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ravfrand@torah.org date: Fri, Mar 17, 2017 at 10:50 AM
subject: Rav Frand

The Lesson of the House of Avtinas: What is Destined to be Yours Will
Always Remain Yours

Yad Yechiel New Site These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa
portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the
weekly portion: CD #937 – The Obligation To Learn T'Nach. Good
Shabbos!

The Lesson of the House of Avtinas

Parshas Ki Sisa includes the mitzvah of Ketores [Incense]. The Ketores
was offered twice a day on the Golden Mizbayach [Altar] situated in front of
the Kodesh Hakadashim [Holy of Holies]. Klal Yisrael enjoyed tremendous
benefits by virtue of offering the Ketores. The Ketores was made up of
various plants, spices, and herbs which provided a pleasant aroma to the Beis
HaMikdash.

The Mishna [Yoma 3:11] lists certain families in less than a positive light
(v'elu l'gnai), one of which was The House of Avtinas (Beis Avtinas). The
House of Avtinas was in charge of producing the Ketores for the Beis
HaMikdash. However, they refused to teach anyone else the "trade secrets"
involved in producing the Ketores. For this reason the Mishna mentions
them (together with certain other families and individuals) in a negative
fashion

The Chofetz Chaim writes, based on this Mishna (in his sefer Shmiras
HaLashon): If Beis Din [the Jewish Court] instructs someone to do
something and he ignores their instruction, it is permissible to speak
negatively about him (e.g. — that he has disobeyed Beis Din). He cites the
Mishna as precedent for the fact that a person may record someone's evil
practices in writing in the annals of the city even if that will preserve the
information for all eternity.

The Gemara on that Mishna [Yoma 38a] says that the Chachomim tried to
undercut the House of Avtinas. They brought in specialists from Alexandria
in Egypt who were expert in mixing spices and herbs. They wanted to put
the House of Avtinas out of business for refusing to comply with the order of
the court to share their recipe for the Ketores. (Instead of "outsourcing" the

job of making the Ketores, the Chachomim tried to "insource" the operation
by bringing in competing artisans.)

The Gemara says that the Alexandrian experts were able to make a mixture
that duplicated the aroma of the Ketores, however they did not know how to
make the smoke of the burning incense rise up in a straight column as was
the tradition of the Ketores of the House of Avtinas. The smoke from the
Alexandrian Ketores dissipated and filled the entire Heichal of the Beis
HaMikdash, rather than rising up straight as a rod.

The Chachomim went back to the House of Avtinas and again demanded
that they reveal the secret ingredient that made the smoke go up straight.
Again, they refused and kept the secret to themselves. The Gemara says the
Chachomim concluded, "Whatever the Holy Blessed Be He has created, He
has created for His Honor as it is written 'All the actions of Hashem are for
Him' [Mishlei 16:4]" [Yoma 38a].

Rabbeinu Chananel interprets "G-d has taken action by giving extra
wisdom to this one more than to this one for His sake so that His work will
be accomplished by the one He wants to accomplish it." G-d gave the House
of Avtinas the secret of how to do this and we can infer that He wants them
to do it and no one else. Sometimes G-d gives individuals certain knowledge
or talents to accomplish something and this is because He wants specifically
them to be able to accomplish the task.

The Chachomim had no choice but to rehire the Family of Avtinas to be in
charge of the Ketores manufacture. The Talmud relates that the Chachomim
sent them a message (wanting to tell them that they had their job back), but
they refused to come. The Gemara says the Chachomim had to double their
salary before they would take their job back. Originally, they were paid 12
maneh a day and now they received 24 maneh a day.

When they finally came back (at the higher wage), the Chachomim asked
them, "Why did you refuse to teach others how to do this?" They answered
"We have a tradition that the Beis HaMikdash is destined to be destroyed.
We are afraid that this information will fall into the hands of inappropriate
people who will make such a Ketores to serve idols. That is why we keep
the secret in our family."

The Maharsha writes that the Chachomim did not believe this answer.
They felt that the only reason the family was refusing to reveal their
knowledge was to keep the monopoly on the Ketores. They had a cartel that
they did not want to lose. For this reason, the Mishna listed them among the
families who deserved condemnation and based on this the Chofetz Chaim
wrote that we are allowed to publicly condemn people who disobey Beis Din
— even if they have an excuse for doing so — if Beis Din feels their excuse
is self-serving and insincere.

The Gemara then discusses other details about the House of Avtinas. At
the end of the discussion, the Gemara relates the following: "From here (this
incident with Beis Avtinas) Ben Azai said 'B'Shimcha Yikra-oocha
u'bimkomcha yosheevucha' (by your name you will be called and in your
place you will be seated)". Rashi interprets this to mean: A person should
not worry and say "so and so is taking away my livelihood" for regardless
you will be called back and returned to your proper station." In other words,
everyone will ultimately receive the income and the property to which he is
entitled. No one can take away his neighbor's livelihood (against the Will of
G-d).

Rav Pam writes in his sefer that we see a very important thing from this
Gemara. If based on Jewish law, a person may open up a competing
business [without infringing on the halachos of 'hasagas gevul' (encroaching
on the territory of one's neighbor)] then the original business owner does not
need to worry that the second business will negatively affect his own. A
person's income is predetermined from the beginning of one year until the
beginning of the next year. What is yours is yours and what is his is his.

Just like the Chachomim could not break the monopoly of Beis Avtinas
because they were destined from Heaven to have that job and that income, so
too no one's livelihood can be affected adversely as long as the other
competitor is acting within the guidelines of Jewish law. (If he is acting

outside the parameters of Jewish law, then there is legal recourse through the Jewish Court system.)

Several months ago, there was a person in town who owned a certain type of business. He heard that there was a competing type of business that was going to open. He and another owner of a similar business had a meeting. He suggested that they should collude to drop the prices on a certain product that this other business was going to feature, such that the new fellow would not even be able to get his new venture off the ground. The plan was to put him out of business before he even started.

The person who was contemplating this scheme asked me whether he should do this and I told him that he should not. If the newcomer *al pi din* [according to Jewish law] has a right to open a new business (and he did have that right) then you need to realize that whatever is going to be yours is yours and whatever is going to be his is going to be his. This is what we see from the Gemara of Beis Avtinan.

Kol Poel Hashem L'Ma'aneyhu [all of Hashem's actions are for His sake]. The Almighty wanted the House of Avtinan to have the exclusive right to make the Ketores, for whatever the reason might be, so nothing is going to affect that. Not only that, but they wound up charging double — which the Gemara did not like — but nevertheless Ben Azzai is telling us that no one can take away his neighbor's livelihood against the Will of G-d.

