



הַמִּזְרָחִי

HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY

PARSHAT VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI – SHABBAT HACHODESH 5783 • 2023



ISRAEL Parsha Picture








The Beresheet selfie taken before touching down on the moon
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הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם
רֵאשׁ חֻדְשִׁים...









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www.mizrachi.org
www.mizrachi.tv
office@mizrachi.org
+972 (0)2 620 9000
f t i n

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Based in Jerusalem and with branches across the globe, Mizrachi – an acronym for *merkaz ruchani* (spiritual center) – was founded in 1902 by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, and is led today by Rabbi Doron Perez. Mizrachi's role was then and remains with vigor today, to be a proactive partner and to take personal responsibility in contributing to the collective destiny of *Klal Yisrael* through a commitment to Torah, the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.

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Rabbi Reuven Taragin

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Ari Levine

Josh Maurer

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GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Leah Rubin

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Wisdom of the Heart

Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence



Rabbi Doron Perez

Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi

A landmark book written a quarter of a century ago, introduced a new term into the world of human intelligence and changed the way we view ourselves.

Professor Daniel Goleman first published his book entitled 'Emotional Intelligence – why it can matter more than IQ' in 1995. The book was an immediate bestseller translated soon thereafter into 40 languages. The very terms EQ and emotional intelligence have now become ubiquitous terms that we are all familiar with.

Multiple Intelligences

The pioneer in the research field of multiple intelligences who Goleman quotes many times is Professor Howard Gardner from Harvard University whose 1983 book 'Frames of Mind' was a manifesto refuting the standard IQ paradigm. Gardner showed that there was not just one monolithic kind of intelligence which was crucial for success in life, but a much wider range.¹ He highlights that since the time of the First World War, the gold standard for testing intelligence is known as the Stanford-Binet Test. This focused on two major faculties – verbal/linguistic competencies and mathematical-logical abilities. This would determine one's IQ – intelligence quotient – and was believed to be the single greatest indicator of intelligence and success in life.

Research after research in the latter part of the 20th century, championed by Gardner, showed otherwise. IQ, it became clear, was at best a 20% indicator of success in life, whereas 80% stemmed from other factors. Less than one in five people who have an outstanding IQ are more successful in their personal and professional lives. Other critical qualities are clearly needed.

Gardner lists multiple other competencies needed – spatial acumen, kinesthetic, musical including two core qualities which are fundamental to living an emotionally complete life – intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies.

Emotional Intelligence

These latter two include the ability to understand and empathize with people and to cooperate with them. Making the other person feel deeply heard and acknowledged is the salient quality needed for success in our interactions with others. The ability for self awareness, being in touch with our feelings and living in sync with our values is the single most important quality for personal success.

These latter two form the basis of Emotional Intelligence. They, maintains Goleman, are the greatest indicators of successful people in terms of earning power, social status, leadership acumen and certainly in terms of success in the home and family.

Amazingly, it is exactly this wisdom of the heart that is necessary for genuine spiritual success.

A Wise and Understanding Heart

This is precisely what is mentioned six times in this week's Parasha as the quality needed for Betzalel and Oholiav and all those chosen to build the Tabernacle to bring Hashem's presence into the world.

חכם הלב – a person of wise heart – is mentioned again and again as the single most important quality needed for those who will build a physical abode for Hashem's Shechina – the Divine Presence. Incredibly, the wisest of all men – King Solomon who built the first Temple – was granted



The ability for self awareness, being in touch with our feelings and living in sync with our values is the single most important quality for personal success.

this very quality to fulfill his great destiny when he was granted a לב חכם ונבון – an intelligent and wise heart.² As the King of Israel and the Senior Judge and Arbiter of his time, Solomon was blessed with a wise and understanding heart – henceforth becoming the wisest of all men.

Living with emotional intelligence is the single most pivotal platform for spiritual growth and success. The twin emotional intelligences of empathy and understanding of the other in interpersonal relationships and self awareness and self control in personal lives are that which transforms us into human receptacles for Hashem's presence to rest. To bring the Shechina into our individual lives and into society as a whole.

1. Emotional Intelligence, Goleman, 1996 edition pg. 38.
2. Kings 1, chapter 3, verse 12.



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שְׁמַאי אָמַר... אָמַר מְעַט וְעָשָׂה הַרְבֵּה... (אבות א:טו)

שְׁמַעוֹן בְּנוֹ אֹמֵר, כָּל יְמֵי גְדֻלְתִּי בֵּין הַחֲכָמִים, וְלֹא מִצְאָתִי לְגוֹף טוֹב אֶלָּא שְׁתִּיקָה. וְלֹא הִמְדַּרְשׁ
הוּא הָעֶקֶר, אֶלָּא הַמַּעֲשֵׂה. וְכָל הַמְרֻבָּה דְבָרִים, מִבֵּיא חֲטָא (אבות א:יז)

Toward the end of Avot's first perek, the mishnah quotes a four-word statement of Shammai: "Emor me'at va'aseh harbeh — speak little and do a lot." Though only four words, the statement includes two important ideas.

Say Little

The first idea was elaborated upon two generations later by Rashbag (Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel).¹ Rashbag shares that his years of growing up among the wise taught him that being quiet is the best thing for a person.

Rashbag's conclusion reminds us of the ancient saying quoted by the gemara: "If one word is worth a *selah* coin, (then) being quiet is worth two."² Our words are often inaccurate,³ extreme, hurtful, unnecessarily revealing or a commitment to fulfill what we are not actually able to or interested in fulfilling.⁴ The Sefer Chassidim adds that: "We often regret what we say, but rarely regret having been quiet. Before we speak, we control our words. Afterwards, our words control us."⁵ How many times do we look back and wish we had not spoken so quickly and irresponsibly?

Rashbag adds that "all those who speak a lot, facilitate sin."⁶ The Rambam⁷ explains that our words invariably include sinful components. For example, we know how prevalent verbal abuse and *lashon hara* are. The more we speak, the more we end up sinning. (Social media amplifies our words and, thus, makes this point even more significant in contemporary times.)

The Rambam also connects Rashbag's assertion to a broader idea found in Sefer Kohelet. Shlomo HaMelech encourages man to limit his words because "we are down here and G-d is above."⁸ We should realize that our view of reality is limited and, thus, think carefully before we speak. Our *yirat Shamayim* — recognition that we live in Hashem's world — should impact not only how we conduct ourselves, but also how we

speak. Our realization that Hashem sees and knows much more than us should inspire us to speak cautiously and humbly.

More Action

Shammai's point is not just about needing caution with speech, but also the contrast between "emor me'at," and "asei harbei — doing a lot." Many people spend their lives talking, without acting much upon their words. Shammai encourages us to invest in action. Our words should be few because we should focus on deeds instead.

Action is of supreme importance. It shows that our feelings and beliefs are truly important to us⁹ and transforms them into a sustainable reality.¹⁰ It is also how we internalize¹¹ and remind ourselves¹² of the feelings we hope to ingrain. In the words of the Rambam: "Beliefs that lack accompanying deeds which give them real expression and help educate and create consistent consciousness (of the beliefs) among the masses will eventually be forgotten."¹³

This is why Judaism is a religion that focuses on action and why action is a condition for entry into the next world. We learn this from the words of Rebbi Yossi ben Kisma to Rebbi Chanina ben Tradyon. Before his death, Rebbi Chanina ben Tradyon asked Rebbi Yosi ben Kisma if he would merit a portion in the next world. The latter replied, "Klum ma'aseh ba l'yadecha? — Have you had a chance to take action?"¹⁴ Rebbi Chanina was known for his absolute commitment to Jewish principles. He would eventually be one of the ten martyrs murdered by the Romans. This commitment and sacrifice were not enough to gain him entry to the next world. It was his actions, his deeds.

Tzadikim and Reshaim

Avot D'Rebbi Natan¹⁵ and the gemara¹⁶ see the balance between word and deed as the difference between *reshaim* and *tzadikim*:

Reshaim speak a lot and act a little, while *tzadikim* do the opposite.

Ephron and Avraham Avinu are presented as the paradigms of each approach, respectively.¹⁷ Ephron initially offered Avraham Avinu *Ma'arat Hamachpelah* for free,¹⁸ but later on said, "What is land worth four hundred shekel between friends?"¹⁹ implying that he expected (that amount as) payment. The Torah tells us that Avraham even had to pay Ephron in cash up front,²⁰ as he would accept no less.

Avraham Avinu, on the other hand, promised his guests a mere "*pat lechem*,"²¹ a small amount of bread, but actually gave them nine *sea'in* of bread²² and choice cuts of meat.²³ Avraham and the *tzadikim* who follow his lead do not "talk a big game." They commit to very little, but then, in practice, offer much more.

Personal Growth

Rav Chaim Volozhin²⁴ applied Shammai's words to our personal goals and growth. We should always see our present state of spiritual growth as "very little" and constantly aim to accomplish much more. "Say little" about what you have done and seek further development.

Rav Chaim's application reminds us of Rabbeinu Yonah's²⁵ explanation of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai's directive that one who has learned a lot of Torah "should not claim credit for himself."²⁶ Rabbeinu Yonah explains that irrespective of how much we have learned, we should always see ourselves as less than halfway to where we need to be. Though Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai had learned all of the Torah and many areas of secular knowledge,²⁷ he saw himself as not even halfway there.

We live in a world where people like to speak highly about themselves and what they have (already) accomplished. Instead, we should focus on reaching higher levels and accomplishing additional goals.

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HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

HaChodesh: New Beginnings



Rabbanit Shani Taragin
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

This Shabbat, the final of the “four parshiyot,” is read from Parashat Bo (Shemot 12:1-20) introducing Rosh Chodesh and the subsequent laws of the korban Pesach. Our haftarah for this Shabbat, read from the prophecies of Yechezkel, (45:18-46:15) as instituted by Chazal (Masekhet Megilla 30a), opens with the sacrifice offered on Rosh Chodesh Nissan and concludes with the sacrifices brought on festivals. The Ashkenazic custom is to begin two pesukim earlier with the role of the “Nasi” and end three pesukim later with laws of inheritance for the Nasi.

Study of the parasha and haftarah, both concerning the korban Pesach, serve as preparation for the holiday. Neither of them, however, relate to the korban Pesach of future generations. In Parashat Bo, Moshe and Aharon are instructed by Hashem to teach Bnei Yisrael the special sacrifice offered in Egypt on the eve of *makkat bechorot* and *yetziat Mitzrayim*. Although some overlap exists between the laws relevant to this sacrifice and those regarding the korban Pesach in the years thereafter (see Mishna Pesachim 9:5), there are many differences. Similarly, Yechezkel addresses the korban Pesach that will be sacrificed with the dedication of the future Beit Hamikdash (i.e. the second Mikdash for Yechezkel, and for us, the third), with significant differences (as discussed by Chazal Menachot 45a) between the laws familiar to us in *halachah*!

