

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON VAYAKHEL - 5760

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From: Rabbi Yissocher Frand[SMTP:ryfrand@torah.org]  
"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayakhel -  
Shabbos -- Commemoration Of Creation And G-d's Involvement In  
History

In Parshas Vayakhel, the Torah mentions the laws of Shabbos: "Six days you shall do work, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for G-d..." [Shmos 35:2]

The 39 categories of labor that are prohibited on Shabbos are derived from the labors that were needed in the Mishkan. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that the 39 categories of work represent man's mastery over the physical world. Therefore, by resting on Shabbos, I am making the statement that there is a greater Master over this physical world than myself.

If by working six days, I proclaim my mastery over the physical world, then by resting on the seventh day, I am saying "but there is a greater Master over the physical world, and that is HaShem [G-d]". Therefore, observing the Shabbos is giving testimony that we believe in HaShem's creation of the world.

This works well for 38 of the 39 categories of work. However there is one type of forbidden work that does not seem to fit in with this philosophical framework. The prohibition of carrying does not seem to show mastery over anything. The object remains the same as it was before. One has not shown mastery over anything by transporting an object between a private domain and a public domain or within a public domain. Carrying seems to be the exception to the rule.

The prophet Yirmiyahu seems to confirm this [Yirmiyahu 17:19-27] by repeatedly distinguishing between "performing labor" and "carrying burdens out of your houses" when bemoaning the lack of Shabbos observance in Yerushalayim [Jerusalem].

If the 38 labors represent man's mastery over the world, what is the philosophical implication of the labor of carrying?

Rav Hirsch says that 'Carrying' represents social interaction -- taking from the private domain into the community and taking from the community into the private domain. This is the social interaction of human beings.

The sum total of all human social interactions can be called 'history'. When I refrain from carrying on Shabbos, I am making the statement that not only is G-d Master over the physical world, but G-d is Master over social interaction. G-d is Master over history.

This is what Yirmiyahu told the Jews of Yerushalayim:

"If you refrain from carrying..." (Meaning: If you recognize G-d's mastery over history...) "...then I will make My Divine Providence (Hashgocha Protis) felt and Yerushalayim will have fame and glory." "However if you refuse to listen to Me and you do carry on Shabbos... (Meaning: If you refuse to acknowledge G-d's place in history), the result will be that I will remove myself from history and, (Rachmana l'tzlan) Yerushalayim will be destroyed."

This, says Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, is what we say in the Shabbos Kiddush. Shabbos is "in commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt" and it is "in commemoration of the Act of Creation". By abstaining from 38 types of labor, we acknowledge that Shabbos is in commemoration of the Act of Creation. By refraining from carrying (the 39th category of labor), we acknowledge the Exodus from Egypt, which represents the Hand of HaShem in the history of human beings.

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[From Vayakhel Pekudei of last year]

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Rav Herschel Schachter

Mitzvot Le-Dorot and Hora'ot Sha'ah

In this week's Torah-portions we learn that the Jews constructed the Mishkan and prepared the bigdei kehunah. Although in both cases the Jews followed the directions they had been given, the Torah stresses at every stage in the preparation of the bigdei kehunah that the work was done "ka'asher tzivah Hashem et Moshe" -- "just as Hashem commanded Moshe" (see Ramban 37:8, 38:22). Why would the Torah stress the fact that the Jews obeyed their orders only regarding the bigdei kehunah? Why not include the phrase by the construction of the Mishkan as well? To answer this question R. Velvel Soloveichick explained that the verb "tzivah" is a halachic term; whenever it appears in the Torah it denotes the presence of a mitzvah le-dorot (an obligation that is binding throughout the generations), as opposed to hora'at sha'ah (an obligation that was binding only for a limited time). This distinction between perpetual mitzvot and temporary obligations was noted by tana'im in the Sifra and was quoted by Rashi (Vayikra 6:1); the Rambam also adopted this as a criterion for inclusion in his Sefer ha-Mitzvot (Shores 3). For this reason the Torah only used the phrase "ka'asher tzivah Hashem et Moshe" regarding the bigdei kehunah, whose specifications would never change. It would be inappropriate for the Torah to use the term "tzivah" when referring to the details of the Mishkan, whose boards and curtains would later be superseded by the stones of the Beit ha-Mikdash. The distinction between mitzvot le-dorot and hora'ot sha'ah should not be limited to the realm of biblical exegesis. It is relevant today as well, particularly in the area of "ma'aseh rav" (attempting to determine current policy based on the practices and recorded opinions of our Rabbeim). Developing a p'sak requires careful analysis of a given case's details, so that the recorded p'sak of a rav may not be applicable to other cases in which the details are different. Sometimes even the actions of a rav must be considered hora'ot sha'ah, and therefore inapplicable to the world today. The great care that must be exercised when drawing conclusions from the actions of a rav is stressed by the Talmud itself. The Talmud (Chullin 6b) relates that when Rabbi heard that R. Meir ate fruit grown in the town of Beit She'an without taking t'rumot u-ma'asrot, Rabbi followed this "ma'aseh rav" and ruled that Beit She'an should not be considered part of the Land of Israel (produce grown outside Israel does not require tithing). But he only lent such weight to R. Meir's reported actions because they were attested to by R. Yehoshua ben Zeruz, a torah scholar in his own right, and brother-in-law of R. Meir. Rabbi was sure that R. Yehoshua ben Zeruz would have understood properly what he had seen R. Meir practice, and so he relied on R. Yehoshua's reports in determining the halachah. If R. Meir's actions had been reported by a person of lesser stature, Rabbi would have had to be concerned that important details of the situation had been overlooked, or that R. Meir's actions could only be considered a hora'at sha'ah. The distinction between mitzvot le-dorot and hora'ot sha'ah is not the only one recognized by halachah; we must also distinguish between mitzvot possessing different levels of holiness. When a yom tov falls on a Sunday, for example, we recite the blessing "ha-mavdil bein kodesh

