“Every man who raised up an offering of gold to Hashem” (35:22-24)

When speaking of the gifts of gold to the Mishkan Sanctuary, the Torah uses the expression “every man who raised up (lit. waved) an offering of gold to Hashem.” Whereas when speaking about the silver gifts to the Mishkan, it says “every man who separated a portion of silver.” The Ramban comments about the disparity between the description of the gifts of gold and the gifts of silver. Those people who brought gold were far fewer than those who brought silver. When someone brought gold, either he himself would wave it or the collectors of the Mishkan’s gifts would wave the gold in praise of his important donation.

When you use your gold card in order to support G-d’s dwelling place in this world you’ve got something to shout about.

“Go For The Gold!”

“Room At The Bottom”

“The keruvim (cherubim)...with their faces toward one another” (37:9)

The Mishkan and later the Beis Hamikdash represented the “marriage” of the Jewish People and Hashem. The keruvim (cherubim) that were carved from the top of the cover of the holy ark were like a barometer which showed the state of this marriage.

When there was shalom bayis — “marital harmony” — between the Creator and His people, the keruvim faced each other, but when the Jewish People strayed and were unfaithful, the faces of the keruvim turned in opposite directions.

The mishna in Pirkei Avos tells us that on Yom Kippur when everyone stood in the courtyard of the Beis Hamikdash, it was jam-packed. You could hardly move an inch. But when
This haftorah, the haftorah of Parshas Hachodesh, prophetically narrates the consecration of the Tabernacle and of the Temple. As this will occur on the first of Nissan, we thus read this haftorah on the Shabbat preceding the first of Nissan.

The haftorah begins with the entire Jewish nation contributing towards the Temple’s consecration, by raising the funds of the festive inaugural offerings conducted by the prince mashiach. This festivity will be celebrated on Passover. The haftorah ends with official regulations regarding the prince’s authority in granting estates to his subjects, stating that he will not use his power to confiscate lands from their rightful owners, as some of the corrupt kings had done.

**THE CHODESH FESTIVAL**

The haftorah refers to Rosh Chodesh as a festival (46:1-3).

This festive nature is evident also from the obligation to bring a musaf offering on Rosh Chodesh (Num. 28:11).

The Tur (Orach Chaim 417) states that Rosh Chodesh was in fact intended to be holy like a Yom Tov, with a prohibition of creative activity, but unfortunately we lost this opportunity subsequent to the sin of the Golden Calf. We were commanded to observe the three regalim festivals — Pesach, Shavuos and Succos — in the merit of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov; and the twelve Rosh Chodesh festivals were to have been observed in the merit of the twelve tribes. However, when the twelve tribes sinned, Rosh Chodesh lost an element of its holiness and became a day when toil is permitted. The custom for women to abstain from unnecessary work on Rosh Chodesh is because they did not participate in the sin of the Golden Calf. Thus, for them it retains an air of its original grandeur.

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**PARSHA OVERVIEW**

Moshe Rabbeinu exhorts 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 Oholiav as the master craftsmen for the building of the Mishkan and its vessels. 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 (holy ark), which contained the Tablets, from wood covered with gold inside and out. On the ark’s cover were two small figures facing each other, with wings arching over the ark. The menorah candelabra and the shulchan, the table with the showbreads, were also made of gold. Two altars were made: A small incense altar made of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for the purpose of sacrifices made of wood covered with copper.

The Book of Shemos 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 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., the month of Nissan. He tells Moshe the order of assembly of the Mishkan and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the Mishkan is finally complete with every vessel in place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that Hashem’s glory rests 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.

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**HAFTORAH: YEHEZKEL 45:16-46:18**

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time came to prostrate themselves before G-d, there was plenty of room for all.

The same can be said about marriage: If a person “stands,” if he stands on his dignity, if he stands only for himself, if he stands proud with his head high, then matrimony can be very crowding. You can’t move an inch.

