

the very first exposure of the moon's new monthly cycle. The Beis Din would then declare the start of the new month.

The most obvious consequence of this procedure was the 29 or 30 day month, otherwise identified by a one or two day Rosh Chodesh. A two day Rosh Chodesh is comprised of the 30th day of the previous month and the 1st day of the new month. A one day Rosh Chodesh means that the preceding month was only 29 days long making Rosh Chodesh the 1st day of the new month. This would have an immediate effect on the scheduling of Yomim Tovim and other calendar ordained activities. It underscores from the very inception of the nation that the Beis Din, representing the Rabbinic leadership of the nation, were the single most important factor in guaranteeing the practice of Torah throughout time. It was as if G-d would wait for Beis Din to notify Him when His Yomim Tovim were to be.

*Rabbi Aron Tendler and torah.org.*

### Announcements

**Coronavirus Pandemic - please see your email for the complete letter to our community from Rabbi Meltzer and Jonathan Erlich**

**The situation is constantly changing and as you will have read in your email Or Chadash Synagogue, like many others around Sydney, has suspended services and face-to-face classes**

**Over the coming days we will be in touch regarding further initiatives to ensure that we have opportunities to come together as a community. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need assistance (alon.meltzer@gmail.com or 0416 643 431; j.erlich@unsw.edu.au or 0404 073 193)**

**By the grace of G-d, we will be back together as soon as possible. May the Almighty ensure the safety and security of our entire community, and a refuah shleima to all those affected by this terrible pandemic**

**Jewish University Online classes via 'zoom' with Rabbi Alon Wednesday 8 pm  
Adult Education - Bespoke shiurim – choose your own learning adventure!  
Matan Bat Mitzvah next course details see email**

**Community Announcements: Jewish Podcast Club at Shalom www.shalom.edu.au; JeneScreen information at www.jenescreen.com.au**

### Minyan Schedule

Erev Shabbat Parashat Vayakhel/  
Pekudei  
No Friday night services 20/03/20  
Online Kabbalat Shabbat via Zoom  
OC with Mizrahi 6:00 pm  
Candle lighting 6:48 pm

Shabbat HaChodesh Parashat  
Vayakhel/Pekudei  
No morning services 21/03/20  
Shabbat ends 7:47 pm  
Musical Havdalah via Zoom join OC  
and Mizrahi from 7:55 pm

Rosh Chodesh Nisan 26/03/20

Erev Shabbat Parashat Vayikra  
Candle lighting 6:39 pm



Celebrating  
**25**  
Years

## Weekly Newsletter

**Shabbat HaChodesh Mevarchim  
Parashat Vayakhel/Pekudei**

25 Adar, 5780; 21 March, 2020

**Shabbat Torah reading:** Stone Chumash p 516, Maftir p 348 and Haftarah p 1218.

**President** Jonathan Erlich  
**Rabbi** Alon Meltzer

### Seeing the Light, with Shadows Rabbi Marc D. Angel

The chief architect of the Mishkan (sanctuary) was Bezalel, named specifically by the Almighty to undertake this sacred task. The Torah describes Bezalel as a person filled with the spirit of G-d "in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Shemot 35:31).

In this week's Torah portion (as in previous Torah portions), Bezalel's name includes reference to his father, Uri, and his grandfather, Hur. Because of the unusual inclusion of his grandfather's name, the Midrash suggests a special reason why Hur was mentioned. Hur was one of the leaders of the Israelites. He and Aaron were second in command to Moses. Yet, we hear very little about Hur in the text of the Torah. The Midrash suggests that when the Israelites wished to fashion the golden calf, Hur stood up in bold resistance to the proposed idolatrous behavior. As

a result of his moral courage, the people murdered him and then compelled Aaron to make the golden calf. The Almighty, as a reward to Hur for his valiant spiritual heroism, chose Hur's grandson Bezalel to be the architect of the Mishkan. Thus Bezalel is identified in the Torah as son of Uri and grandson of Hur, making sure that Hur's name is associated with the building of the sanctuary.

While the Midrash provides a dramatic homiletic story, nothing in the text of the Torah suggests that Hur indeed did resist the Israelites' demand for an idol or that he was martyred for his spiritual heroism.

Perhaps the identification of Bezalel as son of Uri and grandson of Hur may be interpreted in another way. This interpretation is based on the literary significance of the three names.

The name Hur is related to the Hebrew word "Hor"—meaning a cave, a dark place. Uri is related to the Hebrew word "Or"—meaning light. Bezalel literally means "in the shadow of G-d." Why was Bezalel chosen as the master artist and



architect of the Mishkan?

Let us put his names together, starting from the earliest generation. Hur reminds us of darkness. Wisdom begins in “nothingness,” in a dark void of inner searching. But then wisdom proceeds into the light, into flashes of insight. This stage is suggested by the name Uri, light. Finally, though, wisdom requires the ability to balance darkness and light, to see nuances and subtleties. This is suggested by the name Bezalel, whose very name reminds us of shadows; not just any shadows, but “G-dly” shadows, shadows of a wisdom so deep that it is sensitive to the mysteries of darkness and light. Bezalel was chosen because of his special gift of wisdom and his aesthetic sense; he combined the technical talents of an architect with the spiritual and aesthetic sense of an artist.

