

# Toras Aish

## Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

**RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN**

### Shabbat Shalom

“**A**nd let every wise-hearted man among you come, and make all that G-d has commanded; the tabernacle, its tent, and its covering, its clasps, and its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; the ark, and its poles, the ark-cover and the veil of the screen" (Exodus 35:1-12).

Strangely enough, the detailed and explicit record of the construction of the Sanctuary in the desert as the Israelites journeyed toward the promised land can illuminate for us the entire world of marriage.

What is the most critical ingredient in a marriage, the most crucial factor to determine an enduring relationship?

Is it physical attraction, emotional empathy, congruent interests - or is it perhaps the capacity to forgive and even to forget, to renew the relationship after a major domestic battle without continuing to bring up past wrongdoings?

This latter idea may provide a clue to our understanding of what is a strange Biblical puzzle: Virtually everything in this week's portion of Vayakhel (as well as next week's portion of Pekuday) concerning the Tabernacle has already been presented earlier in the portions of Truma and Tetzave. All the ritual objects and furnishings such as the Menora, the Table, the Ark, the Incense Altar, the beams, the Sacrificial Altar, as well as the special garments required for Temple priests have all been mentioned previously.

So why the repetitions? It is almost as if the Torah is testing our nerves, seeing if we can sit through the weekly reading without growing impatient.

As we have attempted to demonstrate in the past, context adds to our comprehension. These repetitions in Vayakhel don't simply appear out of nowhere; they emerge after the incident of the Golden Calf, the sin of idolatry perpetrated by the Jewish people. And immediately before the repetition, G-d forgives Israel of their sin and grants them the 'second tablets.'

Clearly the first and second presentation of the Tabernacle's construction are connected by some of the most significant moments in the history of the Jewish people, an unforgettable sequence of transgression and forgiveness which culminate with the light from Moses' face being so brilliant that he needed

a veil to protect others from its dazzling, blinding splendor!

With this bridge in mind, let's step back for a moment and see if the context now adds a certain dimension, even tension, to the difference between Tabernacle Truma and Tabernacle Vayakhel.

What is the Golden Calf? One basic way to see this calf is in the cusp between the literal and the mystical; by now it is not only the mystics who have absorbed the concept in Judaism of G-d as the lover and the Jewish people as His beloved. We reflect this lofty notion each Friday evening in the chanting from Song of Songs and in the act of binding the t'fillin around our fingers each morning with a quote from the prophet Hosea, "I will betroth you unto Me forever, and I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, justice, kindness and mercy; and I will betroth you to Me with fidelity, and you will know G-d" (2:21-22).

The Holy Zohar speaks of the Revelation at Sinai as a marriage, the raised mountain as the canopy and the Ten Commandments as the marriage contract. Emerging from this idea, the Israelites' engagement with the Golden Calf becomes a metaphor for betrayal, for adultery. And the Sanctuary is after all the nuptial canopy, the mutual home. From this perspective, we may look upon Truma and Tetzave as a metaphor for engagement, a couples' involvement in planning for their new home, tending to all its furnishings from the candelabrum to the dining room table.

And what if an important business trip calls away the groom, and he stays away longer than anticipated? When he returns, a terrible scene greets his eyes. He finds his beloved bride dancing with another person, hypnotized by a golden hunk of brawn. It's all over, the relationship seems dead, divorce inevitable.... However what if the husband has the ability - and sensitivity - to look at the events from his wife's point of view: he was away too long, he seemingly lost interest in her, he had found a new "occupation". And, after all, had he not left her alone in an unfriendly desert, without adequate preparation or protection?

And if his love for her is truly deep, he may begin to feel the urge to forgive her. And what expression should it take? Chocolates and flowers? Candlelight dinner for two? No, the best expression for forgiveness is going back to doing exactly what they were doing before the crisis. Looking at places to live,

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planning their living rooms and bedrooms, choosing curtains and cutlery and porcelain, everything that makes a home work. And if they're able to do this, it means that they have really put away this tragic episode and they're willing to make peace.

Now we understand the significance of the repetition of the details and exact measurements of the Sanctuary. Theoretically, the Torah could have stated that the "...children of Israel did everything G-d commanded them to do. . ." End of story. Instead the Torah spells out the exact details and measurements, a precise accounting of the Sanctuary's construction, demonstrating with an actual play-by-play description that the relationship has been normalized. They're back where they used to be, and life will go on, nail by nail, and beam by beam. Indeed, the greatest tangible expression of their undying love is the building of their home together, detail by detail. Each repetition merely emphasizes the Divine forgiveness and the eternity of the relationship. G-d loves us unconditionally. Our relationship with our Bride-Groom in Heaven is truly an eternal covenant.

