

Shabbat Shalom. Today is 25 Adar 5780, Parshat HaChodesh. We read from two Sifrei Torah. The Maftir is for Parshat HaChodesh (from Parshat Bo, Exodus 12:1-20). The Haftarah is also for Parshat HaChodesh (Ezekiel 45:16-46:18). We bensch Rosh Chodesh Nissan, which will be this Thursday. The Molad, re-appearance of the moon will this Tuesday at 10:14am and 11 Chalakim (about 37 seconds). We omit Av HaRachamim.

TORAH DIALOGUE

(p. 373 Hz) (p. 573 S) (p. 353 Hi) (p. 516 AS)

VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI ויקהל-פקודי

Exodus 35:1

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1. Moshe assembled the entire Jewish community to witness the initial stages of the existence of the Mishkan, the vehicle that proves that Hashem has forgiven the Jewish people from the sin of the Golden Calf. The entire adult male population numbered 603,550. Adding those under 20 years of age and the elderly and all the women brings the entire population to about 3,000,000 (Ramban). The number of punished idolaters in the sin of the Golden Calf was only 3,000 people. So the number of "innocent" by-standers vastly outnumbered the guilty parties. Our Sages pointed out that the people who initiated the sin were non-Jews who exited Egypt with Bnei Yisrael. So if the far far majority of the Jewish people were guiltless, why are we held guilty in the eyes of Hashem? Perhaps the issue was that the Jewish people did not stop the evil doers. They were quiet spectators. And that would constitute a grave sin! (RED)

2. And Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael "these are the 'things' the Hashem has commanded to do them." What things are we talking about? The obvious answer is Shabbat and the Mishkan. Most commentators write that the message is that the Mishkan's construction does not supersede Shabbat. Allow me to suggest something different entirely. Shabbat represents the Sanctity of Time (Kedushat Zman) while the Mishkan represents the Sanctity of an Object (Kedushat HaCheftza). And these two issues of Sanctity will combine each week to give us a holy shot in the arm. And the entire nation of Israel is included in these Mitzvot. Shabbat was not given to an individual; it was given to a nation. And we are required collectively to preserve the Shabbat. How sad it is that not even ten percent of today's Jews are dedicated to our Shabbat observance. The Mishkan was also a collective Mitzvah, whereby each Jew donated a half Shekel for the effort to build it. These two elements unite all Jews in an effort to bring Sanctity into our lives. (RED)

3. The Ramban was correct when he identified the main idea that is incorporated within the entire Chumash of Shemot. It is not the Exodus from Egypt, and it is not the Revelation at Sinai. It is Hashra'at HaShechinah, the Presence of Hashem. And this became the ultimate accomplishment in the construction of the Mishkan. At the end of the process, the entire nation of Israel would experience the Presence of Hashem. We can go through life without feeling the emotion. Some experience an ecstatic feeling of the Presence of Hashem when they are at the Kotel. Or at the moment of 20,000 male Jews davening at the Kotel on Shavuot early morning and praying the Amidah of Shacharit all together. The

only sound to be heard are the chirping of birds. Or at the Siyum HaShas at MetLife Stadium when 75,000 Jews daven Minchah together. Imagine what it was in the desert when three million Jews experienced God's Presence at the same time! (RED)

4. The Me'am Lo'ez presents an interesting idea: Everything in the Mishkan paralleled what Hashem had made during the six days of Creation. The curtains paralleled the heaven and earth. The washstand represented the seas and rivers. The altar and sacrifices paralleled the animals. The Menorah paralleled the sun and the moon. Although the proofs offered by the Me'am Lo'ez are not overwhelming, they still offer a valuable lesson, namely that Hashem's Creation of the world is depicted in real life. The idea has merit. When the Rambam discusses how to experience God's existence in the world, he says that we should see Hashem's creation of nature. Seeing a tree or the sea or even the celestial spheres in the sky will bring us to a greater awareness of Hashem's existence. The Mitzvah of the Mishkan coming immediately after the sin of the Golden Calf is a good antidote to idolatry. Having a physical representation of Hashem's existence will keep us away from idolatry. It is very hard for man, a physical being, to identify with an infinite spiritual entity of Hashem. We need the physical representation to help us. That is what we should think of when we hold a Kiddush cup today! (RED)

