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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON VAYAKHEL PEKUDEI
PARSHAS HACHODESH - 5767

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Rav Soloveitchik ZT"L Notes (Volume 3)

Notice These are unapproved unedited notes [of R.Y.?] of classes given by Rav Soloveitchik. We do not know who wrote the notes. However we offer this to the world that maybe someone can get some use out of these notes. A member of the family has looked at the notes and said that look like the real thing . (Rav Soloveitchik did NOT write these notes.) [Thanks to David Isaac for typing these notes]

Lecture delivered by Rabbi Soloveitchik on Saturday night, March 24, 1979

"Vayakayl" "Vayakhal Moshe" -- And Moshe gathered the entire assembly of the children of Israel and said to them "These are the things which G-d commanded to be done." The first sentence of the Torah speaks "Aylah Hadvarim" - these are the things. Then it continues in the singular, "Six days shall you do your work and the seventh day shall be holy to you, the Sabbath of Sabbaths, etc." In the beginning, it speaks of Shabbos and the building of the "Mishkan". Once Moshe finishes discussing Shabbos then he tells of the other commandment - namely, the Mishkan. It is not often that the Torah should speak of 2 commandments in one sentence. Then it reverts to one matter - Shabbos - then gets down to the matter of the "Mishkan". Let us concentrate on the two expressions: "Ayala Hadvarim" (these are the things) - then (line 4) Zeh Hadavar (this is the thing). We conclude that there is a relationship - a link - a common denominator between Shabbos and the building of the Mishkan. This is not the only place where we find a similar combination. In parsha Ki Sisso after the story of the Mishkan we find chapter 31, line 10 (and onward). He finishes the final details of the Mishkan and immediately "Ach Es Shabbos Ai Tishmoru" -- (Howsoever, my Sabbaths you shall keep). Some link! Here we have the reverse - first Mishkan - then Shabbos. Especially do we find the word "Ach" - (howsoever), showing there is a connection. G-d began with one and then on to Shabbos. Moshe began with shabbos -- then to Mishkan. But G-d wanted both to be combined. There is a link, a tie between the two. Chazal asks, "Why does it say 'Ach'? -- "Don't get so excited to start building - not at the expense of Shabbos. Shabbos should not be overruled and discarded, therefore, "Ach". In sedra Kedoshim (Leviticus) chapter 19, line 30, we find "My Sabbaths you shall keep and my sanctuary you shall fear." Again, the common link! Finally, in sedra "Behar" (Leviticus, chapter 26, line 2) - again - "My Sabbath you shall keep and My sanctuary you shall fear."

There is one answer - a simple one. "Shabbos is a sanctuary -- a Bas Hamikdosh -- just as the Mishkan. You find two aspects - the physical sanctuary (the Bas Hamikdosh) and the Shabbos which is similar but the only difference is its spacial dimension. The Mishkan consists of the two tangible frames. Thus G-d wants the Jew to establish a spacial structure and a time structure. The Jew who is ready to accept the shabbos and light the candles of Shabbos finds himself in the same position as the Jew of 2000 years ago who got ready to enter the Sanctuary. You find references which are almost identical. It is a place where G-d resides. G-d resides in the midst of Knesses Yisroel. On Har Habais (Temple Mount) is the residence of the Alm-ghty. It is not the history but the sanctity of the place. The Bais Hamikdosh is bais Hashem. It is rooted in the fact that G-d resides in the midst of the people. In the Bais Hamikdosh, G-d revealed to the people that the infinity of G-d can squeeze itself into the finity - into "Bain Hakrulum" (the space between the two cherubim on the Holy Ark). This was Moshe's argument: "How can you do it?" The answer: "My intellect sees it differently. It I want, not even the universe can contain me. And if I want, I contract -- self-contraction. I leave infinity and set myself up in the little finite world. It is self-contraction in the one square cubit of th "Kapores". This is the Bais Hamikdosh. It depends on our behavior! On the one hand, infinity separates us; on the other hand, He is very close to us. What is the idea of Shabbos? It is the same idea! On Friday night, we have the "L'cho Dodi" prayer (Chassidim include K' Gavno) -- (Come my friend to meet the bride). It means that G-d pays us a visit. There is a difference between Shabbos and between Yom Tov. On Shabbos, G-d comes to us; on Yom Tov He declares, "Come to me." Therefore, when we say 'L'cho Dodi' it is the "Shchina" knocking on the door. Therefore, when we turn around to face the door we take a few steps to greet the "Shchina". If you are a gentleman as in olden times, you walk out to the edge of the field to greet the "Shchina". There are two versions of the custom of Rab Yonai. One says he used to turn and say "Bo-Chalo" and the other is that he'd walk to the edge of town. So, Shabbos is a holy day. It is G-d's presence, the "Shchina" -- the "kedusha" come to us. That is why the Torah combines in four places the "Kedushah" of Shabbos and the Sanctuary. It is a "Mayreh" -- not fear but reverence and this reverence is by abstinence from work. There is, however, one distinction between Shabbos and the Bais Hamikdosh. Even though the "Mikdash" is destroyed, the sanctity is always there because the Shchina cannot be destroyed. It is always there. In "Shir Hashirim" (2nd chapter) it reads "Mashgiach Min Hachalonus" -- (He peers down through the windows). This is in reference to Shabbos. But there is a difference. The "Shchina" of Bais Hamikdosh is transcendental. We find it at the very end of sedra Pekuday. As soon as the Mishkan was completed, a cloud of glory filled the Mishkan -- a cloud by day and a fire by night. Also, Moshe could not enter. This was the Shchina. It was during their travels a perpetual light, an emotional experience. Thus, in the bais Hamikdosh it was outside of nature. It was outside the law of causality. This was a miracle; it was not justified by the law of causality. It was an experience above nature.

On Shabbos, what does the Shchina exist of? Shabbos is indicative of the presence of G-d on a natural level - the beauty of being able to operate, to think, to do. This is the presence of G-d. Thus, there are two ways -- when G-d defies the causal order and when on the contrary G-d reveals Himself through the causal order. The latter is exemplified by the blue sky, the flowering bush, everything we know -- the beauties of life. It happens every day but we can enjoy it, experience it better on Shabbos. The coolness of rain, the heat of day -- it is the extra awareness of the day of Shabbos. Where is it? Right in our house. This is why we say "Bo-i Chala" - (Come to us). Chazal says that G-d does not like to overrule natural cause. But when G-d sent Moshe on his mission to Mitzraim, He said "Roah Ro-Isi" - I have indeed seen the pain and I come down to save. Here was an interruption of causal order for an emergency. But G-d does not wish to interrupt the cosmic order.

When G-d sees that man cannot possibly repent, rather than to destroy, G-d employs the method "M'aale Min Hataveh" - above the law of the ordinary. He overrules the natural. After all, it was G-d who established natural order.

G-d said, "Moshe, I know it is unpleasant for you -- your experience with the two men Dothan and Aviram. It is degrading for me to punish Egypt with water - plagues. But I must save. If I can accept degradation, you must also. Also, we find at "Dor Haflogah" (tower of Babel era) "Let us go down." It is degrading but I am ready to accept insult. The "Malochim" - angels - are not ready to accept insult. Therefore, Shabbos and Hamkdosh are natural and supernatural Shchina. On Shabbos, we see G-d in every niche of the universe. Thus, when He gave Moshe the blueprint for the Mishkan we find "Ach". It (the Mishkan) is not the most important one. We have survived 1900 years without the Bais Hamikdosh. We have survived without it but could never have survived without the Shabbos.

Thus, the words of G-d to Moshe fit beautifully. Tell them, "Their survival is not tied up with the Mishkan! Yes, it is beautiful - they experience Me, they feel Me -- it is important -- but "Ach" -- howbeit . Sine qua non -- not without Shabbos. Shabbos is stronger! We hope for both.

Now, "Ze Hadavar" -- let us speak about the Mishkan. Rashi says that Moshe told them about the construction the day following Yom Kippur. Moshe had just returned with the exciting news of forgiveness. It is nice but how does Rashi know it was the day following Yom Kippur? Why are we told that Moshe assembled them? Undoubtedly, he did so many times! Why did he assemble them instead of telling them individually? There is a strange feature. If a Jew does sin there are two ways: a) publicly - defying public opinion by eating trefa in public; b) hidden in his home -- out of public sight!

