

# חמודי שי על התורה והמועדים

## Chamudei Shai on the Torah and Holidays

by Dr. Joseph Geliebter

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### Parashas Beha'aloscha

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וזה מעשה המנורה מקשה זהב עדי-ירכה עדי-פרחה מקשה הוא כמראה  
אשר הראה ה' את-משה בן עשה את-המנורה: (במדבר ח, ד)

"And this was the workmanship of the Menorah: hammered work of gold, from its base to its flower it was hammered work; according to the vision that Hashem showed Moshe, so did he make the Menorah." (Bamidbar 8:4)

Several difficulties arise from this verse.

First, the repetition of the word (*mikshah*) "מקשה" "hammered." Why is it necessary to explain once again that the Menorah "was hammered work" after the Torah already stated that the entire Menorah was "hammered gold"?

Second, Rashi brings an additional explanation regarding the question: "Who actually built the Menorah?" He cites a Midrash Aggadah that Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself made the Menorah, this being the meaning the Sages teaching that "the Menorah was made by itself." According to this interpretation, why does the verse review all the details of how it was made? After all, the instructions on how to fashion the Menorah are relevant only according to the first interpretation, the plain meaning of the verse, according to which Moshe was the one who made the Menorah (in accordance with what Hashem showed him)!

### III

- ▶ **Parashas "Vayehi binso'a ha'Aron" ("And it came to pass when the Ark traveled") corresponds to the Aron Ha'Bris (Ark of the Covenant) that goes out with us to war to protect us**
- ▶ **The allusions of the inverted letter *nun's***
- ▶ **The "book" of protection for the Jewish people against the nations of the world**

### IV

- ▶ **The connection between our parashah and the dispute regarding whether fowl may be mixed with milk**

Third, why is there once again a description in Sefer Bamidbar, in Parashas Beha'aloscha, concerning the making of the Menorah? We already have a detailed description of this in Parashas Terumah!?

**The obligation of a person to make an effort (*hishtadlus*) even when he cannot accomplish everything himself**

The *Sfas Emes* on Parashas Terumah points to an apparent contradiction in the words of Rashi. The *Sfas Emes* asks: Why do we feel the need to say that "Moshe struggled" and Hashem had to show him how to make the Menorah - after all, the Midrash testifies that Hashem told Moshe to take a block of gold and throw it into the fire, and "it was made by itself"!?

The *Sfas Emes* gives a beautiful answer. He says that even when we are incapable of accomplishing something, because completing it lies beyond our human abilities, we are nevertheless obligated to make an effort. "And the effort must be with heart and soul in truth." When we do this, Hashem assists us in

completing what we ourselves cannot accomplish alone. So long as we, on our end, make an effort "with heart and soul in truth," we will merit Heavenly assistance to succeed in bringing the matter to completion.

**In Parashas Beha'aloscha, Hashem testifies that Moshe Rabbeinu acted with all his strength, "with heart and soul in truth"**

In my humble opinion, it appears that in Parashas Beha'aloscha, Hashem testifies that Moshe Rabbeinu invested all his strength and exerted every effort possible. Therefore, it is considered as though he is the one who made the "hammered gold, from its base to its flower ... hammered work, according to the vision that Hashem showed Moshe."

The doubled expression of *mikshah* points to two aspects, both to the praise of Moshe. First, the very concept of the Menorah was difficult (קשה) to comprehend, and therefore Hashem needed to show Moshe a Menorah of fire in order for him to grasp the essential concept of the Menorah.

Second, even after the revelation of the fiery Menorah, the actual construction of the Menorah still remained difficult to execute, and there was no conceivable way for it to be completed except through a miracle from Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Now, an ordinary person, finding himself in such a doubly difficult situation, would give up and do nothing, or, at most, suffice with some "symbolic effort," thinking: "Why exert effort if it will not help anyway?" But this was not the way of Moshe, servant of Hashem. Moshe did everything he could, everything humanly possible, with all his strength! He labored intensely and with tremendous effort, and Hashem completed the remainder on his behalf. In this way, Moshe succeeded, and the making of the Menorah is credited to him.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu wished to praise Moshe just as He had praised Aharon in the preceding verse: "And Aharon did so; toward the face of the Menorah he kindled its lamps, as Hashem commanded Moshe." Just as Aharon

receives praise for doing what he was required to do, so too Hakadosh Baruch Hu now praises Moshe Rabbeinu, because he completed his task, all that he was obligated to do, even though the final completion of the work came directly from Hashem!

