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TORAH PERSPECTIVES

RABBI AVI GOLDSTEIN



BEAMING SHITTIM

This week's parshah describes in great detail the materials and structural makeup of the Mishkan. When describing the beams used for the walls of the Outer Courtyard of the Mishkan, the Pasuk says (26:15), "ועשית את הקרשים למשכן עצי שטים עומדים", literally translated as, "Make upright beams for the Tabernacle out of acacia wood". The Gemara (יומא ע"ב.) finds the word "עומדים" superfluous, and explains that one might think that once the Mishkan was no longer needed (i.e. once they entered ארץ ישראל) its promise is lost and its hope is ruined (i.e. it will never return, therefore our hope and waiting for them is for naught), therefore the Torah teaches us that the beams are standing forever and ever. The Maharsha explains that despite the fact that they were made out of wood and should have rotted over the millennia, it is in fact still whole, intact and completely preserved.

This Gemara is very puzzling. since when are we awaiting for the Mishkan to return? we know that eventually, may it be speedily in our days, the 3rd Beis Hamikdash will be built, but why would we need the Mishkan? however, the Midrash (אליהו רבא ס"ג) tells us that since the Mishkan was made by pure people with a complete conviction, it is difficult for Hashem to lay their efforts to waste (despite the fact that they were no longer necessary once we had the המקדש), therefore לעתיד לבא Hashem will come and will dwell in the Mishkan like he did originally. Because of this, the same way we long for and daven for the 3rd המקדש, so too we should be awaiting and hoping for the original Mishkan to be rebuilt, from its original parts and materials. for this reason, the Torah tells us that עצי שטים עומדים, that the acacia wood from which the beams were built are standing everlasting and forever.

The באר יוסף asks, why did the Torah choose to inform us about this interesting fact specifically now, by the beams which were used for the walls of the Mishkan? why not tell it to us by a more important and integral part of the Mishkan, such as the roof (which the Gemara (שבת כ"ח.) tells us was a main part of the Mishkan, more so than the beams), or the פרוכת? What is the connection specifically between the Beams of the Taberknackle and the preservation and future rebuilding of the Mishkan?

continued on page 2 >>>

Meaning — BEHIND THE *Minhag*



RABBI HILLEL MULLER

VIMPEL

If you walked into shul on Monday morning, December 8th, you would have noticed an unusual and beautiful sight: a crowd gathered together—not for a bris, but for the Levi family's Vimpel celebration.

Many may ask: What is a Vimpel?

The custom of wrapping a Sefer Torah with a long decorative cloth dates back to the Talmudic era, when Torah scrolls were bound with fabric sashes. Over time, the practice of donating these cloths in honor of special occasions developed, and is already mentioned by 14th-century Rishonim such as the Tashbetz and the Maharil.

Written records from the 1600s describe a particularly meaningful adaptation of this practice. In Minhagei Varmisa, authored by Rabbi Yuspa Shemesh and annotated by Chavas Yair, we find documentation of the custom to fashion the linens used at a newborn's bris milah into a sash to bind the Torah scroll. This sash, known as a Vimpel, became a beloved tradition among Western European Jewish communities for cen-



continued on page 2 >>>

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CANDLE LIGHTING | 5:58

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A different Midrash tells a fascinating historical fact concerning these beams. The beams were made of עצי שטים (acacia wood), which did not naturally grow in the desert, or even in Egypt were the Jews had left from. Instead, the Midrash tells us, when Yaakov Avinu travelled down to Egypt to see his beloved long-lost son Yosef, foreseeing his descendants future need for עצי שטים hundreds of years later, went out of his way and stopped in באר שבע and harvested them there. He then loaded them up and brought them to Egypt, where he planted them to be available for בני ישראל to take with them when they left Egypt. Eventually, when they finally left Egypt, the Jews chopped down those שטים trees, ready to use them to build the משכן once Hashem gave them the word.

