

Agudas Yisroel Anshei Kielce

Weekly Bulletin

פרשת וישא



What a person gives away seems forever lost. The Torah, in cryptic fashion, uses proper nouns and pronouns in a mysterious medley that teaches us a little about real property, about what you give and what one really has. The Torah tells us about giving maaser. "*And every portion from any of the holies that the Bnei Yisrael bring to the Kohen shall be his. A man's holies shall be his, and what a man gives to the Kohen shall be his.*" What the Torah seems to tell us is that the donor has no further right to item given to the Kohen. So why not say it clearly? "What a man gives to the Kohen belongs to the Kohen." Obviously, there is a dual reference attached to the pronoun. What lies within that double reference?

Rabbi Betzalel Zolty zt'l, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, related the following story:

The Rosh Yeshiva of Slobodka Yeshiva, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein was in America in 1924, raising much-needed funds for his Yeshiva. During his visit, he received an urgent telegram. The Lithuanian authorities were going to conscript the Slobodka students into the army. Rabbi Nossou Zvi Finkel, the founder and Dean of the Yeshiva, made a decision to open a branch of Slobodka Yeshiva in the ancient city of Chevron in Eretz Israel. He would send 150 students to Palestine to establish the Yeshiva, and in this way free them from service in the apostatizing, ruthless Lithuanian army. That monumental undertaking would require a sum of \$25,000 to transport, house, and establish the Yeshiva.

Rabbi Epstein was put to the task. He discussed the program with a dear friend of the Yeshiva, Mr. Schiff, who immediately decided to contribute the massive sum in its entirety.

Years later, in the early 1930s, the tide turned for Mr. Schiff. With the crash of the stock market, and plummeting real estate prices, it took only a few months before he was forced out of his own apartment, and was relegated to the cellar of a building that was once his, existing on meager rations.

At the same time, the health of Rabbi Epstein was failing, and he no longer had the strength to travel. His son-in-law, Rabbi Yechezkel Sarna, made the trip to America, in his stead, to raise funds for the Slobodka Yeshiva. He did not know of Mr. Schiff's situation until the man got up to speak at a parlor meeting on behalf of the Yeshiva.

"My dear friends," he began. "I do not wish my business misfortunes on anyone. I invested literally millions of dollars in all sorts of businesses, and they all failed. I have absolutely nothing to show for them. But there is one investment I made that continues to bear fruit. I gave \$25,000 to establish a Yeshiva in Chevron, and that investment is the best one I ever made. One must know where to invest."

When Rabbi Sarna, heard that Mr. Schiff was literally bankrupt, he cabled Rabbi Epstein, who quickly responded to arrange to give him a \$5,000 loan, in order to get him back on his feet and begin doing business again. Through some generous benefactors, Rabbi Sarna got a hold of the cash and went directly to the basement apartment where Mr. Schiff now resided. He explained to him that Rabbi Epstein insisted he take this money as a loan.

Mr. Schiff jumped up in horror, "What do you want from my life? The only money I have left is the \$25,000 that I gave the Yeshiva. Do you want to take that from me as well?"

In its mystical manner, the Torah teaches us the power of the eternal gift. "A man's holies shall be his, and what a man gives to the Kohen shall be his." We invest much in this world. We work. We buy. We build. We spend. But what do we really have? At the end of the hopefully long day, we call life, what can we say is eternally ours? Stocks crash, and buildings crumble. How real is our estate?

The Torah tells us, what the man gives to the Kohen shall be his. It does not say, "... will belong to the Kohen. It says, it shall be his! What we invest in the eternity of spirituality, in order to proliferate Hashem's eternal message, will never be relinquished. For what we invest for eternity, will be eternally invested. It shall always remain ours.

Good Shabbos

Adapted from Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Mazel Tov to Michael and Betty Spiro on the birth of a granddaughter.

Mazel Tov to David and Goldie Richler on the birth of a great-granddaughter.

Mazel Tov to Gabi Messinger on her new granddaughter.

Mazel Tov to Rita Parshan on the upcoming wedding of her grandson in Los Angeles.

Mincha: 6:50 /8:20

Kriyas Shema: 9:31

Candle Lighting: 8:20

Mincha/Shalosh Seudos: 8:10

Shachris: 8:45

Motzai Shabbos: 9:24