### **The completion of the Menorah had to come specifically through Hashem**

As we wrote in *Chamudei Shai* on Parashas Terumah, the completion of the Menorah had to come specifically through Hashem because of the western lamp, which contained an open miracle from Heaven. The lamp was lit every day, yet it never burned out. Thus Hashem, so to speak, kindles light within the Menorah, just as Aharon, and his sons after him, lit the Menorah each day. Hashem "participates" in the flame of the Menorah.

Therefore, the Menorah had to be fashioned through a partnership between human beings and Heaven: by Moshe Rabbeinu together with the assistance of Heaven.

This is an eternal covenant.

The western lamp is testimony that the Shechinah rests upon Klal Yisrael. We know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu has no need for the light of the Menorah. He commanded us to make the Menorah and kindle its lamps only in order to honor us with a sign that He is with us. We must always remember that the Shechinah rests continually upon Klal Yisrael; even when the Menorah is not physically before us and we cannot see the testimony to this, the Shechinah nevertheless always rests upon Klal Yisrael, always.

With Hashem's help, may we merit to see the Menorah lit once again swiftly in our day, Amen.



## **II**

### **Hashem acquires and transfers the Leviim**

Our parashah states:

וְאַתְּמָנָה אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם נְתוּנִים לְאַהֲרֹן  
וּלְבָנָיו מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעִבְדֹת אֶת־  
עֲבֹדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד  
וּלְכַפֵּר עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא־יָהִיָּה  
בְּבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶף בְּגֹשֶׁת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ: (במדבר ח, יט)

“And I have given the Leviim as a gift to Aharon and his sons from among Bnei Yisrael, to perform the service of Bnei Yisrael in the Ohel Moed (Tent o Meeting), and to atone for Bnei Yisrael, so that there shall not be a plague among Bnei Yisrael when Bnei Yisrael approach the Sanctuary.” (Bamidbar 8:19)

Rashi comments: “The expression ‘Bnei Yisrael’ is stated five times in this verse to make known His love for them, for their mention was repeated [five times] corresponding to the five books of the Torah.” This is from *Bereishis Rabbah*.

The *Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh* writes that this is a *drush* (homiletic interpretation) and explains all five mentions of “Bnei Yisrael” in this verse according to the plain meaning. See there the difficulty he raises regarding the doubled expression “And I have given (*va'etnah*) the Leviim as a giving (*nesunim*).” Likewise, several verses earlier (ibid 19) it says: “For given over (*nesunim*), given over (*nesunim*), are they to Me from among Bnei Yisrael; in place of every firstborn of Bnei Yisrael have I taken them unto Me.”

Likewise, the next verse says, “For mine is every firstborn among the children of Israel, among man and beast; on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them to Me.”

**There is an act of kinyan (acquisition) performed upon the Leviim**

Hakadosh Baruch Hu thereby demonstrates that all the firstborn of Bnei Yisrael belong to Him ever since the night of the redemption from Egypt. He sanctified all the firstborn of Bnei Yisrael at the time of *Makkas Bechoros* (The Plague of the Firstborn) to be consecrated to Him. The verse says: “And I took the Leviim in place of every firstborn among Bnei Yisrael.” There is an act of kinyan (acquisition) here, an actual taking. Aharon HaKohen was required to wave all the Leviim, as the verse says: “You shall wave them as a wave-offering to Hashem.”

Did he physically lift them, as a kinyan *hagbahah* (an acquisition through lifting), or not? Or did he cause them to move, as a kinyan *meshichah* (an acquisition

through pulling), as most commentators understand? There are different approaches regarding how the kinyan was performed. At any rate, Aharon was required to perform a kinyan and transfer the holiness from the firstborn to the Leviim.

**Hakadosh Baruch Hu assists in effecting the kinyan**

In my humble opinion, by way of *derash* (homiletic interpretation), Hashem assists in conducting this kinyan, this transfer of holiness from the firstborn of Bnei Yisrael to the Leviim. For, on the one hand, the verse says, “And I took.” Hashem is testifying about Himself that “I took the Leviim in place of every firstborn among Bnei Yisrael.” But, on the other hand, the previous verse says, “And I have given the Leviim as a gift to Aharon and his sons.” That verse mentions “Bnei Yisrael” or “from among Bnei Yisrael” five times.