The "Ganev" (thief) should be punished worse than the "Gazlen" (man of violence). The "Gazlen" by his public action leaves no doubt about his intentions. The "Ganev" gives a good impression of himself to others but is insincere. Thus, rules Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai.

But Shabbos is the reverse. One who sins in the house is not an apostate. But one who sins in the street commits a form of apostasy. Here, in public, it is worse than privacy. Arrogance is worse than hypocrisy. There were those who rode on a horse (Elisha Ben Avavah) in public on Shabbos and Yom Kippur to defy public opinion. Shabbos should not result in apostasy. If I observe I have a "mitzvah"; if not I commit an "Avayrah". But Shabbos had another aspect. Shabbos gives testimony that G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. The Jew who observes gives testimony that G-d created and G-d is master of the world. Who is the court? It is the universe itself.

Therefore, there is a double sin. Writing as much as two letters of the alphabet per se is a desecration. Secondly, I become a false witness. He purges himself and therefore is equated to "Avodah Zorah" idol worship. He denies the mastery of G-d by denying the creation of the world. It is arrogance. Now we understand why "Vayakayl" -- he gathered all the people. Elazar the Kohan, Aaron -- could have taught the people the 39 prohibitions of Shabbos. But Moshe assembled them to teach the great aspect that the Jew is charged to act as a witness. It is his mission. Therefore, it reads "Vayakayl Moshe Es Kol Hadas" -- not "haklal". "Haklal" would mean the "mob", but Hadas is the historical community - commensurate with "Adas" - witnesses -- the aristocracy of Israel. The aristocrat is one who is capable of giving testimony -- the man who remembers. He assembled them all confined them into an assembly of witnesses. A true witness is one who observes; an apostate is one who doesn't. Therefore, Rashi's deduction that it come the very day after Yom Kippur, the time when they were all pure because they had just been forgiven and were capable and worthy of being called "true witnesses" to the mastery of the Alm-ghty.

Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

Sir Jonathan Sacks

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth [From several years ago 5764]

<http://www.chief Rabbi.org/tt-index.html>

Vayakhel- Pekudei - Encampments and Journeys

RIGHT AT THE END OF THE BOOK OF SHEMOT, there is a textual difficulty so slight that it is easy to miss, yet - as interpreted by Rashi - it contains one of the great clues as to the nature of Jewish identity: moving testimony to the unique challenge of being a Jew.

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

And Moses finished [vayechal] the work [hamelakhah]. And G-d finished [vayechal] on the seventh day the work [melakhto] which He had done. The next verse states the result:

Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. The meaning is both clear and revolutionary. The creation of the sanctuary by the Israelites is intended to represent a human parallel to the Divine creation of the universe. In making the world, G-d created a home for mankind. In making the Tabernacle, mankind created a home for G-d.

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

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

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

When the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, the Israelites went onward in all their journeys, but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out until the day it lifted. 38 So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journeys. There is a small but significant difference between the two instances of the phrase bechol mas'ehem, "in all their journeys." In the first instance the words are to be taken literally. When the cloud lifted and moved on ahead, the Israelites knew they were about to travel. However in the second instance they cannot be taken literally. The

cloud was not over the Tabernacle in all their journeys. On the contrary: it was there only when they stopped travelling and instead pitched camp. During the journeys the cloud went on ahead.

Noting this, Rashi makes the following comment:

A place where they encamped is also called massa, "a journey" . . . Because from the place of encampment they always set out again on a new journey, therefore they are all called "journeys." The point is linguistic, but the message is anything but. Rashi has encapsulated in a few brief words - "a place where they encamped is also called a journey" - the existential truth at the heart of Jewish identity. So long as we have not yet reached our destination, even a place of rest is still called a journey - because we know we are not here for ever. There is a way still to go. In the words of the poet Robert Frost,

The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep. And miles to go before I sleep. To be a Jew is to travel, and to know that here where we are is a mere resting place, not yet a home. It is defined not by the fact that we are here, but by the knowledge that eventually - after a day, a week, a year, a century, sometimes even a millennium - we will have to move on. Thus, the portable Tabernacle, even more than the Temple in Jerusalem, became the symbol of Jewish life.

Why so? Because the G-ds of the ancient world were gods of a place: Sumeria, Memphis, Moab, Edom. They had a specific domain. Theology was linked to geography. Here, in this holy place, made magnificent by ziggurat or temple, the gods of the tribe or the state ruled and exercised power over the city or the empire. When Pharaoh says to Moses: "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go" he means - here, I am the sovereign power. Egypt has its own gods. Within its boundaries, they alone rule, and they have delegated that power to me, their earthly representative. There may indeed be a G-d of Israel, but his power and authority do not extend to Egypt. Divine sovereignty is like political sovereignty. It has borders. It has spatial location. It is bounded by a place on the map.

With Israel an old-new idea (it goes back, according to the Torah, to Adam and Cain, Abraham and Jacob, all of whom suffered exile) is reborn: that G-d, being everywhere, can be found anywhere. He is what Morris Berman calls the "wandering G-d." Just as in the desert His cloud of glory accompanied the Israelites on their long and meandering journey, so - said the rabbis - "when Israel went into exile, the Divine presence went with them." G-d cannot be confined to a specific place. Even in Israel, His presence among the people depended on their obedience to His word. Hence there is no such thing as physical security, the certain knowledge that here-I-am-and-here-I-stay. As David said in Psalm 30:

When I felt secure, I said, "I will never be shaken." . . . but when You hid Your face, I was dismayed. Security belongs not to place but to person, not to a physical space on the surface of the earth but to a spiritual space in the human heart.

If anything is responsible for the unparalleled strength of Jewish identity during the long centuries in which they were scattered throughout the world, a minority everywhere, it is this - the concept to which Jews and Judaism gave the name galut, exile. Unique among nations in the ancient or modern world, with few exceptions they neither converted to the dominant faith nor assimilated to the prevailing culture. The sole reason was that they never mistook a particular place for home, temporary location for ultimate destination. "Now we are here," they said at the beginning of the seder service, "but next year, in the land of Israel."

In Jewish law (Yoreh Deah 286: 22) 7, one who hires a house outside Israel is obliged to affix a mezuzah only after thirty days. Until then it is not yet regarded as a dwelling-place. Only after thirty days does it become, de facto, home. In Israel, however, one who hires a house is immediately obligated mishum yishuv erez Yisrael, "because of the command to settle Israel." Outside Israel Jewish life is a way, a path, a route. Even an encampment, a place of rest, is still called a journey.

There is a marvellous scene in the 19th chapter of the First Book of Kings. The aged Elijah encounters G-d on the mountain, in the "still small voice" that follows the wind, the earthquake and the fire. G-d tells him that he must appoint Elisha as his successor. He does so:

So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother good-by," he said, "and then I will come with you." "Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?" So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the ploughing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant. Elisha was not expecting the call. Yet without delay, he abandons everything to follow Elijah. Almost as if terrified at the sheer starkness of the demand he is making of the younger man, Elijah seems to change his mind at the last moment: "Go back. What have I done to you?" (There is an echo here of an earlier passage in which Naomi tries to persuade Ruth not to follow her: "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home . . . Return home, my daughters, why would you come with me?") In both cases, Ruth and Elisha prove their calling by refusing to be dissuaded. At the end of his essay, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik gives a deeply moving analysis of the encounter:

Elisha was a typical representative of the majestic community. He was the son of a prosperous farmer, a man of property, whose interests were centred around this-worldly, material goods such as crops, livestock, and market prices . . . What did this man of majesty have in common with Elijah, the solitary covenantal prophet, the champion of G-d, the adversary of Kings, who walked as a stranger through the bustling cities of Shomron . . . What bond could exist between a complacent farmer who enjoyed his homestead and the man in the hairy dress who came from nowhere and to finally disappeared under a veil of mystery? [Yet] he bade farewell to father and mother and departed from their home for good. Like his master, he became homeless. Like his ancestor Jacob he became a "straying Aramean" who took defeat and humiliation with charity and gratitude . . . Elisha was indeed lonely, but in his loneliness he met the Lonely One and discovered the singular covenantal confrontation of solitary man and G-d who abides in the recesses of transcendental solitude.

