

The Path To Follow

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Shabbat Observance Makes the Shechinah Dwell Among Us

One verse states, "I will dwell among the Children of Israel" (Shemot 29:45), and another states: "A cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Hashem filled the Sanctuary" (ibid. 40:34). We also read, "The cloud of Hashem was upon the Sanctuary by day, and fire was on it by night" (v.38). How could all these verses be fulfilled at the same time? A third verse comes to reconcile them: "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them" (Shemot 25:8). The Sages have explained: "It is not said 'in it,' but 'among them' – within each of them" (Rabbeinu Ephraim ad loc.).

This is quite surprising: If Hashem wanted His Shechinah to dwell among the Children of Israel, not in the Sanctuary, then why did He command the Children of Israel to make Him a Sanctuary?

Concerning the verse, "from all His work which G-d created to make" (Bereshith 2:3), our Sages note (Pesikta Rabbati 6) that it does not say "made," but rather "to make" – meaning that there is still more work. Lest we say that the creation of heaven and earth were not completed during the six days of Creation, the Sages (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 18) have said: Have heaven and earth ceased to exist? Of them it is written, "Thus said Hashem, 'Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool'" (Isaiah 66:1). Nothing was created after the six days of Creation. It is also said, "Whatever has been is what will be, and whatever has been done is what will be done. There is nothing new beneath the sun" (Kohelet 1:9).

We have received a tradition from our Sages that heaven and earth were only created by the merit of the Torah, and they can only endure when the Children of Israel study Torah and observe mitzvot. Thus we read, "If not for My covenant, I would not have appointed days and nights, the decrees of heaven and earth" (Jeremiah 33:25). Here the Sages explain, "But for the Torah, heaven and earth would not endure" (Pesachim 68a). Hashem created the first man, giving him 248 limbs and 365 sinews, corresponding to the 613 mitzvot of the Torah, which comprise 248 positive and 365 negative commandments. When a person studies Torah and fulfills the 613 mitzvot, Scripture considers him to have become G-d's partner in Creation. It is as if he has completed Creation. In fact before Jews studied Torah, the existence of heaven and earth was not guaranteed. The Gemara tells us, "The Holy One, blessed be He, stipulated with the works of Creation and said to it, 'If Israel accepts the Torah, you shall endure. If not, I will return you to chaos and anarchy'" (Shabbat 88a). When Jews study Torah, heaven and earth have a solid basis for existence. Let us say that whatever was created during the six days of Creation was not completed in such a way that it could endure. When were they perfected in the most stable way possible? It is when the Children of Israel took upon themselves Torah and mitzvot. At that point heaven and earth were completed, which is why the verse states, "to make."

The term "make" always designates something that is created, as it is written: "The souls that they made in Haran" (Bereshith 12:5). Here the Sages explain, "If all the nations assembled to create one insect, they could not endow it with life. Yet you say, 'The souls that they made in Haran!' This refers, however, to converts. Then let it say, 'that they had converted' – why say, 'that they had made'?' This is to teach you that if one brings a proselyte close [to G-d], it is as if he has created him" (Bereshith Rabba 84:4).

To Complete Creation

The Gemara states that Betzalel knew how to combine the letters by which heaven and earth had been created (Berachot 55a). It is written, "He filled him [Betzalel] with G-d's spirit, with wisdom, insight, and knowledge" (Shemot 35:31), as well as: "Hashem founded the earth with wisdom. He established the heavens with understanding. Through His knowledge, the depths were cleaved" (Mishlei 3:19-20). The Sages said in the Midrash, "With these three things, the world was created, for it says: 'Hashem founded the earth with wisdom. He established the heavens with understanding. Through His knowledge, the depths were cleaved'" (Shemot Rabba 48:4). The Sanctuary was made by these three things as well, as it is written: "I have filled him with the spirit of G-d in wisdom, insight, and knowledge" (Shemot 31:3). Therefore let us say that G-d only commanded the Children of Israel to build the Sanctuary so they could remember that they must study Torah and fulfill mitzvot in order to sustain the world. Because they would constantly see the Sanctuary, they would make sure to study Torah in order to sustain the world, and to perfect the creation of the six days.

