

OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

O.H.M.S.

“...stones of remembrance to the Children of Yisrael” (39:7)

Ask someone from a non-religious background what it's like to wear a yarmulke in public for the first time.

He will tell you it feels like becoming an ambassador. An ambassador for the Jewish People. An ambassador for Hashem Himself. The entire Jewish People and Hashem may be judged by the way you now behave. Five minutes ago it was “Hey! - Look at that guy pushing in line!” Now it's “Hey! - Look at that Jew pushing in line!”

A Jew, unlike a person of color, always has the option to merge into the background, to shorten his nose, shorten his name.

But as soon as he ‘comes out’ and wears the signs of his Judaism with pride, his actions reflect not just on himself, but on the whole Jewish People, **and on G-d.**

On the *Choshen*, the breastplate, that the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) wore, were twelve stones. On these stones were inscribed the names of the Tribes of Israel. They were called the ‘stones of remembrance before the Children of Yisrael.’

For the Jewish People would remember that their names were inscribed on this holy garment, and they would thus be ashamed to sin.

You CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU!

“And Moshe saw all the work, (of the Mishkan), and, behold, they had done it as the Almighty had commanded...

and Moshe blessed them.” (39:43)

Rabbi Moshe Helfan was a fundraiser for the Telz Yeshiva in Cleveland. One of his regular donors was a Jewish farmer who had a farm in Pennsylvania. The farmer used to give a small yearly donation. However, in the 1970s, when the price of petroleum went up, the cost of the gas needed to drive to Pennsylvania and back was more than the amount the farmer used to give.

Rabbi Helfan was in a quandary:

“If we will only reach up, He will reach down and illuminate our eyes with His Torah.”

On the one hand he couldn't use the Yeshiva's money to finance a trip which he knew would definitely lose money. But on the other hand he couldn't deprive the farmer of giving his donation. As Rabbi Helfan said “This farmer's supporting Torah study in the Yeshiva is a tremendous merit for him. How can I deprive him of that?”

So Rabbi Helfan decided to drive to Pennsylvania and he himself would foot the bill for the gas.

Have you noticed that at a fund-raising dinner for a charitable cause,

it's usually the staff who heap praise and blessing on the donors?

Really, it should be the other way round.

For through the efforts of the staff in creating a worthwhile charity, they give the donors much more than the donors have given them.

The charity has given the donors a deposit in the First National Bank of *Olam Habah* (the World-to-Come) and that's a bank which suffers neither from inflation nor poor management.

So why is it the other way round — that the staff of the charity thank the donors?

The answer is that we follow the tradition of Moshe *Rabbeinu*, who after itemizing the full accounting of the *Mishkan* blessed the people for all they had brought, even though they should really have blessed him.

As they say: “You can't take it with you — but you can send it ahead.”

THE GOLD STANDARD

“These are the accounts of the Mishkan” (38:21)

In Moshe's accounting for the expenditure of the *Mishkan*, only the silver is reckoned for and not the gold.

The reason is that the *silver* was gathered through the mandatory half-shekel donation, which all the *Bnei Yisrael* had to give.

Moshe realized that, inevitably, there would be those among the people who would be of a suspicious nature — seekers of account — and so for this reason he gave an accounting for the silver.

However, the gold was donated only by the open-hearted and the

PARSHA OVERVIEW

After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the *Mishkan* complete accounting and enumeration is made of all of the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels which had been fashioned. The Bnei Yisrael bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to Hashem'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 the *Mishkan* indicating that Hashem's glory was resting on the *Mishkan*. Whenever they moved away from the *Mishkan*, the Bnei Yisrael would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

WHAT'S TODAY'S NAME?

EXCERPT FROM PREMIER ISSUE OF
LIGHT LINES

Did you ever stop to think why we call the days of the week by those strange sounding names? And why do Jews in Israel call them by other names?

It all started back with the Romans who decided to call the days according to the sun, moon, and the five known planets which had been originally named for pagan deities. The Saxons left the sun and moon for the first two days but substituted Norse deities as names for almost all the other days.

Our own English names are adapted from the Saxon version while the French, Italian and Spanish follow the Latin of the Romans.

Your Yiddish-speaking great-grandparents called these days by their German names which are translations of the Saxon names, with two exceptions: Wednesday is *Mittwoch* (Middle of the Week) and Saturday is *Sonnabend* (Sunday's eve). (But they never said *Sonnabend* or Saturday instead of *Shabbos* unless they were talking to their gentile neighbors!)