The larger message is that life, including religious life, operates on different levels. We need to tend to technical details and precise requirements in order to maintain orderly lives. But we also need to contemplate spiritual foundations, the underlying meanings of our technical actions. Thoughtful people plumb into the darkness of philosophical, spiritual yearnings.

A rabbinic teaching has it that wisdom is found in nothingness. Wisdom seeks ultimate meaning, and it begins with the humble and mysterious searching through darkness. But then, the serious seeker will have flashes of insight, glimpses of the light of truth. A person might think, though, that once he/she has “seen the light,” truth has been found once and for all. This is a grave mistake. A person must move to the higher level

of wisdom: the ability to see “shadows,” to balance darkness and light, to live with nuances, uncertainties, hints and mysteries. Although knowledge of technical reality is essential, wisdom infuses knowledge with meaning, subtlety, sanctity.

Perhaps this is the message implied by the names of Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur. We begin in darkness, we move to light; but we then strive to live in the shadow of G-d, a world of shadows and hidden meanings, a world of wisdom and aestheticism, a world of reality and soulfulness. *Rabbi Marc. D. Angel and the Institute of Jewish Ideas and Ideals.*

### Shabbat Always Wins Rabbi Berel Wein

The Torah reading of this week opens with a review and reiteration of the concept and laws of Shabbat. The rabbis of the Talmud used this juxtaposition of Shabbat and the detailed description of the construction of the Tabernacle to derive and define what type of work was forbidden on Shabbat. This is certainly very noteworthy as it forms the basis of understanding the values of Shabbat as they apply to us, especially as it provides a rest from the stresses of modern life.

However, there is another insight present in this discussion of Shabbat. The first word of the Torah reading indicates that it took place in a public venue with all gathered to hear Moshe explain this concept for them and for all their generations. We are thus informed that among the many facets of the diamond of Shabbat, there is not only the private one that is observed within

the home and the synagogue but also the public one that can be seen and recognized and felt even on the street and in general society itself.

For a long period of time in Jewish history, over the past two to three centuries, both facets of Shabbat were seriously challenged within the Jewish world. With the growth of the Orthodox community, especially over the last 60 years, the pride in the Shabbat has been salvaged. Even though the majority of the Jewish people are not really Sabbath observers today, there are entire sections of the Jewish people that have preserved the Shabbat in all of its beauty and allowed its holiness to invest its homes and families.

The struggle for the public Shabbat is being waged here in Israel and wherever large Jewish communities exist in the world. There are entire neighborhoods in the Diaspora where the population is overwhelmingly made up of Orthodox Jews and the public Shabbat is observed and visible. In these Jewish neighborhoods there is practically no traffic on Shabbat nor any visible public desecrations of the holy day. However, here in Israel the public Shabbat is, and has been for the past century, a strong bone of contention between the religiously observant and secular elements of Israeli society.

In cities such as Jerusalem and even Tel Aviv there is no public transportation that operates on the Shabbat. However, there is a constant demand from secular groups for this element of the public Shabbat to be eliminated and for the Sabbath to be confined to the home and the synagogue. But it is the public Shabbat that is most necessary in Jewish society. It is the public Shabbat that defines us and reminds us of who and why we are and what our mission of service and devotion in life truly is. It is unfortunate that the public Shabbat like many other truly spiritual and apolitical values have been hijacked by politicians of all stripes and turned into contention and misunderstanding. I am confident,

*Or Chadash is a friendly community. We hold tuneful participatory services, in the nusach Ashkenaz tradition, on Shabbat and Yom Tov. Focusing on personal growth, we welcome all, from small children to older men and women, of all levels of observance.*

*We have operated since 1995. During the year we arrange special activities including: learning, shiur/lecture series and social events.*

though, that the Shabbat will always win out, as it always has, even the public elements of Shabbat. *Rabbi Berel Wein and Torah.org.*

### Haftarah Summary Rabbi Aron Tendler

This week, in addition to the regular Parsha, we read the section known as HaChodesh. This additional section from Shemot, Parshas Bo, is read on the Shabbat before the month of Nissan, or on the Shabbat of Rosh Chodesh Nissan. This section is an account of the very first Mitzvah given to the Jewish people as a nation. It includes the concept of Rosh Chodesh, the New Moon, as well as the basic laws of Pesach and the Paschal Lamb. Being that Pesach starts on the 15th of Nissan, this section is read about two weeks before Pesach begins. As with Parshas Parah, Chazal wanted the reading of this Parsha to be a reminder that Pesach is almost upon us! Only two more weeks to make the necessary arrangements to get to Yerushalayim and bring the Paschal Lamb! Only two more weeks and your house had better be in order! (are you panicked yet?)

It is interesting that Hashem selected the Mitzvah of the New Moon as the first national Mitzvah. Basically, the Mitzvah required two eye witnesses to testify before Beis Din that they had seen the tiny sliver of the new moon's crescent that is

Are you on the Or Chadash email list? To receive information about Or Chadash times and events, contact us on orchadash613@gmail.com.

Please be in contact if you have recently changed your details.

Contributions to Or Chadash Inc. can be made by contacting Jonathan Erlich on 0404 093 173 or orchadash613@gmail.com or by post **PO Box 109, Rose Bay NSW 2029**. Details are also available at www.orchadash.org.au