May we soon express our love once again by building a third sanctuary through which the entire world may become a home of Sanctity for G-d and humanity. © 2008 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

#### **RABBI BEREL WEIN**

### **Wein Online**

**T**he haftarah for this week's parsha describes the efforts of the great King Shlomo in the construction of the First Temple. King Shlomo himself is a great and tragic figure. The attitude of the Talmud towards him is an ambivalent one.

On one hand, he is the builder of the Temple, the expander of the kingdom, the builder of great fortresses, and the administrator of twelve districts of his country. He is also the wisest of all men who understands even the sounds of animals and birds, the author of three of the great books of the Bible and someone upon whom the Divine Spirit itself has rested.

And yet on the other hand, the Talmud questions his right to immortality, criticizes his excesses and hubris, condemns his tolerance of the public support of idolatry by his foreign wives and even attributes the rise of Rome and the subsequent

destruction of the Second Temple to his marrying the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Jewish legend actually has him driven off of his throne by a demon and having to wander in exile for part of his life. All of this naturally dims the luster of his great earlier accomplishment of building the Temple.

The haftarah parallels the parsha in the description of the work in constructing the mishkan and its artifacts, with the same type of artisanship in the creation of the Temple and its artifacts.

Shlomo, so to speak, becomes the second Moshe in supervising the building of the house of G-d. But, in the case of Moshe, the building of the mishkan was only one of his career's accomplishments and was dwarfed by his major accomplishment of teaching and instilling Torah within the people of Israel. The building of the Temple by Shlomo was the highpoint of his career and afterwards he slipped off of the mighty pedestal of greatness that he had attained.

The Talmud teaches us that "happy are those whose later years do not shame their earlier accomplishments." My old law school professor taught us that every lawyer makes a bad mistake at least once in his professional career. He also stated that those who are fortunate enough to make that mistake early in their career are truly blessed because they can recover and advance.

Making it late in one's professional life can be disastrous to one's reputation and life. The reverse trend may be true of accomplishments.

Early accomplishments can be very dangerous because they set a standard and inspire a sense of self aggrandizement that will prevent any further achievements. Only a gradual ascent and mature considerations, which usually are part and parcel of advancing years, can guarantee that those early achievements become lasting and untarnished by later behavior. The comparison between the two great builders of G-d's house - Moshe and Shlomo - is illustrative of this truth.

Building G-d's house is a great achievement in itself. Maintaining it and using it for greater spiritual influence and instruction to the people of Israel is an even greater achievement. © 2008 *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](http://www.rabbiwein.com). For more information on these and other products visit [www.rabbiwein.com/jewishhistory](http://www.rabbiwein.com/jewishhistory).*

#### **DR. AVIGDOR BONCHEK**

### **What's Bothering Rashi**

**T**his week's parsha continues with its discussion of the Mishkan. It describes the work done by Bezalel and his co-workers in constructing the Mishkan and the related accoutrements.

And he gave the ability to teach to him and Ahaliav, the son of Achisamach, of the tribe of Dan. (Exodus 35:34)

"And Ahaliav"-Rashi: "[He] was from the tribe of Dan, of the lowliest among the Tribes, one of the sons of the maidservants, yet G-d equates him to Bezalel in the work of the Tabernacle, who was from the greatest of the tribes. This exemplifies what it says: 'He does not recognize the wealthy over the poor.' (Job 34:19)"

Rashi's message is clear. He says that Torah teaches us a moral lesson, i.e., that G-d does not show preference to the privileged over the less privileged. We derive this from the fact that G-d chose Ahaliav, the son of one of Jacob's maidservants, to be on an equal footing with Bezalel, the son of Leah, one of Jacob's wives, in the holy work of constructing the Tabernacle. And we are made aware of this by the phrasing of our verse.

But when we compare our verse with a previous one, we have a question. See 31:6 (parshat Ki Tisa). There it says: "I have given with him (Bezalel) Ahaliav the son of Achisamach of the Tribe of Dan, etc."

A Question: On the above words Rashi has no comment. Why didn't he make the comment he made on our verse on this earlier verse? This verse also mentions Ahaliav together with Bezalel. Hint: Compare the wording of the two verses.

An Answer: In verse 31:6 it says "with him (Bezalel.)" The word "with" can be understood to mean "subordinate to" and not necessarily "equal to." While in our verse we have the words "him and Ahaliav etc." Here the two are placed on an equal basis. Thus it is not by chance that Rashi makes his comment here and not earlier; only here does the wording of the verse stress their equality.