The Sages tell us, "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them" – it is not said "in it," but "among them" – teaching us that since the Children of Israel built the Sanctuary and learned from it to observe Torah and mitzvot, they would fulfill their role as a dwelling place for the Shechinah. It will return to dwell in them, just as it did before, during the six days of Creation.

This is why it says at the beginning of this week's parsha, "Let them take an offering for Me" (Shemot 25:2), to which the Sages add: "For Me, in My Name" (Tanchuma, Terumah 1). Now can anyone think that someone would bring a contribution to the Sanctuary without it being for Hashem? For whom else could it be? This teaches us, however, that neither the world nor the Sanctuary can endure unless man directs all his deeds towards Hashem. The word terumah is formed by the letters of Torah and the letter mem (numerical value: 40), alluding to the giving of the Torah in 40 days. It is part of Torah not to become proud, all while having the intention of growing through Torah. When we act in this way, we make the Shechinah dwell in us.

A Life of Torah

Our Sages have given us numerous warnings about materialism, which can make a person lose his Torah and diminish his ability for spiritual growth. It is an explicit Mishnah: "This is the way of Torah: Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure..." (Pirkei Avot 6:4). It is not without reason that the Sages have said, "Be mindful of the children of the poor, for the Torah emerges from them" (Nedarim 81a). How so? In his book *Michtav Me'Eliyahu*, Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler Zatzal explains that one who values his soul will distance himself from the abundance of this world and devote himself exclusively to learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvot with love. Woe to the one who yearns for this world and pursues it, thinking that he will merit both worlds. He will end up stumbling, for materialism will take hold of him and transform him into something completely material, and the glory of the Torah will be diminished in him. One who chooses Torah and flees the desires of this world is like someone who flees a mortal danger.

This idea is illustrated by the lives of great men of Torah, who have revealed to us the secret of success, as we shall now describe.

New Sources Open Up

While still young, the Netziv of Volozhin visited the gaon Rabbi Shemuel Strashun of Vilna (the Rashash). Rabbi Shemuel presented him with a difficult passage from *Tosafot*, a passage for which he could find no satisfactory explanation. The Netziv looked at the words of *Tosafot* for several moments, and then explained them with a short remark that pleased the Rashash (and for which he cited him in his commentary on *Yebamot* [81b], with a statement of his appreciation).

Later on, the Rashash asked him: "Why didn't I find the same thing?" The Netziv replied, "Because you have studied Torah in abundance, in wealth, and in honor, whereas I labored in the study of Torah. When we acquire Torah through adversity, by means of effort, new sources open up to us."

Extraordinary!

During his travels, the Sha'agat Aryeh arrived in Breslau, where he met the gaon Rabbi Yeshaya Pik (Berlin), one of the most extraordinary men among the Torah giants of the generation. Both Torah and abundance were found together at his table.

When the Sha'agat Aryeh entered the Rav's home, he gave the Rebbetzin a pot and some barley that he carried in his sack, and asked her to cook it for him. However she gave the pot and barley to one of the servants. The Sha'agat Aryeh was upset, saying to her: "I have faith in you, not in your servant!"

The Rebbetzin looked at him, astonished at the audacity of this strange guest. She went to her husband and told him what their guest – a poor wandering man with a strange appearance and clothes – had said: He had come to their home and demanded that she personally cook him barley in a pot! Rav Yeshaya told his wife to do what the visitor had asked, and he personally went to welcome him with a *Shalom Aleichem*. He then brought him through some beautifully decorated rooms into his private room, which was even more exquisite than the rest.

