

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYAKHEL · 22 ADAR I 5774 - FEB. 22, 2014 · VOL. 21 NO. 22

PARSHA INSIGHTS

A “BETZALEL PRODUCTION”

It always amazes me how many people it takes to make a movie. The end credits of a major production read like the telephone directory of a small town with hundreds of people all involved in bringing us a couple of hours of fantasy. And yet at the beginning of the film there is always one name by itself. “A Francis Ford Copolla Film” or “A Martin Scorsese Film” or “A Steven Spielberg Production.” In spite of the myriad of workers on a film, the film is still called after its director, for it is his vision that makes the film.

Everything in this world is a marriage of form and matter. Take a spoon for example. The matter of the spoon is the metal. Its form is its shape. The form of something always reveals its purpose. The form of a spoon is that it has a handle at one end to grasp it and a receptacle at the other to contain soup, sugar and the like. The form of something always reveals its purpose, and the purpose of something ultimately reveals its spiritual dimension. Even a spoon has a spiritual side! Everything in this world reveals a marriage of the physical and the spiritual, of matter and shape, of potential and purpose.

Just as the lowest physical object unifies these two entities, so too do the highest of physical existences. The Mishkan, the Tabernacle, was one of the most spiritual physical objects that existed. It was the house in which the *Shechina*, the Divine Presence, would dwell.

The Mishkan was constructed by many people. Moshe called upon every G-d-fearing man and woman to assist by spinning and weaving tapestries and constructing the com-

ponents of the walls of the Mishkan with their own hands. The special skill of the women was spinning goat hair for the tapestries. The hair was both fine and stiff which made it difficult to work with.

G-d gave all those who worked on the Mishkan a measure of special know-how. This supernal wisdom was not limited only to humans. Even the animals that transported the beams of the Mishkan knew which route to take and did not require guidance.

The two people in charge of building the Mishkan were Betzalel and Oholiav. G-d gave them a special degree of insight to help them fulfill their task of fashioning the vessels of the Mishkan and to form even the most delicate of patterns, all of which were necessary for the vessels to perform their allotted spiritual functions.

However, in the Torah the only one who seems to receive credit for the building of the Mishkan is Betzalel. The verses in the Torah repeat over and over “*and he made it.*”

The reason is that Betzalel not only exerted himself in the physical construction of the Mishkan, but he labored more than anyone else to understand the spiritual depths in each of the mystical vessels of the Mishkan. Because of this effort G-d rewarded him with the highest level of spiritual insight into the Mishkan and its implements.

Betzalel endowed the vessels of the Mishkan with lofty and holy thoughts. He was the spiritual maker of all that it contained and thus the Torah attributes the construction to Betzalel alone.

BARUCH DAYAN HAEMES

WITH SADNESS WE MOURN THE LOSS OF

RABBI MEIR SCHUSTER, ZT”L

The Ohr Somayach Family extends its condolences to Rebbetzin Schuster and the entire family.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

PARSHA OVERVIEW

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 differ-

ent 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 showbreads 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.

TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

SUCCAH 20 - 26

"May I be atonement for Rabbi Chiya and his sons...."

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said these words as an introduction to a statement he made regarding the Torah greatness of Rabbi Chiya and his sons. From Rashi's commentary it seems that although literally he was saying that his own suffering should serve as atonement for them, his main intent was to show them honor. Rashi also explains that this expression of honor is one that a person should use when one mentions his father or Rabbi after they pass from this world. This ruling is cited in the Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 240:9 and 242:28 as the halacha for the first 12 months.

• *Succah 20a*

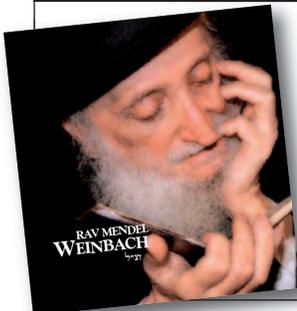
"People involved in a mitzvah are exempt from the mitzvah of Succah."

This teaching in the *mishna* on our *daf* is explained in the *gemara* as an example of a well-known rule that "One who is involved in a mitzvah is exempt from a different mitzvah." Rav Huna derives this rule from the mitzvah of saying the "Shma". The verse states that "Shma" is a mitzvah to do when "going in *your way*" – but not while in the middle of going in a way commanded by G-d — i.e. a different mitzvah.

