

OHR NET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

WHITER THAN WHITE

“These are the accounts...”

Try and open a bank account today in a foreign country and you’ll find yourself wading through a set of forms guarding against an extremely dangerous and unattractive denizen of deep-water banking – The Money Launderer.

The Money Launderer is a thriving, but hardly new species. For example, the Vatican faces a legal landmine that has been quietly wending its way through the American federal court system since 1999.

In November of that year, Ukrainian Holocaust survivors, later joined by Serb and Jewish plaintiffs, filed a class action lawsuit against the Vatican Bank, a Croatian right-wing political organization and the Franciscan Order, alleging complicity in the laundering of Nazi World War II loot including the proceeds of genocide from several Croatian-run concentration camps where upwards of 500,000 Serbs, Jews and others were killed between 1941 and 1945.

The Vatican Bank has claimed sovereign immunity to the lawsuit declaring that it is an arm of the Holy See.

According to a 1998 report issued by the US State Department, the Nazi Croatian treasury was illicitly transferred to the Vatican Bank and other banks after the end of World War II.

The Vatican has repeatedly denied any Franciscan participation in war crimes or the disappearance of the Croatian

Treasury, yet it has refused to open its wartime records to substantiate its denial.

In this week’s Torah portion, Moshe presents a complete accounting of all the donations to the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). Not only did Moshe give an accounting, but he gave his calculations to Aharon’s son, Itamar so that Itamar could check his math.

G-d called Moshe “trustworthy” (Bamidbar 12:7). Why then did Moshe need to make a public accounting in front of all the people?

Moshe had overheard remarks such as “Ben Amram’s (Moshe’s) neck is getting pretty fat lately.” “No wonder. He’s in charge of all that money for the Mishkan...” Certainly, these remarks were only made by lowlifes. The Jewish People as a whole trusted Moshe but they were puzzled about Moshe’s sudden wealth. They didn’t know that G-d had let Moshe keep the fragments of Safire left over from the hewing of the second Tablets. These splinters of Safire made Moshe fabulously wealthy.

Moshe was scrupulous to a tee with the donations he received for the Mishkan, but nevertheless he gave an accounting because he didn’t want to be suspected falsely of doing a little laundering on the side.

From Moshe our Teacher we can learn that it’s not enough for us to do the right thing, we must also be seen to do the right thing.

• Based on the Midrash

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Book of Shemot concludes with this Parsha. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the Mishkan, Moshe gives a complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels, which had been fashioned. *Bnei Yisrael* bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to G-d’s specifications. Moshe blesses the people. Hashem speaks to Moshe and tells him that the

Mishkan should be set up on the first day of the first month, i.e., Nissan. He also tells Moshe the order of assembly for the Mishkan and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the Mishkan is finally complete with every vessel in its place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that G-d’s glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the Mishkan, *Bnei Yisrael* would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE

There are times in the life of an individual and of a nation when a goal seems to be beyond reach, when the thought of not being able to achieve the impossible discourages even making an effort in that direction.

At such a moment it is worthwhile reflecting on the lesson taught in this week's Torah portion. Previous chapters reported the great outpouring of gifts from the Jewish people which provided the materials for the construction of the Mishkan Sanctuary and all the sacred vessels and priestly garments connected with it. Now that the craftsmen had completed their work, all that was necessary was for someone to put up the boards which would serve as the walls. The heaviness of these boards, however, made it impossible for any human to lift them into place. This job was then left for

Moshe, a privilege accorded to him by Heaven as compensation for not being involved in any phase of the construction.

"But how can any human achieve this?" asked Moshe. To which G-d replied: "You do what you can and give the appearance of putting up the Mishkan and it will stand up by itself."

This is a valuable lesson for all those charged with the responsibility of establishing and maintaining *yeshivot*, synagogues and other religious institutions which are the perpetuation of the Mishkan in our day. As impossible as the goal may sometimes seem because of financial difficulties, remember that all you have to do is go through the motions and G-d will see to it that the Sanctuary rises and stands forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE LEGENDS Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

"I HAVE NO OTHER FATHER"

Among the many legends of how Jews braved all odds in order to reach Eretz Yisrael is one with a most important lesson.

Rabbi Yeshaya Bardaky was the son-in-law of Rabbi Yisrael of Shklov, an outstanding disciple of the Gaon of Vilna. He eventually became the leader of the Parushim community in Yerushalayim made up of the Gaon's followers.