The focus of the haftarah is not to reconcile the laws of Yechezkel with those of the parasha, but to appreciate the dates and the messages addressed. The maftir reading is entitled, “ha-chodesh” on account of

its opening phrase: “This month [ha-chodesh] is for you the first of all months.” The first month marks the beginning of a new system of counting time for Bnei Yisrael according to the sighting of the new moon. They are instructed to count ten days from the new moon and then begin watching a paschal lamb. On the fourteenth of the month, the lamb will be sacrificed and eaten at nightfall. The national “birthday” and redemption for Bnei Yisrael began unfolding on Rosh Chodesh Nissan in Egypt and was actualized on year later as they inaugurated the Mishkan. Most of the sacrifices mentioned in the haftarah regarding the *milu'im* of the final redemption, also revolve around three dates: the first of Nissan – Rosh Chodesh of the first month, the seventh of the month (*milu'im*) and the fourteenth, upon which the korban Pesach is brought, followed by the seven day holiday. The haftarah underscores the importance of the korban Pesach as a means and sign of renewed redemption, which ultimately begins on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Sprinkling of the blood on the doorposts, for example, a unique trademark of the korban Pesach (on the fourteenth), becomes part of the Rosh Chodesh inaugural offerings in Yechezkel’s description. Rosh Chodesh Nissan serves not only as a reminder of the miracle of deliverance, but as an expression of the beginning of the Divine selection and sanctity of Israel, ultimately manifest in the Mikdash,

The second theme of the haftarah is the position of the Nasi (Rashi – Kohen Gadol, RaDaK – King). The Nasi is responsible for overseeing that the offerings are brought and is also given a special status in the Mikdash. He is meant to lead the people and enable their spiritual development

responsibly to prevent corruption. The focus on his special status in the Mikdash in particular, is meant to highlight the king as G-d’s representative, belonging to the world of sanctity similar to the kohen. Just as the *milu'im* sacrifices mark a new beginning of the resting of the *Shechinah*, so too the renewal of the human monarchy is accompanied by special sacrifices. On appointed days and festivals, however, when even the people merit to stand before Hashem, then the Nasi “shall be in the midst of them; when they go in, he shall go in” (46:10) as part of the nation and not distinct from the people. The Ashkenazi custom to read three additional verses warning the Nasi against exploiting his position highlights the theme of leadership in overseeing sacrifices, parallel to the role of Moshe Rabbenu in the parasha.

All of these beginnings are relevant to Parshat HaChodesh, highlighting the creation and renewal of a connection and covenant between Hashem and Am Yisrael. The maftir teaches us the story of the beginning of redemption as opposed to its culmination. The process began with the korban Pesach in Mitzrayim and concluded (as the Ramban explains in his introduction to Sefer Shemot) with the inauguration of the Mishkan. The haftarah complements the parasha beautifully with the culmination of redemption manifest at the same time of the year; beginning with Rosh Chodesh Nissan and the inauguration of the (final) Mikdash, followed by the korban Pesach and ensuing holidays, offering continued opportunities to celebrate with Hashem.

Halachic Q&A



Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council
Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

Question: Can one use the same oven for cooking/baking milk and meat?

Answer: When one cooks in a pot, the foods directly touch the vessel and therefore impart flavor into the vessel, giving it the status either meat or dairy. In an oven, however, the food does not directly touch the walls. This raises the question - is flavor transferred from foods cooked one after another in ovens?

The Din of "Zeya"

The Mishnah in Machshirin (2:2) says: "The sweat of a ritually unclean bath is ritually unclean"

If the water is impure, the steam which rises from the water is also deemed impure. The Mishnah teaches the principle that steam has the same status as the water itself. The Rosh writes that this ruling applies to milk and meat as well, and this is brought down in the Shulchan Aruch (YD 92:8).

We can now begin to analyze the status of ovens. When one cooks a meat dish without a cover, the steam, which is considered meat, rises to the walls. If one cooks a dairy dish, the dairy steam will rise to the walls, and the oven will become tref, consequently making the food treif through the steam. Therefore, one cannot use the same oven for uncovered meat and dairy foods, even if they are not cooked at the same moment (Igrot Moshe, Yabiyah Omer).

How can I use milk and meat with one oven?

The best option is to have two separate ovens or one oven with two separate compartments (each section must have

separate walls and not only one wall separating them in the middle).

There are also solutions which permit cooking meat and milk in the same oven. Even with these two solutions, one needs separate baking dishes as well as separate oven racks for milk and meat (alternatively, the oven rack can be covered in tin foil for the second type).

- One may use the same oven by covering the milk and meat foods. While covered, the foods do not emit steam, preventing the problem (Igrot Moshe). If this is difficult, one may designate the oven to be milk or meat, and always keep the other one covered.
- One may wait 24 hours after cooking milk or meat, run the oven on the highest heat for 30 mins, and then cook the other (with the proper baking dish) even without a cover (if it is dry, such as a cake). If it is liquidy, it must be covered (Yabiyah Omer).

After 24 hours, the taste absorbed by the oven is deemed ta'am pagum (defective taste) and the food cooked afterwards cannot become prohibited. Nevertheless, miderabananan one should kasher the oven, and when one runs it on high for 30 minutes, it is kashered.

Are there any other options?

B'she'at hadchak (for example, a family that is not ready to follow one of the first two solutions), one can turn the oven on for 30 minutes on high heat in between the cooking of milk and meat. This relies upon the opinions who hold that this is enough to kasher an oven without waiting 24 hours (Yabiyah Omer).

The basis for this lenient view is that heat of the oven is considered libun kal, and an oven can never require libun gamur (because it absorbs from steam as opposed to the food directly). Therefore, kashering it at any point is accomplished by putting on the highest heat for 30 minutes. Many argue, however, that an oven does require libun gamur, and therefore lechatchila we can only be lenient after first waiting 24 hours when the taste is deemed pagum. Additionally, it is possible that ovens nowadays do not have steam altogether and the walls remain dry. Steam only emits when there is discrepancy in temperature, and modern ovens have evenly distributed heat. When opening the door, the temperature discrepancy causes steam. Nevertheless, that steam is not problematic, as most of it leaves the oven and the small amount the remains likely does not remain at yad soledet bo or is batel b'shishim (See Shulchan Kehilchato who writes this regarding Nat bar Nat).

Lastly, there is room to be lenient and use the same oven for milk/meat dry foods without waiting at all or putting on high heat for 30 minutes because dry foods barely emit any steam (Igrot Moshe).

Status of Food in She'at Hadchak:

If one is eating somewhere where the hosts cook milk and meat without covering, waiting, or heating the oven in between, can the food be eaten?

It seems that b'she'at hadchak, such as one who is hosted by close family members who are not careful in this manner (but are careful regarding other kashrut matters) one can rely on the opinions that the food is not prohibited in order to fulfill the mitzvah of kibud av v'em and keeping family unity.

Continued on next page

דיון משפחתי: פרשת ויקהל-פקודי - מגן עדן למשכן

הרבנית שרון רימון
Tanach teacher and author



שכינת ה' אמנם שורה על המשכן, המקום המיוחד והמיועד לכך, אך באמצעותו היא שורה במחנה ישראל כולו – "ושכנתי בתוכם", מדריכה אותם בכל מעשיהם ודרכיהם מכאן ואילך, ואף מחייבת אותם בשמירת דרך ה', במשכן ומחוצה לו.

נוכחות השכינה במחנה ישראל מוסתת יותר מאשר נוכחות השכינה בגן עדן, ובכך מתאפשרים חיים אנושיים בקרבת השכינה. השכינה איננה נמצאת באופן ישיר בכל מקום, אלא בדרגות שונות, החל מקודש הקודשים בו שורה השכינה דרך הקודש, מחנה לוויה וכהונה, ועד למחנה ישראל. הגישה אל השכינה איננה פרוצה אלא מוגבלת בכללים ברורים: לא כל אחד יכול לגשת אל הקודש, ולא בכל עת. הכהנים עושים את עבודת המקדש, הלויים שומרים את משמרת הקודש, והכהן הגדול בלבד יכול להכנס אל קודש הקודשים בזמנים מסוימים, ע"י עבודה מיוחדת (ויקרא ט"ז).

הגבולות והמגבלות הם המאפשרים לעם ישראל לחיות עם נוכחות השכינה בקרבם, ולבנות מתוכם ובתוכם משכן לה'.

לב: "קחו מאתכם תרומה לה' כל נדיב לבו יביא את תרומת ה'" (שמות ל"ה, ה). עליהם להשתמש בחכמת הלב על מנת לטוות את הקשר העדין בין החומר הפיזי, המגיע מכל אחד ואחד מהם, לבין הרעיונות הגדולים של הקדושה שאמורים לבא לידי ביטוי בכלים מיוחדים אלה: "וכל חכם לב בכם יבאו ויעשו את כל אשר צוה ה'" (ל"ה, י).

כל פרט נעשה בצורה מדויקת לפי ציווי ה', אך לא נעשה ע"י ה' אלא ע"י בני האדם עצמם. בני האדם מראים את נכונותם להתקרב אל הקודש, להיות מחויבים אליו בכל מאודם, ומתוך כך הם ראויים להשראת השכינה ביניהם. מטרת הבנייה של המשכן הייתה "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם" (כ"ה, ח), ומטרה זו הושגה לאחר המאמצים הרבים שהשקיעו בני האדם: "ויכס הענן את אהל מועד וכבוד ה' מלא את המשכן" (מ', לד). הכרובים, אשר שמרו את דרך הגן, הופכים לכרובים עליהם מתגלה שכינת ה': "ונועדתי לה שם ודברתי אתה מעל הפתח מבין שני הכרובים אשר על ארון העדות" (כ"ה, כב).

מכאן ואילך, ענן ה', המבטא את שכינתו, מוביל את בני ישראל בכל מסעותיהם: "ובהעלות הענן מעל המשכן יסעו בני ישראל בכל מסעיהם: ... כי ענן ה' על המשכן ... לעיני כל בית ישראל בכל מסעיהם" (מ', לו-לח).

ראשית, ברא אלקים עולם בו ניתן לשמוע "את קול ה' אלהים מתהלך בגן לרוח היום" (בראשית ג', ח). בעולם כזה, נוכחות אלקים מורגשת, מחיה את הכל בצורה גלויה וישירה, והמפגש עם אלקים הוא טבעי, יומיומי, ומחייב.

אולם, האידיליה הזו נפסקה כמעט מיד. אדם הראשון לא הצליח לעמוד במחויבות וחטא, אכל מעץ הדעת, ובעקבות זאת גורש מגן עדן, גורש מקרבתו של אלקים, ועבר ליקום מקביל, בו הנוכחות האלקית איננה גלויה וישירה: "וישלחהו ה' אלהים מגן עדן... ויגרש את האדם וישכן מקדם לגן עדן את הפרדים ואת להט החרב המתהפכת" (ג', כג-כד).

כעת, עליו לעמול קשה הן על קיומו הפיזי ("בעצב תלדי בנים... ביצעת אפיף תאכל לחם" (ג', טז-יט)) והן על יצירת הקשר עם אלקים. שום דבר כבר לא מובן מאליו.

אברהם איבנו משקיע מאמצים רבים על מנת להנכיח מחדש את האלוקות בעולם, וצאצאיו זוכים לבנות משכן – מקום לשכינת ה' בעולם הזה.

אך הפעם, הסדר הפוך – לא ה' בורא עולם ושם בו את האדם, אלא בני האדם צריכים לבנות בעצמם משכן לה'. הם בונים את המשכן מתרומות, מתוך איסוף חומרים מן העולם של כל אחד ואחד מהם, בנדיבות

Continued from previous page

One can rely on these last few leniencies only in homes which do not accept the first solutions. However, lechatchila one should use the first options (two ovens/compartments, covering, or waiting 24 hours and heating in between).

Summary:

Lechatchila, one should use an oven with two compartments, but can manage with one compartment in the following ways (if the baking tray and racks are switched):

- Always covering either meat or milk
- Waiting 24 hours and heating the oven for 30 minutes in between (at the highest heat, or at least over 200 degree celsius. If needed, one could rely at the very least with heating at the temperature that the first food was cooked at).
- In a place where the first two solutions are not kept but the oven was on high for 30 minutes in between, one may eat

the food (although one should not do this lechatchila)

- In a sha'at hadchak, such as one eating by close family members, one can eat the food even if they did not wait/cover/heat the oven for 30 minutes in between cooking meat and milk (if the oven is not dirty).

• Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.

Chazak chazak!



Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

Just two years ago, after a difficult year, everything was coming back and we were learning to appreciate everything anew. One Shabbat, for the first time since the pandemic began, we were in the presence of many friends. The occasion was a Sheva Brachot celebration (held each day of the week following a marriage in honor of the new couple). I never thought I would get so excited over a conversation with friends around a dinner table. I never was so enthusiastic about candies thrown at the bridegroom when he received an aliyah to the Torah.

