

Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1411 MAR 13TH '21 כ"ט אדר תשפ"א

פרשת ויקהל פקודי

PARSHAT VAYAKHEL PEKUDEI

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM - PARSHAT HACHODESH

ב"ה

Over
40
Years
טו ישראל



WHAT COMES FIRST?

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin
Faculty, OU Israel
Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation
Ahavath Torah, Englewood NJ
page 24



SIMCHAT SHMUEL
Rabbi Sam Shor
Program Director,
OU Israel Center
page 46

אבני־שהם ואבני
מלאים לאפד ולחשן

שמות פרק כ"ה, פסוק ז'

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYAKHEL PEKUDEI

Candles 5:09PM • Havdala 6:22PM • Rabbeinu Tam 7:03PM

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Albert Katz// Yael Emmer

HELPFUL REMINDERS:



Shabbat Mevarchim

מולד חדש ניסן יהיה בליל ראשון, שלש דקות וחמישה חלקים אחרי שבע בלילה
ראש חדש ניסן יהיה מחר ביום ראשון הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה

Rosh Chodesh **Nisan** will be tomorrow Sunday March 14



Kiddush Levana

Earliest Kiddush Levana (3 days after Molad): 4 Nisan/Tues. Night Mar. 17

7 Days after Molad: 8 Nisan/Motzei Shabbat Mar. 20

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana Until: 13 Nisan, Thurs. Night Mar. 25, all night

Birkat Ha-Ilanot on page 63

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

RANGES 11 DAYS / WED - SHABBAT MAR.10-20 / 26 ADAR - 7 NISAN

Earliest Talit and Tefilin	5:05 - 4:52am
Sunrise	5:55 - 5:43am
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema	8:52 - 8:45am
(Magen Avraham: 8:16 - 8:08am)	
Sof Z'man T'fila	9:51 - 9:45am
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic noon)	11:49 - 11:46am
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	12:19 - 12:17pm
Plag Mincha	4:29-4:34pm
Sunset (counting elevation)	5:48-5:55pm

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CANDLES	VAYAKHEL - PEKUDEI	HAVDALA	VAYIKRA	
			Candles	Havdala
5:09	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	6:22	5:14	6:27
5:27	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	6:25	5:32	6:30
5:28	Beit Shemesh / RBS	6:23	5:33	6:28
5:25	Gush Etzion	6:23	5:30	6:28
5:26	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	6:24	5:31	6:29
5:25	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	6:23	5:30	6:28
5:26	Netanya	6:24	5:31	6:29
5:26	Be'er Sheva	6:24	5:31	6:29
5:26	Rehovot	6:24	5:31	6:29
5:09	Petach Tikva	6:24	5:14	6:29
5:25	Ginot Shomron	6:23	5:30	6:28
5:15	Haifa / Zichron	6:24	5:20	6:29
5:24	Gush Shiloh	6:22	5:29	6:27
5:26	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	6:24	5:31	6:29
5:25	Giv'at Ze'ev	6:23	5:30	6:28
5:25	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	6:23	5:30	6:28
5:27	Ashkelon	6:25	5:32	6:30
5:26	Yad Binyamin	6:24	5:31	6:29
5:18	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	6:22	5:23	6:27
5:23	Golan	6:21	5:28	6:26

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 7:03 PM • next week - 7:08 pm

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities,
40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)

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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



Rabbi Avi Berman Executive Director, OU Israel

This past week marked the first day of school for so many families here in Israel. Especially for families of children in 7th-10th grades who had an average of a handful of school days this academic year. When I arrived in the office last Wednesday, I realized that it was the first time since August that there was nobody in my house.

Usually, come September 1, there are many images and jokes being circulated on WhatsApp and social media with parents celebrating now that their children are out of the house and back in school. The parents can't wait for the quiet that comes along with the start of the school year. Often, the children are hesitant to go back to school, complaining that they wished summer vacation was longer. As an educator and head of an organization that works with at-risk youth, these images bothered me tremendously, and I was very pleased to realize that these "jokes" were not being circulated this week. I was also happy to see and hear that after so many

months away from school many children who may have complained about school in the past, now went excitedly.

We as a society are experiencing a re-opening of opportunities

I am well aware that this past year brought many, many challenges along with it. This year was difficult for everyone. I was personally involved in helping families of at-risk teens with extreme circumstances this year. At the same time, there are so many examples of families bonding this year.

One woman told me that her family ate breakfast together while everyone was home, and it bonded them and helped them start their days more relaxed. A grandfather shared that he spent more time on video calls with his grandchildren who were home during the week rather than rushing to Chugim or spending hours on homework. A young mother I know expressed that it's hard for her to adjust to not having her toddler home 24/7, and she misses him so much she has been leaving to pick him up from gan 20 minutes early.

While opening schools this week is a milestone for the children, we as a society are experiencing a re-opening



of opportunities as well. With so many people Baruch Hashem vaccinated in Israel and the new Tav Yarak guidelines, we are starting to “go back to normal,” and this is an adjustment for each of us in our individual lives. This past week, I went to my in-laws for Shabbat for the first time in over a year. With everyone either recovered from Covid-19 or fully vaccinated, we felt comfortable spending Shabbat together. Just as they were excited to go back to school, my children were thrilled to go to their grandparents for Shabbat. I saw that all of us – adults and children alike – appreciated being together in a different way that we would have when we took these visits for granted in many ways.

As things are opening up, all of us here at OU Israel are excitedly looking forward to welcoming you back to our building for in-person programming which has been missing for the past year. We hope you take advantage and join us as we open for special Tav Yarak programming before Pesach.



Avi
Executive Director, OU Israel



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VAYAKHEL PEKUDEI



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven
Tradburks**
Director of
RCA Israel Region

This double parsha is the implementation of the building of the Mishkan. We have had 3 parshiot of commands to build the Mishkan. This is the actual construction and assembly.

When we have a double parsha, the first parsha will have 4 aliyot, with the 4th one continuing into the second parsha. That way each parsha gets 3½ aliyot.



1st aliya (Shmot 35:1-29) Moshe gathers the people, instructing them not to work on Shabbat. He appeals to the people to supply all that will be needed: metals, textiles, oil, spices, jewels. Skilled workers shall make all that

May the Torah learned in this issue of
Torah Tidbits be לעיני

our beloved husband/father/
grandfather/great grandfather

Rabbi Yitzchak Pechman

הרב יצחק בן דוב ז"ל

on his fifth Yahrzeit

ב' ניסן

Pechman - Perlman - Weinberg Families

G-d has commanded: the Mishkan, it's covers, the Aron, the Shulchan, the Menorah listing all the vessels, the structure of the Mishkan and the Cohen's garments. In response to Moshe's appeal, the people bring generously: the metals, the textiles, the jewels, the spices and oil.

The generosity of the people is striking. One would not imagine that we just had the Golden Calf. Man is capable of being an idol worshipper one day; and a generous donor to G-d the next.



2nd aliya (35:30-37:16) Moshe introduces Betzalel, called by G-d, filled with the spirit of G-d, to be the head craftsman. Moshe called Betzalel and Oholiav and all craftsmen to come to do all that G-d has commanded. They took the materials to begin the work. More donations came the next day. Moshe announced that no more donations were needed. The work was done: the **curtain drapes** over the Mishkan, the **goat skin drapes**, and the **colored skin drape** on top. The **planks for the walls**, the **Parochet** to hang in front of the Holy of Holies and the **Curtain** at the entrance to the Mishkan. Bezalel made the **Aron** and the **Shulchan**.

Betzalel is described as having Ruach Elokim – G-d's spirit. He is a master craftsman. But that mastery is G-d given. This is a powerful philosophy of the Torah; that man's greatness is a gift. We are blessed, endowed with skills. Many and varied are man's skills: Betzalel has artistry, some have music, some have eloquence, others insight into people, some mathematical ability, other's wonderful nurturers. We

can be proud of our skills; while humbled that He chose us to house those skills.



3rd aliya (37:17-29) And he made the **Menorah** and the **Incense Altar**.

The building and the main vessels for the service are being made. Upon these vessels, the service will take place. But where is the music?

Let me explain. All the vessels outlined here are used in the daily service. The daily service will involve: lighting the Menorah, having bread on the table that is eaten on Shabbat, the burning of incense, and the offering of sacrifices. The senses are covered. Menorah: sight and heat. Incense, smell. Bread, taste. Sacrifices, tactile. Where is the sound?

Why is there no description of musical instruments? The daily service *did* have music. The Leviim sang a Shir Shel Yom, a song of the day. When the daily offering was brought and the wine was poured on the altar, there was music; both vocal and instrumental. The Rambam, (Hilchot Klei Hamikdash 3:4) based on the Talmud describes the orchestra in the Mikdash – no less than 2 harps, but not more than 6. Flutes: at least 2, not more than 12. Brass: at least 2, not more than 120. Lyre (kinor):

Mazal to
Harriet Mark and family
on the birth of her
great granddaughter, **Nessa Rachel**
to **Daniella & Natan Marcus**

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no less than 9, no upper limit. 1 drum. I would imagine that this means that there was like a little chamber orchestra, small, that played on regular days. But Shabbat and certainly Chagim, the big orchestra performed – imagine 120 trumpets. That is a big sound.

Why then, no instructions for the building of the musical instruments?

Perhaps, music is just different. Whereas the Menorah is lit with the same oil every day, the incense recipe is the same, the bread recipe the same, the sacrifices the same – but when it comes to music, same is not what we want. The Avoda is identical daily; because is G-d telling us how to serve Him. Not too ostentatious, not too modest. Measured amounts; come close but not on your terms, on Mine. You will never know Me, so I will tell you how to serve Me.

But music isn't what **He** wants; it is what **we** want. Singing is our reach to Him. It is our voice. It is part of the Avoda – but it is as if He says “serve Me in song, but the song you choose.” Our voice – well, we say in Tehilim – Shir Chadash, sing a new song. Freshness, variety. We will never know what the music sounded like in the Mikdash, but we do know that there were different words daily. Each day had a different Psalm. I would imagine, those different words also had different tunes, different music played by the orchestra to accompany those words.

Shasha Golda bas Osher (Gladys Rose)

29th Yahrtzeit, 27 Adar

Always loved, Still missed.

Mother, Grandmother, Sister, Aunt

by sons, Michael & Robert Rose

What music would accompany Wednesday – a psalm of the harsh G-d of judgment? Or Monday, how beautiful is Jerusalem? I would imagine Monday is in major key, with an upbeat rhythm. Wednesday, minor key, reflective, pensive, slow paced.

While the music was a mitzvah, the singing and instruments part of the service, the Torah left the form, the number, the kind of instruments in our hands, at our discretion. For the music, while essential, is our reach for Him.



4th aliya (38:1-39:1) He made the **altar for the offerings**, the **copper wash basin**, the **lace curtains** to hang around the entire perimeter of the Courtyard and the **screen** to cover the entrance. An accounting was made of all the raw materials used: the gold, silver, copper – and what they were used for. The fine textiles were used for the Cohen's garments, just as G-d commanded Moshe.

The repetition of the phrase “as G-d commanded Moshe” is striking. This is in contrast to the Golden Calf. Here, everyone acts in complete accordance with what was commanded.



5th aliya (39:2-21) The **Efod** (skirt) was made from coloured materials as G-d commanded Moshe. The fine jewels with the names of Israel chiseled were placed on the Efod shoulders, as G-d commanded Moshe. The **Choshen** (Breastplate), of the material of the Efod, was made with the 12 jewels mounted on it, hung from the shoulder pieces of the Efod, as G-d commanded

Moshe.



6th aliya (39:22-43) The **Meil** (robe) was made of Techelet, with pomegranates and bells on the hem as G-d commanded Moshe. The **K'tonet** (linen robe) was made for all the Cohanim, as was the **Turban** and **belt** as G-d commanded Moshe. The golden **Tzitz** (on the forehead) was made and fastened as G-d commanded Moshe. All the work was completed as G-d commanded Moshe. All of the completed work was brought to Moshe: the building of the Mishkan, the vessels, the outer courtyard, the Cohen's garments. Moshe saw that it was all done as G-d had commanded Him. Moshe blessed the people.