But if a person lowers himself, prostrating his own interests beneath those of his spouse, then there is plenty of room for everyone.

**Hitting the Mark, or Marking the Hit?**

“Ten curtains of linen, twisted with turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool” (36:8)

In this week’s Parsha, the Torah details the same description of the Mishkan and its furnishings as it did previously in Parshas Terumah. Why the need for this repetition?

The Dubner Magid was famous for his use of the mashal (parable). With a short story he could illuminate a Torah idea, lighting up the eyes and the minds of all who listened.

The Vilna Gaon once asked the Dubner Magid how it was that he was able to find such wonderfully telling parables that always seemed to hit the bull’s eye. The Dubner Magid, of course, replied with a mashal:

There once was a prince who desired greatly to become a master archer. One day while he was traveling he came to a small village. An archery contest was in progress. The prince noticed that one of the contestants’ accuracy was uncanny. Each of his targets was pierced exactly in the center.

The prince asked this fellow how he was able to achieve such striking results. This was his reply: “Well first I aim at a tree. Then, once I hit the tree, I run up to it and paint a circle around the arrow.”

Said the Dubner Magid to the Vilna Gaon: “I do the same. First I find an interesting story, then I look for a relevant verse or Torah thought which it explains.”

In much the same way, this is what Hashem did when He brought the universe into being. First of all He “wrote” the mashal — the Torah — and then He looked into it and created the world.

The Torah is the blueprint of the world. But more than an architect’s blueprint which is lifeless, the Torah is the dynamo, the source of the spiritual energy that keeps the world turning.

A fluorescent light may consume only a few watts whereas an air-conditioning unit will need several thousand.

In the same way, the “spiritual electricity” of one Torah verse alone was enough to sustain all the creatures of the sea: “Let the waters teem with teeming living creatures...” (Bereishis 1:20)

However, the Mishkan which was Hashem’s “dwelling place” in this world, required the “spiritual current” of a much higher order.

This is the reason there are so many verses in the Torah which refer to the Mishkan. Every verse in its description is like another volt, another watt.

**Sources:**
- Go For the Gold! - Ramban, Rabbi Moshe Zauderer
- No Previous Experience Required - Ramban, Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram
- Room At The Bottom - V.S.
- Hitting The Mark, or Marking The Hit? - Rabbi Mordechai Perlman, Rabbi Reuven Subar

**I Didn’t Know That!**

“Moshe gathered the entire community of Bnei Yisrael” (35:1)

At the time of the sin of the Golden Calf, dissent and disunity splintered the Jewish People. So much so that, according to the Talmud Yerushalmi, each tribe actually had its own golden calf, because they couldn’t agree on one!

Here, with the building of the Mishkan, Moshe seeks to rectify this; he gathers the entire community together, attempting to unite them as when they received the Torah “like one man, with one heart.”

* Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky in “Emes L’Yaakov”
The "Minute Man" and the Scapegoat

The "ish itti" — the man prepared for taking the scapegoat into the wilderness and pushing it off a cliff — did not have to be a kohen. This mishnaiic ruling is derived from the word “ish” (man), which indicates that any Jewish man qualified.

Why, asks the gemara, did the Torah need to use a special term to teach this? Taking the scapegoat to its death is not a service in the Beis Hamikdash, so why would one have assumed that it required a kohen?

The gemara explains that since the Torah uses the term "atonement" regarding the scapegoat, which symbolically carries all the sins of Israel (Vayikra 16:10.22), we might have assumed that it has the status of a sacrifice and is therefore relegated only to kohanim. The Torah therefore uses the word "ish" to qualify a non-kohen as well.

Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Chayos raises an interesting question in his commentary. The gemara (Yoma 64a) equates pushing the scapegoat to its death to the act of slaughtering. And we know that, unlike all subsequent sacrificial procedures, slaughtering a sacrifice does not require a kohen (Berachos 31b). If a non-kohen can slaughter a sacrificial animal, why should I assume that pushing the scapegoat off the cliff — which is equivalent to slaughtering — should require a kohen?

