

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHIOT VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI • 27 ADAR 5767 • MAR. 17, 2007 • VOL. 14 NO. 22

PARSHA INSIGHTS

SHABBAT “UPGRADE”

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

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

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

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

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

There are two places where the Torah lists the Ten Commandments: in Parshat Yitro and in Parshat Vaetchanan. In Parshat Yitro, the Torah says, “Remember the Shabbat day to make it holy...” whereas in Parshat Va’etchanan, it says, “Guard the Shabbat day

to keep it holy...” The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Yitro 295) explains, “‘Remember’ it beforehand, and ‘Guard it’ afterwards...” — meaning that Shabbat is so special and important that we should begin it early and finish late.

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

“But the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for G-d...”

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

well into Saturday night.

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

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

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

Vayakhel

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

Pekudei

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

ISRAEL Forever

SHABBAT OBSERVANCE ACROSS THE OCEANS

The recent battle over El Al's flying on Shabbat which culminated in the airline's capitulation will most certainly come to the mind of many Jews this Shabbat when they hear the opening passages of this week's Torah portion dealing with Shabbat observance read in the synagogue.

Shabbat observance was a major issue in a recent court case in New York. Real estate broker Tamara Cohen found a West 82nd Street townhouse for comedian Jerry Seinfeld, which he bought for close to four million dollars. But when it came to giving her the \$100,000 commission due her, Seinfeld argued that she did not deserve it because she

failed to show him and his wife the house on Shabbat when they wanted to see it and did not return their calls on that day.

Cohen explained to State Supreme Court Justice Rolando Accosta that as a Shabbat observer she had informed Seinfeld that she could not work between Friday evening and nightfall Saturday. The judge ruled in her favor, another victory for Shabbat observance in the world!

Despite the El Al victory there is still much to correct in private and public life in Israel regarding observance of the Shabbat, which is certainly a vital key to securing Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

LIFE FROM THE DEAD SEA – YAM HAMELECH

Yam Hamelech, the so-called "Dead Sea", has been transformed into a life-giving health resort area.

To name a few of these resorts, there is the Zohar Hot Springs for treatment of muscular

and skin diseases and allergies, the Yesha Hot Springs for muscular and joint ailments, and Ein Bokek's international center for the treatment of psoriasis.

These and other year-round resorts attract people from all over Israel and the world.



PARSHA Q&A ?

Vayakhel

1. On which day did Moshe assemble the Jewish People?
2. Why is the prohibition against doing work on Shabbat written prior to the instruction for building the Mishkan?
3. Why does the Torah specify the particular prohibition of lighting a fire on Shabbat right after it had already noted the general prohibition of doing work on Shabbat?
4. What function did the “*yitdot hamishkan*” serve?
5. What function did the “*bigdei hasrad*” serve?
6. What was unusual about the way the women spun the goat’s hair?
7. Why were the *Nesi'im* last to contribute to the building of the Mishkan? How does the Torah show dissatisfaction with their actions?
8. Who does the Torah identify as the primary builders of the Mishkan? From which tribes were they?
9. What time of day did the people bring their daily con-

tributions for the construction of the Mishkan?

10. For what was the woven goat’s hair used?

Pekudei

11. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear between the *mitznefet* and the *tzitz*?
12. What role did Moshe play in the construction of the Mishkan?
13. Which date was the first time that the Mishkan was erected and not dismantled?
14. What was the “tent” which Moshe spread over the Mishkan (40:19)?
15. What “testimony” did Moshe place in the *aron*?
16. What function did the *parochet* serve?
17. Where was the *shulchan* placed in the Mishkan?
18. Where was the *menorah* placed in the Mishkan?
19. Who offered the communal sacrifices during the eight days of the dedication of the Mishkan?
20. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as *kohanim*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

Vayakhel

1. 35:1 - The day after *Yom Kippur*.
2. 35:2 - To emphasize that the building of the Mishkan doesn’t supersede the laws of Shabbat.
3. 35:3 - There are two opinions: One opinion is to teach that igniting a fire on Shabbat is punishable by lashes as opposed to other “*melachot*” which are punishable by death. The other opinion is to teach that violation of numerous “*melachot*” at one time requires a separate atonement for each violation.
4. 35:18 - The edges of the curtains were fastened to them. These were inserted in the ground so the curtains would not move in the wind.
5. 35:19 - They covered the *aron*, the *shulchan*, the *menorah*, and the *mizbachot* when they were packed for transport.
6. 35:26 - It was spun directly from off the backs of the goats.
7. 35:27 - The *Nesi'im* reasoned that they would first let the people contribute materials needed for the Mishkan and then they would contribute what was lacking. The Torah shows its dissatisfaction by deleting a letter from their title.