7th aliya (40:1-38) G-d commands Moshe: On the first day of the first month, assemble the Mishkan. Moshe is instructed in the exact order to place the vessels and the building. He is to clothe the Cohanim and anoint them. Moshe did all that G-d commanded him. On the first day of the first month of the second year, the Mishkan was assembled, in the exact order Moshe was instructed by G-d. Moshe completed the work. A cloud covered the Ohel Moed; the glory of G-d filled the Mishkan. Moshe could not enter

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due to the cloud and the glory of G-d. The lifting of the cloud was a signal to travel. The cloud of G-d was on the Mishkan daily, fire at night, visible to all the Jewish people.

The culmination of the building is the descent of the cloud, indicating G-d's presence. Even after the failure of the Golden Calf, the passionate loyalty expressed in following every detail of this construction is rewarded with His Presence. The Golden Calf followed by the cloud descending on the Mishkan teaches the Jewish people that while we will fail Him, He will not fail us.

PARSHAT HACHODESH

EXODUS 12:1-20

This is the 4th of the special maftir and haftorahs leading to Pesach. In it the mitzvot of Pesach are outlined, including chametz and matza and the laws of the Pesach offering. The Pesach offering is one of a kind. It is the only offering that every single person of the Jewish people must bring. As Nisan is called the first month, Pesach, the first holiday, the Pesach offering is beginning the year with a personal approach to G-d. When we say each person

In loving memory of our beloved
mother, grandmother and
great-grandmother

Amalia Burstin a"h

מעלא רוזה בת ר' מרדכי יהודה ורוסיא ע"ה

On her 2nd yearzeit

כ"ח אדר תשפ"א

Heineman, Miller, Lasson, Raff families

must view themselves as if they left Egypt, the requirement of bringing the Pesach offering is the consequence of that – since I left Egypt, I, personally must approach G-d. He drew me out of Egypt – I draw near to Him. ■

HAFTORAH

SHABBAT HACHODESH

YEHEZKEL 45:16-46:18

When Rosh Chodesh Nisan falls on Sunday, some congregations add the first and last verses of the Haftorah for Erev Rosh Chodesh.

This Shabbat the reading of the *haftorah* relates to the Pesach offering that will be brought during the time of Mashiach. This theme is an extension of the *Hachodesh* Torah reading in which Moshe commands the children of Israel to make arrangements to bring the Paschal lamb.

The haftorah describes the remarkable vision of Yechezkel in which he sees the third Holy Temple. The passage opens with a description of the various *karbanot* that will be offered in the inauguration and then it mentions the special Pesach offering.

This haftorah is meant to help prepare and inspire us as we move closer to the holiday of Pesach. But even more the haftorah reminds us to set our vision on a celebration of Pesach that will include the Pesach offering and in a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

May that day come soon! ■

STATS

	V	P	V+P
Sedra Among 54	22nd	23rd	-
Sedra Of Sh'mot's 11	10th	11th	-
Lines	211.2	158.7	369.8
Rank (Among The 54)	22nd	41st	(2nd)
Parshiyot	13	20	33
P'tuchot	7	6	13
S'tumot	6	14	20
P'sukim	122	92	214
Rank (Torah/Sh'mot)	17/3	40/10	(2nd)
Words	1558	1182	2740
Rank (Torah/Sh'mot)	24/6	42/9	(2nd)
Letters	6181	4432	10613
Rank (Torah/Sh'mot)	21/5	44/10	(2nd)

MITZVOT

Vayakhel has a single mitzvah counted among the 613.
Pekudei has none.

For these I weep....
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BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

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IN THE PARSHA

Unexpected Leadership Lessons

You have surely noticed the great changes in the way charitable causes do their fundraising these days. There was a time when fundraisers, who often were themselves dignified and prestigious rabbinical figures, knocked on the doors of potential philanthropists in the hope that they would not be turned away. At best, they would be greeted at the door and given a modest contribution. They then proceeded to knock upon the next door.

This experience was inefficient, time consuming, and often humiliating.

In recent times, things have changed. Through the power of electronic communication, it is now possible to post a brief message promoting a charitable cause in dramatic and graphic terms to an audience of thousands. The money comes rolling in.

Little time is expended. No knocking on doors, no embarrassment, no travel expenses, and, regrettably, no accountability.

This technique, often referred to as “crowd

funding,” is not only a tool for getting people to donate money. It is also a tool for influencing people in other ways. It is used for political purposes, for education, for indoctrination, and for teaching morality. It is a tool for leadership.

Were similar tools available in the past? I maintain that there were such tools and that they were available to gifted leaders throughout the course of human history. One such leader was Moshe.

That brings us to this week’s double Torah portion, *VaYakhel-Pekudei* (Exodus 35:1-40:38). Here I have the privilege of quoting from the newly available *Chumash* translation written by the late lamented Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks:

“Moshe assembled all the community of Israel... Then Moshe said to all the community of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord has commanded. Bring of what is yours an offering to the Lord. Let everyone whose heart moves him bring an offering to the Lord: gold, silver, and bronze; sky-blue, purple, and crimson wool...’ So all the community of Israel left Moshe’s presence. And they came, everyone whose heart inspired him and whose spirit moved him, and brought an offering for the Lord...” (Exodus 35:1-21)

On the phrase “all the community of Israel left Moshe’s presence,” Rabbi Chaim ibn

Attar, the eighteenth century author of the classic commentary *Ohr HaChaim*, comments:

“Note that they all left Moshe’s presence as one, quickly and in unison, to bring their contributions. None stayed behind even for a moment. They left his presence before he gave them permission to leave, although the Talmud tells us in the tractate *Yoma* that a disciple should not depart from his master until he receives permission. But, in this case, their enthusiasm prompted them to ignore that protocol.”

Subsequently, in chapter 36 verse six, we read: “Moshe ordered an announcement to be made throughout the camp, ‘Let no man or woman make anything more as an offering for the sanctuary.’ So the people brought no more; for what they already had was more than enough for all the work that was to be done.”

Note that an “order” was necessary to prevent the Israelites from bringing anything further, so great and so strong was their desire to comply with the *mitzvah* of contributing to the construction of the Tabernacle.

Moshe had no system of electronic communication at hand. He did not even have a loudspeaker. And, as we very well know, he not only lacked eloquence, but suffered from a speech impediment. Personal charisma was not his forte.

His enthusiasm, his sincerity, and his impeccable integrity were what enabled him to sway the entire camp. A leader with those characteristics need not knock on

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That is one model of leadership, but one confined to but a few exemplary individuals.

But there is another entirely different type of leader mentioned in the second of this week's two Torah portions. He is described as having some very specialized skills, but he certainly is no Moshe. I refer to Bezalel, who is referenced in one of the opening verses in this week's *Parshat Pekudei*. We first encountered him last week in *Parshat Ki Tisa*. There, we read:

“The Lord said to Moshe, “See, I have called by name Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur from the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with a divine spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in every craft. He will fashion works of art in gold, silver, and bronze. He will cut stones for setting, carve wood, and work in every craft. I have assigned to him Oholiav, son of Ahisamach, from the tribe of Dan... They will be able to make all I have commanded you...” (Exodus 31:1-6)

Obviously, Bezalel was a talented man, blessed by the Lord Himself with the skills of craftsmanship. And he had a very able partner, blessed with a similar skill set.

Why do I maintain that Bezalel was a praiseworthy leader? He was definitely a versatile artisan, but a leader?

This question is intensified by a passage in the Talmud tractate *Berakhot* 55a. It reads:

“Rabbi Yochanan said: Three phenomena are proclaimed in advance by the Holy One Blessed Be He Himself, and they are *ra'av, sova*, and a *parnas tov* (hunger, plenty, and a good leader).”

The example given of a *parnas tov*, a good leader, is none other than Bezalel.

Rabbi Chaim Zeitchik, a heroic Holocaust survivor and a prolific writer on the subject of morality, is troubled by this Talmudic passage. He does not belittle Bezalel's role as the Tabernacle's master craftsman. He simply questions why he is chosen as the archetype of a great leader. What outstanding leadership qualities did he display?

Rabbi Zeitchik's quotes a midrashic passage (*Yalkut Shimoni* Kings I: 185). It reads: “Rabbi Levi said the name of Rabbi Chanina, “Two tribes were selected as partners in the production of the Tabernacle, Bezalel from the royal tribe of Judah and Oholiav from the lowly tribe of Dan...”

Rabbi Zeitchik wonders about the significance of this choice of dual craftsmen.

His moving and instructive response follows, freely translated from his work *Ohr Chadash al HaTorah*:

“A person's moral character can be tested by the extent to which he continues to work for the benefit of the community when another person is assigned to be his partner. Is he envious of his new partner? Is he concerned that others will be impressed by his partner's competence? Does he see his partner as a rival? For this reason, the Almighty assigned the task of constructing the Tabernacle to members of

two different tribes, the royal tribe of Judah and the lowly tribe of Dan. The Almighty could then observe whether each would remain fully dedicated to the task at hand or whether one or both of them would yield to feelings of resentment and envy to the extent that they would fail at their magnificent assignment.

“For some people are only able to demonstrate excellence and remain dedicated to challenging objectives when they are in charge. They need to subordinate others to their way of doing things. Only when they are the sole decision-makers, fully in command, are they able to function. But when they are required to collaborate with another, to work as part of a team, they gradually lose control and become lax, sabotaging the entire project in the process.”

Rabbi Zeitchik, a twentieth century Jewish moralist, thus masterfully cites talmudic and midrashic texts, all based upon careful readings of biblical selections from this week’s Torah portion, all with the purpose of teaching us a lesson that is so very important today.

The lesson is this: There are occasional leaders who can inspire greater numbers of people through their unique spiritual gifts. *Moshe Rabbenu*, Moses our Master, was one of them.

But all of us can learn a different kind of leadership skill. We can learn to work collaboratively. We can subdue our egos, recognize the worth of colleagues, and give credit and praise to all who contribute to humanity’s vital tasks. ■



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Celebrate

If leaders are to bring out the best in those they lead, they must give them the chance to show they are capable of great things, and then *they must celebrate their achievements*. That is what happens at a key moment toward the end of our parsha, one that brings the book of Exodus to a sublime conclusion after all the strife that has gone before.

The Israelites have finally completed the work of building the Tabernacle. We then read:

So all the *work* on the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, was *completed*. The Israelites did everything just as the Lord commanded Moses ... Moses inspected the *work* and saw that they had done it just as the Lord had commanded. So Moses *blessed* them. (Ex. 39:32, 43)

The passage sounds simple enough, but to the practised ear it recalls another biblical text, from the end of the Creation narrative in Genesis:

The heavens and the earth were *completed* in all their vast array. On the seventh day God finished the *work* He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His *work*. Then God *blessed* the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the *work* of creating that He had done. (Gen. 2:1-3)

Three key words appear in both passages: “work,” “completed” and “blessed.” These verbal echoes are not accidental. They are how the Torah signals intertextuality, hinting that one law or story is to be read in the context of another. In this case, the Torah is emphasising that Exodus ends as Genesis began, with a work of

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creation. Note the difference as well as the similarity. Genesis began with an act of *Divine* creation. Exodus ends with an act of *human* creation.

The closer we examine the two texts, the more we see how intricately the parallel has been constructed. The creation account in Genesis is tightly organised around a series of sevens. There are seven days of Creation. The word “good” appears seven times, the word “God” thirty-five times, and the word “earth” twenty-one times. The opening verse of Genesis contains seven words, the second fourteen, and the three concluding verses 35 words. Always multiples of seven. The complete text is 469 (7×67) words.

The account of the construction of the Tabernacle in Vayakhel-Pekudei is similarly built around the number seven. The word “heart” appears seven times in Exodus 35:5-29, as Moses specifies the materials to be used in the construction, and seven times again in 35:34 – 36:8, the description of how the craftsmen Bezalel and Oholiav will carry out the work. The word *terumah*, “contribution” appears seven times in this section. In chapter 39, describing the making of the priestly vestments, the phrase “as God commanded Moses” occurs seven times. It occurs again seven times in chapter 40.