le-kodesh," to distinguish between the higher holiness of Shabbat and the lower holiness of the arriving yom tov. In fact, there is a hierarchy of importance which encompasses all the mitzvot and distinguishes between different levels of holiness among them. Just as we must know which mitzvot were given le-dorot and which were only intended le-sha'ah, so too we must know today which mitzvot have priority over others, which are the rule and which are the exceptions to the rule. It is clear that words and ideas take on new meanings when set forth in different arrangements. The philosopher Blaise Pascal, for example, wrote that although each of his individual ideas may have appeared in the writings of earlier philosophers, the arrangement in which he presented them created his unique philosophy (Thoughts 1:22). Similarly, although all poets use words from the dictionary, no one would argue that therefore all poems mean the same thing. The same is true of mitzvot: to interfere with the hierarchy of mitzvot is to change the mitzvot themselves, and to depart from the established values of Judaism.

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From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@virtual.co.il]  
\* TORAH WEEKLY \* Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshat Vayakhel INSIGHTS  
The Flour Of Knowledge  
"He made the Menorah... its cups, its knobs and its flowers..."  
(37:17)

When describing the menorah's decorations, the Torah never varies from the order "its cups, its knobs and its flowers." It never starts by talking about its flowers first. Why?

The human mind has three stages of development. In our youth, we spend most of our mental energy assimilating new information. The mind of a child starts off as an empty page. Until he can fill it with information, he cannot make intelligent assessments. His memory-banks must be full of information like a cup whose whole essence is to contain. The cups of the menorah represent this idea.

Then comes the second stage. A stage where we go inside ourselves. We use the power of the mind to detach itself from the outside world in order to process the information that we have gathered. To think. This is represented by the menorah's round knobs, symbolizing the mind separating itself from the outside to process what it has already imbibed. The word concentrate in English has this implication: We concentrate -- we encircle ourselves in thought, with thought, and detach from the outer world.

However, this stage can only take place after we have amassed much information. As King Solomon says in Proverbs: "Go to the ant, lazy one!" Like an ant, first you have to gather information, only then can you extrapolate. This is the explanation of the saying in Ethics of the Fathers, "If there's no flour, there's no Torah." If you don't possess a lot of information, the flour of knowledge, you will have very little to grind. And what you do grind will be of poor quality.

The last stage is when the mind "flowers." It produces its own ideas and novellae. Just as the flower is something new and unexpected that emerges from beneath the ground, so too a new idea seems to come from out of the blue. However, in reality, its "newness" can only result from the hidden processes in the "under-ground" of thought.

The menorah represents man's obligation to spread the light of supernal wisdom, the Torah, beyond himself. This can only be done in the proper order: The cup, the button, and then the flower.

Sources: \* Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Mordechai Dolinski, Rabbi Noach Orloweck

HAFTARAH: Melachim II 12: 1-17

Jealousy, lust and pride: According to our Sages, all of our mistakes and sins can be categorized under these three headings. This week we

read Parshat Shekalim, the first of four special readings leading up to Pesach. These readings represent the spiritual cleansing that must take place in the heart of every Jew to become worthy of the exodus from Egypt. We must rid ourselves of jealousy, lust and pride before we can become worthy of the title "Am Kodosh" G-d's holy nation.