And then suddenly at the end of the Torah reading, I received an explanation for these wonderful feelings. In one of the final verses of the Book of Exodus, where an allusion is made to the journeys of the people through the desert, Rashi comments: "The place of their encampment is also called a journey." Not only the times that they moved forward are called journeys, but the encampments or stopovers as well. Even those times when they are compelled to stay in place are parts of the journey too; even then the people could learn and move forward

האדם בונה בית לאלוקים. כלומר: אלוקים נתן לנו את העולם ומלואו, כדי שנבנה בתוכו משכן לשכינה (וכמובן, כדי שנבנה משכן כזה קודם כל בתוכנו).

ובשני המקרים – היצירה מסתיימת בשביטה שמביאה עמה ברכה. אלוקים בורא את העולם ושובת, עוצר, ומברך את העולם. האדם בונה את המשכן ועוצר בשבת, ושובת, ומתוך כך מתברך. יש פה גם תיקון לאדם הראשון ולחטאו – הוא קיבל ציווי ולא עשה מה שצריך. כל היופי במשכן הוא שאנחנו כן עושים את מה שציווי עלינו לעשות.

in their growth and development. Our commentators explain that during every chapter of their journey, especially during the stopovers, they gathered strength for the next chapter.

We are moving ahead following a stopover that lasted more than a year, but this was not wasted time, a void of nothingness. This was also a chapter in our life's journey, during which we learned and moved forward, even if this was internal and hidden. And now we are moving again, only with increased strength.

Chazak! Chazak! Venitchazek! Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!



It's less than three weeks until Pesach. Dr. Miri Kahana from Efrata Teachers College brings a slightly different perspective on cleaning during this time of year:

"I wanted to share a thought to which I continually return: all of this arduous cleaning is only because we are very rich. Not just me, but all of us. Each of us lives with our family in our own home. There is a separate room for the parents,



סביבו מתלכד כל העם, כמרכז רוחני שילווה אותם לאורך המסע במדבר.

פרשנים רבים מדברים על ההקבלה בין סיפור בריאת העולם לבין סיפור בניית המשכן. זה לא רק הפעלים שחוזרים על עצמם ("ויכולו השמיים והארץ..." "ותכל כל עבודת משכן אוהל מועד"...), זה המסר: מעשה בראשית מסתיים במילים: "אשר במעשה בראשית, לוקח אחריות, פעיל. ספר בראשית מתחיל ביצירה אלוקית, ספר שמות נחתם ביצירה אנושית. בספר בראשית אלוקים בנה בית לאדם, ובספר שמות, בתוך הבית הזה –

a kitchen, a shower, and a bathroom. Our houses are full of furniture, clothes, appliances, and food. Our children have more than enough to eat to the point where they forget unopened bags of snacks in their desk drawers and leave sandwiches that they did not even taste in their backpacks. How far we are from those distant halachic discussions regarding a public oven for several families; or the issue of a poor person's cloak taken as collateral for a loan that must be returned each night since the poor person sleeps in the cloak; or the matter of a poor person washing his only shirt Erev Shabbat, despite the prohibition of laundering on this day (prior to the era of washing machines).

Despite the difficulties and challenges of our generation, I am certain that all of us have at least one great-grandfather who would go out of his mind with surprise and joy if he would see the prodigious prosperity in which his great-grandchildren live. Therefore, every once in a while, I remind myself to stop complaining about how much we still have to clean or how much we still have to cook, and simply focus on how much we have."

עשה

המילה הזו מוזכרת בספר שמות 323 פעמים! מדובר על המילה עשייה, השורש עשה, בהטיות שונות. שוב יש פה ייחודיות לעומת החומש הקודם: אחרי ספר בראשית שהוא ספר הבריאה, ה' בורא בו את העולם, ספר שמות הוא ספר העשייה, כאן אנחנו מתחילים לעשות ולפעול. האדם לא רק נברא, הוא עושה. בתחילת פרשת פקודי, הפועל עשה מופיע: וּבְצַלְאֵל... לְמַטֵּה יְהוּדָה עָשָׂה אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה. אבל זו רק דוגמה אחת מתוך כאמור 323 דוגמאות רבות, רובן סביב המשכן. מוקד העשייה המשותף הוא פרויקט המשכן,

Continued on next page

For the Shabbat Table



Rabbi Danny Mirvis

Deputy CEO, World Mizrachi

Rabbi of Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“**A**nd they brought the Mishkan to Moshe, the Tent and all its utensils, its hooks, its planks, its bars, its pillars and its sockets” (Shemot 39:33).

In this weeks Parsha, all the completed components of the Mishkan were brought before Moshe, prior to its construction. Rashi, based on the Midrash, explains that nobody was able to erect the Mishkan, due to the weight of the planks, so they brought everything before Moshe. Posed with this challenge requiring super-human strength, Moshe turned to Hashem and asked Him how this could be achieved by man. Hashem responded to Moshe that he should try with his hands. It appeared as if Moshe was lifting the boards, but in fact they were miraculously raising themselves (Rashi, Shemot 39:33).

Whilst we can now understand why the components of the Mishkan were brought before Moshe, a question arises: If the Mishkan was to be erected miraculously, with the planks effectively raising themselves and putting themselves in place,



If the Mishkan was to be erected miraculously, with the planks effectively raising themselves and putting themselves in place, why did Moshe need to be involved at all?

why did Moshe need to be involved at all? Why did the miracle occur in a way which made it look as if Moshe was doing all the work?

In truth, without Moshe's effort, the miracle would never have happened. It was only once Moshe tried his very hardest and did everything within his capability, that the rest occurred miraculously:

“For this is the way of all the miracles in the Torah and the Prophets – to do what is within man's capability to do, and the rest will be in the hands of Heaven” (Ramban, Bereishit 6:19).

One the one hand, we believe that everything is in the hands of Hashem. At the same time, it is forbidden to rely on miracles and we must make every effort we can to overcome our challenges ourselves.

There are times when life presents us with challenges which appear to require super-human strength to overcome. A natural response is to turn to Hashem in despair, as Moshe did in this week's Parsha, and ask Him how He could ever expect so much from human beings. Hashem's response was clear and simple: “Try your hardest and leave the rest to Me”.

By trying our hardest and maintaining full faith in Hashem, may He grant us the tools to succeed.

Shabbat Shalom!

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נבנים. כשיש לנו יעד, יש סיבה לקום בבוקר, יש משהו מלהיב – אין בכלל זמן לעשות שטויות.

רואים לאורך ספר שמות שכאשר העם עסוק בעשייה הוא פעיל, אקטיבי, ולכן לא מקטר ולא מתלונן. אם השעמום מביא לידי חטא, הרי שהעשייה מביאה לידי מצווה. צריכים למצוא לעצמנו ולילדינו אתגרים, משימות, דברים שיגרמו לנו לחוש שותפות. "אנו באנו ארצה לבנות ולהיבנות בה" זה לא רק שיר חלוצי ישן, זו אמת עמוקה: כשאנחנו בונים את המשכן – אנחנו גם

המשכן הוא תיקון לחטא אדם הראשון, או אולי קומה שנייה של הבריאה – מעין הוכחה שהנה, היצירה הזו ששמה אדם יכולה לעשות את מה שנכון וצריך, את מה שקדוש ומבורך. והיא יודעת מתי לעשות ומתי לעצור ולשים גבול (שבת), שלא כמו האדם הראשון (שלא עצר מול פרי עץ הדעת). לכן הוא גורש מגן עדן, אבל לכן אנחנו נכנסים לגן עדן בכל שבוע מחדש, בשבת.

The Social Animal



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

At the beginning of this *parsha* Moses performs a *tikkun*, a mending of the past, namely the sin of the Golden Calf. The Torah signals this by using essentially the same word at the beginning of both episodes. It eventually became a key word in Jewish spirituality: *k-h-l*, “to gather, assemble, congregate.” From it we get the words *kahal* and *kehillah*, meaning “community.” Far from being merely an ancient concern, it remains at the heart of our humanity. As we will see, recent scientific research confirms the extraordinary power of communities and social networks to shape our lives.

First, the biblical story. The episode of the Golden Calf began with these words: “When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered themselves [*vayikahel*] around Aaron” (Ex. 32:1). At the beginning of this *parsha*, having won G-d’s forgiveness and brought down a second set of tablets, Moses began the work of rededicating the people:

“Moses assembled [*vayakhel*] the entire Israelite congregation” (Ex. 35:1).

They had sinned as a community. Now they were about to be reconstituted as a community. Jewish spirituality is first and foremost a communal spirituality.

Note, too, exactly what Moses does in this *parsha*. He directs their attention to the two great centres of community in Judaism, one in space, the other in time. The one in time is Shabbat. The one in space was the *Mishkan*, the Tabernacle, that led eventually to the Temple and later to the synagogue. These are where the *kehillah* lives most powerfully: on Shabbat when we lay aside our private devices and desires and come together as

a community; and the synagogue, where community has its home.

Judaism attaches immense significance to the individual. Every life is like a universe. Each one of us, though we are all in G-d’s image, is different, therefore unique and irreplaceable. Yet the first time the words “not good” appear in the Torah are in the verse, “It is not good for man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18). Much of Judaism is about the shape and structure of our togetherness. It values the individual but does not endorse individualism.

Ours is a religion of community. Our holiest prayers can only be said in the presence of a *minyan*, the minimum definition of a community. When we pray, we do so as a community. Martin Buber spoke of I-and-Thou, but Judaism is really a matter of We-and-Thou. Hence, to atone for the sin the Israelites committed as a community, Moses sought to consecrate community in time and place.

This has become one of the fundamental differences between tradition and the contemporary culture of the West. We can trace this in the titles of three landmark books about American society. In 1950, David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney published an insightful book about the changing character of Americans, called *The Lonely Crowd*. In 2000, Robert Putnam of Harvard published *Bowling Alone*, an account of how more Americans than ever were going ten-pin bowling, but fewer were joining bowling clubs and leagues. In 2011, Sherry Turkle of MIT published a book on the impact of smartphones and social networking software called *Alone Together*.

Listen to those titles. They are each about the advancing tide of loneliness, successive stages in the long, extended

breakdown of community in modern life. Robert Bellah put it eloquently when he wrote that “social ecology is damaged not only by war, genocide, and political repression. It is also damaged by the destruction of the subtle ties that bind human beings to one another, leaving them frightened and alone.”¹

That is why the two themes of *parshat Vayakhel* – Shabbat and the *Mishkan* (today, the synagogue) – remain powerfully contemporary. They are antidotes to the attenuation of community. They help restore “the subtle ties that bind human beings to one another.” They reconnect us to community.

Consider Shabbat. Michael Walzer, the Princeton political philosopher, draws attention to the difference between holidays and holy days (or as he puts it, between vacations and Shabbat).² The idea of a vacation as a private holiday is relatively recent. Walzer dates it to the 1870s. Its essence is its individualist (or familial) character. “Everyone plans his own vacation, goes where he wants to go, does what he wants to do.” Shabbat, by contrast, is essentially collective. “You, your son and daughter, your male and female servant, your ox, your donkey, your other animals, and the stranger in your gates” (Deut. 5:14). It is public, shared, the property of us all. A vacation is a commodity. We buy it. Shabbat is not something we buy. It is available to each on the same terms: “enjoined for everyone, enjoyed by everyone.” We take vacations as individuals or families. We celebrate Shabbat as a community.

Something similar is true about the synagogue – the Jewish institution, unique in its day, that was eventually adopted by Christianity and Islam in the form of the church and mosque. We noted above

Robert Putnam's argument in *Bowling Alone*, that Americans were becoming more individualistic. There was a loss, he said, of "social capital," that is, the ties that bind us together in shared responsibility for the common good.

A decade later, Putnam revised his thesis.³ Social capital, he said, still exists, and you can find it in churches and synagogues. Regular attendees at a place of worship were – so his research showed – more likely than others to give money to charity, engage in voluntary work, donate blood, spend time with someone who is depressed, offer a seat to a stranger, help find someone a job, and many other measures of civic, moral, and philanthropic activism. They are, quite simply, more public spirited than others. *Regular attendance at a house of worship is the most accurate predictor of altruism*, more so than any other factor, including gender, education, income, race, region, marital status, ideology, and age.

