

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

Virtual Beit Medrash

STUDENT SUMMARIES OF SICHOT OF THE ROSHEI YESHIVA HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT"A .

Adapted by Avi Shmidman & Dov Karoll

"Moshe gathered the entire people of Israel, and he said to them, 'These are the things that God has said to do.'" (Shemot 35:1)

What is the purpose of this gathering? A gathering of all the people is rare during these years in the desert, and it begs for an explanation.

Let us survey, then, the other such gatherings.

At the beginning of Parashat Nitzavim, we find that "You are all gathered here together before God..." (Devarim 29:9). Rashi (s.v. attem) explains that this gathering is meant to bring the people into a berit, a covenant; to enter into a berit, you need all of the people. It is possible, though, to explain otherwise: the entire Sefer Devarim is comprised of Moshe's parting message, and this parasha-starting from Nitzavim-is the crowning jewel. Thus, this parasha was deserving of a full gathering.

Similarly, at the beginning of Sefer Devarim, we find, "These are the words that Moshe spoke unto all Israel..." (Devarim 1:1). Again, Rashi here (s.v. el) offers a technical explanation. Rashi views Sefer Devarim mainly as a book of rebuke, and here, when Moshe lists the people's sins, Rashi says that all of the people must be present in order to give them a chance to have their say-so that none can later say, "We would have denied it had we been present." However, we again can offer another explanation for the gathering: as Moshe begins his parting message, he gathers the people to underscore the drama of the moment.

We also hear of a full gathering at the beginning of Parashat Kedoshim: "Speak unto the entire community of Israel, and tell them, 'You shall be holy...'" (Vayikra 19:2). In that context, the demand of gathering the entire people is understandable-Parashat Kedoshim contains within it many of the main tenets of the Torah, and surveys within it many mitzvot. Beyond the high quantity of mitzvot, this parasha also touches on a broad variety- mitzvot between man and God, interpersonal mitzvot, positive mitzvot, prohibitions, and so on.

However, such an explanation can hardly be given for the gathering described in the parashot of

Vayakhel and Pekudei. These are technical, monochromatic parashot, which essentially repeat what we have already heard in Teruma and Teztaveh. Why, then, the need for a gathering of the entire people?

Ibn Ezra (Shemot 35:1, s.v. ta'am) explains that the time had come to ask for donations to the mishkan, and the gathering was necessary to impress the importance of the mishkan on each and every person, to ensure widespread generosity. We find similar explanations in the Rashbam (s.v. va-yakhel) and the first explanation of the Ramban (s.v. va-yakhel).

What all these positions have in common is that they are future-oriented. The gathering is meant to instill in the nation fervor for the upcoming national task of building the mishkan.

The Ramban, in his alternate explanation, does consider that perhaps the focus of the gathering is on the past, specifically relating to the sin of the golden calf. Following the sin, the nation is in need of a renewed covenant with God-and this must be performed with the presence of the entire nation.

It is possible to extend this line of thought, with its focus on the past, but to go much farther than just the immediately preceding event. If we shift our focus from the relationship between God and the Jewish people to emphasizing the interpersonal relationship between the Jewish people and Moshe their leader, then this gathering becomes extremely pertinent and its need becomes apparent.

At the beginning of their journey in the desert, the people saw Moshe as the ultimate lover of Israel (based on Menachot 65a and 65b), their great hero. His entire existence was dedicated to serving them. He sat to judge them "from dawn to dusk" (Shemot 18:13). When Yitro suggested that Moshe delegate the work, Moshe refused to adopt the suggestion-and one didn't have to be such a genius to come up with the suggestion. It was Moshe's love for the Jewish people that made him insist on being in touch with each and every person in the nation (see Ramban 18:15, s.v. ki), and he was reluctant to give up this connection. The people certainly recognized Moshe's great effort-no matter how small their dispute, they were able to walk right up to Moshe and address him directly, with no secretary and no intermediary.

Since then, however, from the perspective of the people, everything had changed.

"The nation saw that Moshe tarried in coming down the mountain, and the nation gathered up on

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Aharon, and they said to him, "Make for us an icon that will walk before us, for this man Moshe, who took us out of Egypt, we know not what has become of him" (Shemot 32:1).

Moshe has been away for forty days, and the people wonder what has happened. When they say, "For this man Moshe, who took us out of Egypt," what is their intent? It can be interpreted as praise, as Rashi (s.v. asher) explains; however, it may just as easily have been meant in a derogatory sense- this Moshe who has brought us out of the flesh pots, from the place where we had fish and meat aplenty, into this desert, he has now deserted us-

"We know not what has become of him."

