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ON PARSHAS PEKUDEI - 5757

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ryfrand@torah.org (Rabbi Yissochar Frand) ravfrand@torah.org Rabbi Frand on Parshas Pikudei "We Toil And Get Benefit"

In this week's Parsha we learn, "They brought the Mishkan to Moshe -- The Tent of Meeting along with its fastenings, beams, crossbars, pillars and bases." [Shmos 39:33] Rash"i cites a Medrash Tanchuma teaching that the reason the entire structure was brought to Moshe was that no one was able to erect the Mishkan. (It was too heavy.) The Medrash continues that since Moshe did not directly participate in the construction of the Mishkan, G-d felt that it would be appropriate to leave the job of the setting it up for him. Moshe also doubted that he would be able to lift it and inquired of G-d, "How is it possible that any individual can lift it?" G-d told Moshe to make the effort -- "Make it look like you are trying to lift it." A miracle happened and the Mishkan went up on its own. Nevertheless, since Moshe Rabbeinu made the effort, even though in actuality it was put up miraculously, the verse credits him with erecting it. [40:18] Rav Meir Rubeman offers the following insight into this Medrash. We see from here a very important principle in spirituality -- G-d only requires us to make an effort. In other

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areas of endeavor, a person is given credit for producing. That is not the way it is in Judaism. G-d is not interested in results, He is interested in effort. The concept that a person received "an 'A' for effort" is usually a back-handed compliment. In reality the person failed... but at least he got an 'A' for trying! That is the way it is in other areas of life. In spirituality, when it comes to Mitzvos, G-d wants one thing from us: make the effort. Whether it gets done or not is unimportant. When we conclude a Tractate of Talmud we read the passage "for we toil and they toil; we work and get reward and they work and do not receive any benefit." What does "they work and do not get any benefit" mean? Of course they get benefit! A business man or a lawyer who works, makes money. If he doesn't work, he doesn't make money. So how do we make sense of this text? The answer is that when we work, we get paid for the effort - regardless of whether we produce or not! To G-d, what counts is that the person tried and put in the effort. But if one gives a dry cleaner a suit and the dry cleaner says he tried to clean it but he couldn't, that dry cleaner will not get paid. Non-spiritual matters are "bottom-line oriented." Even if one does work, if he does not produce he will not get paid. In spiritual matters, what G-d wants is an honest effort. Whether the Mishkan gets put up or not is G-d's worry, so to speak. We have to try! Not long ago I spent a Shabbos in Atlanta at a Torah Retreat. Thirty years ago there was not a minyan of Shomrei Shabbos people in Atlanta. Today there are 300 people who come to shul every Shabbos, all of them are in some stage of being Baalei Teshuva - newcomers to observant Judaism. These were unaffiliated Jews, Jews whom we were losing, and now they're coming back. I asked their Rabbi, Emanuel Feldman, what was the key to his success. He told me that the key is to plant seeds. That is all that one can do. One plants seeds and then one sits and waits. The seeds must be nurtured and watered; one must exert effort and try, but one never knows if he will be successful or not. One person who recently became a Baal Teshuva told Rabbi Feldman that the reason was that 15 years earlier Rabbi Feldman mentioned an idea in a Yom Kippur sermon that stuck with him. Initially he didn't act upon it, but 15 years later he decided to become religious. When we reach out to others, we have no idea if our efforts will succeed. But it doesn't matter. Our job is to try. What one must do is make the effort. Whether the Mishkan gets put up or not is G-d's worry. "We do the work, and get reward." ... Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@scn.org Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@clark.net RavFrاند, Copyright (c) 1997 by Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc.

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SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS PEKUDEI By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav. As Hashem had commanded Moshe (40:19)

OUR DAILY PRAYERS: DO WE HAVE PROPER KAVANAH?
Shmonei Esrei, the tefillah which we recite three times a day, derives its name from the eighteen brachos which compose it. Why eighteen? The Talmud (1) explains that this number corresponds to the eighteen times it says in this week's parsha "As Hashem had commanded Moshe," referring to Moshe's precise compliance of the laws of the Mishkan. Apparently, the Talmud is alluding to a relationship between the holy Mishkan where the daily sacrifices were brought, and our tefillos. Both of these forms of worship need to be performed exactly as commanded, with the proper intentions, kavanah. Moreover, just as an improper intention invalidates a korban, so do improper thoughts invalidate a tefillah. Since the two most important parts of our davening, Krias Shema and Shmone Esrei, also require the most kavanah, let us focus on them:

PROPER KAVANAH IN KRIAS SHEMA What type of kavanah is needed? There are two types of kavanah that are required for Krias Shema. The first is the kavanah needed to be yotzei the mitzvah of reciting Krias Shema: Before beginning to recite Shema, one should have the intention of fulfilling mitzvas Krias Shema. Although one who recites Shema

as part of his daily davening has an "automatic" degree of kavanah to be yotzei - why is he reciting Shema just now if not to be yotzei the mitzvah of Krias Shema - nevertheless, it is proper to be expressly mechaven to be yotzei the mitzvah(2). The second type of kavanah required is to understand the basic meaning of the words being recited. One who recites Shema but does not understand what he is saying, has not fulfilled the mitzvah.