It is always wise to assume that Rashi will make an appropriate comment at the earliest opportunity in the Torah. If he does not, then we must strive to understand why. © 2008 Dr. A. Bonchek and aish.com

### MACHON ZOMET

## Shabbat B'Shabbato

by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

**T**his week's Torah portion opens with Moshe's command to Bnei Yisrael to observe the mitzva of Shabbat. Even though Shabbat was already mentioned in the previous portion (Shemot 31:12-17), it is not surprising that this subject appears again, since in any case the Torah reviews what Moshe was told about building the Tabernacle in great detail. At first glance, the passage about Shabbat in this week's portion can be viewed as an abstract of the broader passage about Shabbat that appears in last week's portion of Ki Tissa, which goes into great detail about the desecration of Shabbat. The first verse in this

week's portion referring to Shabbat is, "For six days may labor be performed, and the seventh day shall be holy for you, a Shabbat for G-d. Anybody who performs labor then will be put to death." [35:2]. This is almost an exact repetition of what is written in Ki Tissa: "Let labor be performed for six days, and the seventh day is Shabbat, holy to G-d. Anybody who performs labor on the day of Shabbat will be put to death." [31:15]. But the second verse about Shabbat in this week's portion brings up a new subject that has not yet appeared in any of the previous passages about Shabbat: "Do not light a fire in all your settlements on the day of Shabbat" [35:3]. Why does this prohibition appear at this point?

In order to answer this question, we should first ask ourselves why the mitzva of Shabbat is the only one that appears in the passages about the building of the Tabernacle. As the commentators note, it seems that "the laws of Shabbat were given before the commands to build the Tabernacle in order to teach us that this construction does not take precedence over Shabbat" [Rashi]. This also explains why Moshe begins his words to the people at the beginning of this week's portion with the subject of Shabbat, even though at Sinai it was the last subject, at the end of all the details of the Tabernacle. Moshe was told about this matter at the end, since it is not an integral part of the Tabernacle, but for Bnei Yisrael it is important to emphasize that the construction of the Tabernacle doesn't take precedence over the laws of Shabbat. This thus explains the need for the first verse quoted above, which involves the prohibition of labor on Shabbat, in contrast to the construction of the Tabernacle, in which the word "labor" appears repeatedly.

In view of the above, we can now understand the need for the second verse, prohibiting the making of a flame on Shabbat. This prohibition must be emphasized since lighting a flame is not strictly a creative act like the other labors of the Tabernacle (which serve to define the thirty-nine prohibited labors of Shabbat), but it is also forbidden. Based on the above discussion the prohibition takes on another meaning. None of the labors of the Tabernacle involve lighting a fire, and therefore the people might have thought that this action is not considered "labor" in terms of Shabbat. Perhaps the reason that it is in fact prohibited is the great importance of fire in the Tabernacle, as is noted at the end of the book of Shemot: "For the Divine cloud remained on the Tabernacle during the day, and a fire was on it at night, in front of the eyes of Bnei Yisrael, in all their travels" [40:37].

### RABBI BORUCH LEFF

## Kol Yaakov

**H**ere we go again. We seem to be having déjà vu. Wasn't it just a few short weeks ago that we read the Torah's account of the construction of

the Tabernacle? Yet, we read it again in this week's Torah portion. Even the most famous commentator, Rashi, sends us to his previous expositions on the building of the Tabernacle (see Rashi 35:5) and refrains from extensive commentary here. Yet, we are aware that the Torah does not waste space with even one extra letter, let alone entire sections. Why then, the repetition?

Another question: Does the name of this week's Torah portion, "Vayakhel" mean anything?

In general, we do ascribe significance to the names of the Torah portions. It is not simply a pragmatic device to create a name from one of the first few words of the portion. Even if the custom did develop in such a fashion, the very fact that the Jewish People collectively accepted these names for the weekly Torah portions has meaning.

In Jewish law and literature, we encounter a concept described as Minhag Yisrael Torah-"The customs of the Jewish nation become law." While a full explanation is beyond the scope of this essay, we do derive from Minhag Yisrael Torah the idea that the soul and spirit of the Jews is aware of the importance and holiness of certain practices, and will respond by adopting these practices as part of Judaism. (This, of course, does not include practices that are heretical to Torah.) So if we, as a nation, have accepted the names of the weekly Torah portions, we know that these names have cosmic significance in helping us understand each particular Parsha.

What then does the name "Vayakhel"- "And he (Moshe) congregated"- signify for our Torah portion?