The two men sat down and began to speak, and they immediately entered into a Torah discussion. The Sha'agat Aryeh peppered Rabbi Yeshaya with tough questions and difficulties. As Rabbi Yeshaya thoroughly analyzed and explained these questions,

the Sha'agat Aryeh rejoiced. He nodded his head, declaring with astonishment and wonder: "This is extraordinary – a Rav who lives a life of wealth and abundance, but who also knows how to learn!" The gaon Rabbi Baruch Ber Leibowitz Zatzal used to say that the saintly Sha'agat Aryeh exemplified, in his first book, the study of Torah amid hardship, for he wrote it when he served as the Rav of Volozhin and lived in complete poverty. At the time, when the book *Sha'agat Aryeh* was published, it made great waves in the Torah world. The Sha'agat Aryeh later wrote the book *Turei Even* while he was living in Metz, where he learned Torah amid abundance. Even in the *Turei Even*, we can see the quality and importance of his explanations.

However he stated that his own teacher, Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik Zatzal, had personally compared these two books and found that *Sha'agat Aryeh* was much greater than *Turei Even*.

This teaches us just how great Torah is when it is studied in poverty! *I Wouldn't Have Known Even This Little!*

Professor Nachum Sloshtz arrived at the modest home of Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin in Jerusalem. He was a scholar from France, and he brought Rabbi Yehoshua Leib greetings from his father, who was Rabbi Yehoshua Leib's childhood friend. At the end of their visit, the professor said: "I would like to ask you something. Before I left, my father said to me: 'When you're in Jerusalem, don't forget to visit Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin and send him my greetings. Know that he is a very great scholar in the Torah world.' "When I arrived at your home, I thought that I would no doubt find you living in a distinguished house, a magnificent palace with an army of servants, as befits a great scholar. To my astonishment, however, I see that you live in a home with two small rooms, a place that you must descend stairs to reach. It's more accurate to call it a ruin than a home. I think that my father won't believe me when I tell him. What's the explanation?"

Rabbi Yehoshua Leib smiled a little and said, "Your father said that I'm one of the greatest scholars in the world? That's just foolishness! Nothing can be so exaggerated! It's true that I know how to study a little. However I should tell you that if I lived in a large home – a palace with servants, as you described it – then I wouldn't even know the little that I do!"

The Torah does not Emerge from Luxuries

The son of a well-known food manufacturer, Manischewitz, traveled from the United States to visit the Mea Shearim yeshiva, headed by the gaon Rabbi Zerach Braverman. He found Rabbi Zerach in the middle of giving a class, and he was forced to wait until its conclusion. In the meantime, this visitor took a look at the place and noticed the wobbly chairs and benches that squeaked whenever people sat on them.

On the following day, a wagon arrived at the yeshiva loaded with new chairs and benches for the students. These had been freely donated by the Manischewitz family.

However Rabbi Zerach adamantly refused to accept this gift. He ordered the driver to put everything back into the wagon, and to return it from where it came. He even paid him for his traveling expenses.

The donor, who did not understand why Rabbi Zerach had refused his gift, asked him for an explanation. Rabbi Zerach answered him in a way that left no room for doubt:

"The Sages have taught, 'Be mindful of the children of the poor, for the Torah emerges from them' – however the Torah does not emerge from luxuries!"

Purifying the Soul

It is written, "From every man whose heart motivates him, you shall take My offering" (Shemot 25:2).

The gaon Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin Zatzal gave a marvelous explanation for this verse:

From every man who is ready to give his heart to Me, to sanctify himself and fulfill with all his strength the mitzvah, "you shall not follow after your heart" – from him shall you take an offering for the Sanctuary.

Whoever is prepared to give his silver and gold for the sake of Heaven is also capable of purifying his soul by fulfilling "you shall not follow after your heart," and to give it to Hashem. When he presents his offering, it is a sign that he is prepared to give up something for Me and in My honor!

Like the Sanctuary and its Vessels

It is written, "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them" (Shemot 25:8).