Which part of Krias Shema requires kavanah? L'chatchillah, one should understand the basic meaning of the entire Krias Shema. As he pronounces each word, he should have in mind the meaning of the words that he is saying. This requires full concentration, and it is the proper and preferred manner in which to perform this mitzvah(3). If it is difficult to achieve such intense kavanah, one fulfills the mitzvah b'dieved even if he only had kavanah for (in order of preference): The first parsha (the parsha of Shema Yisroel(4); The first three verses of the first parsha (until al levovecha)(5); The first verse of Shema Yisroel and Boruch Shem(6); The verse of Shema Yisrael(7).

What should be done if one failed to concentrate during the first verse of Shema Yisroel? One who failed to concentrate during the first verse of Shema Yisroel(8) must repeat Shema. Since it is forbidden to repeat a word(9), or even an entire verse of Shema Yisroel(10), it is advisable to finish the first parshah and then start again from the beginning(11). Other poskim allow repetition during Krias Shema [when one failed to be mechaven] if the following two conditions are met: a) It is done quietly enough that no one else can hear; and b) only an entire verse at time may be repeated, single words may not be repeated(12).

One who remembered - while reciting the second parsha of Krias Shema (V'ehyah Im Shomoa) - that he failed to be mechaven during the recitation of the first verse of Shema Yisroel, should finish the second parshah, repeat the first verse and the first parsha (V'ohavta), and continue on to the third parshah (Vayomer). If, after davening is over, one remembers that he was not mechaven properly during the first verse of Shema Yisroel, he must repeat the first verse and the first parsha (Vohavta), but no more than that(13).

What is the minimum kavanah required for the first verse of Shema Yisroel? The basic meaning of the first verse of Shema Yisroel combines two themes: 1) Hashem is our G-d, a declaration of accepting Hashem's sovereignty over us, and 2) Hashem is one - a proclamation of His status as the exclusive power controlling the entire world. When reciting Krias Shema, therefore, one must bear in mind the following basic meaning: Hear O Yisroel, Hashem is our G-d and we accept His kingdom, and He is the only G-d - up, down and in all four directions(14). This is the minimum degree of kavanah which is acceptable. If one did not have this idea in mind when reciting Shema Yisroel, his recitation is invalid and must be repeated as outlined above. In addition to this basic meaning, there is an additional level of kavanah pertaining to the deeper meaning of the two Names of Hashem mentioned in the first verse. The name 'Hashem' has two meanings: The first meaning is based on the way Hashem's Name is pronounced, Ad-onai, which refers to Hashem as Master of All. The other meaning, based on the manner in which Hashem's Name is written, y-k-v-k, refers to Hashem's essence as the One who was, is, and will always be - timeless and infinite. The Name Elokeinu refers to Hashem being the Almighty, Omnipotent and the Master of all powers. The halachah is that one should bear in mind all of these meanings when reciting the Names of Hashem during Krias Shema(15). B'dieved, however, one who did not does not need to repeat Krias Shema(16).

PROPER KAVANAH AT SHMONE ESREI Which parts of Shmone Esrei require kavanah? L'chatchillah, one must concentrate on the meaning of all of the words in the entire Shmone Esrei(17). Sometimes, however, it may be difficult to maintain that level of kavanah. In such a case, one must make an effort to have as much kavanah as possible. We will list, in order of halachic preference, the minimum levels of kavanah which are required. Kavanah is required:

For the first brachah (Avos), the brachah of Modim and the ending of each brachah, the c hasimas habrachah(18); During the first

brachah and the brachah of Modim(19). During the first brachah only(20).

One who is temporarily unable to concentrate even during the first brachah, is advised not to daven just then(21) even if he will miss the halachically correct time for davening(22). He should rather daven the next tefillah twice, as a tashlumim (makeup). One who davened but did not have kavanah during the first brachah, has not fulfilled the obligation of davening Shmone Esrei "correctly"(23). He may not, however, repeat the first brachah, since there is a strong possibility that he will not have the proper kavanah the second time either. If, however, he realizes before he finishes the first brachah that he did not have proper kavanah, he should begin anew [from Elokei Avrohom, etc.(24)]. Once he says Boruch ata Hashem, however, he must continue(25) on(26) to recite the rest of Shmone Esrei(27), with particular concentration on the brachah of Modim(28). If one failed to have proper kavanah during the first brachah because of a specific distraction, such as a disruptive child or because he was holding something, he may repeat the first brachah [or the entire Shmone Esrei] once the source of the distraction is gone(29).

What can one do if his kavanah is being disturbed? Proper kavanah is the most important ingredient of davening. Consequently, it sometimes overrides other halachos. Therefore: If a sefer falls to the floor and that interferes with one's kavanah, he may pick it up after finishing the brachah he is presently reciting(30). This may be done even if he needs to take a few steps in order to pick up the sefer(31). If, however, the fallen sefer does not disturb his kavanah, then he may not pick up the sefer during Shmone Esrei(32).

Each individual needs to judge for himself if it is better for him to daven with a siddur or not, since some people concentrate better if they daven from a text, while others have better kavanah davening with their eyes closed(33). If one begins davening without a siddur and suddenly requires one in order to continue davening properly, he may go and get one if he knows its exact location. He may not, however, start searching around for a siddur(34).

If one is davening and is in doubt of a halachah concerning the Shmone Esrei, he may go and look up the halachah in a sefer. If he has no other choice, he may even ask another person what the halachah is(35). This should be relied upon only when not resolving his question might invalidate the Shmone Esrei(36).