Rashi writes that the *mishna* is speaking about people who are, for example, travelling to learn Torah, visit their Rabbi or redeem captives — and they are exempt from the mitzvah of Succah even while they are encamped during their travel. Tosefot seems amazed by this exemption, since why can't they fulfill both *mitzvot* at the same time? "Is someone with *tzitzit* on his garment exempt from other *mitzvot*?" Tosefot clarifies that a person is exempt from another mitzvah only while actively involved in fulfilling the first mitzvah, but not while passively fulfilling it. And that is the case in our *mishna* about Succah as well.

• *Succah 25a*

A Memorial Tribute on the First Yahrzeit



THE MEMORIAL TRIBUTE BOOK FOR RAV WEINBACH ZT"l

is available in print at Ohr Somayach* as well as in PDF format on www.ohr.edu

* Suggested minimum donation for the printed version is 36 nis.

Proceeds will be used for the Gemach Charity Fund established by Rav Weinbach, zt"l.

PARSHA Q&A ?

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 contributions for the construction of the Mishkan?
10. For what was the woven goat’s hair used?
11. What image was woven into the *parochet*?
12. Why does the Torah attribute the building of the *aron* to Betzalel?
13. Where were the sculptured *keruvim* located?
14. How many lamps did the *Menorah* have?
15. Of what materials was the *mizbe'ach haketoret* composed?
16. Of what material was the *mizbe'ach ha'olah* composed?
17. The *kiyor* was made from copper mirrors. What function did these mirrors serve in Egypt?
18. How did the *kiyor* promote peace?
19. The *kiyor* was made from the mirrors of the women who were crowding at the entrance to the *Ohel Mo'ed*. Why were the women crowding there?
20. Of what material were the “*yitdot hamishkan*” constructed?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week’s Questions!

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

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.
11. 36:35 - *Cherubim*. (See Rashi 26:31)
12. 37:1 - Because he dedicated himself to its building more than anyone else.
13. 37:7 - On the two extremities of the *kaporet* (cover of the *aron*).
14. 37:23 - Seven.
15. 37:25,26 - Wood overlaid with gold.
16. 38:1-2 - Wood overlaid with copper.
17. 38:8 - These mirrors aided in the proliferation of the Jewish People. The Jewish women in Egypt would look in the mirrors so as to awaken the affections of their husbands who were exhausted by their slave labor.
18. 38:8 - Its waters helped a woman accused of adultery to prove her innocence.
19. 38:8 - To donate to the Mishkan.
20. 38:20 - Copper.

Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT VAYAKHEL

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

Since this week's Torah portion deals to a large extent with the structure of the Tabernacle and its utensils, which was detailed previously in Parshat Terumah, it is important to relate Abarbanel's outline of the symbolic meanings which he described in Parshat Terumah.

The symbolism of the portable Tabernacle (Mishkan) and its utensils is not based on understandings that can be derived by human rational intellect, for G-d clearly has no need to physically symbolize concepts that Man can derive on his own. Additionally, Man's intellect often leads him astray, especially when he connects the symbolism of the Mishkan to astronomical and other more spiritual matters. Therefore it is much more fitting to understand the Mishkan as a means to assist us in our faith in the Divinely-ordained Torah and *mitzvot*, in a way that each symbol and construct will guide us to behave properly according to the dictates of the Torah.

The Holy of Holies, within which were the Ark and Tablets, the special covering, and the cherubim, symbolizes that our purpose is to be involved in G-d's Torah and *mitzvot*. This is directly symbolized by the Tablets and the adjacent Torah scroll within the Ark. The gold cover of the Ark indicates that the true crown is the crown of Torah. The cherubim, one a male and the other a female child, represent the need to be involved in Torah from our youth. Their wings point upward to tell us that everything emanates from G-d above and they face each other to show the importance of love for our fellow Jews. The Holy of Holies symbolizes the concept of Torah *l'shma* — learning Torah and performing *mitzvot* for their own sake, without any expectation of reward.

The next section, the Inner Courtyard is separated from the Holy of Holies by a curtain, as it represents a different idea — the rewards that G-d grants to those who serve Him. The Menorah, the Table of show-bread and the golden incense Altar indicate that even though the ultimate goal is to keep Torah and *mitzvot* without any expectation of reward, G-d still rewards those who are faithful to Him. The Table with its twelve loaves of bread represents the material rewards of wealth and honor which result from G-d's providence. This is also indicated by its construction out of pure gold. The number twelve could point to the months of the year, in that our sustenance is constant, and also to the twelve tribes to indicate that all Jews are included, and also the twelve constellations to indicate that the entire physical universe is under G-d's direction.

