

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 23 Adar 5778, Parshat Parah. We lain from two Sifrei Torah. We bensch Rosh Chodesh Nissan which will be next Shabbat. The re-appearance of the moon will be next Shabbat morning at 4:53 a.m. and 4 chalakim (about 13 seconds), Jerusalem time. We omit Av HaRachamim.

Mazel Tov to Matthew Eichenholz upon today's celebration of his Bar Mitzvah. Mazel Tov to Matthew's parents Jason & Jennifer Eichenholz and to the entire family.

TORAH DIALOGUE

(p. 385 Hz) (p. 591 S) (p. 363 Hi) (p. 516 AS)

VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI וַיִּקְהַל-פְּקֻדֵי

Exodus 35:1

[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis, Rabbi Emeritus (RED)
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1. "And the princes brought the Avnei Shoham." Rashi explains the word וְהִנְחִיחַ is written in a deficient manner because they were derelict in their responsibilities to contributing towards the Mishkan. They said that they would wait to see what the rest of Klal Yisrael would give, and they would fill in whatever was lacking. However, Bnei Yisrael gave all that was necessary for the Mishkan, and the only items that the Nesi'im could contribute were the stones for the Ephod and Choshen.

Why were the Nesi'im punished; their intentions were good – to fill in anything that was missing?

The Brisker Rav noted that when one has an opportunity to perform a Mitzvah, he must not make any Cheshbonot (calculations). Rather, he must do everything in his power to fulfill the Will of his Creator. Since contributing to the Mishkan was a Mitzvah, the Nesi'im should have seized the opportunity to donate whatever they could immediately.

2. "This is the accounting of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the testimony" (38:21). Why is the word Mishkan repeated twice? Rashi quotes a Midrash which explains that the two Mishkan mentioned here are in reference to the Beit HaMikdash that was twice destroyed for Israel's iniquities. Mishkan (twice) was, therefore, taken in pledge as a security for Israel's repentance, which will allow for the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash. The key word here is Mishkan which in Hebrew is spelled the same way as Mashkon – a security or pledge when one borrows money and has to provide security. This can be better understood by the following: If one destroys an object, it is lost to the owner and to all others. No regrets are of any help. Similarly, if one sells the item to another, it is also gone from the original owner. Should the owner of the object, however, provide it as security (Mashkon) for a loan, it can always be redeemed – it can be his again – provided he returns the loan and pays it back. The Temples were destroyed, burned to the ground. As the Sages teach us – God poured out his wrath on the wood and stones – but only on the wood and stones. The soul of the Beit HaMikdash, however, remained intact. It was returned to God as a pledge for our sins – until the time of repentance. When that precious moment comes, the pledge or security Mashkon will be returned, speedily, and in our days. Until such time the Mashkon is in a trusty hand. And, therefore, the verse above says, "the Mishkan of testimony, i.e. testimony or witness to

the entire world that, indeed, the Israelites were forgiven for the iniquity of the golden calf." (Oznayim LeTorah.)

3. The Torah relates how the half-shekel which everyone contributed was used for the Adanim (sockets) as a base for the Mishkan (38:26,27). The Chafetz Chaim noted that Hashem commanded to use the half-shekalim for the Adanim which the Mishkan rested on, so that all of Klal Yisrael would have a share in the Mishkan. Similarly, in our times, Yeshivas and other Torah institutions must constantly go to their fellow Jews to obtain support, so that all of Klal Yisrael will have a portion in the Torah. A story is told about a wealthy man who came to the Chafetz Chaim, and proudly reported to him that he had decided to bequeath his entire library of Seforim to a Yeshiva, while his monetary wealth was set aside for his children. The Chafetz Chaim replied that it would have been better had he done the opposite – he should have left his Seforim to his children, so that they could learn from them. The Yeshiva had plenty of Seforim. On the other hand, he should have designated that his money go to Yeshivas which are usually in dire financial straits.

