



Parshat HaShavuah
ויקהל-פקודי
VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI
 כ"ג אדר תשע"ה
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 INSPIRE & CHALLENGE



Candle Lighting
7:10
 S"Z Kriat Shema
10:30

Sunset
7:28
 Motzei Shabbat
8:04



Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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REFLECTIONS ON REFLECTION MRS. ORA LEE KANNER

The Torah tells us that the Jewish women donated their mirrors to the Mishkan, and that upon God's command those mirrors were used in the construction of the copper washbasins. The question that is often asked and beautifully answered is why God allowed and even insisted against the objections of Moshe that those utensils of vanity and physicality be used in His holy Temple? The Mid-rash offers a well-known account describing how the women used these mirrors to engage their husbands in intimacy, leading to the birth of hosts of children of Israel:

"When their husbands were weary from back-breaking labor, the women would go and bring them food and drink. Then they would take the mirrors and each one would see herself with her husband in the mirror, and she would seduce him with words, saying, "I am more beautiful than you." And in this way they aroused their husbands' desire and would be intimate with them, conceiving and giving birth there, as it is said: "Under the apple tree I aroused you" (Song 8:5). This is [the meaning of] what is said regarding the Kiyor, בְּמִרְאֵת הַצְּבָאוֹת [lit., the mirrors of those who set up legions]" (38:8).

However, the essential question remains unanswered. Why were these mirrors used specifically for the washstands? Why for this vessel and not any other? What is the possible connection between the Kiyor and the acts of the righteous Jewish women in Egypt?

I believe that the answer lies in the message hidden in the enigmatic words exchanged by the women and their husbands in the apple orchards. The women claimed: "*ani naeh mimcha,*" and the husbands responded: "*ani naeh mimech.*"

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COMPLIMENTARY OPPOSITES

TAMARA KAHN ('17)
MONTHLY WRITER

Parshiyot Vayakhel-Pekudai discuss the Mishkan. If we examine the parts of the Mishkan, we find that each part can be related to the various components of the Shabbat table. The tablecloth represents the Parochet, the head of the table is Hashem's "seat," the candles symbolize the Menorah, and the table and Challah represent the Shulchan and its Lechem Hapanim.

The Menorah and the Shulchan represent two opposites in our lives that are nonetheless dependent on each other. While the Menorah is the spiritual connection we have with Hashem and our Judaism, the Shulchan is the more physical connection.

Flame and fire characterize our souls, which link us to the world above — Hashem's world. Although flames can be seen, we cannot hold flames in our hands. They are, in a sense, intangible and thus possess a Godly characteristic. The Menorah holds the flame and represents the light of Torah that we as Jewish people must follow to become more spiritual and grow closer to Hashem.

Unlike fire, bread is completely tangible. Bread and food is what our bodies need for sustenance in order to survive. So, the Shulchan carries the bread that we need, and the Menorah carries the light that we need. Although these two vessels represent complete opposites, they in fact go hand-in-hand.

The body and soul, the physical and spiritual, influence each other. For example, on Shabbat we eat plenty of delicious foods that we don't normally eat during the week, but we also spend time with family and friends, away from technological distractions, which enhances our connections with others. *Menucha*, rest, is another facet of Shabbat observance that helps us remember how Hashem rested on the seventh day; we too give our bodies a rest after putting them to work for six days. These are all examples of how our physical needs enrich the spirituality of Shabbat.

An example of the spiritual enhancing the physical is the mitzvah of tzedakah: taking some of the money that we have earned and giving it to those in need — perhaps so they too can have a beautiful Shabbat.

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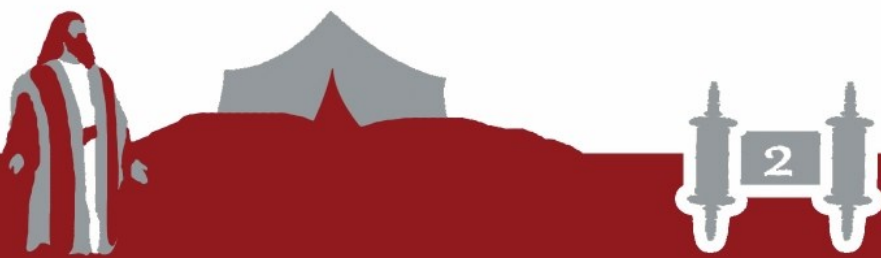
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

LANA ROSENTHAL ('17)

Who was Betzalel? Everyone immediately recognizes the name in connection with the Mishkan. Betzalel is one of the characters in the Torah with whom we seem to be on a first name basis, but the Torah repeatedly calls him by his full name, Betzalel ben Uri ben Chur. Rabbi Yissochor Frand asks, "What is so significant about his lineage that the Torah mentions it not once, but several times?"

Rabbi Frand suggests that the Torah is trying to reaffirm Betzalel's connection to his grandfather Chur, who tried to stand up against Bnei Yisrael when they were creating the *eigel hazahav*. Instead of heeding Chur's warnings, Bnei Yisrael killed him. Chur's protests and consequent death may seem futile. Not only did he not succeed in stopping Bnei Yisrael, but he was murdered for his efforts.

Continued page 4





QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

IZY MULLER ('17)

This week's parshiyot, Vayakhel and Pekudei, seem somewhat redundant. The parshiyot open with Moshe collecting donations from Bnei Yisrael to build the Mishkan and its vessels. The Torah describes every painstaking detail involved in the construction, despite the fact that details have already been mentioned earlier in Parshat Terumah. What is this repetition trying to teach us?