8. 35:30, 35:34 - Betzalel ben Uri from the tribe of Yehuda; Oholiav ben Achisamach from the tribe of Dan.
9. 36:3 - Morning.
10. 36:14 - It was made into curtains to be draped over the Mishkan

Pekudei

11. 39:31 - *Tefillin*.
12. 39:33 - He stood it up.
13. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year in the desert. For seven days before this, during the consecration of Aharon and his sons, Moshe erected and dismantled the Mishkan. (*Rashi* 39:29)
14. 40:19 - The curtain of goatskin.
15. 40:20 - The *Luchot Habrit*.
16. 40:21 - It served as a partition for the *aron*.
17. 40:22 - On the northern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed*, outside the *parochet*.
18. 40:24 - On the southern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed* opposite the *shulchan*.
19. 40:29 - Moshe.
20. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the consecration of the Mishkan.

- The source for not mixing one *simcha* with another
- The Yom Kippur that was skipped
- Criterion for giving priority to one mitzvah over another
- The disguised blessings
- Cosmetic care on Chol Hamoed and in general
- Sewing clothes, stringing beads, making ovens, repairing mills and caring for animals
- When intent determines permissibility of Chol Hamoed activity
- Building roof guard and smoothing an oven floor
- When refraining from activity will cause significant loss
- Preserving fish with salt and advice on eating fish
- Restrictions on labor during the *shiva* mourning period
- Fertilizing a field on holiday and Chol Hamoed
- Special behavior for a distinguished scholar
- Avoiding labor whose purpose is for use after holiday
- Penalty for purposely putting off activity *until* Chol Hamoed
- Special dispensation for laborer who has nothing to eat
- Transporting vessels from house to house
- Covering fruits, selling, hunting and grinding
- Who may cut his hair on Chol Hamoed and why others cannot
- When traveling out of Eretz Israel is permitted
- The mourners, the excommunicated one and the *metzora* in regard to Yom Tov, to cutting hair, to wearing *tefillin*, greeting others, learning Torah, washing clothes, rending garments, doing work, cleansing body, wearing shoes and marital relations

ONE DAY OUT OF PRISON

If a Jew in a foreign prison is granted one day in the year to be free to fulfill his religious obligations, which day should he choose?

One of the early commentaries, Rabbi David ben Zimra (RaDvaZ) raises this question in one of his Responsa and suggests some possibilities of very important *mitzvot*.

A later commentary, Rabbi Zvi Ashkenazi in his Responsa Chacham Zvi (106), suggests that the answer can be found in our *gemara*. In resolving an apparent conflict between two passages in *Mishlei* (4:26 and 5:6) regarding the need to weigh the comparative value of *mitzvot*, the Sages thus conclude: If the less important mitzvah can be done by someone else, you should

choose to do the more important one. But if both are incumbent on you then you must fulfill the first mitzvah that comes your way even if it is the less important one. Based on this resolution the fellow who has one day of freedom should ask for the very first day so that he can fulfill *mitzvot* which he cannot achieve in prison even though they are less important than others which could be fulfilled on a later day.

Another source for the same conclusion is offered by Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Chayes in his commentary on our *gemara*. In *Mesechta Succah* (25b) Rashi thus explains a point made in the *gemara*: "We thus see that when a mitzvah comes your way it should not be put aside in favor of a more important mitzvah due to come later."

• *Mo'ed Katan* 9b

WHAT THE Sages SAY

"Don't shame others and you will merit not to be shamed."

• *The Sage Rav - Mo'ed Katan* 9b

THE MEANING OF PROPHECY

From: Masha

*Dear Rabbi,
I don't understand the notion of prophecy. How exactly
does a person come to speak in the name of G-d?*

Dear Masha,

G-d gave mankind the ability to apply intellect to gain information, understanding and knowledge of things not immediately apparent. In the ordinary plane this involves the faculties referred in Judaism as *chochma*, *bina* and *da'at* respectively, which describe a person's ability to grasp information, process it and then apply it to extrapolate new information. This new information is then processed and extrapolated, thus setting into motion the never-ending dynamic of learning which illuminates the reasoning mind.

There is a parallel to this dynamic in the spiritual plane whereby G-d also gave mankind a venue to perceive the unapparent through spiritual enlightenment. This is called inspiration, of which there are several levels. Hidden inspiration is when the enlightenment is bestowed in a seemingly normal way and perceived as any other spontaneous idea. Many people experience this, for example when we think of someone who then suddenly calls or whom we unexpectedly bump into, or when we get a sudden inkling of the right course of action, often while in the throes of indecision. This differs from Divine inspiration, however, where the enlightenment is not a spontaneous inkling, but rather a clear and true experience where the person is certain that enlightenment has been bestowed upon him.

There are advantages to inspiration over reason. Inspiration can pertain to knowledge accessible by reason and logic, but in a much clearer way. Also, inspiration pertains to knowledge beyond logic and reason, like future events or hidden secrets. For example, there is well known story of a family from London whose son was kidnapped and who the police could not find. In their despair the family flew to Israel to consult the famous Baba Sali who referred them to his son Baba Meir. The rabbi told the family to return in the morning, at which time he presented them with a hand-drawn map of London (which he had never seen), marking the location of the lad. After the boy was found, the Baba Sali explained that the great degree with which his son protected the sanctity of his physical eyesight granted him a tremendous degree of spiritual insight.