When Moshe finally descends, he is no longer the loving leader, but a fiery zealot-as three thousand people are killed instantaneously. The people watch, and they are stunned. Their trust in Moshe has disappeared, and their suspicions deteriorate into an absolute loss of faith. The chasm that has developed between them grows larger and larger.

Moshe may once have sat with the people, but he now has placed his tent "far from the camp" (33:7). This is not simply outside the camp, but at some distance from it-perhaps kilometers away. And this physical dissociation reinforced the overall interpersonal dissociation that they felt.

This dissociation, of course, exists solely from the perspective of the people. For us, readers of the Biblical story, a very different image emerges. But this is due to the fact that the Torah makes us aware of phenomena of which the Jewish people at the time were not aware. The episode of Moshe pleading with God (32:11-13) exemplifies Moshe's great love of Israel, arguing for the nation's survival against God. When God offers Moshe, "Let Me alone, and I shall send forth my wrath and destroy them, and I shall make you a great nation" (32:10) -- a generous offer-Moshe flatly refuses:

"If You will not forgive them, wipe me out of Your book that You have written!" (32:32).

Moshe is interested not in his own glory, but in the welfare of the nation. Moshe sits with God, "face to face" (33:11), with the sole purpose of bridging the gap between God and the nation. Moshe has two, and only two, goals: to bring the nation closer to God, and, so to speak, to bring God closer to the nation.

Thus, from our view of what is taking place on the historical stage-this superb drama-we see only deep roots and firm bonds between Moshe and the people. But the people themselves, who know nothing of these encounters, experience only deep anger, distance, and dissociation.

Thus, at the conclusion of Parashat Ki Tisa, Moshe, sensing the gap that has developed between himself and the people, endeavors to rebuild the trust, the relationship; he wishes to state publicly and forthrightly where he indeed stands with respect to the people. To meet this need, it is clearly not enough for him to confer just with the leaders, or just with certain social strata. He must mandate a general gathering of the people-in order to pursue his goal of reinstating the relationship between himself and each and every member of the nation. *[This sicha was delivered on leil Shabbat, Parashat Vayakhel, 5763 (2003).]*

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

“Six days shall creative activity be done, but on the seventh day there shall be for you a holy Sabbath of Sabbath for the Lord” (Exodus 35:2).

When approaching the five biblical portions which conclude the book of Exodus, the greatest puzzle seems to be the seemingly convoluted order of their subject matter. The over-arching theme is obviously the Sanctuary: its various accoutrements and precise dimensions. The third Torah portion in the middle seems to veer away from the Sanctuary and repeat the commandment of the Sabbath: "But My Sabbath shall you observe... six days shall your creative physical activity be done and on the seventh day a Sabbath of Sabbaths shall be sacred to the Lord... because in six days did the Lord make the heavens and the earth and on the seventh He ceased from work and He became refreshed" (Exodus 31:12-17).

What immediately follows is the idolatrous worship of the golden calf, Moses' breaking of the tablets, and G-d's ultimate forgiveness of the Israelites for their transgression. The fourth Torah portion, our portion of Vayakhel, then opens with the Sabbath once again (as cited above), after which the text continues with its accounting of the execution of the construction of the Sanctuary until the conclusion of the Book of Exodus. The order then becomes: Sanctuary-

Sanctuary-Sabbath-Golden Calf-Sabbath-Sanctuary-Sanctuary

Especially if we take the position of the majority of Midrashim and of the most classical of commentaries Rashi, that the command to build the Sanctuary did not come until after the sin of the golden calf-and was actually a form of atonement for that very sin of idolatry-then the order of these five Torah portions seems absolutely incomprehensible.

In order to further complicate the issue-but at the same time to begin to discover the solution to our problem-it is important to analyze the very special relationship between the Sanctuary and the Sabbath commandment. The Midrash utilizes the verse which appears after the initial command of the Sanctuary and its accoutrements, "And you shall speak to the children of Israel saying 'but My Sabbath shall you observe,'" (ibid. 12,13) as teaching the thirty nine forbidden acts of physical creativity; the Sages of the Talmud insist that it was precisely those activities necessary in the construction of the Sanctuary which we are forbidden to do on the Sabbath day. The construction of the Sanctuary defines the forbidden activities (melakhot) on the Sabbath.

