

# Toras Aish

## Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

**RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS**

### Covenant & Conversation

If leaders are to bring out the best in those they lead, they must give them the chance to show they are capable of great things, and then they must celebrate their achievements. That is what happens at a key moment toward the end of our parsha, one that brings the book of Exodus to a sublime conclusion after all the strife that has gone before.

The Israelites have finally completed the work of building the Tabernacle. We then read: "So all the work on the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was completed. The Israelites did everything just as the Lord commanded Moses... Moses inspected the work and saw that they had done it just as the Lord had commanded. So Moses blessed them." (Ex. 39:32,43)

The passage sounds simple enough, but to the practised ear it recalls another biblical text, from the end of the creation narrative in Genesis: "The heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. On the seventh day G-d finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then G-d blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done." (Gen. 2:1-3)

Three key words appear in both passages: "work," "completed" and "blessed." These verbal echoes are not accidental. They are how the Torah signals intertextuality, that is, hinting that one law or story is to be read in the context of another. In this case the Torah is emphasizing that Exodus ends as Genesis began, with a work of creation. Note the difference as well as the similarity. Genesis began with an act of Divine creation. Exodus ends with an act of human creation.

The closer we examine the two texts, the more we see how intricately the parallel has been constructed. The creation account in Genesis is tightly organized around a series of sevens. There are seven days of creation. The word "good" appears seven times, the word "G-d" thirty-five times, and the word "earth" twenty-one times. The opening verse of Genesis contains seven words, the second fourteen, and the three concluding verses 35 words. The complete text is 469 (7x67) words.

The account of the construction of the Tabernacle in Vayakhel-Pekudei is similarly built around

the number seven. The word "heart" appears seven times in Exodus 35:5-29, as Moses specifies the materials to be used in the construction, and seven times again in 35:34 -- 36:8, the description of how the craftsmen Bezalel and Oholiav were to carry out the work. The word *terumah*, "contribution" appears seven times in this section. In chapter 39, describing the making of the priestly vestments, the phrase "as G-d commanded Moses" occurs seven times. It occurs again seven times in chapter 40.

A remarkable parallel is being drawn between G-d's creation of the universe and the Israelites' creation of the Sanctuary. We now understand what the Sanctuary represented. It was a micro-cosmos, a universe in miniature, constructed with the same precision and "wisdom" as the universe itself, a place of order as against the formlessness of the wilderness and the ever-threatening chaos of the human heart. The Sanctuary was a visible reminder of G-d's presence within the camp, itself a metaphor for G-d's presence within the universe as a whole.

A large and fateful idea is taking shape. The Israelites, who have been portrayed throughout much of Exodus as ungrateful and half-hearted, have now been given the opportunity, after the sin of the golden calf, to show that they are not irredeemable. They are capable of great things. They have shown they can be creative. They have used their generosity and skill to build a mini-universe. By this symbolic act they have shown they are capable of becoming, in the potent rabbinic phrase, "G-d's partners in the work of creation."

This was fundamental to their re-moralization and to their self-image as the people of G-d's covenant. Judaism does not take a low view of human possibility. We do not believe we are tainted by original sin. We are not incapable of moral grandeur. To the contrary, the very fact that we are in the image of the Creator means that we -- uniquely among life forms -- have the ability to be creative. As Israel's first creative achievement reached its culmination Moses blessed them, saying, according to the sages, "May it be G-d's will that His presence rests in the work of your hands." (Sifre, Bamidbar, Pinhas, 143) Our potential greatness is that we can create structures, relationships and lives that become homes for the Divine presence.

Blessing them and celebrating their achievement, Moses showed them what they could be. That is potentially a life-changing experience. Here is a contemporary example.

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In 2001, shortly after 9/11, I received a letter from a woman in London whose name I did not immediately recognise. The morning of the attack on the World Trade Centre, I had been giving a lecture on ways of raising the status of the teaching profession, and she had seen a report about it in the press. This prompted her to write and remind me of a meeting we had had eight years earlier.

She was then, in 1993, head-teacher of the school that was floundering. She had heard some of my broadcasts, felt a kinship with what I had to say, and thought that I might have the answer to her problem. I invited her, together with two of her deputies, to our house. The story she told me was this: morale within the school, among teachers, pupils and parents alike, was at an all-time low. Parents had been withdrawing their children. The student roll had fallen from 1000 children to 500. Examination results were bad: only 8 per cent of students achieved high grades. It was clear that unless something changed dramatically, the school would have to close.

We talked for an hour or so on general themes: the school as community, how to create an ethos, and so on. Suddenly, I realised that we were thinking along the wrong lines. The problem she faced was practical, not philosophical. I said: 'I want you to live one word -- celebrate.' She turned to me with a sigh: 'You don't understand -- we have nothing to celebrate. Everything in the school is going wrong.' 'In that case', I replied, 'find something to celebrate. If a single student has done better this week than last week, celebrate. If someone has a birthday, celebrate. If it's Tuesday, celebrate.' She seemed unconvinced, but promised to give the idea a try.