Yaakov Avinu had been missing his favorite son for 22 years. For 22 years he was mourning and could not be comforted, and all of a sudden, he was informed that יוסף was in fact alive. The Ramban tells us that when Yaakov heard the news that Yosef was alive and well, he fainted out of excitement. Afterwards, he immediately set out to see his son, not knowing how much longer he had to live. Imagine the emotions and excitement that יעקב must have felt! And instead of hurrying quickly straight to מצרים, he went well out of his way to באר שבע, spent considerable time and energy cutting down heavy שטים trees and loaded them up onto his wagons, and brought them down to Egypt with him. This whole process must have cost him a considerable amount of time and significantly delayed his reunion with יוסף. Despite his excitement to finally see his favorite son, יעקב אבינו felt it worthwhile to push it off and exert extreme effort shlepping the trees with him, just to ensure that his future descendants would have the wood they need to build the משכן hundreds of years later. This shows יעקב's extreme conviction and dedication to the משכן, and how committed he was that there be a משכן.

Similarly, the time when מצרים left כלל ישראל was a tumultuous time when they were being rushed and hurried out of מצרים, and didn't even have time for their dough to rise. משה רבינו had to force them to go around and collect gold and silver from the Egyptians. Despite its value and the fact that the Egyptians were happy to give them all that wealth, they didn't want it, instead just wanting to leave Egypt as soon as possible. They were also petrified that פרעה would chase them (which ended up happening) and armed themselves for self-defense. They were also under intense pressure from the Egyptians to leave. Despite all of this pressure and חפזון, they felt it worthwhile to go chop down those שטים trees in order to build the משכן. They felt it was worthwhile to delay their departure (and have מצה instead of fully-risen bread) in order to ensure that they can build the משכן and that the שכונה would have a place to dwell amongst them. This too, shows כלל ישראל's extreme commitment and conviction that Hashem have a place to rest his שכונה and that they be able to build a משכן, despite the tumults of the time.

It is this conviction, and this נדבת לב, that the Midrash is referring to when it describes how attached Hashem is to the Mishkan. It is because of this dedication, and this commitment, that is the reason why Hashem feels the need to preserve the Mishkan, despite the fact that it is no longer needed, and rebuild it לעתיד לבא out of the very same pieces it was originally built from. The 1st and 2nd מקדש are no longer, and were not preserved. It is only because of this extreme dedication and נדבת לב that only the Mishkan will be rebuilt.

We have now finished going through the weeks of שובבי"ם, and have entered into the month of Adar. Rav Avraham Schorr Shlit"א points out that Adar, which is the twelfth month of the year (beginning with Nissan), corresponds to the Shevet of Naftali (when following the order of the דגלים, set forth in Parshas Bamidbar). Rashi (בראשית ל"ה:) explains that the word Naftali is a language referring to prayer. Accordingly, the month of Adar is a time of תפילה. Together with Purim, when כלל ישראל reaccepted, recommitted, and rededicated themselves to the Torah, let us daven that we merit to see the coming of Mashiach and the rebuilding of the Mishkan, and have the opportunity to live with Hashem's presence dwelling intensely amongst us, quickly and speedily in our days. ▲

Meaning Behind the Minhag

>>> continued from front

turies.

The Vimpel is typically adorned with the child's name, date of birth, and decorative illustrations, often including heartfelt blessings. In his notes to the Minhagei Varmisa, Rabbi Shlomo Hamburger suggests that the source of transforming the bris wrappings into a binding for the Torah lies in the blessing recited at every bris: "Just as he has entered into the covenant, so too may he enter into Torah, marriage, and good deeds." The Vimpel beautifully embodies this sentiment—literally binding the child's bris to the Torah. In fact, a variation of this blessing is often inscribed on the Vimpel itself. This understanding also sheds light on the custom of some families to hang the Vimpel beneath the chuppah at the child's wedding, symbolically linking life's sacred milestones.

Historically, even great Torah leaders participated in this custom. There is record of the Vimpel of Rabbi Akiva Eiger (1761–1837), and sources indicate that the practice dates back at least to the 14th century.