The parsha of shekalim contains the formulation for the correction of jealousy. The jealousy of Joseph's brothers led them to sell him for twenty silver pieces. The correction for this sin is contained in the designation of the half shekel given to the Temple.

Unlike the other donations to the Temple, regarding the half shekel the Torah commands us that "the rich man may not give more, nor the poor man less." Thus the total equality of every Jew is ensured and the possibility of jealousy is erased.

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From:Calendar[SMTP:Calendar@Aish.edu] Subject: Aish Purim Series - The Four Parsha  
"FOUR PARSHAS"  
by Rabbi Shraga Simmons

The Sages instituted four special Torah readings on four different Shabbat's during the Purim season. These readings are read as the Maftir portion in the synagogue on Shabbat morning, immediately following the weekly parsha.

1. PARSHAT SHEKALIM -- MARCH 4, 2000  
Exodus 30:11-16 is read in commemoration of the Half Shekel which every Jew brought during the month of Adar, to pay for the public offerings in the Holy Temple.

This portion is read on the Shabbat preceding Rosh Chodesh Adar (or Adar II in a leap year). If Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbat itself, then that Shabbat is Parshat Shekalim.

What is the connection between the Half Shekel and Purim? When Haman proposed to Achashverosh the annihilation of the Jews, he offered to pay 10,000 "kikars" for the right to do so (Esther 3:9). Since one kitar equals 3,000 shekels, Haman was in fact putting a price tag of 300,000 shekels on the Jews.

The Vilna Gaon explains the connection between the Half Shekel donation and Haman's decree: Since there are 600,000 main souls in the Jewish nation (see Numbers 2:32), each Jew giving a Half Shekel totals 300,000 shekels -- precisely the amount offered by Haman.

2. PARSHAT ZACHOR -- MARCH 18, 2000  
The Shabbat immediately preceding Purim is called Shabbat Zachor. The portion of Amalek (Deut. 25:17-19) is read, since Haman was a descendant of Agog, King of Amalek.

One should be very careful to listen to all the words, since most halachic authorities consider it a Torah-level mitzvah to hear this portion once each year.

"Zachor" means to remember, and the Torah commands us to "remember what Amalek did to you on your way out of Egypt" (Deut. 25:17). The Sages explain that the definition of "remembering" is to speak the matter aloud at least once a year.

Since this is not considered a time-related mitzvah, women are obligated to hear the reading as well.

If one accidentally missed Parshat Zachor, the obligation may be fulfilled by listening to the Torah reading on Purim itself, or to the weekly reading of Parshat Ki Tetzei (and according to many authorities, Parshat Beshalach as well).

You will notice that the reader repeats the word "zaicher" and

"zecher" in the last verse, since there are two different opinions as to how that word is pronounced. This stresses the importance of hearing every word correctly.

3. PARSHAT PARAH -- MARCH 25, 2000

Parshat Parah (Numbers 19:1-22) is read on the Shabbat following Purim. These verses deal with the Red Heifer used in the spiritual purification process at the time of the Holy Temple. This issue is important at this season of the year, since in looking forward to Passover, every Jew is careful to maintain spiritual purity in order to partake in the holiday offerings.

Many authorities hold that this reading is a Torah precept. 4.

SHABBAT HACHODESH -- APRIL 1, 2000

Finally, on the Shabbat preceding Rosh Chodesh Nissan, we read the special Maftir from Exodus 12:1-20. These verses contain the commandment to make Nissan the head of all months. This was the first mitzvah given to the Jewish people while still in Egypt.

By declaring the new month, the Jewish people have the ability and responsibility to sanctify life and the passage of time.

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From: Yated USA[SMTP:yated-usa@ttec.com]

Peninim Ahl HaTorah: Parshas Vayakhel  
by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

These are the things that Hashem has commanded, to do them 6 on six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy. (35:1,2)

