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וכן האלשיך הק' (שמות ל"ה י) מיישב את כל השאלות על הפסוק

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מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

וכל הנשים אשר נשא לבן אתנה בחכמה וכו' (לה-כ)

The *Shearis Hapleitah* - those Jews who had survived the indescribable horrors of the Nazi ghettos and concentration camps were alive in body - but just barely. Emotionally, physically and spiritually, however, they remained every bit the victim. Their frail bodies may have been liberated from torture, but suffering still pervaded their souls. Most were extremely susceptible to disease and depression, and they kept reliving the nightmares of the camp experience. Thus, ironically, thousands of inmates who had made it through the war years now fell prey to illness or shock, and died.

Even for those who did not succumb, the war's conclusion brought no remedy or solace. They had no homes or families to which to return; their parents, wives and children were dead, and their homes had been confiscated by gentiles. For the time being, most of the survivors were sheltered in Displaced Persons Camps (DP Camps), where conditions were generally poor and spirits were dangerously low. As much as they suffered physically, their spiritual needs were ignored by camp officials and United Nations workers who were unaware of the role religion played in these Jews' lives.

Mrs. Recha Sternbuch A”H was not a person content to offer aid from a distance. Together with her husband, R' Yitzchok Sternbuch Z”L, she created a relief organization known as HIJEFS, which became the Swiss arm of the American *Vaad Hatzalah*. Throughout the war, she worked above and beyond to rescue Jews and spirit them out of German-controlled lands into neutral Switzerland and to safety. Now, at the conclusion of the war, she felt the need to establish a direct, personal connection with the survivors, specifically by visiting them and learning of their needs on a face-to-face basis. She wanted so much to help her persecuted people. During the end of 1945, and for much of 1946, she was constantly on the move shuttling from one war-ravaged city to another, bringing precious exit visas to one group of survivors and organizing emergency relief efforts for another. Danger didn't faze her. After scores of Jews were killed in a pogrom in Kielce, Poland, in July 1946, she insisted on visiting the city, despite the obvious threat to her safety.

Her presence in the Displaced Persons Camps brought the survivors not only much-needed goods but, even more importantly, an aura of hope and a sense of camaraderie. Those in the drab, gloomy camps greeted her sudden luminous appearance with heartfelt gratitude. She was like a magical benefactress who reminded them that a brighter future lay ahead.

The women inmates at the Zeilsheim DP camp in Germany were among the many recipients of Mrs. Sternbuch's generosity. She arrived there unheralded one day, lugging suitcases of precious goods and necessities. After welcoming her, one of the camp members asked which hotel she would be lodging at during her stay in the area.

“Hotel?” Mrs. Sternbuch replied surprised. “I was planning to stay in the camp with you.”

“Stay in the camp? In this place?” The other woman was astounded. “But it's not exactly luxurious here, I'm afraid.”

“There are more important things than luxury, my dear. I didn't come to live the life of a queen. I came to be with you.”

“Yes,” the shocked survivor said, “but we aren't able to leave this place. You can - you have a choice.”

“Fine,” said Mrs. Sternbuch, “then I choose to stay with you!” This elegant lady then settled in to live amidst the squalor of the camp and made herself at home among her fellow Jews. She mingled easily with them, listening to their woes, comforting them and promising to seek their early release. Even if she couldn't free them immediately, she told them, she could make their existence easier. She asked people what they needed and compiled lists of their requests. Later, she followed up by sending as many of these goods as she could - even *sheitels* for new brides who had requested them. Some requests were satisfied immediately, for even though she arrived with loaded suitcases, they were always empty when she left. Whatever she had brought along remained behind, to be kept by those she had visited.

Her life was one of giving. She gave to others, she said, “because they will put it to much better use than I would.”

משל למה הדבר דומה

קחו מאתכם תרומה לה' כל נדיב לבו יביאה את תרומת ה' וכו' (לה-ה)

משל: One evening, a guest came to daven *Maariv* at the old synagogue located at 17 Rue des Rosiers, in the Parisian suburb known as the Pletzel. While there, he put a few francs into a charity box in order to perform a *mitzvah* prior to prayer. Just then, another man came over to him with a complaint. “You put money into the *pushka* at night? Don't you know that charity is not meant to be given at night?”

The man thought about this and being a scholar, he remembered that indeed in the writings of the **Arizal** it says that after nightfall is not the time for giving charity. This is

even brought down in *Talmud Yerushalmi* (מסכת פאה).

At the time, the previous **Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn ZT”L** was visiting Paris and the man decided to ask his opinion. He told him what happened mentioning that perhaps this Jew is indeed correct based upon the writings of the Arizal and the Yerushalmi.

The *Rebbe* listened quietly to the story and then shook his head in obvious disagreement, “Most probably,” he responded sagely, “the individual who questioned you giving to charity at night, doesn't give during the day either!”