Besides the body, the soul is also rewarded with wisdom and knowledge as symbolized by the Menorah. The seven flames represent the seven types of wisdom. The center flame points toward the Holy of Holies and the other six flames point toward the center flame to indicate that all true wisdom emanates from the contents of the Ark. The Menorah is made from solid gold to indicate that this true wisdom is enduring, eternal and unadulterated by false ideas. The cups, knobs, and flowers represent the different

branches of knowledge, their distinctions and their interdependence, as one leads to the next. Yet because the Menorah was fashioned from one solid piece of gold indicates that all knowledge is unified through Torah.

The third object in the Inner Courtyard, the golden incense Altar represents the soul's reward of an eternal existence after the death of the body. This is symbolized by the smoke which rises upward. This Altar is situated against the Holy of Holies and is not connected to the Table or the Menorah. This is an indication that the eternity of the soul is not acquired through an accumulation of wealth and honor as symbolized by the Table, or by the intellect as symbolized by the Menorah, but rather through adherence to Torah and *mitzvot*. The Altar is covered with gold to indicate the importance and eternity of the World-to-Come. Yet underneath the gold is wood, to teach us that it is through our physical actions which are as ephemeral as wood that we can merit the eternal life symbolized by the gold.

These three types of reward are also contained in the three verses of the Priestly Blessing. The first line speaks of blessing and guarding, a reference to our material blessings, represented by the Table and show-bread. The second line speaks of G-d shining His 'face' on us, a reference to the shining light of wisdom represented by the Menorah. The third line speaks of peace or complete fulfillment, a reference to the fulfillment of our purpose in life through the eternity of the soul as represented by the Altar of gold.

The third division of the Mishkan, the Outer Courtyard, contains the sacrificial copper Altar and its ramp, as well as the washing basin. The Altar symbolizes the inevitable physical death of our body. Without the awareness of death we cannot attain fear of G-d or the ability to keep His Torah. Nor will we merit the rewards that follow. For this reason the incense Altar comes after the sacrificial Altar to indicate that only after death do we merit our ultimate reward. It is made of copper, not gold, to indicate the fragility of the physical world. Its netting symbolizes the fact that the awareness of death is like a net spread over all of life, and its base is hollow to symbolize the hollowness of physical existence. It looks solid and permanent from the outside, but inside is only emptiness. The root of the word for 'ramp' is the same as the word for 'destruction', indicating that death is the ultimate destroyer. Finally, the prohibition against ascending to the Altar by way of steps is another play on words, as the root of the word 'steps' is the same as the expression 'positive advantages' — indicating that there are no positive advantages to be gained by death.

Finally, the washing basin is an indication that all the rewards previously described can only be attained when an individual is able to purify himself from his negative traits. The water of the washing basin represents the Torah, which is ultimately the only way to purify oneself and develop the sterling character that will result in G-d's rewards.

SHALOM ZACHOR

From: Tobi

Dear Rabbi,
My sister has given birth to a boy, and we are wondering about the custom of what we've been told is called "Shalom Zachor", which seems to be some type of home-welcoming for the baby held on Shabbat. What is the reason for this custom? Where is the ceremony held and how? Does it have anything to do with the brit milah, or is it something different?

Dear Tobi,

Mazal tov on the birth of this new addition to your family! May you merit bringing him into the covenant of Avraham Avinu, and may you merit raising him to Torah, chupa and good deeds!

The term "shalom zachor" means peace upon/welcome to the male child. Thus the custom does seem to be based on welcoming the newborn into the home and community. It is indeed held on the night of the baby's first Shabbat. Family and friends gather to bless the child and mother, to say words of Torah and to make blessings over foods in their honor and merit.

It is often held in the house where the mother and baby are, but it may also be done in the shul, or really anywhere else that is convenient for a reception and is accessible to one's guests. The shalom zachor benefits the mother and baby even if they are not present.

The reasons for doing it on Shabbat is that this is a time when people are available and can visit with leisure and amity, and because of the beneficial influence and blessing of Shabbat itself on the baby. Indeed, the fact that the brit is performed no earlier than the eighth day after birth means that the baby will always undergo the uplifting experience of Shabbat before the brit.

That being said, it is not directly related to the brit, such that even if the brit is delayed for whatever reason, the shalom zachor is still held the first Shabbat. On the other hand, even if the shalom zachor was not performed the first Shabbat, it can still be done on another Shabbat.

It is very good to encourage people to prepare and say words of Torah in honor of the occasion, either on the weekly Torah portion or about the mitzvah of brit mila.

