

## PARSHAT TERUMAH

2-8 Adar 1 5784  
11-17 February 2024

*Torah:* Exodus 25-1 – 27:19  
*HafTorah:* Kings I 5:26 – 6:13

Psalms Daily

### Psalms for our brethren in the Holy Land

*Psalm 117*

1. Praise the Lord, all nations, laud Him, all peoples.  
2. For His kindness has overwhelmed us, and the truth of the Lord is eternal. Hallelujah!

(Please say Chapter 20 daily)

Tefillin

Tefillin are leather boxes which contain passages from the Torah (Bible), as written in the original Hebrew. They're worn by Jewish males, 13 and older, every day aside from Shabbat and Jewish holidays. One box is worn on the forehead, (corresponding with the mind), and the other on ones' weaker arm, (corresponding with the heart). While wearing the Tefillin, the morning prayer (Shacharit) is recited; at minimum, one should recite the Shema passage.

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No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

## The Gold Standard

The Mishkan (Tabernacle) was an impressive structure, constructed of acacia wood, gold, silver, copper and luxurious animal hides. The laws and discussion of the Mishkan's construction span five Torah portions, and would, at first glance, seem irrelevant to us nowadays. The Mishkan ceased to be used almost 3000 years ago with the construction of the first Temple in Jerusalem, of what consequence all these laws? As each of us struggles with our challenges, the struggle is precious to G-d. Interwoven through the story of the Mishkan, however, are numerous ethical and moral lessons and practical advice that we continue to live by to this day. One of them pertains to the materials used in the construction project.

Almost everything in the Mishkan was made of, or plated with, gold, silver or copper. We know that the Jews left Egypt with an excess of gold – as evidenced by their making of the Golden Calf – why then did G-d instruct that the lesser materials of silver and copper should also be used in the Mishkan's construction? Surely pure gold would have looked much more spectacular. Recently, during a weekly discussion group in a school here in Leeds, we were talking about intermarriage. One of the boys asked me a perceptive question: "If you were sitting in my place," he asked, "and were not a rabbi with a religious upbringing, could you honestly say that you would only marry a Jewish girl?" My response was that, being born into a religious family and being a rabbi means that I face different challenges than those brought up in a different way. And vice versa. G-d throws each of us the challenges that He feels that we can deal with, no more but no less. As each of us struggles with our challenges, each on our own level, the struggle is precious to G-d. Whether we would classify ourselves as "gold," "silver" or "copper" is irrelevant, as long as

we are working in the holy field of making a home for G-d in this world, a modern day Mishkan.

The commentaries note that the altar that was used for the sacrifices in the Temple was copper coated. The objective of the altar was to bring forgiveness, and it was therefore fitting that it not be made of gold, a material that does not tarnish, rather copper. Copper tarnishes, but can be restored to its former state, demonstrating that just as tarnished metal can be returned to its former shining state, so too, even one who may be classified as "copper," "tarnished copper" at that, remains a shining Jew, ready and able to sparkle.

*By Eli Pink*

## The Japanese Hero Who Saved My Grandfather From the Nazis

Virtually everyone has heard of the World War II hero Oskar Schindler. Through the valiant actions of this German businessman, more than 1,200 precious lives were saved during the Holocaust. Schindler hired Jewish workers for his factories, saving their lives from the hands of the Nazi barbarians pursuing them to the last drop of blood.

But fewer have heard the name Chiune Sugihara. Although his heroic actions never reached the lights of Hollywood or Broadway, his incredible heroism during the war certainly can't be overlooked. Here was a regular man, a Japanese diplomat working in the Japanese consulate in Lithuania, who issued visas to some 6,000 Jews, allowing them to escape Nazi-occupied territories via Japan. As the Nazis threatened to invade Lithuania, the Jews of that region knew what their fate would hold, so thousands surrounded the Japanese consulate in Kovno, hoping to obtain a visa to safety.

Disobeying his superiors back home in Japan, Sugihara issued visas by the thousands. From July 31 to August 28, 1940, Sugihara and his

wife stayed up all day and night writing visas for the desperate Jews.