וכל חכם לב בכם יבאו ויעשו

את כל אשר צוה ה' וגר' (לה-ו)

The word "יבאו" - “*he shall come*” appears to be redundant. The **Rebbe of Radomsk, R' Shloime Hakohen Rabinowitz ZT”L**, notes the following *remez* (allusion): When it comes to the performance of *mitzvos*, the important thing is what one has in his heart and the holy thoughts that he may have while doing each specific *mitzvah*. Even though this is the case, it is still not possible to do a *mitzvah* with thoughts alone since מחשבות are continually flitting from one idea to another. One moment, a person is thinking about one thing, and the next moment something else. Thought alone is not enough without actually performing the *mitzvah* in order to fulfill a requirement or intention. Not only that, but the action will cause one to think the correct thoughts that apply to this action. When one has finished this action, there remains with him an impression of that good thought, and so a part of the action will remain forever.

This is the meaning of what we say before performing *mitzvos*: “אשר קדשנו במצותיך” - “*Who has made us holy with His mitzvos.*” Through *Hashem's* command to do the action of the *mitzvah*, He causes us to become holy. This action causes holy thoughts that apply to this *mitzvah* and they establish themselves with a greater strength and power.

This is what it says in *Megilas Esther* (ט-כח): “*These days shall be remembered and kept.*” The command applies to both the action and the remembrance, because it is not sufficient to remember it alone in thought. This, too, is the meaning of the *posuk*, “*Every wise-hearted man.*” A person with a “wise heart” refers to one upon whom *Hashem* has bestowed wisdom and understanding, with good and proper thoughts in his mind. And yet, “יבאו” - “*he shall come*” - thoughts alone are not enough; one must actually come “ויעשו” - and do them. From there, he will go out to the light and *Hashem's* word will be established forever.

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

קדבת ה'

Is there any other *mitzvah* in the *Torah* that has no less than four *parshiyos* dedicated to it? It seems like *Parshas Vayakhel* is a repeat of *Parshas Teruma* and *Tetzaveh* is a repeat of *Pekudei*! But why? Why does *Hashem* dedicate so much “extra” space to the construction of the *Mishkan*? Because the *Mishkan* represents the heart and *ratzon* (will) of every Jew.

Chazal tell us when the *nesiim* (princes) offered to wait until everyone finished bringing their donations to the *Mishkan* and they would fill in whatever was missing, it seemed like a noble act. Imagine if someone at a parlor meeting to raise money for a *yeshivah* stood up and said, “Please give generously for this important cause, and whatever money is lacking at the end, I will make up the difference!” Such a person would probably get a standing ovation! And yet we see that this was not *Hashem's* reaction to the generosity of the *nesiim*. In fact they were rebuked by having the letter “*yud*” omitted from their name. Why? Because they missed the whole underlying point of the *Mishkan*. Had the *Mishkan* been about constructing a physical abode, their reaction would have been praiseworthy; but the *Mishkan* was all about heart, it was all about expressing love to *Hashem*. The fact that they WAITED and didn't run to partake in its construction showed a lack of enthusiasm for *kirvas Hashem*. All they wished was to complete the building and yet the letter “*yud*” that symbolizes completion was left out so that their title remains incomplete. We can all be involved in the construction of a *Mishkan* every single day - in our hearts. By doing *mitzvos* with excitement and “*bren*,” we express what is truly inside, thus fulfilling the *mitzvah* of building a *Mishkan* for *Hashem*.

TORAH GEMS

ויעש את החשן מעשה חשב כמעשה אפר

וימלאו בו ארבעה סודי אבן וכו' (ט-ת.)

In *Parshas Pekudei* and previously in *Tetzaveh* as well, the *Torah* describes the twelve settings in the *Choshen* (Breast Plate) that were filled up (וימלאו) by the precious stones known as the אבני מילואים (Filling Stones). Rashi there explains that they were called “Filling Stones” for the very simple reason that they served to fill in the settings on the *Choshen*. However, is this not a bit demeaning and insulting to call such precious stones “fillers” whose basic purpose is to just cover space? Would it not have been more complimentary to call them “Precious Stones” and we would know that they are meant to fill in the *Choshen*? Imagine, for example, a newly engaged bride who just received her diamond ring. When she shows it to her friends, they say her beautiful setting had a hole in it and she decided to fill it up with a diamond! How insulting would that be?

R' Shmuel Berenbaum ZT”L, *Rosh Yeshivah* of the *Mir Yeshivah* answers that one can learn a beautiful lesson from these simple words of the *Torah*. The *Baalei Mussar* teach us that the *Torah's hashkafah* (viewpoint) is that the biggest compliment one can achieve is not about one's own self-worth or value, for these tend to change with the winds of time. Rather, what one accomplishes for someone or something else, is a true measure of a person's worth.

The *Choshen* had twelve holes in it - holes that caused it to be considered “lacking” without the stones that filled it up. These special stones were the objects that supplied what was missing in the *Choshen*. Consequently, the biggest compliment for these stones, despite their own intrinsic and costly value, was to show that they were able to fill up what was lacking by something else - the *Choshen* no less.

This, of course, should also be our viewpoint: to always see how we can help somebody else and “fill in” whatever we can that may be lacking by them.

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדת אשר פקד על פי משה (לה-כא)