Most fascinating of his findings is that the key factor is *being part of a religious community*. What turned out *not* to be relevant is what you believe. The research findings suggest that an atheist who goes regularly to a house of worship (perhaps to accompany a spouse or a child) is more likely to volunteer in a soup kitchen than a fervent believer who prays alone. The key factor again is community.

This may well be one of the most important functions of religion in a secular age,

namely, keeping community alive. Most of us need community. We are social animals. Evolutionary biologists have suggested recently that the huge increase in brain size represented by *Homo sapiens* was specifically to allow us to form more extended social networks. It is the human capacity to co-operate in large teams – rather than the power of reason – that marks us off from other animals. As the Torah says, it is not good to be alone.

Recent research has shown something else as well. Who you associate with has a powerful impact on what you do and become. In 2009 Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler statistically analysed a group of 5,124 subjects and their 53,228 ties to friends, family, and work colleagues. They found that if a friend takes up smoking, it makes it significantly more likely (by 36 per cent) that you will. The same applies to drinking, slenderness, obesity, and many other behavioural patterns.⁴ We become like the people we are close to.

A study of students at Dartmouth College in the year 2000 found that if you share a room with someone with good study habits, it will probably raise your own performance. A 2006 Princeton study showed that if your sibling has a child, it makes it 15 per cent more likely that you will too within the next two years. There is such a thing as "social contagion." We are profoundly influenced by our friends – as

indeed Maimonides states in his law code, the *Mishneh Torah*.⁵

Which brings us back to Moses and *Vay-akhel*. By placing community at the heart of the religious life and by giving it a home in space and time – the synagogue and Shabbat – Moses was showing the power of community for good, as the episode of the Golden Calf had shown its power for bad. Jewish spirituality is for the most part profoundly communal. Hence my definition of Jewish faith: the redemption of our solitude.

AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

- Can you think of times when crowds can be used for the good and for the bad?
- Do you think it is important to be part of a community? Why?
- Is community a key part of Shabbat for you, and for your family?

1. Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 284.
2. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 190–96.
3. Robert Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).
4. Nicholas Christakis and James H. Fowler, *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives* (New York: Little, Brown, 2009).
5. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchot Deot* 6:1.

Continued from page 4

May Shammai's words remind us to be cautious about what we say and focus on deeds instead of words.

● Summarized by Rafi Davis

1. Masechet Avot 1:17.
2. Talmud Bavli, Masechet Megillah 18a. Vayikra Rabbah (16:5) connects this Gemara to Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel's statement. See also Masechet Kiddushin (71a) which applies this to two people fighting and says that the first one to stop fighting and be quiet likely has better *yichus* (lineage). A person confident and comfortable with himself has no need to fight with others.
3. Additionally, once something has been said, the speaker no longer controls their words. If they are quiet, their words cannot be misunderstood or misrepresented.

4. The Midrash Shmuel adds that we should consider this even when making a *neder* or when speaking about doing a good deed. We should not commit ourselves beyond what we are sure we can accomplish.
5. See Sefer Chassidim 86.
6. The Rambam to Avot 1:17 explains that we inevitably include things that are problematic and result in *cheit*.
7. Moreh Nevuchim 3:52.
8. Sefer Kohelet 5:1-6.
9. Sefer Kuzari 2:56.
10. Emunah U'Bitachon L'Ramban 19. See also the Ramban's letter to his son and Kedushat Levi Derasha to Shavuot.
11. Sefer HaChinuch 16.
12. Moreh Nevuchim 2:31.
13. Moreh Nevuchim 2:31.
14. Masechet Avodah Zarah 18a.

15. Avot D'Rebbi Natan 13:3.
16. Masechet Bava Metzia 87a.
17. The Rambam and Meiri to Masechet Avot 1:15 both quote the example of Ephron, as well.
18. Sefer Bereishit 23:11.
19. Ibid, pesukim 15-16.
20. Ibid, pasuk 17.
21. Sefer Bereishit 18:5.
22. See Avot D'Rabbi Natan: Avraham asked Sarah to make three types of bread for three people.
23. Rabbeinu Yonah, quoting a Midrash, demonstrates that Hashem Himself models the approach of *emor me'at va'asei harbeh*.
24. Ruach Chaim to Masechet Avot 1:15.
25. Rabbeinu Yonah to Masechet Avot 2:8.
26. Masechet Avot 2:8.
27. Talmud Bavli, Masechet Sukkah 28a.

Anan Hashem



Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

כי ענן ד' על המשכן יומם ואש תהיה לילה בו לעיני כל בית ישראל בכל מסעיהם.

For the cloud of Hashem was upon the Mishkan by day, and there was fire therein by night, before the eyes of all of the House of Israel throughout their journeys. (Shemos 40:38)

The Sforno (40:36) has a fascinating comment on this final *passuk* of the *parsha*. He explains that the *anan Hashem* represented a special *giluy Shechinah* (Divine revelation) that was so firmly established in the Mishkan that it did not depart at all from there until Bnei Yisrael had to journey. This degree of *hashra'as haShechinah* (Divine presence) was not present in Shiloh, in the First Beis HaMikdash, or in the Second Beis HaMikdash. [When Shlomo HaMelech built the Bayis Rishon, an *anan* appeared for a brief time, but it later disappeared (Melachim I 8:10-11).] However, continues the Sforno, an even greater measure of *hashra'as haShechinah* will be manifest in the Third Beis HaMikdash, as the *passuk* describes, “For I will be to her, says Hashem, a wall of fire all around, and will be the glory in the midst of her” (Zechariah 2:9).

Elsewhere, in reference to *hadlakas hamenorah*, the Sforno elaborates on the significance of the presence of the *anan Hashem* in the *Midbar*. He notes that the Torah specifies Aharon, the Kohen Gadol, as being the one to kindle the *menorah*: “Outside the Curtain of the Testimony, in the *Ohel Mo'ed*, Aharon shall arrange it, from evening to morning, before Hashem, continually” (Vayikra 24:3). This is striking, as a *Kohen Hedyot* (ordinary Kohen) is generally qualified to perform all *avodos* in the Beis HaMikdash, with the exception of *avodos Yom Ha-Kippurim*. [Rashi's opinion (Horiyos 11b, s.v. ein), against that of Tosfos (Megillah 9b, s.v. ein), is that there is one additional exception – the *avodah*

of the *bull* (פר העלם דבר של ציבור) for the communal error].

The Ramban is bothered by the same question with regard to the offering of the *ketores*, where again Aharon is specifically mentioned: “Upon it, Aharon shall bring the spice incense up in smoke, every morning” (Shemos 30:7). The Ramban suggests that Aharon was required only to initiate the *avodah* of the *ketores* and of the *neiros*, since that *avodah* achieved the *chinuch* (inauguration) of the *mizbach hazahav* and the *menorah* respectively, thereby completing their *kedushah*.

The Meshech Chochmah (Bamidbar 8:2) makes a similar suggestion to defend the Rambam's opinion (Hilchos Bi'as HaMikdash 9:7) that even a non-Kohen is permitted to kindle the *menorah*. Even though the *passuk* specifies Aharon as the one who lit the *menorah*, a Kohen was required only for the very first *hadlakah* to be *mechaneich* the *menorah*, but not for subsequent *hadlakos*.

This answer is somewhat difficult, since the Gemara in Shevuos (15a) teaches that the *kli shares* (service utensils) that Moshe made for the Mishkan were sanctified through their anointment with *shemen hamishchah*. From then on, however, new *keilim* achieved their *chinuch* when they were utilized for the performance of *avodah* in the Beis HaMikdash. If so, it does not seem that *avodah* performed with a *kli shares* played a role in its *chinuch* in the time of Moshe. Apparently, the Ramban's understanding is that even in the time of Moshe, the initial *avodah* served

to consecrate a *kli shares*, together with anointment with *shemen hamishchah*, and that is why a Kohen Gadol was required to perform that *avodah*.

The Sforno, however, offers a resolution to these difficulties based on the constant existence of the *anan Hashem* in the *Midbar*. He suggests that due to the *anan*, the daily status of *avodas haMishkan* was equal to its status on Yom Kippur in future generations, described by the phrase, “for in the cloud I appear upon the *kapores*” (Vayikra 16:2). The *anan* on Yom Kippur in the Heichal represented a deeper dimension of *hashra'as haShechinah*, and whenever this was manifest, the highest degree of *kedushas Kehunah* was necessary for the *avodah*.

The Sforno reasons that just as the *halachah* requires a Kohen Gadol for *avodah* on Yom Kippur, this requirement extended to *hadlakas hamenorah* and the offering of the *ketores*, which took place in the *Heichal*, during the entire forty years in the *Midbar*.

It should follow, therefore, that in Bayis HaShlishi as well, a Kohen Gadol will be required for *avodah* in the Heichal. Interestingly, in describing the special *korbanos* that will be brought during the greater than six-month period of celebration over the dedication of the Third Beis HaMikdash, the *passuk* states, “On that day, the Nasi shall bring a bull *chatas*-offering for himself and for the entire people of the land” (Yechezkel 45:22). Rashi (45:17) quotes two opinions as to whether הנשיא refers to the Kohen Gadol or to the Melech.

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The Order of the Aleph-Bet



Rabbi Yisroel Reisman
Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Torah Vodaas

In this week's Parshah, of course, we come to the conclusion of the building of the Mishkan. The Mishnah in Shekalim 3:2 discusses how they took a Terumah of all the Shekalim that were donated, and they labeled them - Aleph, Beit, Gimmel. Reb Yishmael says they didn't label it using the Hebrew letters, Aleph, Beit, Gimmel but rather used Greek letters, alpha, beta, gamma. Strange! Why did they use Greek in the Beit Hamikdash?

Rav Schwab, in Parshas Ki Sisa (31:2) has a beautiful idea about the Mishkan and the Beit Hamikdash. He says that, generally speaking, we live in a world that has an order. The Aleph-Beit is basically the intellectual order of Olam Hazeih. In other words, in order to understand things you have words, you have to be able to express yourself, and that is a certain limitation we have in this world. You can't just convey ideas without words. That's why the Aleph-Beit is generally used as a sign of the seder of this world.

The Gemara says in Masechta Brachos (4b), that anybody who says Ashrei every day three times is guaranteed a place in Olam Habah because it is written in the order of the Aleph-Beit. Why does that



In Olam Hazeih, letters and words are the method by which we express our ideas and the way we learn Torah.

make Ashrei so special? In Olam Hazeih, letters and words are the method by which we express our ideas and the way we learn Torah. The Aleph-Beit has a special Kedushah. The Mishkan and the Beit Hamikdash, was a place that was above those limitations. After all, Aleph-Beit is limited. Aleph-Beit is a certain order, and the Beit Hamikdash was above that. To understand what took place in the Beit Hamikdash, you didn't have to express it in words. Your Neshamah felt it. A person had a feeling, a sense of being in a place that's Kadosh, that's special, that's unique. Therefore, the Aleph-Beit did not really belong in the Beit Hamikdash. Reb Yosi says, in a Mishnah in Shabbos, that the Kerashim (poles) weren't labeled with

Aleph-Beit. When you label boards, you usually use "Aleph-Beit", "Gimmel-Daled" in order to know which one matches the other. However, in the Beit Hamikdash, they made a special mark on the board, they didn't use Aleph-Beit. Why not use the Aleph-Beit? Because Aleph-Beit is a sign of Olam Hazeih where there are limitations. The Beit Hamikdash, the Mishkan, the place where the Shechinah resides, is a sense of Olam Habah.

On Yom Kippur, in the Beit Hamikdash, they didn't say Amen to Brachos. Instead, they said *Baruch Sheim Kavod Malchuso Leolam Vaed*. Why? Why not say Amen? Because Amen is a statement of Emunah, of faith. In the Beit Hamikdash there was such a sense of Hashem's existence that it was inappropriate to call it an expression of faith. And that is the reason that there was no Aleph-Beit. Alpha, Betta, Gamma are just indication of an order - Aleph, Beit, Gimmel show a limitation, and that limitation did not apply in the Beit Hamikdash.