Many explanations have been forwarded regarding the Sages' teaching that the verse does not say "in it," but "among them."

It is fitting to focus on the explanation of Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin Zatzal, for whom every Jew encompassed all of Creation. The Sanctuary and its vessels were also designed in the image of Creation and the supernal worlds. However the essence of the Shechinah's dwelling in the Sanctuary pertains to man, for if he sanctifies himself by fulfilling all the mitzvot – upon which the proper functioning of Creation depends – he himself becomes the Temple and Hashem dwells in him.

According to this, the following verse – "like everything that I show you" (v.9), concerning which Rashi says "in future generations" – may be explained in the following way: Do not think that the objective is to build an external Sanctuary. The truth is that the entire Sanctuary and its vessels only exist so that you may see it and build the inside of yourselves – in future generations – so that you yourselves will be like the model of the Sanctuary and its vessels.

Inside and Out

It is written, "Inside and out shall you cover it" (Shemot 25:11).

Rabbi Yosef David of Brisk Zatzal used to say, "Every talmid chacham is comparable to the holy Ark. The verse warns: Do not cover it with gold just on the inside, but not on the outside. This means that he must not concern himself with his sustenance alone, without worrying about inspiring respect on the outside as well. He must wear honorable clothes that will earn him respect, as befits him.

When we give tzedakah, the one who receives it becomes the object of the mitzvah, such as a beautiful etrog that people admire and which makes everyone rejoice.

Immersing the Table

It is written, "You shall also make a table of acacia wood. Two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its width..." (Shemot 25:23).

In the Gemara we read, "The table in the Sanctuary was jointed" (Pesachim 109b), meaning that it could be disassembled into two parts along its length.

The Gemara asks how a table of one-by-one cubit could be immersed in the Sanctuary's mikveh, which also measured one-by-one cubit.

We note that the question of immersion was only raised in regards to the table, not any other vessel.

In the book Ohr Yekarot, Rabbi Naphtali Hirtz Zatzal writes that only in regards to the table, upon which the showbread was placed, does it say: "Before Me [G-d] continually" (Shemot 35:30). It was therefore only possible to immerse the table on Shabbat, when old bread was removed and replaced by new bread. Now the Gemara (Menachot 99b) also teaches that even if old bread was removed on Shabbat at morning and replaced in the evening, it was still considered as being

"before Me continually." Therefore there was no other time to immerse the table than on Shabbat, between one batch of bread and the next.

Such was not the case for the other vessels of the Sanctuary, which could be immersed on any day of the week. They could therefore be immersed outside the Sanctuary, in the large mikveh, something that could not be done with the table because it could only be immersed on Shabbat and only in the Sanctuary mikveh. (Note: Since there was no shvut [rabbinic enactment meant to prevent a desecration of Shabbat] in the Sanctuary, it was possible to immerse it in a mikveh even on Shabbat.) Hence the Gemara raises the question of how the table was immersed in a mikveh that measured one-by-one cubit, and the answer is that it was immersed in separate pieces.

A Sanctified Source

It is written, "Its cups, its knobs, and its blossoms shall be with it" (Shemot 25:31). Based on an allusion found in this verse, the Chatam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer Zatzal) formulated a practical teaching: We must not adorn the Torah's words with foreign decorations coming from abroad, such as by explaining Torah with foreign wisdom. Even "its cups, its knobs, and its blossoms" must be "with it" – meaning that even Torah explanations and commentaries must come from a sanctified source.

In the Light of the Parsha

We Only Learn Torah Well in a Beit HaMidrash

It is written, "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them" (Shemot 25:8).