A child [or an adult(37)] who is disturbing the davening may be signaled to with hand motions. If that does not work, one may walk away from the disruptive child [or walk over to the child to quiet him down(38)], but he may not talk to him in order to quiet him down(39).

It is proper for a father to show his child where and what to daven before Shmone Esrei begins. Even if this will result in the father not starting his tefillah together with the tzibbur, he should still do so(40). If someone is knocking on the door or ringing the bell, or if the telephone rings during Shmone Esrei and it is interfering with his concentration, one may walk to the door and open it, or walk to the phone and lift the receiver off the hook. He may not speak, however(41).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Yerushalmi Brachos 4:3. 2 Mishnah Berurah 60:10 quoting Chayei Adam. 3 Mishnah Berurah 61:1,4,5. 4 Igros Moshe OC 5:5, to fulfill the view of the Tanaim in Brachos 13b who require this. 5 Mishnah Berurah 63:11 quoting Bach. 6 Mishnah Berurah 63:11 quoting Magen Avrohom. According to the view of the Mishnah Berurah, this is the minimum requirement. One who failed to have kavanah during Boruch Shem must repeat the Shema. 7 Aruch Hashulchan 61:6;63:6; Igros Moshe OC 5:5. If he remembers before beginning to recite V'ohavta, then he is required to repeat Boruch Shem. If he remembers after starting V'ohavta, then he is no longer required to repeat Boruch Shem. He may, however, do so provided that he starts Shema all over again. 8 In addition, one must not think other thoughts during Krias Shema, even when not actually saying the words. According to some poskim, those thoughts may constitute a hefsek which may invalidate the Krias Shema - see Mishnah Berurah 63:13 and Biur Halachah 101:1 quoting the Rashba and Igros Moshe OC 5:5. 9 Even b'dieved it is possible that one is not yotzei the mitzvah if he repeated a word of Krias Shema - see Biur Halachah 61:9

and Igros Moshe OC 5:5. 10 OC 61:9. 11 Igros Moshe OC 5:5. 12 Mishnah Berurah 61:22,23;63:14. 13 Mishnah Berurah 63:14. 14 In some siddurim there is a reference to 'Hashem being king over the seven heavens'. One should not be mechaven this kavanah - Igros Moshe OC 5:5. See Hebrew Notes for an explanation and discussion. 15 Mishnah Berurah 5:3. Indeed, these meaning should be thought about not only during Krias Shema but each time Hashem's name is mentioned. 16 Igros Moshe OC 5:5. 17 OC 101:1. Some poskim (Yad Hamelech, Rambam Tefillah; Chidushei Reb Chaim Soloveitchik on Rambam Hilchos Tefillah) add that although one is yotzei if he did not concentrate on the meaning of the words, but if during the Shmone Esrei his mind wandered to the degree that he does not realize that he standing in front of Hashem, his tefillah is invalidated. Other poskim (Chazon Ish and Avi Ezri Tefillah 4:6), however, do not agree with this strict interpretation of the halachah. 18 Shulchan Aruch Harav and Mishnah Berurah 101:1 quoting the Tur. 19 Mishnah Berurah 101:3; Daas Torah 101:1. 20 OC 101:1. In addition, one must not think other thoughts during the first brachah of Shmone Esrei, even when not actually saying the words. According to some poskim, those thoughts may constitute a hefsek which may invalidate the brachah - see Mishnah Berurah 63:13 and Biur Halachah 101:1 quoting the Rashba and Igros Moshe OC 5:5. 21 Mishnah Berurah 101:3. See Aruch Hashulchan 101:2 who remains undecided concerning this halachah. 22 Yabia Omer 3:9. One who, for some reason, usually finds himself in a situation in which he cannot have the minimum kavanah, should consult his rav for guidance on how he should conduct himself. 23 OC 101:1. According to the opinion of many poskim, however, it is not considered as if he did not daven at all. Rather it is considered as if he did not daven in the way davening was ordained by our Sages - see Chayei Adam 24:2 (quoted in Biur Halachah 101:1); Chidushei Rav Chaim Halevi on Hilchos Tefillah; Yad Eliyahu 1:8; Pri Yitzchok 2:1; Kaf Hachayim 101:4; Eretz Tzvi 22; Kehilos Yaakov Brachos 26; Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky (quoted in Orach Yisroel pg. 133); Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Siach Halachah pg. 183, 237). 24 Mishnah Berurah 101:4 quoting the Chayei Adam. For an explanation of why one cannot begin from Boruch ata, see Orach Yisroel (pg. 108) quoting Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky and Harav Moshe Bik. See also Yabia Omer 3:9-7; 3:10. 25 Some poskim advise that before continuing the Shmone Esrei, one should review the first brachah in his mind and then continue - Orchos Rabbeinu 1:59 quoting the Chazon Ish; Yalkut Yosef pg. 157. 26 It is not advisable to say lamdeini chukecha and start over again - oral rulings by Harav M. Feinstein, Harav Y. Kamenetsky and Harav Y. Roth (quoted in Orach Yisroel pg. 108). 27 See Biur Halachah who advises one to wait and listen carefully to the chazan's repetition of the first brachah during chazoras hashatz. Obviously when davening alone, or during Maariv, this solution would not work. See also Shevet Halevi 1:1, Yabia Omer 3:10 and Orchos Rabbeinu 1:59 for the problem with this approach and that it is not customary to do so. 28 Kehillos Yaakov Brachos 26; Yabia Omer 3:10 29 Shaar Hatzion 96:2. 30 Mishnah Berurah 96:7. 31 Shu"t Be'er Moshe 3:13. 32 Mishnah Berurah 96:7, based on Pri Megadim. 33 Mishnah Berurah 93:2; 95:5; Aruch Hashulchan 93:8. 34 Rama OC 96:2, according to the explanation of Chayei Adam 22:7; 25:9 and Mishnah Berurah 104:2. According to Aruch Hashulchan 96:2, he may not walk to get a siddur even if he knows where one is located. See Hebrew Notes for discussion. 35 Mishnah Berurah 104:2 and Kaf Hachayim 96:11 quoting the Chayei Adam. Several poskim (Reb Shlomo Kluger in Ha'elef Lecha Shlomo OC 50; Eimek Brachah pg. 7) disagree strongly with this ruling - even to merely look in a sefer, much less to ask a question. See Yalkut Yosef pg. 177 who rules like Chayei Adam (concerning looking in a sefer). Beis Boruch 25:22 also agrees with the Chayei Adam, 36 Beis Boruch 25:22. 37 Kaf Hachayim 104:3 quoting Machzik Brachah. 38 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (oral ruling quoted in Tefillah K'hilchasa pg. 247). 39 Mishnah Berurah 104:1. Aruch Hashulchan 101:4 does not permit even using hand signals to quiet a child, much less walking away. See Hebrew Notes for discussion. 40 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (oral ruling quoted in Avne Yashfe, 2nd edition, pg. 93). 41 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (oral ruling quoted in Tefillah K'hilchasa pg. 247).