That scene was repeated time and again during the years 1948-51 when one after another of the Jewish communities in Arab lands - the Maghreb, Iraq, Yemen - said goodbye to homes they had lived in for centuries and left for Israel. In 1990, the Dalai Lama, who had lived in exile from Tibet since 1951, invited a group of Jewish scholars to visit him in North India. Realising that he and his followers might have to spend many years before they were allowed back, he had pondered the question, "How does a way of life sustain itself far from home?" He realised that one group above all others had faced and solved that problem: the Jews. So he turned to them for advice (the story is told in Roger Kamenetz' book, *The Jew in the Lotus*).

Whether the Jewish answer - which has to do with faith in the G-d of history - is applicable to Buddhism is a moot point, but the encounter was fascinating none the less, because it showed that even the Dalai Lama, leader of a group far removed from Judaism, recognised that there is something unparalleled in the Jewish capacity to stay faithful to the terms of its existence despite dispersion, never losing faith that one day the exiles would return to their land.

How and why it happened is contained in those simple words of Rashi at the end of Shemot. Even when at rest, Jews knew that they would one day have to uproot their tents, dismantle the Tabernacle, and move on. "Even an encampment is called a journey." A people that never stops travelling is one that never grows old or stale or complacent. It may live in the here-and-now, but it is always conscious of the distant past and the still-beckoning future. "But I have promises to keep / and miles to go before I sleep."

From: ravfrand-owner@torah.org on behalf of **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: Friday, March 24, 2006 3:33 PM To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei -

The Key To Success Is Initiative

Parshas Vayakhel contains a verse describing the people who came forth in the construction of the Tabernacle: "Every man whose heart inspired him (asher nesa'o leebo) came and everyone whose spirit motivated him brought the portion of Hashem for the work of the Tent of Meeting, for all its labor and for the sacred vestments." [Shmos 35:21]

The Ramban notes that the Mishkan was an impressive structure. However, when Moshe Rabbeinu called forth the people to come participate in its construction, he was taking a big chance. The people were not trained architects or builders. Most of these people did not know the difference between a hammer and a screwdriver. However, the Ramban says that somehow the people found it within their nature to do what they were called upon to do.

The Ramban interprets the expression asher nesa'o leebo, literally as "whose heart lifted him up". They had neither the training nor the skill but they had the inspiration and daring and initiative that it took to get the job done. That is all it took to accomplish what needed to be accomplished. More than skill, a person needs ambition.

This Ramban is teaching us that the greatest key to success is not necessarily the training. It is the ambition and initiative to do something.

The Mirer Mashgiach, Rav Yeruchem writes similarly: "If one looks at the great people in the world, if one looks at those who have made financial fortunes – most, if not all such people achieved their greatness thanks to their tremendous drive and initiative." Rav Yeruchem further writes that the difference between the Rishonim [Medieval Jewish scholars] and us is not their IQ or intelligence. The difference is that they had a tremendous drive and sense of ambition to know all of Torah. That is what separates them from us!

That is the way it is in every endeavor in life. The people who have the guts and gumption to accomplish the lofty goals they set out for themselves are those who succeed.

Someone recently lent me a book about the Reichman family. In their heyday, the Reichmans were the biggest real estate development company in the history of the world. Many of us are aware of the tremendous generosity of the family – giving out millions and millions of dollars to Tzedaka and Torah causes.

How did they get started in the construction business? According to the book, they had a tile business – the Olympia Tile Company. They sold building material. One day, they decided they needed a bigger warehouse.

They went to several different general contractors and gave their requirements for building a new warehouse. The lowest bid that came back was \$120,000. Mr. Reichman thought to himself: "I bet that for \$120,000 I can build a warehouse myself. I bet I can build it cheaper."

At the time, he did not know the first thing about construction. He knew nothing about building. All he knew was that he believed in himself and he believed that he could build a warehouse that would meet his needs for less than \$120,000. So it was. He built it for \$70,000. He then said to himself, "You know – this is not a bad business." The Reichmans started building one story warehouses. From there they moved on to multi-story buildings. One thing led to another until they became the biggest real estate development company in the world. Why? Because "nesa-o leebo". It was because of initiative. "I'll try it! I can do it."

When Moshe asked for volunteers to build a Mishkan, people came forth willing to try and determined that they would succeed. Ambition. Initiative. Gall. These are the keys to success.

Ironically, Rav Yeruchem says, when Moshe Rabbeinu – for the best of reasons – contained his ambition, he was punished. Rav Yeruchem is referring to the incident by the burning bush. Moshe hid his face [Shmos

3:6]. According to Rav Yehoshua ben Korcha in the Medrash, Moshe was not acting properly at that moment. Had he not hid his face then, had he had a little more "chutzpah" and ambition at that moment, G-d would have revealed all the secrets of the world to Moshe – a desire that Moshe later had, but was denied.

Such is the beauty and power of initiative and ambition.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org - These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 453, The Tefillah of B'rich Sh'mei. This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei are provided below:

Tape # 047 - Pikuach Nefesh: To Save a Life Tape # 090 - The Melacha of Carrying. Tape # 138 - The Melacha of Tying Knots Tape # 185 - The Melacha of Writing Tape # 231 - Making A Siyum Tape # 275 - Electricity in Halacha Tape # 321 - Leap Year and the Second Adar Tape # 365 - The Melacha of Tearing Tape # 409 - The Melacha of Melabain (Laundering) Tape # 453 - Wearing a Watch on Shabbos Tape # 497 - The Tefillah of B'rich Sh'mei Tape # 541 - Learning Kabbalah Tape # 585 - The Melacha of Trapping Tape # 629 - Sitting in Judgement on Shabbos Tape # 672 - The Mishebeirach in Halacha Tape # 673 - Putting a Sefer Torah in the Aron Tape # 717 - One Hundred Brochos a Day Tape # 761 - Killing Two Birds With One Stone

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Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet Vayakhel Pekudei – Parshas Hachodesh 5767

Mazal Tov to Miriam & Shlomo Karp on the birth of Esther. Mazal tov to the entire extended Stein family.

Mazal Tov to Estee & Stu Shor on the engagement of Lisa to Josh Gottlieb

Jerusalem Post :: Mar 14 2007

THE PRE-PESACH DRIVE IS ON :: Rabbi Berel Wein

As the glorious holiday of Pesach approaches us, Jewish homes are busy preparing for this most demanding of our holidays. We are all familiar with the physical aspects of pre-Pesach preparations. - the koshering process of the kitchen and eating utensils, the general spring cleaning which has become part of Pesach preparations, the purchasing of Pesach foods and in many cases the confirmation of hotel reservations for the holiday. In addition, Jews usually participate in great fundraising drives for the needy for Pesach and this is also the season for purchasing new clothing for the family and painting and otherwise refurbishing our homes and apartments.

In short, it is a busy time for all of the myriad and detailed items that must be accomplished before we sit down, somewhat exhausted but nevertheless exhilarated, at the great festive Pesach Seder. The financial demands for all of this pre-Pesach activity are not to be minimized and therefore getting ready for Pesach always consumes a substantial portion of our annual household budget. Because of this - the work, the expense, the requirements of holy ritual and the additional pressures of regular everyday life, many times the period before Pesach carries with it tensions and stress in the home and family. It is precisely because of this heavy and potentially dangerous physical load that pre-Pesach duties imposes on us, that we should seek relief and serenity in another non-physical aspect of pre-Pesach preparations.

The spiritual aspect of pre-Pesach preparations is two-fold. One is the historical contemplation of Jewish life and existence over the centuries of our story. It is 3919 years since the Exodus from Egypt. So many different eras, empires, civilizations and technological and political revolutions have occurred during these over thirty nine centuries, that it is difficult to imagine that a small and stubbornly different people could have survived it all and still continue to prosper and to influence the world in so many ways. Thinking about Pesach makes us also think about how special we truly are and what our purpose and responsibility in life and in this world should be. Jewish history is not only facts and dates, scholarship and academic disciplines. It is, more importantly, inspiration and faith, guidance and hope, vision and destiny. And for all practical purposes, Jewish history begins with Pesach, with the Exodus from Egypt. It is ironic that there are those in the Jewish world who, for whatever unfathomable reasons, have attempted to deny the entire narrative of the Exodus from Egypt.

