

RED ALERT!

P'KUDEI

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DIVREI TORAH

- After the Revelation of the Almighty at Mt. Sinai and the giving of the Torah, came in quick fashion, the terrible sin of the Golden Calf. After two more trips to the top of Mt. Sinai by Moshe, Hashem finally forgave the people on Yom Kippur.

On the day after Yom Kippur, Hashem gave the orders to construct the Mishkan. Now on the first of Nissan, the Mishkan was completed and erected. According to the simple reading of the text, it took almost 6 months to complete this holy task. In his introduction to the Chumash of Sh'mot, the Netziv (Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, 1817-1893, Rosh Yeshiva in Volozhin) wrote that the major event of this Chumash was not the Exodus and not the Revelation at Sinai but it was the Presence of the Almighty among the people when the Mishkan was completed.

- In the Talmud (Yoma 21b), it states that in the First Beit HaMikdash, there were 5 items that did not reappear in the second Mikdash. They were the Holy Ark with its K'ruvim and Kaporet, the Eternal Flame, the Presence of the Almighty, the Divine

Spirit, and the Urim v'Tumim. HaRav Moshe Sofer (the Chatam Sofer, 1762-1839, Rav in Pressburg) wrote that this is alluded to in the first verse of this week's reading when the Torah writes HAMISHKAN MISHKAN, the letter HEI appears in the first word and is missing in the second word, indicating to us that the Beit haMikdash had HEI = 5 items that were not present in the Second Temple.

- In the beginning of this week's reading, Moshe gives an exact accounting of all the gold and silver that was collected via the Building Fund Appeal that was conducted to finance the Mishkan construction. It is inconceivable that anybody would suspect Moshe of pocketing some of the funds, but nevertheless Moshe was teaching a Halacha that would forever guide such events in the future. In the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De'ah 257), the Halacha is written that the Gabba'im of all Tzedaka collections should give an accounting to the public, just as we see in this Parsha (Ohr HaChayim). There is no indication that anyone had suspected Moshe of any financial misconduct, but the Torah does state that we conduct ourselves in a way to be innocent in the eyes of Hashem and in the eyes of every Jew (Bamidbar 32:22).

- Betzalel and Oholiav were the two partners who led all the craftsmen

who worked on the Mishkan and the Kohen's clothing. Betzalel came from the leading and largest tribe (Yehuda) and Oholiav came the lowest tribe (Dan), indicating that they were equal in the eyes of Hashem. This teaches us that we are equal in the eyes of Hashem in all matters. Many commentators indicate that the two men had different strengths. Betzalel was the more spiritual of the two, indicated by his name. Betzalel means "in the shadow of Hashem". Oholiav was the more physically gifted of the two. Between the different divine gifts that each possessed, the utensils of the Mishkan were in the hands of true masters. Considering that all the craftsmen were former slaves with no experience or skills to perform the tasks of the intricate details of the tasks at hand, it was truly the divine spirit of Hashem that guided all of them.

- The Torah repeats the expression "as Hashem commanded Moshe" 18 times in this Torah text. Simply this indicated that the entire project bore the signature of the Almighty. The Talmud bridges the 18 to the Sh'moneh Esrei, the 18 blessings of the weekday Amida. But there are now 19 blessings in the Amida. The accepted answer is that in the future days of Mashiach, the Amida will be restored to the original 18 blessings. What the Talmud was really doing was linking the sacrificial rituals of

the past to our current daily services. Even though we are living without the benefit of the Mikdash and the sacrifices, our daily prayers take the place of the sacrifices!

- In verse 39:42, the Torah stated that Bnei Yisrael did all the work in building, decorating, and servicing the rituals of the Mishkan. The Ramban questions what the Torah is really bringing out with this statement. Another commentator brought out a valid point to answer the Ramban's question. He wrote that when Shlomo HaMelech organized the construction of the First Beit HaMikdash, he not only utilized Jewish workmen, but he also utilized foreign experts to work on this endeavor. It made the work even more exquisite and beautiful. But in the desert, no foreigners were allowed to work on the development and handicraft needed to build this holy structure. It was all entirely Jewish workmen, and it further demonstrated Hashem's involvement in the project.