Rashi quotes a Midrash that states that the *nesi'im* – princes – of the nation pledge to contribute whatever will be missing from the Mishkan once the community has finished donating to the cause. However, the midrash continues to say that these leaders greatly underestimate the people's generosity and enthusiasm. The only things that the princes have to give are the jewels for the Kohen Gadol's breastplate. Because these gems happen to be the most expensive items donated, one might assume that this gift surpasses all others. However, Hashem doesn't care about the price; what's important is not *what* is given but rather *how* it's given.

The same point is made again in Parshat Pekudei, where the Torah relates how the Mishkan is built. Moshe wonders how he alone will be able to erect the Mishkan. God promises Moshe that as long as he makes the effort, the structure will raise itself up. Here, the Torah is teaching us the same lesson we mentioned above: even with someone as great as Moshe or the *nesi'im*, the effort that is put in is at least equal to if not more important than the achievement itself.

Living in the extremely result-oriented society that we do, this is an important principle to remember. We want the rich-tasting cup of coffee without all the grinding and brewing. We seek a muscular physique with the least exertion possible. We wish that we could accomplish all of our goals without all the challenges and difficulties we must face. The Torah teaches us though that although what we do is important, even more important is how we do it, how much effort we put in, how hard we strive to fulfill our aspirations.

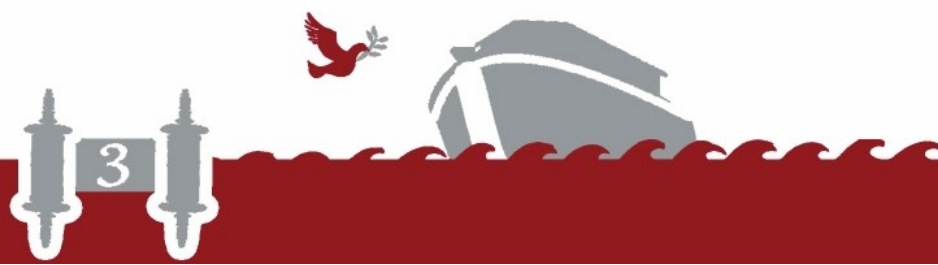
THE MEANING OF SHALOM

AYLIANA WINOGRAD ('17)

In this week's parsha, Parshiyot Vayakhel-Pekudei, the Jews bring their donations for the Mishkan to Moshe. Regarding this action, the midrash comments, "*gadol hashalom*"- "peace is great." The question then arises: what does peace have to do with bringing donations for the Mishkan?

The Rambam (Peah 1:1) specifies that the purpose of the Torah is to create shalom in the world, and Torah brings about shalom more than other things. The gemara in several places (Berachot 64a, Yevamot 122b, Nazir 66b, Tamid 32b, Keritot 28b) says that *talmidei chachamim* increase shalom in the world. However, this seems to be inaccurate, considering all the time our Torah scholars spend arguing with one another! Even though these arguments are about Torah, they still don't seem peaceful.

The word "shalom" does not necessarily mean the absence of war or violence. Here, shalom comes from the root "*shalem*," which means complete. We all must work to live up to our personal and national potential to be complete, or at least as complete as we can be. The Torah creates completeness in the world, and *chachamim* increase shalom by spending their time learning Torah. The midrash comments "*gadol hashalom*" when the Jews give donations for the Mishkan because they reached national spiritual heights of completeness as a result of their donations.



Mrs. Ora lee Kanner continued

Each woman was telling her husband that she was only beautiful because of him (*ani naeh mimcha*), and each husband told his beloved that he was only beautiful due to her (*ani naeh mimech*). Those feelings echoed the couple's realization that each one's inner beauty emerged due to the holiness and beauty of the other. Their individual beauty resulted from their relationship to one another.

The Kiyor stood in a place where one standing outside the holy area of the Mishkan could see the interior of the holy residence of God reflected in the mirrors of the washstand. The washstand reflected the beauty of God to the Jewish people, and the beauty of the Jewish people was reflected into the Holy of Holies.

The message is clear. We, the Jewish people say to God: we are only special and beautiful because of you and your Torah. God in response tells the Jewish people: I am only beautiful in this world due to you, your actions, and your behavior. Thus the mirrors used to reflect the love between the Jewish women and their husbands were used in the Mishkan to reflect the love between the Jewish people and God.

Have a wonderful Shabbat.

Kahn continued

In the Mishkan, we see how the physical and the spiritual impacted each other from the Shulchan and the Menorah. These vessels were placed opposite each other in front of the Kodosh HaKodashim. This was done so that the flames of the Menorah would cast their light upon the Lechem Hapanim of the Shulchan. The spiritual literally illuminates the physical. Similarly, without the Lechem Mishna on the Shulchan, the light of the Menorah would fail to illuminate anything.

From these vessels we learn that having only the physical or only the spiritual is not enough. In order to lead proper Jewish lives, we need to strike a balance so that we can fulfill our duties in this world and merit the World to Come.

Rosenthal continued

However, the Torah shows us that his protests were not in vain, as he merited Betzalel, the builder of the Mishkan. In fact, Rashi suggests that the Mishkan was built as a compensation for *cheit ha'eigel*. Therefore, it is fitting that Betzalel is able to build as an atonement for his grandfather's murder and, subsequently, Bnei Yisrael's downfall.

Furthermore, it is perhaps because of the traits Betzalel inherited from Chur, specifically Chur's *mesirut nefesh*, that enabled Betzalel to be the right person for the holy task of constructing the Mishkan. The Torah tells us that he was not chosen for his artistic talent but because he was "*b'tzel Kel*," "in the shadow of God." Because Betzalel lived in the shadow of Hashem, like his grandfather, he merited the special role of architect of Hashem's dwelling place.

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