The ship on which he traveled to the Holy Land from Europe together with his two young children was wrecked by a storm and sank. No lifeboat was available so he told his children to climb on his back and he would make a desperate swim to safety. After a couple of hours of such strenuous swimming, he felt that he could no longer continue carrying the weight of both children and

asked one of them to let go.

When he tried to explain to this child why she had to let go, they both wept at what this implied. But, then the little girl cried out "But Abba, I have no other father!"

Upon hearing these words Reb Yeshaya told her to hold on again and made a superhuman effort to reach shore where he collapsed in a faint.

Upon waking up he turned to his daughter and asked her to forever remember what she had said to him when she was on the brink of drowning. "Remember that whenever you are in trouble," he advised her, "just turn to G-d and say to Him what you said to me – that you have no other father except for me – and you will discover that you do have another Father Who can and will come to your rescue."



לע"נ

מרת אסתר רבקה בת ר' בן ציון הלוי ע"ה

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why is the word Mishkan stated twice in verse 38:21?
2. Why is the Mishkan called the “Mishkan of Testimony”?
3. Who was appointed to carry the vessels of the Mishkan in the *midbar*?
4. Who was the officer in charge of the *levi'im*?
5. What is the meaning of the name Betzalel?
6. How many people contributed a half-shekel to the Mishkan? Who contributed?
7. Which material used in the *bigdei kehuna* was not used in the coverings of the sacred vessels?
8. How were the gold threads made?
9. What was inscribed on the stones on the shoulders of the *ephod*?
10. What was on the hem of the *me'il*?
11. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear between the *mitznefet* and the *tzitzit*?
12. What role did Moshe play in the construction of the Mishkan?
13. Which date was the first time that the Mishkan was erected and not dismantled?
14. What was the “tent” which Moshe spread over the Mishkan (40:19)?
15. What “testimony” did Moshe place in the *aron*?
16. What function did the *parochet* serve?
17. Where was the *shulchan* placed in the Mishkan?
18. Where was the *menorah* placed in the Mishkan?
19. Who offered the communal sacrifices during the eight days of the dedication of the Mishkan?
20. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as *kohanim*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 38:21 - To allude to the *Beit Hamikdash* that would twice be taken as a “*mashkon*” (pledge) for the sins of the Jewish People until the nation repents.
2. 38:21 - It was testimony for the Jewish People that G-d forgave them for the golden calf and allowed His *Shechina* to dwell among them.
3. 38:21 - The *levi'im*.
4. 38:21 - Itamar ben Aharon.
5. 38:22 - “In the shadow of G-d.”
6. 38:26 - 603,550. Every man age twenty and over (except the *levi'im*).
7. 39:1 - Linen (See *Rashi 31:10*).
8. 39:3 - The gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (See *Rashi 28:6*).
9. 39:6, 39:7 - The names of the tribes.
10. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and golden bells.
11. 39:31 - *Tefillin*.
12. 39:33 - He stood it up.
13. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year in the desert. For seven days before this, during the consecration of Aharon and his sons, Moshe erected and dismantled the Mishkan. (*Rashi 39:29*)
14. 40:19 - The curtain of goatskin.
15. 40:20 - The *Luchot Habrit*.
16. 40:21 - It served as a partition for the *aron*.
17. 40:22 - On the northern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed*, outside the *parochet*.
18. 40:24 - On the southern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed* opposite the *shulchan*.
19. 40:29 - Moshe.
20. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the consecration of the Mishkan.

OHR BITS

Witty Advice for Circling Life

“People spend more time trying to decide what to order for lunch than about what they want to do with their lives.”

• RABBI DOVID ORLOFSKY

A digest of the topics covered in the seven weekly pages of the Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle along with an insight from them.

