

Echoes of the Ages

It was R' Meir Halevi Solovetchik's wedding day. Being the youngest son of the Brisker Rav, not only were there profuse amounts of guests, but many of them were great Rabbis, Roshei Yeshiva and other תלמידי חכמים.

Among those sharing in the celebration was R' Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky, author of שערי תבונה and many other ספרים and otherwise known as the Steipler Gaon. Arriving slightly early for the wedding, he entered the hall, leaning on his cane, and saw that the Brisker Rav, the תתן R' Meir and the rest of the family had not yet arrived. After a moment's thought, he turned to someone else in the hall nearby, asked a brief question and thanked the person before rushing out of the hall.

A quarter of an hour later, the mood in the room turned to excitement and joy, as the Brisker Rav walked in, along with the תתן R' Meir and the rest of the family. They started the חופה without delay. When the time came to read out the כתובה and the קדושין, the Brisker Rav did so himself. The שבע ברכות were next and the first six were

recited with great כונה and joy. The Brisker Rav had reserved the privilege of the final ברכה for the Steipler Gaon.

"R' Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky is honoured with the last ברכה!" came the melodious announcement. A short silence followed, before whispering broke out and all eyes raked the hall for the Steipler. After a few minutes of fruitless searching, someone present recalled how R' Kanievsky had asked a guest a question before quickly rushing off, but that he had only asked for directions and all was fine.

Hours passed with happy rejoicing and the meal was at its height when the Steipler Gaon walked in a second time. He had wanted to use the few minutes that he had till the חופה to learn and so had asked for the location of the nearest המדרש. But once he had delved into the depths of תורה and immersed himself in learning, he had forgotten all else. Only hours later did he remember that he was in Tel Aviv and was supposed to be at a wedding.

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There is Meaning in These Walls

This week's סדרה is the first of four containing only the description and dimensions of the prefabricated משכן and its accessories. The משכן was transported by בני ישראל through the wilderness. The question that this poses is why did the תורה, in which every single letter serves a purpose, spend four סדרות elaborating on a subject that seemingly has no relevance to Jewish life in modern times? Was משה hard pressed for a topic to write about?

However, to suggest that this theme has no significance for our generation would be to fundamentally miss the point the תורה is trying to teach us. Like so much in Judaism, the משכן and its holy objects had symbolical meanings. Thus, for example, its several branched מנורה was intended not just for physical illumination but also to represent the spiritual illumination of our life, the תורה. Indeed, this is as we read in כג: "משלי: 'The תורה is a light.'"

Another case in point is the central feature of the משכן: the wooden ארון, containing the two stone לוחות on which were inscribed

the Ten Commandments. It stood in the innermost, holiest compartment of the sanctuary. The ארון was made of acacia wood, and Hashem instructed משה that the wood was to be overlaid with pure gold, both on the inside and outside. This seems strange, as if one intends to purchase a chest of drawers one pays close attention to the outer finish to ensure that it is faultless but the condition of the inside of the drawers is irrelevant, as who is going to see it? Yet the ארון was gilded on the inside as well as the outside. What is the explanation of this puzzle and what may we derive from it?

It teaches us that our inner thoughts should match our outer deeds. It is an admonition against hypocrisy, sham and double-standards. One's private life should not differ from the veneer of righteousness adopted in public. The design of the ארון symbolises honesty and sincerity, for its outward appearance was not simply a façade but a true reflection of its inside. A Jew should strive to model his conduct on this positive attribute.

By Jason Migdal

Two Items or One?

One question that can be asked is just when was the Testimony (the תורה) placed inside the ארון?

The answer to this question lies in what you consider the ארון and its lid to be; either as one unit or as two separate components. רמב"ן understands the two really to be one. This reflects his general outlook that the purpose of the construction of the משכן was to cause Hashem's presence to dwell on Earth. The ארון was where the שכינה rested and so it is described even before we learn about the משכן. This goal was achieved by all parts of the ארון collectively and so it is considered as one collective entity.

However רש"י understands the ארון and lid to be separate constructions and sees this from the פסוקים themselves. From טו the ארון's construction is described, finishing with the instruction to "place into the ארון the Testimony תורה". This suggests that the purpose of the ארון was to act as a home for the תורה. Then in כב the פסוקים יז - the lid and כרובים are explained and it concludes "I will arrange my meetings with you there. I will speak with you from above the lid...", the purpose of the lid being outlined.

From the distinction of ארון and lid, with each one having a different purpose, רש"י sees the two as distinct articles.

The answer to the question is now simple. רמב"ן would say that since the structure is only complete when it has both ארון and lid, it can only effectively be called "ארון" when it has the lid on. Therefore, first it must be constructed in its entirety and only then can the lid be removed, the Testimony placed inside and the lid replaced. רש"י would differ and say the Testimony is placed inside the ארון before the lid is placed on top and only afterwards positioned. This follows the order of the פסוק , "He took the Testimony and placed it in the Ark [first and then afterwards]... he placed the lid on the Ark from above." - שמות מ : כ - The Brisker Rav adds on this that since the ארון is the only object that has no significance without the "Testimony", which is why in the second בית המקדש when there were no Tablets to place inside the ארון there was ארון at all, the "Testimony" must be put inside first and only then the lid sited.

By Shane Lefkowitz

Riddle of the Week

When would someone have to make at least 20 ברכות because they drank one cup of apple juice?

Previous riddle: Where in davening do you say 24 words in a row that end with the letter "ק"?

Answer: In קדוש לבנה (sanctifying the new moon) - three times we say the verse ברוך יוצרך, ברוך עושך, ברוך קונך, ברוך בוראך.

The Constancy of Change

This week's פרשה consists of the instructions to משה of how everything in the משכן should be constructed. Part of this is the stipulation that the various objects contained therein are to be made once only, and not to have new ones made should they be needed. (Implied in this may be a promise that Hashem would make sure no renovations would ever be needed. This kind of miracle happened many times in the משכן and later in the בית המקדש.) However, there is one notable exception to this rule - the תצרות, the trumpets used to signal to the people on various occasions. These were to be made again each generation. There must surely be a reason for this exception, but what is it?

R' Meir Shapiro of Lublin gives a beautiful answer. He points out the inherent difference between the trumpets and the rest of the artefacts of the משכן. Most of the artefacts were used for the service of the משכן itself, and have a special spiritual significance attached to them for us to recognise and utilise. The trumpets, however, were not a message in themselves - rather they were a means for spreading a message. The symbolism of this is that the message of תורה is eternal; it is the same today as it was when it was given, and will always be the same forever. But

the *vehicle* in which this message is delivered changes over the years. What is right for one generation will not be the same for any other. Although the message itself is constant, the way in which it is transmitted must keep changing to ensure that it is understood by each new generation of receivers, each of whom have different perspectives on life.

We can learn very important lessons from this idea. Change is a very positive occurrence. We must strive to improve as we go through our lives but we must remember that there is one constant in our lives - the תורה. The values of Judaism do not change, they are perfect as they are and need no reconsidering. Despite that, we must also be flexible enough to realise that the world changes so we have to relate to it differently; the approach of 100 years ago is not suited to a modern world. May we learn from this message and go out into the world in a true 21st century תורה way.

With Thanks to Mr J Golker

Quote of the Week

"If silence is good for the wise, how much more so for fools" - אבות דרבי נתן