- This Mishkan was built to travel, and it did so throughout their travels through the desert. Even when it was encamped, Rashi commented that it was "traveling" (40:38). Nevertheless, it was built to travel!

This is evidenced by the attachment of permanent staves to the sides of the Holy Ark. For hundreds of years,

the Ark was in its stationary position in the Mikdash, ready to travel. This indicated that the Jewish people would have to travel... Traveling into Exile for thousands of years. And we take our Torah with us, never abandoning our Rock, stabilizing our religious existence.

- MIDRASH. Rabbi Levi said that the Tent of Meeting (the Mishkan) was likened to a cave that was by the seashore. When there was storm and the sea surged, it filled the cave with water, but the sea did not experience a loss of any water. So was the Mishkan filled with the Splendor of the Almighty, and yet the world did not lose any of the Almighty's Glory.

Questions by RED

From the text

1. Who was the leader of the tribe of Levi whose job was to coordinate the role played by each Levitical family? (38:23)
2. How much gold was collected in Shekels for the construction of the Mishkan? A talent was worth 3000 Shekels (38:24). [Extra Credit: How much was the gold worth in today's market?]
3. Where was the Shoham stones placed? (39:7)
4. On what date was the Mishkan erected? (40:2)

5. What came to cover the Tent of Meeting? (40:34)

From Rashi

6. Why is the word Mishkan written twice in the first verse? (38:21)
7. What were the knitting vestments (BIGDEI S'RAD) used for? (Rashi on 31:10)
8. How did they make gold threads? (39:3)
9. How was the Tzitz (Forehead plate) held in place on the Kohen Gadol's forehead? (39:31).
10. What did Moshe say when he blessed the nation when he completed erecting the Mishkan? (39:43)

From the Rabbis

11. Where did the people bring all the unassembled parts of the Mishkan? (Ramban)
12. During the week before the assembly of the Mishkan, who served as the Kohen Gadol? (Ramban)
13. Moshe placed the Tablets into the Holy Ark (Aron). Where did he take them from? (Ramban)

Midrash

14. The entire nation saw the Divine Presence descend upon the Mishkan when they saw the Heavenly Cloud descend upon it. What will happen in

the Days of Mashiach?

Haftara - HaChodesh (Yechezkel)

15. Historically what happened on the first day of Nissan?

Relationships

- a) Moshe - Tzipora
- b) Aharon - Eliezer
- c) Nadav - Gershom
- d) Avihu - Chur
- e) Dina - Peretz

ANSWERS

1. Itamar, Aharon's youngest son.
2. 87,730 Shekel [A Shekel is .39oz. The current value of gold is \$2,925 per ounce. The total is slightly more than \$100 million!]
3. They were placed on the shoulder straps of the Eifod.
4. Rosh Chodesh Nissan.
5. The Divine Cloud.
6. The word Mishkan is also very close to Mashkon, or pledge or collateral. The Holy Temple was taken from us until the nation repents.
7. These were for the coverings of the Mishkan's most sacred artifacts which were wrapped in them during traveling.
8. They rolled out the gold in very thin sheets and then cut slices from the sheets.
9. By three blue cords tied from the

Tzitz to the back of the Kohen Gadol's head.

10. From T'hilim 90:17: May Hashem rest upon your handiwork...

11. To Moshe's tent.

12. Moshe

13. From his tent where they were in a wooden box.

14. We will all experience personally the Presence of the Almighty within us.

15. The Jewish people received their first mitzva as a nation: Rosh Chodesh.

Relationships

- a) Husband & Wife
- b) Uncle & Nephew
- c) First Cousins
- d) First Cousins
- e) Aunt & Nephew