

BS"D Parashat Korach 5782

Korach, The Holy Ark & Our Torah Scrolls

Korach, the central figure in this week's parasha, was one of the four Levites chosen to hold the Holy Ark each time the encampment moved on to a different site. So, let's discuss the holy ark and other essential elements in the Mishkan.

The basic structural design of the four Mishkanot (Tabernacles) and three Batei Mikdash (Temples) was similar: a Kodesh Kedoshim (inner sanctum, Holy of Holies which contained the Holy Ark); the Kodesh (an area directly in front of the Kodesh Kedoshim which contained the Menorah), the incense Mizbaiach (Altar), and the table for the Lechem Ha'panim (Show Bread), and at a distance away from the Kodesh Kedoshim the large Mizbaiach (Altar).

After the destruction of the Second Temple, it became customary to construct batei knesset (synagogues) according to the basic design of the Temple – the Aron HaKodesh housing the Torah scrolls parallels the Kodesh Kedoshim that housed the Holy Ark containing the broken pieces of the first Tablets, the second whole Tablets and – *in the opinion of Rabbi Meir* – also contained a small Torah scroll. The bet knesset has an area where the Torah is read and placed a distance from the ark of the Torah symbolizing the outer Altar which was at a distance from the Kodesh Kedoshim.

We revere our Torah scrolls and adorn the ark that houses them with esthetic and artistic accessories, because they are sanctified entities and the closest objects that we have today to the Bet Hamikdash and the Holy Ark.

60th Aliya Anniversary

On Thursday of this week (24 Sivan), my wife and I will B"H celebrate 60 years since our aliya to Eretz Yisrael. While discussing with our extended family the various possibilities of how to celebrate (including Shabbat in a hotel), my wife and I decided to donate the money to a meaningful charity in the name of every family member and with those yet to be born to be added to the list.

Were it feasible, I would erect an imposing bet knesset on the Temple Mount. However, even if the government would support such a plan, the next Bet Hamikdash will have already descended from heaven during the time needed to pass all the Israeli bureaucracy.

While pondering the situation, our youngest daughter Shulamit's husband Uri came up with a suggestion that opened new vistas of possibilities.

A word about Uri. He is the head of the Oz Ve'Hadar (strength and glory) project which inspects, evaluates, and corrects every Torah scroll donated to the army and to the Ministry of Defense for their many needs.

He took us to the headquarters of the military rabbinate near the city of Ramle. It was an overwhelming experience. We were met by Major Ronen Aharon, commander of the unit that deals with technology in the military rabbinate. What could possibly be technology in the rabbinate? We were taken into a very large room housing hundreds of Torah scrolls. The scrolls are being prepared to be sent to the numerous military units from the northern border to the Sinai desert where we received the Torah.

There is a section of fully kosher and untouched scrolls (the

officer did not reveal how many) that are distributed immediately to every reserve unit called up to active duty. Moreover, the number of religious soldiers is increasing as the army expands; and in accordance with military law, every unit must receive a Torah scroll. This wing of the Rabbinate is a beehive of activity not found in any army in the world, except perhaps as part of the future army of the Mashiach.

Our tour continued on to the laboratory, which uses top-of-the-line technology to inspect every mezuzah and pair of tefillin purchased by or donated to the army. The soldiers in this unit are former yeshiva students, all in uniform and working day and night to keep up with the needs. Every mezuzah and the inner parchments of tefillin are photographed and enlarged to make the inspection quicker and more thorough. It is a marvel that an organization designated for war is aware that, in a Jewish army, the spiritual weapons of Torah and tefillin must also accompany the soldiers.

Each of the hundreds of Torah scrolls is numbered and its history recorded in a bullet-shaped metal case containing a chip that is imbedded in one of the wooden handles of the scroll. The chip permits the officer in charge to know where the Torah is at any given moment, even on the borders of Egypt and in a submarine.

Major Aharon informed us of the plan to turn this large room and its holy contents into the world's largest Aron Kodesh, where anyone who enters will feel that he is indeed in an Aron Kodesh. It is now in the planning stages and will include artistic woodwork and a grand parochet (curtain or tapestry).

The renovation is expensive, but it doesn't matter, because living in HaShem's "sacred precinct" for 60 years has made us billionaires in mitzvot. This is the meaningful project that we decided to fund – this unique transformation from warehouse to Aron Kodesh.

This is not a request for contributions since this project is in the name of the immediate and extended Kahana family. It is a project that expresses the way we perceive and observe our Judaism – Torah study, mitzvot observance, together with the return of our nation to Eretz Yisrael and the mitzva of defending our people and the Holy Land.

We are indebted to Uri for bringing this project to our attention.

As I wrote above, Uri is the founder and head of the Oz Ve'Hadar (strength and glory) project which inspects, evaluates, and corrects Torah scrolls donated to the army and to the Ministry of Defense.

The army does not provide a budget for this service, which in some way is a good thing, because it provides an opportunity for individuals to get involved by supplying the military with Torah scrolls. The donor purchases the Torah scroll; and after it is cleared halachically, it is placed in a unit according to the discretion of the army and the rabbinate. The Torah scroll is presented to the unit in a beautiful and moving ceremony with the donor as guest of honor. These Torah scrolls have been placed in air force bases, submarine units and even in “sensitive” units where the donor (including Uri) is blindfolded until reaching the bet knesset. It was, indeed, an unforgettable experience.

If you wish to see the whole story of Oz Ve'Hadar and its fascinating and essential work, link on to <https://charidy.com/scroll>

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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