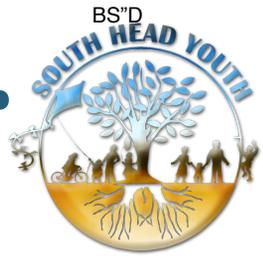


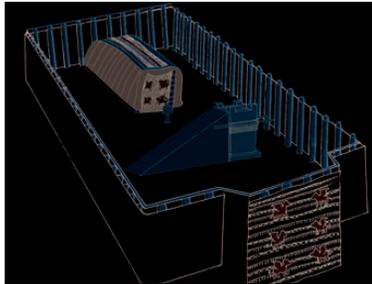


SOUTH HEAD YOUTH PARASHA SHEET

PARASHAT PEKUDEI



The Jewish people spend a whole three months building the Mishkan for Hashem. They sew together the clothes for the Kohanim and the Kohen Gadol, they constructed the holy vessels for the Mishkan, they built the gold-coated wooden beams and silver coated sockets that held the beams together and they embodied the curtain which served as the roof of the Mishkan. The clothing of the Kohanim and Kohen Gadol were designed and sewn by two great craftsmen, Betzalel and Ohaliav. When it comes to making the Kohen Gadol's apron, a very intricate design is used. The apron is blended with six different colors of thread, one which is a fine gold. They ask to make the Kohen Gadol's Choshen (breastplate) on their own - they weave the breastplate, cut the stones engraving them with the names of the twelve tribes and then secure them on the woven breastplate.

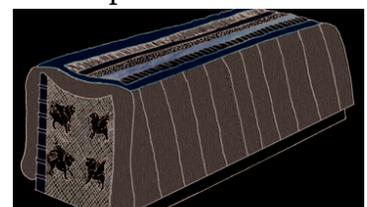


Finally when all the work is finished by the Jewish people Moshe performs a quick inspection of all the items. To his amazement, each item exactly matches the fiery visions that Hashem had shown him on Mount Sinai! Moshe is so filled with awe that he blesses the Jewish people that Hashem should indeed dwell in the Mishkan which they have so lovingly built for Him.

Now that they have been blessed, the Jewish people try to connect the beams to erect the Mishkan, but unfortunately, every time they try to do so the Mishkan just collapses. Every craftsman, builder and developer who had played a large role in the building of the Mishkan attempted to erect the Mishkan but to no avail. The Jewish people are so upset! They were so eager to have a place for Hashem to dwell amongst them and now they're not able to erect the Mishkan. They worry that they may have done something wrong and now Hashem will not have a house in which He can dwell amongst the Jewish people.

The Jewish people were not the only sad ones, Moshe too was upset. He could not understand how after all of their hard work, the Jewish people were not able to put the Mishkan together. He could not understand what was wrong! They had built and completed every single part of the Mishkan according to Hashem's specifications. There was no reason not to be able to get the Mishkan to stand. So Moshe turns to Hashem to find out what has gone wrong. Hashem tells Moshe, 'don't worry, the Jewish people have not done anything wrong. I have purposely caused the Mishkan not to stand when the Jewish people tried to erect it. This is because I want you to have a share in the building of the Mishkan. I want you to be the one to erect the Mishkan'. Moshe was delighted with this news. And so on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the inauguration of the Mishkan took place.

Even though the beams were extremely heavy, Hashem made a miracle and Moshe was able to lift the beams and assemble the Mishkan on his own. Once Moshe had the beams standing and the Mishkan upright, he covered them with the layers of tapestries. Then he placed all of the vessels inside the Mishkan. First he placed the Aron inside the Kodsh HaKadoshim (the Holy of Holies) and then took the two Luchot and placed them inside the Aron. He then covered the Aron with a woven cloth. Then Moshe placed three vessels in the Kodsh - these were the Menorah, the Shulchan (the bread table) and the golden Mizbeach (altar). Moshe then places bread onto the Shulchan. Next Moshe placed the Mizbeach Hanechoshet (the copper altar) and the Kiyor (washing basin) in the Chatzeir (the courtyard). He also filled the Kiyor with water and behold a miracle occurred, the water kept on flowing and it was not necessary to ever fill the Kiyor again.



The inauguration of the Mishkan was an eight day celebration! The difference

between the first seven days of the Mishkan's dedication and the eighth day was great! On the first seven days the Mishkan was not permanent. On each of these days Moshe dismantled the Mishkan on the same day that he set it up. On the eighth day however, the Divine Presence rested on the Mishkan. A great cloud descended on the Mishkan from above and in it reseted Hashem's Divine Presence. Therefore the sacrifices offered during the seven days of dedication were not as lofty as those offered on the eighth day and after, when the Mishkan was totally complete. Of course Hashem does not need a cloud to transport His holiness, He just wants the Jewish people to be able to see that His presence is really dwelling in the Mishkan and among the Jewish people.

It is with the descent of Hashem's holiness to dwell among the Jewish people that the book of Shemot (Exodus), the second book in the Torah, comes to a close.

PARASHAT SHEKALIM

In the four weeks leading up to Rosh Chodesh Nissan, we read four different Parshiot, one on each week. This week we read the special Parasha of Parashat Shekalim which speaks about the importance and significance of the half shekel coin. The half shekel coin served as an atonement for the Jewish people's sin with the golden calf. Even though the Jewish people did not equally take part in the sin, every Jew was required to give a half shekel coin donation. The rich were not permitted to give more and the poor person was not allowed to give any less. The half shekel coin became an annual donation which was used to pay for the communal sacrifice as well as any repairs that were to be made to the Mishkan.

Moshe was quite puzzled by Hashem's request of a half shekel donation for various reasons. Firstly, given the gravities of the sin of the golden calf how was it possible that a simple half shekel coin could atone for such a sin? Secondly, what was the purpose in giving half a shekel? Why not a whole coin? Through the giving of a half shekel the Jewish people are showing that the unity of Hashem and His people is not a union of two separate entities. Rather, the Oneness of a Jew and Hashem forms one whole! Without Hashem, a Jewish person is an incomplete half. A Jew can only become a whole and complete person by uniting with Hashem.

It is also interesting to note that when Hashem told Moshe that the Jewish people would be required to bring a half shekel coin to atone for their sin, He showed Moshe a fiery vision of the coin. This at first can seem quite peculiar. After all, what could possibly be the purpose in Hashem showing Moshe a fiery vision of the half shekel coin? Hashem was trying to tell Moshe that we should never judge a book by its cover. We should not go around judging people by how they look or what they do. The Jewish people were required to bring a half shekel coin yet Hashem showed Moshe a vision of a fiery half a shekel coin. Although both coins may look alike externally (both only being worth half a shekel) one is a cold piece of metal whereas the other is aflame with passion and love. So the half a shekel teaches us that there is more to a Mitzvah than the simple act. There is a Neshama, a soul pushing us to perform the Mitzvah and urging us to not just perform the Mitzvah because we have to but because we want to and because we want to be closer and connected to Hashem. We should take a lesson from this and realize that Hashem judges us based on the fire that we inject into the Mitzvah. Therefore it was possible for a half shekel coin to atone for the sin because each Jewish person gave the half a shekel aflame with passion and love.



Mission of the week: Place a coin in the charity box before the commencement of Shabbat.

**It was great seeing you in Shule!
We hope you enjoy reading this Parasha Sheet and quizzing your family!
Shabbat Shalom from Brookie and the South Head Youth Crew**

