



### 1. Rabbi David Stav, Bein Hazmanim, Pages 224-225

המוקד החשוב ביותר שבו מופיעה האמנות בתנ"ך הוא המשכן, ולאחר מכן בית המקדש. בציווי על בניית המשכן ניתנת חשיבות יתרה לחוכמת האמנות. האמנים והיוצרים מוצגים כדמויות בעלות עולם רוחני עשיר אשר אמור לבוא לידי ביטוי ביצירתם האמנותית... התורה מציגה את בצלאל כאדם המלא ברוח אלוקים, תיאור השמור בדרך כלל לאנשי מעלה מיוחדים שעליהם שורה רוח נבואה. נראה מכאן שהתורה מכירה בכך שהאמנות איננה רק העתקת צורות נאות בצורה יפה ומדויקת, אלא היא ביטוי לרעיונותיו הפנימיים של האמן. משום כך, חשוב לתורה שהאמנים היוצרים את כלי המשכן יהיו לא רק בעלי ידיים טובות וכישורים טכניים, אלא גם מלאי רוח אלוקים. הדרישה האלוקית ליצור מבנה שיהיה מרשים בעוצמתו וביופיו מעידה כאלף עדים על חשיבות היופי והאמנות בעולמו של הקב"ה...

The most significant [context] in which craftsmanship appears in Tanach is the Mishkan, and afterwards, the Beit Hamikdash. In the instructions about building the Mishkan, there is a special emphasis on the "wisdom" of craft. The craftsmen and makers are represented as figures of a rich spiritual world, which is intended to be expressed in their artistic creations... The Torah describes Betzalel as a person full of G-dly spirit, a description set aside for special people on which the spirit of prophecy rests. It seems from here that the Torah recognizes this that craft is not just copying nice images in a nice and exact fashion, rather, it is an expression of the inner ideas of the craftsman. Therefore, it is important to the Torah that the craftsmen who create the vessels of the Mishkan should be not only good with their hands and technical knowledge but also be filled with G-d's spirit. The G-dly request to create a structure that would be [significant] in its stature and beauty testifies like 1000 witnesses to the importance of beauty and craft in the world of Hashem.

### 2. Rambam, Shemoneh Perakim, Chapter 5 (Gorfinkle translation)

וכשישים האדם כוונתו אל זה הענין יבטל מפעולותיו ויחסר ממאמריו הרבה מאד, כי מי שיכוין אל זה הענין לא יתעורר לפתח הכלים בזהב או לעשות רקום זהב בבגדיו, האלקים אם לא יכוין בזה להרחיב נפשו כדי שתבריא, וירחק ממנה חליה עד שתהיה בהירה זכה לקבל החכמות, והוא אמרם (ז"ל) דירה נאה ואשה נאה ומטה מוצעת לתלמידי חכמים, כי הנפש תלאה ותעכר המחשבה בהתמדת עיון הדברים העכורים כמו שילאה הגוף בעשות המלאכות הכבדות עד שינוח וינפש ואז ישוב למזגו השווה, כן צריכה הנפש גם כן להתעסק במנוחת החושים כעיון לפתוחים ולענינים הנאים עד שישור ממנה הליאות, כמו שאמרו כי חלשי רבנן מגירסא, ויחשוב שעל זה הצד לא יהיו אלה רעות ולא מעשה הבל ר"ל עשית הפתוחים והיצורים בבניינים ובכלים ובגדים:

If man has this as his ideal, he will dispense with many of his customary deeds, and refrain from a great deal of ordinary conversation. He who follows this line of conduct will not trouble himself with adorning his walls with golden ornaments, nor with decorating his garments with golden fringe, unless it be for the purpose of enlivening his soul, and thus restoring it to health, or of banishing sickness from it, so that it shall become clear and pure, and thus be in the proper condition to acquire wisdom. Therefore, our Rabbis of blessed memory say,