Now, eight years later, she was writing to tell me what had happened since then. Examination results at high grades had risen from 8 to 65 per cent. The roll of pupils had risen from 500 to 1000. Saving the best news to last, she added that she had just been made a Dame of the British Empire -- one of the highest honours the Queen can bestow -- for her contribution to education. She ended by saying that she just wanted me to know how one word had changed the school and her life.

She was a wonderful teacher, and certainly did not need my advice. She would have discovered the answer on her own anyway. But I was never in any

doubt that the strategy would succeed. We grow to fill other people's expectations of us. If they are low, we remain small. If they are high, we walk tall.

The idea that each of us has a fixed quantum of intelligence, virtue, academic ability, motivation and drive is absurd. Not all of us can paint like Monet or compose like Mozart. But we each have gifts, capacities, that can lie dormant a throughout life, until someone awakes them. We can achieve heights of which we never thought ourselves capable. All it takes is for us to meet someone who believes in us, challenges us, and then, when we have responded to the challenge, blesses and celebrates our achievements. That is what Moses did for the Israelites after the sin of the golden calf. First he got them to create, and then he blessed them and their creation with one of the simplest and most moving of all blessings, that the Shekhinah should dwell in the work of their hands.

Celebration is an essential part of motivating. It turned a school around. In an earlier age and in a more sacred context it turned the Israelites around. When we celebrate the achievements of others, we change lives.  
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#### **RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN**

### **Shabbat Shalom**

"**A**nd the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Sanctuary. And Moses was unable to enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud rested upon it..." (Ex. 40:34-35).

What is the significance of the symbol of the cloud, and its twin symbol, fire?

The cloud rested on the Sanctuary and directed the Israelites in the desert by day), the fire directed the Israelites in the desert by night and confirmed the Divine acceptance of a ritual sacrifice (Num. 9:15-23; Ex. 24:17; 1 Kings 18:38). Together, these symbols comprise the heavens, shamayim; the very Hebrew word shamayim is comprised of two words, aish (fire) and mayim (water), water being the stuff that clouds are made of and turn into. Fire and water are also the ultimate antinomies, the eternal opposites. Hence, since the heavens are the abode of the Divine, the heavens also express the consummate paradox which miraculously brings together in peace even those elements which seem to be constantly at war with each other, fire and water!

Furthermore, clouds within themselves express protective cover and life-giving rain, security as well as growth and development. And fire expresses warmth, which likewise nurtures life, and creativity, as evidenced in the myth of Prometheus: the Greeks thought that fire had to have been stolen by the gods themselves, since all inventiveness stems from the proper use of fire.

By using these two powerful symbols of the

Divine Presence, the Torah conveys another message. It insists that as long as the cloud rested on the Tent of Meeting, Moses was forbidden from entering it - unless he were to be expressly summoned by G-d. Hence the Book of Exodus concludes with Moses' inability to enter the Sanctuary (Ex. 40:35), and the Book of Leviticus opens, "And G-d called out unto Moses and the Lord spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting". (Lev. 1:1) Moses would require specific summons from G-d before he could stand in the presence of the Divine and enter the cloud.

Similarly, while it is true that fire has the ability to bring warmth, it can also devour and destroy. The great Rabbi Eliezer declared, "Warm yourselves by fire of the Sages, but be careful of the coals lest you be burnt" (Mishnah Pirkei Avot 2:15); if this is true of Torah Sages, how much more so must this be true of the Almighty Himself!

From this perspective, the symbols of cloud and fire warn us to temper our desire for closeness to the Divine with reverence and awe which engenders distance. "Serve the Almighty with joyous love, but let there be a degree of trembling in your exaltation." Too much familiarity can lead to a relaxation of discipline, and ecstatic devotion of the moment can sometimes overlook a religio-legal command. Passion is a critical component of religious piety, but it must be moderated by Divine law or it can run wildly into fanaticism. As the Psalmist declares, "Cloud and haze are around Him, so righteousness and just law establish His throne." (Ps. 97:2)

Moreover, cloud and fire, the lack of clarity expressed by a cloud and the inability to gaze directly into a flame, likewise express one of the deepest truths of the Jewish message: religion is not so much paradise as it is paradox. G-d demands fealty even in the face of agonizing questions and disturbing uncertainty.