All of Jewish history and the fact of Jewish survival itself over the ages put the lie to such attempts and theories. Judaism is based upon the simple notion that my grandfather was not a liar. All of the deniers of the Exodus are modern scholars. Well, we are witness to the fact that many truths, such as the Holocaust, can spawn a denial industry. But that will not change the truth. So, knowing the Jewish story is itself a great high point of our pre-Pesach preparations.

The second spiritual aspect of pre-Pesach planning lies in an appreciation of the innate demand of our souls to be considered free in the highest sense of the concept of freedom. Judaism's definition of freedom contains within it strong limits and rules of conduct to govern that freedom. Freedom does not allow a person to be dissolute, addicted, violent or immoral. Freedom demands purpose and goals, accomplishments and creativity. In other words, freedom must be comforting to the inner sense of the person.

If it only engenders an insatiable appetite for more and destroys any sense of appreciation for what is, then this type of freedom truly becomes a form of addictive slavery. Freedom means a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction, an appreciation of life and family, health and accomplishment. Pre-Pesach preparations include the development of this Torah sense of freedom. For even though physical freedom is necessary in order to develop this necessary sense of well being and self worth, without a sense of spiritual freedom to accompany and complement it, its benefits will remain temporary and hollows.

The rabbis of the Talmud taught that proper preparation is the key to both physical and spiritual success and happiness. I think that this is doubly true concerning the blessings of the great holiday of Pesach that is fast approaching. Shabat shalom.

Weekly Parsha :: VAYAKHEIL – PEKUDEI :: Rabbi Berel Wein

The opening subject in this week's double parsha, which marks the conclusion of the book of Shemot, discusses the Shabat and its centrality in Jewish life and halacha. Rashi points out to us that this parsha regarding Shabat was stated and taught b'hakheil – in a public assembly and gathering - hence the name of the parsha itself - Vayakheil.

I have always felt that there is a great implicit but vital message in this idea of Shabat being taught b'hakheil. Shabat has two distinct aspects to it. There is the private Shabat – the meals and family table, the leisure and serenity of our homes during this holy day, the feeling of dignity and Jewish identity that Shabat automatically engenders in the soul of every Jew. But there is also the requirement that Shabat be taught b'hakheil – in a public fashion and forum. The public Shabat is the sign of the covenant between God and Israel and through Israel with all of humankind. It is the public Shabat that reaffirms the communal unity of the Jewish people and determines the direction of our public policies and agendas.

In the absence of a public Shabat the entire community structure of the Jewish people is weakened, our goals and objectives obscured and confusion reigns with regard to our true rights and purpose. While the absence of a private Shabat for an individual and family eventually proves very costly in relationship to their continuity in Judaism, the absence of a public Shabat is a death knell for the Jewish community.

In recent decades the private Shabat has made a strong come back within many Jewish families. Even those who are not halachically observant attempt to have some sort of Shabat at home, whether it is in lighting the Shabat candles or having a special family meal. The realization of the importance to one's psychological and family well-being of having a private Shabat is slowly dawning on increasing numbers of Jews who otherwise are, in the main, non-observant of halacha and Jewish ritual. However, the public Shabat is slipping away from us, here in Israel and certainly in the Diaspora.

Jewish community centers in much of the United States, transformed basically into health clubs for all, stay open on the Shabat. In Israel, kibbutzim and some shopping malls skirt the official laws and stay open on the Shabat. Jewish airlines devise all sorts of subterfuges to fly on the Shabat with the excuse of customer service necessitating such practices. But again, a Jewish community that does not provide for a public face for the Shabat is dooming itself to Jewish extinction. It has been said often that more than the Jews guarding the Shabat, the Shabat has guarded the Jews. In the difficult times in which we live, discarding the public Shabat is tantamount to spiritual suicide. Only by securing the public Shabat and treasuring it as the national gift that the Lord has granted us can we at the same time guarantee our continuity and future success as a people. Shabat shalom.

TORAH WEEKLY :: Parshat Vayakhel - Pekudei For the week ending 17 March 2007 / 27 Adar I 5767

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by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

OVERVIEW

Vayakhel

Moshe Rabbeinu exhorts Bnei Yisrael to keep Shabbat, and requests donations for the materials for making the Mishkan. He collects gold, silver, precious stones, skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the menorah and for anointing. The princes of each tribe bring the precious stones for the Kohen Gadol's breastplate and ephod. G-d appoints Betzalel and Oholiav as the master craftsmen. Bnei Yisrael contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations. Special curtains with two different covers were designed for the Mishkan's roof and door. Gold-covered boards in silver bases were connected, forming the Mishkan's walls. Betzalel made the Holy Ark (which contained the Tablets) from wood covered with gold. On the Ark's cover were two figures facing each other. The menorah and the table with the showbreads were also of gold. Two altars were made: a small incense altar of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for sacrifices made of wood covered with copper.

Pekudei

The Book of Shemot concludes with this Parsha. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the Mishkan, Moshe gives a

complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels which had been fashioned. Bnei Yisrael bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to G-d's specifications. Moshe blesses the people. G-d speaks to Moshe and tells him that the Mishkan should be set up on the first day of the first month, i.e., Nissan. He also tells Moshe the order of assembly for the Mishkan and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the Mishkan is finally complete with every vessel in its place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that G-d's glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the Mishkan, Bnei Yisrael would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

INSIGHTS

Shabbat "Upgrade"

"But the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for G-d." (35:2)

No one ever complained about the hotel that lets you check in to your room at eight in the morning and lets you stay there until nine at night on the day you leave.

No one ever complained about the tailwind that reduced the four and a half hour flight from London to Tel Aviv by half an hour.

Or what about the audience with the Queen of England that starts ten minutes before schedule and goes on half an hour longer than you were told? No one ever said, "Excuse me your Maj., I'm sorry but I've got to pop out and do a little shopping. See ya!"

When something is special and important we want it to go on forever, and when it's a burden, it can never be too brief.

There are two places where the Torah lists the Ten Commandments: in Parshat Yitro and in Parshat Vaetchanan. In Parshat Yitro, the Torah says, "Remember the Shabbat day to make it holy." whereas in Parshat Va'etchanan, it says, "Guard the Shabbat day to keep it holy." The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Yitro 295) explains, "'Remember' it beforehand, and 'Guard it' afterwards." - meaning that Shabbat is so special and important that we should begin it early and finish late.

We find the same idea in this week's Parsha.

"Bt the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for G-d."

In this verse, the word "holy", *kodesh*, precedes the word Shabbat; however in Parshat Beshalach (16:23) in a virtually identical expression, the word Shabbat precedes *kodesh*. In other words, in our Parsha the Torah says the *kodesh* should come before the Shabbat - the holiness of Shabbat should begin early, whereas in Parshat Beshalach the *kodesh* comes after the Shabbat, meaning that we should extend our Shabbat well into Saturday night.

It all depends on how you look at Shabbat. Is your Shabbat a 25-hour airline flight in Economy, or is it an uninterrupted audience with the Shabbat Queen?

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei

PARSHAS VAYAKHEL

All the wise-hearted among you shall come and do all that Hashem commanded. (35:10)

The foundation-stone upon which Judaism rests is obedience. It is the principle which defines the individual's true commitment to Torah and mitzvos. This does not preclude the importance of using one's intelligence to understand the profundities of the Torah. In the final analysis, however, the Jew should be committed as a consequence of a sense of obedience and faith, not rationalization and scrutiny. "All the wise-hearted among you": How does one identify the truly "wise-hearted"? [those who] "do all that Hashem commanded." Hashem gave us mitzvos for our own benefit. We do not necessarily understand the inherent good in everything that He has told us to do. Nonetheless, we accept and do, executing Hashem's

command obediently and without question. That is the definition of an observant Jew.

The first Jew to respond to Hashem with obedience was our Patriarch Avraham Avinu. Hashem called to him, and Avraham replied: Hineni, "Here I am, ready and prepared to do whatever You ask of me." This was the highest expression of obedience, of commitment and dedication to the Almighty. Yet, some individuals have had the audacity to refer to the method of observance displayed by the observant as nothing more than "doglike obedience." They have taken this greatest example of obedience, love and faith and transformed it into a mindless act. In the end Avraham was "supposedly" rejected, happy and finally at peace when the angel instructed him to halt the proceedings. These people grab at the opportunity to paint Avraham as the first reformer, rejecting human sacrifice, when Hashem asked him to sacrifice Yitzchok.