In the course of our lives, this comes up so often. "If this person does this, it will put me out of business..." Do not worry! "B'Shimcha Yikra-oocha u'bimkomcha yosheevucha." What is destined to be yours will always remain yours.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A listing of the halachic portions for Parshas Ki Sisa is provided below: A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. To Support Project Genesis- Torah.org Rav Frand © 2017 by Torah.org. Do you have a question or comment? Feel free to contact us on our website. Join the Jewish Learning Revolution! Torah.org: The Judaism Site brings this and a host of other classes to you every week. Visit <http://torah.org> to get your own free copy of this mailing or subscribe to the series of your choice. Both the author and Torah.org reserve certain rights. Email copyrights@torah.org for full information. Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org (410) 602-1350

From: Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org

date: Thu, Mar 23, 2017 at 9:23 PM

Encampments & Journeys (Vayakhel & Pekudei 5777)

Covenant & Conversation – Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Right at the end of the book of Shemot, there is a textual difficulty so slight that it is easy to miss, yet – as interpreted by Rashi – it contains one of the great clues as to the nature of Jewish identity: it is a moving testimony to the unique challenge of being a Jew.

First, the background. The Tabernacle is finally complete. Its construction has taken many chapters to relate. No other event in the wilderness years is portrayed in such detail. Now, on the first of Nissan, exactly a year after Moses told the people to begin their preparations for the exodus, he assembles the beams and hangings, and puts the furniture and vessels in place. There is an unmistakable parallelism between the words the Torah uses to describe Moses' completion of the work and those it uses of God on the seventh day of creation:

And Moses finished [vayechal] the work [hamelakhah]. And God finished [vayechal] on the seventh day the work [melakhto] which He had done.

The next verse states the result:

Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.

The meaning is both clear and revolutionary. The creation of the Sanctuary by the Israelites is intended to represent a human parallel to the Divine creation of the universe. In making the world, God created a home for mankind. In making the Tabernacle, mankind created a home for God.

From a human perspective, God fills the space we make for His presence. His glory exists where we renounce ours. The immense detail of the construction is there to tell us that throughout, the Israelites were obeying God's instructions rather than improvising their own. The specific domain called "the holy" is where we meet God on His terms, not ours. Yet this too is God's way of conferring dignity on mankind. It is we who build His home so that He may fill what we have made. In the words of a famous film: "If you build it, he will come."

Bereishit begins with God making the cosmos. Shemot ends with human beings making a micro-cosmos, a miniature and symbolic universe. Thus the entire narrative of Genesis-Exodus is a single vast span that begins and ends with the concept of God-filled space, with this difference: that in the beginning the work is done by God-the-Creator. By the end it is done by man-and-woman-the-creators. The whole intricate history has been a story with one overarching theme: the transfer of the power and responsibility of creation from heaven to earth, from God to the image-of-God called mankind.

That is the background. However, the final verses of the book go on to tell us about the relationship between the "cloud of glory" and the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle, we recall, was not a fixed structure. It was made in such a way as to be portable. It could quickly be dismantled and its parts carried, as the Israelites made their way to the next stage of their journey. When the time came for the Israelites to move on, the cloud moved from its resting place in the Tent of Meeting to a position outside the camp, signalling the direction they must now take. This is how the Torah describes it:

When the cloud lifted from above the Tabernacle, the Israelites went onward in all their journeys, but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the Lord was over the Tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journeys. (Ex. 40:36-38)

There is a small but significant difference between the two instances of the phrase *bechol mas'ehem*, "in all their journeys". In the first instance the words are to be taken literally. When the cloud lifted and moved on ahead, the Israelites knew they were about to travel.

However in the second instance they cannot be taken literally. The cloud was not over the Tabernacle in all their journeys. On the contrary: it was there only when they stopped travelling and instead pitched camp. During the journeys the cloud went on ahead.

Noting this, Rashi makes the following comment:

A place where they encamped is also called *massa*, "a journey" . . . Because from the place of encampment they always set out again on a new journey, therefore they are all called "journeys".

The point is linguistic, but the message is anything but. Rashi has encapsulated in a few brief words – "a place where they encamped is also called a journey" — the existential truth at the heart of Jewish identity. So long as we have not yet reached our destination, even a place of rest is still called a journey – because we know we are not here forever. There is a way still to go. In the words of the poet Robert Frost,

The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

From: **Avi Zelefsky** <avizelefsky@gmail.com>

date: Fri, Mar 4, 2016 at 3:59 PM

Subject: **Beautiful D'var Torah from Rav Bezalel Rudinsky on Parshas Vayakhel**

Rabbi Rudinsky had beautiful words on the parsha this week. His main theme reflects a very important lesson that we must apply to ourselves on a daily basis.

The parsha begins: "Vayakhel Moshe es kol adas bnei yisroel vayomer aleihem eileh hadivarim asher tziva Hashem la'asos osam."

Many of the miforshim ask: "La'asos" is a lashon of action. Why is this used to describe Shabbos, a day that is devoid of action!

Later on in the parsha, the torah describes the building of the mishkan. The torah places shabbos adjacent to the mishkan to teach us that the two are intertwined. This was to inform us that we were not allowed to build the mishkan on shabbos, and that all of the actions done for the building of the mishkan are not allowed to be preformed on shabbos.

What is the connection between shabbos and the mishkan?

The passuk says: "Sheshes yamim tei'aseh melacha..." - For six days work should be done.

Two questions: First, the passuk should really say "ta'aseh melacha" - you should do work. Second, why does the passuk mention the requirement of work? We never find anywhere that there is a requirement to work. If you happen to work, then shabbos is a day of rest. It cannot be that the torah is commanding us to work! Somebody who learns all day is a great person!

The passuk then says: "zeh hadavar asher tziva Hashem kichu me'itchem terumah LaShem kol nidiv lev" - anybody that has a desire to give - "yivi'eha es terumas Hashem... zahav, kesef unichoshes."

The achronim ask: "What is yivi'eha" - you should bring it? Yivi'eha is going back to something previously said. But we didn't say anything yet! We only say it afterwards - zahav, kesef unichoshes! The passuk should really say that he should bring the terumah of Hashem: Zahav, kesef, unichoshes!

Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu the greatness of the people building the mishkan. He called Betzalel the matei yehuda. He also said: "Vayimalei Aiso ruach Elokim b'chochma, besvunah, uvida'as." This is the most extravagant title given to a chacham in the torah; even Moshe wasn't given this title, although he was a much greater tzaddik. Hashem filled him up with ruach Elokim. The Gemara in Berachos (55) says that Betzalel knew the letters of the torah that were used, and how they were used, for the creation of shamayim and aretz. After describing all that, the torah then mentions his talent of building, weaving and crafting.

The simple question on this can be brought with an example. We all know the greatness of Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT"L. He was literally a walking sefer torah. He knew the entire torah, and was able to answer literally any question from all for chilakim of the shulchan aruch. Imagine a person saying: "Did you know that Rav Moshe was able to sew beautiful sweaters? I mean really beautiful - like you've never seen. My great-grandmother was also an expert in this, but Rav Moshe's sweaters were so much greater." This would be an embarrassment to Rav Moshe. Why do you describe Rav Moshe's greatness by describing his excellent sewing skills?

