



# The Community

Boruch Hashem

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## Rabbi's Article

### 'Wastes' of Stone

On the verse (-Deuteronomy 10:1 (and Exodus 34:1)), "*Hew* (psalet - פָּקַד) *for you* (two tablets of stone like the first)," our sages teach (-Nedarim 38a), "*their waste* (psalet - פְּסוּלֵיהֶן) *shall be yours* (from which Moses became wealthy)." Which leads us to laws (-Baba Kama 119a) of *leftover materials*: "*Strands* (of wool) *that the launderer removes* (from the garment) *belong to him*, (as it can be assumed that the customer is uninterested in them,) *but* (strands that) *the carder*, (i.e., one who prepares wool for use as a textile), *removes belong to the customer* (as it is assumed that the customer would want them, since the carder often removes a significant number of strands)... *That which a carpenter removes with an adze belongs to him*, (because an adze removes only small shavings of wood); *but* (what he removes) *with an ax belongs to the customer*." The Talmud points out on the latter, with a *braita* (-Link), "*Stone chisellers are not in* (violation of a transgression) *due to* (the prohibition against) *robbery* (if they take the leftover chips of rock)." Now, upon this *braita*, Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch (-Link) comments: "*And we need to understand, if so, why did the Holy One, blessed be He* (have to) *tell Moses, 'Hew for you* ('their waste shall be yours'), *being that, 'not... robbery,' because it* (leftover chips of rock) *are ownerless, and not the owners, and the craftsman is closer to it, if so, why did He* (G-d) *have to say* (to Moses) *'Hew for you'?* However, there (the two tablets) *it was sapphire, while here (braita) it states 'stone,' however, there it was precious stone.*"

To appreciate what Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch is saying let us see the difference in how this *braita*, versus a *tosefta* (-Link), rule over the leftover chips of stone. The *braita* rules that the stones (unlike with pruning trees and vines, trimming shrubs, weeding plants and hoeing vegetables) is not dependent upon the owner's intent, because regardless of the *person's* opinion, the *object* is ruled as not of value, and hence, ownerless. While the *tosefta* sees the stones no different than the rest, and henceforth, depend upon the owner's inclination. Now, the reason for the difference between the *braita* and the *tosefta* is that the *braita* --from the word *bar*, which means *outside-*, and was taught and documented by the sages *outside* of Israel, in *Babylon*, where (-Rashi, Genesis11:3), "*there are no stones in Babylon, which is a valley,*" and hence, stones were not used in Babylon, and therefore, *intrinsically* had no value. *Tosefta* --from the word *hosofa*, which means *add-on-*, on the other hand, was what Rabbi Chiya (-Link), while being in the presence of his teacher *Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi* (-Link), in Israel, was documenting, which Israel is, (-Deuteronomy 8:9), "*A land which her stones are iron,*" are used for building, etc., are of value, and henceforth, the leftover chips of stone are dependent on the owner's inclination.

The two tablets were hewn when the Israelites were in the traveling in the dessert, and none of their homes were built with stone, and hence, Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch is stating that chips of stone were *intrinsically* of no value, and hence, "*are ownerless, and not the owners,*" therefore, "*why did He* (G-d) *have to say* (to Moses) *'Hew for you'?*" To which, the answer is only because the two tablets were of sapphire, and therefore, the chips were valuable, and not *intrinsically* of no value and ownerless, until G-d made His intent clear that the chips are rendered ownerless. And because Moses, "*the craftsman is closer to it,*" therefore, they now belong to Moses' and not to anyone else of the Israelites.

Another way to see why G-d had to tell Moses that Moses can keep the chips of sapphire is because the two tablets had to be placed in the holy Ark (-Link) as part of the vessels of the *Tabernacle* (-Link), and every part of the *Tabernacle* (and later, the *Holy Temple* (-Link)) had to be made of the possessions of the *tzibur*, the entire Jewish nation. Therefore, the sapphire of the two tablets had to be given to the entire people. And therefore, G-d had to tell Moses that taking the leftover chips is not stealing. --According to Abba Chanin's opinion that from the start, the *entire* sapphire belonged to the entire nation. While according to the opinions that G-d placed the sapphire in *Moses' tent*, belonging *only* to Moses, and only *after* the tablets were chiseled out, did Moses have to make it the possession of the *entire* nation, G-d had to tell Moses that he doesn't have to give the leftover chips of sapphire to the entire nation.

On the esoteric level, the difference between the first set of tablets, in which there was no 'waste' (leftover chips), but only the tablets with their writing, and the second tablets, in which there was also the 'waste' is because the first set was made *Above*, in which there is only unity and *panim* (face; front), while the second set was made *Below*, in which there is --especially after the sin of the golden calf-- the descent into the duality of *panim* and *achor* (back; 'waste'). Hence, in the second set there had to be the *exertion* of study, for (-Lamentations 3:6), "*He has made me dwell in darkness.*" However, it is specifically through the *exertion* within in the seeming questions and contradictions (*darkness*) that we find the *wealth* of greater understanding and sharpness of Torah, which G-d gave Moses ("*Hew for you*"), and (-Nedarim, ibid), "*Moses treated the Torah with generosity and gave it to the Jewish people.*"

FRIDAY, AUGUST 19, 2022 ★ כב מנחם אב תשפ"ב  
Shabbat Candle Lighting: North Miami: 7:35 PM · Mincha: 7:30 PM

**This Week...**

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 2022 ★ כג מנחם אב תשפ"ב  
TORAH READING: [Eikev](#) (Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25) · HAFTORAH: [Isaiah](#) 49:14-51:3  
[Shabbat Mevorchim](#) · Shacharit: 9:30 AM · Shabbat Ends: North Miami: 8:27 PM