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rmk@torah.org (Mordecai Kamenetzky) drasha@torah.org DRASHA -- PARSHAS PEKUDEI UNLIMITED PARTNERSHIP

The Mishkan was finally complete. The nation looked at the magnificent work with great joy, and Moshe was proud. So proud, in fact, that he did something that he only did once more -- just before his death: he blessed the entire nation. Actually, the erection of a Mishkan was the greatest blessing in itself. Hashem had promised the Jewish nation in Parshas Terumah, "Build me a Mishkan -- and I will dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). But Moshe felt that he, too, would add a blessing. Rashi tells us what Moshe told the people: "May Hashem rest His presence in your handiwork."

At first it seems that Moshe is reiterating the promise that Hashem Himself made. Hashem had promised to dwell in the midst of the Sanctuary that the Jewish nation would build. Why, then did Moshe repeat G-d's promise as a blessing? Is he blessing them that Hashem should keep His word? Or is he perhaps bestowing a more powerful message?

Once one of his congregants* approached Rabbi Yehuda Assad for advice. "There is an old, run-down store in the downtown area of the city. I can get it a very reasonable price. I think that with my marketing skills I may be able to turn that location into a profitable venture. Do you think I should buy it?" Rav Assad made a face. "I don't think that it would be prudent to enter that part of the city for a business venture." The man left somewhat dejected. A few days later another man entered the Rabbi's study with the identical question about the same property. "There is an old, run-down store in the downtown area of the city. I can get it a very reasonable price. I think that with my marketing skills, and of course with Hashem's help, I may be able to turn that location into a profitable venture. Do you think I should buy it?" This time Rabbi Assad nodded in approval. "I think you should make a go of it. I have no doubts that it will be a success." When word got out that the Rabbi was behind this new endeavor, the first man stormed into his study quite upset. "Why did the you tell me not to buy the property and then tell my friend just the opposite?" he demanded. "My dear student," answered the Rabbi, "there is a great difference. Your friend took in a partner. He said that with the help of Hashem he could make a go of it. When someone includes Hashem in his plans, I am sure that he will succeed!"

For the first time since the Exodus the Jews had become accomplished craftsman, artisans, tailors, and contractors. They built a magnificent edifice in the wilderness. Moshe knew that a feeling of self-gratification might accompany their accomplishments. Perhaps they may begin to think that it was their wisdom, their skills and only their abilities that made this beautiful Mishkan possible. So he blessed them with words that were meant to dissuade any such delusion. "May Hashem's presence rest in your handiwork." Of course Hashem promised that he would dwell in the Mishkan. Moshe's question was, "would the Jews let him in?" Would they make him a partner? Would they recognize Hashem as a significant factor even in the physical handiwork that they themselves had wrought? To that end, Moshe's blessing incorporated the standard for every action, accomplishment, and success that anyone achieves. May Hashem be a part of your success. May the Shechina rest upon your handiwork.

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ohr@jer1.co.il (Ohr Somayach) parasha-qa@jer1.co.il (In-depth questions on Parashat HaShavua w/Rashi)
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Parsha Questions 1. Why is the word Mishkan stated twice in verse 38:21? 2. Why is the Mishkan called the "Mishkan of testimony"? 3. Who was appointed to carry the vessels of the Mishkan in the midbar? 4. Who was the officer in charge of the Levi'im? 5. What is the meaning of the name Betzalel? 6. How many people contributed a half-shekel to the Mishkan? Who contributed? 7. Which material used in the Bigdei Kehuna was not used in the coverings of the sacred vessels? 8. How were the gold threads made? 9. What was inscribed on the stones on the shoulders of the Ephod? 10. What was on the hem of the Me'il? 11. What did the Kohen Gadol wear between the Mitznefes and the Tzitz? 12. What role did Moshe play in the construction of the Mishkan? 13. Which date was the first time that the Mishkan was erected and not dismantled? 14. What was the "tent" which Moshe spread over the Mishkan (40:19)? 15. What "testimony" did Moshe place in the Aron? 16. What function did the Paroches serve? 17. Where was the Shulchan placed in the Mishkan? 18. Where was the Menorah placed in the Mishkan? 19. Who offered the communal sacrifices during the eight days of the dedication of the Mishkan? 20. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as Kohanim?