Why does the verse say "among them" rather than "in it," since it is speaking of the Sanctuary? The Holy One, blessed be He, instructed Moshe to tell the Children of Israel: Build a gathering place for Me, a Beit HaMidrash where I may reside. As the Sages have taught, "Before the Tent of Meeting was set up, He spoke with him from the bush, as it is said: 'G-d called to him out of the midst of the bush' [Shemot 3:4]. Then, 'Hashem said to Moshe and Aaron in the land of Egypt...' [ibid. 12:1]. He also spoke to him in Midian, as it is said: 'Hashem said to Moshe in Midian' [ibid. 4:19]. At Sinai He also spoke to him, as it is said: 'Hashem spoke to Moshe on Mount Sinai...' [Vayikra 25:1]. Yet as soon as the Tent of Meeting was set up, G-d thought: 'Modesty is a beautiful thing,' as it is said: 'Walk modestly with your G-d' [Micah 6:8]. Hence from then on, He spoke to him in the Tent of Meeting" (Bamidbar Rabba 1:3).

The Midrash states, " [Jacob] sent Judah before him to Joseph, lehorot [to prepare the way] before him to Goshen' [Bereshith 46:28]. What did he prepare? Rabbi Nechemia said, 'That he should establish a Beit HaMidrash where he could teach [lehorot] Torah, so that the tribes could study Torah' " (Tanchuma, Vayigash 12). Let us think about this: Could the tribes not have studied Torah elsewhere, such that Jacob had to send Judah before him? From here, however, we learn that a person can only study Torah in a Beit HaMidrash.

Before the Sanctuary was built, a person could study Torah anywhere. Since the time of the Sanctuary, however, he does most of his Torah study only at a Beit HaMidrash. In the Yerushalmi we read, "A covenant was made in which what we learn in the Beit HaMidrash is not easily forgotten" (Berachot 5:1). Hence it is written, "I will dwell among them" – they must study all their Torah in a Beit HaMidrash. Our Sages have said, "One must always divide his years into three: A third to the written Torah, a third to Mishnah, and a third to Talmud" (Kiddushin 30a). This is why G-d said, "I will dwell betocham [among them]." In the term betocham [beit-tav-vav-caph-mem], the beit alludes to the written Torah, which begins with the letter beit (Bereshith), the mem alludes to the Mishnah, which begins with the letter mem (Me'eimatai), the tav alludes to the Gemara, which begins with the letter tav (Tanna), and the vav alludes to the Prophets, which begins with the letter vav (Vayehi), and the caph alludes to the Ketuvim, all of which demonstrates that we must study the entire Torah in a Beit HaMidrash.

Concerning the Parsha

Three Garlands, Three Crowns, and an Abundance of Virtues

Great Torah commentators have long discussed, each in his own field and in his own way, the clear and hidden kavanot and allusions which we find in the description of the Sanctuary's vessels and the way in which they were made. The Kli Yakar notes that we find the commandment to place a garland of gold around the top of three vessels of the Sanctuary: The Ark, the table, and the golden altar.

These three garlands, say the Sages, correspond to the three crowns that were given to Israel: The crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty.

These three vessels differ from one another in terms of their dimensions: For the Ark, all of its dimensions are expressed by so-called "broken" (non-whole) numbers: It was 2½ cubits long, 1½ cubits wide, and 1½ cubits high. On the other hand, all the dimensions of the inner altar are expressed by whole numbers: It was 1 cubit long, 1 cubit wide, and 2 cubits high. The table differs from both of these, for it contained a combination of whole and "broken" dimensions: It was 2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, and 1½ cubits high.

The idea hidden behind these differences is that in regards to spirituality, a person must always consider himself as being halfway to his destination. He must never look to those who are at a lower spiritual level, but instead he must look to those who are better than himself. In this way, a positive form of envy will develop in him, one that will push him to grow even more.

On the other hand, in regards to the things of this world, such as wealth and honor, a person should look to those who have less than himself, and should consider himself as being complete. This idea is alluded to in the teaching of the Sages: "He who prays should look down, and his heart should look up." This means that one who prays for the needs of his body and soul should focus his heart, which discerns wisdom and understanding, towards the One above him. He should ask Hashem to incline his heart towards wisdom, whereas his eyes – which see the concrete attributes of the body – should be focused on a lower level than his own. He will then rejoice in his lot and not ask for an abundance of wealth.