- Recital of evening Shma after midnight
- Eating of Pesach sacrifice and Exodus from Egypt
- Recital of Shma in the morning
- Respect for kings
- Number of Psalms
- Rabbi Meir and the ruffians
- King Chizkiyahu and the Prophet Yeshayahu
- Hospitality for a prophet
- Posture for Shma recital
- Blessings before and after Shma
- Blessings before Torah study
- Ten Commandments as part of prayers
- Additions to prayer in Ten Days of Atonement
- Recalling Exodus in the evening
- Order of Shma chapters and concentration on recital
- Tefillin and Shma
- Proper recital of Shma and blessings

MATZA AFTER MIDNIGHT

Will when can one fulfill the *mitzvah* of eating *matza* on the first night of Pesach? It all depends on the meaning of “haste” used by the Torah (*Shmot* 12:11) in discussing the eating of the meat of the *korban Pesach*. The view of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah is that it refers to the haste with which the Egyptians urged their Hebrew slaves to leave the country. Since this took place at midnight when they were struck by the plague of their

first-born, it is midnight which serves as the cutoff point for eating this sacrificial meat. Rabbi Akiva, on the other hand, contends that it refers to the haste with which our ancestors actually left Egypt which, by Divine command, took place the next morning. His ruling, therefore, is that the sacrificial meat may be consumed until daybreak.

The Sage Rava (*Mesechta Pesachim* 120b) points out that the Torah linked the time frame for eating *matza* with that of the sacrificial meat. It then follows that according to the first opinion one cannot fulfill the *mitzvah* of *matza* after midnight, while according to the second one the cutoff point is daybreak.

There is a difference of opinion amongst the early halachic authorities in regard to which of these two positions to follow. The conclusion of the later authorities (*Mishneh Berura* 477:6) is that every effort must be made to eat the required *matza* before midnight. Should an emergency prevent one from eating till after midnight, he should still eat *matza* but not make the special blessing we say for eating *matza* that night because he may indeed not be fulfilling the *mitzvah* according to Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah.

• *Berachot* 9a

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

THE CANDLE CURE

In our “Generation of Return” it often happens that one spouse becomes committed to the observance of *mitzvot* while the other lags behind.

One such case involved a woman who had become Shabbat observant and came to complain to her local rabbi that her still irreligious husband smokes on Shabbat and ruins the atmosphere of holiness which she tries to maintain in their home.

His advice to her was to ask her husband to refrain from

smoking as long as the Shabbat candles burned. When she reported that her husband had agreed to this compromise and actually refrained from smoking as long as the candles burned, the rabbi advised her to use thicker candles the next Shabbat. Once again the husband was faithful to his commitment. After a few weeks she lit even larger candles until she finally started lighting those “Yahrzeit candles” which burned throughout the Shabbat and kept her home cigarette smoke-free throughout the Holy Day of Rest.

JESUS, JR. AND DISJOINING THE BISHOP

From: Several Readers

Dear Rabbi,

Why don't Jews refer to Jesus by the term "Christ"? Why are some Jews named Jr. if it's not a Jewish custom? Why do some Jews break off parts of chess pieces?

Dear Several Readers,

Judaism accepts that a man named 'Yeshu' — Jesus — lived, that he was Jewish, and that he rejected Judaism. It is primarily for this reason that he was not accepted as the Messiah and therefore not referred to by Jews as "Christ" — a term derived from the ancient Greek for 'anointed' or 'savior'. According to Judaism, from which the Christian concept of Christ was conceived, the Messiah is a descendent of David, excels in Torah, teaches it and encourages others to uphold it, will be a king who ingathers the exiles, establishes peace, and builds the Temple in Jerusalem.

Jesus was none of the above. His purported link to the tribe of Judah was not patrilineal, he was no scholar, and he even discouraged Jews from keeping the Torah. He was not a king who ruled a nation and army. On the contrary, after Jesus' appearance, the Temple was destroyed, the Jews were exiled all over the world, and we have not had one day of peace in the past 2,000 years. While it is not our intention to offend anyone's beliefs, it is clear that Jesus did not qualify as Messiah according to Jewish standards. For a more in-depth

discussion, see "[Why Jews Don't Believe in Jesus](#)" on Ohr.edu — Ohr Somayach's website.

Re: Jewish Jr's, it has never been a Jewish custom to name a child after a parent. Sephardi Jews name children after living relatives such as aunts and uncles, grandparents or great-grandparents. Sometimes they even name children after living rabbis who are close to the family. In all cases, this is considered a gesture of great respect for, and received as a great honor by, the bearer of the name. There is a source for this in Talmud as well (Shabbat 134a).

Ashkenazi Jews have the custom of naming children only after relatives or rabbis who have passed away. This perpetuates the memory of the deceased, which is itself a great honor for the loved and revered of past generations. It also creates a type of metaphysical bond between the person and his or her namesake. What this means is that the person who receives the name is inspired to emulate and perpetuate the good deeds and traits of the deceased, while those very same good deeds and traits are simultaneously connected to and benefit the one who he or she is named after.