The Torah introduces the laws regarding the building of the Mishkan with an admonition to observe Shabbos. Rashi notes the juxtaposition of these laws and infers that building the Mishkan does not override the observance of Shabbos. Abarbanel explains that since building the Mishkan is a symbol of the strong bond that exists between Hashem and Klal Yisrael, one might think that it should take precedence over everything, even Shabbos. After all, action is a positive expression of our love and commitment to Hashem. Should it not have preeminence over the observance of Shabbos, which represents a cessation from action? Specifically, in response to this line of thinking, the Torah emphasizes the laws of Shabbos in connection with the construction of the Mishkan, in order to teach us that Shabbos takes precedence over the building of the Mishkan. Horav Eli Munk, zl, gives two reasons for the predominance of Shabbos over the building of the Mishkan. Firstly, the Mishkan and its successor, the Bais Hamikdash, would one day disappear. Shabbos, on the other hand, is a mitzvah which was to last forever. Its observance would ensure that the loss of the Mishkan and the Bais Hamikdash would not affect Klal Yisrael's relationship with Hashem. Structures are temporary; mitzvos are eternal. To paraphrase Horav Munk, "More than the Jews have kept Shabbos, Shabbos has kept the Jews." We must realize that non-observance of this critical mitzvah can evoke grave consequences in our relationship with Hashem. A second reason for the prioritization of Shabbos over the Mishkan is based on a comparison between the concepts of time and space. Hashem sanctified the seventh day of Creation, making Shabbos the symbol of holiness in the dimension of time. In a similar manner, the Mishkan serves as the representative of holiness for the dimension of space. Kedushas ha'zman, sanctification of time, takes precedence over kedushas ha'makom, sanctification of place, precisely because Hashem initiated the concept of time after the seventh day. Since man fashioned the Mishkan, however, it demonstrates man's ability to create holy places which Hashem consecrates. The holiness of time is inherent in

Creation, while the consecration of space is not. Man can attain perfection within the dimension of time by using the hours and minutes that are allotted to him for spiritual purposes. Such opportunity does not exist in the spatial dimension. Holiness is not increased by vanquishing space or increasing one's possessions in quantity or quality. Our function as Jews does not depend on certain fixed points on earth, but rather in the manner in which we serve Hashem during the specific times that have been established for us. The dimension of space has the flexibility to allow changes to take place. Time does not have this characteristic. It is eternally fixed. We infer from the prohibition against desecrating Shabbos for the sake of building the Mishkan that the sanctity of time has greater significance than the sanctity of space.

Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Bnei Yisrael. (35:1)

Moshe Rabbeinu gathered together the entire nation for the specific purpose of instructing them regarding the building of the Mishkan. Horav Baruch Sorotzkin, zl, observes that the power of certain mitzvos is catalyzed by their acceptance and performance by the tzibbur, entire community. There are other mitzvos that attain validity even if only one person observes and fulfills them. The mitzvah of building the Mishkan, the place where the Shechinah will repose, the source of Klal Yisrael's kedushah and taharah, holiness and purity, is one that must involve the entire Jewish People. No individual, regardless of his ability to achieve even the loftiest degree of sanctity, can alone create a place of hashroas ha'Shechinah, a place in which the Shechinah rests. It must be a communal endeavor in which every individual takes part, each adding his own component of kedushah. Horav Sorotzkin supplements this with the notion that in order for all of Klal Yisrael to receive spiritual influence from the Mishkan, each individual must sense that he has a share in it. He must believe that he is one of its builders and that he is as much a participant in the building of the Mishkan as is everybody else. Hence, even the poorest Jew was instructed to contribute towards the building of the Mishkan. This act engendered within him the feeling that the Mishkan was the source of Divine light for all people.

Every man and woman whose heart motivated them to bring for any of the work6 the Bnei Yisrael brought a free-willed offering to Hashem. (35:29) If we read the text carefully, we note a redundancy. If "every man and woman" contributed towards the Mishkan, why is it necessary to reiterate that "Bnei Yisrael brought a free-willed offering"? Are not the "men and women" included in "Bnei Yisrael"? Horav Mordechai Rogov, zl, observes that many individuals who support Torah institutions and sustain those in need have themselves been educated in Torah institutions which stress the value of tzedakah. People contribute to those organizations with which they identify. When they see the importance of an institution or an endeavor, they support it. One who has been the recipient of a Torah education or has been sensitized to the importance of supporting Torah-oriented endeavors, will do so-because of the education he has received. Consequently, those who support a Torah institution are actually accomplishing two things. First, they are credited for sustaining the institution. Second, they are the catalysts for the students who will one day become themselves Torah supporters as a result of the education that they have received. The philanthropist is a link in the chain of Torah support. Through his contribution, he helps create the next generation of Torah supporters. This is the hidden message of the pasuk. The contribution of the "men and women" who supported the Mishkan was not motivated by a sudden decision. Who was responsible for engendering the positive feeling for Torah support that brought out these "men and women"? Who motivated them to rise to the occasion and support the Mishkan? The members of "Bnei Yisrael" who had previously contributed catalyzed the next generation's outpouring of support. We must remember that when we support a Torah institution, we are preparing the future generation of Jews who will

maintain the legacy of Torah.