Five symbolizes the form of a hand. That is, Hashem hands over, as it says: “And I have given the Leviim as a gift to Aharon and his sons.” The hand of Hashem, so to speak, grants Aharon the

exchange: Leviim in place of the firstborn. Hashem assists in performing the kinyan, in conducting the "exchange," the transition from the state of "every firstborn among Bnei Yisrael is Mine... I sanctified them unto Me" to the state of "I took the Leviim in place of every firstborn among Bnei Yisrael."

The firstborn remained holy until the sin of the golden calf. Thus, the *Sforno* on our verse says: "'To atone for Bnei Yisrael' – [the Kohanim did this] by receiving the tithes from Bnei Yisrael, which enabled the Kohanim to serve Hashem and atone for Israel, who were all implicated in the sin of the golden calf." The firstborn lost the "holiness of the firstborn" through the sin of the golden calf. And now, every time Klal Yisrael gives their tithe to the Leviim, the Leviim bring them atonement for that sin.



### III

**Parashas "Vayehi binso'a ha'Aron"**  
**("And it came to pass when the Ark traveled")**  
**corresponds to the Aron Ha'Bris (Ark of the Covenant) that goes out with us to war to protect us**

The section of "Vayehi binso'a ha'Aron" is bracketed by inverted letter *nuns*. Rashi explains: "He made signs before it and after it, to indicate that this is not its proper place. Why, then, was it written here? In order to separate one calamity from another," etc.

There is another opinion that the section of "Vayehi binso'a" is bracketed by the letter *nun* in order to indicate that it is a sefer unto itself. "Rebbi says: 'It is not for that reason (namely, to separate one calamity from another), but because it is an important sefer unto itself.'" According to this approach, the two verses of the "Vayehi binso'a" section form an independent book, and therefore, there are actually seven books in the Books of Moshe.

In my humble opinion, one may suggest a central idea, in the category of a "supreme Torah connection," by which both opinions branch out from the same place. Namely, that this portion, which serves to separate and divide between one calamity and another, is a book of immense importance for the protection of the Jewish people, corresponding to the Aron, which carries the broken pieces of the First Tablets and which awakens us to *teshuva* (repentance) and which went out with us to battle for protection and victory. For this reason, when the Aron traveled, Moshe Rabbeinu would say: "And it came to pass when the Aron journeyed, Moshe said: 'Arise, Hashem, and let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You.'" These verses are the "*Sukkas Shalom*," the so-called "shelter of peace" providing protection for Bnei Yisrael at all times and in every place. The section of "Vayehi binso'a ha'Aron" describes the journeys of Bnei Yisrael. Bnei Yisrael traveled forty-two journeys during the forty years in the wilderness. It is brought

in the *sefarim hakedoshim* (holy books) on Parashas Masei that the journeys in the wilderness serve as preparation for all the future journeys of the Jewish people throughout the world and throughout all times, both collectively and individually.

### **The allusions in the inverted nuns**

It is possible that the inverted *nuns* surrounding the section of "*Vayehi binso'a*" allude to the Cloud of Hashem, which is secret of the Shechinah that constantly travels with us, throughout all the journeys of Bnei Yisrael, in every place and at every time. The section preceding "*Vayehi binso'a ha'Aron*" discusses the Clouds of Glory and the journeys of Bnei Yisrael. The Clouds of Glory were the protection that surrounded and enveloped the one nation in the land, against the 70 (ע - *ayin*) nations of the world. All of this is actually alluded to within the very word for cloud, עֲנַן (*anan*), which contains two *nuns*, corresponding to the two inverted *nuns* that protect against the seventy nations, and they are the very "Shelter of peace"

that guards His people, the Jewish people, forever.

### **The Jewish people's "book" of protection against the nations of the world**

One may further suggest that the two verses of the "*Vayehi binso'a*" section contain nineteen words, whose numerical value equals "*goy*," alluding to the fact that this is the sefer of protection for the one nation in the land against the seventy nations outside.