(Shabbat 25b) "It is becoming that a sage should have a pleasant dwelling, a beautiful wife, and domestic comfort"; for one becomes weary, and one's mind dulled by continued mental concentration upon difficult problems. Thus, just as the body becomes exhausted from hard labor, and then by rest and refreshment recovers, so is it necessary for the mind to have relaxation by gazing upon pictures and other beautiful objects, that its weariness may be dispelled. Accordingly, it is related (Shabbat 30b) that when the Rabbis became exhausted from study, they were accustomed to engage in entertaining conversation (in order to refresh themselves). From this point of view, therefore, the use of pictures and embroideries for beautifying the house, the furniture, and the clothes is not to be considered immoral nor unnecessary.

### 3. Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 133b (Davidson Edition translation)

דתניא זה אלי ואנוהו התנאה לפניו במצות עשה לפניו סוכה נאה ולולב נאה ושופר נאה ציצית נאה ספר תורה נאה וכתוב בו לשמו בדיו נאה בקולמוס נאה בלבלר אומן וכורכו בשיראין נאין

What is the source for the requirement of: “This is my God and I will glorify Him”? As it was taught in a baraita with regard to the verse: “This is my God and I will glorify Him [anveihu], the Lord of my father and I will raise Him up.” The Sages interpreted anveihu homiletically as linguistically related to noi, beauty, and interpreted the verse: Beautify yourself before Him in mitzvot. Even if one fulfills the mitzva by performing it simply, it is nonetheless proper to perform the mitzva as beautifully as possible. Make before Him a beautiful sukka, a beautiful lulav, a beautiful shofar, beautiful ritual fringes, beautiful parchment for a Torah scroll, and write in it in His name in beautiful ink, with a beautiful quill by an expert scribe, and wrap the scroll in beautiful silk fabric.

### 4. Mishnah Yoma 3:11 (Silverstein translation)

ואלו לגנאי, של בית גרמו לא רצו ללמד על מעשה לחם הפנים. של בית אבטינס לא רצו ללמד על מעשה הקטרת. הגרס בן לוי היה יודע פרק בפסוק ולא רצה ללמד. בן קמזר לא רצה ללמד על מעשה הכתב. על הראשונים נאמר (משלי י), זכר צדיק לברכה. ועל אלו נאמר (שם) וְשֵׁם רָשָׁעִים יִרְקָב:

And these are mentioned to their dishonor: Beth Garmo refused to teach (others) the preparation of the showbread. [The other artisans did not know how to remove it from the oven without breaking it, it being in the form of an open chest.] Beth Avtinah refused to teach the preparation of the incense. [They knew of a certain herb called "ma'aleh ashan" ("the smoke raiser") which, when added to the spices of the incense, would cause the smoke of the incense to rise as a column and not to sway in different directions.] Hugas b. Levi was expert in cantillation, but refused to teach it. Ben Kamtzar refused to teach his writing skills. [He would tie four pens to his four fingers and write the tetragrammaton at one time.] Of the first ones [Ben Gamla, Ben Katin, Monbaz, his mother, Hilni, and Nikanor] it is written (Proverbs 10:7): "The remembrance of the righteous one for a blessing."; and, of the last ones [Beth Garmo, Beth Avtinah, Hugas b. Levi, and Ben Kamtzar] it is written (Ibid.): "And may the name of the wicked rot!" [And even though Beth Garmo and Beth Avtinah gave a reason for not teaching others, viz., perhaps the skill would be learned by an unworthy person, who might use it in the service of idolatry, their defense was not accepted by the sages.]

### 5. Shacharit for Shabbat and Yom Tov, Nusach Milano

מי שברך אמותינו שרה רבקה רחל ולאה הוא יברך את כל בת ישראל שעושה מעיל או מטפחת לכבוד התורה...

He who blessed our mothers, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah, should bless every girl who makes a me'il or mitpachat [types of coverings] for the honour of the Torah...