In Israel the days of the week have no names, only numbers. Sunday is *Yom Rishon* because it is the first day after

Shabbos and each successive day is numbered in the same fashion.

This goes back to the fourth of the Ten Commandments our ancestors heard at Mount Sinai 3309 years ago: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." Remembering is done on the Sabbath (alias Saturday) by making *Kiddush* and saying Sabbath prayers. Throughout the week it is remembered by referring to all of the weekdays by their proximity to the Sabbath.

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THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

Published by
OHR SOMAYACH
TANENBAUM COLLEGE
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • 02-581-0315

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Produced and Designed by the Office of Communication
Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro, Director

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PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529

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SING MY SOUL INSIGHTS INTO THE SHABBOS ZEMIRO

KOL MEKADESH בל מקדש

"Who delay departing from the Sabbath and rush to enter."

How does one delay departing before he rushes to enter?

This may be a reference to a Jew's mental and emotional immersion in the sanctity of Shabbos.

The Sabbath observer should be so

wrapped up in the holy experience of the day that if there is a momentary lapse in his connection he rushes to reestablish contact.

We therefore sing the praise of Jews who are loathe to leave this total connection with the Sabbath — "who delay departing" — and who therefore "rush to enter" by re-connecting themselves as soon as possible.

לע"נ
מדת ריזול רבקה בת ר' ישראל איסרע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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 *Mitznefes* 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 *Paroches* 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*?

BONUS QUESTION?

“**And the 100 silver kikar were melted for the (100) sockets... one kikar per socket....and the (remaining) 1775 shekelim were fashioned into hooks...**” (38:27) Why does the Torah specify exactly what was done with the silver, whereas the Torah is not as specific regarding the gold?

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

The words “as Hashem commanded” appear 18 times regarding the *Mishkan*’s construction. The Sages instituted 18 blessings in the *Shemone Esrei* prayer to correspond to these 18 commands. Today, when we have no *Beis Hamikdash*, the 18 blessings of the *Shemone Esrei* substitute for the sacrifices offered in the *Mishkan*.

• *Vayikra Rabba 1:18 [thanks to Rabbi Sholem Fishbane]*

HAFTORAH: MELACHIM I 7:51-8:21

The completion of the Tabernacle in the desert, which is the subject of this week’s *Parsha* is paralleled in the Haftorah by the completion of the First *Beis Hamikdash* (Holy Temple) by Shlomo *Hamelech*.

THROUGH THE DARK CLOUD SHINING

“**When the Kohanim left the Holy, the cloud filled the House of Hashem. The Kohanim were unable to stand and minister because of the cloud... Then Shlomo said ‘Hashem has said He would dwell in the thick cloud.’**” (8:10-12)

After Shlomo finished building the *Beis Hamikdash*, he saw through prophecy that in the future it would be destroyed; that a time would come when a cloud of darkness would descend on the *Beis Hamikdash* and the *Kohanim* would be forced to leave.

However, he was consoled by Hashem’s promise that He would not abandon His people *Yisrael* even in the darkest and most difficult times; that He would be with them even in the blackest storm-clouds and the most gloomy mists of world events.

That is the hidden meaning of the above verse: Even during the celebration of the inauguration of the *Mikdash* it was revealed to Shlomo the sad vision of the “*the Kohanim left the Holy*,” fettered with iron chains. “*The cloud filled the House of Hashem*,” the cloud which represented the Divine Presence resting on the Temple was replaced with a somber cloud which filled the Sanctuary. The *Kohanim* were not able to fulfill the Divine service; rather strangers went in and desecrated it.

However, in spite of this, Shlomo was not dispirited nor downcast, because “*Hashem had said He would dwell in the thick cloud*.” Hashem has promised that He will dwell with the Jewish People even in their darkest hour. From our vantage point we can see how King Shlomo’s vision has been vindicated. The People of *Israel* live. We live despite pogroms. We live despite holocausts. We live despite assimilation. We continue.

Even in the blackest mists of history Hashem has never, nor will He ever, desert His people. And even though we don’t see Him clearly, if we gaze closely into the gloom we will see Hashem watching over His people through the darkest night.

