



יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו וא'להי אבותינו שתשלח מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים,
רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף לפצועי המלחמה, ולנפגעי מעשי טרור ואנטישמיות
בישראל ובכל מקום שהם - עם שאר חולי ישראל. אמן.

May HaShem protect our soldiers; may He send Refu'ah Sh'leima to the many injured;
may He console the bereaved families and all of Israel; may He end these wars with
total success and peace for Medinat Yisrael and Klal Yisrael wherever we are.



YERUSHALAYIM in/out times for

VAYAKHEL-P'KUDEI HACHODESH (m)

March 13-14, '26 • כ"ה אדר ה'תשפ"ו

 **5:10PM** PLAG **4:32PM** •  **6:23PM** R' Tam **6:58PM**

Use the Z'MANIM link for other locales

PhiloTorah (286vph) - 1 - all at once file





Shabbat M'vorchim

This Shabbat we bench R"Ch Nisan which will be next Thursday, March 19th. Since the Adar right before Nisan always, in our fixed calendar, has 29 days, R"Ch Nisan is one day.

רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ נִסָּן יְהִי בְּיוֹם חֲמִישִׁי
הַבֹּא עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לְטוֹבָה:

The molad of Nisan is on Wednesday, March 18th, 34 minutes and 13 parts (chalakim) after 4 in the afternoon.

הַמּוֹלַד יְהִי בְּיוֹם רְבִיעִי, שְׁלֹשִׁים וְאַרְבַּע דְּקוֹת
וְשִׁלְשָׁה-עָשָׂר חֲלָקִים אַחֲרֵי אַרְבַּע אַמֵּר הַצְּהָרִים.

This translates to 4:22pm Israel Winter Time. In Rambam notation, the molad is כב:תרכה ד'

With Parshat HaChodesh, we see that R"Ch Nisan is not just a Rosh Chodesh. Nisan is ROSH CHODASHIM - the first of the months of the year.

VPH - Vayakhel- P'kudei - HaChodesh

There are 14 year-types in our calendar. Seven of them are 12-month years (SHANA P'SHUTA) and seven are 13-month years (SHANA M'UBERET).

In six of the seven year-types of SHANA P'SHUTA (12-month, one

Adar years), VP are combined and are always joined by a special maftir - Parshat HaChodesh, 42% of all years - as it is, this year, and with Parshat Para 18% of the time. VP is combined about 60% of years and read separately 40% of the time.

When they are read separately, one or the other is joined by a special haftara - specifically, Sh'kalim. And in the rarest year-type of them all, V and P are read separately and both are joined by a special maftir - Para and HaChodesh. (That happened last year.)

Calendar trivia. The sedras from Mishpatim through Tazri'a are sometimes within the range of the Shabbatot of the Four Parshiyot. Among these ten sedras, only P'kudei is always within the Four Special Shabbatot, sometimes with a Maftir and sometimes as a Hafsaka.

There are seven pairs of sedras that sometimes combine and sometimes are read separately. VP is the second longest of the double-sedras at 214 p'sukim. Even with the 20 added p'sukim for the maftir of HaChodesh, it remains in second place, behind Matot-Mas'ei's 244 p'sukim. Contrast that with Nitzavim-Vayeilech's 70 p'sukim.

Four of the pairs - including VP handle the extra Shabbatot during a SHANA M'UBERET. The other three pairs serve different functions.

VAYAKHEL -P'KUDEI



• HACHODESH

	V	P	VP
Sedra among 54	22nd	23rd	-
Sedra of Sh'mot's 11	10th	11th	-
lines	211.2	158.7	369.8
rank (among the 54)	22nd	41st	(2nd)
Parshiyot	13	20	33
P'tuchot	7	6	13
S'tumot	6	14	20
P'sukim	122	92	214
rank (Torah/Shmot)	17/3	40/10	(2nd)
Words	1558	1182	2740
rank (Torah/Shmot)	24/6	42/9	(2nd)
Letters	6181	4432	10613
rank (Torah/Shmot)	21/5	44/10	(2nd)

MITZVOT

Vayakhel has a single mitzva counted among the 613. P'kudei has none. To be fair to VP, the mitzvot it does contain have already been counted the first time around - in T'ruma & T'tzaveh.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND

Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

Vayakhel-P'kudei is the 2nd longest of the seven pairs of double sedras. But, even the addition of the 20-pasuk Maftir of HaChodesh does not help it reach the length of Matot-Mas'ei. Close, but no cigar.

