

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

LOVE AND FAITH

"And they will make for me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst." (25:8)

There is no such thing anymore as 'the bastions of Orthodoxy'. Even in the most respected families there are children who are dropping out or dangling dangerously over the edge.

There are no easy answers to this problem. Maybe we should see the fact that so many of our youth choose not to be lured by that oh-so-glamorous world of illusion that surrounds us as something to give thanks for. But this is cold comfort for those who know the heart-break of a 'lost child'. No child is a statistic. Every person is a universe. A well-known Rosh Yeshiva had a son who couldn't keep up with the high-pressure environment of his yeshiva, and he started to miss classes here and there. His davening became perfunctory and his *kippa* got smaller and smaller and inched further and further to the front of his head.

His father was worried sick that his estrangement from learning would precipitate his fall into the wrong crowd. And from there — who knows? The son sensed his father's anxiety. He came to his father one day and said, "Daddy. Don't worry. I'm not going to drop out because I know you love me."

On the surface this sentence is a non-sequitur. What have religious convictions to do with love? What is the connection between being religious and having loving parents?

"And they will make for me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in their midst."

There are no pat formula answers to the problem of *noshrim* — drop-outs from religious families — but this child felt that his home was a sanctuary, a sanctuary of love. A sanctuary of his parents' love for him, of his parents' love for each other, for G-d and for the Torah. Maybe that brought him to closeness to G-d that transcended his lack of success in yeshiva. Maybe that welded him with iron bands to G-d and to the Jewish People.

Let us make our homes into sanctuaries of love and acceptance, where our children feel our love of them, of our spouses, of the *mitzvot* and our relationship to G-d. And may this love permeate the hearts of all those troubled young lives and save them and their parents from sorrow — for in that sanctuary of love, G-d will dwell in our midst.

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Children of Israel are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard are an altar for the burnt offerings and a laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the *kohanim*, the descendants of Aharon. This contains the table of

showbreads, the *menorah*, and the golden altar for incense. The innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, may be entered only by the *kohen gadol*, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone that G-d gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

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GIVING IN TROUBLED TIMES

Billions of dollars down the drain because of bank collapses or Ponzi pyramiding. Millions of people losing their jobs.

These are troubles affecting the entire world. But perhaps hardest hit are the Torah institutions that depend for their survival on the philanthropy that has always distinguished the Jewish People. This characteristic is evident from this week's Torah portion's description of how our ancestors contributed so generously to the building of the Mishkan sanctuary.

While the shortage of funds affects charitable institutions everywhere, the situation in Israel, with its large number of *yeshivot* and *kollelim*, is particularly acute. As Jews this Shabbat hear the words of G-d asking His people to contribute to the Mishkan fund so that "I may dwell among them", they will hopefully take to heart the importance of maintaining the sanctuaries of today – the institutions of Torah study – so that we will merit enjoying G-d's presence protecting 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

TZIPORI – CITY OF THE PAST

Perched on top of a mountain in Lower Galilee was the city of Tzipori, a great center of Jewish life in Talmudic times.

Many Talmudic Sages lived in Tzipori, among them Rabbi Yossi who maintained his rabbinical court there.



When he passed away blood flowed in the pipes of Tzipori as a Heavenly sign of mourning.

The *gemara* (*Mesechta Megillah* 18a) states that this city was called Tzipori because it was located atop a mountain like a *tzipor* (bird).

לע"נ

מרת רחל בת ר' הירש ז"ל

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. How many types of items were the Jews to donate?
2. The donation of silver for the Mishkan differed from the donation of the other items. How?
3. What property do *techelet* and *argaman* share that *orot eilim m'adamim* do not share?
4. What property do the above three share that *shesh* and *orot techashim* do not share?
5. Onkelos translates "*tachash*" as "*sasgona*." Why?
6. What kind of trees did Yaakov plant in Egypt?
7. Describe two uses of: 1) oil, 2) spices, 3) jewels.
8. The *aron* was made with three boxes, one inside the other. Exactly how tall was the outer box?
9. Why is the Torah referred to as "testimony"?
10. What did the faces of the *keruvim* resemble?

11. On what day of the week was the *lechem hapanim* baked?
12. What does *miksha* mean?
13. What was the purpose of the *menorah's* *gevi'im* (cups)?
14. How did Moshe know the shape of the *menorah*?
15. What designs were embroidered into the tapestries of the Mishkan?
16. What is meant by "standing wood"?
17. How long was the Mishkan?
18. How wide was the interior of the Mishkan?
19. Why was the altar coated with *nechoshet*?
20. Which function did the copper *yeteidot* serve?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week's Questions!

