

# A Taste of Text: Source based learning for Shabbat

*This weekly sheet is brought to you by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman of the New West End United Synagogue in conjunction with Shapell's/Darché Noam*

## PARSHAT TERUMAH

### DVAR TORAH: THE ARON'S PERMANENT POLES

The Torah makes a curious distinction between the poles of the Aron (Ark of the Covenant) and the poles of two other vessels in the Mishkan, the Mizbeiach (Incense Altar) and Shulchan (Table of the Showbreads). It is forbidden to ever remove the poles from the Aron, as it says, "The poles should be in the rings of the Aron and not leave it," (Shemot 25:15 according to the Sages on Yoma 72a), but there is no such prohibition with regards to the Mizbeiach and Shulchan. The poles of the Mizbeiach and the Shulchan could be removed and reinserted when there was a need to transport the Mishkan and its vessels. The Aron's poles were different. They were permanently in their rings and never moved. Why the difference?

The Meshech Chokhmah (Harav Meir Simchah of Dvinsk, 1843-1926) offers two answers. Here is one of them: Why the poles could never leave the Aron can be understood through an analogy to the Rambam's approach to lighting the Menorah. According to the Rambam (Hilkhot Temidin Umusafin 3:10) the candles of the Menorah were lit both at night and in the morning. The Kesef Mishneh, in his commentary on the Rambam's ruling, lists a group of other Rishonim – including Rashi, the Raavad, and the Rashba – who differ with the Rambam and say the Menorah's candles were only lit at night. Commentators discuss how each approach bases itself on Talmudic sources, but the Meshech Chochmah searches for the message underlying the Rambam's approach.

The Gemara comments: "Does G-d need the Menorah's light? Of course not. Rather, the Menorah's light was testimony that the Divine Presence rests in Israel" (Shabbat 22b). This might explain why according to the Rambam we are to light the Menorah during the day. Candles lit during the day are clearly not there to illuminate the darkness. They are a sign of the Divine Presence.

The poles of the Aron might serve a similar purpose. The Talmud tells us that the Aron's weight was not carried by those holding onto the poles. "The Aron lifted up those who carried it" (Sotah 35a). Its poles were not there to enable it to be carried. Instead, its transporters held on to the poles as the Aron miraculously moved from place to place. This miraculous movement is appropriate for the Aron, the dwelling place in this world of the Divine Glory, which Itself carries all the worlds.

True, Hashem wanted the Kohanim to participate by lighting the flames that testified to the Divine Presence every morning; and the Leviim participated by holding their hands on the poles, seeming to carry it. But they weren't needed.

To demonstrate this, the poles were always to remain in the rings of the Aron. A stationary Aron with poles in it makes a powerful statement. Just as the poles do not serve to transport the Aron when it is stationary, so they are unnecessary when the Aron is being "held" on the shoulders of those who "carry" it. It carries them; they do not carry it. Just as the candles lit during the day were not needed for illumination, the poles of the Aron were not needed for transportation.

## SOURCE GUIDE: THE MAKING OF THE MENORAH

The present Talner Rebbe, Harav Yitzchak Menachem Weinberg, שליט"א, asks a string of challenging questions about the making of the Menorah, and answers by highlighting the uniqueness of the Menorah among the vessels of the Mishkan. This source guide is based on his Chumash shiur (Parshat Terumah: "The Menorah") in the Shemot volume (pp. 165-169) of *המה ינחמוני*, a collection of shiurim on the Chumash by the present Talner Rebbe, שליט"א.

### A. Difficulties Making the Menorah

A number of sources emphasize how especially difficult the making of the Menorah was:

<p><b>1. Shemot 28:40 and Rashi's comment on it</b>                  [Hashem said to Moshe:] See and make them according to the form that you were shown on the mountain. <b>Rashi:</b> "See and make" – See here on the mountain the form that I show you. This shows that Moshe had difficulty with the process of making the Menorah until the Holy One, blessed be He, had to show him a Menorah of fire.</p>	<p><b>שמות כה:מ ורש"י עליו</b>                  וְרָאָה וַעֲשֵׂה בְּתַבְנִיתָם אֲשֶׁר אֶתָּה מְרָאָה קִדְרָה.  <b>רש"י:</b> "וראה ועשה" - ראה כאן בהר תבנית שאני מראה אותך. מגיד שנתקשה משה במעשה המנורה עד שהראה לו הקב"ה מנורה של אש.</p>
---	---

The following Midrash goes even further:

<p><b>2. Midrash Tanchuma Behalotecha 3</b>                  "Beaten gold" (Bamidbar 8:4) – What is the meaning of "mikshah"? It is as if to say, 'It is difficult (kasheh) to make.' How much did Moshe exert himself before making the Menorah, as it says, "The Menorah will be made with difficulty" (Shemot 25:31). When Moshe found it difficult, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moshe, "Take the gold and throw it into the fire. Then remove it and it will have been made by itself." Its buttons, flowers, goblets, and shafts come from it: You hit with the hammer and it will be made by itself. The word is written <i>tei'aseh</i> (it will be made) with a Yud and not <i>ta'aseh</i> (you should make it), to indicate that the Menorah will be made by itself. What did Moshe do? He took the gold block, threw it into the fire, and said, "Master of the universe, here is the block thrown into the fire just as You wanted. Let it be made before You." Immediately the Menorah came out as it should be.</p>	<p><b>מדרש תנחומא בהעלותך פרק ג</b>                  "מקשה זהב" – מהו מקשה? כלומר מה קשה היא לעשות. שהרבה יגע משה עד שלא עשה המנורה שכן הוא אומר "מקשה תיעשה המנורה" (שמות כה) – כיון שנתקשה אמר הקב"ה למשה, "טול זהב והשליכהו לאש והוציאהו והיא נעשית מעצמה." וכפתריה ופרחיה גביעיה וקניה ממנה: אתה היה מכה בפטיש ומעצמה נעשית, לכך הוא אומר מקשה תיעשה המנורה, יו"ד מלא. ולא כתיב תעשה כלומר מעצמה תיעשה. מה עשה משה נטל את הככר והשליכו לאור ואמר משה, "רבש"ע הרי הככר נשלך בתוך האש כשם שאתה רוצה. תעשה לפניך." מיד יצאת המנורה עשויה כתקונה. לכך כתיב "כַּמְרָאָה אֲשֶׁר הִרְאָה יְיָ אֶת מֹשֶׁה בְּעֹשֶׂה אֶת הַמְנוֹרָה" (במדבר ח:ד) כן עשה משה אין אומר כאן אלא "כן עשה" סתם. מי עשה? הקב"ה.</p>
---	--

Making the Menorah was so difficult for Moshe that he gave up on being able to make it himself. He threw the gold into the fire and the Menorah emerged; he banged on the Menorah with a hammer and the ornamentation miraculously appeared. If the Menorah was so difficult that even someone as great as Moshe was not able to figure it out, why did Hashem command it? And if it would end up being made miraculously, why did Hashem command Moshe to make the Menorah in the first place? Furthermore, why was Moshe the one who had to throw the gold into the fire? If anyways the Menorah would be made miraculously, anyone else could also have thrown in the gold. The Talner Rebbe also finds the following comment difficult:

<p><b>4. Baal Haturim on Shemot 25:31</b>                  The letter Samech doesn't appear in the entire passage about the Menorah, nor in the Creation narrative. This tells us that where there is a candle there is no Satan and no damage. In the merit of the candle of a mitzvah and the light of Torah the Satan shuts his mouth and refrains from accusing.</p>	<p><b>בעל הטורים על שמות כה:לא</b>                  ואין בפרשת מנורה אות סמ"ך וכן במעשה בראשית. לומר במקום נר אין שטן ואין מזיק. ובזכות נר מצוה ותורה אור סותם פיו של שטן מלהשטין.</p>
--	--

Doesn't the Aron Kodesh, the Holy Ark that held the two tablets and the Torah, represent the Torah? Wouldn't it have been more appropriate to keep a Samech out of the parshah of the Aron instead of, or in addition to, keeping it out of the parshah of the Menorah?

## B. Effort and Results

The basis of his answers to the questions above is the following comment by the Sfat Emet:

<p><b>5. Sfat Emet Terumah 5631</b>          Moshe had difficulty with the Menorah and Hashem showed him a Menorah [of fire]. It later says that the Menorah was made by itself, based on the word tei'aseh. If so, why did Hashem show it to Moshe? Rather, through man's will, when heart and soul truly want it, the remainder gets finished. What a man is not able to accomplish gets done by itself. This is behind what Hashem said, "Throw it into the fire ..."</p>	<p><b>שפת אמת פרשת תרומה - שנת [תרל"א]</b>          נתקשה משה במנורה והראה לו הש"י. ואח"כ כתיב שנעשית מעצמה. תיעשה כו'. א"כ למה הראה לו. אך כי ע"י רצון האדם בלב ונפש באמת. נגמר השאר. מה שא"י לעשות. נעשה מעצמו. וזה מ"ש השלך לאור כו'.</p>
--	--

It was only Moshe's efforts to understand how to make the Menorah – his will to do Hashem's Will – that brought about the Menorah emerging by itself from the fire. Moshe's effort was essential.