In his commentary to Bereishis 22:11, Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, takes the individual who was one of the founders of secular Judaism to task for his mindless and blasphemous exegesis of the Akeidas Yitzchak. Clearly, one who studies our Chazal has a broader picture of the dialogue between Hashem and Avraham. Our Patriarch was acutely aware of what he was doing. Hashem commanded, and Avraham listened, responding immediately.

In a lecture to parents, Rav Hirsch searches for the primary reason why, at times, children sway to the left of their parents' teachings. He hypothesizes that children, who are very perceptive, can tell when their parents' own commitment is, at best, complacent. When these parents instruct their children to serve Hashem, they act only as compliant messengers, speaking in His Name, but not actually conveying the echo of the pulse of their own hearts. Children perceive when their parents do not consider the fulfillment of Hashem's will as the very foundation of their own happiness.

Regrettably, parents often feel that it is enough to just ask that their children observe, demanding nothing else of them. They are wrong. Children who gravitate away sense a distinction between the manner in which their parents ask them to do their personal bidding and the manner in which that they ask them to obey Hashem.

Chazal teach us, *Asei retzono k'retzonecha*, "Make His will your own." In other words, do His will as you would your own. Indeed, your will should be His will. Your hopes and wishes should coincide with those of Hashem. When we stood at Har Sinai and proclaimed, *Naase v'Nishma*, "We will do and we will listen," we were elevated to become Hashem's nation. It was precisely this obedience that has established our position as the eternal nation. It raises us to the level of the ministering angels who do Hashem's bidding without question and without seeking reason. Through these words we became servants of the Supreme Master. Is that so bad? True human dignity is reflected in the ability to obey unconditionally and to maintain a sense of duty to a Higher Authority. Those who view Orthodoxy as a form of self-degradation rob themselves and others of the greatest moral freedom: the ability to serve the Almighty unequivocally and without question.

He (Hashem) filled him with G-dly spirit... To weave designs... (35:31,21)

V'lachashov machashavos is interpreted as the ability to weave designs. *Machashavah* is the ability to think, to contemplate, to deliberate. It is the process through which the mind grasps information and processes it in the many ways that the brain is capable of converting knowledge into concept. To use the idea of *machashavah* in connection with the construction of the Mishkan seems inaccurate, especially in the context of "weaving designs," as it is used here. It does not seem to "belong" in the description of the various work and craftsmanship involved in constructing the Mishkan. The *Koheles* Yitzchak cites the famous exegesis of Horav Chaim Volizhiner, zl, regarding this question. The story is well-known, but certainly worth repeating. Yeshivas Volozhin would annually dispatch a *meshulach*, fund-raiser/collector to go from town to village to farm, to any place that was home to a Jew, in order to raise badly-needed funds for the

yeshivah. In one city lived a fairly well-to-do Jew, who was himself erudite and respectful of those who studied Torah. Every year he would contribute a handsome sum to the yeshivah. The meshulach noted that he had not given a donation the previous year. What was there about the previous year that might have generated a distaste for the yeshivah? Rav Chaim then remembered that it was in the previous year that the meshulach had requested a horse and wagon, so that it would be easier for him to get around. Also, he felt he needed a new suit of clothes and shoes, so that he would appear more presentable. Why would these necessities affect the man's charitable attitude towards the yeshivah?

Rav Chaim decided that, at his earliest convenience, he would personally visit the donor to clarify the situation. The opportunity arose, and Rav Chaim visited the man. Understandably, it was a tremendous honor that the celebrated Rosh Yeshivah visited him in his home. During the conversation, Rav Chaim asked the man why he had stopped supporting the yeshivah. The man replied, "I am prepared to sustain the yeshivah. I am not interested, however, in supporting the meshulach's horse, or buying him a new wagon and a set of clothes."

Rav Chaim explained to the man that "Betzael, the master architect of the Mishkan, was an individual who, besides being a righteous Torah scholar, was also Divinely imbued with an uncanny ability to oversee each and every one of the craftsmen who were involved in constructing the Mishkan. When the Torah presents Betzael's curricula vitae, it only states that Hashem filled him with a G-dly spirit, with wisdom, insight and knowledge. Chazal tell us that Betzael's wisdom was of an esoteric nature. He even knew how to combine the letters that Hashem used to create the world. The Torah, however, does not relate that Betzael was a master craftsman who was proficient in every craft and handiwork. In which area did Betzael manifest his great depth of knowledge?

The answer is that the Mishkan was comprised of many different levels of kedushah, holiness. Every area had its own unique level of kedushah, which was superseded by an inner sanctum until one arrived at the Kodesh HaKodoshim, Holy of Holies, which manifested the greatest level of sanctity. When Klal Yisrael was asked to contribute towards the Mishkan, not all of the Jews had the same attitude concerning their contributions. Certainly, some Jews had a greater sense of "free-will" than others. Betzael's Heavenly-inspired brilliance illuminated these contributions to the point that he was able to discern each one and attribute to it the appropriate degree of holiness it deserved. Therefore, the resources of the people who were totally devoted were used to maintain the Holy of Holies, while the contribution of the others were used for a mission with a lower degree of holiness. Betzael's ability to lachashov machashavos, was that he was able to perceive the source of and intention behind every donation in order to place it in its correct corresponding place.

"My friend," Rav Chaim concluded, "people contribute to the yeshivah for various reasons. Some seek acclaim, while others sincerely want to assist the dissemination of Torah study. Hashem sees to it that every individual's money is directed to its proper place. The funds of those who are sincere will support Torah study. The contributions of others will support the horse who pulls the meshulach. Every dollar finds its corresponding place." Horav Eliyahu Schlesinger, Shlita, applies a similar idea to Shabbos. Rashi explains that the prohibition of certain work on Shabbos precedes the detailing of the construction of the Mishkan to teach us that the construction of the Mishkan does not supersede Shabbos. One may not build the Mishkan on Shabbos. Perhaps there is another reason for this juxtaposition. Rather than add prohibition to Shabbos, the relationship between Shabbos and Mishkan teaches us a positive concept concerning Shabbos. We sing in the Friday night Zemiro, Kol mekadesh shevii karaiu lo, kol shomer Shabbos kadas meichallelo, secharo harbei me'od al pi paolo ish al mechaneihu v'ish al diglo, "Whoever sanctifies Shabbos as it is fitting for it; whoever observes Shabbos according to the law, being careful not to desecrate it, his reward is great in accordance with his endeavor, each man on his camp, each man on his banner."

Shemiras Shabbos is also dependent upon the person's machashavos, intentions and inner thoughts. His total demeanor on this holy day indicates his relationship to Shabbos and his appreciation of the sanctity of this day. One type of Jew "rests" on Shabbos, wasting away the entire day in sleep and reading secular material. To another, rest and rejuvenation are important, but with a limit. The primary focus of the day should be directed towards Torah study, Tefillah - serving Hashem amidst a sense of calm and joy - and singing festive Zemiro Shabbos. Through both approaches, the individual observes Shabbos, each one al pi paolo, according to his understanding and endeavor. The s'char, reward, for his observance will reflect his commitment and attitude. The Mishkan was comprised of ascending levels of sanctity, and each person's contribution "found" its place, coinciding with the attitude that catalyzed the contribution. Similarly, Shabbos will be a source of holy sustenance, and the reward for observing it coincides with the individual's level of observance.

