

Kindly take a moment to study MISHNAS CHAYIM in the merit of
Kayla *bas* Yehudah Leib HaLevi *a"h*
a fellow Jew who passed away with no relatives to arrange Torah study on behalf of her *neshamah*

Sharing the Wealth

PARSHAS TERUMAH 5778

This week's *parshah* features the call to Klal Yisrael – to which they responded most generously – to participate in the construction of the *Mikdash* (Temple/Tabernacle) through the offering of contributions. In our times, as well, we have the opportunity to take part in a similar lofty endeavor. Chazal tell us that nowadays each shul and study hall functions as a “*mikdash me'at* – a miniature sanctuary” (*Megillah 29a*). As these worthy institutions are usually in need of material assistance, the opportunities abound for people to offer “*terumah*” (a proffered gift) for their maintenance or expansion.

What a *Din Torah* (Court Case) Should Look Like

One of the disciples of the Chafetz Chayim related a most fascinating incident in this regard. At one point, the Chafetz Chayim's *yeshivah* in Radin, due to increased enrollment, had to expand its facilities – an endeavor which, of course, entailed a significant outlay of funds. Somewhat reminiscent of the events of this week's *parshah*, the Chafetz Chayim turned to the community with a plea for contributions.

Now, it so happened that in a neighboring hamlet there lived a certain Reb Moshe, a well-known and wealthy individual. He appeared before the Chafetz Chayim with a magnanimous offer. “We are a childless couple,” he related to the sage, “and as such, it would be our pleasure to donate the entirety of the necessary funds for the project. Thus, our name will be perpetuated through the *yeshivah* building.”

The Chafetz Chayim was most gracious and appreciative; surprisingly, however, he turned down the offer. “Reb Moshe,” he explained, “you should be blessed. But a *yeshivah* is a communal entity. As such, I simply cannot deprive the whole community of the enormous merit of contributing to this holy endeavor.”

But Reb Moshe was not to be dissuaded – and even invited the Chafetz Chayim to a *din Torah* over the matter, to be adjudicated by the *gadol hador* (premier sage of the generation), R' Chayim Ozer Grodzinski. R' Chayim Ozer devised a compromise solution: the community would be afforded the opportunity of contributing for the majority of the building, but the prestigious eastern wall would be the sole province of Reb Moshe.

Leaving the courtroom, Reb Moshe turned to the other “litigant” and asked the Chafetz Chayim for his blessing. The sage responded: “I hereby bless you, that as long as I remain alive, so shall you.” As is well known, the Chafetz Chayim merited long years. And sure enough, a short time after his *petirah* (passing), Reb Moshe passed on, as well (*Chafetz Chayim Hachadash al HaTorah, parshas Terumah*).

Stop for Directions

This incident brings to mind a related anecdote involving the Ponevezher Rav, a legendary figure known for his far-reaching efforts to establish the Ponevezh Yeshivah in Bnei Brak. The Ponevezher Rav had to travel far and wide to raise the necessary funds for the building and upkeep of the *yeshivah*. Once, he was sharing his anguish with the Chazon Ish. Observing the state of prestigious universities, he wondered aloud how to make sense of the contrast: For

the sake of the yeshivah he had to literally traverse the entire globe, scraping together some meager contributions at each stop. At the same time, the secular universities seemed to grow and flourish with minimal effort; huge donations poured in, as evidenced by the construction of another building here, another wing there.

The Chazon Ish clarified the matter by turning to the subject of the *Arei Miklat*, the designated cities of refuge to which one who commits accidental murder flees to escape the victim's avenger. The Mishnah (*Makkos 2:5*) discusses the streamlining of the paths that led to these cities:

וּמְכַנְנֹת לְהוֹן דְּרָכִים... שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר תִּכְיֶן לְךָ הַדֶּרֶךְ...

“The roads to (the cities) followed a straight course... as it states (*Devarim 19:3*): ‘You shall prepare the way...’”

The Gemara (*Makkos 10b*) adds that signs were posted by the intersections indicating the way to the *Arei Miklat*. Remarking on this effort, the Chazon Ish posed a question: We don't find that any signs were erected on behalf of the *olei regel*, the pilgrims who ascended to the Temple three times a year? Why was no similar endeavor undertaken to direct these mitzvah-observers to their destination?

The answer, explained the Chazon Ish, is that the Torah specifically did not want the journey to the Temple to be so “easy.” Without signposts, the pilgrims would have to stop and ask others for directions; in this way, the whole matter of this mitzvah would be publicized to the masses. They would learn from the direction seekers about this praiseworthy undertaking of ascending to the Temple, and then they, too, would join in the pilgrimage. But when it comes to the *Arei Miklat*, its use was not something the Torah wanted to be so publicly spread; unnecessary talk about murder would have a deleterious effect on the spiritual climate. And so it was mandated to ease the path of these murderers seeking refuge, such that they could arrive in their *Arei Miklat* without having to stop to ask directions.

The Chazon Ish proceeded to assure the Ponevezher Rav that the matter was quite similar when it came to his predicament. That is, Hashem is not desirous of a great public campaign on behalf of G-dless institutions. As such, he deliberately eases their path, making it relatively simple for them to accrue funds; this will preempt the need for wide-ranging campaigns. But the opposite is true when it comes to Torah institutions. There, like the *olei regel*, Hashem wills that the matter be publicized to all. Let *Yidden* far and wide hear of the greatness of Torah and have the opportunity to gain a portion in it. And so, the peregrinations on behalf of Torah are indeed a fulfillment of Hashem's will, as the entirety of the nation can play a role in furthering the greatness and glory of Torah.

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