### 6. Shmuel Aleph, 16:7 (Alhatorah translation)

ויאמר ה' אל-שמואל אל-תבט אל-מראהו ואל-גובה קומתו כי מאסתיהו כיון לא אשר יראה האדם כי האדם יראה לעינים וה' יראה ללבב: But the Lord said unto Samuel: 'Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him; for it is not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'

### 7. Mishnah Avot 3:7 (Sefaria merged translation)

רבי אלעזר איש ברתותא אומר, תן לו משלו, שאתה ושליך שלו. וכן בידוד הוא אומר (דברי הימים א כט) כי ממך הכל ומידך נתנו לך. רבי שמעון אומר, המהלך בדרך ושונה, ומפסיק ממשנתו ואומר, מה נאה אילן זה ומה נאה גיר זה, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו מתחייב בנפשו: Rabbi Elazar of Bartotha said: give to Him of that which is His, for you and that which is yours is His; and thus it says with regards to David: “for everything comes from You, and from Your own hand have we given you” (I Chronicles 29:14). Rabbi Jacob said: if one is studying while walking on the road and interrupts his study and says, “how fine is this tree!” [or] “how fine is this newly ploughed field!” scripture accounts it to him as if he was mortally guilty.

## 8. Me'iri to Shabbat 149a

ציורי חיות או בני אדם וזכירת מעשיהם כגון מלחמת המלכים וכיבושיהם אסורה אף בחול להביט בהם... שהם דברים המושכים לבו של אדם ומפנים אותו לבטלה ומסירים אותו מעבודת בוראו.

Images of animals or people [which] recall their actions such as wars of kings and their conquests – it is prohibited to gaze at them even on a weekday... since they are things which appeal to the heart of man and bring him to waste time and move him away from serving his creator.

## 9. Bereishit 4:22 (Alhatorah translation)

וַיֵּצֵא גַם־הוּא יֶלְדָה אֶת־תּוֹבֵל לָקַן לְשֵׁשׁ כְּלִי־חֶרֶשׁ נְחָשֶׁת וּבְרָזָל וְאַחֲזָה תּוֹבֵל־לָקַן בְּעַמָּה:

And also Zillah gave birth to Tubal Cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron, and Tubal Cain's sister was Naamah.

## 10. Rabbi David Zvi Hoffman to Bereishit 4:22 (modified Google translation)

הכתוב קובע את העובדה שהמצאות הראשונות הומצאו דוקא בדור בני קין, דור שפנה מאת ה', ושדור זה גם יצר את ראשית האמנות. וגם ההיסטוריה המאוחרת יותר מלמדנו, כי האנושות התקדמה בתרבות ובמדעים, כל כמה שהתרחקה ממנו ית'. אולם התקדמות זו לא היתה לה לברכה, ותועלתה היתה לצדיקים בלבד, בחינת יכין [רשע] וילבש צדיק. האמנויות והמדעים, אף על פי שתוצרו של האדם שכופר באלקים הם, הרי ניתן להשתמש בהם לעבודת הבורא ולקדושם בדרך זו.

Scripture dictates that the first inventions were invented specifically in the generation of the sons of Cain, a generation that turned from Hashem, and that this generation also created the beginning of art. And later history teaches us that humanity has progressed in culture and science, as much as it distanced itself from Hashem. But this progress was not a blessing for her, and her benefit was only for the righteous, in the sense of “the evil ones prepare, and the righteous ones [benefit]” (based on Iyov 27:17). Arts and sciences, even though they are the product of the person who denies G-d, they can be used to serve the Creator and sanctify them in this way.

