visit the famous Ponevezh Yeshiva. There, he continued, I could catch a rare glimpse of a *malach*. He was referring to Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein zt”l who was world-renowned for his piety.

Our *Rosh Yeshiva*, who was sitting close by, overheard this and exclaimed, “You are mistaken. The greatness of Rav Yechezkel is that he is not a *malach* at all. He is flesh and blood like the rest of us.” This is the symbolism of the acacia wood. We must understand that as holy as we can become on the outside and on the inside, we nevertheless remain human beings. Our core is not

gold but wood, which represents our humanness. If we become so holy and spiritual, then we no longer have a place in this world, only in the world to come.

Once I found myself sitting next to someone on a flight, and we started talking about Judaism. He claimed to have tried out *Yiddishkeit* at one point of his life but did not feel comfortable with it. “I must feel comfortable with it,” he said. “Otherwise, it isn’t for me.”

.....
The greatness of Rav Yechezkel is that he is not a malach at all. He is flesh and blood like the rest of us.

He went on to explain that even today when he is called upon to contribute to Jewish causes, he refuses because he does not feel really good about giving away his money. I told him that, in my opinion, there is only one kind of person that feels really good about giving away his money: a *meshugenah*. If we were angels we would feel really good about giving our money away, but we are not.

We may be gold inside and outside, but in between is that layer of acacia. It’s not that we do not want to give, but there is a part of us that resists. It is exactly under these circumstances that we are required to do *mitzvos*. You can be sure that everyone, even a *Rosh Yeshiva*, finds it a nuisance to get up early in winter to make morning *minyan*. But this is what is required of us, even though we would rather sleep late.

All of us, even *tzaddikim*, are human. According to the Chofetz Chaim, the definition of the *mitzvah* of *chesed* is performing a kindness against one’s natural feelings. The humanness within each of us is to be treasured. Sanctify it and cover it with gold.

Optimistic Education Rebbetzin Ilana Cowland

What’s the difference between a pessimist and an optimist? The pessimist says, “Things are so bad they can’t possibly get any worse.” The optimist says, “Yes, they can! Yes, they can!”

When we talk about optimism in education, we need to define what optimism is and what it is not. It is not an exercise in focusing on unrealistic or unhelpful positivity in the face of a difficult situation. Minimally, doing this makes us foolish. Apart from foolishness, this approach can be callous, much like the *shiva* visitor who throws out an optimistic platitude that usually starts with the words, “At least you can be grateful that,” or “It’s a good thing that,” or “You’re lucky that.” Hashem certainly lines our great difficulties in life

with small kindnesses that are His kisses. Those are for us to appreciate and not for some well-meaning comforter to hold up as a stop sign to our grief.

.....
Children can get so stuck in the now. “If I have no friends today, I’ll never have friends. When we get stuck in the rut with them, we stop being helpful.”

Worse yet, optimism can be damaging and dangerous. Focusing on the bright side might be a display of denial

rather than *emunah*. When a situation is at a crisis point, too much optimism is dangerous. Appropriate optimism distinguishes the integral from the circumstantial and the permanent from the shifting.

The pessimist sees the dire situation and doesn't see the possibilities of things shifting towards improvement. In his view, things aren't just bad; they are over. He doesn't view the current behavior of the child acting out as the issue. He sees the child as the issue. As parents and educators, we are also strategists, interior designers, and engineers. Our long-term vision of belief in the child coupled with our understanding that things shift and move in life give way to our seeing the potential and imagining the next better step

for the child.

Children can get so stuck in the now. "If I have no friends today, I'll never have friends. If I failed my test today, I'm never going to pass." When we get stuck in the rut with them, we stop being helpful.

We have to add the word "yet" to our perspective and to our children's lexicon. "You don't have friends, yet." But I, the optimistic adult in your life, recognize that this painful situation is often circumstantial and almost always shifting. I am not overwhelmed by the now, because I know that "nows" change. And with my hope in you and hope in life, I'm going to help guide you through the pain of the now towards the blessing of the next.

What Can I Do About My Daughter? ?!