• *Ohr HaMeir, Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin*

WEEKLY DAF

BECHOROS 60 - ERACHIN 6

TWO PERCENT PRECEDENT

If one delegates an agent to take *terumah* from his grain without giving explicit instructions as to how much the *terumah* should be, the agent must evaluate what his intention was. Should the agent have no clue as to what his intention was, he should separate one fiftieth of the amount of grain as *terumah*, because this is the percentage given by the average person.

The Torah commanded us to set aside a portion of our grain as *terumah*, which is presented to the kohen.

Although the Torah specified no amount, and one could fulfill this command by giving one kernel of grain from an entire warehouse, our Sages set some standards. They directed the generous man to devote one fortieth of his grain to *terumah*, the average man one fiftieth and allowed the miserly one to get away with one sixtieth.

Why was one fiftieth established as the norm?

The Talmud Yerushalmi cites as the source the tax placed on the spoils of

the war against the Midianites which were divided between the soldiers and the rest of the people. From their half the non-combatants were required to set aside one fiftieth of all the slaves and livestock taken from the Midianites as a gift for the “Levites who guard the Sanctuary of Hashem.” (Bamidbar 31:30) This was viewed by our Sages as a guideline in determining one fiftieth as the normative amount for *terumah*.

• *Bechoros 61a*

WOMEN AND THE MEGILLAH

Even though the reading of Megillah Esther on Purim is a mitzvah restricted to a defined period of time, and women are generally exempt from time-oriented commands, there is the same obligation for women to hear the reading of the Megillah as there is for men.

The reason, explains Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, is because they too were involved in the miracle of rescue from the genocidal plot of Haman.

There are two different approaches towards understanding the meaning of this involvement. Rashbam (*Pesachim 108b*) explains that it was a woman — Esther — who was the catalyst of the miracle. Tosefos finds difficulty with this approach, because the words “they too” indicate that the women did not have a primary role. The explanation favored by Tosefos is that they too were threatened by the genocidal decree, and are therefore equal beneficiaries of the miracle.

Rashi, in our section of the Talmud, writes that since women have an obligation equal to that of men a woman is eligible to read the Megillah, and the man hearing her reading fulfills his obligation. This opinion, however, is contested by the Baal Hilchos Gedolos, who rules that the obligation of a woman is to hear the Megillah but not to read it, while a man's duty is to read it. His hearing it read by another man is, however, considered as if he read it himself. It is for this reason that women do not read the Megillah for men. (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 689:2*)

• *Erachin 3a*

continued from page one

generous, among whom was no place for suspicion and account-seeking.

AN UNIMPEACHABLE WITNESS

“the Tabernacle of Testimony” (38:21)

The Tabernacle was itself a testimony to the accuracy of Moshe's accounting, for had there been even the merest hint of misappropriation of funds, certainly the Divine Presence would never have rested upon it.

For this reason it is called the *Tabernacle of Testimony*.

THE SECRETS OF THE WORLD

“Moshe erected the Mishkan; he put down its sockets and put into place its planks, and inserted its bars and erected its pillars.” (40:18)

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Where are the hidden secrets of the world stored? Where in Creation are they to be found?

When we study the *Mishkan* and its vessels, its ropes, and its fastening stakes, the Menorah, the description of its setting up and taking down, we are gazing into the secrets of the world.

Few are those who are able to penetrate to the depths of the *Mishkan*. Maybe one holy and wise man in each generation. Maybe a few more unique individuals with the instruction of a great Torah sage will be able to have some idea of these hidden secrets.

And yet, it is the obligation of every Jew to delve and to search and to pray to Hashem that his eyes be opened a little to glimpse a fleeting flash of these mysteries.

For when a person exerts himself, he finds. The Torah is wedded to the Jewish People. The Torah wants to impart its secrets to those who are worthy, for “more than the calf wishes to feed, the cow wishes to nurse.”

Provided we direct our hearts Heavenwards, we have it within our power to constantly discover new insights in the Holy Torah. If we will only reach up, He will reach down and illuminate our eyes with His Torah.

Sources:

- *O.H.M.S.* - Meshech Chochma; Rabbi Calev Gestetner
- *You Can't Take It With You!* - Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin; Rabbi Zelig Pliskin in *Growth through Torah*
- *The Gold Standard* - Ahavas Yonason
- *An Unimpeachable Witness* - The Malbim
- *The Secrets Of The World* - Degel Machane Ephraim

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Mel Etra

<meletra@earthlink.net>

wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
What is the origin of the halacha (custom?) that one must recite at least 100 blessings during the course of each day? Thank you.