To solve this problem, Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Chayos notes the gemara’s ruling (Yoma 32b) that all procedures of the Yom Kippur service in the Beis Hamikdash must be performed by the kohen gadol, including slaughtering. Without the word “ish” to teach us otherwise, we would have assumed that even the atonement achieved with the pushing of the scapegoat off the cliff must be done by the kohen gadol, not by a regular kohen, and certainly not by a non-kohen.

Restorers of the Crown’s Glory

"Anshei Knesses Hagedolah — Men of the Great Assembly." This is the title given to the extraordinary body of 120 Sages, including the last of the Prophets, who led the Jewish People at the beginning of the Second Beis Hamikdash era.

How did they gain the title “great?” asks Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. “By restoring,” he answers, “the crown to its former glory.”

This Sage cites four passages to explain this point.

- Moshe referred to Hashem as “Great, Mighty and Awesome.” (Devarim 10:17)
- Yirmiyahu described Hashem as “Great and Mighty” (Yirmiyahu 32:18) but did not use the term “Awesome.”
- Daniel directed his prayer to the “Great and Awesome G-d” (Daniel 9:4) but did not mention “Mighty.”
- The Anshei Knesses Hagedolah returned to Moshe’s full, original praise of Hashem, referring to Him as “Great, Mighty and Awesome.” (Nechemia 9:32)

Why did Yirmiyahu and Daniel, each in his own era, delete one of the praises mentioned by Moshe?

Yirmiyahu saw the Babylonian heathens noisily carousing in the Sanctuary and asked himself “Where is G-d’s Awesomeness?” He therefore deleted “Awesome” from his praise.

Daniel saw the Babylonians and Persians subjugating the Jews during the seventy years of exile and asked himself “Where is G-d’s Might?” He therefore deleted “Mighty” from his praise.

The Anshei Knesses Hagedolah offered another perspective in their time. “On the contrary,” they said, “G-d’s might is expressed in the power to restrain Himself and allow the heathens to carry out their oppression (so that their victims will be moved to repentance). G-d’s Awesomeness is expressed in Jewish survival amongst the nations.” (“How great is the lamb which survives against seventy wolves!” said the Roman ruler Andriusus to Rabbi Yehoshua about Jewish survival. “How great is the Shepherd who saves them!” answered the Sage. — Midrash Tanchuma)

How could Yirmiyahu and Daniel, ask the gemara, divert from the praise instituted by Moshe? These sages, explains Rabbi Elazar, were aware how much Hashem values truth, and they would not be untruthful in any way.

Maharsha reconciles the divergences in the praises by pointing out that each of the aforementioned praised Hashem according to what he witnessed in his own time. All of them spoke of Hashem’s Greatness which is revealed at all times in His creation. Moshe, who witnessed Hashem’s power in the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt and forty years in the wilderness, added “Mighty and Awesome.” Yirmiyahu saw the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and could not truthfully testify to witnessing G-d’s “Awesomeness.” He therefore deleted this term from his praise. Daniel did not witness that destruction and was still able to experience Hashem’s “Awesomeness,” but he and his generation suffered what Yirmiyahu did not — enslavement in Babylonian captivity. He could therefore not truthfully testify to Hashem’s “Might.” Therefore he deleted that term.

The Anshei Knesses Hagedolah, however, arrived on the scene at the end of that seventy year exile. They witnessed the miraculous survival of their people in the face of so many troubles, such as the deliverance from Haman’s genocidal plot. In retrospect, they were capable of truthfully testifying, on the basis of their own experience, to Hashem’s Might, expressed in His restraint which allowed time for the lesson to be learned, and the Awesomeness evident in Jewish survival.
PARSHA Q&A

VAYAKHEL
1. What three different words in this Parsha have the same four letters?
2. Why is the prohibition of work on Shabbos written prior to the instructions 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 were the bigdei hasrad for?
5. What was unique about the way the goat’s hair was spun?
6. Why did the princes contribute last? How does the Torah show dissatisfaction with this?
7. Who were the two primary builders of the Mishkan?
8. On which day was the Mishkan first erected and not dismantled?
9. Where in the Mishkan was the menorah placed?
10. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as kohanim?

