

# L'Chaim! Weekly



פרשת תרומה, ח' אדר א' תשפ"ד

**PARSHAS TERUMAH**

16-17 February 2024 - 8 Adar 15784

TIMES FOR SYDNEY

Candle Lighting: 7.29 pm

Shabbat Ends: 8.25 pm



## Living with the Rebbe



In this week's portion, Teruma, we are given the mitzva (commandment) of making a holy place for G-d. G-d says, "You should make for Me a Temple and I will dwell in them." In general, this refers to the different Tabernacles that we had and then the great Temples that stood on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. However, this brings up several questions.

The Sifri, quoting our verse, says, "Every place it says 'for Me,' it will last forever." The Midrash, using our verse as an example, says, "Every place it says 'for Me,' it will never move, not in this world, and not in the world to come." But the Sanctuaries are gone, and the Temples were destroyed. How could they say that it will last forever?

There are different explanations as to what the everlasting component to this mitzva is. Some say, it refers to the holiness of the Temple. That the place where the Temple stood retains its holiness forever. Others say that parts of the Temple are hidden in the ground of the Temple Mount, so it is actually there.

The difficulty with these answers is that they only explain how the Temples still exist, but they don't explain how the Tabernacles still exist.

Another difficulty with these answers, is that the simple meaning of the Sifri and the Midrash, is that it is referring to the actual building, not the spiritual holiness. And many sources point to the idea that the mitzva of building a Temple applies even now. How can one physically do this mitzva today?

The first way is to build or donate towards the construction or improvement of a synagogue or house of study, for they are the "miniature Tabernacle" and Temple that we have today in exile.

The second way, set up a designated place in your home to serve G-d, equipped with a bookshelf with Torah books, a tzedaka (charity) box, a table at which to study, and a set place for prayer. This is similar to the Temple, that contained the Tablets (representing Torah) the Altar (prayer and spiritual service) and the Shulchan (table for the breads, tzedaka.)

Children can also get involved, by making their room or their part of their room into a place to serve G-d with their own Torah books, siddur (prayer book) and tzedaka box.

Another way of understanding how this mitzva can be fulfilled today is from the way the verse seems to be grammatically incorrect. "And you should make for Me a Temple, and I will dwell in them." Shouldn't it say, "And I will dwell in it?" What is the meaning of dwelling "in them"? "In them" means in each of us. G-d wants every one of us to be a Temple. G-d wants to live in every single one of us.

May we all, men, women and children, make a Temple for G-d. This will surely bring the third and everlasting Temple, that is already built and will come down from above, with the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

*Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.*

## A Jew(ish) President

A few days ago, two hostages were rescued in an amazing operation pulled off by the IDF; Fernando Simon Marman, 60, and Louis Har, 70.

Here is the backstory:

About a week ago, the newly elected President of Argentina, Javier Milei, arrived in Israel. Javier said that he loves Israel, and even wants to convert to Judaism when he finishes his presidency.

When most celebrities or politicians visit the Kotel, they put a little note in between the stones. However, when President Milei did, there were tears streaming down his face.

Afterwards, he gave a speech saying that the hostages need to be brought home now, and that night, Fernando Simon Marman and Louis Har, who themselves are Argentine, were rescued.

In the Talmud, in the place where it speaks about the names of Moshiach, it mentions multiple options. Some say it will be Chanina, some say that it will be Menachem, however, one opinion is that it will Chavira. The name of the Argentine President is Javier, very similar to Chavira.

This could be the man who heralds the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days, Amen!



# SLICE OF LIFE

## Starting Again at 44

BY RABBI MICHA PELED

I was born in Fez, Morocco, to the Turgeman clan, a deeply religious family. After the founding of the State of Israel, our family immigrated there and settled in Tiberias.

