LAbOR OF LOVE

“And on the seventh day, a Shabbos of Shabbosos.” (31:15)

There are two kinds of rest. The first kind of rest is a rest from weariness, a chance to recharge your batteries, to enable yourself to continue to work. For no-one can work indefinitely. Everyone needs a break. The second kind of rest comes at the end of a project. The last brushstroke of a painting. The final sentence of a novel. The last brick in a new home. Then you take a step back and look at your work. You feel the satisfaction of completion. It’s finished. It’s done. A time to rest and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

“You shall labor for six days and do all your work.” How can you do all your work in six days? Can you build an entire house in six days? The Torah teaches us that when Shabbos comes, even though you’re only half-way through your project, you should think of it as though it was completely finished. In other words, on Shabbos, you should picture yourself as experiencing the sense of rest and satisfaction that comes after a good job well done, and not that you’re just taking a break. In a sense, this is what Hashem did when the world was six days old. He looked at the Creation and saw that it was finished, the greatest building project ever, the Heavens and the earth were completed. Our rest on Shabbos is a commemoration of that sense, this is what Hashem did when the world was six days old. He looked at the Creation and saw that it was finished, the greatest building project ever, the Heavens and the earth were completed. Our rest on Shabbos is a commemoration of that.

This is the essential difference between our Shabbos and the secular world understands the day of rest as a break. The second kind of rest comes at the end of a project. The last brushstroke of a painting. The final sentence of a novel. The last brick in a new home. Then you take a step back and look at your work. You feel the satisfaction of completion. It’s finished. It’s done. A time to rest and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

It’s finished. It’s done. A time to rest and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

**INSIGHTS**

A VALID VISA

“Hew for yourself two tablets of stone.” (34:1)

Once, there was a traveler who wanted to visit an exotic and remote country on the roof of the world. This country had the reputation of being almost impossible for tourists to enter. So, when our traveler was granted his tourist visa, it came to him as something of a surprise. However, in spite of this, he was convinced that he would be stopped at the border and refused entry to his destination. He had set his heart on the trip, so he enlisted the services of a ‘special agent’, a certain Mr. Shaker, who had contacts in high places in the government of the country. Shaker was able to magically open ‘locked doors’. All of this came at a price. Quite a tidy sum was deposited in a numbered bank account. And then the word came. All clear.

On arrival, our traveler bounded off the plane and presented himself at the immigration desk. “Visa please!” asked a uniformed official. “I’m sorry?” said the traveler. “I said — ‘Visa Please!’” repeated the official, somewhat irritated. “But — don’t you recognize me?” “If you gave me your visa, maybe I’d be able to recognize you,” said the official, sarcastically. “But, but, Mr. Shaker said...” “Look” said the official, “I’ve no idea who this Mr. Shaker is, but all you need to enter the country is a valid visa. However, without that, there’s nothing I can do...”

With this story, perhaps we will understand why it was that the first tablets of the covenant were hewn by Hashem, whereas the second tablets were hewn by Moshe. The sin of the golden calf was not real idol worship, but was based on a mistake: that, since Hashem was the maker of the first tablets, it was impossible to fathom their depths without the assistance of lofty spiritual powers.

It was for this reason that the people had fashioned the likeness of the ox to worship, for this is one of the mystical creatures that surround the heavenly throne. The people thought that mystical powers of the ox would help them to transcend the boundaries of human reach and be close to Hashem and to understand His Torah. While Moshe was still with them, they relied on Moshe to bring them close to Hashem, and did not seek other means. However, when they thought that Moshe was dead, they turned to other ways of elevating themselves.

The truth is that every Jew has his own passport to spirituality. It’s called the Torah. It contains all the visas we need to reach out of this world. It is possible to gain entry to its most esoteric and remote regions via the visa of human effort.