5. A different idea is offered by the Rambam in a letter to his son, Avraham. He wrote: you must realize the Mishkan alludes to the human body. The Ark represents the human heart, which is the innermost part of the body. The wings of the Cherubim which spread over the Ark allude to the lungs. The lungs are over the heart like wings, and they provide it with air. The Shulchan (Table) alludes to the human stomach. The Menorah alludes to the human mind. The Menorah gives forth light, so the intellect enlightens the entire body. The Incense alludes to the sense of smell. The sacrificial Altar alludes to the intestines which digest the food that enters the body. The Washstand alludes to the moisture and other liquids in the body. The Rambam was teaching us that if a person acts the part of a good Jew, he can make the Divine Presence rest in his body. This is because the human body resembles the Mishkan in all its details.

6. Moshe was aware that he could be suspected of taking from the gifts offered for the constructing of the Mishkan. Therefore he offered a complete accounting of all the donations. This notion is highlighted in the Talmud. The house of Garmu were expert in the making of the Showbread, but never was the fine bread found in the hands of their children, lest people should say that they grow fat from the preparation of the Showbread (Yoma 38a). The house of Avtinas were expert in preparing the incense, but never did a bride of theirs go forth perfumed. When they married outside the family, they would make it a condition that the bride not be perfumed, lest people say that they perfume themselves with the incense preparations (Yoma 38a). The one who would collect the Shekel donations did not wear a sleeved cloak or shoes... lest if he became rich, they would say that his wealth came from these Shekels (Shekalim 3:2).

7. The workmen who dedicated themselves to the strenuous tasks of making the utensils and special Kohanim clothing had no experience in the work at hand. Their sole work experience was the construction work imposed upon

them in Egypt. Hardly a good job resume for their work in the desert. Commentators write that it was divine intervention that gave them the necessary knowledge that allowed them to successfully complete the work involved in the construction of the Mishkan. It was solely by the Grace of Hashem that allowed them to do the job. These workers were hand selected by Hashem to perform their handiwork, and each person was aware that he was doing Hashem's work, and allowed himself to be guided by Hashem in His (his) wisdom and skill. They represented all of Israel. There are 613 Mitzvot in the Torah, but no one person could possibly perform all of them. Some were reserved for men, others were exclusively for women. Some were reserved for the Kohanim, others for Leviyim. The Torah is a collective obligation, and each person is called upon to perform his task.

MAFTIR

(p. 253 Hz) (p. 386 S) (p. 249 Hi) (p. 348 AS)

PARSHAT HACHODESH חֲדָשׁ

HAFTORAH

(p. 1001 Hz) (p. 1195 S) (p. 962 Hi) (p. 1218 AS)

EZEKIEL יְהִיָּה 45:16

The month of Nissan brings us the Passover Festival which commemorates our birth as a nation. That began, as the special Maftir indicates, with the foundation and dedication of Jewish homes. The model of the Jewish home is the Tent of Appointed Meeting. It was the first of Nissan when that tent was consecrated as the place where Israel made its sacrificial offerings, paying devotion to God, and where God would give His blessing. The existence of that tent was but a moment in Jewish history (Hirsch.) Ever since then we attempt to create a "Tent of Meeting" out of our own homes. Our dinner table becomes symbolic of the altar. Dipping challah into salt is reminiscent of each sacrifice requiring salt. The spiritual lessons of the Tabernacle are the goals of its creation. In this haftorah, Ezekiel speaks of a Third Holy Temple, one which will never be destroyed. Even though much of Ezekiel's description defies our ability to understand fully its meaning, we are confident that God is the director of our history and will ultimately bring about its attainment.