The '50s were years of poverty and famine. This allowed the kibbutz movement to recruit new immigrant children with promises of food, education and economic stability, which is what happened with my family. Times were tough, my parents were naive about kibbutz life, and had several children to care for. So when a couple of young men came from a nearby kibbutz and spoke with them, they were persuaded, and reluctantly gave their permission for me to go to a kibbutz. When we separated, my father gave me a prayer book, a Chumash, and his blessings.

In the kibbutz, I was the only one leading a religious lifestyle. Gradually, I gave up wearing tzitzit, and then my weekday prayers, but I still tried to keep kosher and Shabbat to the best of my ability. When I reached my Bar Mitzvah, and my parents came to the kibbutz for the celebration, my father was shocked to find nary a trace of Jewish practice – there was no synagogue and I had no tefillin. He took me straight back to Tiberias with him and for the next two months, from morning till night, he had me shadow our community rabbi, who gave me all the Bar Mitzvah classes I had missed.

Still, after I'd spent two years becoming socially integrated into kibbutz life, my older brother told my parents that it would be unhealthy to tear me away from it now, so they let me return. I changed my name from Machluf to Micha, and I adopted the last name Peled.

After the army, I was sent by the Jewish Agency to Vancouver, Canada, which is where I met and married my wife, Bracha. Later, we were asked once again to serve as emissaries to western Canada, this time in Calgary, for the JNF (Jewish National Fund).

One evening during our mission there, two young men knocked on our door. "Shalom Aleichem!" they announced. "We heard that you are emissaries from Israel." They introduced themselves as Chabad chasidim who had come to Calgary that summer on a mission of their own, looking for fellow Jews, and we ended up spending the afternoon in

conversation. It was the first time I had seen a Chabad chasid up close.

Not long after returning to Israel, I was diagnosed with a severe melanoma that had spread to my lymph nodes. I was advised to travel to the United States, since the treatment I needed wasn't available in Israel. Already then, we had some devoted friends who wrote to the Rebbe for a blessing.

Since we still had Canadian health insurance, we preferred to first seek treatment back in Vancouver. We spent a few months with Rabbi Yitzchok and Henia Wineberg, the Chabad emissaries to the city. That is how I got to know his father, Rabbi Yosef Wineberg, a well-known lecturer and fund-raiser. From time to time, he would come to visit and I would go back to New York with him to receive a dollar and a blessing from the Rebbe.

In 1989, my doctor in Vancouver recommended that I go to the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, which specialized in treating my illness. When I met Rabbi Avrohom Korf, the director of Chabad in Florida, he offered to hire me to work at the local yeshivah. In addition to providing me a job, this meant that I would be medically insured. "Please G-d," he said, "once you're feeling better, I'm sure you will help the yeshivah where you can."

And so, between treatments, I began visiting the yeshivah, where I was received with warmth and affection. The head of the yeshivah, Rabbi Leibel Schapiro, introduced me to the students, had me learn with them, and made sure that I truly became a part of the environment.

Having settled in Miami, I made a trip to New York with my wife, so that I could again pass by the Rebbe as he gave out dollars for charity and to receive his blessings ahead of my next course of treatment. As my condition had become increasingly complicated, this was expected to take five years.

When I told the Rebbe about my association with the Miami yeshivah, he remarked, "Do you think you came to Miami only for medical reasons? The real reason you came is to strengthen the yeshivah, to have a good influence on the young students, and to strengthen them with your love for life, your passion, your positive



spirit, and your optimism."

The Rebbe gave me a blessing that I would come out of my life-threatening condition in good health. My meeting with the Rebbe only lasted a few moments. But, despite the long line of people waiting behind me and the pressure from the organizers to keep moving along, as I stood before this tzaddik whose eyes penetrated straight into my heart, time seemed to stand still. I felt as though the Rebbe had spoken to me for an hour.

The Rebbe also told me that my treatment wouldn't take the full five years, as a result of my being "busy with the spiritual affairs of the yeshivah." In the discharge letter my doctor wrote four and a half years later, he noted that my positive attitude had saved my life.