This connection expresses a most profound link between the Sanctuary and the Sabbath. Prof. Abraham Joshua Heschel takes note of this by referring to the Sabbath as "a Sanctuary in time". I would submit, however that the connection is far deeper. The Almighty created a world for us to dwell in;

He expects us to return the compliment by our creating a Sanctuary in which He may dwell. But the Almighty created an incomplete world, whose built-in freedom of will provides the possibility of evil as well as good, chaos as well as order, darkness as well as light. "The creator of light and the maker of darkness, the maker of peace and the creator of evil, I the Lord have done all of these." (Isaiah 45:7) What G-d expects of us is that we utilize the Torah which He has given us, choose good and reject the evil, in order to complete His incomplete world, in order to perfect His imperfect world. The Sanctuary is the ideal of the perfected world, the place where G-d himself may feel comfortable, the more perfect world in which His divine goodness will be felt throughout, so that He will not be forced to hide His face and to be concealed behind a cloud, to be glimpsed only "through a glass darkly."

In this model, the six days of labor and seventh day of rest take on a major symbol. "Six days shall your physical creativity be done"; and it was during the primordial six days that G-d's world, an incomplete, imperfect world, was made. As an old Jewish story reminds us, when a disgruntled customer complained to the tailor who was late in delivering his suit, "It took the Almighty only six days to create an entire universe and you've kept me waiting 3 months for a jacket and trousers?", the tailor responded, "But do you want me to deliver the same problematic product that G-d

delivered?!" Indeed, it is our task to work during the six days of the week to attempt to make this imperfect world into a perfect Sanctuary, to assume our roles as agent-partners with G-d in completing His world.

The Sabbath day itself, the day on which G-d rests, symbolizes a world of peace and harmony, the ultimate world of messianism and redemption. The Sabbath is the goal, the end-game, towards which we all aim and for which we all yearn. The Sabbath expresses the time when we will have overcome our imperfect nature and our imperfect society. Whatever it took by the sweat of our brow for us to remake the world that we were given, is not to be done on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is the ultimate promise and the ultimate vision. It is a foretaste of the world-to-come. The Sanctuary is our Sabbath-in-place, the world which is wholly Sabbath!

Now the order of our Torah portions is clear. The purpose of G-d's having given us the Torah at Sinai is for us to create a Sanctuary, a more perfect world. Hence, after the command to build the Sanctuary, comes the commandment of the Sabbath: our "work" as partners with G-d to perfect the world during the six days and our taste of the more perfect world to come on the Sabbath itself. The cost of failure at that effort is our dancing at the feet of the golden calf, explained by our Sages as embodying the idolatry of false values, the immorality and licentiousness of materialism, and even the murder which comes from lawlessness. But when we fall, we must raise ourselves up by means of the standard and the vision of the Sabbath. Then and only then will Sabbath and Sanctuary merge into one as "the world is filled with the knowledge (and presence) of G-d as the waters cover the seas." And so the order: Sanctuary, Sabbath, Idolatrous Calf, Sabbath, Sanctuary. © 2005 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

By recounting, in detail, the building of the Mishkan in Parshas Vayakhel, the Torah gives us the opportunity to build on the understandings gained after studying the commandment to build it described in Parshas Terumah. However, not everything described in our Parsha was included in the description of the original commandment.

Although we were told that the pillars supporting the curtains that made up the wall of the Mishkan's courtyard were decorated with silver (Shemos 27:10-11, 17), it is not until they were made (38:17, 19) that we are told that the tops of these pillars were silver-plated. Several of the Ba'alei Tosfos ask why this detail was not included in Parshas Terumah.

I discussed the layout of these pillars a few weeks ago (www.aishdas.org/ta/5765/terumah.pdf), presenting the three basic approaches to how, if (as Rashi describes - and all seem to be in agreement)

there was a space of 5 cubits between pillars, the 19 spaces between the 20 pillars can add up to the 100 cubits required for that side. There was one very important aspect that I didn't address there, namely that none of these approaches seems to fit with Rashi's explanation of the layout and function of these pillars.

Although there are many more than three approaches, as far as addressing the specific issue of having one less space than necessary, they all fall under one of these "categories" of approaches - with the variances having a minimal effect (if at all) on how to get to 100 cubits (and 50 on the east and west sides). Therefore, for simplicity sake, I will refer only to these three approaches, and explain why it would be difficult to claim that Rashi meant any one of them.