A remarkable parallel is being drawn between God’s creation of the universe and the Israelites’ creation of the Sanctuary. We now understand what the Sanctuary represented. It was a micro-cosmos, a universe in miniature, constructed with

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the same precision and “wisdom” as the universe itself, a place of order against the formlessness of the wilderness and the ever-threatening chaos of the human heart. The Sanctuary was a visible reminder of God’s Presence within the camp, itself a metaphor for God’s Presence within the Universe as a whole.

A large and fateful idea is taking shape. The Israelites - who have been portrayed throughout much of Exodus as ungrateful and half-hearted - have now been given the opportunity, after the sin of the Golden Calf, to show that they are not irredeemable, and they have embraced that opportunity. They are proven capable of great things. They have shown they can be creative. They have used their generosity and skill to build a mini-universe. By this symbolic act they have shown they are capable of becoming, in the potent rabbinic phrase, “God’s partners in the work of creation.”

This was fundamental to their re-moralisation and to their self-image as the people of God’s covenant. Judaism does not take a low view of human possibility. We do not believe we are tainted by original sin. We are not incapable of moral grandeur.

To the contrary, the very fact that we are in the image of the Creator means that we humans – uniquely among life forms – have the ability to be creative. As Israel’s first creative achievement reached its culmination Moses blessed them, saying, according to the Sages, “May it be God’s will that His presence rests in the work of your hands.”¹ Our potential greatness is that we can create structures, relationships and lives that become homes for the Divine Presence.

Blessing them and celebrating their achievement, Moses showed them what they could be. That is potentially a life-changing experience. Here is a contemporary example:

In 2001, shortly after September 11th, I received a letter from a woman in London whose name I did not immediately recognise. She wrote that on the morning of the attack on the World Trade Centre, I had been giving a lecture on ways of raising the status of the teaching profession, and she had seen a report about it in the press. This prompted her to write and remind me

1 Sifrei, Bamidbar, Pinchas, 143.



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of a meeting we had had eight years earlier.

She was then, in 1993, the Head Teacher of a school that was floundering. She had heard some of my broadcasts, felt a kinship with what I had to say, and thought that I might have a solution to her problem. I invited her, together with two of her deputies, to our house. The story she told me was this: morale within the school, among teachers, pupils and parents alike, was at an all-time low. Parents had been withdrawing their children. The student roll had fallen from 1000 children to 500. Examination results were bad: only 8 per cent of students achieved high grades. It was clear that unless something changed dramatically, the school would be forced to close.

We talked for an hour or so on general themes: the school as community, how to create an ethos, and so on. Suddenly, I realised that we were thinking along the wrong lines. The problem she faced was practical, not philosophical. I said: "I want you to live one word: *celebrate*." She turned to me with a sigh: "You don't understand – we have *nothing* to celebrate. Everything in the school is going wrong." "In that case," I replied, "*find* something to celebrate. If a single student has done better this week than last week, celebrate. If someone has a birthday, celebrate. If it's Tuesday,

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celebrate.’ She seemed unconvinced, but promised to give the idea a try.

Now, eight years later, she was writing to tell me what had happened since then. Examination results at high grades had risen from 8 per cent to 65 per cent. The enrolment of pupils had risen from 500 to 1000. Saving the best news to last, she added that she had just been made a Dame of the British Empire – one of the highest honours the Queen can bestow – for her contribution to education. She ended by saying that she just wanted me to know how a single word had changed the school, and her life.

She was a wonderful teacher, and certainly did not need my advice. She would have discovered the answer on her own anyway. But I was never in any doubt that the strategy would succeed, for we all grow to fill other people’s expectations of us. If they are low, we remain small. If they are high, we walk tall.

The idea that each of us has a fixed quantum of intelligence, virtue, academic ability, motivation and drive is absurd. Not all of us can paint like Monet or compose like Mozart. But we each have gifts, capacities, that can lie dormant throughout life until someone awakes them. We can achieve heights of which we never thought ourselves capable. All it takes is for us to

meet someone who believes in us, challenges us, and then, when we have responded to the challenge, blesses and celebrates our achievements. That is what Moses did for the Israelites after the sin of the Golden Calf. First he got them to create, and then he blessed them and their creation with one of the simplest and most moving of all blessings, that the Shechinah should dwell in the work of their hands.

Celebration is an essential part of motivating. It turned a school around. In an earlier age and in a more sacred context it turned the Israelites around. So celebrate.

When we celebrate the achievements of others, we change lives. ■

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B'CHODSHO

What Comes First?

The Talmud tells a fascinating tale, but doesn't really answer the question...

The rabbis are puzzled by an apparent contradiction in the Torah text. In Parshat Teruma, HaShem issues clear instructions concerning the construction of the Sanctuary. He first commands the fashioning of the *Klei HaMishkan*, the utensils to be contained in the Sanctuary. Only then, does HaShem turn His attention to the building of the *Mishkan*, the Sanctuary structure, itself.

When the Israelites carry out God's instructions, however, the order of construction is reversed. The Torah testifies in *Parshat Va'yakhel* that the people first create the *Mishkan*. Only once the structural components of the Sanctuary are complete, do they begin to fashion the *keilim*.

Why, ask the rabbis, do the people disregard God's clear instructions? If they were commanded to first produce the utensils, why do they begin with the *Mishkan*?

By way of an answer, the Talmud tells a fascinating tale—a narrative that beautifully weaves the name of the *Mishkan*'s chief artisan, Betzalel, into the unfolding events.

The Talmud explains that Moshe initially instructs Betzalel to perform his appointed tasks according to the order found in Parshat Teruma; to fashion the *keilim* before constructing the *Mishkan*.

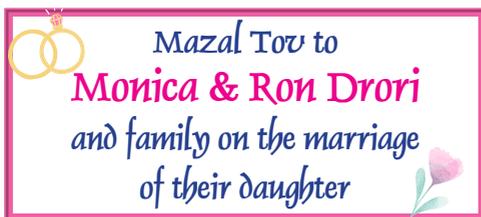
Betzalel, however, objects:

It is the way of the world, Moshe, to build a home before creating its furnishings. Why are you instructing me to do the reverse? Absent a structure, where shall I put the utensils that I create?

Moshe responds:

*שְׁמָא בְּצַל אֱ-לֹהֵי וַיִּדְעַת... Could it be, Betzalel, that you surreptitiously overheard God's commandments to me, while you were hiding in the "shadow of God" [בְּצֵל אֱ-לֹהִים]? You are correct and I am mistaken. God actually commanded us to build the *Mishkan* first and, only then, the *keilim*.*

While this Talmudic aggada underscores the order in which the *Mishkan* and its



furnishings are ultimately created, it begs the fundamental question. If, all along, Hashem wanted the *Mishkan* to be constructed before its *Keilim*, why is the opposite sequence recorded in *Parshat Teruma*? Why are the original commandments concerning the *Mishkan* stated in mirror image to God's will?

I believe that an answer to our question can be determined if we accept two basic postulates:

1. The *Mishkan* and its details are designed to teach us critical symbolic lessons concerning our overall relationship with God and His law.

2. Whenever the Torah details a sequence twice and reverses the order in the second rendition, the text is informing us that, on some level, the order is inconsequential.¹

Armed with these two postulates, we can perhaps explain the Torah's shifting

1 A perfect example of this rule emerges, appropriately enough, from the Exodus narrative in the Torah. In describing the ritual to take place on the night of the Exodus, the text states that blood is to be placed "on the two doorposts and on the lintel" of the Israelites' homes. In a recap of this ritual, however, the text states that the blood is to be placed on "the lintel and the two doorposts"-reversing the original order of placement. The rabbis explain that this reversal of order actually conveys that the order is inconsequential. It did not matter if the blood was placed first on the doorposts or first on the lintel. Either sequence was ultimately acceptable.]

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description of the *Mishkan's* construction. On a practical level, the *Mishkan* must be created before its *keilim*. On a philosophical level, however, the Torah presents both alternative sequences in order to address a critical religious query. Which is more important in our relationship with HaShem; the big picture or the details? What takes priority, the overall structure [the *Mishkan*] or the specifics [the *keilim*]?

The Torah's answer? Both are equally important.

On the one hand, we should never lose sight of the Torah's overall goal: to shape our lives into vehicles for *Kiddush HaShem*. The Torah enables us, and challenges us, to lead sanctified lives; to bring God into the world through our words and deeds.

On the other hand, details are critically important. Through careful adherence to the details of our tradition we show our true loyalty to Hashem. Our care for the specifics, even when we don't fully understand them, demonstrates a willingness to devote daily time and energy to our relationship with the divine.

Both the overall goals and the details of our relationship with HaShem are equally important. Together, they form the essential balance meant to shape our lives.

There could be no better time of the year than the month of Nissan for shared reflection on this balance. As we prepare to re-connect with the first steps of our national journey on the Festival of Pesach, it is appropriate to ask: *How are we doing? How well are we maintaining, in our*

time, the balance between structure and detail that has marked our relationship with HaShem since the Exodus? Have our actions over this past year served to sanctify God's name? Have we been a people from whom HaKadosh Baruch Hu could "shep nachas?"

The answer, of course, is mixed. The challenges of this past year have revealed our strengths and our weaknesses, our ability to pull together and our tendency to pull apart. We've been selfless and selfish. Some among us have risked all in the service of others; while others have shown striking indifference to anyone outside their "*daled amot*." Some have maintained the details of Jewish observance while adhering to the societal rules protecting us all; while others- from all ends of the communal spectrum- have flaunted disobedience to those rules. Some have acted in ways that bring public pride and kavod to God's people; while others, well, not so much...

The advent of Nissan provides us with the impetus to take a step back and recalibrate the delicate balance so critical to our spiritual lives.

Mishkan...Keilim; Keilim...Mishkan...What takes priority, the structure or the details? The Torah's answer is abundantly clear. Both come first. Only if both ends of the spectrum are healthy and strong, will we rise to meet our eternal mission with success. ■

Rabbi Goldin is the author of the OU press volumes "Unlocking the Torah Text," and "Unlocking the Haggada.

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THE PROPHETS

The special maftir reading established by the Tana'im of the Mishna was meant to remind the nation living during the era of the Bet HaMikdash, that the time to offer the Korban Pesach, the paschal sacrifice, was quickly approaching. It is for this reason that they chose the selection from Parashat Bo in which we read Hashem's unique instructions fulfilling the mitzvah of the very first Korban Pesach, that which was offered in Egypt itself. For the same reason, the selection for the haftarah also speaks of the unique laws that would apply to the future paschal offerings that would take place in the third Temple during the Messianic era. Many of the laws quoted do not coincide with the laws of the Torah, causing some consternation among the rabbinic scholars. Yet, as the commentator, Radak, suggests, the new era heralded by the Mashiach would bring with it new, more demanding laws that would guarantee a higher level of spirituality and purity.

Fittingly, the opening verses of the haftarah, tell of the special sacrifice that would be offered on "the first day of the first month", Rosh Chodesh, and whose blood would be spread on the doorposts of the Sanctuary, a clear echo of the blood spread upon the doorposts of the Israelite homes in Egypt the evening before their exodus. Similarly, as the haftarah continues, it speaks of the

seven day holiday upon which matzot would be eaten, a fact included in the Maftir reading as well. This interesting contrast and comparison between the past and future sacrifices reminds us that the holiday of Pesach is meant to mark both the historical and the yet-to-be redemption.

Many of us (and of past generations) might wonder why we still read this selection some 1,950 years after the destruction of the Second Bet Hamikdash, and therefore, 1,950 years during which no Korban Pesach was offered nor was its ritual followed!! Additionally, the majority of the Rabbis who lived during the Mishnaic period, those referred to as the "Tana'im", those who established this haftarah reading, also lived after Churban Bayit. For them as well, therefore, this reading was not particularly germane. So why did they insist on including its reading on this Shabbat HaChodesh?