We can ask the same question here. Why does the torah go on to illustrate Betzalel's skills of his building of the mishkan? Granted that it was a talent, but why mention this right after giving him a title that no chacham has ever received?

Rav Chaim Volozhoner once brought this up in a conversation. He answered that Betzalel had an ruach hakodesh - the torah was informing us that he knew everybody's intentions as they gave their jewelry to the mishkan. Those who donated with a full heart had their gold on the aron, while those with less kavannah had theirs put on the keilim that were less holy.

The truth is that this only answers half of the question. Fine, he knew everybody's kavannah. But why say this after saying that he was the smartest man? Presumably Rav Chaim had more to say, but he didn't want to bring it up in his conversation.

We know that by havdalah of shabbos we have besamim. Chazal say that we have it because we become depressed because the neshamah yiserah leaves us. Tosfos raise the question if we have a neshamah yiserah on yom tov as well. Tosfos quote the Rashbam who says yes. Tosfos ask: So why aren't there besamim motzei Yom Tov?

The Kedushas Halevi offers an answer. He says that by yom tov, we are mekadesh the z'man and mekadesh yisroel. We bring the kedusha. That kedusha can last the whole year - you can hold onto the neshamah yiserah.

Shabbos, on the other hand, comes from shamayim, so the neshamah yiserah leaves motzei shabbos.

This Kedushas Halevi is not so simple for a few reasons. But just to mention one, why do we need to get a new neshamah yiserah on shabbos if we receive a neshamah yiserah on yom tov and keep it?

A question on besamim in general: How does it work? Does a person just smell the besamim and then he is comforted? Of course not! Obviously there is something behing the besamim. What is it?

We can give a p'shat which is really the opposite of the Kedushas Halevi.

We asked - why mention work in the torah? The answer to this question is a beautiful message that we all must apply in our daily lives.

There is nothing great about shabbos alone. The greatness is that shabbos is part of the week - it shows you what every day is. Every day is a day that represents creation. How is this seen? By connecting every day of the week to the fact that Hashem created the world. How much a person connects every day to creation will change how "shabbos-like" each day will be. But the actual day of shabbos is what completes the picture. By having shabbos kodesh, you come to recognition that the six days is one unit - it is a reminder of sheshes yimei hama'aseh.

Even though we have a neshamah yiserah on shabbos, the weekday neshamah can also feel shabbos. If we remember that everyday is a day of creation of Hashem, the weekday neshamah is also a holy neshamah. It is also affected by Shabbos.

The besamim don't just appease us. A smell represents the presence of something, regardless if we don't see it. The besamim is a way of telling a person that the 6 days of work are also part of Shabbos. The whole week you can experience it.

This is why the passuk says teiaseh melacha - you should be affected by it. Not that you should do work - whatever work you do during the week you should do, but it should be affected by shabbos.

A person who lives his/her life that way has everlasting shabbos and everlasting awareness of Hashem.

Betzalel knew the letters that created the shamayim and aretz - that is the highest level of chochma for a human. But when Betzalel was doing things as mundane as building, crafting, and weaving, he was working with the same awareness of Hashem. If you always have Hashem in mind, the importance of the actions don't matter; it all leads to one thing. The torah wanted to place the description of Betzalel's knowledge and his mundane actions next to each other for this reason.

This is why the mishkan is connected to shabbos. The purpose of the mishkan was not the building itself, but rather, that we should see the Shechinah in everything that we do. That can possibly be why the torah says: "yivi'eha es terumas Hashem... zahav, kesef unichoshes." It says yivi'eha for a purpose. Indeed it does mean that you should bring it; "it" is going back to the purpose of shabbos, which is the goal of the mishkan - the awareness of Hashem.

And that was the bracha that Moshe Rabbeinu gave to us when we finished the building. Moshe said: The Shechina should dwell in your hands. Everybody asks: Hashem already said: "Build a Mishkan so that I could dwell in your midst!" But the way that we're learning, it fits very well - Moshe was giving a Bracha that we should have this everywhere in life.

May we be zoche to live up to this incredible level.

החדש, שאז התחילה ההתכוננות לצאת, שנצטוונו משכו וקחו גוי והיתה הפרישה מעבודה זרה ודס פסח ודס מילה. נמצא שמצוות החדש הזה לכם אינה כדי לזכור את גמר יציאת מצרים, אלא כדי לזכור תחילת ההתכוננות לה.

והנה כשאנו דנים על סוף הגאולה העתידה היא תהיה לימות המשיח, אבל תחילת ההתכוננות וההתעוררות אליה היתה בזמן עולי בבל, שאז התחיל להתנוצץ ענין הגאולה הגדולה. וכמו שאנו רואים שהרבה מהנבואות המוסבות על הזמן של לעתיד לבוא נאמרו מתחילה על שיבת ציון. וכגון נבואת זכריה (פרק ב' ג', הפטרת פ' בהעלתך) רני ושמחי בת ציון גוי ונלוו גוים רבים אל ה' ביום ההוא והיו לי לעם ושכנתי בתוכך וידעת כי אני ה'. אשר ברור שזו נבואה על הגאולה השלימה העתידה. אבל המשך הנבואה מופנה ליהושע הכהן הגדול ולזרובבל, שפעלו בתקופת שיבת ציון בזמן בנין בית שני. (ועי' רד"ק שם).

ועיין בדברי ר' יהודה הלוי (ספר הכוזרי, מאמר השני סי' כ"ד), שמתאר איך ששאל מלך הכוזרים את החבר: למה אין אתה משים את ארץ ישראל מגמתך ובית חייך ומותך, ואתה אומר רחם על ציון כי היא בית חיינו. וענה לו החבר: הובשתי מלך כוזר, והעוון הזה הוא אשר מנענו מהשלמת מה שיעדנו האלקים בבית שני, כמו שאמר "רני ושמחי בת ציון", שכבר היה הענין האלקי מזומן לחול כאשר בתחילה, אילו היו מסכימים כולם לשוב בנפש חפצה, אבל שבו מקצתם ונשארו רובם וגדוליהם בגלות שלא יפרדו ממשכנותיהם ועניניהם עיי"ש.

הרי שהתעורר אז בימי שיבת ציון ענין הגאולה השלימה, אלא שכיון שהעם לא נענה במידה הדרושה לכן היתה הגאולה חלקית, ונדחה קיום היעוד הנבואי בשלימותו עד לעתיד לבוא.

(ויתכן לומר שעל כן קדושה שניה שקידשו עולי בבל את ארץ ישראל קידשה לעתיד לבוא, ואילו קדושה ראשונה שקידשו עולי מצרים לא קידשה אלא לשעתה. ודנו ראשונים ואחרונים בטעם ההבדל. ושמה נאמר שהוא משום שהעליה מבבל היתה התחלת ההכנה לגאולה השלימה.)