The Abarbanel (approach "A"), as well as Rabbeinu Efrayim (quoted by the Riva) and the Malbim, say that the 5 cubits between pillars do not include the width of the pillars themselves. If you add the $\frac{1}{4}$ cubit of the width of each of the 20 pillars, you have another 5 cubits. Added to the 95 cubits of the 19 spaces between these 20 pillars, the full 100 cubits are accounted for. However, this only works for the north and south sides. The west side will either have 11 spaces (with the 10 pillars on that side placed between the corner pillars shared with the north and south sides), meaning that each space - including the width of the pillars - is less than 5 cubits, or 9 spaces (by putting two of the pillars in the corners adjacent to the other corner pillars), meaning that each pillar is twice as wide as those on the north and south. Similarly, the shoulders would need their 5 cubit spaces to include the width of the pillars (even though the 5 cubits excluded the width of the pillars on the other sides), and the width of the spaces of the doorway would be $6 \frac{1}{3}$ cubits, meaning that the space was more than 5 cubits and/or the pillars were much wider than those of the other sides. If Rashi understood this to be the layout, why didn't he mention the varying widths of the pillars and/or the spaces? At the very least, he should have mentioned that the 5-cubit space he described on the south side (27:10) did not include the width of the pillars while the 5 cubits he mentions between the pillars of the shoulders (27:14) did. Instead, he uses the exact same words to describe both spaces, implying that either both include the pillars or both exclude them.

The Beraisa d'Meleches haMishkan (approach "B"), as well as the Yalkut Shimoni and the Ma'aseh Chosheiv, say that each 5-cubit section of the curtains extended for $2 \frac{1}{2}$ cubits on either side of (the center of) the pillar it was hung from. If each pillar supported the center of a 5-cubit section of the curtains, we don't need 20 spaces, only 20 pillars - which we have. There are 5 cubits between pillars, and $2 \frac{1}{2}$ cubits between the last pillar of each side and the corner of the courtyard. Although Rashi (27:10) describes the same method of hanging the curtains as the Beraisa d'Meleches haMishkan (and we know that Rashi had

this text - see his comments on Bamidbar 4:32), his definition of the word for "curtains" (Shemos 27:9) deviates from that of the BdMhM, which explains it as similar to the sail of a boat - hung on the mast at its center. Instead, Rashi explains it as similar to the braids made by sailors (rope ladders?) that have holes and are not woven. If Rashi understood the layout to be as described by the BdMhM, why would he change the reason the curtains were called "kela-im?" Additionally, when describing the 15 cubits of the shoulders (27:14), Rashi counts 3 spaces of 5 cubits, with the first being "from the first pillar of the south[ern side], which stands in the southeastern corner, until the first of the three pillars" of the southeastern shoulder. According to the BdMhM, there is no pillar in any of the corners! Besides, the distance between the first pillar on the southern side and the first of the shoulder's pillars (if you cut off the southeastern corner diagonally) is less than 3 cubits - and half of that would have to count towards the southern side, not the eastern side! It would seem, then, that Rashi is not explaining the layout according to approach "B" either.

The Commentators (approach "C") on Rashi (including the Mizrachi, the Maharal, the Levush and numerous Ba'alei Tosfos) use the first pillar of the next (adjacent) side to complete the final "5-cubit" space of each section, so that there are, for example, 20 spaces on the south and north sides, not just 19. If we follow this around the rectangular courtyard, the first pillar of the northeastern shoulder doubles as the 21st pillar of the northern side, the first pillar of the "doorway" as the 4th of the northeastern shoulder, the first pillar of the southeastern shoulder as the 5th of the "doorway" and the first of the southern side as the 4th of the southeastern shoulder. And, as we saw above, Rashi does describe the pillar in the southeastern corner as being the first of the 20 pillars on the south side yet being used for the southeastern shoulder. However, rather than explaining that the first pillar of the northeastern shoulder is in the corner, and it is the 1st of the pillars of the "doorway" that acts as its 4th pillar, Rashi just adds "and the same goes for the other shoulder," implying that it uses one of the pillars of the northern side just as the southeastern shoulder uses one of the pillars from the southern side. Why would Rashi leave us with such a misleading impression? Additionally, since the space between every two pillars, on all four sides, is the same 5 cubits, why would Rashi feel the need to repeat this measurement by the shoulders if it had already given it for the southern side? And if the distance needs to be given on each different part of the perimeter, why was there no mention on the western side or in the "doorway?" (This line of questioning applies to approach "B" as well.)