We all want to add spirituality to our Shabbos. Many of us do so when our children surround us at the Shabbos table. The singing and the recitation of Torah thoughts, compliments of their school or their own novella, catalyzed by the father's ability to involve them in the thought process; all of these certainly add to the spiritual flavor of Shabbos. What about those who have gone through the "cycle," raised their children, and are experiencing the empty nest syndrome? What do they do to catalyze greater spirituality in their Shabbos observance, especially during the meal, which, for many, is a primary focus of the day? Perhaps one can invite a not-yet observant Jew to his Shabbos meal. While this might prove to be a challenge for some, it is certainly one worth undertaking. Everybody knows someone who is less observant than he is. Why not invite him for Shabbos and expose him to kedushas Shabbos? It would not only help him, it would simultaneously elevate our appreciation of Shabbos as we reach out to others. We might even save two spiritual lives with one meal - his and ours. Parashas Pikudei

PARSHAS PIKUDEI

Betzael... Made all that Hashem commanded Moshe. (38:22)

Apparently, a discussion ensued between Betzael and Moshe Rabbeinu concerning the construction of the Mishkan. Moshe instructed Betzael to construct the Aron HaKodesh prior to constructing the actual Mishkan. Betzael questioned the practicality of this sequence. "Should not the edifice be standing prior to fashioning its furnishings?" he asked. Moshe replied, "Your name Betzael means b'tzel Keil, 'in the shadow of G-d' Surely, you must have been standing in the shadow of G-d when He related the command." Understood simply, this reply indicates a concession on Moshe's part. It is difficult to accept that Moshe did not correctly grasp Hashem's command. What is the meaning of their dialogue?

The Sokolover Rebbe, zl, suggests an interesting approach towards understanding this conversation. Certainly, the Aron did not need protection from the elements. It was free-standing and immune to any physical harm. In fact, it "carried its carriers." The question about which a difference of opinion developed was: How would the Jewish People conduct themselves in the presence of an exposed Aron? Would they demonstrate the proper reverence, or would they forget its significance and not display the proper decorum? In fact, do we always recognize the presence of the Aron HaKodesh in our shuls?

In order to understand their divergent opinions, we must take into consideration the individual vantage points from which they perceived their fellow Jews. Moshe stood in the shining brilliance of the Shechinah. From his position, he could not conceive that any Jew would behave inappropriately in the presence of the Aron. Thus, he had no qualms about constructing the Aron prior to the edifice that would house it. Betzael, on the other hand, functioned as a member of the greater community of Jews. He viewed his brethren from a different perspective. He saw them for what they were - not what they should be, and, therefore, he felt that the Aron must be protected. The people could conceivably forget themselves and err, even in its presence.

Moshe agreed with Betzalel and replied, "You stood in the shadow of G-d. Had you stood where I was standing, directly in the presence of His Divine Light, you could never have conceived of the people acting inappropriately. The more one is in the shadow of the Divine, the greater protection he needs to prevent a spiritual mishap from occurring. The protective force of the Divine Light is not as noticeably profound when one stands in its shadow.

It was in the first month of the second year on the first of the month that the Mishkan was erected. Moshe erected the Mishkan. (40:17,18)

How did Moshe Rabbeinu become involved in the final stages of the Mishkan's construction? It seems that, throughout the entire progress, the people were charged with its construction. Here we see that it was actually Moshe who erected the Mishkan. What happened? The Midrash Tanchuma tells us that when the Mishkan was completed, the people prepared to erect it. They tried a number of times, to no avail. Whenever they stood it up, it just fell down. They came to Moshe and said, "We did everything that you instructed us to do. All of our handiwork is before you. Perhaps we erred and missed something." Moshe had been troubled the entire time that they had been preparing the Mishkan. After all, he had not been included in the planning or construction of the Mishkan. Veritably, this was the reason that the people were unable to erect the Mishkan. They now realized that without Moshe's participation, the Mishkan would not ever stand. Hashem told this to Moshe. "Do not worry, Moshe," Hashem said. "The Torah will record that you erected the Mishkan." "But," Moshe interjected, "I have no idea how to erect the Mishkan." Hashem replied, "Asok b'yadcha, involve yourself in it, make it appear like you are erecting it, and, in the end, it will rise of its own accord." This is why the Torah records that it was Moshe who erected the Mishkan. A powerful Midrash, but, in summary, did Moshe erect the Mishkan? No! All he did was asok b'yodcha, involve himself, and make it appear as if he were erecting it. In reality, he did not. It was Hashem Who erected the Mishkan.

Horav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi, Shlita, derives an important principle in life from here. This entire world, which is referred to as the *olam ha'assiah*, world of action, is based upon two principles. First, we must do; we must act. Through our actions, Hashem sends His blessings. If we do not act, if we are not asok b'yadecha, then there is no blessing. Second, the achievement, the final product, the accomplishment is all Hashem's blessing. We only "appear" to be making it. It is really Hashem who erects the Mishkan and everything else that we do. We do - Hashem achieves. We act - He makes it happen. That is it!

Hashem erected the Mishkan, but first there had to be action on the part of Moshe. Man is *osek*, appears to be making it, but, actually, it is Hashem Who is constructing it. Regrettably, many of us do not see this. We get carried away with the asok b'yadecha and begin to believe that the ultimate *hatzlachah*, success, is our doing. Furthermore, while it is understandable that one have a source of livelihood, his goal should be that he works to live - not the inverse. We live in a time in which people have a life's goal that transcends work. One should work as much as necessary to achieve his livelihood, with his ultimate goal being the opportunity to spend his free time in the pursuit of matters of the spirit - either his or that of his children. Regrettably, when we look around at contemporary lifestyles, we note that it is money, work, or fame that has become an end in itself. Priorities in life have changed, so that acquiring essentials is not enough, or the definition of what are essentials has radically changed.

David Hamelech praises one who partakes of the work of his hands. "When you eat the labor of your hands, you are praiseworthy" (Tehillim 128:2). "This means," says the Kotzker Rebbe, zl, "that the 'work' should be that of his hands and not the total preoccupation of his mind." As my rebbe, Horav Baruch Sorotzkin, zl, always emphasized, Hashem's admonishment to Adam HaRishon of, B'zeyias apecha tochal lechem, "By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread" (Bereishis 3:19), was a curse - not a necessary way of life. Why should an individual choose to assume more punishment than is absolutely necessary?

Once, a chasid, who was a manufacturer of shoes, visited the Kotzker Rebbe and asked for a blessing in his venture. Noting that the individual was directing all his time, thought and energy to his business, the rebbe remarked, "You are truly an unusual person. Most people put their feet into shoes, whereas you have put your head into shoes."

We must ask ourselves: How many of us put our lives and, by extension, the lives of those closest to us, into shoes?

Va'ani Tefillah

Hod v'hadar lefanav, oz v'chedvah bimekomo.

Glory and majesty are before Him, might and delight are in His place.

Citizens of modern society feel that glory and majesty, dignity and beauty, are attributes that can be found in the halls of intellectualism, in the denizens of artistic ability. People have been drawn to various religious experiences in search of beauty and majesty. This prayer, as explained by Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, dispels this notion. We are being told not to look elsewhere for these attributes, for true glory and majesty can be found only before Him. Do not look to satisfy your intellectual religious yearnings and desires by chasing the beliefs of other religions. You will find the answer to all of your yearning in only one place: *lefanav*, before Him.

Likewise, the honor and power which are demonstrated in the arena of world affairs, which the world nations, the so-called superpowers, think is theirs, actually belongs to Hashem. True might and honor are His. It is the arrogance of the nations that leads them to think that they shape their own destiny and, thus, honor and power is theirs. They are wrong, and the sooner that they realize the true source of honor and power, the quicker they will establish themselves as a true nation.

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“RavFrاند” List - Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei

Bezalel's Ability To Share The Stage Made Him a Leader

The Talmud states: "There are three things that the Almighty Himself proclaims: Famine (*ra'av*), Abundance (*sovah*), and a good leader (*parnas tov*)." [Berachos 55a]. The Gemara cites *pasukim* [verses] to prove each of these points. The *pasuk* [verse] cited to prove that the Almighty Himself proclaims a good leader is the *pasuk* from Parshas Vayakhel: "See, Hashem has proclaimed by name, Bezalel son of Uri son of Chur, of the tribe of Yehudah." [Shmos 35:30].

Bezalel was the general contractor, so to speak, behind the construction of the Mishkan. He perhaps had artistic ability. He was a good organizer. He was talented. But it is strange that the Gemara refers to him as a '*parnas tov*'. Where do we see leadership qualities in Bezalel? He succeeded in getting the job done under budget and on time—he was a good general contractor. But in what sense does that make him a good leader (*parnas tov*)?