● Edited by Yehuda Kaufold and Josh Harris.

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We may suggest that the first opinion in Rashi is in line with the *chiddush* of the Sforno. As mentioned, there will be a חומת אש סביב around the Third Beis HaMikdash, and this represents an even greater *giluy Shechinah* than was present in the

Mishkan. Just as *avodas Yom HaKippurim* requires a Kohen Gadol, and, according to the Sforno, a Kohen Gadol was necessary for *avodas haMishkan*, we well understand why the *avodah* at the inauguration

of Bayis HaShlishi will require a Kohen Gadol.

● Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Parsha II.

What will you be doing on the day after?



Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis KBE

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

Parshat Vayakhel commences (Shemot 35:1), “Vayakhel Moshe et kol adat Bnei Yisroel.” – “Moshe congregated the entire assembly of the People of Israel.”

Rashi comments, “Lemacharat Yom Hakippurim,” – “This took place on the day after Yom Hakippurim.”

Which yom Kippur is Rashi referring to and why is it important for us to know this? Rashi continues, “Kesheyarad min hahar,” – “When Moshe came down from the mountain.” Now we see that he was referring to that original Yom Kippur when we received the second tablets of the Ten Commandments.

You will recall that after initially spending 40 days and nights on Mount Sinai, Moshe received the first tablets and then, when he came down and witnessed the nation worshipping the golden calf, he smashed them. On the first of Elul, Moshe ascended the mountain again and 40 days later, on the 10th of Tishrei, he received the second set of tablets.

Timing

Why did Moshe not wait? Why was he so keen to gather the people together immediately after the receipt of the



**Why did Moshe not wait?
Why was he so keen to gather the people together immediately after the receipt of the second tablets?**

second tablets? The answer is surely that Moshe Rabbeinu recognised that on the previous day, the nation had had the most extraordinary, uplifting experience, a transformational day for one and all. And he wanted to guarantee that there would be follow-up.

He didn't want that to be a one day memory. Rather, he wanted it to genuinely change their lives for the better, and so he purposefully, proactively created an event to guarantee that the inspiration which they had received would now continue well into the future.

Follow-up

We can learn so much from Moshe Rabbeinu's lesson. For example, immediately following a Bar Mitzvah or a Bat Mitzvah, we can't just leave it up to chance that

our children will remain connected to our people and our tradition. We need to proactively create programmes of study and engagement for them to continue their commitment. Similarly, after many years of immersive Jewish education, it's important for us to create opportunities for ongoing Jewish education and commitment well into adulthood.

I find all this to be of great relevance right now. The pandemic has provided us with an extraordinary, unprecedented, long opportunity for *cheshbon hanefesh*, introspection. During Covid we've been reassessing our lives and now we have fresh priorities.

As we now emerge from the pandemic towards a more regular rhythm of life, let's learn that lesson from Moshe Rabbeinu – let's do something proactively to guarantee that all our Covid resolutions will be translated into action, to ensure that the inspiration that we have received will continue for the rest of our lives.

Dual Aspect of Shabbat



Rabbi Shalom Rosner
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

שֵׁשׁ יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לְךָ קָדֶשׁ שַׁבָּת שְׁבִתוֹן לָהּ

Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have sanctity, a day of complete rest to Hashem. (Shemos 35:2)

As we are instructed to build the Mishkan we are reminded of the sanctity of Shabbat. Chazal derive from this juxtaposition that the 39 *melachot* performed in the Mishkan are prohibited on Shabbat.

We celebrate Shabbat as a day of rest every week on the seventh day. Is this day of rest related to the hard work of the previous week, or is it to gain strength for the following week (after all, one can recite *havdala* until Tuesday, so Shabbat has a connection to the following week)?

It may seem like an esoteric distinction, but it actually has an impact on a halachic discussion that appears in the Talmud. A question is raised in *Messechet Shabbat* 69:, if an individual is traveling through the desert and loses track of what day of the week it is, when does he observe Shabbat?

According to Rav Huna, that individual is to immediately count six days and the seventh day he is to observe the Shabbat. Chiya bar Rav argues that such an individual would immediately observe the Shabbat and then count six days until the next Shabbat.

The Shem M'Shmuel explains the difference in opinions (citing his father, the



Shabbat has two aspects. One that relates to the completion of creation and another that relates to gathering strength for the future.

Avne Nezer). Shabbat has two aspects. One that relates to the completion of creation and another that relates to gathering strength for the future.

Rav Huna subscribes to the view that believes that Shabbat reflects the completion of creation and is a day to rest from the hard work conducted throughout the previous week. Therefore, an individual who lost count of the days of the week should count six days and then “earn” a Shabbat.

Rav Chiya bar Rav believes that the first Shabbat was observed the day after man was created, and so it is the first day that one should observe when lost in the desert. After *Adam Harishon* transgressed, he was able to rest on Shabbat and regain

his strength and ability to persevere and rebuild for the following week.

These two aspects of Shabbat are reflected in the Luchot as well. In Parshat Yitro, when Shabbat is described in the first Luchot, it is related to the six days of creation. In Parshat Vaetchanan, when Shabbat is described in the second Luchot, Shabbos relates to *Yetziyat Mitzrayim*. *Yetziyat Mitzrayim* can be viewed in a similar fashion to Adam's initial transgression. In Egypt, as a people, we sank to the 39 levels of *tumah* (impurity). *Yetziyat Mitzrayim* and later *Matan Torah*, reinvigorated us spiritually to be able to proceed, as the Shabbat provided strength for *Adam Harishon* to continue.

As we celebrate Shabbat, we should bear in mind this dual aspect of Shabbat. On the one hand, reflect on the accomplishments and challenges of this past week and at the same time utilize the day to be able to recharge our physical and spiritual being so that we can garner the strength to succeed at all our tasks in the upcoming week.

Parshios Vayakhel-Pekudei: Knowing is Believing



Michal Horowitz
Judaic Studies Teacher

With this week's double parshios, Vayakhel-Pekudei, we close the book of Shemos once again. The road to redemption outlined in *Sefer ha'Geula* is complete, as the *Bnei Yisrael* finish the construction of the *Mishkan*, and the presence of G-d rests upon it and within.

It is this second book of Torah, *Sefer Shemos*, which tells the story of the redemption of the people of Israel, hence, the appellation "*Sefer ha'Geula*."

From an enslaved nation to free people, we left Egypt, crossed the Reed Sea, and battled with Amalek – all symbolizing our *physical redemption* from servitude; we received the Torah along with the acceptance of the many detailed laws outlined in *Mishpatim* – our *spiritual freedom*; and in the last five parshios of Shemos, we donated to and constructed the *Mishkan*, wherein the *Shechina* would dwell amongst us and within us – the final stage of freedom, wherein we proverbially move over, and make room for G-d in our lives and homes.

R' S. R. Hirsch writes (Shemos 40:38), "With the acceptance of G-d's Torah in Israel's midst as Israel's mission and supreme aim for all time, and with the establishment of G-d's glory in the home that Israel prepared for this Torah, the book of Shemos – the book of redemption from Egypt – comes to an end... The founding of the Sanctuary of the Torah, the placement of the Torah in its dwelling place in the Ark, Israel's devotion upon the altar of this Torah – these made the people the people of G-d.

"For the cloud of G-d was upon the Dwelling Place by day, and there was fire inside it by night, before the eyes of the entire House of Israel throughout their journeys (Shemos 40:38). Thus it was shown to the 'entire house of Israel,' to young and old alike, that G-d's providence and the blessing of His Torah are not matters of belief, mercifully invented as consolation for this earthly life, but of knowledge, of unshakable conviction based on the certainty of actual experience.

"Inside the dwelling place of the Torah, the Table, the Menorah, the altar, and the *keruvim*-tapestries proclaim: Where G-d's Torah is taken up with the freshness of eternal thriving and with the firmness and tenacity of pure gold (Holy Ark); where material and spiritual welfare (Table and Menorah) comes only through this Torah and is dedicated (Golden Altar) solely to the fulfillment of this Torah – there the *keruvim* of G-d's providence descend, visibly and invisibly, bringing protection and blessing. This is not belief, but *knowledge*...

"From experience you will learn that when I took you out to be My people, it was not just then, once, that I led you out from under the burdens of Egypt; rather, *I will always be to you a G-d Who is close at hand, Who similarly guides you, protects you, and bestows on you His blessing.*"

With the construction of the *Mishkan* and the manifestation of the Divine Presence within, the people – the entire house of Israel – were shown and reminded that Hashem is not our G-d only once, when He redeemed us from Egypt. Rather, He

was always and is always with us, for He is always close at hand.

One who perceives the Hand of Providence constantly guiding him, does not live by mere belief in what has been told to him by others. Rather, he lives with the truest, more personal, *knowledge of Hashem* in every aspect and facet of his life.

"*Yehoshua's Story*: People ask me, 'Who was your mother (Rebbetzin Henny Machlis a'h, d.J'lem, 2015)?' If I had to describe her, I'd quote from Tehillim (55:23): *Cast upon Hashem your burden and He will sustain you.* That's who my mother was in every area. Not just when she got sick. Most people, when something goes wrong, they throw their burdens on Hashem, because they have no other way out. But my mother, even when things were going well, she would always depend on Hashem for everything.

"During the time she was sick, she would always say, 'Hashem, You are the doctor. You will make me feel better. You're going to make the treatment go well.' She would say this for every injection and every chemo. She would say, 'Hashem, thank You.' I would ask (her), 'Thank You for what?' (And she would say,) 'Thank You for everything You have given me. Thank You for the cancer. But I have had enough. Now take it back.' Her whole view was, 'Hashem wants me to be closer to Him, that's why He's giving me this pain.'

"She was never concerned about tomorrow in any field – (not) in health, (not) in finances. Even when today was a bad day, she'd say it really was a good day, and tomorrow will be a better day.

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From Sefer Shmot to Vayikra and Bamidbar



Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

The final chapter of Parshat Pekudei tells of Moshe Rabbeinu assembling the Mishkan on the first day of Nisan. Once all the pieces are together, Sefer Shmot concludes its description of these events as follows: “The **anan** (cloud) covered the **Ohel Mo’ed**, and **Kvod Hashem** (G-d’s glory) filled the **Mishkan**.”

In Parshat Mishpatim, a similar description appears in the context of Moshe’s ascent to Har Sinai: “And Moshe ascended the **mountain** and an **anan** covered the **mountain**, and **Kvod Hashem** dwelled upon **Har Sinai**...”

Thus, the **Ohel Mo’ed** replaces the **mountain** and, correspondingly, the **Mishkan** replaces **Har Sinai**. The reason is simple. The essence of Har Sinai is one and the same with that of the Mishkan: they both serve as a medium whereby Bnei Yisrael can ‘encounter’ the **Sh’china**.

Furthermore, in both instances a direct encounter is impossible. Instead, man must be shielded from G-d’s Presence by an **anan**.

Although this comparison appears simple and straightforward, the next pasuk in each of these two sources seems to ‘ruin’ this parallel. When the **Sh’china** descends upon Har Sinai, Moshe actually **enters** the **anan**: “And **Kvod Hashem** dwelled on Har Sinai and the cloud covered it for six days, and **G-d called to Moshe** on the seventh day... and Moshe came **inside** the **anan** and ascended the mountain.”

In Parshat Pekudei, by contrast: “And Moshe was **unable to enter the Ohel**

Mo’ed, because the **anan** was dwelling upon it...”

Certainly, our parallel would have been much stronger had Sefer Shmot similarly concluded with G-d ‘**calling**’ upon Moshe to enter the **Mishkan**, just as He had ‘**called**’ upon him to enter the **anan** at Har Sinai. But for some reason, Moshe cannot enter. Has Moshe been demoted? Or, alternatively, has the Mishkan-replica of Har Sinai been demoted?