Egypt, with its ever-present waters of the Nile and its unchanging social order of masters and slaves, represent certainty; the desert, on the other hand, and especially the rain-expectant manna-less and leader-starved Land of Israel represent the unknown. G-d expects us to have the courage to enter into the haze, to scale the heights of the unknown, to take the risks of uncertainty as to immediate outcome in order to act as partners of the Divine. We must attempt to make light from darkness, order from chaos, gardens from swamp lands, and justice from inequity. And just as the Almighty took a risk, as it were, by creating a human being with freedom of choice, so must we take risks by venturing into the unknown. "I remember the loving kindness of your youth, the love of your engagement years, when you went after Me in the desert, in a land which was not seeded." (Jer. 2:2)

Perhaps only a nation which has fealty to a G-d who has no form and is profoundly unknowable can enter into a cloud of the unknown. But even if the precise details of the challenge are not prescribed, we

do have a Torah which does specify right and wrong ways to pursue our goal. And, at the very least, the end-goal is certainly guaranteed, when "nation will not lift up sword against nation, and humanity will not learn war anymore," (Mic. 4:3 & Isa. 2:4) "When the Knowledge of the Lord (at last!) will fill the world as the water (from the clouds) will cover the seas." (Hab. 2:14) ©2014 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

### RABBI BEREL WEIN

## Wein Online

One of the many new but somehow always temporary buzzwords that are so beloved in our current society is?transparency.? In our current world's lexicon this word has substituted for what earlier in my life our teachers used to call?accountability.? No matter, the idea is the same; namely, that when it comes to public funds and positions one is held to be responsible to the nth degree for what occurs under one's aegis and watch.

In a project of such magnitude as creating the Tabernacle/Mishkan from scratch, making and collecting the necessary funds and materials, paying the workers and overseeing the construction, it is likely that it will be difficult to account for every agurah involved. Yet we see in this week's parsha that Moshe in fact did so.

The Midrash tells us that in the original accounting of receipts and expenditures, Moshe was off by one thousand shekels. Since it is likely that the value of the Tabernacle/Mishkan ran into millions of shekels one would think that being off by less than one percent regarding a project and budget of this magnitude could easily be overlooked and certainly forgiven.

However, the necessity for transparency and accountability when it comes to public funds is so vital that Moshe cannot let the matter pass. He searches and searches and finally is able to successfully account for the previously missing one thousand shekels. This sets the standard of the Torah when it comes to public charitable funds. Excellent accounting methods must be put into place to guarantee public trust and to prevent any misuse or slipshod handling of funds donated for the public good and/or holy purposes.

Money can be a terrible thing, especially when one's ego allows one the liberty to see one's self as all-powerful and exceedingly self-righteous. Handling public funds or being in a highly respected public position creates great temptations. The basest acts of malfeasance and even thievery can be rationalized and excused for one's self.

This has been so from the beginning of time, and as we are well aware, in our generation and present leadership, both religious and political are all prone to succumb to this temptation. Yet we are also aware that there are not enough police and prosecutors in the world to completely overcome this human weakness of

temptation and monetary corruption.

It is interesting to note that in First Temple times when the Temple building was to be refurbished, the King had to forego any strict accounting of the funds collected by the priests for that purpose. He rather, almost ruefully, had to rely on the trustworthiness of the priests themselves in the hope that no public funds would be siphoned off into private coffers.

The great lesson here is that honesty and probity is created from within and not from without. We need police and law enforcement in order to have a livable society. But without the self-discipline of honesty and the realization that the Lord holds us accountable for every one of our activities and for every agorah of public funds that passes through our fingers -- we are accountable for every bit of behavior in public service? there can be no complete victory over the temptations of wealth and office. Perhaps that is one of the reasons for all of the detail and accounting that fill this final parsha of the book of Shemot/Exodus.

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#### RABBI AVI WEISS

## Shabbat Forshpeis

**T**he second book of the Torah concludes at the end of this week's portion. As the final words are recited, the assembled call out hazak, hazak, ve-nithazek, be strong, be strong and may we be strengthened. Indeed, we say these words when completing each of the Five Books of Moses.

Most interpret these words to speak first to the individual, and then to the collective whole. Hazak is a singular term. When uttered twice it creates a sense of community. Hence, ve-nithazek - together we will gain greater strength and prevail.

However, if we examine the end of Genesis and Exodus, the first two places where we actually utter this phrase, a deeper understanding emerges. Genesis concludes with Joseph's death. Exodus comes to a conclusion with the cloud of glory resting upon the newly finished Tabernacle.

A common thread can be seen. Both books conclude with endeavors left unfinished-left to be concluded by the next generation. When Joseph dies, slavery is about to begin-fulfillment of the covenant with our ancestors, in the form of redemption, comes many years later. Similarly the Exodus narrative ends with the Tabernacle just constructed, but the fulfillment of the use of the Tabernacle has not yet taken place. Not only has it not been used, but it serves as a blueprint for the ultimate House of G-d, the Holy Temple built many years later.