SHERLOX

Sherlock and the Mystery List
Did you notice that Mr. Glenshire’s account details his movements before and after the crime, but not during?” said world famous detective Sherlock Holmes. “There’s a conspicuous omission in the middle.”

“I really didn’t notice,” said Watstein. “I was too busy being confused.”

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!
All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

VAYAKHEL
1. 36:35, 37:6,19 - Paroches, kapores and kafar.
2. 35:2 - To teach that building the Mishkan does not supersede Shabbos.
3. 35:11 - The lower curtains visible from within, the goat-skins, and the 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 the goats’ backs.
6. 35:27 - The princes wanted the people to contribute first, and only then they would contribute whatever was lacking. Hence, the Torah omits a letter from their title.
7. 35:30, 35:34 - Betzalel ben Uri from Yehuda; Oholiav ben Achisamach from Dan.
8. 36:35 - Keruvim. (See Rashi 26:31).
9. 37:1 - Because he dedicated himself to its building more than anyone.

PEKUDEI
1. 38:21 - To allude to the Beis Hamikdash that would twice be taken as a “mishkon” (pledge) for Jewish People’s sins.
2. 38:21 - The lev’im.
3. 38:22 - “In the shadow of G-d.”
5. 39:1 - Linen. (See Rashi 31:10)
6. 39:3 - Gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (See Rashi 28:6)
7. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and gold bells.
8. 40:17 - Rosh Chodesh Nissan of the second year. For seven days before this, Moshe erected and dismantled the Mishkan. (Rashi 39:29)
9. 40:24 - On the southern side of the Ohel Mo’ed opposite the shulchan.
10. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the Mishkan’s consecration.
An essential “survival technique” for any religious Jew is to be part of an observant community. If you live in the dorms, this presents a problem. It would be much better if you could board with an observant family. It’s very likely that such opportunities exist in Montreal; if at all possible, this should be your first step.

Secondly, you need steady Torah study as part of your daily life. It’s essential to set aside some time every day and night to study Torah, preferably with a chavrutah study-partner. Contact Rabbi Eliyahu Finkelstein or Rabbi Nosson Kulefsky, and they will help you find a study program that fits your college schedule. I’ve included their address below. Wishing you success!

Ohr Somayach of Montreal
6772 deVimy, Montreal, PQ H3S 2R9
Tel: 514-341-6712 / 731-8348

BAD SAMARITANS
Janet from Dallas, Texas
<vaneyst@usa.net> wrote:

Could you please tell me the ways in which Samaritans differed from other Jews? I am preparing a talk and would like to be able to enumerate why the Samaritans were considered different from other Jews. Thank you for your help.

Dear Janet,
The Samaritans were non-Jews brought to Israel by the Assyrians to populate the North after the exile of the Ten Tribes. They ostensibly converted to Judaism, but in reality they continued worshipping idols, save for a period when they were mistakenly considered genuine converts; hence the Samaritans were not considered Jews, neither by Jewish law nor by the Jewish people.

They did not accept the Oral Tradition, which forms the overwhelming bulk of Jewish law. They also did not accept any books of the Bible except for the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua. Today, the Samaritan version of the Torah manuscript differs from ours by about 800 letters.