ומעתה, הרי יש לנו שתי מצוות, האחת מצוות למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים, שהיא זכירת קץ הגאולה כשיצאנו ממצרים ממש, ומצוות החדש הזה לכם שהיא זכירת ההתכוננות ליציאת מצרים מתחילת החדש. ולענין שניהם ניבא ירמיהו הנביא: הנה ימים באים נאם ה' ולא יאמרו עוד חי ה' אשר העלה את בני ישראל מארץ מצרים כי אם חי ה' אשר העלה ואשר הביא את זרע בית ישראל מארץ צפונה ומכל הארצות אשר הדחתים שם. אלא שקיום נבואה זו מתחלק לפי הענין. שלענין מצוות זכירת יציאת מצרים – שהיא זכירת סוף הגאולה ותכליתה – לא הגיע זמן קיום נבואה זו כלל, והיא שמורה לגמרי לעתיד לבוא, ובזמן הזה אין לנו לזכור בקריאת שמע כי אם יציאת מצרים. אבל לענין מצוות החדש הזה לכם, שהיא לזכור את תחילת ההכנה לגאולה, בזה כבר התחיל נבואת ירמיהו לפעמו מאז שיבת ציון מגלות בבל, ומאז ההכנה לגאולה העתידה מתחילה להיות עיקר, וההכנה ליציאת מצרים טפילה לה, ולכן מונים החדשים בשמות שעלו מבבל, כדברי קדשו של הרמב"ן.

Excerpt from **Haggadah Yisamach Av - Rav Eli Baruch Shluman**
www.tinyurl.com/Haggadah-Yisamach-Av
Available at many major seforim stores (Weinreb's Teaneck, Judaica Plus Cedarhurst, Z. Berman Cedarhurst, Biegeleisen Boro Park, Torah Treasures Flatbush, Judaica Plaza Lakewood, etc.)

הגדה ישמח אב - רב אלי ברוך שולמן החדש הזה לכם

במשנה (ברכות יב:): - וגם מובא בהגדה - מזכירין יציאת מצרים בלילות. א"ר אלעזר בן עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא שנא' למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חייך ימי חייך הימים כל ימי חייך הלילות וחכ"א ימי חייך העוה"ז כל להביא לימות המשיח. ובגמרא מובא ברייתא שהיא כהמשך למשנה זו, שר' אלעזר בן עזריה שאל לחכמים איך אפשר שמצוות זכירת יציאת מצרים תהיה נוהגת לימות המשיח, והרי כבר ניבא ירמיהו הנביא: הנה ימים באים נאם ה' ולא יאמרו עוד חי ה' אשר העלה את בני ישראל מארץ מצרים כי אם חי ה' אשר העלה ואשר הביא את זרע בית ישראל מארץ צפונה ומכל הארצות אשר הדחתים שם (ירמיהו ט"ז י"ד-ט"ו). והשיבו לו, שאין כונת הנבואה שתיעקר מצוות זכירת יציאת מצרים ממקומה לגמרי, אלא שתהא זכירת הגאולה משעבוד מלכיות לעתיד עיקר, וזכירת יציאת מצרים טפלה לה.

והנה הרמב"ן – על הפסוק "החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים" (שמות י"ב ב') – ביאר שזו מצוה למנות חדש ראשון ולמנות ממנו שאר החדשים: חדש השני, חדש השלישי כו', כדי שכל פעם שנזכיר את החדשים יהיה זכר לנס הגדול של יציאת מצרים. והרמב"ן מדמה את זה למה שנצטוונו למנות את ימי השבוע לשבת: יום אחד בשבת, יום שני בשבת כו'.

וקשה, הרי אנו נותנים שמות לחדשים: ניסן אייר כו', ואמרו חז"ל שהם שמות שעלו מבבל, ואיך מבטלים על ידי זה מצוות החדש הזה לכם. ומתוך הרמב"ן וז"ל: "מתחלה היה מניינם זכר ליציאת מצרים, אבל כאשר עלינו מבבל ונתקיים מה שאמר הכתוב ולא יאמר עוד חי ה' אשר העלה את בני" מארץ מצרים כי אם חי ה' אשר העלה ואשר הביא את בני" מארץ צפון, חזרנו לקרוא החדשים בשם שנקראים בארץ בבל, להזכיר כי שם עמדנו ומשם העלנו ה' יתברך".

ודברי הרמב"ן תמוהים לכאורה, שהרי בגמרא הני"ל מבואר שאך רק לעתיד לבא תתקיים נבואת ירמיהו, ותיטפל זכירת יציאת מצרים לזכירת קיבוץ גלויות, אבל בזמן הזה עדיין זכירת יציאת מצרים עיקר. וכמו שאנו רואים שבקריאת שמע בכל יום מזכירים את יציאת מצרים, ולא את קיבוץ הגלויות. ואיך כותב הרמב"ן שכבר בימי שיבת ציון בתחילת בית שני התחיל זמנה של נבואה זו.

ונראה לבאר דבריו, כי הנה מצוות זכירת יציאת מצרים היא לזכור היום שיצאנו ממצרים, כמו שכתוב "זכור את היום אשר יצאתם ממצרים". והיינו זכירת קץ הגאולה ממצרים. אבל מצוות החדש הזה לכם היא למנות החדשים מניסן, והיינו מתחילת

http://5tjt.com/
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Seeing Red

Halachic Musings

By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

They appear not only in the headlines of the Daily News, but in New York City courthouses. They are two female Orthodox Jewish criminal lawyers, one 40 and one 26, who wear bright pink outfits—even down to their matching Chanel patent-leather pink flats. They call themselves “Double Trouble,” and by numerous accounts they are a formidable team. One of them was quoted by the paper as stating, “We comply with Orthodox Jewish rules of modesty, but we like to wear pink.”

It is this last statement that this article addresses. Hopefully, the two lawyers will respond positively (and not with a lawsuit) to this halachic analysis.

The Background

The Gemara in Berachos 20a tells us of the self-sacrifice of Rav Adda bar Ahavah, who encountered what appeared to be a Jewish woman wearing a “karbalusah” (red scarf) in the marketplace. He took it away from her, and the woman subsequently took Rav Adda bar Ahavah to court. He lost and had to pay 400 zuz. He inquired what her name was and when she responded “Matun,” he responded: “If only I had listened to your name, Matun (translation: be patient), I would have saved myself 400 zuz.” The Ben Yehoyadah asks why this particular incident constitutes mesirus nefesh or self-sacrifice. He answers that Rav Adda bar Ahavah was unsure as to whether or not she was a Jewish woman and felt that it was worth the risk to ensure that a Jewish girl not violate a prohibition.

Why Did He Take It?

The approach of the Aruch and most of the commentaries is that Rav Adda bar Ahavah tore away the article of clothing (a garment worn over other clothing) on account of its apparent lack of modesty in color. The Maharal (Netzach Yisrael chapter 25) understands that he did so because it was an article that Jews shouldn’t wear since it looked like the clothing of gentiles. The Maharal does not understand it as being due to its immodesty but rather because of assimilation.

