

Superbowl, Sanctuary and the Poles

Parashat Teruma - Rabbi Jay Weinstein

This past Sunday, Superbowl Sunday, I was tasked with leading the few minutes of learning in between Mincha and Maariv. I began by explaining that as Jews who live in the modern world, it's our goal to find meaning and inspiration in all aspects of our lives, even the seemingly mundane ones. We can even learn lessons from the Superbowl and football. I shared a few examples which I found on the internet (chabad.org). For example, a kickoff can be prepared to inspirational moments that we feel. Just like the team kicks off the ball with the intention of getting it as far down the field as possible, so too we have to monopolize on our inspirational moments so that they last as long as possible. This is one of the many lessons we can learn from football, but the general lesson is that we can infuse all of our mundane activities with some spirituality.

The Superbowl lesson is also found in this week's parasha. We are commanded to construct the "home" for the Ten Commandments. It is to be a wooden box, covered with gold on all sides, with rings at its corners and poles to carry it with. The Torah adds that the poles used to carry the *Aron* (Ark) can never be removed from the rings which are connected to the ark. Many of the commentators are bothered- why not? In general, when the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was travelling, the components had to be carried and transported with particular means of transportation, but when it was stationary, the *Mishkan* is put back together. If the poles are simply to carry it, then when it's NOT being carried why should we not remove the poles?

Rabbi Menachem Meiri (1249, France) explains that these poles which always had to be connected to the *Aron*, symbolically teach us an important lesson. The poles represent the technical and seemingly mundane aspects of our lives. However, the *Aron*, with the *Luchot* (Tablets of Stone) inside represent the spiritual aspects of our lives. The message of the Torah is that the poles must always stay attached to the *Aron*. They are never removed. Even when we are involved in worldly activities, we are still connected to the spiritual. We find meaning and holiness in every part of our lives because we, the "poles," are always attached to the Torah. This is the Superbowl lesson!

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