Note that the three other places where hazak is

recited fall into the same pattern. Leviticus and Numbers end with laws of tithing and inheritance. Those laws are given, although they can only fully become a reality after possessing land in Israel, which occurs later. And, of course, Deuteronomy concludes with the death of Moshe. The irony of his life is that the greatest leader of our people never realized his greatest dream, to enter the land of Israel - a mission only to be achieved by those he left behind.

An important lesson emerges. Often, in life, we think that there is nothing we cannot accomplish. The culmination of each book teaches us-no. No one leaves the world fulfilling all of their dreams, all of their hopes and expectations. In the words of Rabbi Tarfon, it is not for any of us to complete the task. (Avot 2:21)

The story is told of an elderly man who plants a carob tree. "Foolish man," a passerby proclaimed, "why do you waste your time? Surely, you will not live long enough to see the tree produce." The old man sighed and responded, "My father planted trees for me and I, in turn, must plant trees for my children."

Notwithstanding that no one can fully complete the task, Rabbi Tarfon adds that we are not free from doing our share, from embarking on our goals with our utmost energy and strength. This in fact, may be the deeper meaning of the refrain: first we proclaim hazak hazak-be strong, be strong, let us each make sure to do our share, knowing all along that we will not complete every goal.

But then, we call out together, ve-nithazek, may we be strengthened in the recognition that together, our task be concluded, even if it takes generations to make it a reality.

With this in mind, I suggest that this week, and every other occasion that we complete a book of the Torah, we take a moment of pause to recognize that as we surround the Torah, that we appreciate the gifts of the generations that proceeded us. At the same time, we should hold our children close in the prayer that they continue the mission of our people and Torah. ©2005 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale

#### YOUNG ISRAEL OF PASSAIC-CLIFTON

## As G-d Commanded

by Rabbi JB Love

**R'** Yishmael bar Nachmani, in the name of R' Yochanan, [says], 'The basis [for the number eighteen (18) for the *b'rachos* of the weekday *amida*] are the eighteen "commands" in the second *parasha* of the *mishkan*.' R' Chiya bar Va says, 'Only from after Ahaliav to the end of the book.'" The reference is to the eighteen times the words, "as G-D had **commanded** Moshe," appear in *parashas p'kudei*

after verse 38:23.<sup>1</sup> Since nothing of the “commands” appears in *vayakhel R’ Yishmael* could not have meant that part of the “second” account. We are also told to ignore the reference to G-D’s command at the beginning of *p’kudei* (38:22), and only count those from verse 23 on. The idea, it seems, is that the number of *b’rachos* in the *sh’mone esrai* has a connection to the **fashioning** and **donning** of the priestly vestments and the **bringing, anointing** and **erection** of the *mishkan*. **Not**, it would appear, to the **fashioning** of the *mishkan*. This needs some explanation as does the very connection of the *sh’mone esrai* to these “commands.”<sup>2</sup>

Rabbi Yehuda Nachshoni zl<sup>3</sup> eloquently shows how the *mishkan*, with all its precise detail, was meant to be the “receiver” of spirituality on Earth. Therefore, as with any device that has the power to do good or harm, each coded color wire and switch had to be connected precisely, every line in the blueprint had to be followed exactly as to size and dimension. In this lay the necessity for the precise repetition when mandating the design and when the orders were carried out. G-D, and He alone, could design such a receiver and only in the precise following of the blueprints could we hope for it to work. For this job only B’tzalel, “who knew how to put together the letters which formed Heaven and Earth,”<sup>4</sup> would do. This receiver would accomplish the purpose of creation; G-D would dwell among men and disseminate his holiness among them.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Y. B’rachos Ch.4 Hal.1. The term “the second *parasha* of the *mishkan*” is used to refer to the combined *parshios vayakhel* and *p’kudei* since they repeat the first account given in the two *parshios t’ruma* and *t’tzave*. This, even though the actual chapters in question, 38-40, contain the second account of the priestly clothes and the third (the actual setting up) account of the *mishkan*.

<sup>2</sup> Both the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds quote other *amora’im* as to the “basis” for these eighteen *b’rachos*. E.g. the vertebrae, since “all my bones”(as per T’hilim, 35) praise G-D, the number of times G-D is mentioned in Psalm 29, associated with the praise of G-D in nature and the 18 times the forefathers (the innovators of prayer) are mentioned together. All of these seem reasonably connected to the subject. R’Yishmael’s idea does not.

<sup>3</sup> In his classic, *Hagot B’parshiot Hashavua*.

<sup>4</sup> B. B’rachos 55.

