null
Moshé exhorts the Bnei Yisrael to keep Shabbos, and requests donations for the materials for the construction of the Mishkan (tent of meeting). He collects gold, silver, precious stones, animal skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the Menorah and for anointing. The princes of each of the twelve tribes bring the precious stones for the Kohen Gadol’s breastplate and ephod. Hashem appoints Betzalel and Oholai as the master craftsmen for the building of the Mishkan and its vessels. The Bnei Yisrael contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations. Special curtains with two different covers were designed to serve as the material for the Mishkan’s roof and door. Gold-covered boards set in silver bases were connected and formed the walls of the Mishkan. Betzalel made the Aron Hakodesh (Ark), which contained the Tablets of the Covenant, from wood that was covered with gold on the inside and outside. On the cover of the Ark were two small figures facing each other with wings arching over the Ark. The Menorah and the Shulchan, the table with the showbreads, were also made of gold. Two altars were made: A smaller one for burning incense, made of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for the purpose of sacrifices that was made of wood that was covered with copper.

HAFTORAH: YEchezkel 36:16-38

Parshas Parah
Heart Of Stone
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 more a basic reason: In the time of the Beis Hamikdash, it was on the 14th of Nissan that the Pesach sacrifice 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 Pesach sacrifice.

The Haftorah describes the time of Mashiach, when Hashem will “sprinkle purifying waters on the Bnei Yisroel” and remove from them 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) Hashem’s mitzvos are our life blood.

When we neglect them, our hearts freeze over, severed from their life. We become spiritually rigid. Our hearts atrophy, coarsen and eventually become as rigid as stone.

And because we then have made ourselves a heart of stone, we don’t realize that this is why we have so little faith. How can a heart of stone have faith? We don’t realize that our complaints against Hashem come from a rock chamber entombed in our chests.

Eventually it will be too late for a “bypass.” Hashem will come and give us a heart that is soft, that cries, that wants to hear the word of Hashem and beats in time to its Maker.

VAYAKHEL

The Book of Shemos comes to its conclusion 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. The Bnei Yisrael bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handicraft 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, 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 Hashem’s glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the Mishkan, the Bnei Yisrael would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

GIVING EXPRESSION TO LOVE

When Moshe Rabbeinu was refused entry into Eretz Yisroel he complained to Hashem: “The bones of Yosef shall enter the land and I shall not enter?” “He who proudly admits that this was his land shall be buried in it,” replied Hashem, “but he who did not admit that this was his land shall not be buried in it.” Yosef did not deny his Hebrew origin when Potifar’s wife (Bereishis 39:14) derided him as a “Hebrew brought here to make fun of us.” He even went further in describing himself to the chief butler (Bereishis 40:15) as one who “had been stolen from the land of the Hebrews.”

But when the daughters of Yisro told their father that “an Egyptian man rescued us” (Shemos 2:19), Moshe made no effort to correct this false impression and stress his Hebrew origins.

* Devarim Rabba 2:8
takes great initiative to become spiritually wealthy. Capitalize on those peak moments of inspiration to focus your spiritual goals higher and higher, and you will get help from above to lift you to the skies.

**Mirror, Mirror On The Wall**

“He should make the copper laver ... from the mirrors of the legions...” (38:8)

When you look at someone else, what do you see? You notice all the character flaws that he himself tries so hard to conceal. When you look at someone else, think that you are looking in a mirror. Just as a mirror reveals to us our unsightly features, so too when we see character flaws in others, we should check for those same traits in ourselves. That’s what the saying means: “Who is wise? He who learns from every person (Avos).”

When the kohanim prepared for the service of Hashem in the Mishkan, they washed their hands and feet. On a mystical level, this cleansed them of any spiritual blemish, from any defect, bias or partiality. The laver in which they washed was made entirely of mirrors. This reminded the kohanim that they should check themselves for those character faults that they perceived in others. Because were they only to look at themselves, they would find it very hard to identify their own faults.

**Mirror, Mirror On The Wall II**

“He should make the copper laver...from the mirrors of the legions...” (38:8)

In the courtyard of the Tabernacle stood a very large copper laver from which the kohanim washed their hands and feet before performing the service of the Mishkan. It was made exclusively from brightly polished sheets of copper that had been used by the Jewish women as mirrors to adorn themselves.

