



תורת חיים Torat Chayim

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Eitz Chayim of Dogwood Park

בס"ד

Terumah

8 Adar Rishon, 5784 / Feb. 16, 2024

Vol. 1 Num. 19

This issue of Torat Chayim is dedicated to the soldiers of the IDF, the hostages, and the wounded.

Ramban on Our Parshah: Let's Go!

In elementary school we absorb a fundamental lesson about the *Chumash*: There are no redundant words. Two words toward the beginning of our parshah, *v'chen ta'asu*, provide a powerful illustration.

Hashem tells Moshe (Shemot 25:8-9), "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell in their midst. According to all that I show you, the form of the Mishkan and the form of all of its implements. And so shall you make [*v'chen ta'asu*]." What is the point of "And so shall you make?" The verses began with "They shall make" already!

Rashi suggests that "And so shall you make" is about the future; all future sanctuaries must follow the model of the Mishkan. But Ramban rejects this; when King Solomon built the Beit HaMikdash he indeed deviated from these original designs, and Hashem approved of it. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra contends that the initial "They shall make" was regarding the building, and the concluding "And so shall you make" was regarding the implements, but Ramban dismisses this idea as unnecessary.

Ramban declares that "So shall you make" was not an instruction, and it certainly was not redundant. It was an excited and exciting Divine charge, a coach rallying, "Let's

go! Let's make this!" Hashem was inspiring Moshe and his "team" to emerge from the locker room with energy and alacrity, to dedicate materials and construct the building that would be the focus for Hashem's presence.

This is consistent with Ramban's general positive vision of the Mishkan. Per Rashi the instructions for the Mishkan came after the Golden Calf, and the Mishkan atoned for that sin, Ramban sees the Mishkan as the original Divine plan. We could capture the Divine presence found at Sinai and bring it along with us in our travels, so that we would sense Hashem among us in perpetuity.

Ramban channels this exciting perspective in explaining the role of the angelic *keruvim* atop the Aron. Per Ramban, the celestial *keruvim* constitute a throne of sorts for Hashem (see Shemuel II 22:11, Tehillim 18:11, Tehillim 99:1). Our *keruvim* and Aron will be a similar throne, enabling us to sense Hashem's presence among us.

Those two words were far from superfluous; they asserted that we could ensure that the intimacy of Sinai would never end. More, they asserted that Hashem was excited about this prospect, and wanted to share that excitement with us. You will harbor a perpetual Sinai; let's go!

Parshah Riddles for Kids (answers on the back)

Age 4-8: What is the name of the building the Jews carried with them in the midbar, which they used to serve Hashem?

Age 8-12: The Aron that held the Luchot was made of wood and what other material? A) Plastic B) Gold C) Aluminum

Age 12+: According to Rashi, what did the Keruvim on the Aron look like? A) Oxen, B) Moshe and Aharon C) Babies

Journey Through Tanach: Yehoshua, Perek 18

We begin Chapter 18 on what ought to be a national high, as the Jews dedicate a new Mishkan in Shiloh. I would have expected to see a grand celebration, parallel to the celebrations dedicating the Mishkan in the wilderness and dedicating the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem. After all, the Mishkan would stand in Shiloh for 369 years (Zevachim 118a), nearly as long as each of the Batei Mikdash! Further, this Mishkan was halachically greater than any other Mishkan in Israel, and almost like that of the Beit HaMikdash (Zevachim 112b)! For example: while Shiloh stood, personal altars were forbidden; this was not true for any other Mishkan.

Nonetheless, all we see is a perfunctory declaration that the Jews established the Mishkan. Perhaps this is meant as a statement that no Sanctuary would be worth celebrating until the rise of the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem. (18:1-2)

We then turn to the distribution of the rest of the land. Yehudah, Shimon, Menasheh and Ephraim have received portions west of the Yarden River, but that leaves Dan,

Naftali, Gad, Asher, Yissachar, Zevulun and Binyamin. Yehoshua instructs the Jews to map the remaining territory and identify seven portions, which they will distribute via lottery. (18:3-10)

Why hadn't the Jews identified lots yet? Rabbi David Altschuler (Metzudat David) suggests that the Jews had delayed because they feared that each tribe, knowing its own space, might fail to fight on behalf of the rest. In truth, this did happen in the time of Devorah, when certain tribes failed to respond to her call to fight Canaanite oppressors.