Five Approaches

Regardless as to what the self-sacrifice actually was and why he tore the garment away, there seem to be five approaches in the commentaries as to what exactly the prohibition would have been for a Jewish girl wearing a karbalusah.

The Aruch and Tosfos in Kesubos 72a explain that it is peritzus—a breach of decency and brings to sin. The Shach (YD 178:3) further explains in the name of the Maharik (Shoresh 88) that it is not the manner of modest people to go in red, and that this is a tradition in the hands of the Jewish people. It is not the manner of tzniyus and hachna’ah—humility of dress. In Teshuvos Binyomin Ze’ev Vol. II # 282 “v’kaivan d’hacha” he explains that red is important and exotic in a sense, and it is not the way of Jewish women to dress in such a manner. Many understand this as complementing the idea of hachna’ah, humility of dress, expressed above. The Nemukey Yosef seems to provide a third explanation, that red is the color used by the priests of avodah zarah and that in wearing red, there is a trace of violating avodah zarah. The Teshuvos Geonim Kadmonim (#101) writes that Rav Adda perceived that this article of clothing contained sha’atez (kelayim)—a prohibited mixture of fibers. This is also the approach of the Terumas haDeshen (Siman 276). The Chasam Sofer has a different approach, explaining that the power of Eisav stemmed from red or Mars. He cites the interpretation of Rabbeinu Bachya on the verse “Haliteini nah min haAdom ha’zeh—feed me from this red”—and that is something entirely foreign to and unbecoming of the Jewish nation.

Plugging It All Back In

There may be a second or corollary issue of tzniyus (modesty) in bringing excessive attention to oneself, but for now, we are dealing with the particular issue of wearing red. Starting from the last explanation and going backward: According to the Chasam Sofer, pink would not be an issue, since this hardly evokes the red of Mars or Eisav. Nor would the lawyers’ attire bring up a specific problem of sha’atez. Pink was not used in avodah zarah, so that would address issue number three. There is also nothing particularly important about pink that would make it extremely exotic. The only issue is the first one—that of modesty. This is the view that the Shulchan Aruch seems to adopt.

How Red Is Red?

The halachah is that the prohibition applies to clothing which is entirely red or the majority of which is visibly red (see 178:1 and commentaries). Rav Elyashiv, zt”l, had ruled (see Halichos Bas Yisrael p. 92 footnote 7b) that the color Bordeaux is not considered red for these purposes. The author extends that to other types of off-red as well.

The origin of the word karbalusah is explained by the Aruch as referencing the fleshy red part on top of a rooster’s or chicken’s head. This would seem to be the type of red that is referenced in the Gemara.

Rav Moshe Shternbuch (Teshuvos v’Hanhagos Vol. I #136) seems to understand the aforementioned Gemara so as to include any color that brings attention to oneself. Thus, a bright yellow or bright pink would be included in the prohibition according to Rav Shternbuch. Other poskim cite other sources for not bringing excess attention to oneself and forbid any bright or neon color. They do not state that their source is this Gemara in Berachos, however.

A Lenient Opinion

In Sefer Mitzvos HaBayis Vol. II page 145, a ruling issued by Rav Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor, zt”l, is cited that states that since nowadays gentile women no longer wear red as a sign of peritzus, the Gemara is no longer applicable. Clearly, however, Rav Elyashiv and other modern-day poskim do not adopt the approach of Rav Yitzchok Elchanan. The author can be reached at Yairhoffman2@gmail.com.

from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com>

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Why Keep Shabbos?

by R. Gil Student

Over the past few years, non-religious Jews have been rediscovering Shabbos. The intrusion of mobile technology into our lives creates a constant state of being busy. Many are realizing that a day of rest offers great benefits during an otherwise whirlwind week. Some proponents of Judaism revel in this defense of tradition. The idea that Judaism thought of it first, that the religion’s ancient wisdom is finally receiving the acknowledgment it deserves, confirms the observant in their practices and may even encourage others to become Jewishly observant.

Yet, that sentiment has been offered before and, at the time, was rejected as a distortion of Judaism. Previously, I have discussed why a lack of commandedness, a failure to treat Shabbos as inviolable (except in the case of a medical emergency, of course), robs Shabbos of its importance. But there is more to it. In the middle of the eighteenth century, as Jews gained entry to European cities, they struggled with the economic consequences of closing their businesses on Shabbos. Not coincidentally, this was also the time that Reform ideas began spreading throughout Europe. One Reform proposal was moving the Jewish day of rest to Sunday. If Shabbos is about resting from work one day a week, why wouldn’t Sunday suffice?

I believe that Orthodox rabbis responded by emphasizing the importance of Shabbos. Below are insights into the weekly Torah portion from two leading rabbis of the time.

Rav Shmuel Avraham Binyamin Sofer, also known as the Kesav Sofer, took over as the rabbi of Pressburg, the leading rabbinical position in Hungary, the passing of his father, Rav Moshe Sofer (Chasam Sofer), in 1839. He held that position until his death in 1871. As the rabbi of Pressburg and rosh yeshiva of its large yeshiva, and as a vocal proponent of a moderate Orthodoxy, he wielded immense influence in the Jewish community.

Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson served as the rabbi of Levov (Lemberg), Galicia (at that time part of the Austrian empire), from 1857 until his death in 1875. A prolific author, some of his commentaries are standard in printed editions of the Shulchan Arukh and Talmud. He was among the leading halakhic authorities of his day, answering questions from all over Europe and the United States. His responsa are difficult to use but at the time were highly influential.

Both of these rabbis were masters of the art of homiletical interpretation of the Bible. They offered brilliant insights into the weekly Torah reading on multiple levels -- peshat, derash, halakhah -- many of which were gathered into books and published. Rav Sofer's insights into the Torah (the Pentateuch, haftaros and megillos) are called Kesav Sofer Al Ha-Torah and Rav Nathanson's insights on the same are published as Divrei Shaul Al Ha-Torah (in multiple editions, recently combined into a single edition). I found repeated references in both of these works to the notion that Shabbos is a day of rest from work, which they explicitly rejected.

I cannot be certain that these rabbis were responding directly to Reform proposals. Historically, a direct response seems unlikely. I am not aware of a Reform movement in Galicia at that time and Hungary's Neologs were much more traditional. However, as globally influential rabbis, they may have been responding to developments in Germany. They may also have been responding to ideas that were floating around the culture, even without a specific movement or proponent.

- Divrei Shaul, Ex. 15:25 - God gave three mitzvos at Marah, prior to the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai: honoring parents, Shabbos and the red heifer. Following the Radak's formulation of three types of commandments, Rav Nathanson explains that honoring parents is an example of a logical mitzvah, Shabbos is a mitzvah that demonstrates faith (in Creation), and the red heifer is a mitzvah that we cannot explain (chok). While the first two types of commandment lend themselves to observance because of their underlying meaning, the third was given to teach that really we must observe all commandments as decrees, because God commanded us to follow them, and not because of their reasons.

