



Parshas Vayakhel - Pekudei

For the week ending 25 Adar 5759
12 -13 March 1999

Overview

VAYAKHEL

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.

PEKUDEI

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.

Insights

Go FOR THE GOLD!

“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.

NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

“And every man came whose heart was lifted up” (35:21)

Imagine turning up at a spotless hi-tech computer plant and offering your services to build computer chips.

Each chip is no more than a few millimeters square and yet it contains a multitude of components and is capable of making millions of calculations in the time it takes you to say “I'm looking for a job.”

They say to you: “Fine. What experience do you have?”

You say “None. But I know in my heart that I can build all the chips you need.”

“Yeah, look there's a food factory down the block. Why don't you try over there? Maybe you'd be better off frying their chips than ours...”

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22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-581-0315

fax: 972-2-581-2890

info@ohr.org.il

38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

1-212-213-3100

fax: 1-212-213-8717

RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com

613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

1-905-886-5730

fax: 1-905-886-6065

Somayach@MSN.com

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Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman

Parshas **Vayakhel - Pekudei** - 25 Adar 5759, 12 -13

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When *Bnei Yisrael* left Egypt, they had been slaves for so many years. The only skills that they had developed in those years of apprenticeship were how to stir mortar and *shlep* stones. Not exactly an ideal training ground for the extremely high degree of artistry necessary for the building of the *Mishkan*.

Where was their training as carpenters, embroiderers, metal-smiths, sculptors, weavers?

And yet they came to Moshe and said, "Whatever my lord commands, I will do it." And they did it.

Even though the *Mishkan* performed the incredibly complex task of uniting Heaven and Earth, but because it was a spiritual building, all it needed was the desire of its builders to serve Hashem; then Hashem, as it were, filled in the rest of their resumes.

When we want to serve Hashem, to be good Jews and good people, we should remember that no previous experience is required, just a heart that's uplifted to serve.

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 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

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Haftorah: Yechezkel 45:16-46:18

This *haftorah*, the *haftorah* of *Parshas Hachodesh*, prophetically narrates the consecration of the third and everlasting *Beis Hamikdash*. 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.

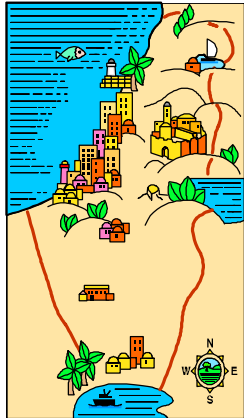
THE CHODESH FESTIVAL

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, Shavous 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.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael



BEIT SHEMESH

This large development town has become, for many religious Jews, a virtual suburb of Jerusalem. Historically, it was tied to Israel's capital in another way.

When the Philistines took the holy ark from the Israelites, they were so frightened by the havoc which Heaven visited upon them that they sent the ark back to Israel on a wagon drawn by animals without a human driver. The wagon headed for Beit Shemesh where it was received with great rejoicing.

From Beit Shemesh the ark was eventually carried to Kiryat Yearim, and then to Jerusalem under the direction of King David.

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