At first, Moshe was loath to accept the mirrors. Since they had been used to incite desire, he considered them unsuitable for such an elevated purpose. However Hashem instructed him to accept them. These mirrors were more beloved to Hashem than all the other gifts to the Mishkan, for through these mirrors the women of Israel had established multitudes — legions of Jewish souls in Egypt. When their husbands were exhausted from the back-breaking slave-labor, the women would go out to them, bring them food and drink, and feed them.

As they sat there, they would take out their mirrors and each one would look at herself, together with her husband, in the mirror. She would allure him with words, saying “Am I not more beautiful than you?”

This is what the Torah alludes to when it speaks of the “mirrors of the legions.”

Sources:
- We Have The Technology - Beis Halevi
- No Previous Experience Required - Ramban, Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin
- Mirror, Mirror, On The Wall - Toldos Yaakov Yosef
- Mirror, Mirror, On The Wall II - Rashi

**Bonus Question?**

Rashi never “just” comments; something in the text always impels him to do so. Rashi answers unspoken questions arising from a thoughtful reading of the Torah text. Anyone who wants a true understanding of Rashi’s classic Torah commentary must always ask: “What’s Bothering Rashi?”

“And Betzalel made the ark of acacia wood....” (37:1) Rashi: “Because he gave himself over to the work more wholeheartedly than the other wise people, it is called after his name.”

Why does Rashi draw such a conclusion? The Torah simply tells us that Betzalel made these objects.

**I Didn’t Know That!**

“Each person who waved a waving of gold ... and all who donated a silver or copper donation.... (35:22-24)”

Why were donations of gold called “wavings?” Because when people gave gold, they waved it due to its great value.

- Ramban

This issue is dedicated in memory of

**Etta Willner ז”ע**

(Eta Bas Elias) of Hallendale, Florida
on the occasion of her yahrzeit on 20 Adar
May one write the Torah chapters for tefillin on the skin of a fish? This question was put to Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak by the Sage Mar, the son of the Sage Ravina. It appears in the gemara’s discussion of which living things are considered as having a layer of skin covering their flesh and the ramifications of this for one who wounds such a creature on Shabbos.

Rabbi Nachman’s response was that while it is obvious that a fish has a skin, we will have to wait for the Prophet Elyahu to reveal to us whether the inherent uncleanness of this skin is removed in processing it for parchment. Since we have not yet merited Elyahu’s arrival, Rambam rules that we may not use fish skin for tefillin.

A simple reading of the gemara suggests that the physical uncleanness is the putrid odor of fish skin. But it is difficult to understand why we need a prophet to reveal to us something which we can determine with our own sense of smell.

Rabbi Nissim (RaN), one of the early commentators, offers another perspective. The gemara (Shabbos 146a) tells us that when the primeval serpent persuaded Chava to sin by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, he instilled a spiritual uncleanness into the entire universe. The Jewish People, and the spirits of their future generations and converts, which stood at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, were purified of this uncleanness. All animal life, except for fish, was there as well, adds Rabbi Nissim, and was likewise purified. The question remaining for Elyahu to solve is whether this spiritual uncleanness disappears during the processing of the skin.

A more recent commentary, Sfas Emes, suggests that only animal life requiring shechita, such as animals and fowl, were granted release from spiritual uncleanness, to the exclusion of fish which do not require shechita. Only Elyahu will tell us whether processing achieves the same effect.

Shabbos is different! Since this day is holy, our Sages taught us that we must show our respect for this difference in a variety of ways. Not only must the clothes we wear on Shabbos be different than those we wear on the weekdays, and the manner in which we walk be different from how we move about on the weekdays, but even our talk on Shabbos must be different from our talk on the weekdays.

Rashi explains this ban on weekday talk as referring to discussion of weekday business and calculations, activities which are forbidden on Shabbos. Tosefos rejects this approach because discussion of business comes under another category of activity previously mentioned in the gemara. Rabbeinu Tam, one of the leading Tosefists, suggests that the aforementioned curb on speech relates not to the subject but rather to the quantity of talk, even about permissible things.

In support of this point he cites a Midrash which tells of the extremely talkative elderly mother of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. On Shabbos the Sage would remind her that it was Shabbos and she would become silent.