The Yalkut Shimoni on this week's parsha contains the following teaching: During the building of the Mishkan, two tribes had a partnership—the tribe of Yehudah (as represented by Bezalel) and the tribe of Dan (as represented by Oholiav ben Achisamach) had a partnership.

Why did they need two tribes for the project? In truth, G-d did not need anyone to build the Mishkan, but it certainly would have been sufficient to provide just one tribe. Bezalel could have done the job alone. With his G-d given talents, he did not need a partner. Nonetheless, the Medrash emphasizes that the Mishkan had to be built by two tribes.

Rav Chaim Zaytchik, zt"l, writes that this Medrash allows us to better understand the previously cited Gemara that labeled Bezalel as a '*parnas tov*.' There are many people who are interested in getting involved in communal work as long as they will have the spotlight by themselves. They are in it so that when the job gets done, they will be able to say: "Look, what I've done!" But if you ask them to be a co-chairman, to share the job and responsibilities, and as such, to share the limelight and glory, they say—"under those circumstances, I am not interested."

The Almighty is looking for people who work lishma [altruistically]. He wants people who are interested in efforts for the Sake of Heaven, not for the sake of an ego trip. The true test of a person's motive is whether he will tolerate a partner. Therefore, the first test that the Ribono shel Olam gave Bezalel—to see whether he was the man for the job—was to assign him a co-chairman. “I want you to work with someone, with someone who is not even from the prestigious tribe of Yehudah, but from the “lowly” Tribe of Dan. In accepting this partner, Bezalel showed us how to be a leader (parnas tov).

Why State The Obvious?

The Parsha begins “And Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and said to them...” [Shmos 35:1]. The section ends some twenty pasukim later with the words: “The entire assembly of Israel left Moshe's presence.” [Shmos 35:20] Moshe told them what he needed to tell them and everyone left.

If this was a Talmudic passage, the Gemara would analyze it, asking, “This is obvious - what is the Torah telling us?” It goes without saying that if Moshe Rabbeinu summoned them to deliver a message, that when he was through delivering that message they would all walk out. Why does the Torah that never wastes words need to include pasuk 20 at the conclusion of the narration?

Rav Elya Lopian says that the pasuk is teaching that when the Jews walked away from Moshe Rabbeinu, it was evident that they had been in the presence of a Moshe Rabbeinu. One does not spend time in the presence of a great Jewish leader without having an indelible impression left upon him.

Certainly this is true immediately after the encounter. Often the impression lasts a lifetime.

The pasuk “The entire assembly of Israel left Moshe's presence” teaches that the impression was “written on their faces” and they were a changed people because they spent time with a Moshe Rabbeinu. Rav Elya explains that when we see someone staggering drunk on the street and we ask ourselves “where was he?” the answer is obvious. He was in a bar getting drunk.

So too, when we see a person who was in the presence of a Moshe Rabbeinu, it is evident where the person was. He was in the presence of holiness. Such is the influence of any environment. When one is in a holy environment, when one is in the presence of a holy congregation, when one is with spiritually great individuals, it makes an impression and it makes a difference. And the opposite is true as well.

The Ponevitzer Rav, of Blessed and Holy memory, once offered a great interpretation to a Medrash in Parshas Toldos: Yosef Meshisa was a despicable Jew. He was a traitor to his people. When it came time to destroy the Temple, the Gentile invaders were afraid to walk into the Holy Sanctuary. They picked a Jew to walk in first and betray his G-d. Who did they pick? They picked this low-life Yosef Meshisa. They told him to go in to the Temple and as a reward, he could take anything he wanted for himself. He went in and took out the Golden Menorah. When the Gentiles saw what he took, they told him that this was too great a prize for a commoner. They told him that he could go back in and take something else that was more appropriate. This time they promised that he could keep whatever he found.

However, he refused to go in a second time. They offered him a bonus. If he went in a second time, they would give him all the collected tax from Judea for the next 3 years. He still refused. “Is it not sufficient that I angered my G-d once, should I anger Him a second time?” They tortured him until he died, but he refused to go back in.

The Ponevitzer Rav asked - what happened to Yosef Meshisa? This was the traitor whom the Gentiles picked as being the most likely Jew to do their bidding in desecrating the Temple. He already went in and stole the Menorah. Now he suddenly became a Ba'al Teshuva and refused to ever do it again, despite the offer of riches and despite the torturing. What happened to him?

The Ponevitzer Rav explained what happened to him. He was in the Beis HaMikdash for two minutes. He was never the same again. The influence of being in a Holy Place for two minutes changed his life.

If a person is exposed to radiation, he doesn't smell it; he doesn't feel it; two minutes of exposure can change his whole body. Likewise, one can be exposed to kedusha [holiness] for two minutes and become a different person.

That is what this pasuk is teaching us. The congregation left the presence of Moshe... but they were not the same anymore. They were not the same Jews because they had been in the presence of a great man. Being in the presence of a great man, or even being in the presence of a holy place—a Beis Medrash, a Beis Knesses [House of Study; House of Prayer], being in Eretz Yisroel [the Land of Israel] can change a person's life.

This is why environment, friends, and community are so important. Such is the power of holiness. It can change a person forever.

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Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

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Holiness from Above and Below

The second half of Sefer Shemos deals almost exclusively with the construction of the Mishkan, excluding the interlude of the cheit haeigel. Although physically the construction described in Vayakheil Pekudei followed precisely the commands in Terumahand Tetzaveh, there was a fundamental distinction between the original plan of the Mishkan and its actual implementation.

Following the order of the pesukim, the mitzvah of building the mishkan preceded the cheit haeigel, whereas the construction followed the cheit. A mishkan built after the cheit was different in nature than one that would have been built before the cheit. The area of the mishkan endowed with the highest level of kedusha was the kodesh hakodashim, which housed the aron containing the luchos. While the aseres hadibros appeared on both the first and second luchos both, the essence of the two sets was different. The first set is described as “v'haluchos maaseh Elokim - the work of Hashem”, whereas the second set was carved out by Moshe Rabbeinu, with only the letters being carved out by Hashem.

This distinction was reflected in the nature of the kedushas mishkan. The “first” mishkan that would have been built if not for the cheit would have housed the luchos of “maaseh Elokim”. The kedusha would have emanated from Hashem. The “Second” mishkan that actually was built required human participation and its kedusha was initiated by Bnei Yisroel and it only subsequently received the blessing from Above. After all the human input, Moshe Rabbeinu could only pray that “yehi ratzon shetishre shechina b'maaseh yedeichem - let the divine presence rest upon your work” (Rashi Shemos 39:43). This mishkan was not “maaseh yedei hashem”, but rather “maaseh yedeichem”. The luchos of “maaseh Elokim” had been transformed into the luchod of “psol lecha” - stones carved by a human being that would be written upon by Hashem.

Two distinct types of sanctity, one stemming from Hashem and the other indicated by man, is a common theme in halacha. Shabbos receives its sanctity directly from Hashem, while yom tov requires the Jewish people to endow it with holiness by declaring the new moon. This halachic distinction is reflected by the text of the berachos “mekadesh haShabbos” and “mekadesh Yisroel vehazemanim”; Hashem sanctifies Shabbos while the Jewish people sanctify the yomim tovim (gemara Pesachim 117b). Similarly, there is a distinction between the sanctities of Eretz Yisroel and of Yerushalayim. The Rambam (Hilchos Beis Habechira 6:16) explains that kedushas Eretz Yisroel with respect to the agricultural mitzvos can be revoked because its kedusha emanates from being possessed by Bnei Yisroel. Therefore, in their absence, the kedushas haaretz is lost. This is in contrast to the kedusha of Yerushalayim with respect to korbanos which

can never be lost, because its kedusha is derived directly from Hashem, who is eternal.

These two models of mishkan materialized in the two batei mikdashos. The first Beis Hamikdash resembled the original plan for the mishkan - present were the shechina, the urim vetumim, and prophecy. It had all the qualities of "maaseh Elokim - the work of Hashem". On the other hand, the second Beis Hamikdash, devoid of the urim vetumim and nevuah, was built by the Jewish people and endowed with sanctity through human effort and fervent prayer that the shechina rest upon it to some degree.