Traditionally, the Vimpel is brought to the synagogue by the child when he reaches an age at which he is able to attend shul—often around three years old. Assisted by an adult, he helps bind the Vimpel around the Sefer Torah, symbolically beginning his lifelong connection and service to Torah. The occasion is typically marked with a celebratory kiddush, offering gratitude to Hashem for bringing the child to this milestone and for the privilege of raising him into a life of Torah.

On that Monday morning, as the Levi family gathered with friends and community members, this beautiful chain of tradition continued—another young child taking his place in a story that stretches back centuries, binding his own beginning to the eternal Torah. ▲

DID YOU KNOW



RABBI BINYAMIN SCHIERMEYER

1

That the “Tachash” animal actually shares the same name as one of Nachor’s sons?

That the Tachas was a unicorn like animal, with one horn and a 6 color coat on its fur. (Shabbos 28b)

2

3

That all of the gold in the world was created for the sake of the Mishkan and Beis Hamikdash. And not only that, but there is even 7 types of gold, and every type was used in the Beis Hamikdash. (Medrash Shemos Rabba)

“וְיִצְחָק יֹאמֵר אֵלֶיךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ וְיֹאמֵר אֵלֶיךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ”

PARSHA PIX SOURCE

Climbing HIGHER



RABBI YOSEF CHAIM PINKUS

At the end of the Megillah, after all of the action is over, we find the commandments of Purim given to us: to read the Megillah, to give Matanos L'evyonim, Mishloach Manos and to have a festive seudah. Then comes a brief mention of something odd. “Kimu vekiblu hayehudim” — a national reaccepting of the Torah. Searching for explanation, the Gemara makes a connection to the famous Midrash of “kafu lahem har kegigis,” that Hashem held Har Sinai above their heads like a barrel and threatened to bury them if they did not accept the Torah. The takeaway from this powerful imagery is that even at the very moment where Klal Yisrael said Naaseh v’Nishma, there was still something lacking in their acceptance. The Gemara explains that something was rectified at Purim with the kimu vekiblu. Clearly, there is something unique about Purim...and it’s not just the costumes and drinking.

The Midrash Tanchuma explains as follows. The acceptance of the Torah at Har Sinai was lacking because it was only an acceptance of the Torah SheBichtav (Written Law). Klal Yisrael only fully embraced the Torah SheBaal Peh (Oral Law) with the reacceptance that occurred after Purim. This is an odd blend. The Torah received at Har Sinai, yet only confirmed and fully actualized at Purim. What took so long? There were all sorts of miracles in the thousand years in between. Why didn’t Klal Yisrael have a full acceptance after the miraculous victories in Shoftim or at some point during the first Beis Hamikdash where miracles happened daily? What’s so special about Purim?

Rav Chaim Friedlander brings a beautiful insight about Purim’s mitzvos. Unlike typical d’Rabbanan enactments, they aren’t there to create a fence around the Torah. They are wholly independent. You may not realize just how unusual this really is. Pirkei Avos tells us that “asu seyag leTorah” — create fences around the Torah. I.e., that rabbinic mitzvos and enactments are motivated by a larger purpose of pushing the friction point of where and when sin occurs further away, keeping us far from Torah-level aveiros. But Purim’s obligations have nothing to do with guarding against or preventing any other aveira. None of the typical d’Rabbanan motivation is present. Why?