Eventually, as the war escalated, the Japanese government shut down the consulate in Kovno. Despite that, Sugihara kept writing visas, even from the window of his train as it was about to draw away from the platform and leave the city. When the train began moving, he gave the visa stamp to a refugee to continue the job!

After receiving their visas, the refugees typically followed a train route to Moscow, then followed the Trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok, and on to Kobe, Japan. Most stayed in Kobe for a few months, then went on to Shanghai, China, and elsewhere. My grandfather, Reb Nochum Preger, of blessed memory, was one of those fortunate enough to obtain a visa directly from Sugihara's operation. He was the 44th name on the list of 52 yeshivah students, from Yeshivat Tomchei Temimim in Vilna and elsewhere in Europe, who were granted visas. The fact is, if not for Sugihara's actions, I wouldn't be here to write this essay. It's that simple.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center has estimated that 40,000 people are alive today because of the Sugiharas' efforts! In 1985, as a small gesture of appreciation and gratitude for his efforts, Israel named Sugihara a "Righteous Among the Nations," a title given to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. He died a year later in Tokyo.

Mark Salomon is a grandson of Bernard Salomon, and therefore directly linked to Sugihara's 299th visa. Mark made the following statement, knowing that his family would not have existed without Sugihara: "Most people have this idea that you can't really help the whole world, so what's the point?" But, Mark continued, Sugihara showed that "whatever you are doing with yourself, you are having a much broader impact."

Sometimes it's hard to see the forest through the trees, but it's important in every aspect of your life to remember you are having an effect and to make it a positive effect.

### **Universal Transformation?**

Calls to "change the world for the better!" and for tikkun olam are ubiquitous motivational slogans, persuading us to get out there and make this world a better place. But looking around, one sees a world teeming with evil and negativity. How then can the One Above expect us to transform this apparent scrapheap filled with evil into a beautiful garden for His pleasure? It seems impossible!

### **Making It Personal**

"You shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in them." Grammatically speaking, wouldn't it be more correct to say "in it"—in the sanctuary? Isn't the verse referring to G-d's presence finding a home there? Our sages explain that the verse is (also) referring to every individual. That's right: that means

you, too! All of us can—and must—construct a magnificent sanctuary inside our hearts and minds. It's a garden that even meets the standards of the Almighty. Is it possible? Surely! For if G-d commanded us to build it, then we are certainly capable of doing so. This commandment of personal Temple-building portrays the unique power of every individual. We are given the ability to achieve so much more than our wildest dreams can predict! As a young Jewish girl who endured the Nazi onslaught wrote: "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." Her name was Anne Frank. It comes as no surprise, then, that Sugihara's herculean efforts to build a "sanctuary" for my grandfather would lead to my Zaide building his own sanctuary, as the following story depicts. On the first night of Passover, 1981, the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory—passed my grandfather's home on President Street in

Brooklyn. He was on his way from observing the Seder at the local yeshivah dining room to a public Seder at the Machon Chana school for women. The Rebbe stopped in front of my grandfather and asked, "Is this your mikdash me'at, minor Holy Temple?" When my grandfather replied that it was indeed, the Rebbe remarked, "May the verse 'And I will dwell in them' be fulfilled in actuality!" Thanks to Sugihara, my grandfather was able to make it across the Atlantic to the shores of America, and to build himself the most glorious sanctuary in which the Almighty could feel right at home! Yes, one person can indeed change this beast of a world. Indeed, there's an obligation placed upon the shoulders of every solitary human being to do their part. The impact of our positive actions will follow, as the water ripples outward from one stone dropped in a pool of water.

*By David Greenwald*

## IN JEWISH HISTORY

### **Sunday, February 11, 2024-2 Adar I, 5784 Passing of R. Yomtov Algazi (1802)**

R. Yomtov Algazi was the chief rabbi of Jerusalem from 1773 until his death. During a journey to Europe to raise money for the Jewish community in Israel, he discovered a manuscript of a work of Nachmanides: a compilation of the laws of the firstborn and the separation of challah, styled after R. Yitzchak Alfasi's codex of Jewish law. R. Yomtov undertook to publish the manuscript, accompanied by a lengthy commentary he authored, which brought him worldwide fame as a brilliant Torah scholar.