Betzalel, the person chosen by G-d to be in charge of the building of the Mishkan, is described as having "wisdom, understanding and knowledge" (31:3 and 35:31). Rashi explains "wisdom" as what a person

hears and learns from someone else, "understanding" as figuring things out on his own based on what he learned from others, and "knowledge" as possessing the divine spirit. Using these three abilities, he was able to "think the appropriate calculations" to build the Mishkan and all of its vessels. If wisdom was not enough - if the ability to understand and follow directions and instructions down to the very last detail were not enough - then his role was not just precisely following the Master Architect's plans. Rather the Master Architect (G-d) purposely left certain aspects of the design for its human builders to figure out. Obviously the guidelines had to be followed exactly, but there were different options as to how the finished product could come out, and we became partners with Him by using the abilities He gave us to determine which of those possibilities to go with. Similar to the relationship between the Written Law and the Oral Law, where G-d gave us the specific guidelines to follow, but how they are carried out - what the final halachah is from among the various possibilities - is "not in heaven" but left to the Torah sages to determine, the final choices about how the Mishkan was built was left up to Betzalel and those who worked with him.

When it came to the layout of the courtyard, there were specific guidelines - it was to be 100 cubits by 50 cubits, with a total of 60 pillars supporting the curtains (20+10+20+3+4+3). How they were positioned exactly, though, may have been left up to Betzalel to determine. There were a limited amount of possibilities, but there wasn't only one possibility. Rashi may have purposely been ambiguous in order to leave these possibilities intact. Of all of the above issues, none are a direct contradiction to any of the three approaches. If Rashi had one specific approach in mind, then he may have been able to describe things more precisely. But if he wanted to allow all of them to work within his explanation, then his impreciseness is amazing.

The only sections that he comments had 5 cubits between pillars are the shoulders and the north and south sides, which is true for all 3 possibilities described above. Even though according to approach "A" the 5 cubits aren't always the same (re: whether they include the width of the pillars), this impreciseness doesn't negate the approach while allowing for the other two. If we count the cubits from the first pillar of the southern side to the first pillar of the southeastern corner along the perimeter, we will find 5 cubits in all three. Sure, adding the 2.5 on the southern side and the 2.5 on the eastern side to get 5 is a bit confusing according to approach "B," but it does tell us not to cut off the corner diagonally (or there wouldn't be 5), and remains consistent with the other two approaches. Describing the first pillar on the southern side as being in the southeastern corner may not be precise (according to "B"), but it is as close to the corner as any pillar gets. Is the northeastern pillar counted as one of the 20 on the north side, or one of the 3 of the

northeastern shoulder? By remaining ambiguous, Rashi retains his consistency with approaches "A" and "B" by sacrificing clarity if he only meant "C." And he defines "kela-im" in a way that doesn't limit which approach can be understood from his explanation.

Another example of where Betzalel may have had the latitude to determine how to fulfill G-d's command might have been the manner in which the pillars were decorated with silver. Therefore, when describing the commandment (in Parshas Terumah), all we are told is that their decorations were made of silver. In our Parsha, however, where the finished product is described, we are told that, as part of the decoration, the top part of the pillars - which were visible above the curtains - were plated with silver.

May G-d give us the wisdom, understanding and knowledge to learn what He wants from us, and to figure out the best way to accomplish it. © 2005 Rabbi D. Kramer

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

The last two portions of the Book of Exodus apply and repeat information found in previous passages of the Torah. In Parshat VaYakhel, the Tabernacle is constructed in its detail following the prescriptions found in the portion of Terumah. In the portion of Pikudei, the priestly garments are made again following the details laid out earlier in the portion of Tetzaveh.

Why is it that the Torah needs to repeat every detail when describing the making of the Tabernacle and the garments? Wouldn't it have been enough for the Torah to simply say that the Temple was constructed and the garments were made as God had commanded?

Several reasons for repetition can be suggested. First, the Torah may want to make the very point that the commands were followed in great detail. Presenting the details of the law shows that nothing mandated by God was overlooked.

Another possibility is that presenting the details again points to a loving involvement in this process. Each step in making the Tabernacle and the garments was an expression of the love that Moshe (Moses) and the people felt towards God.

But for me, the answer to our question may lie in considering the sequence of events in the latter part of Exodus. The portion of Terumah deals with the command to make the Tabernacle. Tetzaveh follows with the command of the priestly garments. Immediately following these portions, the importance of Shabbat is mentioned in the portion of Ki Tisa.

Not coincidentally, the portion of Vayakhel, which follows Ki Tisa, mentions Shabbat at its very beginning. The building of the Tabernacle, found in Vayakhel, and the making of the garments, found in Pikudei, then follow. The sequence is truly a mirror opposite with one notable exception. Whereas the

command of Tabernacle and priestly garments was followed by Shabbat, in the actual implementation of the laws, Shabbat comes first.