In addition, we find the following mystical comment by Rabbi Yeshayah Horowitz (Shnei Luchot Habrit, Volume One, page 10a, circa 17th Century). 'If someone is an ignoramus, who tries to study Torah but fails to understand anything, he should recite, with all of his heart, the individual names of each of the Five Books of Moses. Then, he should say the names of the individual parshiyot of the Bible. He should proceed with reciting the names of all of the books of the Prophets, the tractates of the Talmud, and the Midrashim. He will then merit to understand the entirety of the Torah in the World to Come.'

Rabbi Horowitz is definitely giving great prominence and spiritual meaning to the names of the parshiyot. What then does the name, "Vayakhel," "And he (Moshe) congregated" signify for our Torah portion?

We will find the answer to our questions in a profound understanding of a passage of Talmud. The Talmud states (abridged):

From where do we derive that the Divine Presence is with a group of ten (a minyan) praying? Because the verse in Psalms 82, says, "G-d stands with His assembly." From where do we derive that G-d is with two people when they study Torah together? Because the verse in Malachi 3 states, "Then the G-d-

fearing men spoke, each one to his friend, and G-d listened." And from where do we derive that even when one person studies Torah, G-d is with him? Because the verse in Exodus 20, says, "In every place that My Name is mentioned, I will come to you and bless you."

Now since we know that G-d's Presence is with even one person, why do we need to derive (from its own verse) that G-d is with two or ten people? The answer is that G-d writes a group of two in His Book of Remembrances, while an individual's study is not written there. With a group of ten, G-d actually comes to them before they start praying. (Babylonian Talmud, Brachot 6a)

The question that is probably bothering you also bothered the commentary Tosafot. How can we suggest that G-d only writes down the Torah study of a group of two? Don't we pray on Rosh Hashana for G-d to inscribe us in His Book of Life, whether or not we are with a group? Besides, the Mishna in Pirkei Avot says that "All of our actions are recorded in His book?"

Tosafot's answer that the Talmud in Brachot quoted above agrees that all of our actions are written down in G-d's book. But when we study with a partner, the action is recorded in its own separate book.

It would appear from Tosafot that G-d has separate books for Mitzvot done by individuals and for Mitzvot accomplished by groups. Now, we know that when the Talmud discusses books of G-d, the reference is merely figurative. G-d has no physical body and there is no physical existence in Heaven. But the imagery of books does have meaning. It is not merely a cute description. Rather, the explanation is that when a group does a Mitzvah together, it is quite a different spiritual reality than if an individual performs a holy deed. It is not a difference of the quantity of more people being involved in the action. Rather, the action is qualitatively different in the eyes of G-d when a group is involved. Therefore, it warrants a separate book. It deserves a separate "spiritual group file cabinet" and cannot be "filed" together with the positive actions of individuals.

It has been suggested that the word "team" stands for "Together Everyone Accomplishes More." Teamwork and working as a community are not simply ways to combine individuals' achievements. Rather, the team succeeds in ways that would be unimaginable for individuals. This is seen in team sports as well as in projects at work.

So too, in the spiritual realm. The quality of the Mitzvah will be far better when performed by a group and G-d credits the Mitzvah as such in Heaven. This is why the Mishna says in Pirkei Avot (4:14), "A group gathering for the sake of heaven is so powerful that it is guaranteed to have lasting effects."

So why do we repeat the construction of the Tabernacle? The power of community is the answer. The Book of Exodus is all about the formation of the

Jewish People and Community. It is in Exodus where we come together as a nation in slavery, and in freedom. It is here where we accept the Torah at Sinai and receive our national mission to be a "light to the world." Is it not fitting then to conclude Exodus with the glowing national achievement of bringing G-d's Presence into the world through the Tabernacle? True, we made detailed mention of the significance of the Tabernacle in earlier Torah portions (See A Tedious Tabernacle) but we now encounter the building of the Mishkan as a community.

Earlier, Moshe individually received the commandments from G-d. That was the planning stage. Here, Moshe relays these commands to the Jewish nation and community. Now, it is the actual building stage. These commands and their fulfillment by the entire Jewish nation are carried out, bringing with it a different qualitative reality than its original mention to Moshe.

G-d wishes to stress this idea of the power of community and therefore "repeats" the sections of the Tabernacle's construction displaying the Jewish People's communal accomplishment.

