

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE ULTIMATE LABOR SAVER

“Six days labor shall be done, and the seventh day will be holy for you...”

For as long as I can remember, one of society’s most cherished dreams has been a robot that gets all your work done for you.

In the late fifties we were regaled with fanciful concoctions of tin cans that looked like Tin-Man-rejects from The Wizard of Oz, complete with an apron and a happy mechanical smile. In the sixties, wacky inventors produced little motorized “home-puppies” that scooted around cleaning the carpet and sweeping the floors. Nowadays robotics has reached amazing levels. Watching a car being assembled today is an eerie experience with nary a human in sight. (Except of course to execute the mandatory strike for shorter hours and better working conditions.)

I want to let you in on a secret. The Ultimate Labor Saver has been in existence for over three thousand years. The trouble is that many people don’t know

how to operate it.

“Six days labor shall be done, and the seventh day will be for you holy...”

The grammar of this verse is unusual. The Torah doesn’t say you can do labor for six days; rather it expresses itself in the passive, “labor **shall** be done.”

When we keep Shabbat, G-d’s blessings rest on all our workday efforts.

When we keep Shabbat, G-d’s blessings rest on all our workday efforts. If you’re a creative writer for an ad agency, suddenly you’ll find a brilliant new concept just wafts into your consciousness from out of nowhere on Tuesday morning. If you’re a cabinetmaker, all the shelves that you cut are a perfect fit. If you’re a pilot, you’ll find that there’s a break in the weather allowing you a landing-window at your destination, avoiding a three-hour delay and a few hundred irate passengers. The list is as endless as the activities of Man. When we keep Shabbat

properly, even if we don’t overly exert ourselves, we will find that things just seem to get done that little bit quicker and better.

Shabbat is the Ultimate Labor Saver.

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Vayakhel

Moshe Rabbeinu exhorts *Bnei Yisrael* to keep Shabbat, and requests donations for the materials for making the Mishkan. He collects gold, silver, precious stones, skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the *menorah* and for anointing. The princes of each tribe bring the precious stones for the *Kohen Gadol's* breastplate and *ephod*. G-d appoints Betzalel and Oholiav as the master craftsmen. *Bnei Yisrael* contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations. Special curtains with two different covers were designed for the Mishkan's roof and door. Gold-covered boards in silver bases were connected, forming the Mishkan's walls. Betzalel made the Holy Ark (which contained the Tablets) from wood covered with gold. On the Ark's cover were two figures facing each other. The menorah and the table with the show-breads were also of gold. Two altars were made: a small incense altar of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for sacrifices made of wood covered with copper.

Pekudei

The Book of Shemot 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 G-d'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 it, indicating that G-d's glory was resting 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.

ISRAEL Forever

WHAT'S NEW?

The last of the four special supplementary Torah readings will be heard this Shabbat in synagogues throughout the world. It is called *Parshat Hachodesh* and it relates the first mitzvah given to the Jewish People.

This mitzvah- *kidush hachodesh* – forms the basis of the Hebrew calendar. Moshe was commanded to sanctify each month when the moon that had not been visible in the sky reappears as the “new moon”.

The Hebrew month is called *chodesh*, which also

means new. But it is not only the visibility of the moon that is new for the Jewish People. “This *chodesh*”, said the Creator, “is for you.” The subtle message is that the ability to renew our energies is also a unique gift to Jewry.

When the current elections are over Israel will be getting a new parliament and a new government. It is to be hoped that the elected leaders will utilize the ability to effect a new turn in the affairs of the country and return to the old, traditional Torah values which will secure Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE SAGES

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

“...ONE WHO IS ASHAMED TO ASK CANNOT LEARN, AND ONE WHO IS QUICK TO ANGER CANNOT TEACH.” — HILLEL (AVOT 2:5)

One who hesitates to ask others to explain something vague or puzzling which he has read or heard because he is afraid he will look foolish, will stay foolish.

One who is easily angered is not suited to be a teacher or a spiritual leader of a community. Anger deprives him at that moment of the wisdom

required to explain things properly, and therefore confuses both talker and listener. Furthermore, how can a student be expected to pay attention to someone who is hostile to him? “The words of the wise are heard when they are gentle.”