In Judaism, there are two sanctities, the sanctity of place and the sanctity of time. As important as place may be, time is of even greater importance. Perhaps then, it can be suggested that the reason why the Torah repeats the commandments in details is to point out that Shabbat, the epitome of the sanctity of time, is even more important than the sanctity of space represented by the Tabernacle and the garments.

In his book "The Sabbath," Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel points out that the acquisition of "space," is an appropriate human quest. But life goes wrong when one spends all of his/her time to amass "things." "For to have more, does not mean to be more."

It is interesting to note that the incident that falls between the command and the implementation is the sin of the Golden Calf. The keruvim, the angelic forms atop the Ark were holy objects; the Golden Calf which the Jews may have seen as a replacement was a defiling of place.

Precisely because of this perversion of the sanctity of space, the Torah deems it important to repeat the whole sequence, but to place Shabbat first so that its spirit be infused in every detail of the construction of the Tabernacle and making of the priestly garments. This teaches that ultimately we are people who carve out our empires in time and not in space. © 2005 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

The Mishkan and Shabat are inextricably connected. We are taught in the Talmud that all of the rules regarding the definition of the thirty-nine types of forbidden labor and work on Shabat are somehow derived from the work involved in constructing the Mishkan. In this week's parsha of Vayakhel, the opening paragraph of the parsha, which is otherwise exclusively occupied with reviewing the construction of the Mishkan, deals with the necessity for Shabat observance. Shabat is a priority in Jewish life, even trumping the construction of the Mishkan. This is a practical and simple view of the connection between Shabat and the Mishkan. But on deeper consideration, Shabat and the Mishkan have a great spiritual connection, transcending even the halachic relationship between the two.

Mishkan signifies the concept of sanctifying place. It was the forerunner to the later Temple in Jerusalem. It represents the special existence of holy space in this world. It teaches us that not all locations in the world are equal in spiritual potential and influence. It is the backdrop for our understanding of the importance and sanctity of the Land of Israel and the holiness of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount in our lives and

spiritual development. The longing of the Jewish people throughout the long dark centuries of exile to return to the Land of Israel was not only one of nationalism and freedom, but was the longing of the Jewish soul to be reunited with the place where its spiritual potential could be expanded and realized. If in the world of commerce and real estate, location is everything, the same is true in the world of Jewish spiritual development as well. The Mishkan/Temple expresses that idea to us very clearly. Understanding this will enable us to somehow understand better all of the space and detail that the Torah devotes to the Mishkan in the book of Shemot.

Shabat naturally deals with the concept of the sanctification of time. This is one of the most radical ideas that Judaism introduced into world society - that time has not only a value but that it must be invested with holiness and spirituality. Only by sanctifying time can we exploit it efficiently and correctly. And the task of sanctifying time requires a guide, a blueprint in order to be accomplished. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the Mishkan - the paradigm of the sanctification of space - should be the model for Shabat, which is the prime example of the sanctification of time. And since time is the most precious commodity in human life, the one thing that is irreplaceable and irretrievable, it is also understandable why it is a priority in Jewish life even over its model, the Mishkan.

The combination of the Mishkan and Shabat, of the sanctity of space and time creates the boundaries of Judaism. It gives the Jew one's assignment in life - to be holy and to sanctify life in all of its aspects and details. This week's parsha tells us that these ideas were given to Israel bhakel - all were present to hear the parsha. The task of sanctification of life is incumbent upon all of us. We create our own Mishkan and our own Shabat and it is necessary for us to continually enhance our spiritual growth. © 2005 Rabbi Berel Wein- Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com/jewishhistory.

MACHON ZOMET

Shabbat B'Shabbato

by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

In the beginning of this week's Torah portion, Moshe asks Bnei Yisrael to contribute donations to G-d, and he repeats the required materials in sequence, as G-d commanded him in the beginning of the portion of Teruma: "Take from among you a donation for G-d, let every generous person bring it, a donation for G-d, consisting of gold, silver, and copper; and blue, purple and scarlet wool, linen, and goat hair; and reddened skins of rams, and skins of the Tachash, and acacia wood; and oil for the light..." [Shemot 35:5-8]. However, further on, when the contribution is described the way it

was actually brought, the sequence is changed. First the gift of gold is noted, "And the men came together with the women, every generous person brought bracelets, noserings, rings, and ornaments, every utensil of gold. And this included every man who raised up a contribution of gold for G-d." [35:22]. But instead of listing the silver and the copper together with the gold, they are placed at the end of a long list of other gifts. "And every man who had in his possession blue, purple and scarlet wool, linen, and goat hair, and reddened skins of rams and skins of the Tachash, brought it. Everybody who gave a contribution of silver and copper brought the donation of G-d, and everybody who had in his possession acacia wood to be used in the work brought this too." [35:23-24]. Why was the gold listed separately from the silver and the copper?