Kohen - First Aliya - 20+9 p'sukim - 35:1-29

[S> 35:1 (3)] Moshe gathers the People (according to Tradition, this took place on the "first" Yom Kippur or the day after, following 40 days and 40 nights on Har Sinai) to instruct them concerning the building of the Mishkan. He begins with a warning to keep Shabbat (even while being involved in the holy tasks of the Mishkan).

OBSERVATION Notice that when G-d speaks to Moshe, He instructs him concerning the Mishkan (236 p'sukim) and then warns him that Shabbat is supreme. When Moshe gathers the people to instruct them, he puts the Shabbat warning up front (3 p'sukim and then 211 p'sukim about Mikdash and everything in and about it). Some commentaries say that with the change in "primary" emphasis on the Mikdash in the aftermath of the Golden Calf, there came a change in the messages of Shabbat and Mikdash which helps explain which is presented first, and when.

SDT: In the opening 3-pasuk portion about Shabbat, there are 40 words - 39 plus the word HaShabbat. This can be taken as a symbolic reference to the 39 categories of prohibited Melacha, which define the nature of HASHABBAT. The Baal HaTurim says that the word LA'ASOT in the phrase, "These are the things that G-d commanded TO DO them", is spelled with a LAMED (30) and an anagram for TEISHA (9) - another remez to the Melachot of Shabbat. He adds that a VAV is "missing" from LA'ASOT, representing the six weekdays when Melachot are permitted.

MITZVA notes

The "command" here of "You shall not kindle fire in all your dwellings on the Shabbat day" teaches us many things.

Lighting a fire is one of the 39 AVOT MELACHA (categories of creative activities forbidden on Shabbat). As such, we already have the prohibition from Commandment #4 - ...Thou shall not do any manner of MELACHA... Why is the Torah singling out FIRE here? The question is two-fold: Why single it out and why command it again.

Sefer HaChinuch says that the prohibition here is directed to Sanhedrin, not the individual. **[It is mitzva 114 according to the Chinuch, and**

Rambam's LAV (prohibition) 322.]

We have already been told that we may not kindle fire. The courts, says the Chinuch, may not carry out the capital punishment of burning (S'reifa) on Shabbat. Nor, by Biblical extension, may any capital punishment be carried out on Shabbat, nor may any punishment by the courts be meted out on Shabbat. This allows Shabbat to be a day of respite and rest even for the convicted felon on "death row".

We can also look at the Shabbat reminder in a different way. You may not kindle fire in YOUR DWELLINGS, wherever they may be, but you may - nay, you must - kindle fire (and do certain other Melachot) in THE DWELLING, the Mikdash. (That is, when specifically commanded to do so by G-d.) This can explain the specific placement of the "repeat" of the prohibition of kindling fire.

Tif'eret Y'honatan suggests a novel reason for singling out FIRE. Since we are prohibited from doing Melacha on Shabbat because G-d rested from Creation on the first Shabbat, and since fire was not "in the picture" until the first Motza'ei Shabbat, perhaps kindling of fire is not an equal member of the family of prohibited Melachot. Comes the pasuk here to set the record straight. Fire is not only one of the 39 categories, it is the flagship of the LAMED-TET MELACHOT.

Furthermore, from the singling out of one of the melachot, we are taught that each category of melacha is often treated distinctly. This means that cooking and baking would be considered two violations of the same Av Melacha, as would watering and pruning a rosebush. In contrast, pruning a tree and picking its fruit would be violations of two different melachot - Planting and Reaping. There are ramifications to this distinction.