• Tiferet Yisrael



Vayakhel

1. On which day did Moshe assemble the Jewish People?
2. Why is the prohibition against doing work on Shabbat written prior to the instruction for building the Mishkan?
3. Why does the Torah specify the particular prohibition of lighting a fire on Shabbat right after it had already noted the general prohibition of doing work on Shabbat?
4. What function did the “*yitdot hamishkan*” serve?
5. What function did the “*bigdei hasrad*” serve?
6. What was unusual about the way the women spun the goat’s hair?
7. Why were the *Nesi'im* last to contribute to the building of the Mishkan? How does the Torah show dissatisfaction with their actions?
8. Who does the Torah identify as the primary builders of the Mishkan? From which tribes were they?
9. What time of day did the people bring their daily con-

tributions for the construction of the Mishkan?

10. For what was the woven goat’s hair used?

Pekudei

11. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear between the *mitznefet* and the *tzitz*?
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 *parochet* 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*?

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

Vayakhel

1. 35:1 - The day after *Yom Kippur*.
2. 35:2 - To emphasize that the building of the Mishkan doesn’t supersede the laws of Shabbat.
3. 35:3 - There are two opinions: One opinion is to teach that igniting a fire on Shabbat is punishable by lashes as opposed to other “*melachot*” which are punishable by death. The other opinion is to teach that violation of numerous “*melachot*” at one time requires a separate atonement for each violation.
4. 35:18 - The edges of the curtains were fastened to them. These were inserted in the ground so the curtains would not move in the wind.
5. 35:19 - They covered the *aron*, the *shulchan*, the *menorah*, and the *mizbachot* when they were packed for transport.
6. 35:26 - It was spun directly from off the backs of the goats.
7. 35:27 - The *Nesi'im* 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.

8. 35:30, 35:34 - Betzalel ben Uri from the tribe of Yehuda; Oholiav ben Achisamach from the tribe of Dan.
9. 36:3 - Morning.
10. 36:14 - It was made into curtains to be draped over the Mishkan

Pekudei

11. 39:31 - *Tefillin*.
12. 39:33 - He stood it up.
13. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year in the desert. 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 goatskin.
15. 40:20 - The *Luchot Habrit*.
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 *parochet*.
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.

- The “lazy group” and a perspective on indispensability
- Washing the *Beit Hamikdash* floor when Shabbat is the day of offering
- Pesach sacrifice
- Why the blood of the sacrifices was temporarily restrained from exiting
- Which normally forbidden Shabbat activities could be done for the Pesach sacrifice
- Why the Sage Hillel was appointed head of the Sanhedrin
- The dangers of pride and anger
- The limitations imposed on different sorts of spiritually impure people and how they differ in regard to offering Pesach sacrifice
- Resurrection of the dead and other wonders of the hereafter
- The special days when eating is a mitzvah
- The sharp exchange between Rabbi Eliezer and his disciple Rabbi Akiva
- Rabbi Akiva’s principle re violating Shabbat for Pesach sacrifice as it applies to Shabbat circumcision
- The *Chagigah* sacrifice – when it is offered in addition to the Pesach one and the rules that apply to it
- Ben Taima’s position and the question not asked at the Pesach Seder
- The knives lost and found
- Fulfilling the mitzvah of *simcha* with eating sacrificial flesh

FOR G-D AND YOU

We are accustomed to dividing our holidays, with half dedicated to the service of G-d with prayer and Torah study and the other half to enjoying food and drink. The source for this formula is an apparent contradiction between two passages dealing with our obligations during our sacred festivals.

In regard to the festival of Pesach we find (*Devarim* 16:8) the term *atzeret* – a festive gathering – is used, and it is described as being dedicated to G-d. When it comes to the eighth day of Succot, the same term, *atzeret*, is used (*Bamidbar* 29:35), but this time it is designated as being for your – Israel’s – indulgence.

Rabbi Eliezer’s resolution of the two passages is that a Jew has a choice of either dedicating himself completely to prayer and Torah study on the holiday to the exclusion of festive meals, or to indulge in festive meals as the main celebration of the day. Rabbi Yehoshua, on the other hand, saw in these conflicting passages a signal to split the holy day between the spiritual and the physical.