In case you haven’t figured it out yet, to solve this problem we simply need to ‘turn the page’ and read the opening pasuk of Sefer Vayikra: “And [G-d] **called out** to Moshe, and G-d spoke to him from the **Ohel Mo’ed** saying...”

Thus, in order to complete the parallel between the Mishkan and Har Sinai, we must take the **first pasuk** of Sefer Vayikra and append it, if you will, to the end of Sefer Shmot.

But if this parallel is indeed correct, then the first pasuk of Vayikra actually belongs at the end of Sefer Shmot! Why does the Torah begin a new “sefer” in the middle of a story?

Our understanding of Vayikra 1:1 as the logical continuation of Shmot 40:34-35 works only if these are indeed the final psukim of Sefer Shmot. However, Shmot 40:35 is not the end of Sefer Shmot! Rather, three more psukim, which appear to interrupt this logical progression, follow: “And when the **anan** lifted from the Mishkan, Bnei Yisrael would travel. If it would not lift, they would not travel... For the **anan** was upon the Mishkan during the day and fire would appear in it by night, before

the eyes of Bnei Yisrael throughout all their travels.”

Despite their obvious connection to the first two psukim as they relate to the concept of the **anan**, these psukim address an entirely **different** issue – the effect of this **anan** on Bnei Yisrael’s journey through the desert.

In fact, these three psukim seem not only ‘in the way,’ but also **out of place** – they simply don’t belong here. As those of you proficient in Parshat Bha’alotcha must have noticed, these psukim are repeated almost verbatim in Sefer **Bamidbar**, when the Torah describes Bnei Yisrael’s traveling protocol in the desert: “On the day that the Mishkan was set up, the **anan** covered the Mishkan... and in the evening it appeared as fire... And when the **anan** lifted from the **Ohel [Mo’ed]**, then Bnei Yisrael would travel, and at the place where the **anan** rested Bnei Yisrael would set up their camp...”

Thus, the three final psukim of Sefer Shmot clearly belong in Sefer Bamidbar, as they involve Bnei Yisrael’s mode of journey through the desert.

Apparently, Sefer Shmot concludes with these three psukim since these special ‘travel regulations’ result directly from the dwelling of the **anan** upon the Mishkan.

Our analysis thus far has shown that the final five psukim of Sefer Shmot divide into two distinct topics, each of which points us to a different Sefer:

A) 40:34-35 describes the **anan** dwelling upon the Mishkan, and continues directly into **Sefer Vayikra**;

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The Precious Value of a Torah Home



Rabbi Eli Mansour

Edmond J Safra Synagogue, Brooklyn

Upon reading Parashat Vayakhel, we cannot help but be struck – and perplexed – by the Torah’s verbosity. The Torah laboriously repeats all the details regarding the construction of the Mishkan which were already presented earlier, in Parashat Teruma. There, we read of G-d presenting the commands for how to build the Mishkan and its furnishings, and here in Parashat Vayakhel, we read of how Beneh Yisrael fully complied with these commands. But why did all the details need to be repeated? Why did the Torah not simply relate that Beneh Yisrael built everything as G-d had commanded? Why was it necessary for the Torah to specify each and every detail of the construction a second time?

The Or Ha’hayim Ha’kadosh (Rav Haim Ben-Attar, 1696-1743), in his commentary to this Parasha (36:11), explains that G-d repeated all the details of the construction of the Mishkan “Ki Habib Alav” – because this information is especially “beloved” to G-d. When we feel excited over something, we want to talk about it repeatedly. The Torah, too, is repetitive when it comes to particularly precious information. The Or Ha’hayim draws a comparison to the story of Eliezer, Abraham’s servant,



Building a Jewish home is as precious and beloved to G-d as the building of a Mishkan.

who went to Aram Naharayim to find a wife for Yishak, and met Ribka, as we read in Parashat Hayeh-Sara. There, too, the Torah seems to be repetitive. After telling us of Eliezer’s experiences at the well outside the city, where he met Ribka, the Torah then records Eliezer lengthy account of his experiences when he spoke to Ribka’s family. The Midrash, as the Or Ha’hayim cites, comments that all this is repeated because “Habiba Alav” – this section is precious and beloved to G-d. Similarly, the Or Ha’hayim explains, the details of the Mishkan’s construction are repeated because this subject is especially beloved to G-d.

It is noteworthy that the Or Ha’hayim draws a comparison between the building of the Mishkan and Eliezer’s successful efforts to find a wife for Yishak – the story of the building of a Jewish home.

The Or Ha’hayim here is teaching us that building a Jewish home is as precious and beloved to G-d as the building of a Mishkan. After all, when a husband and wife conduct themselves the right way, and run their home on the foundations of Torah values and Torah observance, then their home becomes worthy of the Shechina (divine presence). In essence, such a home becomes a Bet Ha’mikdash, a sanctuary, where G-d is present. We are to ensure to build our homes properly, the way the Torah instructs, so that our homes will be beautiful and sublime like the Bet Ha’mikdash, worthy of G-d’s presence and of His unlimited blessings.

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“Did my mother have questions of faith? Never. No one in our family did, because *emunah* was ingrained in us. Everyone in our family had struggles in various ways, but doubts? Never!” (*Emunah with Love and Chicken Soup*, p.484)

With our redemption from Egypt, with the giving, and acceptance, of the Torah, and with the completion of the *Mishkan*, *Sefer Ha’Geula* comes to a close.

As we prepare to celebrate the *Yom Tov* of *Geula*, our Festival of Freedom, let us pray

that we merit the long awaited day, when *the world will be full of knowledge of Hashem, as water covers the sea* (*Yeshayahu* 11:9).

Easy Does It



Rabbi Moshe Weinberger
Congregation Aish Kodesh, Woodmere

Remarkably, between the *parshios* of *Terumah-Titzaveh* and *Vayakhel-Pikudei*, the Torah spends over 400 *psukim* describing the details of how the *Mishkan* should be – and actually was – built. There is no other mitzvah regarding which any comparable amount of time is spent. Neither *Tefillin*, *Shabbos*, *Yom Tov*, or anything else has so many *psukim* devoted to it. Why is that? Why must the Torah repeat all of the details of the *Mishkan* and vessels in *Vayakhel-Pikudei* when all of these specifications were already laid out in *Terumah-Titzaveh*?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe *zy'a*, based on a *Yerushalmi*, says that the specifications regarding how the *Mishkan* and its vessels should be built in *Terumah-Titzaveh* describe the *Mishkan* in the world above – in Heaven. And *Vayakhel-Pikudei* describes the details of how the *Mishkan* below was actually built – here in this world. There are two separate sets of specifications for each because one cannot simply assume that the physical reality here in this world corresponds exactly with what it is supposed to be.

The architectural plan for the *Mishkan* is found in *Terumah-Titzaveh*. This is the artist's rendering. Yet the Torah separately describes the actual construction in *Vayakhel-Pikudei* to teach us that the two are not necessarily the same. What happened in between which can explain the potential discrepancy? Perhaps it is because *parshas Ki Sisa*, which describes the sin of the golden calf, is interposed between the two. Our own failures and shortcomings create the difference between what we could do and what we actually accomplish.

It is like this with respect to all areas of life. The ideal one plans for does not always pan out. When a couple marries,

each of them, and the bride in particular, has a specific image of what married life will look like. It sometimes involves beautiful, white *Shabbos* tablecloths, elegant silver candlesticks, well-behaved children listening attentively to *Abba's dvar Torah*, and singing *zmiros* beautifully together. The groom, as well, may have images of a beautiful, spotless home in his mind. He may picture a life in which his beautiful wife and children wait adoringly for him as he comes home, thanking him for providing such a beautiful life for them. He may imagine that he davens in a shul where three months never go by without the *gabbai* giving him an *aliyah* *Shabbos* morning. But real life seldom looks exactly the way the bride and groom imagine.

It is the same in one's spiritual life. At *neilah*, one may imagine that this year, he will be holy and pure, free from all of the filth with which he contaminated himself the previous year. And sometimes the realities of life bear a passing resemblance to one's plans. But very often it is completely unrecognizable.

We find another anomaly in the *parshas Pikudei*. No less than nineteen times, the Torah repeats that the Jewish people built one or another part of the *Mishkan* and vessels “just as Hashem commanded Moshe.” Why is this done in this context, whereas it is not done anywhere else? Rav Yitzchak Zev HaLevi Soloveichik *zt'l* of Brisk explains that there is a dispute in the Gemara whether it is possible for people to make anything the Torah commands with exact precision or not. In other words, can we make the Ark the required 2.5 *amos* long without making it 2.50000001 *amos* long.

The Brisker Rav explains that we follow the opinion of the Chachamim that it is not possible to achieve exact precision.

Accordingly, even though the way we built the *Mishkan* may not have been exactly as the Torah commanded to the thousandth of an inch, to make sure that we do not worry that we have not fulfilled Hashem's will with respect to the building of the *Mishkan* and its vessels, the Torah repeatedly reassures us that we did the job “just as Hashem commanded Moshe.”

Hashem commanded us to build the *Mishkan* but concomitantly reassured us that our best efforts to meeting the specifications were all He wants from us. He wants us to know that “there is no righteous man in the earth who does [only] good and does not sin” (*Koheles* 7:20). Hashem wants us to know that He does not expect absolute perfection from us so that we will be able to move forward in our service of Him and not beat ourselves up or become discouraged because of our lack of perfection.

The entire reason our souls descended from the upper world into the *Mishkan* below of our bodies is to give us opportunities to do our best to reveal Hashem's Presence and holiness in the messy scrum of this world.

While the actual city of Chelm was filled with great Torah scholars, a number of apocryphal stories are told which portray the city as if it were filled with fools. In one of those stories, there was a debate in the town *beis medresh* regarding whether the sun or the moon were more powerful. After a full day of arguments, the Rav finally stood up, banged on the *shtender*, and announced that he was settling the issue. The moon was stronger than the sun. When asked the reason for his decision, he explained, “The moon is powerful because it has the strength to light up the night. The sun, however, must not be very powerful because it only attempts

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The Human Miracle



Rabbi YY Jacobson
TheYeshiva.net

As a result of a near mutiny, the overbearing and arrogant captain was forced to see a psychiatrist by order of the Commodore.

As soon as the captain settled down on the couch, the psychiatrist began the session by asking:

“Why don’t you start at the beginning?”

The captain said, “Okay. In the beginning I created heaven and the earth...”

Two Creations

At the beginning of Genesis, the Hebrew Bible devotes 31 verses to describe how G-d created the entire world. “In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth.” In striking contrast, the Torah portions of these weeks (Terumah through Pekudei) devote 371 verses to describe how the Jews created the Tabernacle, or Mishkan, in the desert.

This seems profoundly strange.

The universe spans some 176 Trillion Billion miles and is an awesomely complex structure. After millennia of research, we have not yet scratched the surface of its untold depth and unbound mysteries. We have not even mastered the secrets embedded in a single cell. The Tabernacle, on the other hand, was around 150 feet long and 75 feet wide, and was a highly impressive structure, but essentially a small tent; a mini mobile “shtibel.”

Why would the Torah be so expansive about the creation of a humble albeit splendid tent in the desert and yet so

terse about the creation of the cosmos with all of its infinite depth, majesty, and grandeur? 31 verses for creation of the world, and almost half the book of Exodus for the creation of a mobile sanctuary!

Mortality into Eternity

This strange contrast conveys something profoundly important about the Torah’s perspective on life. For an infinite G-d to create a home for finite man is not a big deal. But for a finite man to create a home for an infinite G-d—that is a revolutionary notion. It constitutes the essential revolution of Judaism that from the fragmented pieces of our hearts we can construct a home for the Divine; that the ordinary stuff of human life can be carved into a dwelling place for the Almighty; that G-d craves to dwell in the space we designate for Him in the barren desert of human consciousness.

The creation of the universe is G-d’s miracle—the miracle of converting (spiritual) energy into matter. The creation of a structure to house the Divine in a desert is man’s miracle—the miracle of converting matter into energy; the wonder of a human being surpassing himself, transcending his finite egocentricity and turning his life into a home for the Divine—that story is deserving of close to 400 verses!

