



**ALEPH  
INSTITUTE**  
No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

# TORAH WEEKLY

ת"ש

4 - 10 March, 2018  
17 - 26 Adar, 5778

**Torah:**  
Exodus 35:1 - 40:38

**Second Torah - Parshat  
Parah:**  
Numbers 19:1 - 22

**Haftarah:**  
Ezekiel 36:16 - 36  
■ **CALENDARS**

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

## ■ **FAMILY PROGRAMS**

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

## ■ **GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH**

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

## **ALEPH INSTITUTE**

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## THE FINAL EXAM

Transparency and accountability — these are the new buzz words for 21st century corporate governance. No doubt all upright, honorable people welcome every genuine effort to stop corruption and dishonesty in whatever sphere of society — corporate, governmental or personal. But is this really a new phenomenon? Is ours, in fact, the first generation in history concerned about such issues?

In this week's Torah reading, Pikudei (Exodus 38-40), we learn that way back in the days of Moses a transparent accounting and detailed audit was conducted over the donations made by the Israelites towards the building campaign for the Sanctuary and its sacred vessels. The contributions of gold, silver and copper were all weighed and totaled, so that no one could cast any aspersions on the integrity of Moshe and his team. In fact, the commentaries derive from this episode that those in charge of communal charity funds should likewise hold themselves accountable. We all need to be "innocent in the eyes of G-d and man."

Ethics of the Fathers reminds us to consider that one day we will all face ultimate accountability. Each of us will stand before the heavenly tribunal to give a *din v'cheshbon*, a "full justification and an accounting" for

the way we lived our lives.

It's fascinating to note that somehow the Talmud (Shabbos, 31a) was able to get wind of the actual questions we will be asked by that supernal tribunal. Know what the very first question is going to be? Surprise, it's not "Did you believe in G-d," or "Did you fast on Yom Kippur?" Believe it or not, the first question on this final of final exams is: "Did you deal faithfully in business?" Not how religious you were with G-d but how you conducted your business affairs. Were you honest and fair with people?

The second question, however, does go to the heart of our Jewishness. "Did you set aside fixed times for Torah study?" It would appear that familiarizing oneself with Torah and becoming a knowledgeable Jew is the key that opens the doors to everything else in Jewish life.

Is it not an anomaly of our times that many of our most brilliant legal minds — attorneys, advocates and judges — may have never opened a single page of the Talmud, Judaism's classic encyclopedia of law? Or that some of our finest doctors may be completely unfamiliar with the medical writings of Maimonides, the great 12th century physician and scholar? Or that our brightest business magnates remain Jewishly ignorant, even illiterate?

When it comes to crossing a red light, ignorance

of the law is no excuse. No traffic cop will buy the story that the driver didn't know it was illegal. In our day and age, with so many new opportunities for Torah study available, Jewish ignorance just doesn't wash. If the Talmud was once a closed book, today it's available in English — and there are teachers to go with it too. Jewish studies opportunities abound in every community. And if one is geographically challenged, the internet can work wonders. You'll even find yourself a virtual Rabbi!

Let's ensure that when the Cop in Sky pulls us over to "ask a few questions" we'll all be able to answer in the affirmative.

By Rabbi Yossi Goldman

## THE CLOUD

This week we finish the reading of the book of Exodus, also known in the commentaries as the Book of Redemption because of its description of the people of Israel leaving Egypt. This second book of the Torah concludes by describing the establishment and dedication of the Tabernacle and, most importantly, the revelation of G-d's Divine Presence within it.

The Torah tells us: "When the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, the Israelites would set out, on their various journeys." This seemingly simple verse raises two very significant questions.

First of all, what is the connection between

the Jews traveling forward and the establishment of the Tabernacle in the desert? This information would seem to be more appropriate later in the book of Numbers, when it describes in great detail the various travels of the people of Israel during their 40 years in the desert.

Secondly, the verse implies that the Jews' march toward the Land of Israel is specifically connected to the Divine Presence leaving their camp in the desert. Only when "the cloud lifted" do "the Israelites set out." Why is this so?

Chasidic thought answers both of these questions by dealing with the ultimate existential nature of Creation. It understands the Tabernacle to be a paradigm for all of the world. What dynamic is at play behind the timing of the Jewish people's journeys? One answer is that there is no great spiritual accomplishment in fulfilling the Divine Will at a time when G-d's Presence is revealed and manifest.