According to the above, Jews named Sr., Jr. or III are simply not named according to the Jewish custom, but rather according to the assimilated, non-Jewish practice.

Regarding disjoining chess pieces, the reason why some Jews do this is quite simple: It became customary since medieval times to incorporate Christian religious symbols such as the cross on some of the chess pieces such as the bishop and king. In view of the fact that the cross is not a Jewish symbol, and, in addition, considering the affliction suffered by Jews on account of the fiction of Jewish guilt in crucifixion, many remove the cross from its location.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

THE CABBIE'S DILEMMA

Question: A patient with a serious skin disorder left a hospital after receiving treatment and asked the manager of the taxi stand to arrange a cab to take him home. None of the cab drivers agreed to take him since they were aware that because of his condition he would exude a very unpleasant odor in the cab which would make it impossible to take other passengers for a considerable period. In the end the only ride this embarrassed fellow got was with the hospital's garbage truck. What is the right thing to do in such a case?

Answer: In regard to this real-life situation, Rabbi Yitzchak

Zilberstein, rav of the Ramat Elchanan community in Bnei Brak, pointed out that while the cab drivers could not be expected to sacrifice their livelihood for the sake of such a problematic passenger, there was something they should have done. A truly conscientious cabbie, the rabbi noted, should have approached the fellow with the bad odor and offered to take him to his destination on the condition that he compensate him for the loss of income he expected to incur from not being able to take other passengers until the odor cleared. This would have been a fair offer which would have spared the patient the embarrassment he suffered from being completely rejected.

Dear Ohrnet,

Perhaps I can add something to help out the young copier. **(What's the Right Thing to Do?, Parshat Tetzave)**

When my two oldest boys were in elementary grade school, I observed that the younger of the two was having difficulty on his tests and studies. I wasn't really sure how to help him. He spent a lot of time in study, and seemed greatly distressed about his test results. I wished success for all of my children, and I too, was concerned. His elder brother seemed very gifted, and received accolades from teachers and students for his abilities. At mid-semester, the boys brought home their report cards. I was in the study and first the older showed me his grades. His 9-year-old face shined as I congratulated him for his efforts. Then younger brother stepped forward, his face turned to the floor. I reached out and gently turned his young face up and looked at the pain in his eyes. It was then that I knew what to do.

I asked him, "Son, did you do the best you could in your studies and on your tests?" "Yes, papa." came the quiet reply. "Well then," I said. "Son, that is what I expect of you. You did well. There is never failure in this house, when you do the best you know how to do. I feel great pride for my sons who always do the best they can." His head lifted and his face beamed, as he broke into a grin from ear to ear! I watched a bit later as older brother asked him if he could help his younger brother study.

I observed as the years passed how they helped each other to study, and I never changed my line of questioning of both. "Did you do your best?" Even when that younger brother was held back a grade, my response was simply, "There is never failure in this house when you do the best

you know how to do. I feel great pride for my sons who always do the best they can." Not surprisingly, I sometimes heard, "No, papa, but I'll try harder." And they both did. What's the point of my story?

Recently, the younger of those two brothers graduated from a Trade School and began a job search. The job market has been pretty tough for the past few years around this town, too! On one particular job interview, a man stepped into the office and was introduced as the company owner. He then asked a question that went something like this: "Young man, would you be interested in making a good salary by cutting corners for us on some jobs, or fixing some things that might not necessarily need fixing if or when we asked you to?" My son quietly stood up. He turned to the owner and replied, "No sir. I guess the job isn't for me. I only know how to do the best job I can for you. I believe that success isn't based on taking unfair or unseen advantage of someone." My son turned to go. The company owner then surprised my son with this statement, "Young man, you are what we've been looking for! You see, we don't operate that way here, either, and you are the first one we've interviewed who said 'No' to that offer. When can you start?" So, what's my point? Failure isn't always what it seems. If we strive to do the "best we know how to do", though we might fail, we still pass one of life's most important "tests". I know my son hurt when he didn't do well in school. I know that he was tempted to cheat, but he got past that and simply did the best he could do. Success for him, and for any of us, is measured in the strength of a personal code of ethics. Do what is right, even when no one else is looking.

• Shalom, Barry



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