This is a universal principle:

<p><b>6. Sfat Emet Terumah 5631</b>          The same is true for every mitzvah done by any Jew. Certainly a person doesn't have the ability to accomplish G-d's Will. Rather, according to a person's will the results get accomplished by themselves. Nevertheless, the completion was also based on man's will. This is why Hashem showed Moshe [the Menorah], so he should understand Hashem's Will. Through the desire to accomplish Hashem's Will, even though it is beyond human capability, it gets done by itself.</p>	<p><b>שפת אמת פרשת תרומה - שנת [תרל"א]</b>          כן הוא בכל מצוה מכל איש ישראל. כי וודאי אין בכח אדם לעשות רצונו ית'. רק כפי רצון האדם נגמר מעצמו. ומ"מ הגמר בא ג"כ ע"י רצון האדם. וזה שהראו לו לידע מכוון ורצונו ית'. וע"י שרצה לעשות רצונו ית' רק שהי' למעלה מכח אדם. לזה נעשה מעצמו.</p>
---	--

When we put in true effort, we are blessed with the gift of results:

<p><b>7. Sfat Emet Terumah 5631</b>          This is how my grandfather, of blessed memory, explained the Talmudic statement (Megillah 6b), "If one says, 'I made the effort and found it – believe him.'" My grandfather asked: Doesn't finding refer, as the Gemara (Sandhedrin 97a) says, to something one comes upon. Why is something that was the result of effort referred to as 'finding'? Rather, the explanation is as follows: Who is able to find the truth through his own efforts? Only Hashem, may He be blessed, gives it as a present, as something one finds, not as something one accomplishes. This is what happened to Moshe [on Mount Sinai]. After forty days in Heaven, not eating bread or drinking water, G-d gave the Torah to Moshe. The Midrash says He gave it as a present. The reason for my brevity is that I have already written about this.</p>	<p><b>שפת אמת פרשת תרומה - שנת [תרל"א]</b>          כענין זה פי' אא"ז מו"ר זצלה"ה עמ"ש יגעתי ומצאתי. ודקדק כי מציאה בהיסח הדעת (סנהדרין צז.). ומה שבא ע"י יגיעה למה נק' מציאה. אך מי יכול למצוא האמת ע"י יגיעתו. ורק שהש"י נותן במתנה ודרך מציאה ע"י היגיעה. וכן כ' במשה אחר שהי' מ' יום בשמים לחם לא אכל כו' אח"כ כ' ויתן אל משה. וכ' במד' במתנה ניתנה לו כו' וקצתי כי כ' כבר.</p>
---	---

The Aron and the Menorah both represent Torah. But the Aron represents the effort we put into Torah and the Menorah represents the results – that are a Divine gift. Only someone as great as Moshe, who put in his maximum effort and grappled with the difficulties presented by the making of the Menorah, was able to merit the Divine gift of the miraculously made Menorah. This explains the Baal Haturim's comment. Why does Samech appear in the section about the Aron but not in the section about the Menorah? There are plenty of difficulties to overcome in learning Torah – plenty of "Samech"s – but we have to put in our maximum effort to overcome them. That is what the Aron represents. But the Menorah, in contrast, is associated with the G-d-given results of learning. There the Satan has no entry.

## FOR MY NAME BY RABBI AVRAHAM FISCHER

Hashem commands the Children of Israel "ויקחו לי תרומה" – "They should take for Me a donation" (Shemot 25:2). Rashi's comment on the words ויקחו לי is famous for its brevity and has stimulated much discussion by his commentaries. "ויקחו לי" – "For Me" means "לי לשמי" – "For My Name."

What does Rashi wish to convey by his comment?

Based on the Aruch Hashulchan He'atid (Harav Yechiel Michel Epstein זצ"ל's work on the laws that will be applicable when the Machiach will come), we understand that an object that is to be used for the Mishkan must go through a series of stages.

For example, a piece of wood that is going to be used as one of the boards for the walls starts off as חול, unconsecrated. Then it becomes לשם קודש, earmarked for eventual consecration. The next stage is construction. The piece of wood is made into a board. And the final stage is מוקדש, the board is consecrated for the Mikdash.

It is in this light that Rashi should be understood. Hashem commands that the People of Israel even initially take each object to be used in the Mishkan לי, for My Name. Each object is eventually made into a part of the Mishkan, and each is finally consecrated.

There is a tendency to think that there are two distinct, even antithetical spheres of existence, the sacred and the profane. But this is not so. חול and קודש are not binary values, but rather the starting and end points on a continuum, a gradual process.

Our personal growth in Torah should be the same, one step at a time.

שבת שלום ומבורך

We mourn the tragic death of Border Police Corporal Hadar Cohen, הי"ד, murdered in a terrorist attack last week. We continue to pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.

---

*This publication is compiled by the staff and Rabbonim at **Shapells/Yeshivat Darché Noam** for men and **Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya Seminary** for women in Jerusalem. Find out more about the **married couples' programme** and the **Pathways Israel** and **Pathways Plus** programmes offered at [www.darchenoam.org](http://www.darchenoam.org) +972-2-651-1178, 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem.*

To dedicate a Taste of Text, please email Rabbi Freedman at  
[rabbi.dr.moshefreedman@gmail.com](mailto:rabbi.dr.moshefreedman@gmail.com)

For back issues and other articles by Rabbi Freedman please see  
[www.moshefreedman.com](http://www.moshefreedman.com)