



Parashat Vayakel-Pekudei 5770

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Where are the Vessels of the Beit Ha-Mikdash (Temple) Today?

[Commentary to the Book of Esther, pp. 23-24]

We do not know exactly where. Some say that they are in the Vatican, other say in other places, but the truth is that they are buried somewhere under the Temple Mount. King Shlomo dug tunnels under the Temple Mount, because he knew through his Divine Spirit that the Beit Ha-Mikdash would be destroyed.

Question: Isn't it written that Nebuchadnezar took everything (see Megillah 12a)?

Answer: The vessels which he took were replacement vessels. The original vessels are located under the Temple Mount.

Question: Aren't there vessels in England which are associated with the Temple?

Answer: Perhaps, but the real ones are under the Temple Mount.

Question: The Menorah and the Table of the Show-Bread also?

Answer: Yes. As is known, Titus stole the Menorah. We see this in the Arch of Titus in Rome. The Jews of Rome have a custom to say Lamentations there on Tisha Be-Av. But those vessels are also replacements. There were ten Menorahs (Menachot 29a, 98b-99a) and many vessels. We do not know if he took the actual Menorah or a fake which was placed in the Beit Ha-Mikdash in order that he would think that he plundered the Temple. Even if he took the actual Menorah, there are nine others. Nonetheless there is no need to search for them today. When the time comes,

everything will be found including the Ark of the Covenant and the jar of "man" (manna) as well.

Question: Did anyone ever search for the vessels of the Beit Ha-Mikdash?

Answer: Many certainly searched, but they did not find them. There are different stories and fables.

Question: What about those people who claim to have seen the Ark?

Answer: Anything is possible. Nevertheless, everything that they saw also disappeared. Do not worry, there are others. Incidentally, my daughter who studies art made a relief of the Arch of Titus. She brought to my attention the fact that the direction of those walking is not from Yehudah to Rome, but the opposite, from Rome to the direction of Israel, and this is true today. We are all returning home!

Rav Aviner on...

“Don’t Believe Lashon Hara”

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Chayei Sarah 5767 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Don’t believe a single word of evil gossip from anyone! Don’t listen to it altogether! That itself is forbidden. Yet if you happen to hear it, don’t believe it. There’s so much Lashon Hara in the world! There’s so much falsehood and slander!

Tales were spread about Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook that he was a closet Christian, about Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto that he was a false Messiah, about Rambam that he had become a Moslem, about the Prophet Jeremiah that he had cohabited with a harlot, about Moshe that had committed adultery with 600,000 women!

Even what you see with your own two eyes, don’t believe! Maybe you don’t know all the details, and if you did it would change the picture. This is called giving the benefit of the doubt, not in the sense of wearing blinders and emotionally distorting the truth, but in the sense of clarifying what the truth is. Yet let’s not forget that the truth

means all the truth. This is the rule. Even what you see with your own eyes, don't believe!

The story is told that Rabbi Aryeh Levine saw someone purchase a flower pot in the middle of a funeral. He was very puzzled. Yet when he clarified matters, he found out that the departed had a dangerous, contagious disease. The hospital had therefore decided to burn all his effects, including his Tefillin, unless they would be taken directly for burial. That person therefore bought a flower pot in order to bury the Tefillin.

A woman was once waiting for a plane at the airport, munching on sugar wafers. Suddenly she was called up to the desk to clarify matters. When she returned, she saw a man of Charedi appearance unabashedly eating her sugar wafers. She didn't wish to insult him, so she took a wafer and began to eat it, in order to hint to him that they were hers. Yet he did not take the hint and continued to eat. He ate one and she ate one, until the package was finished. She was astonished by hischutzpah, but kept quiet. Yet when she settled down in the plane and opened her bag, she saw her package of wafers inside, and she then recalled that she had put them in her bag when she went to the desk. Suddenly the story took on an entirely different hue.

The story is told that when the Arizal arrived in Tsefat, he was appointed to a committee that dealt with sin. Very early one morning, a member of the committee rose to pray at sunrise, and as he opened his window, he saw a married woman leave her home and approach the courtyard of a man known as an adulterer. The man was very shocked, and after services he assembled the committee and told them about the terrible deed of that woman. The Arizal said to him, "Quiet! How dare you to speak so about a reputable Jewish woman? In the same courtyard where that adulterer lives, a visitor from the Diaspora has found lodgings. That visitor has brought money and a secret letter from this woman's husband, who insisted that the money and letter not be delivered to the woman by a third party, but directly. She therefore went there, and so modest is she that she chose to go early in the morning

when there is no one else on the street so that no one would look at her.” The committee member responded, “Forgive me, Rebbe! Forgive me!” Yet the Arizal answered, “It isn’t me you have to ask for forgiveness, but that righteous, modest woman whom you suspected!”

Another story is told of Rabbis who held a large gathering in order to deliberate on the problems of the generation, and afterwards ate a meal together. In the middle, the senior Rabbi rose and informed the others that he would show them a marvelous sight. From his pocket he removed a coin from the time of King David, which he would use for such rituals as “redeeming the firstborn.” The coin passed from hand to hand, and all the Rabbis were very excited. Yet at some point it disappeared. Everyone looked for it on the table and the floor, but the coin had disappeared into thin air. An unpleasant mood developed. The senior Rabbi said, “Perhaps one of the Rabbis unintentionally, out of habit, put the coin in his pocket. Please, let’s everyone have a look.” They were a bit insulted. They searched, but they didn’t find it. The mood was now grave. The senior Rabbi said, “Perhaps accidentally the coin fell into the pocket of one of you, without your noticing it. Rabbis have lots of pockets too. Perhaps a Rabbi is unaware of all his pockets. I therefore suggest that every Rabbi should examine the pockets of the Rabbi sitting on his right.” The Rabbis felt very uncomfortable at this, but out of respect for the senior Rabbi they performed his request, but they didn’t find anything. There was one elderly Torah scholar, however, who said forcefully to the man on his left, “No one is going to search my garb!” “Why not,” his neighbor asked. The elderly Rabbi turned red in the face, but he insisted, “No one will search me!” The senior Rabbi turned to him and asked, “Then what you do suggest?” “I don’t suggest anything!” he cried. Everyone was silent. The mood was terrible. A heavy silence enveloped the chamber. After ten minutes, the waiter burst in holding the coin. He had accidentally cleared it away with the tray of dishes. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief, gazed shamefacedly at the elderly Torah scholar whom they had suspected. They then asked him why he had refused. He then put his hand into his pocket, took out a similar coin and said, “I too brought an identical coin to show everyone, but when the senior Rabbi showed his, I saw no reason to

compete with him. And now, who would have believed me that I too had such a coin?..." Everyone lowered his head in shame and said, "It was worth coming here just for this to happen."

Now do you understand? Don't believe a word of evil gossip, even what you yourself have seen!

Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Married Students and Stipends

A number of students tried to refuse financial support from the Yeshivah (perhaps due to the opinion of Rambam and one should not receive money for learning Torah), yet our Rabbi was adamant that they receive a stipend.

In response to the claim that some married students received higher stipends than others, our Rabbi requested of Rav Noson (Rabbi Raanan Kook, Maran Ha-Rav Kook's son-in-law) to make all Yeshivah stipends equal so that there be no jealousy among students. In response to Rav Noson's, "Where will I come up with the money," our Rabbi responded, "From the place where there is for one, you will find for all."

When there came a request to increase stipends for students with larger families, our Rabbi said, "Mercaz Ha-Rav is not a Kollel. We help students until they find their place in life, with an emphasis being placed on the Rabbinate or education."

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