- Divrei Shaul, Ex. 20:8-20 - Some people rest on Shabbos so they have more strength during the week. For them, rest is for the purpose of work. However, the proper attitude is the reverse--to work all week in order to rest on Shabbos for the physical and spiritual break. Zakhor means to remember during the week that we are working in order to rest on Shabbos.

- Divrei Shaul, Ex. 31:14 - The Arizal (Likkutim, as loc.) says that there are two aspects to the suspension of labor on Shabbos--to rest from the work we do the other days of the week and to represent Creation. The practical difference between these two reasons is someone who is not tired and wants to continue working.

- Kesav Sofer, Ex. 31:14 - Why does it say that by observing Shabbos, Jews make it an eternal covenant for future generations? Reformers say that the underlying reason for Shabbos is a mandate to rest once a week from work. If so, any day suffices, including Sunday. However, this cannot be the reason for Shabbos because it was commanded at Marah, before the giving of the Torah and the mandate to build the Tabernacle. Rather, the day is holy and a sign between God and Israel, demonstrating a belief in Creation and the Exodus. By observing Shabbos in the desert, the Jews showed future generations that it is about holiness and not just rest, thereby turning Shabbos into an eternal covenant. ((I thank R. Elchanan Poupko for bringing this comment to my attention))

- Kesav Sofer, Lev. 23:3 - Why does it say that for six days work will be done in a passive voice (tei'aseh melakhah)? And why does the Torah

include Shabbos in a list of holidays? Rashi (ad loc.) explains that someone who violates the holidays is as if he violated the Shabbos, and someone who observes the holidays is as if he observes the Shabbos. This explanation remains somewhat cryptic. The Kesav Sofer explains that Shabbos is not just a day to rest from work but a day of holiness we must sanctify. Someone who rests on Shabbos only for the break from work will not need to rest for the holidays that fall out on weekdays, as well (he doesn't say this but this holds true particularly for the last day of Sukkos, which comes after many holidays off from work). Therefore, someone who violates the holidays demonstrates that he only observes Shabbos as a break from work, not as a holy day, and effectively desecrates Shabbos. However, someone who observes the holidays shows that he does so because of the holiness, and by implication observes Shabbos for the same reason. The Kesav Sofer adds that someone with servants may also take days off during the week. If he believes that Shabbos is merely about a day off from work, he might see no need to observe it. Therefore, the verse says that even if work is done for you, you still must rest on Shabbos.

- Kesav Sofer, Num. 22:28 - Bilam hit his donkey three times. To his surprise, his donkey spoke to him and asked, "Why did you hit me these three times (shalosh regalim)?" The phrase used for "three times" also means "three holidays." Rashi (ad loc.) says that the donkey's intended question is why Balak was trying to undermine the Jewish nation which celebrates three holidays. The Kesav Sofer asks why this midrashic interpretation of the donkey emphasized holidays and not Shabbos observance. He explains that someone who observes Shabbos may be doing so merely for the rest from work. However, resting for weekday holidays--particularly for a Sunday holiday that immediately follows Shabbos--shows that you are not just resting for the day off from work but for the holiness.

If I am correct that these interpretations are part of an anti-Reform polemic, that does not mean that they are artificial, that they do not represent the true and honestly arrived at view of eminent Torah scholars. The polemic is the reason for their expressing the idea--repeatedly and in this format. However, the idea that Shabbos is more than a utilitarian day of rest predates Rav Sofer and Rav Nathanson by centuries.

For example, Rav Yehudah Halevi (Kuzari 2:48) distinguishes between rational and civil laws, on the one hand, and divine laws, on the other. The latter are neither derived by logic nor opposed by it. These laws, rather than the former, distinguish Jews from other nations. Rav Yehudah Halevi offers three examples of divine laws: animal sacrifices, circumcision and Shabbos. While there is more to discuss about Rav Yehudah Halevi's attitude to commandments, and Shabbos in particular, he clearly rejects the rational reason for Shabbos -- that people need a day to rest from work. Rather, he sees it as a non-rational commandment.

Similarly, Rav Sofer and Rav Nathanson rejected the rational approach to Shabbos as insufficient, instead seeing it as a holy day, each in his own way.

Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

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subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

VAYAKHEL – PEKUDEI

The Torah reading of the book of Shemot concludes this week with the reading of the total portion of Vayakhel and Pekudei. These two portions are a fitting conclusion to the long narrative describing the construction of the Tabernacle/Mishkan. Every great project, whether physical or spiritual, is yet incomplete without an accounting being given as to the investment, effort and cost relating to the project.

One of the great principles of the Torah and of Jewish life generally is accountability – for behavior, speech, actions and even thoughts. The Talmud phrased it succinctly: “Human beings are always accountable and liable for their actions.” We have a concept in the Talmud that one can be found not to be liable for actions caused by human negligence or mistakes by an earthly court but still be liable in the heavenly court, which judges all of our behavior.

As human beings we hold ourselves to a far less stringent standard of behavior and liability. But Heavenly judgment, which knows our true capabilities and potential, holds us to its lofty standard of accountability. And we are witness to that in the accounting that Moshe submits to us in this week’s Torah reading, of the wealth accumulated and spent in this great construction project of the Tabernacle/Mishkan.

The project was enormous in scope and in cost. Yet Moshe was aware that one thousand measures of silver were not accounted for. He could not rest until he traced the missing silver - which was actually used for the hooks that held the curtains that constituted the hanging tapestries of the structure.

One of the great demands of current politics that now engulfs us is the issue of transparency. We wish for transparency in government affairs, financial dealings and even in personal relationships. All governments are currently besieged by the leaking of sensitive documents and information and all of this is justified by the idea that the public has a right to know everything about everybody at all times.

In theory, transparency is a good and necessary component of a democratic republic. But the question arises as to whether there are any limits to this right to transparency. From the Torah itself it seems that in monetary matters and in accounting for the use of public funds, especially charity funds, there is no limit to the necessity for transparency and accountability.

However, in matters of personal behavior and past actions of human beings, the Torah does impose limits on the need for revelation. The laws of evil speech and slander apply even when one speaks the truth about others. Then, the so-called right to know is severely curtailed. Such distinctions do not exist in the culture that currently surrounds us. Private information about people’s lives, which at one time was considered sacrosanct, is today visible to all on social media and through the hackers and leakers that abound in our world. Even transparency has to have its limits of decency and restraint.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Vayakhel - Pekudei
For the week ending 25 March 2017 / 27 Adar II 5777
by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonofthemoon.com
Insights

Vayakhel: From the Mundane to the Sublime

“...and the seventh day shall be holy to you...” (35:2)

Rashi: “The Torah places the exhortation of Shabbat before the commanding of the labors of the Mishkan.”

The list of skilled labors necessary for the construction of the Mishkan and the observance of Shabbat appear both in this week’s Parsha and in last week’s Torah portion. But with an interesting difference: In last week’s parsha the skilled labors of the Mishkan precede the observance of Shabbat, whereas in this week’s parsha the order is reversed.