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

1. 25:2 - 13.
2. 25:3 - No fixed amount of the other items was required. The silver was given as a fixed amount: a half-shekel.
3. 25:4,5 - They are wool; *orot eilim* are not.
4. 25:4,5 - They are dyed; *shesh* and *orot techashim* are not.
5. 25:5 - The *tachash* delights (*sas*) in its multi-colors (*g'vanim*).
6. 25:5 - *Arazim* — cedars.
7. 25:6-7: 1) The oil was lit in the *menorah* and used for anointing. 2) The spices were used in the anointing oil and for the incense. 3) The precious stones were for the *ephod* and the *choshen*.
8. 25:11 - The outer box was one and a half *amot* plus a *tefach* plus a little bit, because it rose a little bit above the *kaporet*. (The *kaporet* was a *tefach* thick — see 25:17).
9. 25:16 - It testifies that Hashem commanded us to keep the *mitzvot*.
10. 25:18 - The faces of children.
11. 25:29 - Friday.
12. 25:31 - Hammered.
13. 25:31 - Purely ornamental.
14. 25:40 - G-d showed Moshe a *menorah* of fire.
15. 26:1 - On one side a lion; on the other side an eagle.
16. 26:15 - The wooden beams were to be upright and not stacked one upon the other.
17. 26:16 - 30 *amot*.
18. 26:23 - 10 *amot*.
19. 27:2 - To atone for brazenness.
20. 27:19 - They secured the curtains against the wind.

S U B S C R I B E !

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- Change in the nature of a stolen object and despair of recovery on the part of the victim
- A stolen sacrifice and stolen animal skins
- A decree to facilitate a thief's rehabilitation
- Change in the name of a stolen object
- Why the fine of four and five times for selling or slaughtering a stolen animal is limited to cow and sheep
- The thief who steals from a thief
- The status of a stolen object when the owner has not yet despaired of recovering it
- The markings made for indicating the status of certain trees
- The *tzenuin* and their efforts to prevent sin
- Testimony regarding the theft and the slaughter
- When violation of Shabbat accompanies the theft and its sale
- When an agent carries out the slaughter or sale of the stolen animal
- Can one benefit from something cooked on Shabbat

A DILEMMA FOR DECADES

Imagine a problem in Talmudic logic remaining unresolved for twenty-two years! Such a situation is mentioned in our *gemara*. The Sage Rava reports that the Sage Rabbah posed a question to Rabbi Yosef for twenty-two years that was finally resolved when the latter became the head of the yeshiva.

A similar *gemara* (*Mesechta Ketubot* 42b) mentions a problem that both Rabbah and Rabbi Yosef struggled with for twenty-two years until the latter resolved it upon assuming leadership. (In his commentary, Rabbi Yaakov Emden suggests that in our *gemara* as well the text should read as it

does in *Ketubot*.)

Rashi in *Ketubot* explains that the 22-year period was the time when Rabbi Yosef stood at the helm of the yeshiva, and the resolution came when Rabbah succeeded him upon his death. While Rabbah was famed for his analytic power that earned him the title of a "mover of mountains", Rabbi Yosef was chosen before him because of his encyclopedic knowledge that earned him the title "Sinai".

In order to enable Rabbah to gain a reputation like his predecessor, Heaven helped him find the solution to the problem that had challenged both of them for 22 years.

• *Bava Kama* 66b

What the SAGES Say

"A one-day-old ox is called an ox and a one-day-old ram is called a ram."

• *The Sage Rava - Bava Kama* 65b

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SHEMITA

From: Craig in Chicago

Dear Rabbi,

Is there any concern regarding shemita produce now that the shemita year is over? If so, would it affect those of us who live outside of Israel? And as a follow up on that, if shemita is somehow still in effect even after the seventh year has ended, how do observant farmers fare?

Dear Craig,

The sanctity imparted to produce grown in the Land of Israel during the seventh year of the agricultural cycle, and all the laws governing its proper use, apply equally to the produce that remains after the end of the shemita year, since it grew during shemita.

Regarding this point, there is a practical distinction between most vegetables and fruit. Most vegetables that grow during the shemita year become ripe, are harvested and consumed by the end of the year. However, many fruits, while ripening during shemita, are picked only at the end of the year, or even picked after shemita is over. Additionally, the fruits may be dried or preserved, such as dates or olives, or made into long-lasting beverages, like wine. For this reason the laws pertaining to shemita fruit apply even after the seventh year and into the eighth.