Bonus QUESTION "And the 100 silver kikar were melted for the (100) sockets...one kikar per socket...and the (remaining) 1775 shekelim were fashioned into hooks..." (38:27) Why does the Torah specify exactly what was done with the silver, whereas the Torah is not as specific regarding the gold?

I Did Not Know That! The words "as Hashem commanded" appear 18 times regarding the Mishkan's construction. The Sages instituted 18 blessings in the Shemone Esrei prayer to correspond to these 18 commands. Today, when we have no Beis Hamikdash, the 18 blessings of the Shemone Esrei substitute for the sacrifices offered in the Mishkan. Vayikra Rabba 1:18 [thanks to Rabbi Sholem Fishbane]

Recommended Reading List Ramban 38:22 Betzalel's Genius 40:2 Timetable of the Yemei Milu'im Ibn Ezra 38:11 Sunshine and Rain 40:35 Covering the Aron Sforno 40:18 Essence of the Mishkan Ba'al HaTurim 39:27 Storage of the Garments Aderes Eliyahu 39:33 The World of the Mishkan

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated 1. 38:21 - To allude to the Beis Hamikdash that would twice be taken as a "mashkon" (pledge) for the sins of the Jewish People until the nation repents. 2. 38:21 - It was testimony for the Jewish People that Hashem forgave them for the golden calf and allowed His Shechina to dwell among them. 3. 38:21 - The Levi'im. 4. 38:21 - Isamar ben Aharon. 5. 38:22 - "In the shadow of G-d." 6. 38:26 - 603,550. Every man age twenty and over (except the Levi'im). 7. 39:1 - Linen. (See Rashi 31:10). 8. 39:3 - The gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (See Rashi 28:6). 9. 39:6, 39:7 - The names of the tribes. 10. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and golden bells. 11. 39:31 - Tefillin. 12. 39:33 - He stood it up. 13. 40:17 - Rosh Chodesh Nissan of the second year in the Midbar. For seven days before this, during the consecration of Aharon and his sons, Moshe erected and dismantled the Mishkan. (Rashi 39:29) 14. 40:19 - The curtain of goat-skin. 15. 40:20 - The Luchos HaBris. 16. 40:21 - It served as a partition for the Aron. 17.

40:22 - On the northern side of the "Ohel Mo'ed," outside the "Paroches." 18. 40:24 - On the southern side of the "Ohel Mo'ed" opposite the "Shulchan." 19. 40:29 - Moshe. 20. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the consecration of the Mishkan.

Bonus ANSWER: Because everyone gave exactly half of a silver shekel, the total amount of silver was public knowledge. Therefore, the more relevant question regarding the silver was "How was it used?" The gold, however, had been a free will offering, each person giving as much as he wanted. Therefore, the most relevant question regarding the gold was "How much was donated." Ahavas Yonasan (thanks to Rabbi Sholem Fishbane)

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ohr@jer1.co.il (Ohr Somayach weekly@jer1.co.il (Highlights of the Torah weekly portion) This issue is sponsored by Herschel Kulefsky, Attorney at Law, 15 Park Row, New York, NY 10038, 1-212-693-1671
Insights O.H.M.S. "...stones of remembrance to the Children of Yisrael" (39:7) Ask someone from a non-religious background what it's like to wear a yarmulke in public for the first time. He will tell you it feels like becoming an ambassador. An ambassador for the Jewish People. An ambassador for Hashem Himself. The entire Jewish People and Hashem may be judged by the way you now behave. Five minutes ago it was "Hey! - Look at that guy pushing in line!" Now it's "Hey! - Look at that Jew pushing in line!" A Jew, unlike a person of color, always has the option to merge into the background, to shorten his nose, shorten his name. But as soon as he `comes out' and wears the signs of his Judaism with pride, his actions reflect not just on himself, but on the whole Jewish People, and on G-d. On the Choshen, the breastplate, that the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) wore, were twelve stones. On these stones were inscribed the names of the Tribes of Israel. They were called the `stones of remembrance before the Children of Yisrael.' For the Jewish People would remember that their names were inscribed on this holy garment, and they would thus be ashamed to sin. Meshch Chochma; Rabbi Calev Gestetner ... Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer(C) 1997 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

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INTRODUCTION TO PARASHAT HASHAVUA by Zvi Shimon PARASHAT PEKUDEI The Significance of the Sacrifices

In this week's Torah reading we conclude the book of Exodus and commence the book of Leviticus. Despite being different books in the Torah, the content of Exodus and Leviticus is intricately connected. The last half of the book of Exodus, from chapter 25 to the end, deals primarily with the construction of the Mishkan, the abode of God. Exodus concludes with God's dwelling in the newly constructed Mishkan: "When Moses had finished the work, the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Presence of the Lord filled the Tabernacle" (40:33,34). The book of Leviticus, the third book of the Pentateuch, follows with the rules regarding the offering of sacrifices. The Mishkan is the abode of God where one goes to encounter the divine and to worship him. Furthermore, it is the location where all sacrifices are to be offered. Several week's ago, in parashat Teruma, we discussed the significance of the Menorah. This week's discussion will focus on the underlying idea behind the offering of animal sacrifices on the brass altar of the Mishkan.