They had a very logical reason.

As we have pointed out more than once, the prophecies of geula, of the return to our land, of a glorious future, were a source of hope and a glimmer of light to the Jew suffering in the seemingly endless galut. To survive 1,950 years with no hope and no belief in a brighter tomorrow would have been nearly impossible. Without the emunah that there would be another Bet

HaMikdash and that the Korban Pesach would be sacrificed in Yerushalayim yet again, there would have been little chance of survival as a unique nation in the Diaspora. If for no other reason than this – its reading would have been understandably instituted for this Shabbat. “Let us learn the laws of Korban Pesach in the rebuilt Bet HaMikdash because we might need to know them this Pesach...or next,” hopeful Jews would say.

But that was not the only reason.

Woven throughout the navi’s words is a most subtle, yet crucial, lesson. In the verses preceding the haftarah, Yechezkel admonishes the leaders by telling them that no longer would they use their power to enrich themselves at the expense of the common person. Rather, they will fulfill what their true purpose as leaders is: to remove lawlessness and pursue justice and righteousness, to have “honest scales and honest ephah” and to guarantee that the coinage be equal and true.

Ultimately, the future redemption brought by Mashiach ben David would not be one of sacrifices, religious rites and ritual purity alone. We must also realize and prepare for a purity of action and of deed as well. This is what will be the essence of the Messianic Era. And that was something the past generations had to prepare for. And, certainly, our generation must as well. ■

Rabbi Winkler's popular Jewish History lectures can be viewed by visiting the OU Israel Video archive: <https://www.ouisrael.org/video-library/>



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וְכַל־חַכְמֵי לֵב בָּכֶם יבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' (שמות לה:י)

And every wise hearted person among you shall come and make everything that Hashem has commanded: (Shemos 35)

In the pasuk referenced above, the term “Chacham Lev”- wise hearted, seems a bit strange. Typically, wisdom is related to the mind rather than the heart, which represents emotion.

The Otzros HaTorah suggests that this phrase is the secret to the successful fulfillment of *mitzvos*. A wise man, will act upon his inspiration and rather than merely contemplate, will take concrete action. That is highlighted by the phrase “יבואו ויעשו”, “they should come and fulfill” - to be able to turn one’s inspiration into the performance of a mitzva.

Unfortunately, at times when we are inspired and consider taking on new responsibilities, like joining a shiur, learning a new topic or spearheading a community project, we speak of our intentions, but we don’t always seem to turn our dreams into reality.

The Hida explains the following statement uttered by Hazal “צדיקים אומרים מעט ועושים” – “הרבה” – Essentially, righteous individuals “under promise and over deliver.” Rather than boast of all the wonderful ideas we have and share them with everyone, it is better to take action and to implement these ideas. The Yetzer Hara often tries to prevent us from fulfilling our goals. We have to understand that it is not only “the thought that counts.” By telling others of our ideas, it makes us feel good about ourselves and we may feel as if we have implemented the project. The key is to execute. When we are inspired, we should think of what we can do and immediately take action. To hit the iron while it’s hot!



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Later in the parsha we come across another pasuk:

ויבאו כל איש אשר נשאו לבו וכל אשר נדבה רוחו אתו
הביאו את תרומת ה' למלאכת אהל מועד ולכל עבודתו
ולבגדי הקדש. (שמות לה:כא)

Every man whose heart uplifted him came, and everyone whose spirit inspired him to generosity brought the offering of Hashem for the work of the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. (Shemot 35:21)

This pasuk teaches us that every individual who was originally inspired to donate to the Mishkan carried through with his inspiration and took action. Every single person made good on his pledge.

This, explains Rav Pam (*The Pleasant Way*) is why the content of the Parshiyos of Teruma and Tetzaveh is repeated in Parshiyos Vayak'hel and Pekudei. The Torah wants to emphasize that after all the times that the Torah says ve'asita – “any you shall make” – in Parashas Teruma and Parashas Tetzaveh, Bnei Yisrael carried through; Parshiyos Vayak'hel and Pekudei are full of ve'asu – “and they made.”

Let's allow ourselves to be inspired and to think carefully of how we use such inspiration to improve our avodas Hashem and our communal service. But we must not stop there. We have to follow through and take immediate action so that our good intentions are in fact brought to fruition. If we may borrow a phrase from a famous sportswear manufacturer, when we are inspired - we should have the attitude of “Just Do it!”. ■



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Enough

In an outpouring of largesse, *Am Yisrael* donated their possessions to furnish the *Mishkan* and its adornments. So much so that Moshe Rabbeinu had to tell them it was enough. The Torah then concludes this section saying that the material brought was enough for the work to be done and there was extra (*Shemos 36;7*). The *parshanim* are troubled by this expression. If there was enough then there wasn't extra and if there was extra, then why say it was enough? Rav Weinberger in *Shemen Hatov* notes that this idea reflects the dialectic embedded in Jewish thought. The *Mishkan* was where people could bring down the holy *Shechinah*, yet at the same time, as physical beings, are so far from achieving holiness and closeness to Hashem. Yechezkel Hanavi (*Yechezkel 1;14*) describes this dynamic

among the angels, "*ratzo vashov*", moving forward toward *kedushah* and retreating from it. Here too, the contributions were enough and at the same time, there existed a desire to give more.

Kol Mevasser takes this further, explaining that "*vehoter*", the extra, is referring not to the donations, rather to the **desire** of the people. Upon completing their contributions, the people wished they could continue to give. The Divrei Yisrael of Modzitz explains that this desire has been passed down to all generations. Our desire to give tzedakah and support Torah institutions is driven by the 'left over' desire of *Am Yisrael* when donating to the *Mishkan*.

This concept, to give beyond what is needed, is not relegated to monetary contributions alone. It is something that can be found in all our mitzvah observance. Rav Bunim of Peshischa teaches that we find it hinted

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to at the end of the *tefillah* of *Yishtabach*. The *brachah* concludes “*habocheh beshirei zimrah*”, [Hashem] who chooses musical songs of praise. One can read it however as “*beshayarei*”, the leftovers of song. Hashem chooses the feelings left over when we have completed singing; the desire to sing even more is beloved by Hashem. Whenever we do a mitzvah, the yearning to do even more elevates the experience of the mitzvah and ourselves to an even higher level.

Rav Druk in *Darash Mordechai* looks at this episode from a slightly different perspective. The extra donations were needed to offset potential *gaavah* among the people. A person could easily conclude that it was **their** personal donation that completed the *Mishkan* and hence, brought the *Shechinah* down to earth. However, now that there were left over materials, no one could be sure where their donation was to be found, in the actual structure, the vessels or in the excess. This uncertainty led to a necessary humility, no one could claim proprietary rights over any part of the *Beit Hashem*. Indeed, as Hashem does not rest among the haughty, it was a prerequisite to achieve the culmination –*hashra'at haShechinah*. ■

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One Rosh Chodesh Nissan, after davening *shacharis k'vasikin*, 'with the sunrise', Rav Shlomo Zalman and his son set out to recite the special blessing. "Tatte, look! There are two budding trees right here, we can go right over and make the *brachah*."

"Ah, thank you, yes, they are beautiful... but I prefer to go somewhere else," Rav Shlomo Zalman replied."

They walked some distance through Shaarei Chesed and arrived at a small courtyard where a single tree stood, with a few buds sprouting. Knowing that his father was of the halachic opinion that it is preferable to make the *brachah* upon seeing at least two fruit-bearing blossoming

trees, the *gadol ha-dor*'s son was surprised. "But Tatte... There's only one tree?" he said.

Rav Shlomo Zalman smiled at his son. "You're right. It is preferable to make the *brachah* over two trees." He then motioned toward the apartment above the garden, where an elderly woman stood at the window looking out toward the garden below. "Do you see that woman watching us? She lost her husband many years ago and lives alone, rarely venturing out. She waits all year for me to come and make *birchas ha-ilanos* on this tree. Bringing joy to an *almanah*, and showing her sensitivity, is a *mitzvah d'Oraisa*, a Biblical commandment, while reciting the *bracha* on two trees is a praiseworthy rabbinic stringency.

Rav Shlomo Zalman looked toward the window, nodded at the elderly woman, smiled, and made the *brachah* over her tree.

Our sedra describes the building of the Mishkan, and details the elements of its construction. Every element of the structure, from its design, materials, colors, and size, was according to Hashem's instructions:

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ה' בְּנֵי עַמּוֹ וַיְבָרַךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה

“Just as Hashem had commanded Moshe,
so did Bnei Yisrael do all the work.

And Moshe saw all the work, and behold they had done it as Hashem had commanded, *kein asu*, ‘so had they done’, and Moshe blessed them” (*Shemos*, 39:42-43).

The *Ohr haChayim haKadosh* teaches that there are certain details in our performance of mitzvos that, while optimal and enhance the mitzvah, are not required. The Torah’s repetition of *kein asu*, “and so they did,” teaches us that Bnei Yisrael did everything they were commanded, אפילו דברים שאינם אלא, מצוה מן המובחר, “even those elements that are not required but which optimize the fulfilment of the mitzvah”.

Rav Dr. Yitzchak Twersky, The Tolner Rebbe, zy’a, sees the construction of the *Mishkan*, meeting place between Am Yisrael and Hashem, as a paradigm for our fulfilment of mitzvos, as well as a fundamental life lesson in our Divine service. Mitzvos are opportunities for us to draw close to Hashem; when we fulfil them *min ha-muvchar*, ‘in their ideal form’, we express a desire to draw close to God. When we invest ourselves in following halachah with dedication and enthusiasm,

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Starting on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, we can recognize the exalted levels of commitment to *halachah* prevalent in Jewish homes. The intensive efforts, dedication and stringencies prevalent in every community in Klal Yisrael are certainly a source of Nachas to Hashem, a *limud zechus* on High. Pesach season is a ‘headquarters’ of *chumros*, stringencies and ‘extras’, along with our *minhagim*, holy family traditions and customs. At a time where we are so focused on striving to live with *mitzvah min ha-muvchar*, it is critical to remember where to focus our priorities.

Rav Yisrael Salanter, zt’l, warned his students that they ought to be ‘*machmir*’, stringent in preparing and baking matzos and fulfill every aspect of the *halachah* beyond the letter of the law. He also charged them to make sure to be sensitive and kind to the women who worked in the matzah bakery, most of whom were poor and many of whom were *almanos*.