Rebbetzin Tamar Pfeffer

Question:

I am married with three children. We are *baalei teshuva* for 10 years, and my husband is wavering. So is my 16-year-old daughter. She's breaking all the modesty codes, smokes, and doesn't care much for mitzvos. I want to throw her out or throw everything out. The

standard response of "have patience and be friendly and attentive" doesn't work. I'm fed up, I've tried everything, and it's only getting worse. All day long she's busy with boys and cigarettes and who knows what. It's driving me crazy. What can I do?

Response:

Dear Questioner,

Thank you very much for your question. Your pain is evident in every word. Aside from the pain, I also recognize the deep responsibility you accept for your family's *teshuvah* process. This is also the core of the response I wish to offer.

You write that you have been frum for ten years. Your husband is wavering, and your 16-year-old is ever further removed. As you see it, you are making continued progress in your own *teshuvah* process, and you feel a sense of responsibility to ensure that the other members of your family are likewise moving ahead.

Dear mother: Parents are only responsible for their children's choices up to a certain point. The cut off is around the age of 12-13, though for each child it will be somewhat different – when the child takes his own responsibility and is considered an adult. We then trust him to lean on everything we gave him at a younger age and develop – to grow upon the foundation that we provided. Now, at an adult age, parents can no longer make choices on behalf of their children.

If parents can't choose for their adult children, what is left for them to do? Daven, of course. The gates of prayer are never sealed; prayers to Hashem do not return in vain. And know that Hashem is waiting for your *tefillos*. Your relationship with Him does not depend on the spiritual

state of your family members. It is between you and your Maker. "You are children of Hashem, your God" – always children, sometimes wayward, sometimes disobedient, but always children.

An ostensible fine line, which is actually a deep chasm, divides between prayer out of humility and prayer out of failure. A humble prayer is one in which you turn to Hashem and tell Him: "Lord of the world, this is your daughter; help me raise her." A "crisis prayer," davening that derives from failure, can be the opposite. It can be rooted in pride, in refusal to submit to circumstances. "I didn't succeed with this daughter; she is not what I expected her to be. Make her what I want her to be."

Children are not the property of their parents. A parent cannot put a child into a hatch he designed for him. The child has his choices, his decisions, and the path that Hashem designed for him.

.....
The fact that your daughter needs to dress a certain way at home respects the family hierarchy. While not arrogating her choice, it also reminds your daughter that her behavior is inappropriate.
.....

Beyond prayer, it remains up to parents to set clear



boundaries in their own home. This is our home, and we, the parents, decide the dress code, the type of friends who can come, and so on. The fact that your daughter needs to dress a certain way at home respects the family hierarchy. While not arrogating her choice, it also reminds your daughter that her behavior is inappropriate.

Finally, I want to offer some advice for how to maintain a close relationship with your daughter: by sharing. More specifically, by sharing home experiences. If she leaves the house in the morning and comes back in the evening, think about some things that happened at home during the day and tell her about them when she returns. The stories can be simple and even uninteresting, but in your daughter's eyes they are a thread connecting her and the family. The neighbor broke her leg; I dropped a cup of coffee and everything spilled; grocery prices are so high that I drove to a faraway store.

A deeper form of sharing family identity is consultation.

When she comes back in the evening, ask your daughter: "New neighbors just arrived and I want to bake them a cake. Should I choose a chocolate or a fruit cake?" "I wanted to cook soup for lunch. What do you suggest?" Your daughter will feel that she's significant to you – not just an object that did or didn't do *teshuva* but a person whose opinion is important to you (even when, for whatever reason, you can't act on it).

Place yourself in your daughter's place and feel the sweet feeling of "I'm needed. I'm important to them just the way I am." This feeling, which you can give her, will empower her to rise.

I wish you great success and much joy in the process,

Tamar Pfeffer

Tamar Pfeffer is a parenting and relationship counselor with years of experience, certified under Mrs. Rachel Arbus. Questions should be submitted to ask-en@akshiva.co.il

One Small Thread Rabbi Shmuel Kimche

Just as *chesed* is the foundation of Creation, the *Mishkan* – modeled on Creation – was also created with *chesed*, as we learn in this week's *parasha*. Here's a story I love. It's about how selfless giving has unlimited power because it taps into the strength of Creation.

Around 25 years ago, Sarah, a young girl of 9, was living alone with her mother in a suburb of New York City. The highlight of Sarah's week was on Tuesdays after school when she climbed from her 4th-floor apartment to do *chesed* with Mrs. Schwartz, an elderly blind neighbor on the 7th floor of their apartment complex. Mrs. Schwartz was always so excited when Sarah came to help out. Sarah was great company.