A further support is the Jerusalem Talmud which relates that the Sages stretched the law to its limit in order to permit us to say “Good Shabbos” to one another.

The reason for all of this caution in regard to talking on Shabbos, says Maharsha, is that in regard to Shabbos, word is equivalent to work: The Torah says “(Hashem) rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had done (Bereishis 2:2),” and King David explains that “with the word of Hashem” everything was created (Tehillim 33:6). Since word is work, on Shabbos we must be careful which words we speak and how many of them.

Weekly Parsha newsletter, Monthly Seasons of the Moon, Weekly Daf, Ask the Rabbi, Holiday specials, Ohren magazine, Yossi & Co., Poetry, Essays on Jewish thought and contemporary issues, Excerpts of books by Ohr Somayach faculty, Audio catalog on-line, Jewish Educational Extensions - University on-line, Explore Jerusalem, Mark Twain’s Concerning the Jews, JLE summer & winter programs in Israel, ChoppedLiver cartoons, Meet the children of Odessa, The Center for Torah Studies, A road map to Jewish learning, Top Ten lists, and much, much more...a billion and a half bytes of Torah literature and information. Join tens of thousands of other people from around the world and...get connected to Ohr Somayach on the Web at... WWW.OHR.ORG.IL
1. What three different words in this week’s Parsha are spelled with the same four letters?

2. Why is the prohibition against doing work on Shabbos written prior to the instruction for building the Mishkan?

3. In verse 35:11, what is the Mishkan, the tent of the Mishkan and the covering of the Mishkan?

4. What function did the bigdei hasrad serve?

5. What was unusual about the way the women spun the goat’s hair?

6. Why were the Princes the last to contribute to the building of the Mishkan? How does the Torah show dissatisfaction with their actions?

7. Who does the Torah identify as the primary builders of the Mishkan? From which tribes were they?

8. What image was woven into the Paroches?

9. Why does the Torah attribute the building of the Aron to Betzalel?

10. Of what materials was the Mizbach HaOlah (Burnt-offering Altar) composed?

1. Why is the word Mishkan stated twice in verse 38:21?

2. Who was appointed to carry the vessels of the Mishkan in the Midbar?

3. What is the meaning of the name Betzalel?

4. How many people contributed a half-shekel to the Mishkan? Who contributed?

5. Which material used in the bigdei kehuna was not used in the coverings of the sacred vessels?

6. How were the gold threads made?

7. What was on the hem of the me’il?

8. Which date was the first time that the Mishkan was erected and not dismantled?

9. Where was the Menorah placed in the Mishkan?

10. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as kohanim?

BONUS ANSWER!

Betzalel certainly didn’t make these things alone. Oholiav and all the wise men helped. (See 36:1). But because he took full responsibility and gave himself over completely, it is as if he made them alone.

* Concept based on Dr. Avigdor Bonchek’s new book “What’s Bothering Rashi?” Feldheim Publishers

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

VAYAKHEL


2. 35:2 - To emphasize that the building of the Mishkan doesn’t supersede the laws of Shabbos.

3. 35:11 - The lower curtains that were visible in the structure, the coverings of goat skins, the coverings of ram and tachash skins, respectively.

4. 35:19 - They covered the Aron, Shulchan, Menorah, and the Mizbechos during transport.

5. 35:26 - It was spun directly from off of the backs of the goats.

6. 35:27 - The Princes reasoned that they would first let the people contribute materials needed for the Mishkan and then they would contribute what was lacking. The Torah shows its dissatisfaction by deleting a letter from their title.

7. 35:30, 35:34 - Betzalel ben Uri from the tribe of Yehuda; Oholiav ben Achisamach from the tribe of Dan.

8. 36:35 - Charuvim. (See Rashi 26:31).

9. 37:1 - Because he dedicated himself to its building more than anyone else.


PEKUDEI

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 - The levi’im.

3. 38:22 - The name means “in the shadow of G-d.”

4. 38:26 - 603,550. Every man that was counted from twenty years of age and up (excluding the levi’im).

5. 39:1 - Linen. (See Rashi 31:10).

6. 39:3 - The gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (See Rashi 28:6).

7. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and golden bells.