[P> 35:4 (26)] Aside from the first three p'sukim, the rest of the sedra deals with the building of the Mishkan. Parshat T'ruma gave us the command and instructions, Vayakheil tells us of the carrying out of the instructions.

One senses an impatient excitement concerning the job at hand. Moshe speaks to the people and tells them that which G-d has commanded.

(Note the similar terminology the Torah uses when Moshe tells about Shabbat and about the Mikdash.)

The different types of materials are named. It is made clear that donations are encouraged, but completely voluntary. (Except for silver.)

Then each part of the Mishkan and its furnishings is mentioned in detail. After the people heard what Moshe had to say, they left the meeting (apparently enthused and anxious to get busy).

One can speculate, based on the sequence we are presented with in the Torah, that there was a fair amount of guilt from the Golden Calf that was motivating the People.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: The phrase SHABBAT SHABBATON appears 6 times in the Torah. Twice it refers to Yom Kippur, once to the Shmita year. One other time it might be talking about Shabbat, but possibly about Yom Kippur. The first two times the phrase appears are in Ki Tisa and Vayakhel. Both times are in the context of building the Mikdash. One of the commentaries suggests that when one does "regular" work during his week, then Shabbat is Shabbat. But when we spend our six work-days in "holy-work", such as building the Mikdash (but not just that), then our Shabbat is further elevated, and is described as Shabbat Shabbaton.

We can also say that since Yom Tov is called Shabbaton, Shabbat and Yom Kippur are both Shabbat Shabbaton, because they have more forbidden melachot and their punishment for violation is greater than that of Yom Tov.

Many people are moved to give generously in response to Moshe's appeal. Men and women all give (there are different interpretations as to what the wording in the pasuk indicates). In addition to donations, men, and more

so women, donated their talents in weaving, dyeing, woodwork, metalwork, etc.

Repeated reference is made to the hearts of the people being in what they were doing. This was a genuine positive response to G-d's and Moshe's call to build the Mishkan.

The leaders of the Tribes supplied the precious stones for the shoulder-pieces of the Eifod and for the Choshen of the Kohen Gadol, and spices and oil for the Incense and the Anointing oil.

Levi - Second Aliya - 13+12+35 p'sukim - 35:30-37:16

[P> 35:30 (13)] Moshe tells the people that G-d has designated Betzalel (from Shevet Yehuda) and Aholiav (from Dan) as the chief artisans of the Mishkan. They have been Divinely inspired with intelligence, insight, and the skills necessary for the various intricate tasks ahead. They and those working with them supervised the collection of materials and informed Moshe that they received more than enough material. Moshe "gives out the word" that the people should cease their donations.

[S> 36:8 (6)] When G-d commanded Moshe about the Mishkan, He first commanded the making of the Aron, Shulchan, and Menora. Then, the roofing layers - the Mishkan, the Ohel,

and the Orot. Only then were the wall boards and foundation sockets brought into the picture. In the carrying out of the commands, a more "practical" plan was followed. The structure and then the furnishings. But how can Moshe and Betzalel deviate from the commands of G-d? You can't just do whatever you want in this kind of thing.

Commentaries say that Moshe and Betzalel requested and received permission from G-d to take the more human, practical approach.

In this portion, the three layers of ceiling are presented. Note that the first layer was a beautiful, multi-colored weave and the fasteners were gold.

[P> 36:14 (6)] Over that came the more practical, less attractive, less complicated, but weather-resistant Ohel of goat hair. This layer was not seen from inside the Mishkan, and might not have been seen from the outside either, according to the opinion that the Tachash and Red-dyed sheep skin covering (which was also attractive) was not just on top, but down the sides of the Mishkan as well.

[S> 36:20 (19)] Next, the Torah describes the construction of the wall-planks of the Mishkan from acacia wood. (Still out of practical, logical order - a puzzle.) There were 48 planks - 20 each on the north and south walls, and 8 on the west wall. Each plank was covered with gold.

(According to Rav Aryeh Kaplan z"l, the gold covering was extremely thin - he calculated it at 1/100 of an inch thick.)

Each plank was inserted into two foundation sockets of silver. The Torah describes in detail the rods, bolts, rings that held the wall planks together.