MAFTIR

(p. 652 Hz) (p. 898 S) (p. 584 Hi) (p. 838 AS)

PARAH פָּרָה

The "Red Heifer" is the classic example of a statute (*chok*) that defies rational explanation. This Torah portion is read several weeks before Pesach, reminding all of us to become pure before being able to offer a Pesach sacrifice. It is a law that we do not understand that will bring us purity, to be able to join the masses of Bnei Yisrael in Yerushalayim. This type of law teaches us that we are limited in our comprehension of God's ways. It is impossible for us to reject a law just because we do not understand it. Fulfilling a Mitzvah of this nature demonstrates a level of love and trust in Hashem. Our inability to understand it does not make it any less true. The Midrash (Sifra Kdoshim) states, "It is more praiseworthy to do something solely because God commands it than because our own logic or sense of morality leads us to the same conclusion."

HAFTORAH

(p. 999 Hz) (p. 1194 S) (p. Hi) (p. 1216 AS)

EZEKIEL 36:16 יְהוֹקָאֵל

The prophet Ezekiel envisions the spiritual level of the Jewish nation during the Messianic Era. One of the necessary steps in the spiritual elevation of the people is the ritual of the Red Heifer, enigmatic as it is. When Bnei Yisrael stood at Mount Sinai and experienced the Divine Revelation, they were elevated spiritually. Even though they were still physical beings, the spiritual side was heightened, and the balance of the physical and spiritual part of the Jewish people was altered in favor of the spiritual. Forty days later, this new reality was lost with the worship of the Golden Calf. This Mount Sinai spiritual entity would be regained only in the Messianic Age after we go through the ritual of the Red Heifer. Spiritual growth is available to us now, but not the level that it was experienced at Mount Sinai. With this understanding of what will transpire in Ezekiel's vision the Red Heifer will bring atonement for the Sin of the Calf. However enigmatic the ritual the repercussions of the ritual will be realized with greater perception in the days of the Mashiach. (RED)

QUESTIONS FOR VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI 5778
by Rabbi Edward Davis

From the Text

1. Which objects did the women donate to the Mishkan? (35:22)
2. Which objects did the tribal princes donate? (35:27)
3. Which part of the Mishkan was made first? (36:8)
4. What covered the Ark? (37:6)
5. When all the utensils were completed, who actually erected the Mishkan? (40:18)

From Rashi

6. Why preface the construction of the Mishkan with another reminder to observe the Shabbat? (35:2)
7. What special skill was needed by the women who spun the goat's wool? (35:26)
8. What was so special about the mirrors used to make the washing basin (Kiyor)? (38:8)
9. On the 8th day of the Milu'im (dedication) there were 6 Kohanim to serve in the Mishkan. Name them. (40:31)
10. When was Moshe able to enter the Ohel Mo'ed (the Tent of Meeting)? (40:35)

From the Midrash

11. Which group of people was the first to contribute to the Mishkan? (Shmot Rabbah 48:6)
12. Which tribe was rewarded with a particular stone in the Ephod because he kept his mouth closed? (Breishit Rabbah 71:5)
13. How much water was necessary to be in the Kiyor, water basin? (Rambam, Hil. Biat Mikdash 5:13)

Haftorah. Parah. Ezekiel

14. What punishment did Hashem give Bnei Yisrael for their embrace of impurity in their lives?

Relationships

- a) Yosef—Nemu'el
- b) Leah—Betu'el
- c) Rachel—Adah
- d) Levi—Amram (2 answers)
- e) Lot—Haran

ANSWERS FOR VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI 5778

1. The women brought bracelets, earrings, finger rings, and body ornaments, all made of gold.
2. Precious stones for the breastplate and ephod as well as fragrances and olive oil.
3. The tapestries (for walls).
4. The Ark was covered by the Kaporet coverings, made of gold, with 2 gold cherubim on top.
5. Moshe.
6. To teach us that the construction of the Mishkan does not supersede the laws of Shabbat.
7. The wool was spun while still on the backs of the goats.
8. The women used these mirrors in Egypt to excite their husbands who were depressed while in oppressive slavery.
9. Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, Avihu, Elazar, and Itamar.
10. Moshe could enter any time the cloud of glory was not upon the Mishkan.
11. The women who refused to give to the Golden Calf were the first to contribute to the Mishkan.
12. Binyamin was rewarded with the Yashpei stone because he knew about the sale of Yosef and didn't say a word. (Yashpei – Yeish Peh, he had a mouth).
13. Enough volume of water needed for 4 Kohanim to wash.
14. Exile.

Relationships

- a) Uncle Yosef
- b) Grandfather Betu'el
- c) Sisters-in-law
- d) Grandson; and son-in-law
- e) Father Haran