In the passage, there is a clear difference between the donation of gold and the contributions of the other items. With respect to the other items, it seems that not all of Bnei Yisrael participated in the donations, since not everybody had the items in their possession. The materials were brought by "those who had them in their possession." The fact that silver and copper were included in these lists of somewhat limited items ("blue, purple, and scarlet wool... and acacia wood") shows that they were also not donated by all the people but only by those who had some of the material available (see Ramban). The gifts of gold, on the other hand, are described in a very general way: "and the men came together with the women..." In addition, the specific items are listed in detail-"bracelets, noserings, rings, and ornaments, every utensil of gold." This shows that each and every person, man and woman alike, was individually involved in bringing the contribution.

Evidently this personal involvement is the basis of the essential difference in the way the contributions were defined. While the other items are described with the word "teruma," a contribution, gold is described in a special way:

"every man who raised up a contribution of gold for G-d." This is a bit surprising in that the word "tenufah," an uplifted donation, always refers in the Torah to an act of holiness, such as the gift to the Kohen of the front quarters of the Shelamim sacrifice (see Vayikra 7:30-34), the Asham sacrifice of a poor man who suffered from leprosy (14:21), and of course of the Omer sacrifice and the Two Loaves on Shavuot (23:11-17). Thus, the gift of gold was similar to a sacrifice in that it was brought by every person, and it consisted of the most expensive jewelry.

This also explains why the contributions of gold and those of silver and copper were separated in this week's portion. This emphasizes the unique character of the donation of the gold. Perhaps this is also one of the reasons that most of the utensils in the Tabernacle were made from gold- not only because of the high value of this metal but also because of the high level of participation of Bnei Yisrael in contributing it.

The Daf Yomi: The Crown of the Ark

By Rabbi Gideon Pearl, Chief Rabbi of Alon Shevut

It is written in the Midrash: "And Moshe gathered the people' [Shemot 35:1]

* G-d commanded: Assemble large congregations and lecture them in public about the laws of Shabbat, so that future generations will learn from you to gather the congregations every Shabbat, in order to teach Bnei Yisrael Torah, what is forbidden and permitted. In this way, my great name will be glorified among my children... So Moshe said to Yisrael: If you act in this way, the Almighty will consider it as if you had crowned Him in His own world, as is written, 'You are my witnesses, G-d says, and I am G-d' [Yeshayahu 43:12]. [Yalkut Shimoni, Ki Tissa, 408].

It seems that our generation fulfills this command of "Vayakhel" with the regular daily study of a page from the Talmud, the "Daf Yomi," a program which has just entered its twelfth cycle, having been founded by the late Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin. This regimen forces the participants to set aside time for Torah, regularly and in a dedicated way. Those who have joined the program are literally "attached" to the Talmud and are enriched by the Divine abundance revealed in the oral Torah, which was handed down to us generation by generation, ever since it was given to Moshe at Mount Sinai. Those who participate in this program acquire good habits and good ethical traits which can be found in many places in the Talmud. It is good and proper that tens of thousands of the people of Yisrael study the same page every day, some in depth and others in a more superficial way.

This is also what the sages meant when they said that "the crown of the Ark lies and waits." "And Betzalel made the Ark' [Shemot 37:1] -- Rabbi Yehuda said: Betzalel made three arks. The middle one, from wood, a length of 9, the inside one, from gold, was a length of 8, and the external one, of gold, was a little more than 10 long... What was the extra 'little bit'? It was a crown. Rabbi Yochanan said: There are three crowns, on the Altar, on the Ark, and on the Table. With respect to the Table, David was privileged to take the crown. With respect to the Altar, Aharon was privileged to take it. But the crown of the Ark lies and waits, and whoever wants to can come and take it. Could it be that the least worthy one will take possession? No, for it is written, 'Kings will reign through me' [Mishlei 8:15]. Rabbi Yochanan asked:

It is written 'stranger' ('zar'-without a yud), but the word is read as crown ('zeir'). If one is privileged, it will be a crown, but if not, it will be strange to him." [Yalkut Shimoni, Vayakhel, 414].

The crown of the Ark lies ready, and "whoever wants to can come and take it." In this way, the joy of the Torah can be heard in all the communities of Yisrael, so that the name of G-d is enhanced and sanctified. This is what is meant by the phrase quoted

above, "the Almighty will consider it as if you had crowned Him in His own world, as is written, 'You are my witnesses, G-d says, and I am your G-d.'"