Two questions arise in regard to this *gemara*:

Since the passages cited refer to two different festivals, why not assume that on one of them we must dedicate our *atzeret* to the service of G-d and on the other *atzeret* to our physical enjoyment?

In regard to the third festival, Shavuot, there is no mention of *atzeret* dedicated either to G-d or ourselves. Yet Rabbi Elazar declares that even Rabbi Eliezer will concede that on that festival there must be feasting to celebrate the Giving of the Torah which took place on that day.

Maharsha clears up these problems by pointing out that our Sages found it illogical to assume that different festivals should have different rules as to how they should be enjoyed, so that whatever instruction is found in one applies to all the festivals. He cautions us not to mistake the term *Atzeret* which our Sages use as a name for Shavuot with the word *atzeret* used by the Torah in regard to the other two festivals. And when Rabbi Elazar states that there is a consensus that on *Atzeret* (Shavuot) there must be feasting, he means that even Rabbi Eliezer agrees that one cannot spend the day only in prayer and study but must also celebrate with eating and drinking on the day when we received the Torah.

• *Pesachim* 68b

WHAT THE Sages SAY

“Should a wise man become angry his wisdom will depart from him, and if he is a prophet his power of prophecy will leave him.”

• *Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish - Pesachim* 66b

END OF DAYS

From: Matt in DL

Dear Rabbi,
I am generally aware of the Jewish belief in the End of Days, but is it spoken about in the Torah, and how can we know what it will be like?

Dear Matt,

First, let me say that many great Jewish Sages of recent times have said that we are already in the first phase of the End of Days called 'Ikveta d'Mashicha', which literally means 'on the heels of Mashiach'. The saintly Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman wrote a special treatise on the subject in which he remarked, "If we want to interpret contemporary events we must search after verses and statements that deal with the period known as 'Ikveta d'Mashicha', that is the period of transition from exile to redemption. If we compare the Torah's teachings with events, we will see in the Torah a clear vision of all that is happening to us. Everything spoken in those verses has become real and all events were prophesied from the beginning."

While it is beyond our scope to quote the plethora of Torah sources on the subject, I'll present an overview of what they say will characterize this period and what will be the general order of events.

One major characteristic of the End of Days is the Jewish people's lack of belief in G-d. Rambam, in Iggeret Teiman, writes, "Our sources have already revealed to us that toward the end of the exile, as a result of our suffering, many Jews will come to doubt G-d, be led astray from the Torah and eventually abandon their religion. And all this will be because of our lowly position in the exile and the elevated status of the non-Jews. But a few will still remain loyal and not become confused."

Many verses affirm that before the redemption, the Jews will err after various forms 'idol worship', changing their allegiance from one to another. Indeed, during the last hundred years, most Jews have abandoned G-d, transferring their allegiance from one "ism" to another, to which they literally sacrificed their blood, children and money. German Enlightenment, Liberalism, Democracy, Socialism, Communism – yet each of these idols betrayed them. Rabbi Wasserman himself wrote that the Jews' belief in Nationalism and Socialism caused their own downfall through National Socialism.

The second major characteristic is a lack of commitment to *mitzvot*. Many sources portend that in the End of Days, most Jews will despise the Torah, the *mitzvot*, and those Jews who observe them. Ramban confirms this and writes that in the End of Days, the majority of Jews will have forgotten the Torah and will therefore transgress most of the *mitzvot*. He notes one exception: *brit mila*. This is based on the verse, "With the blood of your covenant I have freed your prisoners from a pit [exile] in which there was no water [Torah]"

(Zacharia 9:11). Interestingly, most non-observant Jews today inexplicably continue the covenant.

Many sources describe the order of events of the End of Days. The Vilna Gaon explicates one such source by noting that 'Torah' means instruction. This certainly applies to the explicit teachings of the Torah, but even events described in the Torah are also instructions. This is the meaning of the teaching of our Sages, "The deeds of the Fathers are a prelude for the children". Inherent in the Torah narratives about the forefathers are all the future episodes to occur to Jewish people.