This is why the Parsha is called "Vayakhel," "And he (Moshe) congregated." The key to the entire portion is to understand the importance of a congregation and its spiritually powerful actions. The Jewish People fulfilled their mission in bringing G-d into the world through the Tabernacle and they did it as a community, not as millions of individuals. They understood the unique reality to a group's actions, especially an entire nation's, and they appreciated every detail of their building the Tabernacle. So G-d writes every detail of the construction of the Tabernacle "again" because He wants us to appreciate it as well.

While reading Parshat VaYakhel, let's internalize the beautiful power of community building and teamwork in all aspects of our lives. © 2008 Rabbi B. Leff & aish.com

### **RABBI MICHA BERGER**

## **Aspaqlaria**

**W**hen the parts of the Mishkan were completed, the Mishkan was then dedicated in the Shmonas Yimei Hamilu'im, 8 days in which it was assembled and taken down. For the first seven days, it was assembled by Aharon and his sons, the kohanim. On the eight day, Moshe assembled the Mishkan.

What was the purpose of this? If the building of the Mishkan was just practice, to learn how to do it in the future, Moshe would have demonstrated to the kohanim how to assemble the Mishkan on the first day, not the last, after they've done it seven times already.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch sees in these 8 days a symbol for the subsequent history of all of the sanctuaries. The Mishkan was assembled in five

places: Sinai, Gilgal, Shilo, Nov, and Gideon. After the Mishkan, we have had two Batei Mikdash so far, and await the building of the third. In all, sanctuaries are built eight times in Jewish history.

There is a famous Aggadita that explains why Moshe Rabbeinu could not be the one to take us into Eretz Yisrael. Anything Moshe did is permanent. This is important, because if it were possible to abrogate one thing that he did, it brings into question the permanence of the Torah. However, Hashem knew that the time would come when the Jews would deserve punishment. By having Joshua bring us into Israel, it made the choice of exile a possible punishment.

This makes Rabbiner Hirsch's comment even more interesting. On the eighth day the assembly was done by Moshe. The eighth day also parallels the Third Beis Hamikdash, which will never be destroyed. Moshe was not merely participating in the consecration of the Mishkan, but also was demonstrating the permanence of the Messianic age. The Temple will not fall again, there will be no more exiles.

But what gave Moshe Rabbeinu's actions the power of permanence?

We find that Hashem uses two adjectives to describe Moshe. The first is anav, modest. "And the man Moshe was very modest." (Bamidbar 12:3) Modesty is a necessary precondition for prophecy. If one is too full of himself, there is no room for G-d. If everything you perceive is colored by what you want to hear, then you can't hear Hashem.

The second, is that Hashem calls him "Moses My servant", Moshe Avdi. "Moshe avdi is not like that" (ibid 7). Hirsch finds a similarity between eved, with an ayin, and avad, with an aleph. Avad means lost. Eved, with the voiced ayin instead of the silent aleph, means one whose will, desires, and self-identity are occluded by another's. Moshe Avdi, therefore, means, Moshe, who made his desires secondary to Mine.

Both adjectives, anav and eved, describe Moshe Rabbeinu as one who placed his own desires second. Everything Moshe did was lisheim Shamayim (for the sake of heaven). His actions were an expression of Hashem's will.

R. Yochanan Hasandler (Avos 4:14) describes what gives permanence to a congregation. "Any congregation which is lisheim Shamayim will end up existing, and congregation which is not lisheim Shamayim will not end up existing."

Perhaps this too is the source of the permanence of Moshe Rabbeinu's actions. Just as a congregation that is lisheim Shamayim endures, so too other activities.

Chazal comment on the phrase "Mishkan Ha'eidus" (the Mishkan, dwelling place, of testimony), "Sheyitmaskhein ba'avonos Yisrael", it will be made temporary through the sins of Israel. Divrei Shaul writes that this is because it was built by Betzalel, a human

being. However, the third Beis Hamikdosh, "tivneh chomos Yerushalayim—You will build the walls of Jerusalem" (Tehillim 51:20). Hashem will build it, and so it will be permanent.

It is not clear how literally to take the idea that Hashem will build it. In Hilchos Melachim, the Rambam clearly describes the building as part of the role of the Melech Hamoshiach. How then would the Rambam understand "tivneh chomos Yerushalayim"?

We said that the building of the third Beis Hamikdosh was foreshadowed by Moshe assembling the Mishkan on the eighth day. Perhaps this is to indicate that the third Beis Hamikdosh will be built by people, who like Moshe, are acting entirely *lisheim Shamayim*, with no element of personal motivation. Since "a person's messenger is like himself", it could be said poetically that Hashem was doing the building, even though the king will be leading it. Since it is being done *lisheim Shamayim*, it would still have the permanence described in the *Divrei Shaul*.