May we, this Rosh Chodesh Nisan and Yom Tov season, merit to fulfill all of our obligations ה' כאשר צוה, “as God has commanded us”, and observe *mitzvos min ha-muvchar* — by following in Rav Shlomo Zalman’s example, keeping ‘the main thing’ the main thing. ■



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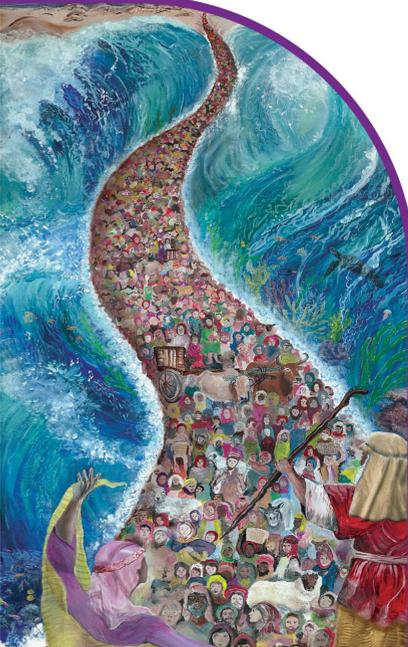
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Sunday, March 14, Nisan 1, 9:00AM - 1:00PM

9:15 - 10:15 Unlocking the Haggadah: A Guided Journey Through the Seder **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

11:10-11:15 Tehillim

10:15 – 11:10 Guide to Cleaning and Kashering your Kitchen **Rabbi Ezra Friedman**, Director of the OU Israel Gustave & Carol Jacobs Center for Kashrut Education

11:15-12:00 Finding Freedom in the Everyday Grind: A Personal Account **Hadassa Cowland Goldberg** // @therealhadassa

12:00-1:00 Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Snow White & the Seder Plate **Rabbanit Shani Taragin**

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www.ouisrael.org/events/nisan2021

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SUN, MAR 14

- 9:00 AM**
Rabbi David Walk Tehillim
- 10:15 AM** **Rabbi Aharon Adler** to resume on March 21
- 11:30 AM**
Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz
 Mishlei: Wisdom for Life (L'Ayla)
- 2:00 PM** **Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld** Men's Gemara Chabura S,T,TH <https://zoom.us/j/887981820>
- 4:30 PM** **Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**
 Men's Gemara B'Iyun S,M,W,Th
<https://zoom.us/j/86466998217>

Special Events

9:00AM- 1:00PM
 Rosh Chodesh Nisan Seminar for Women In-Person & Virtual
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81472546984>



8:00PM
 Making Seder of the Seder
Rabbi Zev Leff. Register at www.ouisrael.org/events/pesach-rav-leff

MON, MAR 15

- 9:15 AM**
Mrs. Pearl Borow
 Sefer Nechemya (L'Ayla)
- 10:30 AM**
Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider
 Rav Soloveitchik on the Parsha
- 11:45 AM**
Rabbi Shmuel Herschler
 Ethics, family and society in the writings of Rav Hirsch, Rav Kook & Rav Soloveitchik
- 4:30PM**
Rabbi Hillel Ruvell
- 7:00 PM**
Rabbi Baruch Taub
 Parshat HaShavua
<https://zoom.us/j/888974573>
- 9:00 PM**
Rabbi Sam Shor
 Penimiyut HaTorah- Inspiration from the Masters of Jewish Thought [facebook.com/OUISrael](https://www.facebook.com/OUISrael)

8:00PM
Special Event

Mother-Daughter Teen Pre-Pesach Event
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83470242810>



TUE, MAR 16

- 9:00 AM**
Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz
 Minchat Chinuch
- 9:15 AM**
Mrs. Shira Smiles
 Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)
- 10:30 AM**
Rabbi Shmuel Goldin
 Parshat HaShavua
- 2:00 PM**
Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld
- 5:00 PM**
Mrs. Sylvie Schatz
 Chazal: Insights Into Our Times (L'Ayla)
<https://zoom.us/j/85177782268>

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WED, MAR 17

9:00 AM Rabbi Shimshon Nadel Halacha and Medina

10:15 AM Rabbi Anthony Manning
Contemporary Issues in Halacha and Hashkafa

11:30 AM Rabbi Alan Kimche
Great Jewish Thinkers

4:30PM Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

7:00 PM Rabbi Baruch Taub
Halacha <https://zoom.us/j/709706986>

8:30 PM Rav Meir Goldwicht
(Hebrew) Parshat Hashavua
[https:// zoom.us/j/2244321902](https://zoom.us/j/2244321902)
Passcode: 18



7:00PM Special Event
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THURS, MAR 18

9:00 AM Rabbi Ian Pear
Meaning in Mitzvot

10:15 AM Rabbi Baruch Taub
Parshat HaShavua

11:30 AM Rabbi Shai Finkelstein Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

2:00 PM Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

4:30PM Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

8:00 PM Rabbi Ari Kahn
Parshat HaShavua
<https://zoom.us/j/2624570009>

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8:00pm - Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbat
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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

In the *zemer* sung each Shabbat evening, *Kol Mekadesh Shevii* - we see a reference to the Temple's future reconstruction.

The stanza reads: “*Samcheim b’vinyan shalem*,” Rejoice in the complete building. What exactly is the connection between *Shabbat*, and the building of the *Beit Hamikdash*?

The opening verses of *Parshat Vayakhel* (*Shemot* Chapter 35:1-3) finds Moshe once again instructing the Jewish people regarding the Sabbath day. Most specifically, in verse 3 we read the instruction: “*Lo tiva’aru eish bechol moshvoteychem b’yom haShabbat...*” “You shall kindle no flame in any of your dwelling places on the Sabbath day...”

This verse is commonly interpreted to connote the obvious legal ruling - the prohibition against kindling flames of any sort on *Shabbat*. However, there is a beautiful, and perhaps more significant teaching regarding this verse from the Torah commentary the *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* (Two tablets of the Law) written by the 16th Century Kabbalist, Rabbi

Yeshayahu Horowitz, of Prague. He writes:

“*Lo tiva’aru eish bechol moshvoteychem b’yom haShabbat, al tivaaru eish shel machloket bayom haShabbat! Zeh hayom sheniyached yisrael zeh lazeh...*” “You shall kindle no flame in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day - do not fuel the flame of conflict or disagreement on the Sabbath day! *Shabbat* is the day that brings each Jewish person closer to each other...”

This teaching is so powerful. The biblical prohibition to not spark a match, (or for that matter any of the various *Shabbat* regulations), is but one aspect of the essence of *Shabbat*. Perhaps in refraining from even these seemingly mundane acts, we are somehow meant to take stock, acknowledge and even reach out to our fellow Jew; to find a common bond, to set aside our differences, and reflect and build on the bonds that join us, rather the fractured divisiveness that causes so much confusion and disagreement.

This, says the *Darchei Noam*, the Rebbe of Slonim *shlit”a*, is the meaning of the stanza in our *Shabbat zemer*, *Samcheim*

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B'vinyan Shaleim. Each *Shabbat* we rejoice in the knowledge that the very essence of *Shabbat* is building, not in physically laying the stones of the Temple, but in spiritually building the bridges between each member of the Jewish people; building that unified sense of purpose, that shared awareness, not only of where we come from, but where we are in the here and now. Only then, when we once again achieve that understanding and genuine love and respect for one another, can we also, together, begin to truly build for the future.

The Slonimer Rebbe teaches us that this is the essence of each and every *Shabbat*, that each week we have our opportunity to do our small part in building the *Beit Hamikdash*. *Yehi Ratzon*, may we indeed merit both to appreciate the great gift that is *Shabbat Kodesh*, and to actualize the power for building a better tomorrow that is inherent in the sacred unity that *Shabbat* brings to *Am Yisrael*. ■

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The Hag'alah Procedure

Previous articles related the various preconditions and preparations required for kashering with hot water. Prior to performing *hag'alah*, utensils must be clean from all residue, dirt, and substantial rust, and must not be used for twenty-four hours before kashering. The following article discusses the basic guidelines of performing *hag'alah*.

Kashering part of the utensil

In a case where only a part of a utensil came in contact with non-kosher food or *chametz*, is it sufficient to kasher only the affected area?

Early authorities debate this issue and bring different proofs from earlier sources. The *Ran* (*Pesachim* 8:a) rules that if only a part of a utensil was used to cook, such as the bottom third of a pot, then only that area requires *hag'alah*. The *Rashba* (*Torat Habayit Ha'aroch* 38a) and *Rosh* (*Pesachim* 5:34) disagree and require kashering the entire utensil, regardless of how much of the utensil was actually used. The logic of the *Rashba* and *Rosh* is that once flavor is absorbed in the utensil it spreads in different areas, which would make spot

kashering ineffective (*Taz* YD 121:7). The *Shulchan Aruch* (YD 121:6) rules that even if only part of the utensil was used, *hag'alah* must be done on the entire utensil. The *Rema* (*ibid*) disagrees with the *Shulchan Aruch* and rules like the *Ran*. Later authorities discuss the issue at length. The *Aruch Hashulchan* (YD 121:24; see also *Darchei Teshuva* 121:77) rules that ideally the stringent opinion should be followed, i.e. no matter how much of a utensil was used, *hag'alah* must be done on the entire utensil.

Handles

The *Mordechai* (*Avodah Zarah* 577) and *Terumat Hadeshen* (132) write that handles of the utensil also require kashering, and must be immersed in the hot water. The *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 451:12) and *Rema* (*ibid*) concur that handles require kashering. The *Taz* (OC 451:17) and *Mishna Berura* (451:68) explain that this ruling is according to all opinions, even those who are lenient regarding partial or spot kashering, since quite often there are spills of hot food on the handles. Because of this likely possibility, the handles also require kashering.

Kashering in stages

Kashering may be done in stages. For example, if a pan or pot cover is too large to submerge completely, halacha permits



immersing one side in the boiling water followed by immediately immersing the other side (*Shulchan Aruch* OC 451:11; see also *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 452:17). It should be noted that this is **not** true when performing the mitzvah of *tevilat keilim* (immersing new utensils in the *mikvah*). Immersing new utensils in the *mikvah* in stages does not fulfill the mitzvah under any circumstances.

Milk and meat utensils

As previously mentioned, it is important to make sure that all utensils are *eino ben yomo* (not used twenty-four hours prior to kashering). A question that arises regarding kashering, especially for Pesach, is whether one may do *hag'alah* on both milk and meat cutlery at the same time. In a case where all utensils (including the pot itself with boiling water inside) are *eino ben yomo*, there is no problem kashering milk and meat cutlery together or immediately

one after another. (See *Shulchan Aruch, Rema, Mishna Berura* 452:2 and *Aruch Hashulchan* 452:16.)

In summary:

- The entire utensil requires *hag'alah*, even in a case where only a part of the utensil was used.
- The handles of utensils also require *hag'alah*.
- *Hag'alah* may be done in stages, such as when utensils are large and cannot be entirely submerged in one immersion.
- There is no impediment to kashering milk and meat utensils at the same time, as long as they are *eino ben yomo*. ■

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RABBI AARON

Editor, Torah Tidbits

GOLDSCHIEDER

A Reflection of One's Beauty

Rashi reveals a fascinating backstory regarding the following verse in this week's parsha: "And he made the *Kiyor*, washstand, of copper and its base of copper, from the mirrors of the women who had set up the legions..." (*Shemot* 38:8):

"The daughters of Israel had in their possession mirrors into which they looked when they adorned themselves. But Moshe was displeased with them for they were made from the evil inclination. So the Holy One Blessed be He said to him, "Accept them, for these are more beloved to Me than everything else." (*Rashi* 38:8)

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik zt"l offered his unique perspective regarding this memorable midrash: This is what troubled Moshe. He could not make peace with the fact that the mirrors used for pleasure and beauty would be incorporated in the *Kiyor* (washstand). After all, the *Kiyor* sits adjacent to the *Mizbeach* (altar) where a Jew brings his sacrifice of atonement, on which he recites confession with a broken heart.

The Rav asked, "Given that the *Mizbeach* and the *Kiyor* seem to represent two mutually exclusive motifs, the physical proximity of these two items seems strange. How can the beauty of the mirrors harmonize with the sensation of self-criticism with which the road of the altar is bound?" ('Chumash Mesoras HaRav', Sefer Shemos, p.333)

The Almighty said to Moshe "Accept the mirrors." The women were able in Egypt, in the bitter dark of exile, to comfort and strengthen their husbands. Their inner



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resolve and resilience were the key ingredients to withstanding the degradation and humiliation they all underwent daily.

In a similar vein, the same can be said regarding the psychological state of the sinner who entered the Beit Hamikdash with his sin offering in need of forgiveness.

Repentance is predicated on two principles. One, individuals must be willing to accuse themselves and think of themselves as unworthy and inferior. In this vein we declare on Yom Kippur statements such as, “I am a vessel filled with shame and humiliation”, “And you are justified for all that befalls us, for You have acted correctly and we have acted evilly.” (*Yom Kippur Machzor*)

It was in this place that a person faced the harsh facts that they failed and were at fault

Second, there is the potential in every person to cleanse themselves. There is the ability of a person to ascend and elevate him/herself if only he has the will to do so. Even after one has sunk to the abyss of impurity, one can make a transformation and turn things around in a single moment.

The Rav emphasized that the second principle is just as important as the first. This is the majestic symbolism expressed in the juxtaposition of the *Kiyor* and the *Mizbeach*. There cannot be commitment to a new and improved future if man has

no faith in his own creative abilities. If he does not believe in his own talents and ‘beauty’, can he seek to sanctify his actions and work toward change and building a new edifice?