Dear Mel Etra,

In the time of King David 100 people were dying every day due to a terrible plague. The Sages at that time perceived the plague's spiritual essence and instituted 100 blessings a day. The plague stopped.

Even after the plague, the 100 blessing requirement still applies. Many halachic works make an accounting of exactly 100 blessings which are said in the course of every normal weekday.

On Shabbat (and festivals) the accounting is different. This is because the silent *amidah* prayer on Shabbat has fewer blessings than the weekday *amidah* prayer. So on Shabbat you need to make up for the 'missing' blessings. You can do so by eating different types of foods, smelling various spices, and saying the appropriate blessing for each one. Or, according to some authorities, you can fill in the missing blessings by listening to the blessings made during the Torah reading and saying 'amen.'

There's a story told about the Brisker Rav, Rabbi Yitzchak Ze'ev Soloveichik, who was once a guest at someone's home in Switzerland. On Shabbat afternoon he asked his host for a banana and an apple, but he did-

n't eat them. The afternoon prayer, the third meal, and *havdalah* came and went and still the fruit remained uneaten. After *Melava Malka*, the mystical meal served at the conclusion of Shabbat, the host could contain himself no longer. Mustering up his courage, he asked his august guest why he hadn't eaten the fruit.

The Brisker Rav answered that at first he had needed the fruit because he was missing two blessings from the required hundred. (An apple requires the blessing for 'fruits of the tree' and a banana requires the blessing for 'fruits of the earth.') However, during the afternoon synagogue service he was called up to the Torah where he recited two blessings: One before the Torah reading and one after.

Sources:

- Tractate Menachot 43b
- Aruch Hashulchan Orach Chaim 46

DIVIDED WE STAND

David Salvadori from Italy

<nuoto77@protec.it> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Please, why can men and women not stay near each other in the synagogue? Somebody told me that it is because women can disturb men during the prayer with their voices. Is this the answer or there are other matters? Where is written in the Torah such rule?
Shalom

Dear David Salvadori,

The law requiring a *mechitzah*, division, between men and women in

the synagogue dates back to Biblical times and is mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud. There are a number of reasons given for this:

- So as not to cause those who are unmarried to feel left out. We come to synagogue to relate to G-d as Jews, not as spouses, husbands, wives, fathers or mothers. With a *mechitzah*, spouses do not sit together. That way, we are more of a congregation than groups of individuals.
- To prevent there being a light, social atmosphere during prayer. The atmosphere during prayer should be serious. One way to help achieve the proper atmosphere is by creating a division between men and women.
- To promote modesty, and to prevent the distraction from prayer to both men and women from the presence of members of the opposite gender, to whom there is a natural attraction.

Sources:

- Tractate Succah 51b, 52a

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

The name of which Parsha has the same *gematria* — numerical value — as the number of its verses?

Answer:

Parshat Tzav, which has 96 verses. The word Tzav has the numerical value of 96. (By the way, Parshat Terumah also has 96 verses.)

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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 *Beis 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 Hashem forgave them for the golden calf and allowed His *Shechina* to dwell among them.
3. 38:21 - The *Levi'im*.
4. 38:21 - Isamar 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 *Midbar*. 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 goat-skin.
15. 40:20 - The *Luchos HaBris*.
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 "*Paroches*."
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*.

BONUS ANSWER!

Because everyone gave exactly half of a silver shekel, the total amount of silver was public knowledge. Therefore, the more relevant question regarding the silver was "How was it used?" The gold, however, had been a free will offering, each person giving as much as he wanted. Therefore, the most relevant question regarding the gold was "How much was donated."

• Ahavas Yonasan (thanks to Rabbi Sholem Fishbane)

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

38:22	RAMBAN Betzalel's Genius	40:35	Covering the <i>Aron</i>	ADERES ELIYAHU
40:2	Timetable of the <i>Yemei Milu'im</i>	40:18	SFORNO Essence of the <i>Mishkan</i>	39:33 The World of the <i>Mishkan</i>
38:11	IBN EZRA Sunshine and Rain	39:27	BA'AL HATURIM Storage of the Garments	

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