We hold that in general "mitzvos einum tzrichos kavanah—mitzvos do not require intent". (Exceptions are those mitzvos, like *tephillah*, where intent is the who substance of the mitzvah.) But look how much is lost when we do this minimal requirement! The mitzvah is robbed of its ability to have lasting impact!

To truly get value out of the mitzvos, we have to explore our motivations. I am doing this because that is how I was raised? Or because it will impress my neighbors with my "frumkeit"? Hashem tells me to do this, but why? What can I learn and take with me from the deed I am about to do?

Perhaps by focusing on doing things *lisheim Shamayim*, we can merit to be the generation that builds the third Beis Hamikdosh (which will be done *lisheim Shamayim*), speedily, in our days, *Amein*.  
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#### **RABBI DOV KRAMER**

## **Taking a Closer Look**

**B**y recounting, in detail, the building of the Mishkan in Parashas Vayakhel, the Torah gives us an opportunity to spend more time on things we began to study several weeks ago in Parashas Terumah. There ([www.aishdas.org/ta/5768/terumah.pdf](http://www.aishdas.org/ta/5768/terumah.pdf)), I discussed how the coverings lay on the Mishkan and suggested an answer to a difficulty that had been, for the most part, unresolved. This week, I would like to discuss a question Rashi (26:5) asks on the *Beraisa d'Mem Tes Midos* that many commentators try to give an answer to.

The *Beraisa* (10) says that the lowest covering also covered the pillars that the curtain of the Mishkan's doorway hung on, so that only 8 of its 40 cubits were able to cover the back (western) wall. The interior of the Mishkan was 30 cubits long, the beams that made up the Mishkan's walls (including the rear wall) were 1

cubit thick, and the pillars in front were also 1 cubit thick, for a total of 32 cubits. Since the gold clasps that joined the two halves of the covering were smack in the middle (with each half being comprised of five 4 cubit pieces), the clasps were 20 cubits from each end. With one end covering 8 cubits of the back wall and the 1 cubit thickness of its beams, these clasps were 11 cubits from the back of the Mishkan, or one cubit east of the "paroches" that divided the "Kodesh" from the "Kodesh Hakadashim." However, the Torah says explicitly (26:33) that the "paroches" was under the clasps. Therefore, Rashi (on 26:5) says that this verse (26:33) is more consistent with the approach of the Talmud (*Shabbos* 98b), which has 9 of the 10 cubits of the rear wall covered by this layer, leaving the pillars in the front uncovered and the gold clasps directly over the "paroches."

The most widely discussed explanation of how the *Beraisa* can be consistent with the Torah's requirement that the clasps be above the "paroches" (see *Chizkuni*) is that the pillars that the "paroches" was hung on were not within the 10 cubits of the "Kodesh Hakadashim," but right after them. Since they were also a cubit thick, if the "paroches" was hung on the eastern side of the pillars, it would be 11 cubits from the western wall, and directly under the clasps. This raises other issues, such as taking a cubit away from the eastern portion of the Mishkan, leaving only 19 cubits instead of 20. The *Mizrachi* therefore suggests that the curtain at the Mishkan's opening was also hung on the outside (eastern) side of the front pillars, so that if we include the thickness of those pillars (meaning the space between the pillars), there are 20 cubits. Even though the thickness of the pillars that the "paroches" was hung on is not included in the space of the "Kodesh Hakadashim" (so that it is only 10 cubits long), the space of the front pillars would be. This inconsistency led the *Maharal* (and others) to reject this approach; others are okay with the area of the pillars of the "paroches" being considered "closed" ("*sasum*") and not counted as either part of the "Kodesh" or of the "Kodesh Hakadashim" even if the area of the front pillars are "open" and part of the Mishkan. The *Malbim* (26:6) says that this would be consistent with *Rabbi Yosi's* opinion in the Talmud (*Yoma* 51b) regarding the status of the cubit that divided the two parts of the Temple; it would also be consistent with *Rabbi Yosi's* opinion in the *Beraisa d'Meleches Hamishkan* (1:1) that the Mishkan was 31 cubits long, not just 30.

Nevertheless, it would be difficult to say that this is the opinion of the *Beraisa d'Mem Tes Midos*, as this *Beraisa* (14) says explicitly that the "paroches" was 10 cubits from the rear wall (not 11). This is despite its also saying (*ibid*) that the "paroches" was under the clasps. We therefore still need a way to explain how the "paroches" could be said to be under the clasps if the

clasps had to be (according to this Beraisa) 11 cubits from the rear wall, not 10.