The ultimate goal of existence is to rise up and connect to holiness even when it is hidden and concealed from us. The Midrash tells us that G-d desired a "dwelling place for Himself in the lower worlds." But relative to G-d, is there truly an upper or lower world? His realm is infinite.

We can now understand that when G-d's cloud was found among the Jewish people and His Presence was revealed, then the material world ceased to be "lowly." It is only when the cloud of G-d raises itself higher and higher, and His Divine Light is no longer revealed, can we begin the spiritual fulfilling of G-d's design. And the Tabernacle bestows upon the Jewish people the strength and faculties to bring holiness into the world, the ultimate purpose of Creation.

This is an extremely relevant message for us all at this time in Jewish history. We are in a spiritual state of exile. There is a darkness that rests on the world necessitating our best efforts, even more than before, to engage in the study of Torah and the fulfillment of mitzvot. We must understand that our ultimate goal and purpose is to illuminate that darkness with the light of Torah. Just as the disappearance of the Divine cloud from the Tabernacle became the sign to proceed forward, so, too, should today's conflicts encourage and arouse us to dedicate ourselves to the fulfillment of G-d's mission, which is to journey past this era and into the Messianic era of the complete and full redemption.

By Rabbi Shraga Sherman

## Parshat Parah

The Torah reading of Parah (Numbers 19) is added to the weekly reading. Parah details the laws of the "Red Heifer" and the process by which a person rendered ritually impure by contact with a dead body was purified.

(When the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, every Jew had to be in a state of ritual purity in time for the bringing

of the Passover offering in the Temple. Today, though we're unable to fulfill the Temple-related rituals in practice, we fulfill them spiritually by studying their laws in the Torah. Thus, we study and read the Parshat Parah in preparation for the upcoming festival of Passover.)

In this weeks Parshah Moshe is told	This shows that all must be included
To gather different materials	No matter what lot is his
Copper, silver and gold	
Gold represents a tzadik	Everyone in the world
Who is righteous through and through	Must be a part
And the silver represents the	Even if he doesn't
Baal teshuva	Appear to be so smart
Who is level number two	
The copper shows a sinner	The copper was also included
Yet included he is	And for us this is a lesson
	To treat everyone equally
	No matter what their knowledge or possession

## In Jewish History

**Tuesday, 19 Adar, 5778 - March 6, 2018**

**Israel Secures Ein Gedi (1949)**

Following the War of Independence, Israel needed to secure its borders against the hostile Arab nations which surrounded it. Ein Gedi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea, was secured on Sunday, March 20, 1949.

**Shabbat, 23 Adar, 5778 - March 10, 2018**

**Mishkan assembled; 7 "days of training" (1312 BCE)**

The Children of Israel began building the "Mishkan" (also called the "Tabernacle"--a portable sanctuary to house the Divine presence in their midst as they journeyed through the desert) on the 11th of Tishrei of the year 2449 from creation (1312 BCE) -- six months after their Exodus from Egypt, four months after the revelation at Sinai, and 80 days after their worship of the Golden Calf. The construction of the Mishkan, which followed a detailed set of instructions issued to Moses on Mount Sinai, lasted 74 days, and was completed on the 25th of Kislev; but the Divine command to erect the edifice came only three months later, on the 23rd of Adar, when Moses was instructed to begin a 7-day "training period."

During the week of Adar 23-29, the Mishkan was erected each morning and dismantled each evening; Moses served as the High Priest and initiated Aaron and his four sons into the priesthood. Then, on the "eighth day" -- the 1st of Nisan -- the Mishkan was "permanently" assembled (that is, put up to stand until the Divine command would come to journey on), Aaron and his sons assumed the priesthood, and the divine presence came to dwell in the Mishkan.

**Passing of 1st Rebbe of Ger (1866)**

Chassidic Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Altar (1799-1866), author of Chiddushei Harim (a commentary on the Talmud and Shulchan Aruch), was a disciple of the Maggid of Koshnitz and Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Peshischa, and the founder of the "Ger" (Gerer) Chassidic dynasty. All his 13 sons had died in his lifetime, and he was succeeded (in 1870) by his young grandson, Rabbi Yehudah Leib Alter (the "Sefat Emet").