Why?

The Golden Calf was a defining moment in Jewish history. Before the Golden Calf, even mundane labor was suffused with holiness so that those labors could act as preparations to the holiness of Shabbat. After the Golden Calf, however, those labors lost their innate holiness and became worldly and non-spiritual. Thus, in this week’s parsha Shabbat is mentioned first because through Shabbat the potential still exists to raise mundane labor to the level of the Mishkan, the level of the sublime.

Pekudei: A World of Blessing

“A hundred sockets for a hundred kikar...” (38:27)

There’s an elderly lady who sits in a nursing home in New York. Every day, this is what she says, “Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift of G-d. That’s why we call it the present.”

How does a person sensitize himself to the present that is the here-and-now? Our Sages mandated that we recite at least one hundred blessings every day.

Making blessings helps to remind us constantly of all the blessings that surround us: The ability to see, to think, to enjoy the smell of fruit and flowers, the sight of the sea or great mountains, the sight of royalty, eating a new season fruit, or seeing an old friend for the first time in years. We have blessings when a baby is born, when a loved one dies.

When we surround ourselves with blessings we surround ourselves with blessing.

The Hebrew word beracha (blessing) is linked to the word bereicha, which means a pool of water. G-d is like an Infinite Pool of blessing, flowing goodness and enrichment into our life.

Amongst other things a beracha must include is the Hebrew word which means “L-rd”, which comes from the root adon. In the construction of the Mishkan (the portable Temple on which G-d caused His Presence to dwell) there were exactly 100 “sockets.” These sockets were called adanim. What is the connection between the 100 adanim and the hundred times that we call G-d by the name “Adon” in our daily blessings?

Just as the adanim were the foundation of the Mishkan through which G-d bestowed his Holy Presence on the Jewish People, so too are our daily blessings the foundation of holiness in our lives.

Source: *Chidushei HaRim*

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Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Would you ever consider Rembrandt a leader? How about Mozart, or Frank Lloyd Wright?

Each of them was certainly a leader in his own field, but none of them was an individual who had a public following, or who had an influence upon a nation or community. Rembrandt deserved his fame as an artist; Mozart, as a master composer of beautiful music; and Frank Lloyd Wright, for his architectural accomplishments. But none of them is considered a leader, notwithstanding their superior creative talents.

In this week’s double Torah portion, Vayakhel-Pekudei (Exodus 35:1-40:38) we encounter a brilliant artist, architect, and artisan. Arguably, he was at least as gifted as the aforementioned geniuses. I refer, of course, to Bezalel.

We were first introduced to him one week ago in Parshat Ki Tisa, but his considerable talents are again described in this week’s parsha, and it is this week that we learn that he accomplished his mission and that he was congratulated for his work by Moses himself. Let the sacred text speak for itself, beginning with Moses’ words as he introduces Bezalel:

“And Moses said to the Israelites: See, the Lord has singled out by name Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. He has endowed him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft... He and Oholiab son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan have been endowed with the skill to do any work... Let Bezalel and Oholiab and all the skilled persons, whom the Lord has endowed with skill and ability to perform expertly all the tasks connected with the surface of the Sanctuary, carry out all that the Lord has commanded.” (Exodus 35:30-36:1)

Bezalel’s divinely endowed artistic genius is emphasized here. What is so striking is that he is assigned a partner, Oholiab, from a different tribe, who is also extremely talented, albeit probably not quite as gifted as Bezalel. We must also take note of the fact that an entire team of “skilled persons” is also

engaged in the holy, and daunting, task of designing and crafting the Tabernacle and all of its components.

The ensuing several dozen verses all begin with phrases such as “they made,” “they matched,” “Bezalel made,” and then, more than twenty times, “he made.”

Our Sages do not regard Bezalel as merely an artistic genius, nor even as the supervisor of a team of lesser geniuses. Rather, they reserve for him the title of “good leader,” or literally, “good sustainer.” In a most fascinating Talmudic passage in Berachot 55a, they refer to him as the ideal “parnas tov,” the person who supports and nourishes the community at large.

Here is the passage: “Rabbi Yochanan said: There are three things which the Holy One, Blessed be He, Himself announces. They are a famine, a period of prosperity, and a parnas tov, a good leader... As it is written [Exodus 31:1-2], ‘And God said to Moses: See that I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri...’”

What is the significance of the notion that the Almighty Himself “announces” something or someone? The commentators explain that the Lord “announces” only that which is unusually unique and extremely important. Famine is thankfully a rare occurrence, but it is a terrible one; great prosperity is also quite rare, and it is a wonderful phenomenon. Hence the Almighty reserves for Himself the right to “announce” them. Apparently, a parnas tov, a good and giving leader, is a most unusual person, hard-to-find, and a very special blessing to his followers.

Rabbi Chaim Zeitchik, a Holocaust survivor who left us with numerous sensitive essays on topics of morality and ethics, wonders about the basis for the Talmud’s assumption that Bezalel was in any way a leader. “Was he a teacher, or a spiritual guide, or a judge?” he asks. “True, he constructed the Tabernacle, and but even that was for only a limited time. What is the evidence of his leadership capacity?”

Rabbi Zeitchik finds the answer to his question in a passage in the Midrash. It reads: “Rabbi Levi taught in the name of Rabbi Chanina: We find that when the Tabernacle was built, representatives of two different tribes were partners in its construction: Bezalel from Judah, and Oholiab from Dan. Similarly, in the construction of the first Holy Temple, the son of a widow from among the daughters of Dan partnered with King Solomon of the tribe of Judah.” (Yalkut Shimoni, Kings I, paragraph 185)

Rabbi Zeitchik teaches us that from an ethical and moral perspective, all of a person’s actions can be assessed by his readiness to accept a partner to assist him in his work and responsibilities, and to share his power and his fame. The great leader is not afraid that someone else will also achieve recognition. He is not concerned that another might stand in the limelight with him and get the credit for some of his accomplishments. The readiness to accept a partner is the litmus test of a truly good leader.

What made Bezalel the parnas tov was neither his artistic genius nor his management abilities. Rather, what made him the parnas tov, deserving to be “announced” as such by the Almighty Himself, was the fact that he readily accepted Oholiab as his full partner in this sacred undertaking.

Rabbi Zeitchik adduces another Talmudic text to expand upon his point. He refers to a passage in Tractate Yoma that praises a number of individuals and families who generously gave of their fortunes and wisdom to help in the construction and in the function of the second Holy Temple. It refers to them as tzaddikim, very righteous people.

But that passage continues and lists families, such as the House of Garmu, who possessed the expertise necessary to properly bake the lechem hapanim, the holy shewbread; and the House of Avtinas, who knew how to mix the ingredients of the holy incense. Shamefully, neither of these families was willing to disclose its secret knowledge with others. They wished to be known as the only possessors of the sacred secrets. They wanted glory to be theirs, and theirs alone. Not only are these glory seekers not labeled as parnasim tovim, good leaders, but the very derogatory term resha’im, wicked people, is applied to them. Their names are recorded in the history of our people to their eternal shame.