<sup>5</sup> Many *m’for’shim* show how the *mishkan* represents a microcosm of the universe and in this idea lies the connection between the construction of the *mishkan* and the crafts forbidden on *shabbos*, another link with creation. Malbim zl goes one step further and sees the *mishkan* as representing a microcosm of the universe by representing the human being, who, is after all, a microcosm of the universe himself. Not only is the representation, according to Malbim, of a single human being but of two. It is the interaction between people which is the manifestation of G-D on Earth much like the *k’ruvim* which, facing each other, are the throne, or chariot of the *sh’china*. In this interaction is mirrored the interaction between G-D and man, hence G-D and His Universe. The symbiotic

The *mishkan*, though, was not merely a receiver for the *k’dusha* transmitted to us by G-D. It was also a transmitter of our hearts’ desire to be close to Him. In fact, say the Chazal, the very descent of the *sh’china* into the *mishkan* was dependent upon Moshe and Aharon’s use of the tabernacle for prayer.<sup>6</sup> Sh’lomo when dedicating his temple was fully aware of this double function. He begins, “G-D said He would dwell in the fog. I have built this house as a dwelling place for You . . . .”<sup>7</sup> He proceeds, however, to point out the various trials and tribulations which would bring Yisrael, or their prayers, through the portals of that House, to G-D.<sup>8</sup>

The fashioning of the *mishkan* was the making of our **receiver**, G-D’s transmitter. The fashioning of the priestly garments, though were the creation of **our transmitter** as was the anointing and erection of the *mishkan*. This was the work done on **G-D’s receiver**. This work too, needed to be done, “as G-D commanded Moshe.” Just as B’tzalel, who knew how to combine the letters of creation, could create the receiver of G-D’s bounty on Earth, so did the transmitter of our “enticement” of G-D have to be made to transmit on His “wavelength.”

Although prayer is, “the service of the heart”<sup>9</sup> its form and content is not subject to the whims and wishes of the heart alone. No less is the process for communicating our will to G-D circumscribed by laws and blueprints than is the process by which G-D is brought to dwell among us. “One hundred and twenty elders, among whom were many prophets, arranged the eighteen *b’rachos* in order.”<sup>10</sup> Yes, not just elders, rabbis, but **prophets** were needed to put this pivotal prayer together. If G-D “needs” a blue thread, a red one, a purple and a white. If G-D needs ten curtains or eleven folded in such and such a way. If fifty blue loops

relationship he infers is similar to the one addressed in this article.

<sup>6</sup> V. Rashi to Vayikra 9:23 s.v. *vayavo*.

<sup>7</sup> M’lachim I, 8:12 et al.

<sup>8</sup> We have here the Kabbalistic idea of *isarusa d’l’tata*, arousal or awakening from below. G-D is the quintessential giver but there must be a need shown for His gifts. The essence of prayer is *bakasha*, beseeching G-D for our needs. (Rambam, Yad, *t’fila* 1:2) This is the “service of the heart.”(Ibid. 1:1) To serve G-D is to recognize the need for G-D. To find G-D we must look within ourselves for that point at which we recognize that it is He, not we, who sustains us and provides for our needs. The word *mispalet* is in the reflexive, we examine, or judge, ourselves. Where does “I” end and G-D begin. Where self-sufficiency ends, there is G-D. Once we recognize that need, we arouse His mercy, His “need” to sustain us. The lover in Shir Hashirim sees his beloved as a garden of spices (4:12-15). But only after she asks that the wind blow the wafts of fragrance toward her lover to entice him (16) do we find, “I have come to my garden, my sister bride.” (5:1)

<sup>9</sup> V. Note 8.

<sup>10</sup> B. Brachos 17b.

must connect the curtains, and not forty nine or fifty one, in order for the *sh'china* to communicate with us, then our communication with G-D must also be "as G-D commanded Moshe."

"Rabban Gamliel says, 'Every day one should say the eighteen b'rachos.' R' Yehoshua says, "a summary of the eighteen [is sufficient]. . . R' Eliezer says, 'One who makes his prayer a set thing, his prayer is not pleading.'"<sup>11</sup>

R' Eliezer<sup>12</sup> believes that prayer, being the "service of the heart," must flow from the heart. A set text would kill the very essence of prayer. Rules and rote are no longer pleading, no longer of the heart. Not so, say Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Yehoshua, prophets arranged the eighteen *b'rachos*. There were rules for the priestly garments and the erection of the *mishkan*, not only its creation. There are eighteen *b'rachos* because at the end of *parashas p'kudei* we are told that each step in the setting up of the transmitter to G-D was also done, "as G-D commanded Moshe." © 1998 Rabbi JB Love and Young Israel of Passaic-Clifton