The "sefer" of "*Vayehi binso'a ha'Aron*" accompanies Klal Yisrael wherever they go as protection against every evil occurrence, from enemies and haters who seek to harm the Jewish nation. The section of "*Vayehi binso'a ha'Aron*" is an eternal covenant of defense and protection, that Hashem Yisbarach promises us for whenever we are in the category of "wandering and unsettled," in every place and at every time, even in a situation of concealment within concealment where we do not perceive the hand of Hashem and His *hashgachah pratis* (Divine providence) except in hindsight, after His salvation. And this is what the "inverted Nun"

points to: that we only see the Divine assistance "in reverse," meaning, looking backward, [in a manner of: "You shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." Understand this well].



## **IV**

### **The connection between our parashah and the dispute regarding whether fowl may be mixed with milk**

Our parashah has a connection to the dispute regarding whether the meat of fowl may be mixed with milk. The Mishnah in *Maseches Chullin* (113a) presents the opinions of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yosi HaGelili. Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yosi hold that the meat of fowl is not prohibited by Biblical law. The Gemara in *Maseches Shabbos* (130a) addresses this dispute and states that the prohibition against eating the meat of fowl with milk is not of Biblical origin, but of rabbinic origin. Why do we say it is not of Biblical origin? Because the Torah says, "You shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk," and a bird does not nurse. Why, then, did the Sages prohibit it? What

was the original basis to prohibit the meat of fowl?

The clue is found in the episode of the *slav* (quail). In my humble opinion, there is a source for this in our parashah. In Parashas Beha'aloscha, Klal Yisrael complained that they wanted meat, and Hashem provided them meat in the form of the *slav*. Hashem promises them meat, and the *slav* is referred to as "meat." For example, in 11: 33, it says: "The meat was still between their teeth." We thus see that the meat of fowl possesses significance

and is treated as meat. Since the Torah refers to it as meat, that could be the foundation for a Rabbinic prohibition against cooking it with milk, so that it doesn't mistakenly lead to cooking the meat of sheep or cattle with milk, which is under the Biblical prohibition of "You shall not cook a kid in its mother's milk." This prohibition is mentioned in the Torah three times, and from this we learn that it is forbidden to cook meat with milk, forbidden to eat such a mixture, and even forbidden to derive benefit from it. But since

fowl is not a species that produces milk, the strict Torah prohibitions may not apply. Nevertheless, since the Torah refers to the *slav* as "meat," it is possible that the Sages enacted a decree forbidding eating poultry with dairy because of the important status that the Torah grants fowl, treating it like meat.

See this wonder! Even though the episode of the quail represents a negative moment in our history for which we were punished, we can still derive words of Torah from it.

## Maharal Tzintz ב-י-ל-א ואמן

PEARLS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE GAON FROM PLOTZK

It is stated in our parashah (10:29):

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹבָב... נִסְעִים אֲנִיחֶנּוּ אֵלֶי-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר ה' אֵתוּ אִתָּנוּ לְכֶם לְכֶה אֲתָנוּ וְהִטְבַּנּוּ לָךְ כִּי-הוּא דְבַר-טוֹב עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל:

"And Moshe said to Chovav... 'We are journeying to the place of which Hashem said: I shall give it to you. Come with us and we shall treat you well, for Hashem has spoken good concerning Israel.'"

According to the plain meaning of the verse, Moshe is offering Yisro the opportunity to join them in their journey to the Promised Land and to have a share in it along with the Jewish people. However, Rabbeinu, the Maharal Tzintz, argues that there are many nuances (questions) in this verse. Rabbeinu does not detail what they are, so let us attempt to identify some of them ourselves.

The questions:

- Why did the verse include the lengthy elaboration, "for Hashem has spoken good concerning Israel"?
- Could Yisro, who was not among those who went out of Egypt, actually be offered a share in "the good that Hashem would give the Jewish people," meaning,

that he would inherit a portion of the Land? After all, he was not one of those who left Egypt [who were the ones legally entitled to inherit the Land]?

c. The wording "Come with us and we shall treat you well" implies an immediate benefit, whereas the "good" under discussion is something future-oriented, taking place only when they eventually enter the Land.

### **Rabbeinu's explanation of this verse**

Rabbeinu raises a difficulty regarding Megillas Rus. It says in the Megillah (2:19): "And she said: 'The name of the man with whom I acted today is Boaz.'" The Sages ask: Did Rus perform kindness for Boaz? Was it not Boaz who performed kindness for Rus, allowing her to glean from his field, extending kindness to her, and caring for her? Why then does the verse say, "with whom I acted"? From this, the Sages derived that "more than what the householder does for the poor person, the poor person does for the householder." In other words, the benefit the householder receives from giving and bestowing goodness upon the poor person is greater than the benefit received by the poor person himself. Therefore, it is considered as though Rus did a favor for Boaz.