**OVERVIEW**

Moshe conducts a census by counting each silver half-shekel donated by all men, age twenty and over. Moshe is commanded to make a copper laver for the Mishkan — the women donate the necessary metal. The formula of the anointing oil is specified, and Hashem instructs Moshe to use this oil only for dedicating the Mishkan, its vessels, and Aaron and his sons. Hashem selects Betzalel and Oholiav to be the master craftsmen for the Mishkan and its vessels. The Jewish People are commanded to keep the Sabbath as an eternal sign that Hashem made the world. Moshe receives the two Tablets of Testimony on which are written the Ten Commandments. The mixed multitude that left Egypt with the Jewish People panic when Moshe’s descent seems delayed, and force Aaron to make a golden calf for them to worship. Aaron stalls and tries to delay them. Hashem tells Moshe to return to the people immediately, threatening to destroy everyone and build a new nation from Moshe. When Moshe sees the orgy of idol-worship he smashes the Tablets, and destroys the golden calf. The Sons of Levi volunteer to punish the transgressors, executing 3,000 men. Moshe ascends the mountain to pray for forgiveness for the people, and Hashem accepts his prayer. Moshe sets up the Mishkan, and Hashem’s cloud of glory returns. Moshe asks Hashem to show him the rules by which He conducts the world, but is granted only a small portion of this request. Hashem tells Moshe to hew new Tablets, and reveals to him the text of the prayer that will invoke His mercy. Idol worship, intermarriage, and the combination of milk and meat are prohibited. The laws of Pesach, the First-born, the First-fruits, Shabbos, Shavuos and Succos are taught. When Moshe descends with the second set of Tablets, his face is luminous as a result of contact with the Divine.
“Shabbos is a day of rest...”
“The dove found in it a place to rest and there will be the weary ones rest.”

Three different interpretations have been suggested for the symbolism of the dove in this song:

• The dove which Noach sent from the Ark to see if the flood waters had subsided found a place to land in Gan Eden on Shabbos. In similar fashion those who are weary from studying Torah with all their might will also find their rest in Gan Eden.

• The Shechinah - the Divine presence - is, as it were, homeless during the exile of Israel and will find their rest in Gan Eden. But the dove merely folds one weary wing to its side to rest in Gan Eden.

• The Jewish Nation is compared to the dove. It is the promise that in similar fashion to Noach's dove, the Jewish Nation is promised a home in Gan Eden.

Dear Confused,

Selling your chametz before Pesach is not a trick, but a legally binding sale. When you sell your chametz it belongs to the buyer who has every right to use it.

In a certain community, all the chametz — including the kosher pizza shop — was sold to a police officer. During Pesach, a burglar broke into the pizza shop. The policeman, who happened to be on duty at the time, entered the pizza shop, arrested the robber and exclaimed, “You’re robbing my business!”

And it’s told of a whiskey producer in Europe who sold his entire business for ten dollars. During Pesach, however, the chametz belongs to him.

But you’re right. Both buyer and seller should take the sale seriously and realize that it’s not a ‘trick.’ I know of a Rabbi who, in order to show his congregants that the sale is legitimate, locked up the shop during Pesach. The buyer exercised his ‘option’ and took permanent control of the business.

If the buyer decides not to exercise his option after Pesach, that’s his decision. During Pesach, however, the chametz belongs to him.

Dear Binyomin,

Kabbala certainly has ‘redeeming’ qualities. But it has dangers as well. On his death-bed, the Arizal (preeminent Kabalist, 16th century Safed, Israel) told Rabbi Yitzchak Hakohen: “Tell the disciples in my name that from today they are to stop studying Kabbala. The Geula certainly has ‘redeeming’ qualities. But it has dangers as well. On his death-bed, the Arizal (preeminent Kabalist, 16th century Safed, Israel) told Rabbi Yitzchak Hakohen: “Tell the disciples in my name that from today they are to stop studying Kabbala.”

“I recently read the following statement of the Vilna Gaon: “The ultimate redemption of the Jewish People (Geula) will come when the people at that high level learn Kabbala.”

As far as the ‘significance’ of your studies in bringing the Geula, the Talmud says that Torah study helps us survive the exile. And were the whole Jewish people to learn Torah, the Geula would come immediately!

Sources:
• Even Shleima 11:3
• Shivchei Rabbi Chaim Vital pp. 25b-26a

Dear Rabbi,

As usual I enjoyed another one of your responses, this time to Philip Americus about ‘Scalping Tickets.’ (Ask the Rabbi #96) Your logic is commendable. However, could you reconcile for me your advice of not using tricks to get around a law, with the practice at Pesach of selling one’s chametz, or even more astute - locking them up in a cupboard and selling “futures” to someone who will never pick them up.