From: listmaster@jencom.com[SMTP:listmaster@jencom.com]  
Subject: PENINIM ON THE TORAH  
by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

All the women whose hearts inspired them with wisdom spun the goat hair. (35:26)

They spun the wool while it was still attached to the animal. This is certainly a remarkable craft, but what benefit does it derive? Obviously, there was a purpose in performing this extraordinary feat: What was it? Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita, suggests a practical application for spinning the wool in this manner. Everything in the Mishkan must be tahor, ritually clean/pure. The women went to extreme lengths to see to it that the thread would remain tahor until it was actually incorporated into the curtains of the Mishkan. According to halachah, a living animal is not mekabel tumah, never becomes ritually contaminated. Therefore, the women spun the wool while it was still attached to the animal to prevent it from becoming tamei.

From a remark made by the Rambam in Hilchos Tumaas Meis 1:13, we note that this was unnecessary. The Mishnah details the obvious precautions taken in preparing the Parah Adumah and mixing it with the "cleansing water" to be sprinkled upon one who was tamei tumaas meis, had been in contact with a corpse. Since everyone involved with the process was to be tahor, the children who would draw the water that was ultimately mixed with the ashes were raised to be tahor from birth. Everybody else would undergo the seven-day purification process necessary for one who comes into contact with a corpse. Regardless of these unusual measures, the Rambam adds that while we see it is possible to arrange to have people free of tumaas meis, we should take every precaution to keep them as far as possible from actual contact with the ashes. The Rambam concludes that in reality there is no difference between one who has never become tamei and one who had been tamei and became tahor. In fact, the individual who is sprinkled with the tahor water achieves a special distinction of purity as evidenced by the Torah's proclamation of his pure status.

Accordingly, one who becomes tahor is actually greater than one who has never been impure. Even if a thread would become tamei, it could be cleansed, rendering it even more appropriate for use in the Mishkan. We return to our original question: What was accomplished by choosing to prepare the thread in this more difficult manner, while it was still attached to the goat's body?

In an alternative approach, Horav Bergman suggests the following: He cites the Talmud Bava Metziah 85b in which Rabbi Chiya extolled his method for assuring that Torah would never be forgotten from Klal Yisrael. He said, "What do I do? I go and sow flax and twist nets out of the flax that grows. I use these nets to trap deer. I slaughter the deer and feed the flesh to orphans and prepare Torah scrolls from their hides. I then write the five Chumashim on these scrolls. I go to those towns where there is no teacher for the children and teach five children the five Chumashim and six children the six orders of the Mishnah. I tell the children, 'Until I return, teach each other!' They teach each other, thereby ensuring that Torah will not be forgotten from Yisrael!"

Horav Aharon Kotler, zl, asked why Rabbi Chiya went to such lengths to prepare the scrolls personally. He explained that the best guarantee of success is to perform everything, every single detail, from start to finish l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven. He cites the Vilna Gaon who says that if a shul were to be built entirely l'shem Shomayim - each board, each brick, each nail and even the workmen's tools - then no one would entertain any inappropriate thoughts during davening. A building that is entirely built for the sake of Heaven retains an element of sanctity unlike anything else.

We now understand why the women made such an effort to spin the goats wool for the curtains of the Mishkan. The wool of a living animal

cannot become tamei as it grows. Tumah could creep in, however, once they began the actual work of making the curtains. These people were concerned that the holiest structure that had ever been built by man should not become defiled. To this end, the women undertook the preparation of these panels in the most strenuous manner. Carding, combing, washing and spinning the wool would be performed with utter devotion l'shem Shomayim. No extraneous ideas would be thought. There would be no opportunity for the evil inclination to attach to the project. These people had no training in this difficult and exacting craft, particularly not in doing it while the wool was attached to the animal. As the Ramban explains, "Their heart uplifted in Hashem's ways" and Hashem inspired them in the craft.

They had no one to guide them in their work - other than their "uplifted heart." As they turned to Hashem with absolute devotion, wisdom flowed from the Source of all wisdom. Suddenly, whatever Moshe asked of them, they could do. The Fountain of all wisdom and strength gave them the ability and the knowledge to execute the most arduous task.

This serves as a pedagogical lesson for us as we raise and educate our own children. If our goal is for them to be educated, G-d fearing, holy Jews -- and as observant Jews this should most certainly be our goal -- then we must focus on these things from the moment our children are born. Every aspect of their training should be executed al tahaaras ha'kodesh, from a totally pure and holy perspective. Only in this way can we anticipate the success of seeing them living lives of true devoutness. The training begins with the parents, who themselves must be unwavering in their commitment and devotion. A child responds to, and emulates, what he sees at home. We must make sure that what he sees is something we want him to mirror as he leaves the home.