Only the Holy One Himself can judge alone, and only He can lead alone. Human leadership requires partnership. This lesson is exemplified by Bezalel in the earliest days of our people’s history. Sadly, it is a lesson that few throughout our history have sufficiently taken to heart. It is a lesson that is evermore important in our critical times.

May our current and future leaders learn the lesson exemplified for us by Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, from the tribe of Judah, the parnas tov.

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/>

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

Rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites

Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei: Wisdom residing deep in the heart

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

Over the last few weeks, we have been reading parashot outlining the plan for the construction of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) – the temporary temple that accompanied the Children of Israel during their 40-year journey in the desert – as well as the ritual objects it contained. In this week’s Torah portion of Vayakhel-Pekudei we read how the necessary funds and materials for the construction of the Tabernacle were collected and the process of the construction.

The parasha starts with a description of the nation’s generosity. Moses had only just requested the nation’s “generous of heart” to give a donation, and immediately the entire nation, women and men, volunteered to bring their gold dishes, leather, materials, and anything else needed to build the Tabernacle.

The contributions made by the women earned a special mention in the Torah when, in addition to their financial contribution, they volunteered to do the actual work: spinning the wool and weaving the fancy materials, a job that was complex and painstaking.

For this they were termed “wise of heart.” Other women, “whose hearts uplifted them with wisdom,” were in charge of spinning the goat wool, a job even more complicated than weaving the other materials.

The term “wise-hearted” is repeated numerous times in this parasha, and it raises a question: Why does the wisdom of these talented artisans refer to the heart? We are used to associating wisdom with the brain, and feelings with the heart. However, in the description of the building of the Tabernacle, time and time again we encounter wisdom associated with the heart.

The answer to this lies in comprehending the manner in which the architects of the Tabernacle were chosen.

Moses told the nation about this choice this way: “Moses said to the Children of Israel: ‘See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel... He has imbued him with the spirit of God, with wisdom, with insight, and with knowledge, and with [talent for] all manner of craftsmanship... both him and Oholiab’” (Exodus 35:30-34).

Bezalel and Oholiab were joined by others who assisted in the construction of the Tabernacle and its tools: “Bezalel and Oholiab and every wise-hearted man... to know how to do... all the work of the service of the Holy” (ibid. 36:1).

These verses seem to show that “wisdom of the heart” is a characteristic that precedes wisdom. It is the potential that is actualized when God gives man wisdom, insight and knowledge.

But what is this “wise-heartedness” that is necessary to receive wisdom, insight and knowledge from God? It is the wisdom that comes from man’s heart, wisdom that stems from the desire to empathize with others, do for them, be good to them. This is the wisdom essential for building the Tabernacle, God’s home, since God does not reveal Himself in man’s talent but, rather, in man’s heart. A person who is not “wise of heart” himself, even if he received wisdom and engineering training from God, will not have the necessary tools for building the Tabernacle. This job necessitates more than talent. It requires a strong desire stemming from the heart.

The inference in the choice of Bezalel and Oholiab is that God purified and refined the hearts of these “wise of heart.” He chose them and bequeathed to them spiritual assistance; He gave them wisdom and designated them to build His house.

The level of the women who wove the materials was even loftier. They did not need this choice. They were naturally prone to this. Their wisdom came straight from the depths of their hearts. Their work expressed the emotional depth and rich inner world, and their choice was therefore obvious.

God does not provide us with wisdom of the heart. It stems from our work. Our role is to lift our hearts, enrich our emotional worlds, and turn the wisdom with which we were blessed into “wisdom of the heart,” wisdom and talent whose goal is to grasp how to help others. Our goal is make our house into a Tabernacle – a place that sheds light all around it.

Even if we do not completely succeed at this task, we can expect Divine assistance, because whoever is “wise-hearted” merits God’s assistance and His gift of wisdom and insight.

The sages of the Talmud expressed this concept when they said: “If one comes to purify himself, he is helped” (Shabbat 104).

The third attribute, da’at (knowledge), refers to a thorough attention to detail. “With His knowledge... the heavens drip dew.” The rain and dew were created with da’at. They sustain every plant, every blade of grass, every creature. God created the universe not only with its fundamental laws of nature (chochmah) and spiritual direction (binah), but also with meticulous care for its myriad details — da’at.

Attention to detail is also important in art. The artist should make sure that the finest details correspond to the overall composition and heighten the work’s impact.

Betzalel knew the letters of creation, the secret wisdom used to create the universe. With his gifts of chochmah, binah, and da’at, Betzalel was able to ensure perfection in the Tabernacle’s structure, its vision, and its details. His holy sanctuary became a suitable vessel for God’s Presence, completing the sanctity of the Jewish people by facilitating their special closeness to God. (*Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. II, pp. 263-264*)

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Rav Kook on VaYakhel: Art and Creation

“Moses informed the Israelites: God has selected Betzalel... and has filled him with a Divine spirit of wisdom, insight, and knowledge in all craftsmanship.” (Ex. 36:30-31)

What exactly were these three gifts of wisdom, insight, and knowledge that God bestowed upon Betzalel? The Sages wrote that the master craftsman was privy to the very secrets of creation. Betzalel knew how to “combine the letters with which the heavens and the earth were created,” and utilized this esoteric knowledge to construct the Tabernacle (Berachot 55a).

We find that King Solomon mentioned the same three qualities when describing the creation of the universe:

“God founded the earth with wisdom; He established the heavens with insight. With His knowledge, the depths opened, and the heavens drip dew. (Proverbs 3:19-20)

What is the difference between wisdom, insight, and knowledge? How do they apply both to the Creator of the universe and to the human artist?

Chochmah, Binah, and Da’at

Chochmah (wisdom) is needed to design the fundamental structure. In terms of the creation of the world, this refers to the laws of nature which govern the universe. The intricate balance of natural forces, the finely-tuned ecosystems of life — this is the underlying chochmah of creation.

In art, chochmah fulfills a similar function, determining the work’s underlying structure. Using wisdom, the artist decides on the overall composition, the balance of light and shade, colors, perspective, and so on. Binah (insight) refers to the future vision, the ultimate goal. The Hebrew word binah is related to the word boneh (‘to build’). The emphasis is not on the current reality, but on the process of gradually building and progressing toward the final, complete form. Therefore, Solomon ascribed chochmah to forming the earth, and binah to establishing the Heavens. The foundation of the earth - its current physical structure — is based on chochmah. Binah, on the other hand, corresponds to the Heavens, the spiritual content that reflects its final form.

What is binah in art? The spiritual aspect of art is the sense of wonder that a great artist can awaken through his work. Betzalel was able to imbue the Tabernacle with magnificent splendor, thus inspiring the observer to feel profound reverence and holiness. The great beauty of his work succeeded in elevating the emotions, as it projected a majestic image of God’s grandeur.