The broken dimensions of the Ark teach us that every man must picture himself as lacking wisdom. It is said, "Where is wisdom found? With one who considers himself as nothing, not with one who is wise in his own eyes." The Sages have taught, "Who is wise? He who learns from every person" (Pirkei Avot 4:1). He constantly sees himself as still lacking a great deal of wisdom and must study to acquire it.

This feeling must not be held in regards to Torah study and mitzvot observance alone, but also in regards to the knowledge of Hashem's existence. It is for this reason that the three dimensions of the Ark are not whole. Its length, width, and height correspond to the constricted views of a person who thinks about the deep concepts and details that must be understood. In other words, the height corresponds to the heights of the Torah, which are the heights of understanding. The width corresponds to the constricted views of man, and the length corresponds to the length of the Torah and the understanding of wisdom, as it is written: "Its measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea" (Job 11:9).

The table, which corresponds to the crown of royalty and the table of kings, comprises all the success that G-d has granted to Israel, since

everything they obtained originated from the table in Heaven. The fact that some of its dimensions are expressed in whole numbers shows that in terms of material success, we must all rejoice in our own lot. We must all picture ourselves as having everything and lacking nothing, as our father Jacob said: "I have all" (Bereshith 33:11).

At the same time, other dimensions are expressed by broken numbers, teaching us that a person must not give free reign to his instincts. Rather, he must break them.

The Altar of Atonement

In regards to the altars, continues the Kli Yakar, since their role was to effect atonement for the sins of man, all their dimensions are given by whole numbers. In fact man comes to complete and perfect what is lacking by means of an animal sacrifice. The golden altar atoned for the soul by the smoke that arose from the incense.

The Gemara discusses a statement by the prophet Ezekiel: "The altar of wood three cubits high...and He said to me, 'This is the table that is before Hashem'" (Ezekiel 41:22). Note that the verse opens with the term "altar" and ends with the term "table." Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Eleazar explained: "As long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel, but now a man's table atones for him" (Berachot 55a).

Great is the table of a Jew within the sanctuary of his home, because for him it is an altar that atones for his sins when he fulfills all the laws and customs pertaining to the table. This means that he is extremely careful in regards to the food that comes upon his table. He eats in a refined and dignified way, which befits a Jew, and he recites all the blessings calmly and with proper concentration. At that point his table atones for his sins. The Reshith Chochma (Sha'ar HaKedusha 28) states that the Holy One, blessed be He, sends two angels to a man's table to see how he conducts himself as he eats.

In his book Shulchan Tahor, the tzaddik Rabbi Aharon Rotte Zatzal cites a tzaddik in stating that when a man eats once a week, or just once a month, for the sake of Heaven, he elevates all the food he consumed when he was not eating for the sake of Heaven.

One of the ways in which food is considered an offering is when a person does not quickly swallow his food. It is also when he perceives the flavor of his meals, stops for a brief moment, and does not obey his desire to eat such delicious food.

In this context, the Raavad writes that if a person stops eating when he has a great craving for food, and he does this for the glory of Hashem, it is considered a fast (termed "the fast of the Raavad").

A meal is also called lechem ("bread"). The Chida states that this comes from the root milchama ("war"), for when a person eats, a war ensues between the side of impurity and the side of holiness. Happy is the one who strengthens the side of holiness and makes his table pure before Hashem.

Guard Your Tongue!

Many Stumble in this Area

The prohibition against Lashon Harah applies to both men and women. It makes no difference if a man is speaking about his own wife or another woman. Yet because of our many sins, numerous people stumble in this area. They believe that they can speak ill of their wife or their wife's family to their own brothers and family members. This is forbidden unless there is a constructive purpose behind it.– Chafetz Chaim