The Parochet to hang between the Kodesh and the Kodesh Kodashim, the Masach for the front of the Mishkan, and the Masach for the front of the courtyard were similar in style and material to the first ceiling layer.

With the structure completed, next came the Aron and the Shulchan.

[P> 37:1 (9)] The Aron is described in the same detail as when it was first commanded back in Parshat T'ruma. This is so for all parts of the Mishkan, not just the Aron.

The Aron consisted of an open-top box of wood, plated with gold inside and out. (Some describe it as three nested boxes - the outer and inner of thin gold and the middle one of wood, which gave support to the Aron and the lid - Kaporet and K'ruvim). Even the thickness of the wood was covered with gold, so that none of the wood was visible.

[P> 37:10 (7)] This parsha contains the details of the Shulchan. In Parshat T'ruma, the command to build the Shulchan and its utensils was followed by the command to put the Lechem HaPanim onto the shelves of the

Shulchan. Here in Vayakheil, the mention of Lechem HaPanim is still to come.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 13 p'sukim - 37:17-29

[P> 37:17 (8)] Next comes the Golden Menora. With the exception of the oil cups, everything else - the branches, the decorative orbs, cups, flowers - was hammered from one piece of gold.

Did you know... that even though the Torah commands that the Menora be made of gold, it may be made of other precious metals, if gold is not available. Furthermore, the requirement of MIKSHA ACHAT, one solid piece, only applies to the Menora when it is made of gold. And furthermore, a non-gold Menora, which is just as "kosher" for the Beit HaMikdash as a gold one, does not need the decorative orbs, cups, and flowers. Without these restrictions, it is much easier to make a Menora for use in the next Beit HaMikdash, until we get the gold and full details of the Menora's form. In fact, there is a silver Menora in the Temple Institute in the Old City, that is waiting to function in the Third Beit HaMikdash until we will be able to make a proper gold one. May we see it put to use in our time - and subsequently replaced by a Golden Menora.

[P> 37:25 (5)] Next, the Golden Altar (a.k.a. Incense Altar, a.k.a. Inner Altar) is described.

After this Mizbei'ach was made, the Anointing Oil and Incense were compounded.

Just an observation... In the first presentation of the Mishkan, the Golden Altar is found in Parshat T'tzaveh. The Mizbei'ach for the korbanot, which was outside the Mishkan, which is the next topic here in Vayakheil, was presented in T'ruma.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 20+12 p'sukim - 38:21-39:1

The fourth Aliya is always the bridge Aliya between two combine sedras

[S> 38:1 (7)] The External Altar, Copper Altar, Earth Altar (because it was filled with earth when the camp rested and the Mishkan was erected) is described. All korbanot were brought on this Mizbei'ach. It was much bigger than the Golden Altar.

[S> 38:8 (1)] The final vessel described is the Washing Basin and its Stand. It was made of copper. Tradition tells us that the copper came from the mirrors of the Israelite women. At first, Moshe did not want to accept them because of the vanity associated with mirrors. G-d, however, told Moshe how very precious this gift was in His eyes, because they reminded Him (so to speak) of the role Jewish women played in the redemption of the people from Egypt.

[S> 38:9 (12)] Finally, the courtyard is described.

[S> 38:21 (3)] The sedra of P'kudei begins with an accounting of the materials collected for use in the construction of the Mishkan, its furnishings, and the garments of the Kohanim.

SDT: We are taught from the fact that Moshe Rabeinu gave a voluntary accounting of the materials, that a person in the position of collecting monies for the community must conduct himself in such a way that he will always be above suspicion. Even if the individual is completely trustworthy, he should take measures to avoid the possibility of appearing improper.

The work of assembling and dismantling the Mishkan throughout the years of wandering in the Wilderness was the domain of the tribe of Levi, under the supervision and leadership of Itamar b. Aharon HaKohen.

The chief artisans of the Mishkan, the Torah reminds us, were Betzalel of Yehuda and Aholiav of Dan.