What is the significance behind the offering of sacrifices? What is their function in man's worship of God? (We do not intend, by our question, to

inquire into the significance of the different types of sacrifices but rather wish to find an underlying idea imminent in the sacrificial enterprise as a WHOLE.) The Rambam (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, Egypt, 1138-1204) discusses this question in his classic philosophical work, originally written in Arabic, 'The Guide to the Perplexed'. In the section which deals with the rationale behind the different commandments of God, the Rambam offers the following explanation for the offering of animal sacrifices.

"It is impossible to go suddenly from one extreme to the other; it is therefore according to the nature of man impossible for him suddenly to discontinue everything to which he has been accustomed.... The custom which was in those days general among men, and the general mode of worship in which the Israelites were brought up, consisted in sacrificing animals in those temples which contained certain images, to bow down to those images, and to burn incense before them; religious and ascetic persons were in those days the persons that were devoted to the service in the temples erected to the stars, as has been explained by us. It was in accordance with the wisdom and plan of God, as displayed in the whole Creation, that He did not command us to give up and to discontinue all these manners of service; for to obey such a commandment it would have been contrary to the nature of man, who generally cleaves to that to which he is used [to].... For this reason God allowed these kinds of service to continue; He transferred to His service that which had formerly served as a worship of created beings, and of things imaginary and unreal, and commanded us to serve Him in the same manner; viz., to build unto Him a temple; "And they shall make unto Me a sanctuary" (Ex. 25:8); to have the altar erected to His name; "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me" (ibid. 20:21); to offer the sacrifices to Him; "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord" (Lev. 1:2), to bow down to Him and to burn incense before Him. He has forbidden to do any of these things to any other being; "He who sacrificeth unto any god, save the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed" (Ex. 22:19); "For thou shalt bow down to no other god" (ibid. 34:14). He selected priests for the service in the temple; "And they shall minister unto Me in the priest's office" (ibid. 28:41). He made it obligatory that certain gifts, called the gifts of the Levites and the priests, should be assigned to them for their maintenance while they are engaged in the service of the temple and its sacrifices. By this Divine plan it was effected that the traces of idolatry were blotted out, and the truly great principle of our faith, the Existence and Unity of God, was firmly established; this result was thus obtained without deterring or confusing the minds of the people by the abolition of the service to which they were accustomed and which alone was familiar to them." (Guide to the Perplexed 3:32)"

The worship of God by the offering of sacrifices is not the preferred form of worship. The Torah commands it only in an attempt to curb idolatry since sacrifices were the universally accepted form of worship. According to the Rambam, it would have been impossible, for the Torah to totally annul the custom of sacrifices since it was so ingrained in people's behavior. Instead, God limited the scope of sacrifices to one location, the Mishkan, and designated the sons of Aaron to be responsible for sacrificing on the altar. In a similar vein, he Rambam explains the Torah's determination of the animals suitable for sacrifice:

"Scripture tells us, according to the version of Onkelos, that the Egyptians worshipped Aries, and therefore abstained from killing sheep, and held shepherds in contempt: "Behold we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians," etc. (Exod. 8:26); "For every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians" (Gen. 46:34). Some sects among the Sabaeans worshipped demons, and imagined that these assumed the form of goats, and called them therefore "goats" [se'irim]. This worship was widespread: "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto demons, after whom they have gone a whoring" (Lev. 17:7). For this reason those sects abstained from eating goats' flesh. Most idolaters objected to killing cattle, holding this species of animals in great estimation. Therefore the people of Hodu [Indians] up to this day do not slaughter cattle even in those countries where other animals are slaughtered. In order to eradicate these false principles, the Law commands us to offer sacrifices only of these three kinds: "Ye shall bring

your offering of the cattle [viz.], of the herd and of the flock" (Lev. 1:2). Thus the very act which is considered by the heathen as the greatest crime, is the means of approaching God, and obtaining His pardon for our sins. In this manner, evil principles, the diseases of the human soul, are cured by other principles which are diametrically opposite." (Guide to the Perplexed 3:46)"

The Rambam posits that the reason for offering sheep and cattle as sacrifices, and not other animals, is to negate and uproot the mistaken and skewed beliefs of the idolatrous world. The Torah commands us to sacrifice the idols of the other peoples in order to distance the Israelites from the idolater's faulty conceptions. Do you agree with the Rambam's approach?

The Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, Spain, 1194-1274) rejects outright the Rambam's explanation:

"But these words are mere expressions, healing casually a severe wound and a great difficulty, and making 'the table of the Eternal polluted,' [as if the offerings were intended only] to remove false beliefs from the hearts of the wicked and fools of the world, when Scripture says that they are 'the food of the offering made by fire, for a pleasing odor.' Moreover, [if the offerings were meant to eliminate] the foolish [ideas] of the Egyptians, their disease would not thereby be cured. On the contrary, it would increase the cause of sorrow, for since the intention of the above-mentioned wicked ones was to worship the constellations of the sheep and the ox, which according to their opinion possess certain powers [over human affairs], and which is why they abstain from eating them in deference to their power and strength, then if these species are slaughtered to the Revered Name, it is a mark of respect and honor to [these constellations]. These worshippers themselves were in the habit of so doing, as He has said, 'And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the satyrs,' and those who made the [golden] calf sacrificed to it. Now the Rabbi [Moshe ben Maimon] mentions that the idol-worshippers used to sacrifice to the moon on the days of new-moon, and to the sun when it rose in a particular constellation know to them from their books. The disease of idolatry would surely have been far better cured if we were to eat [these animal-deities] to our full, which would be considered by them forbidden and repugnant, and something they would never do!