Although many assume (based on his pointing out this inconsistency) that Rashi is following the Talmud's opinion that the lower layer did not cover the front pillars, it seems pretty clear that Rashi agrees that these pillars were covered. First of all, when describing how half of the extra section of the second layer covered more of the back wall than the lower covering did (26:12), Rashi says that it covered both of the cubits that had been left uncovered by the lower layer. In other words, only 8 of the 10 cubits of the rear wall had been covered, and now all 10 were covered. The only way that only 8 cubits were covered (and not 9) would be if the front pillars were covered! And being that 8 cubits covered the rear wall and 1 cubit was over the beams of that wall, the gold clasps had to be 11 cubits from the wall, not 10! Rashi has the same difficulty he pointed out with the Beraisa!

Additionally, Rashi says that the other extra 2 cubits of the second layer hung over the doorway (26:9). But what about the top (thickness) of the front pillars? If both extra cubits hung down in front, obviously the cubit covering the top of those pillars was not "extra," but the same as the lower covering. Again, Rashi is consistent with the Beraisa's opinion that the lower covering also covered the top of the front pillars. It should be pointed out, though, that Rashi is not consistent with everything in the Beraisa, as the Beraisa (12) has the brass clasps that connected the two (unequal) halves of the second layer precisely 10 cubits from the rear wall and directly over the "paroches," meaning that only 9 cubits of the rear wall were covered (whereas Rashi had all 10 covered). As a matter of fact, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, shlita, in his comments on the Beraisa, says that the Beraisa understands the verse placing the "paroches" under the clasps as referring to the brass clasps of the second layer, not the gold clasps of the lower layer.

As previously mentioned, Rashi is consistent with the Beraisa regarding the gold clasps being a cubit to the east of the "paroches." As far as where Rashi understands the brass clasps to be, since the second layer covered all 10 cubits of the rear wall and the (cubit of the) beams of that wall, these clasps had to be only 9 cubits from the rear wall ( $9+10+1=20$ ), or one cubit to the west of the "paroches." It is therefore possible that Rashi understands the Torah saying that the "paroches" was "under" the clasps to be referring to being under both clasps, and that even though it wasn't directly under either one, since it was in the middle of the two it could be considered "under" both. Rashi may agree that the literal words of the verse fit better with the Talmud's approach, but when considering the whole picture was more willing to live with this explanation. It should be noted that when the Beraisa (12) refers to the brass clamps that were directly over

the "paroches" it uses a different word ("kenegdo" as opposed to "al") then when (in 14) describing being under ("tachas") the gold clasps. This latter word, which must be understood as being "approximately under" rather than "directly under" is the same word used by the Torah.

Aside from Rashi understanding the "paroches" to be under/inbetween the two sets of clasps, the gold clasps were really less than a cubit away, for several reasons. First of all, the top of the "paroches" was wrapped around a rod which was hung on hooks attached to the pillars (see Rashi on 26:31). Considering the thickness of the "paroches" itself, doubled because it was wrapped around a pole, and taking the length of the hooks and the thickness of the pole into account, the edge of the "paroches" was closer to the gold clasps than the full cubit from the clasps to the wood of the pillars. Additionally, even though the loops through which the brass clasps of the second layer went are described as being "on the edge" of each of the two pieces (26:10 and 36:17), the loops of the lower layer were "on" one edge (26:4 and 36:11) and "at the edge" of the other (26:5 and 36:12). In other words, the clasp extended past the edge of one of the halves (see Malbim), putting the clasps closer to the "paroches" than the end of the eastern section was. The clasps themselves are described as being shaped like small barbells (or large staples), with each edge being put through the loops on either side. If we add the length of the stem of the clasps to the thickness of the part of the clasp that went through the loops that were beyond the covering itself, the clasps that the "paroches" was "under" were closer to the pillar than the edge of the eastern half of the covering was. Taken together with the distance the edge of the "paroches" was from the pillar itself, is it really that awkward for the Torah to consider the "paroches" to be "under" the clasps? © 2008 Rabbi D. Kramer

#### **RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY**

### **Going the Extra Smile**

**B**uilding a sanctuary is difficult enough. Getting people to donate has been, historically, even more difficult. That, however, was not the case concerning the Mishkan. The Torah in this week's portion tells us that everyone contributed to the cause. Men and women brought gold and silver. They brought personal items and family items. Copper mirrors were donated as well as bracelets, bangles and baubles. Those who had wool and linen came and those who had dyes donated.