Regarding how this affects those who live outside of Israel, there is an additional distinction between vegetables and fruit as based on marketing dynamics. Vegetables generally have a shorter shelf life and are less of a specialty item than fruits. So in addition to the fact that shemita concerns are extended after the year via fruits as mentioned above, these fruits are often exported outside of Israel. If one knows that a particular product comes from Israel from the shemita year, he must treat it accordingly.

How does the extended nature of the shemita affect observant farmers in Israel? The Torah provides the following answer:

You shall perform My statutes, keep My ordinances and perform them, then you will live on the land securely. And

the land will then yield its fruit and you will eat to satiety, and live upon it securely. And if you should say, "What will we eat in the seventh year? We will not sow, and we will not gather in our produce!" know then, that I will command My blessing for you in the sixth year, and it will yield produce for *three* years. And you will sow in the eighth year, while still eating from the old crops until the ninth year; until the arrival of its crop, you will eat the old crop (Lev. 25:18-22).

G-d promises a special blessing to those who keep the law of the Land such that the produce of the sixth and eighth years will compensate for the fallow of the seventh. Nowadays, we don't rely on miracles and many organizations and individuals proactively help, encourage and support those farmers who make the admirable sacrifice to preserve the sanctity of the Torah and the Land of Israel. Despite the help, resources are limited and some farmers admittedly find it difficult. Still, every shemita has its miraculous stories that in one way or another bear out the Torah's promise.

The following story is one of many from the recent shemita year:

The season before shemita a particular non-religious farmer invested a great deal of money in new equipment in order to start producing organically grown peppers, which he harvested but wasn't particularly successful in marketing. Sometime before shemita he became religious and was confronted with the dilemma of whether to plant during shemita to get his budding venture off the ground (for which he had dug deep into debt), or let things lay fallow.

Despite great pressure from his family, business acquaintances and distributors, who threatened to drop him as a new supplier if he didn't deliver the goods, he decided to keep shemita. Just before the year began there was a great frost in Europe that devastated the pepper crops and European distributors were frantically searching for peppers. Unsolicited, organic pepper people "somehow" got to this newly religious farmer and not only did they pay double for his heretofore unsold sixth-year harvest, they paid all the costs of packaging and shipping to Europe. This unexpected windfall enabled him to pay off his debt, leaving enough profit to get him through his first shemita.

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PAYING THE SYNAGOGUE FOR SERVICE

Question: It is generally understood that regular worshippers in a synagogue help support it by purchasing a seat or an *aliya*. What about someone who just comes to pray there once in a while? What is the right thing to do?

Answer: This question is very appropriate to this week's Torah portion that describes the participation of all Jews in the building of the Mishkan sanctuary.

The story is told of the time that Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul, *zatzal*, the famed head of Yeshivat Porat Yosef, entered a synagogue to join the congregation for the Ma'ariv service. Although it is not customary to give *tzedaka* before

that service as it is before the morning and afternoon prayers, he was seen putting some coins into the synagogue charity box.

When asked why he did this he explained that it was not his intention to simply give *tzedaka* before praying, but rather to pay for the service he received.

"My intention", he pointed out, "was to participate in the upkeep of the synagogue. When I enter it to pray I want it to be clean and that the lighting should allow me to read from my *siddur*. Since I benefit from all of this, how can I do so without paying for what I receive?"

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

A TOOTHACHE IN TIME

When he returned from his trip abroad to inspire Jewish communities Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman suffered from a severe toothache. After being examined by his regular dentist this great Rosh Yeshiva and Torah leader was informed that a tooth would have to be extracted. Since such a procedure is extremely painful the dentist told him that he would require a local anesthetic.

When the Rosh Yeshiva refused to take any pain killer the dentist told him that he never did such a painful procedure without an anesthetic, even for younger people. But the Rosh Yeshiva was adamant and the dentist had to go ahead

with trepidation.

Throughout the procedure not one sign of pain was heard and it was impossible to tell from the patient's calm composure that he was experiencing any pain.

When it was all over Rav Shteinman explained his insistence on refusing any effort to prevent his feeling pain. During his visit abroad, he said, he was greatly honored wherever he went. Since he felt that he was not deserving of such honor, he was determined to seek atonement. The pain he would suffer from having his tooth extracted without an anesthetic, he concluded, would serve this purpose.

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