"Furthermore, when Noah came out of the ark with his three sons, there were as yet no Chaldeans or Egyptians in the world, yet he brought an offering, which was pleasing to God, as concerning it Scripture says, 'And the Eternal smelled the pleasing odor,' and on account of it 'He said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.' 'Abel likewise brought of the first-born of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Eternal had regard unto Abel and to his offering.' Yet there was as yet not the slightest trace at all of idol-worship in the world."

"The Scriptural expression concerning the offerings is, 'My food which is presented unto Me for offerings made by fire, for a pleasing odor unto Me.' Far be it that they should have no other purpose and intention except the elimination of idolatrous opinions from the minds of fools!" (Ramban Leviticus 1:9)

The Ramban rejects the Rambam on several grounds. First, he rejects the Rambam's approach since it attaches no inherent value to the sacrifices, and regards them as being only a protective guard against idolatry with no independent significance. The Ramban rejects this argument because it contradicts verses such as, "My food which is presented unto Me for offerings made by fire, for a pleasing odor unto me" (Numbers 28:2), which relate positively to the sacrifices. I would add to the Ramban's reservations the fact that sacrifices entail a whole complex of commandments so that it is hard to relegate such a large number of commandments to such a minor role bereft of positive meaning. Second, the Ramban critiques the Rambam's approach on its own grounds, claiming it is factually incorrect. The idolaters, themselves, sacrificed these animals to the constellations. They did not object to sacrificing these animals but rather refrained from eating them. Were the Torah's intention to negate the beliefs of the idolaters it would encourage eating the animals, not sacrificing them. Finally, the Ramban rejects the Rambam's explanation on historical grounds. The Torah recounts instances such as the offerings of Abel and Noah where sacrifices were

offered before there existed any idolatry and God nevertheless looked favorably upon them.

The Ramban offers an alternative explanation to the sacrifices:

"It is far more fitting to accept the reason for the offerings which scholars say, namely that since man's deeds are accomplished through thought, speech and action, therefore God commanded that when man sins and brings an offering, he should lay his hands upon it in contrast to the [evil] deed [committed]. He should confess his sin verbally in contrast to his [evil] speech, and he should burn the instruments of thought and desire in the human being. He should burn the legs [of the offering] since they correspond to the hands and feet of a person, which do all his work. He should sprinkle the blood upon the altar, which is analogous to the blood in his body. All these acts are performed in order that when they are done, a person should realize that he has sinned against his God with his body and his soul, and that "his" blood should really be spilled and "his" body burned, were it not for the loving-kindness of the Creator, Who took from him a substitute and a ransom, namely this offering, so that its blood should be in place of his blood, its life in place of his life, and that the chief limbs of the offering should be in place of the chief parts of his body." (Ramban *ibid.*)

The sacrifice is a substitute for the person himself. The punishment deserved by the person offering the sacrifice is symbolically transferred to the animal. The owner of the animal, through the act of sacrificing, inculcates his culpability and realizes that because God is merciful, his sins are forgiven and his sacrifice accepted. Can you spot any weaknesses in the Ramban's explanation?

Rabbi Hoffman (Rabbi David Zvi Hoffman, Germany, 1843- 1921) points out several difficulties in the Ramban's approach.

1. Not all sacrifices are brought for the atonement of sins. Besides the sin offering there are also burnt offerings and meal offerings which are not brought for the atonement of sin. Therefore, the Ramban's explanation does not encompass the whole gamut of sacrifices since he only refers to the sin offering.
2. Even the sin offering is not brought for a sin which carries a punishment of death but rather for a sin perpetrated unwittingly. Therefore it is incorrect to see the sin offering as a symbolic representation of the punishment deserved by the sinner.
3. According to the Ramban's explanation, the focal point of the sacrificial procedure should be the slaughtering of the animal, the actual infliction of death. However, this is not the case since anyone, even a non-Levite, can perform the slaughtering. The most important part of the sacrificial process is actually the sprinkling of the animal's blood onto the altar, an act which can only be performed by a priest.

As Rabbi Hoffman points out, the sprinkling of the animal's blood is the most important part of the sacrifice. Although the different types of sacrifices have different laws with regard to the flesh of the animal, (either burning the whole animal on the altar or having parts of it eaten by the owner, or offering parts to the priest,) one aspect never changes in all the animal sacrifices. The blood of the animal is always brought to the altar. The bringing of the blood to the altar is therefore the common denominator in all animal sacrifices. If we are to search for an underlying explanation to all animal sacrifices we must focus on the offering of the blood.

What does blood represent, what is its significance? The Torah gives the following answer in explaining the prohibition of eating blood:

"But make sure that you do not partake of the blood; for the blood is the LIFE, and you must not consume the life with the flesh"(Deuteronomy 12:23).