Let us therefore send our blessings and our appreciation to those who study the Daf Yomi, for they are involved in crowning the Almighty in the world. We call upon thousands more from among Bnei Yisrael to join in this regular program. Just as we have been privileged to finish a cycle of the Talmud, so do we hope for the privilege of attaining the complete and holy land.

RABBI FEIVEL WAGNER

National Council of Young Israel

This article is written L'Zeicher Nishmas Avi Mori Harav Yisrael Wagner Z"L whose yahrzeit was on 20 Adar, this past Tuesday.

One of the important foundations of Torah Judaism is the concept of the unity of Torah SheBichsav (the Written Torah) and Torah SheB'alPeh (the Oral Torah). Without the interpretations of Chazal it is impossible to understand the Torah SheBichsav. One example can be seen in this week's parsha, Vayakhel. Moshe gathers all of the Jewish people, men and women, to command them to contribute to the construction of the Mishkan and to command them about Shabbos. In informing them of the Shabbos restrictions, he constantly uses the word 'Melacha'. Melacha is what is done on the 6 days, but is prohibited on Shabbos. What is Melacha? It is usually translated as work, but that definition brings with it a serious problem. How do we define work? Each of us has a different interpretation. What one person considers work is merely an enjoyable leisure activity for another. For example, while the farmer would consider clearing a small piece of land to be work, an amateur gardener would consider it an enjoyable way to spend a summer afternoon. We need a definition that can apply to all people and at all times.

Enter Chazal, with a unique interpretation of the word Melacha, one that, in fact, differentiates it from other words in Lashon Hakodesh such as 'Avoda' which is also translated as work. Melacha means 'an act that shows man's mastery over the world by the constructive exercise of his intelligence and skill'. (See The Sabbath by Dayan Grunfeld, which offers this interpretation based on the philosophy of Rav Shmshon Rafael Hirsch and explains it in more detail. It is a small but excellent volume, which presents the idea of Shabbos and some of the laws). Rav Hirsch states that the Shabbos testifies that HaShem is the Creator of everything that exists. Man is constantly trying to control nature as HaShem has told him to do. Because man succeeds to an extent, he is in danger of forgetting that he is totally dependent on HaShem. By resting on Shabbos man shows his comprehension of this

concept. While this offers us an understanding of thirty-eight of the melachos, we still have to add something to understand why the Torah prohibited "carrying", that is moving an object from the public to the private domain or vice versa. At first glance this does not fit our definition of melacha. Nothing has been done to improve the object. I have simply moved it from one domain to another. We, therefore, must add the concept that Shabbos shows not only that the ability to improve things comes from HaShem but also the organization and workings of human society comes from Him, too.

All this is derived from our Parsha. Moshe gathers all of Klall Yisrael and tells them about Shabbos and the Mishkan. Why were these two things put together? What connection could there possibly be between the Mishkan and Shabbos? Chazal tell us that there is a connection. In order to understand what a Melacha is we need to derive from the Mishkan what is prohibited. The construction of the Mishkan is the prototype for all constructive acts. (See the Ramban in his commentary to Chumash chapter 31, verse 13 for why this is the source and not that verse, which appears earlier). Our Parsha is the source of what is considered a Melacha. © 2005 Rabbi F. Wagener and NCYI

ZEV S. ITZKOWITZ

A Byte of Torah

“**A**nd they came forward, each man whose heart lifted him up, And all those who wanted to give, brought the donation to Hashem for the making of the Tent of Meeting, and all its service and the holy garments.” (Exodus 35:21)

Why did only those 'whose heart lifted him up' come forward to work on the construction of the Tabernacle? During their stay in Egypt, the Children of Israel were never given the chance to learn and acquire skills in the art of metallurgy or other crafts. The people who came forward to work on the construction were those who were naturally skilled in the aforementioned work (Ramban). If these people were all artisans then why are they referred to as 'those whose heart lifted him up'? Their hearts lifted them up in the ways of Hashem so that they would come before Moses and volunteer to help build the Tabernacle (Ibid).

Why are there two consecutive phrases to describe those who came to help out with the Tabernacle? These two phrases describe the two types of volunteers who came to Moses. One type, 'all those who wanted to give', were those who only wanted to give according to their vigor and wealth. The other category, 'each man whose heart lifted him up', were those who, in their assistance to build the Tabernacle, gave of themselves more than their share of vigor and wealth (Or HaChayim).