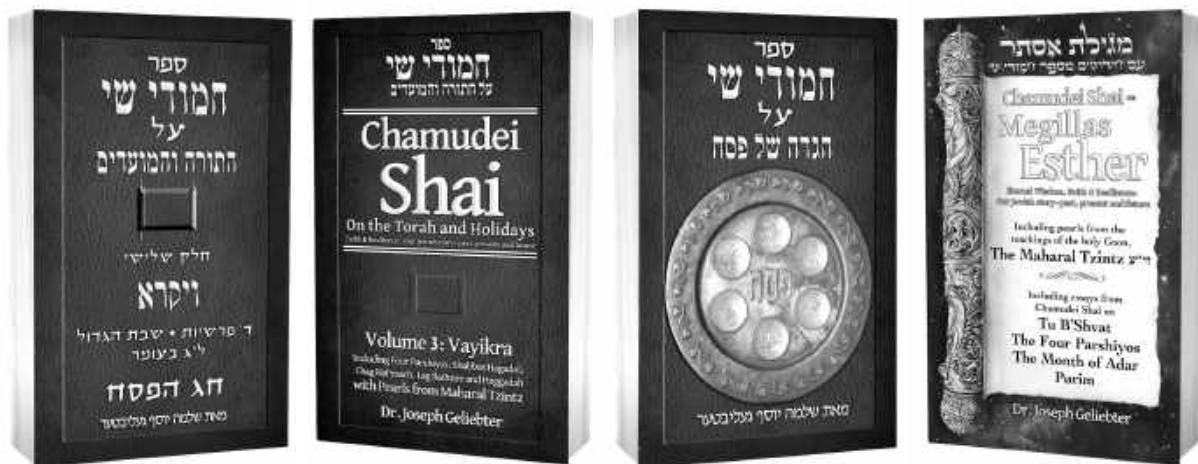
Rabbeinu explains these words based on the well-known concept brought many times in the Zohar, that through an awakening from below (*isarusa d'lesata*), there comes an awakening from Above (*isarusa d'le'eila*), meaning that Hakadosh Baruch Hu does not "awaken" and begin to bestow abundance upon the creations below until they themselves first awaken the matter from below. For example: when a person arouses himself to study Torah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu then bestows upon him an abundance of Torah from Above.

Since every abundance (*shefa*) that comes from Heaven requires an *isarusa d'lesata*, therefore when Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Who is good and bestows good, wishes to grant of His goodness to Bnei Yisrael, Bnei Yisrael themselves must first awaken within themselves the attribute of bestowing goodness upon others. They themselves must do good for someone else. Only after there is an "*isarusa d'lesata*" in the attribute of goodness does Hakadosh Baruch Hu awaken His own attribute of goodness and bestow the goodness He wishes to grant to His creations. Therefore, Rus said: "I acted with him." I caused good to come to Boaz by giving him the opportunity to bestow kindness upon me, and now he will be able to receive the abundance designated for him from Heaven.

Based on the above, Rabbeinu resolves our verse. Moshe says to his father-in-law: "Come with us now and we shall treat you well. We will do what is necessary for your benefit, because Hashem has spoken good concerning Israel," meaning that Hashem desires to bestow goodness upon Bnei Yisrael and give them the Land. However, for the promise to materialize, Bnei Yisrael must initiate an *isarusa d'lesata*. Bnei Yisrael must themselves bestow goodness upon converts, and through this they will awaken upon themselves Hakadosh Baruch Hu's attribute of goodness

and thereby receive the promised good. Accordingly, the explanation of the verse is: "We are journeying to the place of which Hashem said, 'I shall give it to you,'" and in order for us to be worthy of receiving this promise, we want [you to] "come with us and we shall treat you well," right now, immediately, and not necessarily only upon entering the Land, "for Hashem has spoken good concerning Israel." That is, this goodness will come to us from Heaven only after we ourselves awaken below to do good for others. Therefore, through our doing good for you, the good will come to Bnei Yisrael!

From the words of Rabbeinu we emerge with the conclusion that the finest and most worthwhile thing that exists is: **to do good for another person!**



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