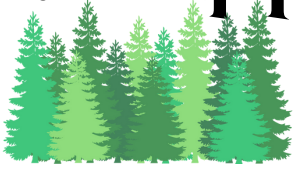
Over the years I spent in the yeshivah, I made tremendous progress in my Torah studies. A few years later, with Rabbi Schapiro's encouragement, I traveled to Israel to be tested for, and then to receive, rabbinical ordination. At one stage, once I had already begun to regain my strength, the Moroccan Jewish community of North Miami Beach asked if I would come to take the place of their rabbi, who had recently left. I was no great Torah scholar, but they wanted my energy and attitude, so I accepted the responsibility and stepped into the role.

After that, and through my contact with Rabbi Mordechai Elyahu, Israel's Chief Sephardi Rabbi at the time, I took up a position in the Israeli rabbinate. I spent six years as the rabbi of Netiv Hashayara, a coastal agricultural village of Mizrahi Jews, before moving to the hills of Mateh Binyamin, where I have served as the rabbi of Beit Horon ever since.

It was the Rebbe who set me on the path toward the rabbinate when he encouraged me to go back to yeshivah at the age of forty-four. On account of my visits to the Rebbe, I came to feel a very close, profound bond with him, and the impact he had on me is indescribable.

***Rabbi Micha Peled is the rabbi of Beit Horon in Israel.***

# It Happened Once



Long before Rabbi Meir of Premishlan was known as a tzadik (righteous person), his unusual kindness and compassion were demonstrated. Even as a young child he would go from door to door collecting money for the poor. Rabbi Meir was simply unable to bear seeing someone in an unfortunate situation. He would do everything in his power to relieve the other's suffering.

At the same time, he was extremely modest and went out of his way to avoid drawing attention to himself. A year after he was married, he hired himself out as a tutor for an estate owner's children, a common way to support one's family in those days.

It did not take Rabbi Meir long to realize that the wealthy landlord was a coarse individual. Nonetheless, the children seemed to be progressing nicely under his tutelage, despite their father's rough and boorish behavior.

Rabbi Meir was particularly distressed by his employer's stinginess. Whenever a poor person knocked on the door asking for a donation or a crust of bread, he was treated condescendingly and with a tight fist.

For the first few weeks in his new position Rabbi Meir tried to concentrate on his teaching and ignore what was happening. But as time wore on he found it increasingly difficult to restrain himself.

One day, Rabbi Meir approached the owner of the estate and made a suggestion. "From now on," he proposed, "every time a poor person comes, I'd like you to give him a coin, which you can deduct from my salary." The landlord agreed to the plan, as there was no reason for him not to.

From that day on, every beggar who arrived on the doorstep received a coin, and sometimes even a light meal to ease his hunger. In the meantime, the owner of the estate was carefully recording every penny that went to charity in his ledger. No one could understand the miserly landlord's sudden generosity, but at least the beggars were happy.

Six months passed, and soon it was almost Passover and time for Rabbi Meir to go back home. Before he left, the owner of the estate called him in to pay him his salary. Taking out his ledger, he deducted all the coins and food he had "wasted" on the poor, and was shocked to see that nothing remained. And not only that, but Rabbi Meir actually owed him money! The landlord was furious. How could he, a smart and savvy businessman, have allowed himself to fall into such a trap?

Rabbi Meir was banished from the estate without a penny in his pocket. Rabbi Meir, however, was not particularly

upset by what had occurred. In fact, he was in a good mood. Passover was coming, he was going home, and there were many things in the world more important than money...

Rabbi Meir was on the outskirts of Premishlan when something shiny in the road caught his attention. Looking closer, he saw it was a very valuable gold coin, worth far more than the entire salary he was supposed to have received as a tutor!