One afternoon during the weekly visit, Mrs. Schwartz turned excitedly to Sarah and exclaimed, "I just heard on the radio that the doctors have found a way to cure my blindness! In five years I will turn 60, and then I will be able to have this operation."

Sarah didn't understand. "Do you mean to tell me that there is an operation that can make you be able to see again?"

"Yes, but I can't afford the operation," Mrs. Schwartz

explained. When I become a senior citizen the government will pay for my operation."

Sarah couldn't sleep that night. The next morning, Sarah packed her school bag, but added a plastic cup and a plastic bag. During her first class, timid little Sarah raised her hand. "Could I please speak to the whole class? Stunned, the teacher replied, "Of course!"

.....
"Whenever I lose faith in society, all I need to do is take out this bag of money. In the bag, I see your daughter's love, sincerity, and care for others."

"Every week I visit my neighbor who is elderly and blind. She can't afford an operation to let her see again. I am collecting for Mrs. Schwartz's operation." The cup was passed around, and the children, inspired by the mission, threw into the cup the nickels and dimes that they had brought to school that day. Very soon, Sarah was scooping up the \$3.22 with satisfaction and pouring the coins into her small plastic bag.

Sarah didn't know that her teacher called for a quick





conference in the staff room to bring all the teachers on board. Very soon, Sarah was gainfully employed, moving from class to class collecting for Mrs Schwartz. By the end of the week, Sarah had collected a grand total of \$83.46.

Tuesday arrives. Sarah walks right past her front door and climbs to Mrs. Schwartz's apartment.

"Come, Mrs Schwartz. Put on your hat and coat. I have collected the money. We are going to fix your eyes," Sarah says. Speechless, Mrs. Schwartz follows Sarah. They walk down the block to the local optometrist and find a seat in the waiting room.

"Can I help you?" asks the optometrist.

"We are here to fix Mrs Schwartz's eyes," Sarah says.

The doctor takes one look at Mrs. Schwartz and says, "I think you are in the wrong place. You don't need an optometrist. You need the ophthalmologist down the block. And you should know that these types of operations are very expensive."

.....
"We can do the operation right in this clinic. Please come back in a week. There has been a cancellation, and you can take the slot."

Sarah takes Mrs. Schwartz by the hand and leads her out to the street. "Don't listen to him. I have the money."

Sarah and Mrs. Schwartz enter the ophthalmologist's office. It's closing time. The doctor is sitting in his office, and he can hear a faint shout from a young girl. "I know we don't have an appointment, but I must see the doctor." Dr. Johnson walks out of his office to be met by a crying young girl next to an elderly lady "All I want is to help Mrs. Schwartz. I have the money. I collected it myself."

Dr. Johnson takes a look at Sarah, and then at Mrs. Schwartz, and then at Sarah again. "Please come into my office. I need to check the patient." After a few minutes of checking and looking through his special lenses, Dr. Johnson pronounces, "We can do the operation right in this clinic. Please come back in a week. There has been a cancellation, and you can take the slot."

A week later, Mrs. Schwartz has the surgery, and after three days she takes off the bandages. She can once again see! Her first stop is Sarah's home, where Sarah's mother opens the door. "Mrs Schwartz, you can see! How did this happen?"

Now it was Mrs. Schwartz's turn to be surprised.

"Didn't you know? Sarah paid for my operation. What an amazing daughter you have."

Sarah's mother wasted no time. She ran down the stairs and flew to the ophthalmologist's office. "Please doctor, there must be some mistake. I don't know what my daughter promised you. I know that the operation must have cost tens of thousands of dollars. Please let me make a payment plan."

Her words were cut off by a wave of Dr. Johnson's hand. "Madame, let me tell you what happened last week. I was sitting in my office and thinking about my retirement when suddenly in walks your daughter with such sincerity and kindness. She had collected for her neighbor's operation. I thought to myself, "Johnson, this one is on you. This one is going to be free. I don't want any payment."

.....
Sarah and Mrs. Schwartz enter the ophthalmologist's office. It's closing time. The doctor is sitting in his office, and he can hear a faint shout from a young girl.