Thus, the events in Jacob's life reflect what will happen to the Jews in future times. While returning from exile in Padam Aram to the Land of Israel, Jacob is threatened by Esav (Gen. 30). Accordingly, during the last stage of exile, before returning to the Land of Israel, the Jews will be persecuted by the descendants of Esav, the European nations.

"And a man wrestled with him and smote him on the thigh". A man refers to the mundane, and Jacob's thigh refers to the supporting pillar of Israel. This portends that during that period, secularism will undermine the foundations of Torah. Jewish children will cease to learn Torah in favor of secular studies and wealthy Jews will cease to support Torah in favor of secular philanthropies. In either case, this blow to the thigh of Jacob will shake the supporting pillar of Israel.

"And Jacob put the handmaids and their children first". This alludes to the fact that the descendants of the mixed multitude, who defy G-d and deny the Torah, will stand at the head of the people, particularly upon the Jewish people's return to the Land of Israel after the long exile. "And Leah and her children after", represents the Jewish masses that will be lured to follow after the mixed multitude and be deluded into forsaking G-d and the Torah. "And Rachel and Joseph at the end", corresponds to the observant Jews and Torah scholars who will be put at the very end. They will be considered by the others to be the lowest part of the Jewish people, rejected and despised.

Other sources add that once the Jews return to their land, they will be greatly distressed by the descendants of Ishmael (Zohar, Vaera p. 32a). Eventually, an extremely numerous and powerful people of the descendants of Esav, after having overrun the rest of the Middle East, will invade the Land of Israel from the North (Daniel 11,12; Yechezkel 39). This will initiate the cataclysmic war of Armageddon, a conflict whose resolution will ultimately result in the victory of Mashiach and the final Redemption.

Sources/Notes:

- Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, 'Ikveta d'Mashicha'
- Rabbis of recent times who identified our period as the beginning of the End of Days: Chafetz Chaim, 'Shem Olam' vol. 2 ch. 2, 'Tzipita l'Yeshua'; Chazon Ish, Igrot vol. 1 p. 96, 111; the Steipler, intro. to 'Chaye Olam'; Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian; Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, 'Ikveta d'Mashicha'
- Ramban, commentary on Shir HaShirim 8:13

GOING My Way?

Question: I have an opportunity to give a fellow worker a lift in my car. The only problem is that I am in the habit of making some highly personal telephone calls during the time I drive, something that I will have to forgo if I have a passenger and thus lose some precious time. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: First of all, I hope you are able to make calls while driving with both hands free to grab the wheel in accordance with the traffic laws.

As regards the moral aspect, you would be well advised to view giving a lift as an act of *hachnasat orchim* hospitali-

ty. The great halachic authority Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *zatzal*, is quoted as saying that in our society, where it is rare for a poor wanderer to be in need of a meal, the only regular opportunity for performing *hachnasat orchim* is offering a lift. He reportedly ruled that one who buys a car with the intention of providing lifts should make the blessing of *hatov umeitiv*, which one says when the enjoyment of his acquisition of a valuable item is to be shared by others.

You are well aware that offering hospitality in your home requires time, energy and money. Is it not worth a few minutes of your time without calls to do the same in your automobile?

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY _____

THE WRONG CLASS

When a new student arrived at Ohr Somayach with the intention of doing some Torah study before beginning his residency for being licensed as a physician in the U.S., he was assigned to one of the Ulpan classes for beginners with limited knowledge of Hebrew.

He walked into the Ulpan class taught by Rabbi Avraham Zuroff and soon realized that he had wandered into the wrong class. It turned out, however, to be the right class in another sense when Rabbi Zuroff asked him his name. Upon hearing the family name Rabbi Zuroff

commented that his child's pediatrician in Kiryat Sefer had the same name. The student turned pale upon hearing the full name of the doctor and then explained why.

About 20 years ago this young man's parents were divorced in Russia. He went to the U.S. with his mother and heard rumors that his father eventually came to Israel. During several trips to Israel he made unsuccessful attempts to locate his father, even enlisting the services of a friend in Army Intelligence. Only now, by coming to Ohr Somayach and entering the wrong Ulpan class did he finally succeed in being reunited with his long-lost father.

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