## 11. My Summary of Rav Stav's Pesakim (Bein Hazmanim, pages 247-262)

- It is forbidden to make a sculpture or protruding **image of a person**. (p 248, fn 11) It is permitted to make a partial image of a body, but there is a dispute as to whether just a head is considered “partial”. (p 248, fn 12) There is also a dispute if depicting people together with other beings is permitted. (p 249, fn 14) However, some write that it is best to avoid this even where it is technically permitted. (p 249, fn 15) Drawing these images is permitted, but it is best to avoid if possible. (p 252, fn 40-44)

- It is permitted to make the image of a person if it is not permanent, such as drawing on an erasable board, creating snowmen, etc. However, if it is a permanent structure that one intends to destroy, it is prohibited. (p 253, fn 48, 49, 52)

- It is permitted to make an obviously lacking sculpture of a person, and some allow a Jew to ask a non-Jew to complete it (p 254, fn 53-56)

- It is forbidden to sculpt/draw/weave/embroider **any forms of angels or heavenly beings, as well as the sun, moon or stars**. (p 249, fn 16, 17, p 252, fn 36, 37) Under certain circumstances, it is permitted to for poskim to combine the opinion that the sun/moon/stars are only prohibited in the forms that they would be represented by idol worshippers, or the view that this prohibition does not apply to small versions of the sun, moon and stars with other considerations to be lenient (p 249, fn 18, 19)

- There are three opinions about drawing the signs of the Zodiac; some prohibit altogether, others permit it so long as all 12 are not drawn with each other, and a third opinion permits it so long as they are not drawn together with stars. (p 249-250, fn 20-22)

- Just as with a body, it is permitted to make a partial picture of the sun, stars and moon, provided it is not how they are usually drawn (for example, one cannot make a crescent as the moon, and say that it is an obscured full moon), (p 250, fn 23, 24).

- One need not be concerned to draw a circle or Magen David as a star, as the prohibition is only applicable when rays of light are drawn. (p 250, fn 25)
- Being that some poskim permit making two-dimensional figures of heavenly bodies, one should not protest against those who do (p 252, fn 38, 39) There are also additional leniencies if the figure will be displayed in public.

- Any of the above images may be created to **learn/teach Torah or critical secular studies** (such as an image of the human body teaching anatomy to medical students), and in addition to other leniencies, to provide other practical (educational) uses. (p 254 fn 57-59, 61) A minority view extends this leniency to any case where it is clear that the image is not being worshipped, but this is rejected by mainstream poskim. (p 245, fn 60)



- One may not intentionally build any of the **vessels or structures of the Mishkan/Beit Hamikdash**, or vessels that look like them, but one is not required to find out exactly how a particular vessel was made in the Mishkan/Mikdash in order to avoid replicating it. (p 250, fn 26, 27) It is permitted to draw them. (p 252, fn 35)

- It is forbidden to create a Menorah of 7 branches, provided it is made from metal, and has a base and shaft. (p 251, fn 28, 29) Some additional leniencies that are not generally accepted are if the Menorah uses candles, not oil, if the middle branch is not aligned with the others, or if it has any defect that would make it Pasul to use in the Beit Hamikdash. (p 251, fn 30-33)

- It is permitted to draw stories or scenes from **Tanach**. (p 260, fn 94)

- It is prohibited to write verses from the Torah unless they are written in a different font or noticeably different style/layout than a Torah scroll. (p 260-261, fn 95-101)

- It is the custom to permit such writing when it serves an educational purpose, and perhaps if it offers a personal religious benefit. (p 261, fn 103, 104)

- It is permitted to write Hashem's name only if it will be kept in an appropriate place, but if it is not, one may substitute a letter or an incomplete name in its place. (p 261 fn 107-109). Similarly, one does not have to be concerned that the other parts of the verse will get erased or degraded in some fashion. (p 262, fn 110)

- It is prohibited biblically to get a **tattoo** of any words or drawing, so long as there is an incision and colouring. It is rabbinically prohibited to get a tattoo when there is only colouring, but it is permanent. (p 262, fn 111-116)

- It is technically permitted to get a non-permanent tattoo that does not involve any incision, but any tattoos that may fall under the prohibition of Chukot Hagoy should be avoided. Permanent makeup may be worn, despite some poskim's opposition. (p 262, fn 116-117)