[S> 38:24 (9)] The Torah next details the amounts of gold, silver, and copper which were collected for the Mishkan and its vessels. The Torah also lists the uses of the different metals. Then the Torah mentions the different dyed wools (sky-blue, purple, crimson - the shades of color are debated - e.g. sky-blue - at what time of day?

Different shades of blue - which is the "correct" T'cheilet color?) that were used in the making of the sacred garments of the Kohen Gadol, and for the cloths that covered (and protected) the sacred items of the Mishkan during the traveling from place to place in the Midbar.

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 20 p'sukim - 39:2-21

[P> 39:2 (4)] This Aliya contains a detailed description of the Eifod and the Choshen of the Kohen Gadol. Both were woven from the same kind of weave and the two were attached firmly to each other when worn.

[S> 39:6 (2)] Two onyx stones (Avnei Shoham) were attached to the shoulder straps of the Eifod. The names of the 12 tribes (actually, it was the 12 sons of Yaakov) were engraved on the stones, six on each stone.

[P> 39:8 (14)] This parsha contains the detailed description of the CHOSHEN. In addition to the fabric of these two garments, there were gold settings for the stones, gold rings and chains for attaching Choshen & Eifod.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 11+11 p'sukim - 39:22-43

[P> 39:22 (5)] The ME'IL (different opinions - cloak, cape, poncho-like garment) was woven completely of T'CHEILET wool. Its neck-hole was

reinforced to prevent tearing. The hem of the ME'IL was fringed with alternating bells of gold and pompoms of colored wools. According to Rambam, there were 72 bells in all, 36 in the front and 36 in the back.

[S> 39:27 (3)] The KUTONET, a long-sleeved, floor-length garment was woven of white linen. All Kohanim wore a KUTONET. Each had it custom-fitted, since it is forbidden to do AVODA in the Mikdash if the garment was either too long or too short, (or frayed or soiled).

A turban of linen was worn by the Kohen Gadol in one style, to accommodate the TZITZ. Regular Kohanim wore their turban in a different style.

The belt or sash, AVNEIT, was woven from the three colors of wool and from linen. It was unusually long (32 AMOT, approx. 15 meters, about 50 feet) and therefore needed to be wound around the kohein's waist many times. (Some say that the AVNEIT was worn above the waist.) The winding produced a prominent bulge around his waist which the kohein felt whenever his hands were at his sides. This served as a constant reminder to the Kohein of the seriousness of the service in the Beit HaMikdash. The AVNEIT was Shaatnez, as was the Choshen and Eifod.

[S> 39:30 (2)] Next comes the TZITZ, a.k.a. NEZER HAKODESH, made of

pure gold and fastened around the KG's head with ribbons of T'cheilet wool. The TZITZ was embossed with the words KODESH TO HASHEM. There are different opinions as to how the words were formed from the gold of the Tzitz, and in what order and orientation relative to each other. The TZITZ was like a royal crown for the Kohein Gadol, yet it was also meant to humble him greatly. It is difficult for an exalted person to be humble - but that is the challenge for the Kohein Gadol and for kings of Israel.

[S> 39:32 (1)] Thus, all the work of the parts of the Mishkan and garments of the Kohanim came to an end. (All that remained was to put everything together and in its right place.)

SDT: Talmud Yerushalmi notes that the phrase, "as G-d had commanded Moshe" appears 18 times in P'kudei. Correspondingly, we have 18 brachot in our weekday Amida (the connection between Service in the Mikdash and Davening is well-known).

[P> 39:33 (11)] All the components of the Mishkan, its vessels, and the sacred garments were brought to Moshe following the completion of the work by the many men and women who voluntarily contributed their talents to the Mishkan. Moshe inspected all of the work and found it to be consistent with what G-d had commanded to be done.

Moshe blessed the people:

VIYHI NO'AM... "May it be G-d's will that He will cause His Presence to settle upon your handiwork." (Rashi)

The Torah once again enumerates all of the components of the Mishkan. And repeats over and over again that the People did everything that G-d had commanded Moshe.