There is a third level of Divine inspiration which is even higher than the others called *navua*, which is translated

(not entirely accurately) as "prophecy". The use of this term in the Torah elucidates its meaning. Avraham is called a *navi* regarding the curing of Avimelech after taking Sarah: "And now, return the man's wife, because he is a *navi* (prophet), and he will pray for you and you will live; but if you do not return her, know that you will surely die" (Gen. 20:7). Aaron is also called a *navi*: "The Lord said to Moses, See! I have made you a lord over Pharaoh, and Aaron, your brother, will be your *navi* (prophet)" (Ex. 7:1). Interestingly, neither case seems related to our traditional understanding of prophecy. What then is *navua*?

There are four nuances of *navua* that give us a composite picture of what prophecy means in the Torah. 1] *Navi* is related to *niv*, which indicates speech as in the verse, "He created the fruit (*niv*) of the lips" (Is. 57:19). In this context, a *navi* is a spokesman. 2] Another nuance of *navua* is from *bo*, meaning come. This expresses the idea that the *navi* enables the word of G-d to come forth. 3] It is also related to *nava*, which means flow. Here Divine influence flows forth from the prophet as from a spring or fountain. 4] Last, *navi* is connected to *navuv*, meaning hollow. This implies the process of emptying oneself of ego, becoming channel or conduit for Divine inspiration. Accordingly, Avraham and Aaron are each referred to as *navi* because they spoke of, brought forth, caused to flow and channeled Divine energy to achieve a goal. In Avraham's case it brought forth a cure; regarding Aaron, it refers to his initiating the first of the plagues. Prophesizing the future, then, is only one limited manifestation or expression of *navua*.

There are many methods of inducing prophetic influence mentioned in our sources which include: intense Torah study and prayer; meditations involving mantras, visualizations and postures; invoking the names of angels or various names of G-d; and the use of music to induce the prophetic state. Women were also prophets. Sarah was described by G-d as having a higher level of prophecy than Avraham. The Judge Deborah was consulted by all of Israel because of her insight, and it was through her leadership that the Jewish nation prevailed over, and gained freedom from, their enemy. In Temple times, a prophetess named Chulda sat at the southern gates of the Temple Mount prophesying to and inspiring the Jewish pilgrims as they went up to the Temple. It was in her honor that this entrance to the House of G-d was called the Chulda Gate.

Additional Note:

For an even more informative and in-depth discussion on Inspiration and Prophecy you are invited to listen to a lecture on the topic by Rabbi Ullman at: www.rabbiullman.com/audio/dl.htm.

“BEST BEFORE” PURCHASING

Question: I always check the “best before” date when shopping, and will often search among the items for a later date. Since the price is the same, I would rather have a fresher item. But for some items, such as milk, I know that my family will consume the product before even the early “best before” date. If I don’t buy the item that will expire earlier, the store will end up throwing it away. (We have asked, and none of the large stores will give away food with expired dates, since they fear lawsuits if anyone gets sick.) This is wasteful, bad for the environment and costs the store money. Should I be buying the older item in these cases?

Answer: Your concern for food that may go to waste reminds us of what the Talmud (*Mesechta Ta’anit* 20b) relates concerning the Sage Rabbi Huna. Every Friday just before Shabbat he would send an agent to the local vegetable market with instructions to purchase all of the produce that had not been bought and to cast it into the river.

Two explanations of this policy are offered by the commentaries. Both agree that the Sage’s purpose in

buying the leftovers was to avoid the danger of the sellers’ being discouraged from bringing their products to the market the following week. They also agree that he did not distribute these vegetables to the poor lest they develop total dependence on such handouts and fail to do their own purchasing, thus ending up with nothing for Shabbat when there were no leftovers that week.

Where the two explanations diverge is in regard to the purpose of putting the vegetables in the river. One approach is that he intended that they should float to another town where people would find them and consume them. A second approach is that he simply destroyed them in order to achieve his lofty goal of ensuring a steady supply.

In regard to your own question, it would be very noble of you to seek to eliminate waste and protect the environment. (Your consideration for the store’s losing money sounds like Rabbi Huna’s problem, but it is doubtful that your storekeeper would ever entertain the thought of not stocking up!) These considerations do not, however, obligate you to sacrifice your search for greater quality in your purchasing.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

DRY CLEAN ONLY

“You have brainwashed my son!” This was the angry accusation that a non-religious mother of a young man who had become religious and was attending a yeshiva in Jerusalem hurled at the head of the yeshiva.

The Rosh Hayeshiva, sensitive to the pain felt by this woman at seeing her son turn his back on the secular

lifestyle in which she had raised him, decided to temper her anger with a bit of humor with a big message.

Aware of how much spiritual poison had been absorbed in the brain of his student from his exposure to corrupting influences, the rabbi smiled and told the woman:

“My dear lady, in our yeshiva we do not wash brains — we dry clean only!”

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LOVE of the LAND

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