### **Monday, February 12, 2024-3 Adar I, 5784 Passing of R. Mordechai Jaffe (the Levush) (1612)**

R. Mordechai Jaffe served as the rabbi of numerous communities in Poland and Lithuania. Among his more well-known works are *Levush Malchus*, a halachic code following the order of R. Jacob ben Asher's *Arbaah Turim*, and *Levush HaOrah*, a super-commentary to R. Shlomo Yitzchaki's Torah commentary. R. Mordechai served as the head of the "Council of Four Lands," the government-sanctioned Jewish organization entrusted with dealing with Jewish communal affairs. In addition to Talmud and Jewish law, R. Mordechai was also well-versed in both Kabbalah and astronomy.

### **Wednesday, February 14, 2024-5 Adar I, 5784 Passing of R. Shmuel Abba Schapiro of Slavuta (1864)**

R. Shmuel Abba Schapiro and his brother R. Pinchas managed the famed printing press of Slavuta, in what is now Ukraine. In 1835, they were falsely accused of arranging the murder of one of their workers (who had committed suicide). As a result, the government ordered the

closing of all Russian Jewish printing presses (save for one press in Vilnius), and the brothers were incarcerated and flogged. The brothers' tremendous piety and fear of Heaven followed them to their cells. It is related that while walking through the two rows of soldiers who were administering the flogging, R. Shmuel Abba's kippah (skullcap) fell off of his head, and he refused to proceed until it was returned, although he received additional blows as a result. A miniature Torah scroll was smuggled into their cell during their incarceration to enable the brothers to study. This unique scroll later gifted to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who would dance with it every year on Simchat Torah. R. Shmuel Abba passed away on 5 Adar in the year 5624 from Creation (1864). Books printed in the Slavuta press remain prized collectors' items to this day.

### **Thursday, February 15, 2024-6 Adar I, 5784 Passing of R. Shmaryahu Gurary (1989)**

Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary ("Rashag") was born in 1898; his father, a wealthy businessman and erudite scholar, was a leading chassid of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneersohn (1860-1920). In 1921, Rabbi Shmaryahu married Chanah Schneersohn (1899-1991), the oldest daughter of the 6th Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950). When Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak passed away in 1950, there were those who saw Rabbi Shmaryahu -- an accomplished Chassidic scholar and elder of the Rebbe's two surviving sons-in-law -- as the natural candidate to head the movement; but when the younger son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, was chosen as rebbe, Rabbi Shmaryahu became his devoted chassid. Rabbi Shmaryahu served as the

executive director of Tomchei Temimim, the world-wide Lubavitch yeshiva system -- a task entrusted to him by his father-in-law -- until his passing on the 6th of Adar I in 1989.

### **Friday, February 16, 2024-7 Adar I, 5784**

**Moses' Birth & Passing (1393 and 1273 BCE)**  
Moses was born in Egypt on the 7th of Adar of the year 2368 from creation (1393 BCE). According to one opinion, the year of Moses' birth was a "leap year", and he was born in the first Adar. Moses passed away on his 120th birthday -- Adar 7, 2488 (1273 BCE)

### **Shabbat, February 17, 2024-8 Adar I, 5784**

#### **Oath on Torah Permitted (1674)**

In the 1660's the Jewish community of Barbados gained considerable importance. However, they had a decided disadvantage in that their testimony was not admissible in court due to their refusal to take an oath on a Christian Bible. In October 1669, the Jewish community presented a petition requesting permission to take oaths on the Five Books of Moses, the Jewish Bible. Several years later, on Wednesday, February 14, 1674, Barbados passed a law granting the Jewish community the permission they requested.

#### **Passing of R. Eliyahu Hakohen (1729)**

R. Eliyahu HaKohen was a preacher and author who lived in Izmir, Turkey. He was known for his weekly sermons which inspired many people to repentance, and for his efforts in collecting and distributing charity to the poor. His ethical work *Shevet Mussar*—only one of the thirty-plus works he authored—is widely studied and has been translated into multiple languages. He passed away on 8 Adar.