The Samaritans often acted as enemies of the Jewish people. They tried to destroy the Temple and to inform against the Jews to Roman authorities. The para-

Sources:
• Tractate Bava Batra 22a
• Tanna D’vey Eliyahu. 23:1

IF I WERE A RICH MAN
Daniel Rabchinsky from Mexico City, Mexico <derej@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
We are taught, “Who is rich? The one who is happy with what he has.” Correct me if I’m wrong, but this phrase does not apply to every aspect of our lives, or how does it work? Let’s say that in the material aspect it works, be happy with your house, car, food, etc. But what about the spiritual side? I don’t think that it applies there, because if we are happy with our present knowledge, we wouldn’t be looking for more and I wouldn’t be asking this question! So, how do we apply the principle? Thank you so much for your time and effort. Shalom.

Dear Daniel Rabchinsky,
Should a person be content spiritually? Yes and no. Different people have different spiritual capabilities, and a person should be thankful for whatever spiritual capabilities Hashem has given him.

However, a person should never be content with his spiritual achievements. The Talmud states that “jealousy of Sages increases wisdom.” Our Sages teach us that a person should always say, “When will my actions reach the level of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?”

Sources:
• Tractate Bava Batra 22a
• Tanna D’vey Eliyahu. 23:1
bread must be pareve. This is stated in Shulchan Aruch as follows: “It is forbidden to knead dough for bread with milk, in case a person should (accidentally) eat it with meat...It is similarly forbidden to bake bread in the oven with meat fat...”

But if you mark the bread with some identifying symbol before baking, or if you bake it in an identifying shape so that it’s clear that this bread is not pareve, then it is permitted to make it dairy or meaty. Since it’s marked, you won’t mistake it as pareve. (Marking it after baking doesn’t help, and such bread may not be eaten.)

For example, I have heard that the Bodatz Eida Charedit kashrut supervisory board in Jerusalem requires all dairy pastries to be either triangle or moon-shaped for this reason.

Sources:
• Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 97
• Pitchei Teshuvah 97:3

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**Snake Speak**

Gene <HYKAEH@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I recall having read that in the Talmud there is a comparison between the fangs of a snake and lashon hara, slander. It states that a snake will bite with his poisonous fangs to harm someone with no benefit to itself. This analogy is likened to the person who commits the sin of evil speech. Will you be kind enough to tell me where this teaching can be found? Many thanks.

Dear Gene,

This statement can be found in the Talmud in Arachin 15b and Ta’anit 8a.

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**PUBLIC DOMAIN**

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous “Ohrnet” features

Re: How Big is a Yarmulke? (Ohrnet Shemos):

Regarding the question that appeared in “Ask the Rabbi”: How big must a head-covering be? My friend Rav Yacov Rappaport quoted his father (Dayan Rappaport of London) as saying that a kippah should be big enough to cover your seichel (intellect)!

• David Olesker <olesker@IsraelMail.com>

My Favorite Rabbi:

Just a few words to let you know that this is my favorite page in the whole World Wide Web. This is my Rabbi! I love you people! My family is learning a lot too. Shalom and keep up the good work.

• Felix from South America <felixvelez@hotmail.com>

Re: Not by Chance:

I read the letter in “Public Domain” submitted by Judith Amrani of Houston in which a “chance” reading of a name on your site led to a reunion with a long-absent friend. Many of us believe, many of us know, that these “chance” happenings are not by chance, but are guided from above, if we choose to notice. I note many, many such “coincidences” occurring in my own life, and they seem to increase the more I study, the more observant I become.

• P.I. Danzig <PIDanzig@aol.com>

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Re: Archived Yiddle Riddle:

In connection to your Yiddle Riddle there, I’d like to point out that the Dutch minhag (custom) is to only say the shehecheyanu blessing on the Megillah in the evening.

• Y. Katz, Amsterdam <sskatz@hetnet.nl>

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The Ohr Somayach website

www.ohrnet.org • www.ohr.org.il • www.ohrsomayach.org
Exercise your ability to judge favorably; otherwise, you may end up with...

**A Puff and a Huff**

I got into a cab the other day in Jerusalem. “Do you mind not smoking?” I asked the cab driver.