It is forbidden to eat blood since it is the life of all creatures. The Torah states another reason for this prohibition:

"And if anyone of the house of Israel or of the strangers who reside among them partakes of any blood, I will set My face against the person who partakes of the blood, and I will cut him off from among his kin. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have assigned it to you for making atonement for your lives upon the altar; it is the blood, as life, that effects atonement." (Leviticus 17:10-11)

It is not only that the blood is life but as a result of its being the essence of life it is reserved for the altar. We are now better equipped to understand the significance of the sprinkling of the blood onto the altar? The offering of blood is a proclamation of God's ownership of our lives. The blood sprinkled on the altar, as the Ramban explained, represents the blood (the life) of the person offering the sacrifice. However, its offering is not an act of atonement, a symbolic transfer of the punishment of the person offering to the animal. Rather, it is a statement, a symbolic portrayal of God's dominion over our lives. Through the sprinkling of the animal's blood on the altar (which represents life), we acknowledge that our lives are not our own but belong to God who created us. The sacrifice reiterates our commitment to God and the devotion of our lives to the fulfillment of His will. A Torah lifestyle carries with it the awareness and the responsibility of choosing one's course of action and direction in life based on the will and commandment of He who is the provider and owner of all life.

Rabbi Hoffman proves this explanation of the underlying idea behind the sacrifices by analyzing some of the earliest cases of sacrifices in the Torah.

"Noah, who saw with his own eyes the destruction of the world and its evil inhabitants [in the flood], and who was miraculously saved by God, grasped that his life was a gift from God and totally dependent upon Him, and he vividly expressed this awareness through the sacrifice of animals. The blood, the "life" of the animal, which was offered on the altar, symbolized the soul of man and his life, and in this sacrifice Noah's feelings flowed forth and were given an outward expression, that not only his wealth but also his very life belongs to God..."

This idea is explicitly and most powerfully expressed in Abraham's sacrifice in the binding of Isaac.

"God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his favored son, to whom he was connected with all his soul, and whose life was more dear to him than his own. After having displayed his full willingness and unrestrained compliance [with God's command], came a call to preserve his son's life, and then appeared suddenly a ram which he offered instead of his son. Through this was expressed clearly the idea that via the life force which we offer to God by means of the sacrifice of a living creature, we symbolize our complete submission to God and our total obedience to His commands... This is the essence of the fear of God: unlimited obedience of God. "For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from me" (22:12).

This idea implicit in the sacrifices of Noah and Abraham serves as the foundation for the understanding of animal sacrifices offered in the Mishkan. The sacrifices are not only aimed at curtailing idolatry. They are a powerful, dramatic and most vivid expression of man's devotion to his Creator.

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peninim@shemaisrael.com This Weeks Parsha - Hebrew Academy of Cleveland The Shema Yisrael Torah Network <http://www.shemaisrael.co.il> Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Hebrew Academy of Cleveland Parshas Pekudey ...

He put the Shulchan in the Ohel Moed on the north side of the Mishkan...He placed the Menorah in the Ohel Moed...on the south side of the Mishkan. (40:22,24) In the Talmud Bava Basra 25b Chazal say, He who desires to become wise shall go south; He who desires to become wealthy shall go north. The placement of the Shulchan in the north and the Menorah in the south supports this idea. The Shulchan symbolized material wealth, since it was the medium through which the blessing of nourishment flowed to the world. The Menorah represented Torah wisdom, which is compared to light. The wisdom of the Torah illuminates the path of life before a person and guides him along the way. Consequently, the Menorah was placed on the right side of the entrance to the Mishkan. The right side is a metaphor for wisdom, alluding to its prominence. The material dimension is represented by the left side. Hence, the Shulchan was placed on the north, which is the

left side.

There is one problem, however, with our analogy. The Menorah was on the right side, and the Shulchan on the left side only as they stood free-standing. To the individual who entered through the gates of the Mishkan/Mikdash, it was just the opposite, since the entrance was in the east. A person entering the Mishkan would find the Shulchan on his right, and the Menorah on his left.

The Bais Ha'levi infers a significant lesson from this pasuk. When a person enters into the endeavor of avodas Hashem, service to the Al-mighty, at the onset he is permitted to study shelo lishmah, not for the sake of the mitzvah. One is allowed to have ulterior motives as he begins to study Torah, since it will ultimately lead to lishmah, pure Torah study for the sake of the mitzvah.

When one begins to earn a living or undertakes any endeavor for the purpose of financial gain, his intention must be purely l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven. No room exists for ulterior motives in the area of earning a living. An individual works because that is the means by which he sustains himself, so that he can perform mitzvos and study Torah. Material endeavor is a means, not an end. Otherwise, the pursuit of financial gain can become an obsession. It drives one to do the unspeakable in his quest for greater and more significant rewards. Chazal guarantee mitoch shelo lishmah ba lishmah. Once one begins to study Torah, regardless of his motive, if he continues, he will ultimately become a student of Torah lishmah, for the sake of the mitzvah. This applies only to Torah study and no other endeavor.

Consequently, when one enters the Mikdash, the Menorah is on his left side, symbolizing that he may begin studying Torah for self-serving purposes.

Regarding material endeavor, however, he must look at the Shulchan which is on his right--the side of strength, conviction and veracity. There may be no covert motives in earning a living. We do what we must in order to sustain ourselves for a higher purpose, service of Hashem.

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