Each of the two batei mikdashos had a unique downfall which undermined its source of holiness. The Beis Hamikdash of "maaseh Elokim", whose sanctity stemmed directly from the shechina, could not conceivably last in the presence of idolatry, just as the avodah zarah of the cheit haeigel destroyed the plans to construct a mishkan which would house the luchos that were carved by Hashem.

The destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash was precipitated by divisiveness within the Jewish people, characterized by sinas chinam - baseless hatred. A Beis Hamikdash that owed its existence and sanctity to the Jewish people can only exist when the Jewish people are united, not when they are split by baseless hatred. Our ability to create kedushas hamikdash is conditional on our acting as a united people.

As we begin chodesh Nissan, may we merit to be redeemed as in the days of Yetzias Mitzrayim, and once again see the Beis Hamikdash and be privileged to serve Hashem as in the days of old.

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5767

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav CHECKING OUR MEZUZOS

All mezuzos(1) must be checked periodically to verify their kashrus. Everyone who lives in a dwelling(2) (whether he owns it or rents it) is required to check his mezuzos twice in seven years, or once every three-and-a-half years,(3) since it is an established fact that over a period of time mezuzos are liable to become invalid. Age, humidity, rain, location, a paint job and/or other factors may ruin a mezuzah which was originally kosher.(4) Even if one letter is smudged or cracked, the entire mezuzah may no longer be valid and often cannot be fixed. It is imperative, therefore, to check all mezuzos periodically and be prepared to buy replacements.(5) The three-and-a-half year time frame established by the Rabbis applies only to mezuzos exposed to normal conditions, not to mezuzos that have to weather harsh elements like direct sunlight, exposure to a sprinkler system, a paint job,6 etc. Such mezuzos must be checked more often.(7) [Indeed, some meticulous individuals check all of their mezuzos every Elul.(8)] Some people are lax about checking their mezuzos, claiming, among other excuses,(9) that it is difficult to find a professional sofer or an examiner who will come to the house, remove all the mezuzos, check them, and re-affix them in short order. Since people are wary of leaving their homes without the protection of the mezuzah for any length of time - and justifiably so - checking mezuzos gets pushed off and sometimes neglected entirely. This should not be allowed to happen.

In a situation when a sofer or an examiner is not accessible, one should still not totally forsake the checking process. As explained earlier, the main purpose of checking is to find out whether or not a mezuzah that was originally kosher became ruined. Technically, anyone who reads Hebrew well and is familiar with the basic layout of a mezuzah can check if the lettering has faded or if the letters are no longer whole and fully formed; no professional sofer is required for this.(10) Of course, if a question were to arise about a specific letter, then one would need to refer to an halachic authority for a decision.

Obviously, this type of checking suffices only if the mezuzah in question was certified kosher by a professional sofer at the time of purchase. Before one places a mezuzah on his doorpost, he must have it professionally

checked to be sure that it was properly written. [Unfortunately, buying a mezuzah from a Jewish-owned establishment is no automatic guarantee that the mezuzah is kosher.] Once, however, the mezuzah was certified as kosher, and a professional is not available, the checking can be done by a layman as described above.

In order to check a mezuzah, it must be removed from the doorpost. If it is removed for only the few moments that it takes to check it, there is no halachic obligation to replace it with another mezuzah.(11) The mezuzah is removed, looked over carefully, and if no problem is found, it is immediately returned to the doorpost. One does not recite a blessing over the mezuzah when re-affixing it to the doorpost.(12)

When mezuzos are removed overnight [and, according to many poskim, even when they are removed for more than several hours(13)], a blessing should be recited when they are re-affixed.(14) If all the mezuzos are re-affixed at the same time, one blessing suffices for all of them. The poskim argue as to whether one who replaced a mezuzah and forgot to recite the blessing can recite the blessing later on. One may conduct himself according to either view.(15)

If the existing mezuzah is pasul and a new one is needed, a blessing is recited over it. The same halachah applies if the existing mezuzah was found to be pasul, but it was able to be repaired. When it is re-affixed, the blessing is recited.

QUESTION: What can be done if the checking process will take a long time and the house [or room] will be left without a mezuzah?

DISCUSSION: Sometimes the checking process can drag on overnight or even a few days. In such a case, it is improper to leave the house (or any single doorpost) without mezuzos. According to some opinions, the people in the house may even have to move out while the mezuzos are being checked.(16) Obviously, this is a terrible inconvenience and highly impractical.

To avoid this situation, there are some possible alternatives:

1. Buy [or borrow(17)] an extra mezuzah which will replace the mezuzah that is being checked. A blessing would have to be recited when the replacement is put on.(18) This solution is not practical for a large house that has many mezuzos to be checked.
2. Renounce ownership of one's home(19) for as long as the mezuzos are being checked. This procedure, called hefker, removes halachic ownership from the home and makes it an ownerless entity. Once ownership of the house is renounced, the obligation to put on a mezuzah is lifted. The residents are living in an ownerless property, and they are not obligated to put on mezuzos.(20) [Before re-affixing the mezuzos, one should have in mind that he is once again becoming the owner of the house.]

The proper way of making an item hefker is to renounce ownership in the presence of at least three adults. The adults may be household members. [Some Rishonim maintain that the hefker is valid even when declared in front of one individual or even in front of no one at all.(21) If three adults are not available, one may rely on this view.(22)]

FOOTNOTES:

1Mezuzos which are publicly owned must be checked only once every twenty-five years; Y.D. 291:1.

2This includes a woman living alone, students sharing an apartment, etc.

3In order to remember this obligation, the custom in Frankfurt was to check the mezuzos every Adar Sheini, which falls every two or three years.

4Another reason for checking is to see if the mezuzah was stolen [or misplaced]; Rashi Yuma 11a. See also Meiri, ibid.

5Y.D. 291:1.

6Igras Moshe Y.D. 1:183. L'chatchilah, mezuzos should be removed before painting.

7Aruch ha-Shulchan 291:1.

8 Mateh Efrayim 581:10; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:3. In addition, Teshuvos Maharil 94 writes that it is proper to examine one's mezuzos if misfortune befalls an individual or his family. God forbid.

- 9 It must be emphasized that there is no halachic basis for laxity in this obligation. See Birur Halachah, pg. 399, who quotes several sources that strongly condemn those who are not careful about fulfilling this obligation.
- 10 Teshuvos Chasam Sofer 283, quoted in Pischei Teshuvah 291:3.
- 11 Da'as Kedoshim 291:1 (concerning a renter); Emek Berachah (Mezuzah 11).
- 12 Pischei Teshuvah 289:1 remains undecided on this issue but most poskim rule that one should not recite a blessing in this case.
- 13 If the owner was preoccupied with the mezuzos throughout the time that they were removed from the house, possibly the blessing should not be recited.
- 14 Even if the house was not pronounced as hefker.
- 15 See Kuntres ha-Mezuzah 289:3.
- 16 See Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 285:1 quoting the Pri Megadim, who maintains that it is prohibited to remain in a house [or in a room] without a mezuzah, and one who has another place to go to must go there. Other poskim, however, are not as stringent and do not require one to move out of his home if the mezuzos are down temporarily and he cannot find a replacement.
- 17 Har Tzvi Y.D. 238.
- 18 Harav C. Kanievsky (Mezuzos Beisecha 289:6); Kuntres ha-Mezuzah 289:6, quoting several poskim. Other poskim, however, do not require a blessing to be recited (oral ruling by Harav M. Feinstein, quoted in Oholei Yeshurun, pg. 22).
- 19 This is suggested by Mikdash Me'at 285:3 and Mezuzos Melachim 285:19. There are other halachic areas where this solution is suggested; see Mishnah Berurah 13:15 concerning tzitzis and O.C. 246:3 concerning a Jew's animal on Shabbos. For various reasons not all poskim agree with this solution, and it is not common practice. [See Sefer Tevilas Keilim, pg. 84, who quotes Harav S.Z. Auerbach as ruling that under extenuating circumstances one can rely on this solution to permit temporary use of utensils which were not immersed.]
- 20 Although one who "borrows" a house is required to put on mezuzos, in this case the people living in the house are not "borrowers." Halachically, the house has no owners to "borrow" from. The house is technically ownerless and temporarily exempt from the mitzvah of mezuzah.
- 21 Rama C.M. 273:5.
- 22 See Sma C.M. 273:11, Mishnah Berurah 246:15 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 18.

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