#### RABBI DOV KRAMER

## Taking a Closer Look

"**A**nd B'tzalel the son of Uri the son of Chur of the Tribe of Yehudah did all that G-d had commanded Moshe" (Sh'mos 38:22). There's a missing link in this chain of command; since G-d commanded Moshe, who then commanded B'tzalel, the verse should have said "and B'tzalel did all that Moshe had commanded him." Based on this, Chazal (B'rasishis Rabbah 1:14 and Yerushalmi Pei'ah 1:1) tell us that B'tzalel even did "things he did not hear from his teacher Moshe." Nevertheless, it was "consistent with what was said to Moshe at Sinai." What it was that

<sup>11</sup> M. B'rachos 4:3&4. Although R'Eliezer's statement is relegated to a separate mishna it is obvious that he is arguing on the very theory that there should be a set text for prayer. The Gemara, (Vilna, 28b) has R' Eliezer's mishna contiguous with the preceding one. This also seems to be the opinion of Rabba and Rav Yosef in the Gemara (Ibid. 29b) who interpret, "makes his prayer set" as, "he who cannot innovate something."

<sup>12</sup> R' Eliezer, throughout mishnaic literature, is the bearer of the classical. He is the student of Bais Shamai who would never say anything he didn't hear from his mentors. His *halacha* is even G-D's *halacha* at one point but, unfortunately, not ours. (B. B.M. 59b) There was, I'm sure, a time when prayer flowed from the heart and, indeed, flowed at the right wavelength. "Their hearts were as big as the entrance to the hall of the temple." (B.Yoma 9b) This would explain why Rabban Gamliel had to re-arrange the *shmone esrai* after the destruction. Were we, however, to wait for the proper inspiration to pray, were we to only pray when we *felt* we were on the right wavelength, we might never pray. The connection must be established and the words put before us. Then might we hope to find the inspiration. As is true with other mitzvos, "the heart is motivated by actions." (Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzva 20)

B'tzalel figured out on his own (and had to figure out on his own) because Moshe didn't teach it to him, despite Moshe having been commanded about it by G-d? And why didn't Moshe relate these details to B'tzalel in the first place?

Rashi quotes this Midrash, and, in our editions, continues by paraphrasing the Talmud (B'rachos 55a), which says that Moshe had commanded B'tzalel about the vessels of the Mishkan before teaching him about the Mishkan itself. B'tzalel realized that the structure (the Mishkan) must be built before its contents (the vessels), and asked Moshe whether G-d had really told him to build the Mishkan first. Moshe then answered that G-d had told him to make the Mishkan first. At first glance, then, it would seem that this was what was meant when the Midrash refers to something that B'tzalel did "as G-d had commanded" even though he hadn't heard about it from Moshe.

There are many issues raised by many commentators on this Aggada, but doing so here would detract from the questions raised above. Early printed editions of Rashi do not include this discussion (whether to make the Mishkan or its vessels first), and according to Rabbi Shmuel Yehoshua Gold, z"l (Iyunim B'Rashi), it does not appear in any manuscript either. It first appears in Eliezer Toledano's edition of Rashi; most subsequent editions of Rashi, which were based on an edition based on Toledano's edition, included it as well. [None of the commentaries on Rashi who came before this edition reference this part of Rashi; almost all who came after it do. Whatever motivation/justification Toledano had for adding words that weren't Rashi's, doing so did lead subsequent commentaries to share their thoughts on the numerous difficulties with this Aggada.] Maharai (T'rumas HaDeshen's commentary on Chumash) quotes the first part of Rashi (the only part that existed at the time), and says that Rashi cannot be referring to whether the Mishkan or its vessels should be made first, as that doesn't qualify as something that "his teacher didn't tell him." In a footnote, the publisher (M'or Shmuel) says it can't be what Rashi meant because Moshe did "tell him," just in the wrong order. I would think it can't be considered something that Moshe didn't tell him because Moshe did tell him (after B'tzalel asked about it). The bottom line, though, is that when the Torah says "B'tzalel did everything that G-d had commanded Moshe," meaning even those things that Moshe never told him, it can't be referring to whether the Mishkan or its vessels should be made first.

Ramban references the Yerushalmi/Midrash Rabbah too (without quoting any part of Rashi), and references his earlier comments (36:8) that Moshe didn't teach B'tzalel any of the details (see also Kli Yakar). For example, Moshe told him to make ten curtains for the covering, with two sections of five curtains each, and they (B'tzalel and his helpers) understood on their own that they should make "50

loops and 50 golden clasps" (36:12) to connect the two sections. The verse is therefore telling us that even though Moshe didn't share the details of the construction with B'tzalel, the finished product, down to every detail, was exactly the way G-d had commanded Moshe. (He says they were made in a different order than Moshe was commanded, but the finished product was exactly the same.) Although this addresses what it was that B'tzalel didn't hear from Moshe, it doesn't explain why Moshe didn't share all the details with B'tzalel in the first place. It seems strange that G-d would tell Moshe to do things in a specific way, yet Moshe would leave out some of the details. Additionally, the Talmudic discussion regarding the order things were made is based on the premise that Moshe told B'tzalel what he was commanded in Parashas T'rumah (the vessels then the Mishkan), comparing it with how B'tzalel made them in Parashas Vayakhel (the Mishkan then the vessels). If Moshe taught B'tzalel Parashas T'rumah, then he was taught all the details; if he didn't, why assume Moshe used the order in Parashas T'rumah as opposed to the order in Parashas Ki Sisa (31:7-11), where the Mishkan came first?