The holiest sacrifice brought on the *Mizbeach* where the *chatat* and *asham*, both relate to sin. When someone brought a *korban* they had to be *mitvadeh* (recite confession) over the sacrifice. It was in this place that a person faced the harsh facts that they failed and were at fault. It is for this reason, said the Rav, that the altar had to be built from stones taken directly from the ground and not smoothed over. One must stand before the *mizbeach* with all of his blemishes and rough edges. “An altar of stones shall you build for Me, Do not hew the stones.” (Shemot 20:22) The *Mizbeach* was a mirror for the person who sinned and sullied himself so that he could see his own reflection (*Shemot* 20:22) (“The Rav Thinking Aloud”, Holzer, Sefer Shemos, pp. 155-158).

Strikingly, the *Kiyor* conveyed a contrasting message to the one who committed a sin: Never lose sight of your beauty and your potential to rectify your faults.

The Rav expounded on a captivating verse from *Shir HaShirim* by saying: “Every confession of sin expresses itself in the outcry, “I am black and I am beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem (*Shir Hashirim* 1:5). When we do not see the “beauty,” we cannot discern the “blackness.” The sinner must view himself from two antithetical viewpoints: the nullity of being, and the greatness of being” (Ibid p.331). ■



DIVREI MENACHEM

BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

Special Projects Consultant, OU Israel Center
mpersoff@ou.org

Moshe, the Mishkan, and the Missing Sons

In Parshat Pikudei, we learn of the Mishkan's completion. One can imagine the sense of relief now that the Shechinah would return to rest among the people after the terrifying events of the Golden Calf. Now, Hashem commands Moshe to set up the Mishkan and sanctify both Aharon and his children to serve Him, and take on the mantle of the priesthood for generations to come.

But why did Moshe's sons not have any significant role in the Mishkan? What happened to them?

Perhaps the Midrash Tanchuma (Pinchas 11) provides an answer. When Moshe sought a leader to follow him, Hashem said: "Your sons sat idly and were not involved with Torah. It is appropriate that Joshua who served you serve Israel."

So, Moshe's sons, Gershom and Eliezer, were not meritorious. While still in Egypt, Moshe had sent them off with Zipporah to Yitro's (then) idol-worshipping home in Midian, where it appears the boys (especially Gershom) picked up the pagan rituals. Only years later did the sons join their father in the desert (Shemot 18:1-6), the Torah's last mention of them.

Dr. Maurice Mizrahi draws our attention to *Divrei Hayamim* where we read that "the sons of Gershom [were] Shevuel the Chief. And the sons of Eliezer [were] Rehavia the Chief. Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehavia were very numerous" [1 Chronicles: 23:14-17]. Moshe's many descendants, however, disappear from history. Notably unlisted is Gershom's "other" son, Yonatan, an idol-worshiper (see *Shoftim*: 18:30) who is linked to Menashe, a notorious idol-worshipping king of Israel (Bava Batra 109b). According to some, Shevuel and Yonatan are the same. King David later appoints Shevuel "ruler over the treasuries" [1 Chronicles: 26:24], perhaps to lure him away from his idol-worshipping instincts [cf. Song of Songs Rabbah 2:18], but Shevuel relapsed in any event.

Notably, in the Aleppo Codex (10th century), the letter 'Nun' in the word *Menashe* is raised, not so much to draw our attention to the idol-worship, but more, in the words of Dr. Mizrahi, as a warning to take the education of our children seriously. While priesthood and monarchy are hereditary, the crown of the Torah must be earned. If Moshe Rabbeinu's children slipped away, how much more so do we have to keep an eye on our children's education, however vital our status in the community, our missions, or our work demands. ■

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Adding a Shabbat Candle after Forgetting

Question: I am a man living alone. Last week, I forgot to light Shabbat candles. Must I light an extra one from now on?

Answer: The Rama (Orach Chayim 263:1) accepts the *minhag* presented by the Maharil (Hilchot Shabbat 1) that if a woman forgets to light Shabbat candles one week, she must add one from that point on. Most see it as a penalty to reduce the likelihood of repeating such mistakes (Mishna Berura 263:7). Therefore, *poskim* assume that if she missed for reasons beyond her control, she does not need to add (Magen Avraham 263:3). The *minhag* has possible negative consequences for those who light exactly two lights, corresponding to *zachor* and *shamor*, as arguably this correspondence is lost when the number is changed (Darchei Moshe, OC 263:1). Nevertheless, it was widely accepted. The Eliya Rabba (263:7) understands the Maharil differently – there is no need for an extra candle, but it suffices to improve the lighting by adding

more oil or having longer candles.

In your case, there are two grounds for leniency. One is that some prominent *poskim* (including Yalkut Yosef, OC 263:26) reason that in our days, when without the ritual candles there is plenty of light for a pleasant Shabbat, there is no need to penalize people for not lighting the candles. There are a few reasons not to agree with this contention. For one, despite the fact that we always have electric lights, we still view the Shabbat candles as a relevant *mitzva*, which we take seriously and make a *beracha* on. As such, if one did not do it, why shouldn't the regular penalty apply? The matter is clearer according to the Pri Megadim (Eshel Avraham 263:3) who says that even if a woman lit one less light than she normally does, she still is penalized. The Melamed L'hoil (I:46) says that there is a need for some penalty, but one can be partially lenient by following the above Eliya Rabba.

The Be'ur Halacha (to 263:1), after citing the Pri Megadim (ibid.) that omitting any of the lights is grounds for the penalty, not only disagrees but also makes a general comment about the penalty: "All of this is only a *minhag*, and let us not add on to it." We see this as a logical direction to take regarding this unusual *minhag*. (Consider that there seem to be many bigger shortcomings in our religious

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and OU Israel's Torah Tidbits.



lives for which there are no penalties. Have you ever heard, for example, that whoever forgot to *daven Mincha* should add a *mizmor* of Tehillim to it from then on?!). Therefore, some have a rule that when there is doubt whether something is included in this *minhag*, we do not implement it, as Piskei Teshuvot 263:(37) cites in the name of Rav Vosner. On the other hand, not every idea for leniency counts as a doubt, as the same Rav Vosner (Shevet Halevi V:33), Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata (43:5), and others did not think having electric lights is strong enough to preclude the penalty. Chut Shani (IV:83) presents an interesting compromise – if one lit the electric lights with intention for it to supplement the Shabbat candles, it precludes the penalty (it is not easy to know where to draw the line on what counts for that intention).

Your case includes another serious reason for leniency. Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata (43:(35)) raises and leaves as an unsolved question, whether the penalty applies to men, considering the special connection between women and the *mitzva*. Dirshu (263:(13)) also cites important

contemporary *poskim* who say that men are not penalized despite the identical obligation on a fundamental level. This makes sense according to *Chazal's* shocking statement that women could meet tragedy if they are not careful about Shabbat candle lighting (Shabbat 31b). I would not venture to comment on why this *mitzva*, as dear as it is, mysteriously has such a surprisingly great weight for women, but it can explain the *minhag* of the penalty as well as the logic of not extending it to men.

In the final analysis, we do not think that is necessary for you to add a candle in the future. If you want to do something to enhance the *mitzva*, who are we to object? ■

Eretz Hemdah has begun a participatory Zoom class - "Behind the Scenes with the Vebbe Rebbe" - an analytical look at the sources, methodology, and considerations behind our rulings, with Rav Daniel Mann. Contact info@eretzhemdah.org to join.

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RABBI GIDEON

**Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha**

WEITZMAN

Corona's End

Last time we discussed the importance of disseminating accurate information related to the Corona vaccine. At PUAH we held extensive conversations with doctors and experts worldwide. The resounding conclusion was that all experts concurred that the vaccination is safe for pregnant women, nursing women and for people undergoing fertility treatment or trying to get pregnant. While there have been rumors regarding a detrimental effect on fertility there is no scientific evidence to suggest that this is true.

Many are concerned that the vaccination is new and has not been tried for a long enough time to prove that it works and causes no harm. The doctors that we spoke to explained that, while the vaccination is new, the science is far from new and has been investigated for decades. Medicine and science must be based on knowledge gained from experience and observation.

All of the scientific knowledge and experimentation have shown that the science is safe and, therefore, doctors and medical organizations worldwide have been quick to recommend the use of the vaccination.

While the trials did not include pregnant or nursing women, or children, the medical experts that we consulted with were adamant that there was no cause for concern. Initially there were reservations about using the vaccination at the beginning of pregnancy. Evidence has shown that these concerns were unfounded and the vaccination is safe.

We have received countless calls from people asking about using the vaccination. Some are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, some are nursing, some ask about their teenaged children out of a fear for their safety and future fertility. It is understandable that people are worried, especially in light of many theories, false reports and conspiracies surrounding the use of vaccinations in general and these specific vaccinations.

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It is rare in the medical field to find an area that is so immediately accepted and becomes normative practice. Scientists and medical professionals can be as skeptical as anyone, sometimes even more. Yet across the board the use of the vaccinations has been promoted and heralded as a huge advance in public medicine.

We must continue the ongoing discussions with medical professionals, closely follow the studies, the literature and the reports of side effects and negative reactions. But the vaccinations herald an end to this terrible pandemic and we pray to God to remove all illness from His people and the entire world. ■

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Maror on Pesach

Q: Is it possible to perform the mitzvah of eating maror on lettuce grown hydroponically?

A: The prevailing opinion is that it is possible to perform the mitzvah of eating maror lechatchila regardless of its method of cultivation, just as one can observe the mitzvah of eating matza on wheat grown in an unperforated pot. Even according to the poskim who maintain that the beracha for hydroponically grown lettuce is shehakol, one can avoid making the beracha by relying on the hamotzi recited before eating the matza (see Torah VeHa'aretz VI p.364, Mikra'ei Kodesh Harari-Pesach p.457 quoting Rav Shaul Yisraeli and Rav Mordechai Eliahu).

Q: When taking terumot and ma'aserot when there is a doubt from lettuce meant for maror, do I need to

give ma'aser rishon to a Levi?

A: Some poskim maintain that for rabbinically ordained mitzvot like maror today, the limitation of a "mitzva haba'ah be'veira" (mitzvah done in a forbidden way) does not apply. For this reason, if ma'aser rishon is not given to a Levi, even though this constitute stealing from a Levi, it still does not pose a problem when eating the maror. However, there are those who believe that maror is similar to matza, in that it must be the full property of the person performing the mitzva. The Mishna Berura rules in this vein (S473:33). According to this approach, if a person is supposed to give part of his lettuce to a Levi but fails to do so, some of the maror that he will eat will not be his, so he will not be able to perform the mitzvah of eating maror. For this reason, ma'aser rishon should be given to a Levi from the lettuce that will be used for maror, and this is optimal also when terumot and ma'aserot are taken due to doubt (this is the ruling of Rabbi Ya'akov Ariel, Emunat Itecha 33, Nissan 5755; Halichot Shelomo, Pesach 7:22). ■

These Q&A were written by Rabbi Ehud Ahituv from Torah VeHa'aretz Institute.

The learning on כ"ד אדר (Thursday, March 11) is in memory of my beloved father, Avraham David

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Nisan- Learning About Birkat Ha-Ilanot

Question: Whoever sees especially beautiful creations recites the blessing *shekacha lo ba'olamo*; “Who has such things in His world.”

Whoever goes out to fields or gardens in the days of Nisan and sees trees blossoming and budding recites *birkat ha'ilanot*, the blessing for the trees: “Blessed ... who has withheld nothing from His world, and has created in it beautiful creatures and trees for human beings to enjoy.” What is the difference between both blessings?

Answer: Birkat ha'ilanot vs. Shekacha lo ba'olamo: on the similarities and differences between the blessing for the trees and the blessing for seeing beautiful creatures.

In tractate *Berachot* (43b), it states: “Rabbi Yehuda said: One who goes out during Nisan and sees trees that are blossoming recites: ‘Blessed ... who has withheld nothing from His world, and has created in

it beautiful creatures and trees for human beings to enjoy.’”