Rabbi Meir, however, did not think along the same lines or in the same way as "regular" people. The whole way home his thoughts had been focused on higher, more spiritual matters. His initial reaction upon seeing the coin was hesitation. "Is this the way it has been decreed from Above that I derive my livelihood?" he thought to himself. "Does G-d really want me to make a living from the dust of the earth?" Rabbi Meir continued walking and did not bend down to pick it up.

Rabbi Meir's wife was overjoyed to see him after a half-year's absence. Several days later, when her husband still hadn't mentioned any earnings, she thought it was strange, but having full faith in him she did not bring up the subject, assuming he had his reasons.

By the following week she decided the time had come to allude, very delicately, to their financial situation. But her husband only responded cryptically, "Let's wait until tonight..." and left for the synagogue. In shul, money was soon the farthest thing from his mind.

That evening, Rabbi Meir was in the study hall when the servant of one of the wealthiest inhabitants of Premishlan suddenly tapped him on the shoulder. Handing him a gold coin he said, "My master asked me to deliver this to you."

Rabbi Meir jumped. "What is the meaning of this?" he inquired. The servant related that earlier that day his master had returned to Premishlan after a long journey, and had found the coin lying on the ground. After some deliberation he had decided to give it to a young Torah scholar, and Rabbi Meir's name had been drawn from a lottery.

"I see this coin really was supposed to be mine..." Rabbi Meir smiled, pondering the ways of the Creator.

# Smile, it's Shabbos!



A truckdriver stops at the back of a long queue on the motorway. He sees a policeman walking down the line of stopped cars to briefly talk to the drivers.

As the policeman approaches the truck, the truckdriver rolls down his window and asks, "What's going on?"

Policeman: "A terrorist is holding Joe Biden hostage in a car. He's demanding 10 Million Dollars, or he'll douse Biden in petrol and set him on fire. So we're asking drivers for donations."

Driver: "Oh, ok. How much do people donate on average?"

Policeman: "About a litre."

## Is this Genocide?

By Rabbi Aron Moss

### Question of the Week

What should I respond to a work colleague (he's a Christian) who insists that Israel has been committing genocide on the Palestinian people for 75 years?

### Answer

Genocide is an easy throw-away accusation to make. But it needs to make sense. So let's just look at the facts.

Genocide means attempting to wipe a people out. For this to happen, the population of that group would dramatically decrease. This is where this accusation of genocide hits a small problem.

The Arab population of Israel and the Palestinian territories has increased rapidly in the last seventy five years. If Israel is committing genocide, they are doing a horrible job of it.

In 1948, the Arab population of Gaza was around 80,000. By 1967, when Israel conquered Gaza, the population had grown to 394,000. In 2005, when Israel unilaterally left Gaza, the population had reached 1,299,000. Today it is over 2 million.

In that same time span, the Arab population of the West Bank grew from 585,000 to 3,176,500.

And in the areas that became the State of Israel, there were 156,000 Arabs in 1948. They became Israeli citizens, and today Arab Israelis number 2,080,000. In fact, the growth rate of the Arab population in Israel is 2.2%, compared with a Jewish growth rate of 1.8%.

This would have to be the most unsuccessful genocide in history. The numbers are going the wrong way. By contrast, if honest people wish to look for evidence of genocide in the Middle East, perhaps they should investigate the plummeting numbers of Christians in Turkey, Egypt, Iraq and Syria. There is only one country in the region with a growing Christian community. Can you guess which country that is?

Truth can be hard to find these days. Our superficial world favours slogans over substance, vitriol over intelligent debate, and propaganda over accurate information. The bigger the lie, the more likes. That's why the Jewish sages called this world "The World of Falsehood." And that was before TikTok even existed.

But those same sages envisioned a future world, "The World of Truth." Because truth will prevail in the end. It always does.

Good Shabbos,  
Rabbi Moss



'L'Chaim Weekly' is published weekly by Mivtzoin Sydney

Prepared by Gavi Sufrin

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Special thanks to Lubavitch Youth Organisation, NY and Chabad.org