

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT PEKUDEI · 1 ADAR II 5768 · MAR. 8 2008 · VOL. 15 NO. 23

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE GURU FROM RAMAT GAN

*"...and the glory of G-d filled the Tabernacle." (40:34)*

In the daily life of a Jew there is a moment of total abnegation of self, a moment of sublime connection to the Almighty in which our very existence fades into Him.

This moment is the recital of the Shema.

In this spiritual highlight of the day, the Halacha requires an elevated degree of concentration during its recital. At certain points while saying the Shema one may not even pause to greet a king who has the power of life and death, so total is our engrossment with the King of life and death.

Nevertheless, when Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, *atzal*, in the midst of his morning recital of the Shema, heard an argument between two people about which of them was responsible to bury a cadaver, he stopped immediately, removed his *tefillin* and ran to perform the burial.

If you ever manage to travel the Inca Trail to Macchu Picchu in Peru, chances are that you'll hear something like "*Shloime, efoh atah?*" wafting up from the other side of the mountain; or sitting on the roof of the world in Katmandu, don't be surprised if the backpacker sharing the view beside you comes from Ramat Gan. The obligatory "pilgrimage to the East" features high on the to-do list of Israeli youth.

The nature of a Jew is to search for spirituality, so why do comparatively few Israelis make their way up the Jerusalem Hills to the Holy City, whereas two years ago the world's largest Passover Seder, with some 1,500 Israelis, took place in Katmandu?

When Avraham saw three strangers approaching, he curtailed his audience with the Almighty, and rushed out to greet his potential guests. The spiritual masters reveal that this incident teaches that the mitzvah of welcoming guests takes precedence over an audience with G-d.

A Jew's job is not so much about flying high in the spiritual worlds, be they above Katmandu or Jerusalem — it's about serving G-d. It's about taking guests rather than being a guru, as it says in the Ethics of the Fathers, "One hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is worth more than a life of eternity in the World to Come."

Doing what G-d asks of us is greater than any spiritual enlightenment that could be attained either in this world or the next.

• Source: Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe  
(*Shiurei Chumash, Parshat Vayera*)

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

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

### THE FIERY COIN

Jews are generous people and this Shabbat recalls their first opportunity to contribute to a sacred cause. In addition to the regular weekly portion, this Shabbat we will read *Parshat Shekalim*, which recalls that call to generosity includes a hint that Moshe was shown by G-d a fiery half-shekel coin as a model for the coins that Jews would be required to contribute.

Why a coin of fire rather than one of silver that was

what Jews would be giving?

It has been suggested that the message was that even though every Jew would be giving exactly the same amount, the value of his gift would depend on how much fiery enthusiasm accompanied that gift.

It is this sort of enthusiastic giving for sacred causes that will sustain Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

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

### TVERIA HOT SPRINGS – TOMB OF RABBI YIRMIYAHU

It is not often that the tomb of a Talmudic Sage is reached on a main road. Rabbi Yirmiyahu's tomb is on the grounds of the Ganei Hamat Hotel next to the Tveria Hot Springs.



Tradition has it that this Sage asked his disciples to bury him on a main road so that he would be prepared to rise the moment Mashiach arrives.

S U B S C R I B E !

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## 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 *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*?

## 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 *Beit 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 G-d forgave them for the golden calf and allowed His *Shechina* to dwell among them.
3. 38:21 - The *levi'im*.
4. 38:21 - Itamar 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 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

לע"נ

ר' דוד בן ר' אהרון ע"ה  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

- Different motives for husband's silence towards wife's vow
- Which sort of vow husband has power to nullify
- A wife's vow regarding bathing and whether abstaining from bathing constitutes severe suffering
- Comparing the importance of bathing and washing clothes
- Important insights regarding study of Torah
- Wife's vows that affect relationship with husband
- Wife's vow to be a nazirite
- Her vow to abstain from benefiting from anyone
- The concept of *tovat hana'ah* as having monetary value
- Can someone consecrate something which is not yet in existence

## SCHOLARS AND KINGS

“Pay special attention to the children of the poor for they are destined to succeed in their study of Torah.”

This was the message sent to the Sages in Babylon from their colleagues in Eretz Yisrael.

The Torah source for this is a passage (*Bamidbar 24:7*) in the prophecy of Bil'am, which speaks of water flowing *midalyav*. Torah is compared to water and the Hebrew word for a poor person is *dal*. The interpretation is then that *midalyav* — from his poverty shall Torah flow.

But why should poverty be an advantage in achieving success in Torah study?

Rabbeinu Nissim (RaN) offers two reasons. One is that since their economic situation is one in which they will not

have the distraction of involvement in an occupation and will therefore be free to be totally involved in Torah study.

The other reason is that it is often mentioned throughout the Talmud that humility is an indispensable element for Torah success. The poverty of these youngsters will certainly protect them from haughtiness and help them succeed.

In his commentary on this very passage Rashi refers us to the interpretation of *Targum Onkeles* which is a prophecy regarding the great kings which will arise *midalyav* — from the wellsprings of the people — to conquer Israel's enemies and establish great kingdoms.

Perhaps one can see a connection between the two interpretations based on the famous Talmudic expression “Who are the kings if not the Torah scholars.”