SHABBAT HALACHAH

The Pitchei Teshuvah on Orach Chaim (282:4) discusses a situation in which, like today, Vayakhel and Pekudei are read together. The congregation made a mistake and read only Vayakhel. It is not necessary to take out the Torah again to read Pekudei, according to the Pitchei Teshuvah. Rather they should read Pekudei and Vayikra together the following week. He does point out that the Magain Avraham (135:4) writes that it is not appropriate to read in one Torah from two parshiot that are in two different chumashim.

The Pitchei Teshuvah further relates that one time a congregation mistakenly thought that Matot and Mas'ei were together that year and they read three aliyot in Matot and four in Mas'ei. Upon leaving shul they were informed that in that year Matot and Mas'ei were to be read on two separate Shabbatot. The question was raised: Since they had not read seven aliyot from the appropriate parsha, what were they to do? The ruling is that it is not necessary to read another four aliyot from Parshat Matot, since the main institution of public Torah reading was to read seven aliyot from the Torah, irrespective of which parsha they were read from.

QUESTIONS FOR PARSHIYOT VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI 5780

I. From the Text

1. What three metals were collected for the building of the Mishkan? (35:5)
2. What was the Parochet? (35:12)
3. What did the princes donate to the Mishkan? (35:27)
4. What else did Betzalel and Oholiav do besides work with the material? (35:34)
5. How did they make gold threads out of the blocks of gold? (39:3)

II. From Rashi

6. When did Moshe assemble all the people to contribute to the building of the Mishkan? (35:1)
7. Why did the spinning of the goat's hair require extraordinary skill? (35:26)
8. The princes gave their contribution last. At what event did they atone for going last? (35:27)
9. What significance was there to Betzalel being from the tribe of Yehudah and Oholiav being from the tribe of Dan? (35:34)
10. The Book of Psalms (Tehillim) is divided into 150 chapters. How many of the chapters are attributed to Moshe? (39:43)

III. From the Rabbis

11. Of all the prohibitions of work on Shabbat, why is "fire" the only prohibition mentioned here? (Seforno)
12. Why did the men accompany the women in donating to the Mishkan? (Seforno)
13. What important ingredient was there in the building of the Mishkan that guaranteed Hashem's presence there? (Seforno)

IV. Haftorah. HaChodesh. Ezekiel

14. What three Mitzvot did the Greek-Syrians wish to nullify (before the Chanukah miracle)?

V. Relationships

- a) Betzalel - Moshe
- b) Shucham - Chushim
- c) Yimnah - Serach
- d) Kehat - Amram
- e) Kehat - Korach

ANSWERS FOR PARSHIYOT VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI 5780

1. Gold, silver, and brass (copper).
 2. The curtain that separated the Holy of the Holies from the Holy.
 3. The onyx stones and the stones for the Ephod.
 4. They taught the other craftsmen what to do.
 5. They beat the gold into thin plates and then cut the plates into threads.
 6. On the 11th of Tishrei.
 7. The women spun the hair while it was still on the goat.
 8. At the consecration of the Mishkan, the princes brought their gifts first.
 9. From Yehudah, the leading tribe, and from Dan, one of the minor tribes, would teach the people that all were equal in Hashem's eyes.
 10. Eleven
 11. In creating the Mishkan much of the work includes fire, and it is a constructive fire, and therefore is still prohibited.
 12. The man's presence was necessary to confirm her donation.
 13. The sincerity and piety of each craftsman imbued the Mishkan with sanctity (unlike in the construction of the First and Second Holy Temples).
 14. Shabbat, Circumcision, and Rosh Chodesh (hence the significance of Rosh Chodesh Nissan to today).
- Relationships
- a) Great Great Uncle Moshe
 - b) The same person (son of Dan)
 - c) Brother - Sister (children of Asher)
 - d) Father Kehat
 - e) Grandfather Kehat