Confused in California

Based on a riddle sent in by Shlomo Steinhart

Triplet's and their cousin are born within a 2 hour period, yet the brit milah for each of the four takes place on four consecutive days. They are all healthy - i.e., no jaundice or other health problems. How can this be?
The Rule:

Whereas the higher level of korban (kodshei kodashim - olah, chatas, asham) must be slaughtered in the northern part of the Sanctuary courtyard (azarah) the shlamim may be slaughtered in any part of this area, as the Torah states (Vayikra 3:2) “He shall slaughter it at the entrance to the Ohel Moed.” (The Ohel Moed or Tent of Assembly refers to the Sanctuary itself — the heichal in which the menorah, table and golden altar stood.)

Weekly Daf

Questions and Answers:

What if the shlamim was slaughtered in the heichal itself? Since the Torah declares that the “entrance to the Ohel Moed” qualifies as a site for the slaughter of the shlamim, it implies that the Ohel Moed — or heichal — is the more qualified site. It is therefore logical to assume that if the secondary site qualifies, then the primary one — the heichal — certainly does.

May kohanim eat the flesh of the kodshei kodashim, which cannot be eaten outside of the azarah, in the heichal?

Rabbi Yehuda ben Besaira ruled that if the Beis Hamikdash was under siege and the army was firing arrows and boulders into the azarah the kohanim could take shelter in the heichal and there eat the flesh of kodshei kodashim. He bases this on the passage (Bamidbar 18:10) which designates “the holy of holies” as the area in which the kohenim may eat this sacrificial flesh, a designation which certainly includes the heichal as well!

The Problem:

Why must this sage seek support from this passage when he could presumably have implemented the aforementioned logical extension that if the secondary site of the azarah qualifies for eating the sacred flesh then the primary site should certainly qualify?

The Resolution:

It is proper for a servant to perform service for his master in the master’s presence. It is therefore logical to assume that if he can perform such a service — the slaughtering of shlamim — in a secondary site, farther removed from his Master, he can certainly do so in the primary site. It is not proper, however, for a servant to eat in his master’s presence. Without the support of a specific passage we would therefore have assumed that such permission to eat was granted only in the secondary site and not in the primary site which is tantamount to eating in the Master’s presence.

1. How was the census taken?
2. What was the minimum age of military service in the Jewish army?
3. What were the three different types of terumah donated?
4. List two times when the Jewish People were counted.
5. How did the olive oil for anointing acquire its fragrance?
6. How many ingredients comprise the incense of the Mishkan?
7. What is the difference between chochma (wisdom), bina (understanding), and da’as (knowledge)?
8. Shabbos is “a sign” (31:13). What does it signify?
9. When did the Jewish People begin to give contributions for the building of the Mishkan?
10. Why did Aaron build the altar for the golden calf by himself?
11. Who were the “mixed multitude”?
12. Why did Moshe break the Tablets?
13. How can two brothers belong to two different tribes?
14. Rather than wipe out the Jewish People for the sin of the golden calf, Hashem agreed to punish them gradually. How did this affect the Jewish People throughout history?
15. What is a textual source for referring to “travel to Israel” as “Aliyah”?
16. In verse 33:2, Hashem says that the inhabitants of Eretz Canaan would be driven out of the Land. In that verse, only six of the seven Canaanite nations are mentioned. What happened to the seventh?
17. Which events took place on these dates: a) 17 Tamuz; b) 18 Tamuz; c) 19 Tamuz; d) 1 Elul; e) 10 Tishrei; f) 1 Nissan?
18. How did Hashem show that He forgave the Jewish People?
19. Why is Hashem “slow to anger”?
20. How many times is the ban on meat and milk mentioned, and why?

Fig. Leaves and Fires

For fueling the fire upon the altar from which coals would be taken for the offering of the incense (and for all the fires upon the altar) it was customary to take wood which came from a fig tree.

The fig tree referred to here must be one that grows wild and bears no edible fruit. Otherwise, it would be disqualified for use in the same way that the Mishnah in the second perek of Mesechta Tamid disqualifies the wood of all fruit-bearing trees, by citing the examples of grape and olive trees. The reason given for this by Rabbi Acha bar Yaakov is to preserve the settlement of Eretz Yisrael, for if there will be no wine or oil or figs to enjoy, the land may become desolate. But why did they insist on the fig tree?