Chizkuni quotes Rashi's noting that the Torah says B'tzalel did what G-d had commanded Moshe rather than what Moshe had commanded him, and adds an example of what Moshe didn't tell B'tzalel (but he did anyway): "the covering of the tops of the pillars." Earlier (36:38) he says the same thing; based on the verse he is commenting on it is clear that he means the gold covering and decoration of the five pillars that supported the screen at the entrance of the Mishkan. In the original commandment (26:37) it says that these pillars should be covered with gold, without specifying that it means only the tops and some decorative gold; Moshe never told B'tzalel which part was to be covered in gold and which part should be decorated with gold, yet it was done "as G-d had commanded Moshe." The same can be said of the pillars surrounding the courtyard; the commandment says they are to be "decorated with silver" (27:10-11 and 17), yet B'tzalel not only decorated them with silver, but covered their tops with silver as well (38:17 and 19). [This is likely why Chizkuni says "for example," as the pillars of the Mishkan's entranceway weren't the only thing that B'tzalel did that was "consistent with what was said to Moshe at Sinai" despite "not hearing about it from his teacher."] However, we would still need to understand why Moshe didn't tell B'tzalel how to cover and decorate these pillars.

In his discussion about what Rashi couldn't have been referring to when he says that B'tzalel did what G-d commanded Moshe even though Moshe hadn't relayed it to him, Maharai suggests that Moshe purposely didn't tell B'tzalel everything because he wanted to put the finishing touches on the Mishkan himself. Nevertheless, B'tzalel figured out what else was needed, and did it before Moshe had a chance to.

Although Maharai doesn't tell us what it was that Moshe didn't tell B'tzalel about, it could have been, as Chizkuni suggests, how to cover and decorate the pillars. [Since the commandment for the pillars of the entranceway was to "cover them with gold," which is the same wording as other pillars (26:32) and beams (26:29), and for these the "covering" was complete (36:36 and 36:34), not just their "tops, plus decorations," the discrepancy regarding these pillars can't be attributed to Moshe wanting B'tzalel to leave them unfinished. Nevertheless, it could apply to the pillars of the courtyard.]

There's a bigger issue with Chizkuni's approach, though; since the commandments in Parashas T'rumah were what "G-d spoke to Moshe" (25:1), how could the lack of specificity (or the discrepancy between what it says in Parashas T'rumah and what it says in Parashas Vayakhel) be based on Moshe not telling B'tzalel what G-d had commanded him? Wasn't it G-d Himself who didn't mention the "tops of the pillars" being covered (or the decoration)?

In his explanation of the Aggada that appears in our editions of Rashi, Rabbi Yehonasan Eibeschitz (Chidushay Rabbi Yehonasan on B'rachos 55a, Tiferes Yehonasan on Sh'mos 25:9 and Y'aras D'vash 1:2; see also Chidushay Gaonim, one of the commentaries on Ain Yaakov, who quotes two similar approaches) says that Moshe was shown a vision of the completed Mishkan and its vessels, a vision referred to several times throughout the commandments to build the Mishkan (25:9, 25:9, 26:30, 27:8), referring explicitly to both the Mishkan and to its vessels, and sometimes including the expression "and so shall you do" (25:9 and 27:8). If included in the commandment to build the Mishkan and its vessels was the requirement to recreate what he had seen in this vision, then the silver and gold decorations of the pillars (and that it was their tops that were covered in gold) were included what was commanded to Moshe even if they weren't included in the words of the commandment. Therefore, when Moshe repeated only the words of the commandment to B'tzalel, he wasn't telling him everything. Yet, "B'tzalel did all that G-d had commanded Moshe," even though Moshe didn't complete the picture (pardon the pun) by adding the details he had seen in the vision.

There are other possibilities as to what Moshe was commanded that B'tzalel didn't hear from Moshe. For example, there is much discussion about how the pillars of the courtyard were situated, with several approaches suggested by the commentators (see page 3 of <http://www.aishdas.org/ta/5765/vayakhel.pdf>). All of the approaches fit within the guidelines of the commandment, so which one was did G-d have in mind? If Moshe was shown a vision of the layout, this was the one he was "commanded," even if other layouts were consistent with the words of the commandment. It could therefore be suggested that even though the words Moshe repeated to B'tzalel contained numerous

possibilities, B'tzalel chose the one that matched what Moshe saw on Mt. Sinai. It was "commanded to Moshe," but wasn't specifically relayed to B'tzalel. Similarly, there are multiple possibilities regarding how the Mishkan's covering (including the overlap at its front and back ends) lay (see page 6 of <http://www.aishdas.org/ta/5768/terumah.pdf>); covering the Mishkan the way G-d intended it even though the words of the commandment could be interpreted differently could also qualify as something that "B'tzalel did as G-d commanded Moshe," if Moshe didn't specify which of the possibilities matched the vision he saw.