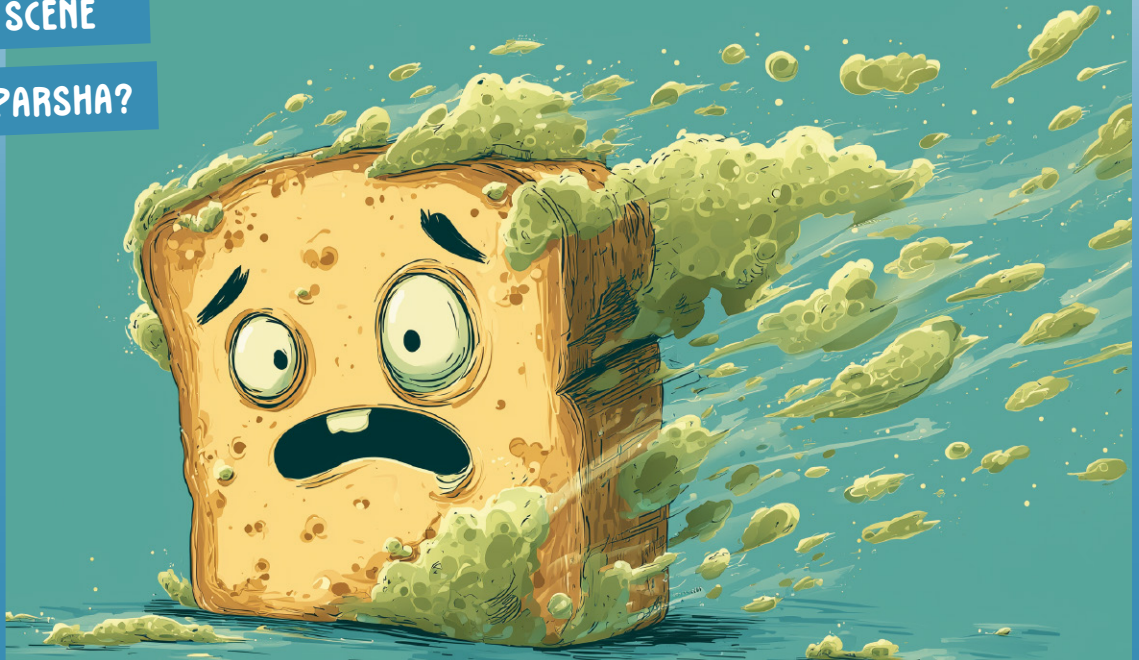
The answer lies in the story itself. The entire Purim story turns on whether the Jews would trust in their leadership, whether they would trust in Mordechai. It was Mordechai who warned the Jews not to attend the festive meal of Achashveirosh. And yet, driven by the political dynamic, they felt they should ignore him and went to the meal. It was Mordechai who refused to bow to Haman, and many Jews felt that political necessity outweighed that principle — and in fact blamed Mordechai for putting them at risk by stirring up Haman’s ego. Yet, after the dust settled it was through listening to Mordechai, when he told the Jews to fast for three days and they

continued on page 4 >>>



RABBI ELI PERLMAN

HOW DOES THIS SCENE
CONNECT TO THE PARSHA?



SEE PAGE 3 FOR THE ANSWER

Climbing Higher >>> *continued from page 3*

needed his instructions, that salvation came.

This really is a story of emunah in Chazal. When salvation came, along with it came a realization that struck the Jewish people. Had they trusted Mordechai, none of this would have occurred! With this eye opening experience, it's only logical that they'd then come to a deeper appreciation of Chazal. Mordechai was a member of the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah, the same people who created many of the rabbinic enactments that constitute such a major part of Torah SheBaal Peh. This new trust in Mordechai that occurred created a furthering of trust in rabbinic leadership, opening up the Jews to fully trust in Chazal's role as the carriers of the mesorah of Torah SheBaal Peh. This mental shift

— this moment of real understanding — is why Purim became the moment of that final acceptance.

Certainly, trust and rabbinic authority existed before. For example, the Gemara explains that David HaMel-ech enacted d'Rabbanan levels of yichud well before the Purim story. But the full, societal acceptance — that deep and lasting emunah in rabbinic authority — came with Purim. The mitzvos of the yom tov reflect this paradigm, with the mitzvos being purely from Chazal. This reacceptance is what allowed us to traverse exile, generation after generation, and withstand the tribulations that came with it: the capacity to hold fast to the Torah, the wisdom, and the teachings and transmissions of Chazal. ▲