The first portion outlined goes to Binyamin; they receive a rectangle of land sandwiched between Yehudah to their south and Ephraim to their north. Jerusalem is split between Binyamin and Yehudah, and Shiloh is split by Binyamin and Ephraim (Zevachim 118b). On their east they hit the Yarden River, but in the west they do not reach the Mediterranean; Dan is their western neighbor. According to Josephus (Antiquities V 1:22), their land is narrow, but very fertile. (18:11-28)

The 613 Mitzvot: #18, 22, 23, 393 - First-Born Animals, Part 2

(Continued from last week)

The mitzvot of the firstborn apply even when there is no Beit haMikdash, biblically within Israel and rabbinically outside of Israel. [One version of Rambam's Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Bechorot 1:5 says that these mitzvot apply only in Israel, and Sefer HaChinuch seems to adopt this view in mitzvah 393, but the consensus is that this edition of the Rambam is in error; see Minchat Chinuch 393:7.] Today, Jewish ranchers tend to form partnerships with non-Jews as joint owners of their animals; a first-born animal owned in partnership with a non-Jew is not subject to the laws of the first-born animal.

The Torah's special declaration that we may not redeem an unblemished firstborn animal is odd; we may not redeem any unblemished korban for money. Why would the firstborn kosher animal be different? Sefer HaChinuch (393) suggests that this lesson is necessary because we do redeem the firstborn donkey; one might have thought that the same would be true for a firstborn kosher animal. Therefore, the Torah takes the time to note that one may not do so.

In truth, even a blemished firstborn animal is never "redeemed", in the usual sense of the word; it may be sold, but its sanctity is not transferred to the money used for purchase. Because its holy status is a function of birth and not conferred upon it by the will of a human being, no human being can transfer the holiness to another entity (Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch to Bamidbar 18:17).

Israel's Chief Rabbis: Purim in Ramot, Rav Shalom Messas

Born to Rav Mimoun and Rachel Messas in Morocco, Rav Shalom Messas was a dedicated student from a young age. He continued his family's long rabbinic tradition, directing the Talmud Torah of Meknes for some 2,000 students, then founding Yeshivat Keter Torah in Meknes, then becoming Chief Rabbi of Casablanca, and finally Chief Rabbi of Morocco. In 1978, Rav Ovadia Yosef and Rav Shlomo Goren brought Rav Messas to Israel to become the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem; Rav Messas served in this role until his passing in 2003.

Rav Messas was influential beyond the Sephardic world, working closely with Ashkenazi leaders like Rav Eliezer Waldenberg and Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv. Chabad Lubavitch credits him with enabling their early success in Casablanca. Rav Messas produced many students, who occupy leading positions around Israel today. The following is from his *Shemesh uMagen* (Vol I Orach Chaim 51).

The community of Ramot is located northwest of Jerusalem, with a small gap between it and northwest Jerusalem. For many years, they celebrated Purim as part of Jerusalem, on the 15th of Adar, following the principle that com-

munities which are near walled cities and visible with them celebrate when they do, on the 15th. But in 1984, shortly before Purim, Rav Ovadia Yosef published an article claiming that Ramot should celebrate Purim as an unwalled city, on the 14th of Adar. He contended that because more than one *mil* (approximately one kilometer) separated Ramot and Jerusalem, they were considered separate cities, as per Megillah 2b which states that cities separated by one *mil* are considered distinct.

Expressing his own view and that of the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, Rav Yitzchak Kolitz, Rav Messas opposed Rav Ovadia Yosef for reasons including:

- The historical custom of Ramot celebrating on the 15th.
- Rav Yosef Karo wrote (Orach Chaim 688:2) that communities which are seen with a walled city read on the 15th, even if they are not close to the walled city.
- Ramot is considered part of Jerusalem for municipal services and taxation.
- The Talmud's one *mil* threshold refers to the time it took to travel one *mil* in the talmudic era. Our vehicles easily travel from Ramot to Jerusalem in the time it takes to walk one *mil*.

Upcoming Learning!

All classes are open to men and women and free of charge, unless otherwise noted

5:30 PM Shabbat February 17

Halachah and Technology: Cooking with Chemical Reactions, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, at Eitz Chayim

8:30 AM to 9:15 AM Sunday February 18

Fourteen Centuries: Rav Saadia Gaon, Part 3, with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, in the lobby at Eitz Chayim

7:30-8:30 PM Monday February 19 at Eitz Chayim and on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/medhal>

Halachah in Healthcare Settings: Davening for Patients with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

8:15-9:00 PM Tuesday February 20

Gemara Makkot with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, for men - 693 Knollwood

Age 12+ C: Babies. See Rashi Shemot 25:18
Age 8-12 B: Gold
Age 4-8 The Mishkan

Answers to Parshah Riddles

Torat Chayim does not include the Name of Hashem but should be disposed of respectfully, such as in paper recycling.

To dedicate an issue of Torat Chayim, go to <https://eitzchayim.shulcloud.com/form/toratchayim.html>