Would the question whether the branches of the Menorah were curved or straight qualify? There are many "disputes" about numerous details of the Mishkan, but some (i.e. the size of the altar and the height of the courtyard's curtains, see Z'vachim 59b) would require Moshe to tell B'tzalel that things were not as they seem (if they weren't). Nevertheless, if Moshe didn't see the need to delineate all the possibilities for every detail (and tell B'tzalel which one G-d meant), even if Moshe repeated every word of G-d's commandments there would be things that B'tzalel had to figure out on his own. The Torah therefore tells us that "B'tzalel did everything as G-d had commanded Moshe," as the final product matched the vision Moshe had seen on Mt. Sinai, despite some details not being relayed to him. ©2014 Rabbi D. Kramer

#### **RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY**

### **Exactly Redundant**

In the final Torah portion that details the completion of the Mishkan, an expression that describes the accomplishment is repeated over and over. In fact, the descriptive assertion is repeated no less than eighteen times! After the Torah details the completion of each utensil, component, or vestment necessary to finish the Mishkan and begin the service, the Torah uses an expression that declares that they were made "exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe." Again and again the Torah repeats the expression almost verbatim. First, the Torah uses the expression in a general sense when telling us how the vestments were made: "exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe." Then it is used again when detailing each garment. The Ephod and its garters, "were made exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe;" the Choshen and its stone setting were made "exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe."

The same applies to the vessels of the Mishkan. In addition to a general statement that everything was crafted "exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe," the Torah reiterates the expression of perfect conformity in regard to each of the utensils. This goes on for almost every component of the Mishkan!

Why? Would it not have been enough to begin or end the summary with one proclamation that

everything was crafted "exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe"? Why restate it so often?

Rabbi Zev Wilenski, shli"ta, recited that a student of Rabbi Boruch Ber Lebowitz, z"l, had undertaken to transcribe the notes of the revered sage to prepare them for print. This work would eventually be known as the Birkas Shmuel, one of the classic exegetical works on Talmudic Law. As the student reviewed the work, he noticed a seeming redundancy of the titles mentioned about Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soleveitchik, the Brisker Rav who was a son of Rabbi Lebowitz's own teacher Rabbi Chaim Soleveitchik, and revered as well, by Rabbi Lebowitz. Each time that Rabbi Lebowitz quoted him, he would preface Rabbi Soleveitchik's name with all due titles and accolades, "the true Gaon, Rebbe and Teacher of all of Israel, The Gaon of Brisk, he should live to see long and good days." Even three or four times in one paragraph, Rabbi Lebowitz would repeat the words, each preceded with a slew of praise and reverence, "the true Gaon, Rebbe and Teacher of all of Israel, The Gaon of Brisk, he should live to see long and good days."

The next time that Rabbi Soleveitchik was quoted in the works, the student, in the interest of brevity, decided to leave out the seemingly supplementary appellations. Instead he wrote, My Rebbe, the great sage, Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soleveitchik, shlit"a.

Upon reviewing the work, Rabbi Lebowitz was visibly shaken. "Why did you leave off the introductory appellations? "But, Rebbe," countered Rabbi Lebowitz's student, "I mentioned them the first time. Must I repeat them every single time?"

Rabbi Lebowitz was dismayed. "Why am I publishing this book?" he asked in true sincerity. "What do I have from it? Honor? Money? Of course not! I wrote this work so that a student will understand how to learn a Rashba (a medieval commentator) or to understand the Rambam."

He paused. "The same way that I want them to understand the text, I also want them to understand to appreciate the greatness of the Rebbe. I want them to see and understand that Rav Yitzchak Zev is "the true Gaon, Rebbe and Teacher of all of Israel."

Perhaps the lesson imparted by each and every action of the Mishkan warrants the Torah's declaration of perfect conformity for a generalized statement does not impact as much as reiteration.

The Torah is mindful that just as we hammer the facts of dimensions and specifications into our minds, just as we ponder the intricacies of the cups and flowers of the Menorah, the forms and staves of the Table of Showbread, the various stones of the Choshen and their placement inside their settings, so too there is one detail we must not miss. And this detail applies with a freshness for every Mishkan-related activity: each was exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe. ©2014 Rabbi M. Kamenetzky & torah.org