Raising children is a most difficult task - not much different than spinning wool on a living goat's back. This is an almost impossible achievement if not for the Almighty's aid. As the people of that generation uplifted their hearts and turned to Hashem, so, too, should we seek Him out as we raise our children. To paraphrase Horav Chaim Soloveitchik, zl, in regard to raising children, "Even after applying all the pedagogical skills it is important to recite Tehillim mit treren, un treren mit Tehillim - Tehillim with tears, and tears with Tehillim." With this recipe, we may hope to achieve success.

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From: Shlomo Katz[SMTP:skatz@torah.org]  
Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz  
Vayakhel-Shekalim

After reading in the last three parashot about the command to build the mishkan/Tabernacle and its vessels, we read in this week's parashah of the actual construction. In all, observes R' Gedalyah Schorr z"l, there are seven parashot that discuss some aspect of the mishkan's construction. Likewise, we are taught that there are seven "Heavens."

The purpose of the mishkan was to be a "home" for Hashem. With each of these seven parashot, the Shechinah descended from one of the seven Heavens until it reached the mishkan.

We read in this parashah that Bnei Yisrael brought so many donations for the mishkan that Moshe had to say, "dai"/"Enough!" The gemara says similarly that when Hashem created the universe, it would have expanded indefinitely if He had not said, "dai"/"Enough!" (This is why one of His names is "Shakkai.") What does this mean?

R' Schorr explains that the act of creation involved Hashem's restricting His Light in order to make room for, i.e., to allow for the possibility of, a physical world. However, He struck a fine balance so

that it is still possible to find Him within the physical world. Had He not commanded the physical world to stop expanding, that balance would have been lost and there would be no possibility of man's recognizing G-d's Light.

In contrast to the creation of the physical world, which caused Hashem's presence to be hidden, Bnei Yisrael's construction of the mishkan caused Hashem's presence to be revealed in this world. Here too, however, there is a limit, and it was necessary to say "Enough!" Otherwise, Hashem's Light would overwhelm us. (Ohr Gedalyahu)

"Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem; everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it, as the portion of Hashem: gold, silver and copper . . ." (35:5)

Why does the phrase, "portion of/for Hashem," appear twice, and why does the verse say "for" one time and "of" the second time?

R' Baruch Yosef Sack z"l explains: On the verse (Mishlei 3:9), "Honor Hashem with your wealth," the Sages comment (via a play on the Hebrew word "honcha"/"your wealth"), "Honor Hashem with what He has given you." When we give charity, the money that we give is not ours, it is His. All that we give of our own is our good will.

This is the meaning of our verse: "Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem; everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it." The only thing that you give which is "from yourselves" is the fact that your hearts motivate you. Anything else you give is "the portion of Hashem: gold, silver and copper . . ." (Birkat Yosef)

"The nesi'im/leaders brought the shoham stones and the stones for the settings for the ephod and the breastplate." (35:27)

Rashi quotes the midrash: Why did the nesi'im bring the first sacrifices when the altar was dedicated (in Bemidbar, chapter 7), whereas they were not the first to contribute when the mishkan was built? The nesi'im said, "Let the people bring whatever they will bring for the construction of the mishkan and we will make up whatever is lacking." In the end, however, nothing was lacking (except these stones). Therefore, when the mishkan was dedicated, the nesi'im said, "This time, we will contribute first."

Rashi concludes: Because they acted lazily the first time, one letter was subtracted from their name, and the word "nesi'im" in this verse is missing a "yud."

Why, of all letters, a "yud"? R' Moshe Yechiel Epstein (the "Ozorover Rebbe" in New York beginning in 1926) observes that the number ten - the gematria of "yud" is ten - signifies a congregation. By not participating initially in the construction of the mishkan, the leaders separated themselves from the congregation and lost the letter "yud."

When the mishkan was dedicated, each of the nesi'im brought a set of sacrifices - one leader per day, for twelve days. The midrash says that on the day that each nasi brought his sacrifices, he made a party for all of his friends and relatives. Why? asks R' Epstein. This was each leader's way of re-entering the congregation from which he had separated himself at the time that the mishkan was built. (Be'er Moshe p. 1000)

**Parashat Shekalim** This week, as every year on the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh Adar (unless Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbat), we read Parashat Shekalim. In the so-called "Yotzer" prayer which some congregations recite on this Shabbat, we read: "You raised my head above all heads, and You caused my body to be raised above all bodies." (The word in parentheses is not in some versions.)