“No, I don’t mind,” he said. But he made no motion to extinguish the cigarette which dangled from his lips.

“Well then,” I said, “is it possible to put out your cigarette?”

“It’s possible,” he said, but again he took no action.

“Look,” I said, “I can’t ride with you if you’re smoking.”

“Okay,” he said.

“Fine!” I said. “I’m taking another cab!” I opened the door and got out in a huff.

“Look,” said the driver, holding up his unstarted cigarette. “It wasn’t even lit!”

Sheepishly, I got back into the cab.

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

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**Yiddle Riddle**

Last week we asked:

What letter from the Aleph Beis is missing from the Bircat Hamazon and why?

**Answer:**

“Peh sophit” — final peh. The reason being that who ever says the blessing after bread properly will be saved from “aph, shetseph and ketseph;” all of these words are expressions of Hashem’s anger and they all end with the letter “peh sophit.”

• Source: Tashbetz Katan 366

Riddle and answer submitted by Rabbi R.Y. Eisenman, Passaic, NJ <RYE613@aol.com>

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**Sherlox Answer!**

“Notice the conspicuous omission in Rashi’s comment?” asked Sherlox.

“Hmm, now that you mention it, yes. Rashi repeats every item except for the middle two. The verse lists seven items: ‘techeles, argaman, red silk, linen, goat’s wool, dyed-red ram skins and tachash skins.’ Yet Rashi mentions only the first three — ’techeles or argaman or red silk’ — and the last two — ’dyed-red ram skins or tachash skins.’ ”

“Exactly,” said Sherlox. “Rashi omits ‘linen and goat’s wool.’ Why do you suppose that is? How do these two items differ from the others on the list?”

“Give me a clue,” said Watstein.

“Take note,” said Sherlox, “that the items Rashi mentions are generally combined. That is, they are used together in the work of the Mishkan. The items Rashi omits, on the other hand, are used separately. Each one is used by itself in some capacity.”

“Yes! Brilliant observation!” said Watstein. “Techeles, argaman, and red silk were used in combination; for example, they were together in the High Priest’s clothing. Similarly, the dyed-red ram skins and tachash skins were combined, joining together to form one of the Mishkan’s coverings. The linen and goat’s wool, on the other hand, were used separately. The linen was the lone material of the priestly garb, while the goat’s wool was the single ingredient in one of the Mishkan’s coverings.”

“Continue,” said Sherlox.

“Therefore,” said Watstein, “I might have thought that the items which are used in combination must be donated in combination. That is, if you don’t have them all, don’t donate any. Thus Rashi needs to negate this fallacy by inserting the word ‘or’ as he does. But regarding the items which are used separately, it’s obvious that they can be donated separately. Thus, Rashi need not mention those.”

• Based on Sifsei Chachamim; Sherlox is by Reuven Subar

Inspired by “What’s Bothering Rashi?” by Rabbi Dr. Avigdor Bonchek

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**Recommended Reading List**

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“Yes! Brilliant observation!” said Watstein. “Techeles, argaman, and red silk were used in combination; for example, they were together in the High Priest’s clothing. Similarly, the dyed-red ram skins and tachash skins were combined, joining together to form one of the Mishkan’s coverings. The linen and goat’s wool, on the other hand, were used separately. The linen was the lone material of the priestly garb, while the goat’s wool was the single ingredient in one of the Mishkan’s coverings.”

“Continue,” said Sherlox.

“Therefore,” said Watstein, “I might have thought that the items which are used in combination must be donated in combination. That is, if you don’t have them all, don’t donate any. Thus Rashi needs to negate this fallacy by inserting the word ‘or’ as he does. But regarding the items which are used separately, it’s obvious that they can be donated separately. Thus, Rashi need not mention those.”

• Based on Sifsei Chachamim; Sherlox is by Reuven Subar

Inspired by “What’s Bothering Rashi?” by Rabbi Dr. Avigdor Bonchek

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