8. 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)


10. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the consecration of the Mishkan.
Dear Choped,

Choped <Choped@aol.com> wrote:

• Tractate Rosh Hashana 16b

Source:

Name@Withheld wrote,

have been eating raw fish ever since

fortune:  Giving charity, praying, chang-

ing one's ways is then counted in

person who used be lax about mitzvah

powerful resolve to better one's behav-

chassadim.

Dear Bob Glina,

Tzedakah Chassadim means bestow-

There are many types of

The Sages say that

because:

• Tzedaka is only performed with

• Tzedaka only helps poor people,

Dear Rabbi,

Deine and differentiate between

development.

Bob Glina from Birmingham, AL
<brob_karen_gлина@msn.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Define and differentiate between

tzedakah and gemilut chassadim.

Dear Bob Glina,

Gemilut Chassadim means bestow-

Lending money or items is an example of

Gemilut Chassadim is one subcate-

Gemilut Chassadim.  Tzedakah is one subcate-

Gemilut Chassadim is greater than Tzedaka

 because:

• Tzedaka is only performed with

• Tzedaka only helps poor people,

May Hashem grant your wife, Pninah

May May Hashem grant your wife, Pninah

Talmud states that four things have the power to change a person's fortune:  Giving charity, praying, changing your behavior (teshuvah), and changing your name. The Talmud explains that only after Sarah's name was changed (from Sarai to Sarah) did she become pregnant and bear Yitzchak. The Talmud considers a fifth possibility, that of changing one's location.

Changing one's name symbolizes a powerful resolve to better one's behavior. It's like saying "I'm not the same person who used be lax about mitzvah observance." This earnest desire to improve one's ways is then counted in the person's merit.

May Hashem grant your wife, Pninah Tamar bat Leah, a complete and speedy recovery.

Source:

• Tractate Rosh Hashana 16b

Dear Choped,

My friend insists that sushi made from kosher fish, although raw, is kosher, and that there is a glatt kosher restaurant in New York that serves sushi. I responded that sushi cannot be kosher because the fish in its raw state contains blood.” I agree, of course, that if the fish is properly prepared and cooked that the fish would then be permissible to eat. Am I correct?

Dear Choped,

Actually, your friend is correct. Jews have been eating raw fish ever since herring was invented. Although the Torah forbids animal and fowl blood, kosher fish are permitted without removing their blood.

Sources:

• Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 13:1

Dear Rabbi,

“Pareve” is a very common term. Has it always been this way, and when did it originate? Also, what is the source of the word? Thank You.

Melissa Taylor from Raleigh, North Carolina <foodsafety@ncsu.edu> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I have a company who has a labeling issue. They need to know whether the spelling for a Kosher food is pareve, pareve or parave. Could you please tell me the difference if there is one?

Dear Elly Goldberg and Melissa Taylor,

Pareve comes from a Yiddish word meaning something that is neither meat nor milk. It’s not clear exactly when it was introduced into the lexicon, and which from which language it originated (Yiddish is compilation of many languages). It does not appear in Shulchan Aruch. There are similar words in the Talmud, but they seem to have no connection.

Webster’s Dictionary spells it “pareve.” “Pareve” also looks OK, and it’s one letter shorter so you’ll save on printing costs! I suggest that you ask the rabbi supervising the kashrut of your product.

Dr. Eric Chevlen from Youngstown, Ohio <Eric_Chevlen@hmis.org> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Where can I learn about the history of the Daf Yomi (the worldwide coordinated study of a page of Talmud per day)? My recollection is that the "uncoordinated coordination" began about 70 years ago, but I don’t know that for sure, and I don’t remember the name of the Rabbi who promoted or proposed it. I assume there were scholars and laymen who were studying a page of Talmud a day before that. Were they all studying different pages then? What prompted the promoter to make his proposal? How was it first coordinated or promulgated?
Dear Dr. Eric Chevlen,

The idea of having a universal Daf Yomi was first proposed by Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin. It was accepted in 1922 by the Council of Torah Sages in Eastern Europe and thus began what is today an international study scheme by which tens of thousands of Jews worldwide study the same folio page of Talmud every day.