What does this mean? Also, asks R' Shalom Elchanan Jaffe z"l (St. Louis; 1890's), why is there a change from "You raised" in the first part of the stanza to "You caused . . . to be raised" in the second part? He explains:

Our Sages comment on the verse (Tehilim 139:5), "Back and front You created me," that man was both first and last in the process of

creation. If man is worthy, he is considered to be the "beginning" of creation, but if man is not worthy, he is considered to be the "end" of creation. How so? R' Jaffe explains that man's soul is the most important -- the "first" in importance -- of all creations, and a man who lives a life worthy of his holy soul is "first" in rank among G-d's creations. On the other hand, man's body is one of the grossest of the creations, and a man who places his body first, places himself "last" in creation.

However, man can elevate and purify his body. Indeed, Kabbalists teach that G-d created the whole world merely so that man would have an opportunity to improve himself. When man elevates himself he becomes the loftiest of all creations, and by creating a world where one can elevate himself, G-d has "raised [man's] head above all heads." The first "head" refers to each person, of which the head is the loftiest part, while the second "head" refers to everything else in the world that is lofty. When one elevates himself, his "head" is raised -- it becomes loftier -- than all "heads."

Because man's body contains a soul which is extremely holy, man effectively has a "head-start" toward elevating himself. This is alluded to in the phrase, "You raised my head above all heads." You, G-d, did it. Thereafter, man must work on his own, and the spiritual boost that he receives from G-d is more indirect. This is alluded to in the more indirect language, "You caused my body to be raised above all bodies."

How is this message relevant to the Shabbat of Parashat Shekalim? R' Jaffe explains:

The special Torah reading for this Shabbat commemorates the obligation to donate a half-shekel to the Bet Hamikdash. Why a half-shekel? The half-shekel symbolizes the fact that half of man (the soul) is already in heaven. All that man must do is elevate the other half (the body). (Sichah Sheleimah)

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From: rachrysl@netmedia.net.il [SMTP:rachrysl@netmedia.net.il]  
Subject: MIDEI SHABBOS by Rabbi Eliezer Chrysler

Parshas Vayakhel

Reflections on Parshas Shekolim Adapted from the Torah Temimah  
Why A Half?

There is a discussion in the Yerushalmi in Shekolim (2:3) as to why the Torah prescribed a half-shekel for the mitzvah of machtzis ha'shekel. Both opinions ascribe it to the fact that it came to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf; according to one, it was because they sinned at mid-day (half way through the day); according to the other, because they sinned after six hours - and half a shekel is the equivalent of six garmisin (a coin of that time). And a third opinion cited there (Rebbi Nechemyah quoting Rebbi Yochanan ben Zakai) ascribes it to the fact that they had violated the ten commandments. They therefore had to give half a shekel, the equivalent of ten geiroh (another coin of that time) towards the construction of the Mishkan, which came to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf.

Yet a fourth reason is given by Resh Lokish in the Medrash Tanchuma: because the ten brothers sold Yosef for twenty silver pieces, and each brother received one silver coin, which was the equivalent of half a shekel. (According to Resh Lakish, the half-shekel which was used to construct the silver sockets of the Mishkon (if not the entire Mishkon) came to atone for the sale of Yosef.)

The Half-Shekel and the Yam Suf

"All those who 'pass by the counting' from twenty years and onwards . . .". The Yerushalmi in Shekolim (1:3) extrapolates from the words "Kol ho'over" ('all who pass' which can also mean 'all who cross'), that whoever crossed the Yam-Suf was obligated to donate the half-shekel -

even Kohanim and Levi'im, who did not 'pass by the counting' (since it was Moshe who went to their tents to count them), nor were they counted from the age of twenty (but from thirty).

It's a Man's Mitzvah!

The Torah Temimah also uses this last d'roshoh to explain why the Yerushalmi there needs to preclude women from the mitzvah of machtzis ha'shekel (from the posuk "and each man shall give the ransom of his soul"). After all, he points out, the women were not counted (the main purpose of the half-shekel donation - nor, one may add, did they participate in the sin of the Golden Calf, for which the half-shekel atoned)? So why should it even be necessary to preclude them?

But they did cross the Yam Suf, which explains why.

But Not Today, it Isn't!

Regarding the minhag of giving a half coin before Purim, the Mogen Avrohom in Siman 694 questions the Hagohos Mordechai, who includes women and children in the obligation to participate, seeing as women and children were not obligated to participate in the original mitzvah.

The Torah Temimah suggests that, even though the current custom to give half a shekel before Purim is linked to the original donation of a half-shekel, from which women and children were exempt (because they were not counted), the real reason behind the donation before Purim is to commemorate the miracle of Purim, as the Gemoro in Megilah (13b) hints when it writes: 'Hashem, knowing full well that Homon was going to give Achashveirosh all those shekolim to destroy Yisroel, pre-empted that with the mitzvah of Machtzis ha'Shekel.'