This is the essence of the Tabernacle story, which occupies almost half the book of Exodus and on the surface seems so remote from our present lifestyle: that a human being, with his or her limited

tools, through his or her minute and limited deeds, words, and thoughts, can create a home for G-d in his or her daily life; that a frail and vulnerable human being is capable of creating a space in his or her heart for the living presence of G-d. This is the miracle of Torah.

The Talmud says it succinctly (Kesuvos 5a): “The deeds the good people are greater than the creation of heaven and earth.”

G-d transformed Divine energy into physical matter; we transform physical matter into Divine energy.

Half-Ness

This explains two enigmatic details about the Tabernacle story: 1) The obsession with details and nuances that seem irrelevant. G-d seems overly concerned with pegs, nails, beams, hooks, sockets, drapes, curtains, and bows. 2) Most of the measurements are half sizes, not whole ones. Why not wholesome measurements?

Yet this captures the essence of the narrative. Our lives are defined by details, and most of them seem mundane. And we always do things in “half,” never complete, as we are fragmented creatures and there is always something left to do in order to complete the work. “No man dies with half of his ambitions fulfilled,” states the Midrash. This, then, is the message of the story: our disjointed and fragmented lives, the many diverse details of our mundane life, can all become a home for the absolute and undefined reality of G-d. Infinite Oneness can pervade our consciousness — and the consciousness of the universe.

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to light up the daytime when it is already light outside anyway. It must therefore be weaker.”

Our job, like the recounting of the building of the Mishkan in Vayakhel-Pikudei, is

to do the best we can, without driving ourselves crazy, to bring light into the darkness of this world. Even if we are not able to accomplish everything to the thousandth of an inch. Not only is Hashem not

upset with us when we do our best but fall short, this is exactly what He wants – exactly what He had in mind when setting up the world the way it is.

Parshas haChodesh: Unconditional



Rabbi Judah Mischel

Executive Director, Camp HASC; Mashpia, OU-NCSY

Rebbe Yeshaya Steiner of Kerestir, zy'a, "Reb Shayaleh", was beloved and respected as a *Tzadik*, Rebbe, and miracle worker who dedicated his life to the well-being of Jews. A Gaon in Torah and paradigm of *mesirus nefesh* and *ahavas Yisrael*, Reb Shayaleh referred to himself as the *Aibishter's Kecher*, 'God's Cook'. This was because he was continuously welcoming and feeding all who came, from *talmidei chachamim* to the simplest of Jews from across Hungary and Europe. Reb Shayaleh provided them with a place to stay, *hachnasat orchim*, and care for their material and spiritual needs.

Pinchas'l, an unfortunate vagabond who suffered from emotional instability, was a regular guest. He was rude and unkempt, and would spend much of his time sitting on the Rebbe's balcony smoking cigarettes, even on Shabbos. The flagrant disregard for *kedushas Shabbos* was just too much for the *gabbaim*, who were concerned not only for the honor of Shabbos and the *kavod* of their rebbe, but for the fact that he was negatively influencing others. They suggested Pinchas'l find other arrangements away from the home and *beis medrash* of the *tzadik*.

Reb Shayaleh looked at them in astonishment. "Should I send a Jew away from my home?! I will be *ois rebbe*, I'll close my *kremel*, I'll give it all up... but a Yid will never be sent away from Kerestir!"

■ ■ ■

This Shabbos we relive the first Mitzvah given to *Am Yisrael* as a Nation, *kiddush ha-chodesh*: "This month shall be for you the first of the months." Earlier commandments were not addressed to the Nation, but were individual in nature, and whatever pertains to our journey as an entire people pertains to each one of us, even

today. This Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh was given on the First of the Month of Nisan, two weeks before *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. It was given amid darkness and suffering, while Pharaoh was bathing in Jewish blood, and *Am Yisrael* was teetering on the 49th level of *tumah*, almost at the point of no return.

One of the most essential aspects of this first communal Mitzvah is its instruction in Divine partnership; a day of Rosh Chodesh was to be established in collaboration with Hashem. Two witnesses were to come to the *Beis Din* in Yerushalayim, whoever they might be — perhaps two common Jews who had looked well and recognized the first, tiny luminous curve of the moon as it was still covered in darkness. Their testimony to the *Beis Din*, when accepted, would set the Divine calendar of that month, including the date of its *Yom Tov* or festival. The mitzvah of *Rosh Chodesh* thus included a vast empowerment of the 'every man' of Klal Yisrael, a demonstration that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* believes in each of us, and counts on all of us.

The system of establishing *chagim* and *moadim* depends on our identifying and sanctifying the new moon: "These are Hashem's appointed, holy occasions, which you shall designate in their appointed times" (*Vayikra*, 23:4). In this verse, **וְהָאֵלֹהִים**, *osam*, "them", meaning the holy occasions, is spelled without a letter *vav*, and so the letters also spell the word **אַתֶּם**, *atem*, 'you', plural. A seemingly insignificant word with an almost unnoticeable lack of a letter, therefore teaches us that the new month must be proclaimed not only by 'you', singular, the head of the court — but also by *atem*, 'each of you', the entire people (*Rosh Hashanah*, 24a).

The Gemara discusses the possibility of mistaken testimony or of false witnesses intentionally misleading the

court regarding a sighting of the new moon. Hashem says, "Whether you have proclaimed them at their proper time or whether you have declared them not at their proper time, I have only these Festivals as established by the representatives of the Jewish People... *You (atem)* are authorized to determine the date of the new month even if you unwittingly establish the new moon on the wrong day; you, even if you do so intentionally; you, even if you are misled by false witnesses. In all cases, once the court establishes a day as the new moon, it is sanctified, and God grants His consent" (*Rosh Hashanah*, 25b).

Even if the declaration of Rosh Chodesh is scientifically inaccurate, the calendar remains as it stands, with all its *halachos*, and observances. This is no small fact: it will mean that Jews will eat *chametz* on days that scientifically 'should have been' Pesach. We will fast on a day that 'technically' wasn't supposed to be Yom Kippur. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* humbly 'changes' the day to the one we decide it should be, as it were. The Creator of time takes into account humanity's flaws and mistakes and makes them holy.

Rebbe Yitzchak Meir Alter, the Chidushei haRim, comments on the Gemara, above and says that reading *otam*, 'them' as *atem*, 'you', relates to another pasuk in which *atem* appears: "You (*atem*) are all children of Hashem, your Divinity." And this is precisely why the Gemara says, "You are authorized to establish the time in which the Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh will apply: even when mistaken, even when malicious, even when misguided." No matter how imperfect, flawed or corrupt, a Jew remains a Jew — a child of Hashem — invited by his or her Divine Parent to collaborate on establishing the mitzvos of the Torah.

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Enough

Mrs. Shira Smiles

International lecturer and curriculum developer

In an outpouring of largesse, Am Yisrael donated their possessions to furnish the Mishkan and its adornments. So much so that Moshe Rabbeinu had to tell them it was enough. The Torah then concludes this section saying that the material brought was enough for the work to be done and there was extra (Shemos 36;7). The parshanim are troubled by this expression. If there was enough then there wasn't extra and if there was extra, then why say it was enough? Rav Weinberger in Shemen Hatov notes that this idea reflects the dialectic embedded in Jewish thought. The Mishkan was where people could bring down the holy Shechinah, yet at the same time, as physical beings, are so far from achieving holiness and closeness to Hashem. Yechezkel Hanavi (Yechezkel 1;14) describes this dynamic among the angels, "ratzo vashov", moving forward toward kedushah and retreating from it. Here too, the contributions were enough and at the same time, there existed a desire to give more.

Kol Mevasser takes this further, explaining that "vehoter", the extra, is referring not to the donations, rather to the desire of



Whenever we do a mitzvah, the yearning to do even more elevates the experience of the mitzvah and ourselves to an even higher level.

the people. Upon completing their contributions, the people wished they could continue to give. The Divrei Yisrael of Modzitz explains that this desire has been passed down to all generations. Our desire to give tzedakah and support Torah institutions is driven by the 'left over' desire of Am Yisrael when donating to the Mishkan.

This concept, to give beyond what is needed, is not relegated to monetary contributions alone. It is something that can be found in all our mitzvah observance. Rav Bunim of Peshischa teaches that we find it hinted to at the end of the tefillah of Yishtabach. The brachah concludes "habocher beshirei zimrah", [Hashem]

who chooses musical songs of praise. One can read it however as "beshayarei", the leftovers of song. Hashem chooses the feelings left over when we have completed singing; the desire to sing even more is beloved by Hashem. Whenever we do a mitzvah, the yearning to do even more elevates the experience of the mitzvah and ourselves to an even higher level.

Rav Druk in Darash Mordechai looks at this episode from a slightly different perspective. The extra donations were needed to offset potential gaavah among the people. A person could easily conclude that it was their personal donation that completed the Mishkan and hence, brought the Shechinah down to earth. However, now that there were left over materials, no one could be sure where their donation was to be found, in the actual structure, the vessels or in the excess. This uncertainty led to a necessary humility, no one could claim proprietary rights over any part of the Beit Hashem. Indeed, as Hashem does not rest among the haughty, it was a prerequisite to achieve the culmination—hashra'at haShechinah.

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B) 40:36-38 describes how Bnei Yisrael journey through the desert in accordance with this **anan**, and continues directly into **Sefer Bamidbar**. A very interesting structure emerges from this analysis. Sefer Shmot concludes with two 'pointers': one to Sefer Vayikra (A) and one to Sefer Bamidbar (B)!

The significance of this "double-pointer" relates to G-d's original plan after the Exodus, that Bnei Yisrael:

A) Receive the **Torah** at Har Sinai and

B) **Travel** to (and conquer) the Land of Israel. The events of Chet Ha'Egel signified Bnei Yisrael's breaking of the **brit** [covenant] of Har Sinai. Consequently, G-d threatened to break His end of the deal, too, and take His Sh'china away from the people. Had it not been for Moshe Rabbeinu's intervention, Bnei Yisrael would not have received the remaining mitzvot [A], nor would they have been worthy of

G-d's direct assistance in conquering the Land [B].

Now that Bnei Yisrael have built the Mishkan and G-d's Sh'china has returned, G-d once again commits Himself, as it were, to both elements of His original plan:

A) In Sefer Vayikra, Bnei Yisrael receive the **mitzvot**;

B) In Sefer Bamidbar, Bnei Yisrael **travel** towards the Promised Land accompanied by the Sh'china.

Reserve Duty Days



Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi
Popular Torah teacher and author

It's hard to hang in there and go to reserve duty when you feel like your contribution is not being counted.

That's exactly how the Israelites felt in those days, the days of the reserve. In the last week of Adar, Moshe falls down again and again in despair as he tries to build the Tabernacle, but fails. Three times a day, the sages say, Moshe builds a Tabernacle and it collapses. Then the suspicion arises: Who knows where our donation has gone! And Moshe Rabbeinu, in Parashat Pikudei, counts one by one the donations received, and when his account is missing 1175 shekels, he asks G-d to remember where they are and find out! It turns out that Bezalel used this amount to make the hooks for the pillars...

This is a wonderful lesson: do not underestimate a donation that comes from the heart, even if it is only a thread, even if it is only symbolic! Perhaps we have forgotten the gratitude for this donation?!

But the other lesson will be: continue to do the role, continue to do the reserve duty days. And this house sometimes seems very fragile, but in these times we will remember what we sometimes forget about ourselves, the power of the hooks: the hooks of the pillars. We will try and try and – try again until the pillars stand...

Suspicion will always be at the door of every home, private and national. So is the washbasin at the entrance of the Tabernacle, the washbasin to which a man brings his wife suspected of infidelity. At the door of every home, national or social, there will be the question of the common contribution to the house and the carrying of the burden, the question of fidelity or deviation. How do we deal with these difficult questions? The women of Israel knew how to turn suspicion into something new. In their house, which was falling apart before their eyes in Egypt, they decided to go to reserve service, to fight for the house, to renew the love of the brides until it was restored.