Rashi explains that the leaves of the fig tree were the first items of plant life to be used in human effort for self improvement. When Adam became conscious of his nakedness following his sinful eating from the Tree of Knowledge he fashioned some garments for himself and his wife from fig leaves (Bereishis 3:7). It is therefore fitting that the wood from this tree be given priority in the effort of Adam’s descendants to achieve self-improvement through the service of the Beis Hamikdash.

I Didn’t Know That!

“I have called Betzalel... to devise clever work... and Oholiav... to make all that I have commanded.” (31:2-6)

The work of the Mishkan required a knowledge of design and of construction. Betzalel was in charge of the design of the Mishkan and Oholiav was in charge of its actual construction.

Sifsei Kohen

In the list of the “13 Attributes of Hashem,” the Name “Hashem” appears twice. Rashi explains that the Name “Hashem” refers to the attribute of Mercy, and is repeated to teach that Hashem is merciful not only before a person sins but also after he repents. Why does a person need mercy before he sins?
1. 30:12 - Through the donation of a half-shekel per person.
2. 30:14 - Twenty.
3. 30:15 - For the Adamim (sockets), for the purchase of communal sacrifices, and for the building of the Mishkan.
4. 30:16 - After Yom Kippur of the first year, and in Iyar of the second year.
5. 30:24 - It was mixed with spices.
6. 30:34 - Eleven ingredients were used making the incense.
7. 31:3 - Chochma is knowledge acquired from others. Bina is the deduction of new knowledge from what one has already learned. Da'as is holy inspiration.
8. 31:13 - It is a sign between Hashem and the Jewish People that He has chosen them, and a sign to the nations of the world that He has sanctified the Jewish People.
9. 31:17 - The 11th of Tishrei.
10. 32:5 - He hoped that by building it by himself it would take longer and in the interim Moshe would return.
11. 32:7 - The non-Jews who came out of Egypt, who Moshe accepted and converted.
12. 32:19 - Moshe reasoned: If the Torah did not permit those who have estranged themselves from the Torah to partake in even a single commandment (Pesach sacrifice), surely the entire Torah cannot be given to a whole nation who has estranged itself from Hashem!
13. 32:27 - Half-brothers, sharing the same mother.
14. 32:34 - Whenever Hashem punished the Jewish People, part of that punishment comes as payment for the sin of the golden calf.
15. 33:1 - The words "tech alehi" (depart and go up).
16. 33:2 - The seventh nation, the Girgashites, voluntarily emigrated.
17. 33:11 - a) Moshe came down from Har Sinai and broke the Tablets. b) Moshe burned the golden calf and punished the offenders. c) Moshe went up a second time to Har Sinai. d) Moshe went up a third time to Har Sinai. e) Hashem forgave the Jewish people and gave Moshe the Second Tablets. f) The Mishkan was completed.
18. 33:14 - He agreed to let His Shechina dwell among them.
19. 34:6 - To give the sinner a chance to repent.
20. 34:26 - Three times to prohibit eating, deriving benefit and cooking.

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**Bonus Answer!**

Hashem is merciful and good to all His creations, and although He knows in advance that a person will sin, He still is merciful to that person.

- *Sifsei Chachamim*

Hashem is Hashem whether a person sins or not, and this proves that Hashem is unchanging and not affected by human choice or action.

- *Maharal*

**Parshas Parah**

One who aspires to purify himself spiritually, is given help from Above. The period before Rosh Chodesh Nissan is especially favorable for purification. This is one of the reasons that we read Parshas Parah at this time of the year. But there is a more basic reason: In the time of the Beis Hamikdash, it was on the 14th of Nissan that the korban Pesach was brought by all the Jewish People. Parshas Parah deals with the laws of purification that were needed to purify the Jewish People from contact with a dead body — a necessary preliminary to entering the Beis Hamikdash and bringing the korban Pesach. The Haftorah describes the time of Mashiach, when Hashem will ‘sprinkle purifying waters on the Bnei Yisrael’ and remove all the impurities that have encrusted their souls.

"I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh instead."

(46:26)

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