This blessing is known as *birkat ha'ilanot*, the blessing for the trees. Another blessing is cited in a different context (*Berachot* 58b): “*shekacha lo ba'olamo*,” “Who has such things in His world,” and was instituted for those “who sees beautiful creatures or beautiful trees.” In light of the similarity between the two, Rambam cites them as one *halacha* (*Hilchot Berachot* 10:13): “Whoever sees especially beautiful creatures and beautiful trees makes the blessing ‘that it is such in His world’ (*shekacha lo ba'olamo*). One who goes out to fields or gardens in the days of Nisan and sees trees blossoming and buds coming forth says the blessing: ‘Blessed are You, G-d, Our L-rd, master of the Universe, who has withheld nothing from His world, and has created in it beautiful creatures and trees for human beings to enjoy.’”

However, despite the similarity, it is possible to see several significant differences between the two blessings:

The blessing *shekacha lo ba'olamo* applies the entire year, as opposed to *shelo chisar ba'olamo kelum* (*birkat ha'ilanot*), which applies only during Nisan. Even according to those who allow for an extension for the time one can say this blessing, it is still limited to the blossoming period for most trees (Adar to Iyar).

The blessing *shekacha lo ba'olamo* includes the blessing for beautiful creatures, non-fruit bearing trees as well. In contrast, *birkat ha'ilanot* was instituted when one sees the blossoms of fruit trees (according to most *poskim*).

The blessing *shekacha lo ba'olamo* applies any place and time one sees beautiful trees. In contrast, it is preferable to say *shelo chisar ba'olamo* when one goes out to “the fields or the gardens,” as Rambam writes. That is, when one goes out to see nature in its full glory: at the height of its blossoming.

Despite the fact that the blessing *shekacha lo ba'olamo* is codified as a *halacha* (Shulchan Aruch OC 225:10), the *poskim* write that we do not make this blessing *beshem umalchut* (mentioning G-d's name and kingship). This is the ruling of the Mishna Berura (ad loc., 32): “Today it is not customary to say this blessing at all,” but adds, “it is proper to say this blessing without mentioning G-d's name and kingship.” In contrast, all *poskim* hold that *birkat ha'ilanot* should be recited when seeing blossoming trees as a full blessing, as is the simple understanding of the Shulchan Aruch (§226). Moreover, there are those who customarily recite *birkat ha'ilanot* in large groups; those with alacrity say this blessing immediately on Rosh Chodesh Nisan following *shacharit*.

The former chief rabbi Ben Zion Meir Chai Uziel (*Mishpatei Uziel* I OC:6) explains the conceptual difference between the two blessings, as follows:

[Since the blessing *shekacha lo ba'olamo* is] a blessing of thanksgiving ... for the existence of the beautiful trees that the

Birkat Ha-Ilanot

When one sees blossoming fruit trees for the first time during the month of Nisan, one should say this blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
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בְּנֵי אָדָם.

This blessing is said just once a year—the first time that one sees it.



eye and spirit derive enjoyment from their beauty and splendor ... every time one derives enjoyment from beholding them [he] thanks their Creator who fashioned His world with wondrous wisdom.

It is for this reason that the laws governing the blessing *shekacha lo ba'olamo* are similar to most other *birkot ha're'iya* (made when one witnesses certain phenomena): most of these blessings can be made once every thirty days, if one has not seen other beautiful creatures or trees during this period.

In contrast, when saying *birkat ha'ilanot*, we are thanking G-d for something else:

This is our thanks for the very blossoming and rejuvenation: that these bare trees, which seemed to be lifeless, once again blossom and are fertile. As it states: "Then shall all the trees of the field know that it is I the L-rd who has abased the lofty tree and exalted the lowly tree" (*Yechezkel* 17:24).

For this reason, this blessing was instituted to be recited once a year, as Rabbi Uziel goes on to explain that it is only during the time all fruit trees blossom, in early Spring, that we express thanks:

... for the very force of blossoming and growth that G-d instilled in the nature of creation, which is renewed in His goodness every day, and in every season, in

an invigorated, spectacular, and efficient manner, so it can give pleasure to mankind.

To build on Rabbi Uziel's beautiful explanation, we can add that this blessing is unique particularly to Nisan, the month of redemption. The rejuvenation of the trees hints also to the redemption of the Jewish People, likened to trees, as stated by *Yeshayahu* (65:22): "For the days of My people shall be as long as the days of a tree." As such, in this blessing where we thank G-d for the blossoming of the trees that seemed to be utterly lifeless, we also essentially hint to ourselves as a nation. We essentially beseech G-d that during this month, which has the potential for redemption (and "in Nisan [the Jewish People] will ultimately be redeemed," *Rosh Hashana* 11a), that He fulfill *Yechezkel's* prophecy of the dried bones. This vision describes a state in which it seems that the Jewish People are nothing but lifeless, dry bones. Yet, these bones blossom into a physical and spiritual revival for the nation, as it states (*Yechezkel* 37:11-14): "They say, 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone' ... I am going to ... lift you out of your graves, O My people, and bring you to the land of Israel. ... I will put My breath into you and you shall live again, and I will set you upon your own soil."

These Q&A were written by Rabbi Ehud Ahituv from Torah VeHa'aretz Institute.

WEEKLY INSPIRATION

"A Jew studying Torah is like the amnesia victim who tries to reconstruct from fragments the beautiful world he once experienced. In other words, by learning Torah man returns to his own self."

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt"l, "Redemption Prayer, Talmud Torah" p. 69



The Wood for the Mishkan

A person needs to have hope. Cedar wood was used to build the *Mishkan*, and our sages tell us that Jacob brought these trees when he moved from the Land of Israel to Egypt. He told his sons, “My children, in the future you will be redeemed from this land and God will command you to build the *Mishkan*. Plant trees now so that when God will instruct you to build it, the trees will be ready.” Why could they not simply buy the wood from the local population where the trees were already growing? Why did Jacob need the inconvenience of bringing them from the Land of Israel?

We are meant to learn something from this. Jacob wanted to raise the spirits of the Jewish slaves in Egypt and give them a symbol of hope and optimism. Whenever they would see the cedar trees during the long, dark years of slavery, they would be reminded of Jacob, of their destiny, and of the promise that they would be redeemed. Lofty ideas about the future are fine, but a person needs to see something tangible with his own eyes as well.

A modern-day illustration of this point can be seen from Natan Sharansky. He was the most famous Prisoner of Zion and was let out of the Soviet Union and allowed to move to Israel in 1986. Sharansky was the symbol of the struggle for freedom who spent many years incarcerated in jail, often in solitary confinement, under the most trying conditions. He would often go on hunger strikes as part of his protest for freedom – he fasted for a total of four hundred days throughout his incarceration. When asked what gave him strength, Sharansky replied, “My small book of Psalms. It was not me who carried it, the Psalms carried me.” ■

Sivan Rahav-Meir is a media personality and lecturer. Married to Yedidya, the mother of five. Lives in Jerusalem, and formerly served as the World Mizrahi Shlichah to North America. Sivan lectures in Israel and overseas about the media, Judaism, Zionism and new media. She was voted by Globes newspaper as most popular female media personality in Israel and by the Jerusalem Post as one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world.

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Today Is no Different”**

EMTs respond quickly to save seriously injured motorcyclist after major crash

Early one Friday afternoon in the middle of February, United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Netanel Moyal was preparing for Shabbat in his hometown of Ashdod, when he was suddenly alerted to a motor vehicle accident involving a truck and a motorcycle on B'nai Brith Street in Ashdod. Netanel immediately dropped what he was doing and told his wife that he was rushing out to help someone. He then jumped on his ambucycle and whizzed to the location of the accident. Another United Hatzalah volunteer, Benny Manala, also rushed over and met Moyal at the scene.



Debris from the destroyed motorbike was scattered across the roadway in the aftermath of the intense collision. The 25-year-old biker sustained a multi-system trauma, and suffered serious injuries to his head and limbs. He was unconscious and his condition was deteriorating rapidly; there was no time to lose.

Netanel and Benny worked feverishly to stabilize the injured man, providing critical medical care that included applying trauma bandages, securing a c-collar neck brace and full-body immobilization. In the quickest possible time, the young man had received the on-site treatment necessary and was whisked off to Assuta Hospital in Ashdod for further urgent care.

“The rapid treatment this young man received was absolutely critical for him to survive this severe accident,” Moyal said. “He was in serious condition and was unconscious the entire time. We had to work quickly to save him, and we worked together with the ambulance teams that arrived in order to stabilize and treat him. That is what we are here for, no matter what time of day or night, we do our best to help those in need of our assistance, and today was no different.”



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TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

TEFILLA

BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative

אמת ויציב

Did you ever meet a human thesaurus? You know, one of those people who are constantly spitting out a whole list of synonyms to describe something? As we begin the 3rd bracha of Birchat Kriyat Shema (the first two came before Shema and this one comes after), it almost feels like we have now become human thesauruses!

אמת ויציב ונכון וקיים וישר ונאמן ואהוב וחסיד ונחמד ונעים ונורא ונדיר ומתקן ומקבל וטוב ויפה הדבר הזה *Genuine, established, enduring, upright, loved, faithful, cherished, desirable, pleasant, awesome, mighty, correct, acceptable, good, and beautiful is this statement for us forever.*

What exactly are we referring to here and why are we using so many repetitive words to describe it?

We can answer this question on two levels -

On the one hand, the word אמת follows immediately after the last words of the Shema אני ה' אלוקיכם (*I am Hashem your G-d*). In fact, one is obligated to make sure to not have any הפסק (break) between those words and the word אמת, and the Chazan must recite these three words together at the conclusion of the Shema. אני ה' אלוקיכם is the first thing that we are attesting to, the

fact that Hashem is our G-d. This is such a basic truth that we need to emphasize and re-emphasize just how true this fact is.

Beyond that, Tosfot (Berachot 12a) points out that these adjectives are also being used to describe the entire three paragraphs and all of their basic themes.

We use 15 words to describe our strong belief in all of the tenets discussed in the Shema, in order to show just how firmly we believe in them. The **Ateret Zekeinim** divides up these 15 words and says that each group of five refers to a different one of the words of אמת ה' אלוקיכם. **Rav Eliyahu Munk** in his book *Olam HaTefillot* expands on this as follows.

The first five words of affirmation refer to the word ה', ie. - the basic concept of belief in Hashem. This in essence is our acceptance of the message of the first paragraph of Shema in which we accept עול מלכות שמים.

The second five words of affirmation refer to the word אלוקיכם. This name of Hashem refers to the judgement aspect of הקב"ה, in essence pointing to the second paragraph of Shema, in which we discuss שכר ועונש, reward and punishment for doing Mitzvot and Aveirot.

Finally, the last five words of affirmation refer to the word אמת, truth. This truth is the ability to see Hashem's hand in history

and in our own lives presently. This is illustrated in the third paragraph of the Shema when we discuss Yetziat Mitzrayim.

Each of these three concepts are so important that we need to repeatedly express our deep belief in these ideas.

Gemara Brachot 12a says one is obligated to say both *אמת ויציב* after the Shema of Shacharit and *אמת ואמונה* after the Shema of Maariv. These two tefillot are very similar so why do we need to repeat them twice? The Gemara answers and quotes a pasuk from Tehillim “להגיד בבוקר חסדך ואמונתך” *“בבליחות”*, *in order to tell about Your kindness in the morning and your faith at night*. Our affirmation to all of the great principles of the Shema in the morning is in response to what we have actually see happen in the past. We recognize Hashem as King based on all we have seen and experienced in the past. At night, our beliefs are based on faith and *Emunah* that Hashem will continue to rule and to be there for us in the future.

The concepts of day and night are of course symbolic as well – there are times in history and in our personal lives where we can see Hashem’s hand clear as day and it is easy to recognize and believe in Him; There are other times where all is dark and it is hard to see Hashem in the picture at all. It is at these times that we need to have faith and continue to believe in Hashem even when we can’t see Him.