• *Nedarim 81a*

## What the SAGES Say

“Be careful to study Torah together with others (for no one can effectively explore something without the help of another – Rashi).”

• *Message from Sages in Eretz Yisrael to their colleagues in Babylon - Nedarim 81a*

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## WHO SAYS RASHI'S RIGHT?

**From: Binyamin**

Dear Rabbi,  
An 8th grade, 13-year-old boy asked me today why I accept what Rashi says in his commentary on Chumash. The 8th grader claims Rashi could be wrong you know. There were other commentators. He was not there, how does he know what really happened and why it happened. Here is the question: Why do we adhere to Rashi so much? Why do we accept our commentaries over any other type of biblical commentary?

Dear Binyamin,

I once heard a clever idea: Since Rashi didn't have Rashi's commentary, whose commentary did he learn? The answer is Rashi learned "roshi" – which means "one's own head".

Use this idea to encourage your student to apply his own thinking to understanding whatever he's learning before consulting any commentary. Train him to ask questions, apply critical thinking, explore many possible approaches and explanations while simultaneously searching for proofs or refutations for all the possibilities he's pondered. In short, convey to him the importance of learning "roshi" before looking into Rashi.

That being said, an essential part of Rashi's "roshi" was the tremendous amount of information he acquired by applying himself day and night from early youth to learning the entire Torah – Chumash, Talmud, Midrash, Halacha – by heart. In short, Rashi knew the entire Torah such that it is not for naught that Rashi is said to be an acronym for

"Rabban shel Yisrael" – the rabbi of all Israel.

Therefore, after learning "roshi", one must lower one's head in deference and awe for the scholarship of Rashi's commentary which is culled and distilled from sources which most people don't even know exist, and will probably never even see, let alone understand. Rashi's commentary is so authoritative, then, not because he lived in those times or witnessed the events described, but because he delved with such depth and breadth into the sources of those who either lived then, or at least received a tradition or explanation from those who did.

Therefore, when "roshi" argues with Rashi, the response should not be why I'm right and Rashi's wrong, but rather: "Why didn't Rashi explain as I did", or "Why didn't I see it as Rashi did?"

Similarly, when others of the great commentators argue on Rashi, we are not qualified to mediate between such giants to consider one right and the other wrong. Rather we must marvel at the scholarship and genius of both commentaries, accepting both as diverging facets of the same truth. This is the spirit of the teaching of our Sages: "These, and also these, are the words of the Living G-d". Of course, since the other commentaries saw Rashi, when they don't argue with him (which is usually the case), they agree with him, and he is certainly right.

So the bottom line is, after applying "roshi", we accept Rashi because he knew virtually the entire Torah while we know nearly no Torah – which is also the reason why we accept his opinion in particular, or the opinion of other of "our" Torah giants in general, over the opinion of what you refer to as "any other type of Biblical commentary" by which I understand from the context to mean not "ours". Namely, the former knew the entire Torah while the latter, as intelligent and educated as they may be, know little of the "words of the living G-d".

## WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

### WHO MAKES THE BEDS?

**Question:** We are giving our home this Shabbat to a family visiting our neighborhood for a simcha celebration in their family, while we visit our children in another community. Is it our responsibility in the spirit of *hachnasat orchim* hospitality to prepare beds for them or is it sufficient to just leave them sheets and blankets to make their own beds? What is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** When an overnight guest in the Radin home of the Chafetz Chaim saw his aged host rushing into the guest room with sheets and blankets, he insisted on making his

bed himself.

"Well, if that's the way you feel about it," said his saintly host, "perhaps you will also put on my *tallit* and *tefillin* for me tomorrow morning?"

"But, rabbi," protested the guest, "you know better than I that I can't perform such a mitzvah for you and that you must do it yourself."

"Why is *hachnasat orchim* any different?" challenged his smiling host. "Taking care of a guest is my mitzvah and not the guest's."

## THE RABBI AND THE HITCHHIKER

In the *Parshat Mishpatim* issue we told the story of “The Rabbi and the Cabbie”. This inspired the following response from Rabbi Michael Unger, a resident of the community established years ago in Zichron Yaakov.

I guess I have a story for you. I have been saying Kaddish and leading the davening since my mother passed away before Yom Kippur. In Zichron Yaakov there are regular *minyanim* and I have no problem finding a minyan for throughout the day.

Last month I had a job interview to work in Pardes Chana, a 20-minute drive from Zichron Yaakov. At the interview I was told that the hours are 9 am – 5 pm and I said I needed a 45-minute break for Mincha and Kaddish, and the employ-

er agreed. Just I didn’t know where and when I would *daven*. I told the employer that I would start when I found a minyan.

The next morning I decided to drive to Pardes Chana and searched for a minyan. So I got into my car and drove maybe two minutes and then saw a neighbor of mine at a bus stop. I stopped and asked him where he was going. He replied that he needed to get to his Kollel in Pardes Chana. I asked him when Mincha is there. He said, “Every day at 2:50 pm”. I told him, “Today I am taking you there so you can show me where the Kollel is.”

Since then I have been leading the davening and saying Kaddish daily in Pardes Chana.

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