Customarily, one also offers a variety of cakes, fruits, nuts and seeds, and various beverages, including those used for a "L'chaim" for the guests to make blessings over in honor of the mother and baby.

Perhaps the most well-known food offered at a shalom zachor is cooked chickpeas or "arbes". There are different reasons suggested for this custom. Either because as a round food, it recalls the circular nature of life at this inception of the life-cycle; or, alternatively, its association as a food of mourners expresses our empathy with the infant's sorrow over parting from the joy of being taught Torah by an angel while in his mother's womb.

In either case, we bless the child that he embark upon a life full of Torah study and observance of the *mitzvot*.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

KIBBUTZ KALYAH – TWO MEANINGS OF A NAME

Near Yam Hamelach (the Dead Sea) is a kibbutz with a most interesting name. Kalya is mentioned in the Talmud as the name of a plant growing in the Yam Hamelach area which is used in the manufacture of soap. The kibbutz took on the name of this plant, but after the Six Day War this name became popular as an acronym for the revival of the Dead Sea: **KAm**



Latchiya Yam Hamelach (the Dead Sea has come to life).

As any visitor to that area can see, the once "dead" sea today brings life to the many people enjoying its therapeutic waters and luxurious hotels, not to mention the major medical and cosmetic industries that have been developed from its rich mineral content.

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General Editor and Talmud Tips: Rabbi Moshe Newman • Design: Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro

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PRAYER FUNDAMENTALS - PART 4

G-d's All-Encompassing Power

I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His name, rules over all of His creations, and has the power to provide all of our needs, and to save us from any situation, without any limitation. (“Principles of the Faith”)

Although belief in G-d's existence is essential to prayer, its essence extends far beyond this. For one to place his trust totally in G-d, praying to Him with utmost conviction, he must contemplate the fact that G-d has the ability to grant his every request, whatever it may be. Thus, by turning to G-d and crying from deep within our hearts, we testify that we believe in G-d's absolute control over every aspect of His world.

One must reflect on the fact that for G-d even the biggest miracle, like splitting the Sea of Reeds, is a simple matter. Since everything is as naught before G-d, then, in truth, big and small are the same to Him. It follows then that nothing is too small to ask from G-d since to Him it's all the same. Whether it's a life or death situation or an annoying ingrown toenail; a breakthrough million dollar deal or getting a good parking spot at the mall, G-d is there

to turn to for help, guidance and salvation.

This idea is expressed in the story of the great Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa. One Shabbat eve Rabbi Chanina found his daughter crying because she had mistakenly used vinegar instead of oil to light the Shabbat candles, and since it was after sunset it was too late to fix it. He responded to her calmly, saying, “The One Who commanded oil to burn will command vinegar to burn.” And indeed that is what happened.

Although G-d does not always choose to transcend the laws of nature for everyone, one must understand that from G-d's perspective it is no more difficult for Him to change nature than it is to create it.

One might wrongly conclude that G-d would never perform a miracle for him, reasoning that G-d caused vinegar to burn only in the merit of the great Rabbi Chanina, who was the most righteous man in his generation. The truth, however, is that G-d constantly performs miracles for all of us, as we proclaim three times daily in the *Amidah* prayer, “We thank You... for Your miracles that are with us every day, and for your wonders and favors in every season - evening, morning, and afternoon.” When a person turns to G-d with the firm belief that G-d has the power to do anything, he can also merit seeing miracles in his life.

@ OHR *Profiles of Ohr Somayach Staff, Alumni and Students*

Steve Kaplan

Steve Kaplan is a 26 year-old newly-married alumnus of Ohr Somayach now living in Highland Park, NJ. Steve received his B.S. in Physics from Loyola University in Chicago and is now working toward his PhD in physics at Rutgers University in New Jersey. He is currently working with the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) experiment at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Geneva, Switzerland.

Steve was inspired by many staff members at the JET in Chicago to become observant. Foremost among them were Ohr Somayach alumni, Rabbis Shalom Garfinkel and Zev Kahn. Steve describes



his connection to Ohr Somayach as follows: “In the middle of my senior year as an undergraduate I came to the realization that if I did not take off time to go to Yeshiva I would not have a firm basis in learning and *hashkafa* (Torah perspective). Since Rabbis Kahn and Garfinkel were Ohr Somayach alumni, Ohr Somayach seemed the natural choice. The Center Program molded me over the course of the year and taught me the skills that would enable me to pick up a *gemara* or another *sefer* and learn. I have a very high level of appreciation to the Center and Ohr Somayach for helping me to build me into the person that I am today.”