



אור בישראל

A LIGHT FROM WITHIN ISRAEL **פרשת תרומה**

ח' אדר תשפ"ה 1.3.25



1 The weekly Torah portion is Parshat Terumah, the seventh parsha in the Book of Exodus. The entire parsha deals with building the Mishkan (Tabernacle), which was the spiritual center that accompanied the people during their 40-year journey in the desert. The Torah commands us to build a spiritual center everywhere, like a synagogue, and the people didn't wait until they reached the land of Israel to build the Temple. We always need a holy place that goes with us.

After the Exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Red Sea, and receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai – there's a change of direction in this parsha: now God demands that we begin to act and do. Not just receive gifts and kindness, but to do things ourselves. To contribute to the Mishkan and build it.



The Torah commentators tell us that our forefather Jacob brought cedar trees to Egypt and told the people of Israel: One day you will leave Egypt and build a Mishkan in the desert from these trees. This gave them hope during the difficult years in Egypt. Do we have objects that give us hope that better days will come? Our story this week answers this question...



4 This week we celebrate Rosh Chodesh Adar (on Friday and Saturday) and in about two weeks, the holiday of Purim. When Adar begins, we increase in joy, and it has already begun. So may we have a Shabbat Shalom and a good month, and lots of joy!

A STORY FOR SHABBAT

Natan Sharansky's Book of Tehillim (Psalms)
Anatoly Sharansky was born in the Communist ruled Soviet Union. Communism controlled all aspects of society. Millions of people were sent to prison and were deprived of their basic human rights. Many were even killed. The Communists also opposed every form of religion, and Jews were forced to stop observing the mitzvot, and over time, many forgot their Jewish identity altogether. As a child, Anatoly knew he was Jewish but considered it a kind of curse. His classmates and people on the street would laugh at him and call him "dirty Jew" and everyone looked at him with suspicion. He had no idea what it meant to be a Jew. When he grew up he discovered his Jewish heritage and what it meant. He read books about Jewish history even though they were banned under communist law. He joined a secret, illegal group of Soviet Jews who wanted to be given permission to immigrate to Israel and married his wife Avital, another activist, in a Jewish wedding ceremony. This was also against Soviet law. At demonstrations he demanded that Jews be free to take pride in their Jewish identity, until the Soviets arrested him and sentenced him to 13 years in prison. Before his arrest, his wife handed him a small book of Tehillim. Sharansky tore off part of the opening page of the book that said "Printed in Israel" so that it wouldn't be taken away from him. He held onto this book throughout his terrible years in Soviet prisons. Sometimes it would be taken away from him and he would fight to get it back. He was transferred between jails, but he always made sure to take it with him. After nine years in prison he was finally released and brought this precious book with him to Israel. Reading it over and over again in prison made him feel connected to the Jews all over the world who prayed for his release. This small book brought so much light into his life and symbolized hope for the future. At last, the day of his release arrived. Anatoly Sharansky, who had changed his name to Natan Sharansky, landed at Ben Gurion Airport and was greeted in an emotional ceremony. Thousands were waiting for him and accompanied him dancing

and singing to the Kotel, where he was finally able to pray as a free man. Standing near those ancient stones, Sharansky opened up his small Tehillim book and read from it. He had dreamed of this moment. 35 years after his release from prison a woman met Sharansky on a street in Jerusalem and told him that she had heard about the Tehillim that he had kept with him in prison and was very touched by this story. Sharansky surprised her by taking the book out of his shirt pocket. "You still carry it with you everywhere you go?" she asked him. Sharansky smiled and replied: "I carry it? It carries me!"
(From the 'Ligdol' book series)

Food for Thought

What special objects do you own and how do they give you strength? What is the story behind them and why are they important to you? If you don't have such possessions, perhaps it would be a good idea to start the tradition of keeping items that are meaningful to you. (You might even want to save them for your family to pass on to future generations.)





FROM THE DIARY OF A CHEMED STUDENT

Shining My Great-Grandmother's Values

I'm a student at Yeshivat AMIT Eliraz in Petach Tikva. A few weeks ago, was my great-grandmother's first Yahrzeit. My whole family came to commemorate this, and we had a big meal together. During the meal, we have a tradition that someone performs a Siyum Masechet in her memory. This means someone has completed learning a section of Gemara or Mishnayot and recites the special blessings that follow. Her children also shared Divrei Torah and told meaningful stories about her. They remembered her as a kind person who was always happy and thankful



Dvir with his grandmother, Rivkah Frumer Z"L

for everything. These memorials remind our family to appreciate each other, cherish time together, and live with kindness and gratitude, just as she did. They also connect me to my family's history and values of Torah and tradition.

Her blessings and loving presence inspire me to be better. She showed me how small acts of kindness can leave a

lasting impact. Although I miss her deeply, I find comfort in knowing her values live on through us. Participating in these memorials strengthens our family bond and helps us honor her memory while learning from her life. May her memory be blessed.

Dvir, 10th grade , Amit Eliraz Petach Tikva

Around the Shabbat Table

- How can remembering the values of our relatives help us live better today?
- Why do you think traditions like the Siyum Masechet are important for keeping family memories alive?
- Consider a one-time event versus a routine event that happens quite often: When is it harder to cope - when something happens once every few years, or when it happens every day?



From the Diary of a Shaliach

"In Jerusalem, when it snows, it's a special event! Once every few years, snow arrives, and then everything stops: schools close, cars stay home, and everyone goes out to play in the snow. People wrap their shoes in plastic bags, wear many layers of clothes, and go outside to build snowmen and slide on bags. A day or two of fun, and then back to routine." This is what Amichay Findling, an educational shaliach at the school, writes.

"But here in Ann Arbor, Michigan, everything is different. I arrived here last summer with my family for our shlichut. At first, it was a pleasant summer - green forests, blue lakes, and families going out boating. The Jewish community welcomed us very warmly, and we immediately felt at home. Then winter came. Within one month, everything changed - from a pleasant summer to a frozen winter with snow. But unlike Jerusalem, here life continues as usual! School stays open, students play outside even when it's very cold (down to minus 15 degrees!), and they know exactly how to dress properly without getting wet. At the synagogue, when we started praying 'Morid HaGeshem' (He who brings down the rain), I asked an Israeli student who lives here: 'Why do we pray for rain when it snows here?' And he simply answered: 'Because we always pray for the Land of Israel, that's our home.' It's different from Jerusalem snow, but it has its own magic. Here I learned that you can live with snow, enjoy it, and still feel a bit like home. I discovered amazing things: how to roll a giant snowball with a diameter of a meter (yes, it's possible!), how to walk on a frozen river and play ice hockey on it, and how to play American football on a snow-covered field. During breaks, they play and collect beautiful ice chunks. My own children also go out to the yard, the little one comes during break to hug the supervising teacher - that's me. Not like Jerusalem snow."