"But let me ask you one favor," continues the doctor as he takes out a plastic bag with dimes, nickels, and crumpled dollar bills. "Please let me keep this bag. Whenever I lose faith in society, all I need to do is take out this bag of money. In the bag, I see your daughter's love, sincerity, and care for others."

.....
 This is a true story about real giving as heard from Dr. David Pelcovitz in New York. Innocent young Sarah with her little collection actually changed lives. Her small attempt brought about something huge. HKB"H tells us to take just a small step. "Just bring me a little bit of gold, of wool, of goat-skin... And as long as it is for the sake of Heaven, I will build Eternity with it." Our small thread becomes Hashem's tapestry.

May we be *zoche* to be real partners!



Can You Enjoy the Shade of the Kotel? Josh and Tammy Kruger

The Story

Abie and Benji began walking back from the *Kotel* to the parking lot where their bus was due to arrive. "I'm glad we got a chance to come here. It's such a hot day, but I really wanted to say those *Tehillim*," said Abie.

Benji looked ahead towards their bus and said, "Gosh, there are lots of people waiting to get on the bus. We'll have to wait for the next one." Abie sighed. "I don't want to stand out here in the boiling sun. The next bus won't be here for another 20 minutes. Let's go back to the Wall to cool off a bit."

The boys headed back and sat by the Kotel wall to enjoy its shade. Chaim, one of the older boys from their yeshiva, was walking by and stopped near them. "Hi, guys," said Chaim, "I'm heading to the bus stop to get back to yeshiva. Aren't you heading back, too?"

The boys explained to Chaim that they were just enjoying the shade of the Kotel until the bus arrived.

Chaim hesitated for a moment and then said, "You know, this may sound strange, but I'm not sure that you're really allowed to do this."

The boys headed back and sat by the Kotel wall to enjoy its shade. Chaim, one of the older boys from their yeshiva, was walking by and stopped near them. "Hi, guys," said Chaim, "I'm heading to the bus stop to get back to yeshiva

"Not allowed?" asked Benji, "Not allowed to sit near the Kotel?"

"Yes," answered Chaim. "Have you learned the idea of *hekdesch* yet in class?"

Puzzled, the two boys looked at each other and shook their heads.

The Discussion

Q: What is the connection between our story and the *parasha*?

A: *Parashas Terumah* teaches us about important objects in the *Mishkan* and *Beis Hamikdash*, such as the *aron*, the *shulchan*, and the *menorah*. Unfortunately, today we do not have a *Beis Mikdash*. The *Kotel* is all that is left.

Q: What is *hekdesch*?

A: *Hekdesch* is a word that refers to the *Beis Hamikdash* and the things inside it. Everything belongs to Hashem, and we are not allowed to use any of it for our personal benefit.

Q: Should the *Kotel* be considered *hekdesch*?

A: Some *rabbanim* believe that the *Kotel* is a wall of the actual *Beis Hamikdash* (*Radvaz*, Vol. 2, No. 648, 691; *Chayei Adam*, *Shaarei Tzedek*, *Mishpetei Eretz*, Ch. 11, No. 8; *Responsa of the Ridvaz*, No. 38). According to these opinions, the *Kotel* would be considered *hekdesch*. We would have to make sure

that we are pure when we come near the wall and also that we don't get any personal benefit from it. However, most *rabbanim* today believe that the *Kotel* is part of the wall that was surrounding the *Beis Hamikdash* (*Avnei Nezer*, *Yoreh De'ah*, 450; *Tzitz Eliezer* 10:1; *Rav Ovaya Yosef*, *Yabia Omer Rav Ovadya Yosef*, Vol. 5, *Yoreh De'ah*, No. 27). This would mean that it isn't *hekdesch*.

Even if the Kotel is not actually a wall of the Beis Hamikdash, it still has great kedushah. Therefore, it is inappropriate to use it for purposes such as shade.

Q: Are the boys allowed to use the *Kotel* for shade?

A: Even if the *Kotel* is not actually a wall of the *Beis Hamikdash*, it still has great *kedushah*. Therefore, it is inappropriate to use it for purposes such as shade (*Iggros Moshe*, *Yoreh De'ah* Vol. 4, No. 63).

Written in collaboration with Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer; le'iluy nishmas Frumit Bat Yosef, Edith Nusbaum a"h.