“And Moshe assembled...For since the Holy One, blessed be He, became reconciled with them and gave Moses the second Tablets, and also made a new covenant that G-d would go in their midst, He thereby returned to His previous relationship with them, and to the love of their ‘wedding,...’ (Ramban Exodus 35:1) This is possible, G-d told Moshe, but only if you name and remember in Parashat Pekudei all those who said “Yes, Commander (in Hebrew, *mefaked!*)” to the most complicated tasks, who went and did and believed and truly wanted the resurrection of this land.

The day when mistrust becomes a new power is the day of Rosh Chodesh Nissan. The beginning of this month is a reflection of the magic and investment and love of everyone in this nation, and this mirror, the Sages say, is our military strength: “from the mirrors of the armies – that they (the women of Israel) raised up armies of armies in Egypt...” (Midrash Rabbah)

The army is marching towards this renewal.

So how does one go into reserve service to wage war against love?

In three ways: 1. Initiated physical encounters – like the Israelite girls going out into the field and initiating an encounter, which is not so easy. 2. In a great prayer about love: according to Eben Ezra, the women's contributions were shown as they came to pray at the entrance of the Ohel Mo'ed. 3. Recognizing the different contribution of each member of this nation, gratitude!

We have love and it will win. Chodesh Tov!

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During our enslavement, in terms of behavior, we were not all that different from Egyptians. Not only had we fallen into the darkness of idol worship, we did not yet have the Divine support, life-instruction and mission statement of the Torah. But then came the first mitzvah, *Kidush haChodesh*. Rosh Chodesh becomes

a special time, place and process, in which our intimacy is expressed in the mitzvah of *Ha-chodesh ha-zeh lachem*. It is the beginning of our intimate relationship and partnership with Hashem; the unconditional *keshet* of every Jew with Hashem.

May we follow, in our own way, the *derech* of Reb Shayaleh — the path of the true

tzadikim and strive to identify and honor the unconditional holiness and Divine *keshet* of every person we meet.

■ ■ ■

*Ben Zoma says: Who is honored?
The one who gives honor to others....
(Avos, 4:1)*

Hebrew Language in the Parsha



David Curwin
balashon.com

Parashat Vayakhel opens with Moshe gathering the people:

וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת-כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲלֵהֶם אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה ה'...

“Moshe then assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them: These are the things that G-d has commanded you to do.” (Shemot 35:1)

The root of the word וַיִּקְהַל is קהה - “to gather, assemble.” This is actually the second time we find this verb in the Torah. The first occurrence (in a different form) is in last week’s parasha:

וַיִּרְא הָעָם כִּי-בָשַׁשׁ מֹשֶׁה לָרַדַּת מִוַּיְהִי וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם
עַל-אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו ...

“When the people saw that Moshe was so long in coming down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aharon and said to him...” (Shemot 32:1)

A midrash compares the two:

“The commandment for Moshe to assemble [וַיִּקְהַל] all the people at this point was to compensate for the time Aharon had assembled all the people at the time of the golden calf: ‘the people gathered [וַיִּקְהַל] against Aharon”

According to linguists, קהה derives from the root קול, meaning “voice.” They theorize that the original meaning of קהה was to “call together” or “call to an assembly.” The two roots are occasionally interchangeable. In Yirmiyahu 51:55, we find the phrase קול גדול meaning “large assembly”, and there are those that explain the phrase קהלה גדולה in Nechemiah 5:7 as meaning “great voice”.

A similar case of a connection between “noise” and “group” is found in the word קהל. It originally meant “crowd” (and later

took on the meaning “abundance”), and derives from the root מהמה, meaning “growl, roar”.

From קהה, Biblical Hebrew produced two nouns: קהלה and קהל. While their meanings were similar in the Tanakh (assembly, gathering, congregation), today קהלה refers to a group of people with a common interest or goal (“community”), while קהל means only a group of people assembled together, and is usually limited to the sense of “audience”, or the public in general, such as in the phrase דעת הקהל - “public opinion”.

One more word from that root is מקהלה. Today it means “choir”, and so you might think it’s connected to קול meaning “voice.” But in its only appearance in the Tanakh (Tehilim 68:27) it also meant “assembly.”

Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh
Mizrachi Melbourne

Find a word in the Parshat Pekidei that has exactly the same letters as the word “מקוה” (Mikveh).

Answer to the Parsha Riddle

The Chida explains, the Ohel (tent) of the Mishkan now completed, symbolized the tents of merit, and in so doing resemble a Mikvah which elevate a person from ritual impurity to purity. Learning Torah which have the ability to raise a person from the scale of guilt to the scale of ohalim, tents, rather than ahilim. They are juxtaposed in order to tell you: Just as streams planted by the Lord, as cedars by the water” (Bamidbar 24:6) The Gemara vocalizes the word as also [ahallim]. As streams stretched forth, as gardens by the riverside; as also [ahallim]. Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hamina, also said: Why were tents juxtaposed to streams, as it is written: “As streams stretched forth, as gardens by the riverside; as also [ahallim].”

מ	ק	ו	ה
ה	ו	ק	מ

The Chida in Nachal Kedumim explains the connection between the Mishkan and a Mikvah based on the following Gemara in Brachot 16a:

וְהָיָה כִּי יִבְנֶה אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְשָׂאֵל בְּעֵינָיו וְרָאָהוּ וְשָׂאֵל בְּעֵינָיו וְרָאָהוּ וְשָׂאֵל בְּעֵינָיו וְרָאָהוּ

Answer = מקוה (was set up)



THIS WEEK in Jewish History

- March 18, 1817:** Czar Alexander I of Russia declared the Blood Libel, for which thousands of Jews were massacred through the centuries, to be false.
- March 19, 1933:** Birthday of Phillip Roth, American novelist who wrote 31 books, and won multiple National Book Awards, the Man Booker Prize and the Pulitzer Prize.
- Adar 27, 3174 (586 BCE):** King Tzidkiyahu (Zedekiah), the last king of the royal house of David to reign in the Holy Land, died in captivity in Babylonia.
- Adar 28, 3597 (163 BCE):** King Antiochus V granted freedom of religion and political autonomy to the Jews of Israel, reversing the decrees of his father.
- March 22, 2004:** The IDF assassinated the founder of Hamas, Ahmed Yassin, who was responsible for years of terror attacks, causing the deaths of numerous civilians.
- Nissan 1, 2449 (1312 BCE):** On the day the Tabernacle was completed, two of Aaron’s sons, Nadav and Avihu, died after entering the Holy of Holies unauthorized.
- March 24, 1921:** Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and Rabbi Ya’akov Meir were elected the first two Chief Rabbis of pre-state Israel.

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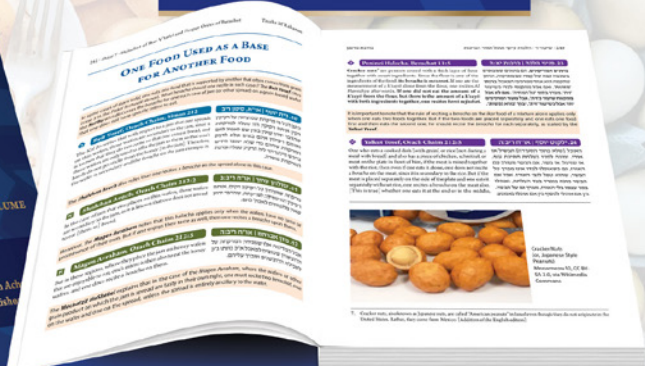
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SWEDEN

The Jewish Community of Stockholm
Kehilat Adat Yeshurun
Kehiliat Adat Yisrael

SWITZERLAND

BERN

Jüdische Gemeinde Bern

ZURICH

Mizrachi

UNITED KINGDOM

Mizrachi UK

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Kol Hatorah Kulah
National Council of Young Israel
RZA-Mizrachi USA

CALIFORNIA

Beth Jacob Congregation
Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy
West Coast Torah Center
Young Israel of North Beverly Hills
YULA High School
Young Israel of Century City

COLORADO

DAT Minyan
East Denver Orthodox Synagogue
The Denver Kehillah

CONNECTICUT

Beth David Synagogue
Congregation Agudath Sholom
Young Israel of West Hartford

FLORIDA

Beth Israel Congregation
Hebrew Academy RASG
PlayHard PrayHard
Congregation Torah Ohr
Sha'arei Bina Torah Academy for Girls
Young Israel of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale

GEORGIA

Congregation Beth Jacob
Congregation Ohr HaTorah

HAWAII

Kehilat Olam Ejad Ganim

ILLINOIS

Mizrachi-Religious Zionists of Chicago

MARYLAND

Kemp Mill Synagogue
Pikesville Jewish Congregation
Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation

MASSACHUSETTS

Congregation Beth El Atereth Israel
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe
Congregation Shaarei Tefillah
Young Israel of Brookline

MICHIGAN

Young Israel of Oak Park
Young Israel of Southfield
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe

MINNESOTA

Congregation Darchei Noam

MISSOURI

Yeshivat Kadimah High School Nusach
Hari B'nai Zion Congregation
Young Israel of St. Louis

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Hillel at Dartmouth

NEW JERSEY

Ahavas Achim
Volunteer Chaplain Middlesex County
Congregation AABJ&D
Congregation Adath Israel of the JEC
National Council of Young Israel
Congregation Ahavat Achim
Congregation Ahavath Torah
Congregation Brothers of Israel
Congregation Darchei Noam of Fair Lawn
Congregation Etz Chaim of Livingston
Congregation Israel of Springfield
Congregation Ohr Torah
Congregation Sons of Israel of Cherry Hill
Kehilat Kesher
Ma Tov Day Camp
Ohav Emeth
Pal Foundation
Shomrei Torah of Fair Lawn
Synagogue of the Suburban Torah Center
Yavneh Academy
National Council of Young Israel
Young Israel of Teaneck

NEW YORK

Beis Community
Congregation Anshei Shalom
Congregation B'nai Tzedek
Congregation Bais Tefillah of Woodmere
Congregation Beth Sholom
Ramaz
Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls
MTA – Yeshiva University
High School for Boys
Young Israel of Merrick
Congregation Beth Torah
Congregation Etz Chaim of
Kew Gardens Hills
Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun
Congregation Ohab Zedek
Great Neck Synagogue
Iranian Jewish Center/Beth
Hadassah Synagogue
Irving Place Minyan
Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach
Kehilath Jershurun
Kingsway Jewish Center
Lincoln Square Synagogue
Merkaz Yisrael of Marine Park

North Shore Hebrew Academy
Young Israel of Merrick
NYC Department of Correction
OU-JLIC at Binghamton University
OU-JLIC at Cornell University
Queens Jewish Center
Stars of Israel Academy
The Jewish Center
The Riverdale Minyan
Vaad of Chevra Kadisha
West Side institutional Synagogue
Yeshiva University High School for Girls
Young Israel of Hillcrest
Young Israel of Jamaica Estates
Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst
Young Israel of New Rochelle
Young Israel of North Woodmere
Young Israel of Oceanside
Young Israel of Scarsdale
Young Israel of Woodmere

OHIO

Beachwood Kehilla
Congregation Sha'arei Torah
Congregation Torat Emet
Green Road Synagogue
Fuchs Mizrachi School
Heights Jewish Center

PENNSYLVANIA

Shaare Torah Congregation

SOUTH CAROLINA

Brith Sholom Beth Israel
Congregation Dor Tikvah

TENNESSEE

Baron Hirsch Congregation

TEXAS

Mayerland Minyan Synagogue
Robert M. Beren Academy
United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston

VIRGINIA

Keneseth Beth Israel

WASHINGTON

Bikur Cholim-Machzikay Hadath
Northwest Yeshiva High School
Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation

URUGUAY

Comunidad Yavne Uruguay

VENEZUELA

CARACAS

Ashkenazi Kehilla
Mizrachi Venezuela



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