Consequently, just as women and children are obliged to fulfill the other mitzvos of Purim, so too, must they fulfill this one.

Wot, No Fiery Shekel?

The Yerushalmi (6:4) also quotes Rebbi Meir, who learns from the posuk "This is what they shall give", that Hashem showed Moshe a half-shekel of fire. Rebbi Meir is of the opinion that since Hashem made a point of showing Moshe the coin of fire and saying to him "Like this you shall give!", one may never donate a coin worth less than the value of the half-shekel of those days.

The halochoh however, is not like Rebbi Meir, and one may donate the half-shekel of that time, even if it is worth less than the half-shekel of Moshe's time.

With this, we can resolve a difficulty posed by Tosfos in Menochos (29a). Tosfos comments on the B'raysa there, which lists three things that Moshe found difficult, and which therefore Hashem found necessary to point at with the finger (because by all of them the Torah writes "This ..." ["zeh"]: the Menorah, the New moon and the forbidden insects). Why, asks Tosfos, does the Tana not include the half-shekel (see also Rashi - Ki Siso 30:13)?

According to what we just wrote, explains the Torah Temimah, the kashya of Tosfos is easily resolved - because that is the opinion of Rebbi Meir, which is not the accepted one.

Thirteen or Twenty

The Rambam and the Ramban maintain that the obligation to donate the half shekel begins from the age of thirteen. True, the posuk here (30:14) gives the age as twenty, but that posuk refers to the half-shekel that they donated for the construction of the silver sockets. In the previous posuk, which refers to the half-shekel with which they purchased the sacrifices, this is not mentioned.

The Bartenura however (Shekolim 1:3), the Seifer ha'Chinuch and others give the starting age for the half-shekel donation as twenty, since the twenty-year age limit appears to pertain to the entire parshah (and this is also the opinion of the Gro).

Exempt From Musaf

The Torah Temimah quotes the Besomim Rosh, who exempts women from davening Musaf, because the chief source for tefilas Musaf is the Korban Musaf which was bought with the half-shekolim, which women did not donate. Based on that Besomim Rosh, he extrapolates

that, according to the opinion of the Bartenura that we just cited, (who maintains that anyone under twenty is exempt from donating the half-shekel), anyone under twenty is also exempt from davening Musaf. Moreover, even assuming that he is permitted to volunteer a tefilas Musaf, he will not be permitted to daven Musaf in the capacity of a Shli'ach Tzibur, because anyone who is not obligated to perform a mitzvah, cannot render yotze someone who is.

The Torah Temimah's comparison however, is questionable, on the basis of Chazal, who differentiate in a number of places, between a woman, who will never become obligated to perform a certain mitzvah, and a kotton, who will. It is therefore possible for a young man who has reached the age of bar-mitzvah to render the congregation yotze with the Tefilas Musaf, seeing as he will become obligated when he turns twenty, even though a woman cannot.

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From: Rabbi Jonathan Schwartz jschwartz@ymail.yu.edu Subject: Internet Chaburah -- Parshas VaYakel/Shekalim

Prologue: Sometimes, communication can be critical to success. Knowing exactly what one wants to say or write and doing it successfully, can make the difference between getting one's point across and creating a complete misunderstanding or worse. Toward the middle of this week's Parsha, we are told of a seemingly interesting call that appears to be misinterpreted by the people. The call went out to the people to stop their work and the people stopped bringing things to the Mishkan. In fact, the command was to cease with the work, why highlight the fact that the people stopped their donations? What about the Avoda that had been requested to stop?

Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlop ztl. (Mei Marom, V) notes the difference between the call and the reaction of the people. The zeal of Klal Yisroel to donate items for the Mishkan was so great that the financial contributions were finished immediately. There was enough to build with immediately after the opportunity to donate was begun. Once financial donations were complete, people began to request to donate their talents for the sake of the Mishkan. Eventually, this too, provided more of a supply of labor than the demand. Hence the call went out to the people to cease donating from themselves. However, while one can have enough financial reserves for a Mishkan, and enough labor, the zeal of the nation cannot be overloaded. Therefore, the request to stop doing for Meleches HaMishkan was taken by the people to mean, "stop bringing" not "stop caring". One can donate too many goods, and at times, too many services but not too much of himself. Luckily, the call was understood differently and the demand for work on the Mishkan was sufficient to meet the desires of the people who donated from themselves for the worthy cause.

Communications can be misinterpreted. When they are, gut wrenching pain can be caused. When people accidentally launch accusations based on false impressions, reputations and lives are at stake. ...