Before the pledges began arriving, the Neseim (the heads of the tribes) were so confident that the goals would not be met, that they pledged to fill the gap of any missing funds. They were shocked to learn that there was almost nothing for them to contribute! So much of every item was donated that an

announcement was made, ordering the entire nation to halt their generosity. (It may have been the first and last of its kind!)

But what interests me is one other group of people that the Torah mentions as contributors. "And all those who Hashem inspired with wisdom to do the work. They took in front of Moshe the donations that the Jews brought for the work of the Mishkan, and the brought an additional offering each morning" (Exodus 36:2-4).

Why did the Torah single out that these people brought something to the Mishkan? Didn't everybody?

The daughter of Rabbi Zusia of Anipol's was engaged. As poor as he was, Reb Zusia and his wife scraped together enough money for a seamstress to sew a beautiful gown for the bride-to-be. After a month the gown was ready, and Reb Zusia's wife went with her bundle of rubles to the home of the seamstress to get the finished gown.

She came home empty-handed. "Where is the gown?" asked both the Rebbe and his daughter, almost in unison.

"Well," said his wife, "I did a mitzvah. When I came to pick up the gown, I saw tears in the eyes of the seamstress. I asked her why she was crying and she told me that her daughter, too, was getting married. Then she looked at the beautiful gown that she had sewn for me and sighed, "if only we could afford such beautiful material for a gown."

Reb Zusia's wife continued. "At that moment I decided to let the seamstress have our gown as a gift!"

Reb Zusia was delighted. The mitzvah of helping a poor bride was dear to him and he longed for the opportunity to fulfill it. But he added one question to his wife. "Did you pay her for the work she did for us?"

"Pay her?" asked the wife, "I gave her the gown!"

"I'm sorry," said the Rebbe. "You told me the gown was a gift. We still owe her for the weeks of work she spent for us." The rebbitzen agreed and, in addition to the gift of the gown she compensated the seamstress for her work.

The men and women who toiled laboriously could have said that they had done their share. After all, they crafted and wove the beautiful utensils and tapestries of the Mishkan. Yet that was not enough for them. In addition to the work they did, Rabbi Shlomo Kluger (1786-1829) explains, they contributed too! They did not stop their commitment with their work for the Mishkan. The Torah tells us that they, too, gave each morning. The efforts of individuals were crowned by their relentless generosity. In addition to their time and their skills, they gave their possessions. In a generation that looks to abdicate responsibility and commitment, it is wonderful to read about men and women who searched for more ways to give—and found them!

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**RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR**

## Torah Weekly

“**T**en curtains of linen, twisted with turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool...” (36:8) Why is it that The Torah sometimes seems so repetitive?

In this week's Parsha the Torah lists in extensive detail exactly the same description of the Mishkan and its furnishings as it did in Parshas Terumah.

Why the need for the repetition?

The Dubner Maggid was famous for his meshalim (parables) which always hit the bull's eye. With a short story he could illuminate a Torah idea, lighting up the eyes and the minds of all who listened.

The Vilna Gaon once asked him how it was that he was able to tell such wonderfully telling parables that always seemed to hit the mark. The Dubner Maggid replied with another mashal: There once was a prince who desired greatly to become a master archer. One day while he was traveling he came to a small village. An archery contest was in progress. The prince noticed that one of the contestant's accuracy was almost uncanny. Each of his targets was pierced exactly in the center.

The prince asked this fellow how he was able to achieve such striking results. This was his reply: "Well first I aim at a tree. Then, once I hit the tree, I run up to it and paint circles around the arrow."

Said the Dubner Maggid to the Vilna Gaon: "I do the same. First of all I find an interesting story, then I look for a relevant verse or Torah thought to which to attach it."

In much the same way, this is what Hashem did when He brought the universe into being. First of all He `wrote' the mashal—the Torah—and then He looked into it and created the world.

The Torah is the blueprint of the world. But more than an architect's blueprint which is lifeless, the Torah is the dynamo, the source of the spiritual energy, that keeps the world turning.

A fluorescent light may consume only a few watts, whereas an air-conditioning unit will need several thousand.

In the same way, the `spiritual electricity' of one Torah verse alone was enough to sustain all the creatures of the sea: "Let the waters teem with teeming living creatures..." (Bereishis 1:20)

However, the Mishkan which was Hashem's `dwelling place' in this world, required the `spiritual current' of a much higher order.

This is the reason there are so many verses in the Torah which refer to the Mishkan. Every verse in its description is like another volt, and watt. © 1997 Rabbi Y.A. Sinclair and Ohr Somayach International