When Rabbi Shapiro raised the idea, one of his most prominent backers was Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, known as the Chafetz Chaim. He supported the idea because certain portions of the Talmud were not commonly studied, “neglected” in favor of more “popular” portions. The methodical study of a page of Talmud a day ensured that the entire Talmud would be studied in the course of seven and a half years.

The first completion of the Daf Yomi cycle took place on Tu B’Shvat 1930. In honor of Rabbi Shapiro, it was celebrated in his town, Lublin. The second completion in 1938 attracted 20,000 celebrants to Lublin, indicating just how popular Daf Yomi had become over such a short period.

The third completion was in 1945. Because of the Holocaust, the largest celebrations were in Israel. The fourth completion was in 1953. The fifth celebration in 1960 was the first one attracting mass attendance in America. Amongst others, it was attended by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Rabbi Yaakov Kamietzky and Rabbi Aharon Kotler.

The sixth completion in 1968 came shortly after the reunification of Jerusalem and the return of the Western Wall. At that time, celebrations were held in the USA, England, Belgium, Argentina, Mexico, Holland and France. The eighth completion in 1982 was the first to cater to large crowds in America, filling New York’s Felt Forum to capacity (5,000 seats) with thousands of people standing outside. In Israel there were 20,000 participants.

In 1990, 20,000 people crowded into Madison Square Gardens to celebrate the ninth completion. The tenth and most recent completion was in 1997. In America alone there were over 70,000 participants! And tens of thousands more throughout the world.

Virtually any place Jews are, there are people studying Daf Yomi. It’s wonderful that a person can go almost anywhere in the world and participate in a class on the exact same section of Talmud he is currently studying. It draws Jews together in a unique way.

I recently had the same question, and looked it up in the English Shemirat Shabbos K’hilchosa (18:44). But there it says you may walk into a reshuth harabim (public domain) with labels; i.e., laundry labels, price tags, identification labels, etc.

• Yossie Abramson <yossie@juno.com>

The Rabbi Responds: The source from Shemirat Shabbat to which you refer does not relate to tags which can be seen on the outside of the garment, but rather to hidden tags. (See chapter 18:30 and footnote 131, and 18:33. See also Mishnah Berurah 301:150.) Accepted practice is to be strict even regarding hidden price tags.
Dressed to Kill

I was at a wedding, standing with a group of friends. We were discussing clothing, shoes, bags and dressing for fancy occasions.

R. admitted, “It took me two hours to get ready for this wedding.”

I piped up, “Two hours! I could never spend two hours to get ready.”

“Well,” commented R., “that’s why I look like this and you look like that.”

I turned and walked away, not knowing where to put myself or what to think. Why would she have said something like that? After replaying the conversation endless times in my mind, it suddenly dawned on me that R. must have felt insulted and lashed back at me for what she felt was an insensitive comment directed at her. Seeing her comment in the context of a response put it in an entirely different light.

A hurtful statement may have been a defensive response to what was perceived as a verbal push. In judging favorably it is helpful to recognize the part we play in triggering other people’s responses. When people feel verbally attacked, they often strike back. We often don’t see our comments as provocative until someone lets us know — in no uncertain terms — that they felt provoked. Others may perceive our words, tone of voice, or facial expressions as hostile or derisive, even though we didn’t mean them as such.

The above is an example of finding a merit for a person which, although it does not completely clear the person, does make the person look better. To completely exonerate the woman in the story, let’s examine her words again, but this time let’s interpret her words to mean the exact opposite: “That’s why I look (bad) like this, and you look (good) like that (because you don’t need to spend so much time getting ready, while I do)!”

Does this seem like a far-fetched interpretation of her words? Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky was once asked by his students: Everything Hashem created has a purpose. What is the purpose of creating “crooked” reasoning? His answer: “So we can use it to judge others favorably.”

• Based on “The Other Side of the Story” by Yehudis Samet, ArtScroll Series

Yiddle Riddle

Who was the first person to study Chumash with Rashi?

answer next week...

Recommended Reading List

**RECOMMENDED READING LIST**

**VAYAKHEL**

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| 40:35 | Covering the Aron |
| **Sforno** | 40:18 | Essence of the Mishkan |
| **Ba’al HaTurim** | 39:27 | Storage of the Garments |
| **Aderes Eliyahu** | 39:33 | The World of the Mishkan |

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