May we be given the strength and the clarity to be able to continue to make our Shema affirmations with conviction and sincerity on a daily basis, no matter which situation we find ourselves in. ■

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**Rabbi Dr. Dvir
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Not Quite Open

for Business

The buildup to the grand finale – that's the best way to sum up much of the content of Parshat Pikudei. The Torah reviews in detail the final phase of construction and assemblage, ending with the *Mishkan* being open for business, so to speak. And at that moment where it should open, the Torah tells us the doors would remain shut.

First the completion (Shemot 40:33): *“He set up the enclosure around the mishkan and the altar, and put up the screen at the*

enclosure's entrance, and thus Moshe completed the work.”

The Torah then reports (ibid 34-35):

“The cloud (anan) covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory (kavod) of Hashem filled the mishkan. Moshe was unable to enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of Hashem filled the mishkan.”

It seems there were two distinct “manifestations” of the presence of Hashem. The cloud covered over the *Mishkan* entirely, while the *kavod Hashem*, contained within the cloud, filled the *Mishkan*. What was this *kavod Hashem*?

The Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim 1:64)

explains that the term “*kavod Hashem*” when applied to the *Mishkan* referred to a light created by Hashem to delineate the importance of the place. We see this at Har Sinai. The *kavod Hashem* rested on Har Sinai, with the cloud enveloping it for six days. On the seventh day, Hashem called out to Moshe to enter the cloud. Taking the Rambam’s interpretation, this would mean the cloud covered the mountain and the light emanated from within.

The Talmud (Yoma 4b) notes an apparent contradiction regarding access to the cloud. On the one hand, we see that Moshe was unable to enter the *Mishkan* due to the presence of the cloud. Yet at Har Sinai, Moshe is able to walk right in. The simple answer offered is that Hashem’s intervention allowed Moshe to enter. Why was Moshe restricted?

A cloud and a light are ideal representations of Hashem. They both are observable in the physical world yet lack any tangibility – nobody can “touch” light or “feel” a cloud. Hashem is not physical, so there is no means of empirically representing Him. Yet there are times when God

chooses to reveal Himself to the nation, and we need a means of identifying God’s presence. We have what is observable and intangible.

Yet there is a difference. One can see a cloud – yet one cannot see through it. On the other hand, light serves to illuminate, aiding our vision. We are left with two representations that function dissimilarly.

How can we explain the dichotomy? It is possible the at-odds characteristics teach us a crucial formula in how to approach

learning about God. A freshman in college, taking his first class, would naturally approach the subject matter without any intellectual restrictions. His goal would be mastering the area, and he would not have any sense of limitation in his pursuit. Studying the wisdom of God requires a much different approach. A fundamental

premise due to being a human, there is no potential for mastery. This does not mean we cannot appreciate and gain insight into Hashem’s wisdom. When we study the universe around us, from vast galaxies to the subatomic world, the very analysis



is a study of that which God created. Ultimately, there is no finality to this pursuit.

On the other hand, there is the definitive knowledge we have of His existence, the reality that is the cornerstone of our faith. While we may not be able to perceive Him, we know Him to be true.

This could very well be the tie in between the cloud and the light. When these manifestations take place, they serve as vehicles to engage in the study of God. The cloud obscured the *Mishkan* from clear view – indicating that there were inherent limitations preventing the complete understanding of God and His relationship with Bnei Yisrael. On the other hand, there was the light inside, signaling the reality of God’s existence. We can never see the light

directly – just like we can never have any positive knowledge of Hashem.

This would also help clarify the answer offered in the Talmud. While Moshe Rabbeinu was the greatest human to walk the earth, he was bound by the same limitations as any person. To allow Moshe to “walk in” to the cloud would imply that man has the capability to penetrate the depths of God’s wisdom. God brings Moshe into the cloud – and in doing so relays the message that it was only with God’s assistance that a human was capable of entering into this realm of knowledge.

Yes, the **physical** structure of *mishkan* indeed was completed. Yet without the proper approach, demonstrated through the idea of the cloud and the light, it was conceptually inaccessible. ■



The advertisement is split into two main sections. The left section has a blue background with white and light blue text. At the top left is a small logo with colorful vertical bars. In the center is a circular logo for the 40th anniversary, with '40' in large white numbers, 'Years' written vertically on the left, and 'Over' above the '0'. Below the '0' is the Hebrew text '40 שנה לOU'. Below this is the word 'NEW' in large, bold, white serif font, followed by 'PROCEDURE!' in a smaller, white, all-caps sans-serif font. Underneath is the text 'Click here to login/register for your OU Israel classes' in light blue. At the bottom of this section is the word 'VISIT:' in white, followed by the URL 'https://www.ouisrael.org/classes/' in white. The right section is a photograph of the entrance to the OU Israel Center building, showing a stone facade, a metal awning over the entrance, and a large Israeli flag on the wall. The photo is framed with a blue border that matches the left section.

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A Word To The Wise

“See, G-d has proclaimed Bezalel by name...he filled him with G-dly spirit, with wisdom, insight, and understanding.” (Shmot 35:30-31)

Bezalel, the master architect of the Mishkan, was endowed with exceptional wisdom and knowledge necessary to make a dwelling place for G-d's Shechinah. Midrash Tanchuma comments that Bezalel already had possessed great wisdom before he was appointed to this monumental position. This is because G-d grants wisdom only to one who already has wisdom, as the verse in Daniel 2 states, “He gives wisdom to the wise.”

The Midrash relates that a Roman matron once asked Rav Yosi about the logic of this verse in Daniel. Why does G-d give wisdom

to the wise? Wouldn't it make more sense to give it to fools who need the wisdom, she asked. Rav Yosi answered her, like a Jew always does, with another question: If a rich man and a pauper would approach you for a loan, to whom would you lend money?

“To the rich man, of course” the matron replied, “because I am more assured of getting back my money from him. The pauper may default on the loan and have nothing with which to repay me.”

G-d will grant him this unique gift

This is the answer to your question, Rav Yosi replied to the matron. G-d gives wisdom to the wise because they know how to use the wisdom to repay G-d. The fools will take the wisdom and waste it on nonsense, thereby default on the wisdom they were given.

Where does the original wisdom of the wise come from? Shlomo Hamelech answered this when he said, “The beginning of wisdom is to acquire wisdom.” (Mishlai 4:7) A person must have a desire to acquire wisdom and demonstrate that it is the most precious commodity in life for him. Then G-d will grant him this unique gift. Bezalel was such a person. He was someone whose heart inspired him to approach the work

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and to do it. (Shmot 36:2)

A person may have an extremely high IQ, but that does not make him wise. He must desire to use this special intelligence for the right purpose. There was a landmark study done a number of years ago which showed that some of the most evil people in recent history had exceptionally high IQ's. Yet this did not prevent them from committing some of the worst crimes.

What is the message for us today in our personal lives? Rav Pam stated that any Torah teacher can testify that success in Torah learning is not necessarily dependent on intellectual ability. What is needed is a strong desire to succeed, to review and to patiently grow. What's more, one has to treasure every bit of Torah knowledge that one acquires. That is the key to success! ■



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Albert Katz Modiin Chapter Director

No I in Team

Many Parshiyot in the Torah give a lot of technical information about the Mishkan. Do we really need so much information?

Perhaps the Torah spends so much time giving details because they give deep insight about life in general.

The main colors that constantly appear are techelet, purple, red, and white. These 4 colors are constantly woven together.

When most people paint the walls in their house, they paint it one or two colors. An interior designer would definitely struggle designing a house with so many different color schemes! Rabbi Lowenstein says the colors represent the rainbow. He believes the Mishkan is meant to look like the rainbow Hashem showed Noach.

When Hashem recreates the world with Noach, man can eat meat and dominate the world in a way we couldn't before the flood. The rainbow represents man's ability to dominate the world and Hashem's promise to let that be. The rainbow's many colors are man's ability to see many different colors of the world and not the one truth.

Where exactly do we find these colors in the Mishkan? They are on the walls and the entrance ways. Man's dominion stops on the walls. These colors aren't on the Aron or Kodesh Kedashim. They're only on the outer parts. The physical world is man's to reign, but the Beit Hamikdash is Hashem's space. We are not the center, rather Hashem is.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt'l said the way to understand a culture is by asking them what they worship. If people in the future looked at our generation, they would see that we worship the self. Today's culture is about selfies, iPhones, self-esteem, and individual rights.

May we live in a world where we are not so absorbed with the self but absorbed with the klal and Hashem's goodness.



Yael Emmer 11th Grade, Chashmonaim

Building a Community

In this week's Parshiot, Vayakhel-Pikudei, Moshe gathers Bnei Yisrael together after they sinned in order to teach them about Shabbat and how to build the Mishkan. Bnei Yisrael seem to view this as an opportunity for repentance for the sin of the golden calf, and now they will have the opportunity to build the Mishkan.

These Parshiot teach us not only about building a Mishkan, but also how to build a community. Bnei Yisrael gathered to listen to these instructions from Moshe, their leader, and used his detailed instructions to reconnect to Hashem. Each person was to donate jewels, gold, and anything else they could to the Mishkan. Once all the donations were collected, only then was the Mishkan complete. Through these actions, Bnei Yisrael were redeemed from sinning and given the opportunity to serve Hashem as a nation.

The first thing we can learn in terms of building a community is the importance of gathering together as a collective and being a part of something. The ability to come together and share a common goal can lead to a beautiful feeling of unity. Everyone from Bnei Yisrael was thrilled about giving their jewelry towards the building of the Mishkan, to the point where it was overflowing! From this we can see how a common goal can cause beautiful creations.

Moreover, we can learn that even if we make mistakes, there are actions we can take in order to repent for those wrongdoings. This past year has been difficult for everyone due to the pandemic, yet we can see that as a result of the struggles, our communities have come

together to help those in need. Whether it was helping people that were sick or quarantined or just checking in on each other.

We see the importance of being part of a community, not to mention the fact that the entire world was working together to develop a vaccine! The struggles in building the Mishkan actually brought Bnei Yisrael to work together and become a close-knit community. Hopefully we will continue to see how even the struggles of Corona can bring the world closer together! ■

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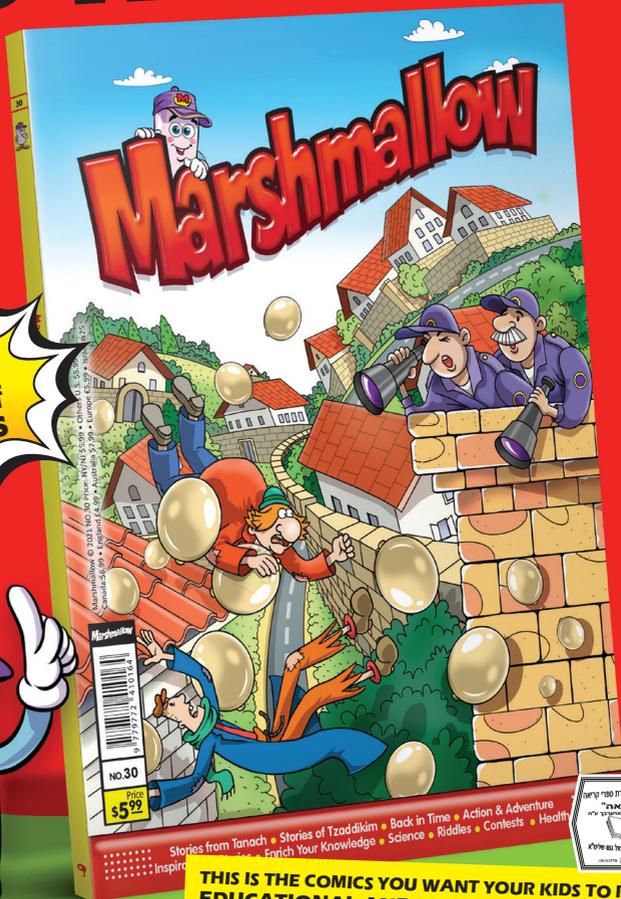
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