Here's a thought... The emphasis upon the people doing as commanded stands in harsh contrast to the Golden Calf, which was not at all what G-d had commanded. We can see a rebuke every time the point is made that, "this time we listened, but what happened a couple of months earlier..." (It is complimentary, that we did as commanded, but we can also see an implied rebuke.)

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya
- 16+11+11 p'sukim
- 40:1-38

[P> 40:1 (16)] G-d instructs Moshe to erect the Mishkan on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. After the structure of the Mishkan is in place, Moshe is to bring in the ARON and hang the PAROCHET which is to separate the Holy of Holies from the main part of the Mishkan.

Then the Shulchan and Menora were put in their places, followed by the Golden Mizbei'ach.

The MASACH was then hung from the posts (or posts and rod) at the entrance

to the Mishkan.

The Copper Mizbei'ach was then placed in front of the Mishkan, opposite its entrance.

The KIYOR and its base were then placed between the Mishkan and the Mizbei'ach, slightly to the side. The courtyard curtains were then hung from their posts.

Following all this, Moshe was to anoint all the components of the Mishkan and sanctify them. Then the Mizbei'ach and its vessels were anointed, and the Laver as well.

Then the Kohanim were brought forward. After proper ablutions, they were clothed in their sacred garments and anointed.

[S> 40:17 (3)] And it came to pass that on the first day of Nissan, in the second year out of Egypt (almost), the Mishkan was completed. In this portion, the Torah spells out the step-by-step procedures of finally carrying out the commands of T'ruma, T'tzaveh, and the first third of Ki Tisa.

ADANIM, wall boards, braces for the walls, pillars for the curtains. Coverings.

[S> 40:20 (2)] Then the LUCHOT go into the ARON, the carrying poles are inserted into their rings (never to be removed), the lid (KAPORET) is placed on the ARON and the complete ARON is placed into the Mishkan. When in position, the PAROCHET is hung

between what now becomes the Holy of Holies (with the ARON) and the rest of the Mishkan.

[S> 40:22 (2)] Then the SHULCHAN is set in place (north wall of the Mishkan) and the LECHEM HAPANIM is placed on the shelves of the SHULCHAN.

[S> 40:24 (2)] The MENORA goes in place next, opposite the SHULCHAN (on the south wall). Then the oil cups are placed on the tops of the seven branches of the Menora.

[S> 40:26 (2)] The Golden Mizbei'ach is then set in the middle of the KODESH, in front of the Parochet, and KETORET is offered on it.

[S> 40:28 (2)] With that, the MASACH was hung across the entrance of the MISHKAN. Then the external Mizbei'ach was put in place, opposite the entrance to the Mishkan, and an OLAH was offered on it.

[S> 40:30 (3)] The LAVET (KIYOR) was set between the Mishkan and Mizbei'ach, and it was filled with water. Kohanim were required to wash hands and feet before approaching the Mizbei'ach or the Mishkan.

[S> 40:33 (1)] Finally came the poles and curtains of the courtyard and the curtain at its entrance. And the whole task was completed.

[P> 40:34 (5)] In the final 5 p'sukim of Sh'mot, the Torah tells us that Moshe was not able to approach the Mishkan because it was "covered by a Cloud".

Only when the cloud lifted was Moshe able to approach. The Cloud was also that which signaled the people to travel or to remain encamped. The Cloud was there by day and the Pillar of Fire by night.

Note that the Mishkan's being covered with a cloud and Moshe's not being able to approach is very similar to the experience at Har Sinai. It has been said that the Mishkan / Beit HaMikdash was the successor (so to speak) to Har Sinai. G-d spoke with Moshe at Sinai, and continues to speak to him from the Mishkan.

Thus ends the Book of Sh'mot, with the stage set, so to speak, for the Book of Vayikra, Torat Kohanim.



It is customary for the congregation to stand for the concluding pasuk of each book of the Torah.

This seems NOT to raise the objections that standing for the Aseret HaDibrot does.

The Torah-reader reads the final words with a dramatic flair, signalling the congregation to respond with CHAZAK, CHAZAK, V'NITCHAZEIK (Strong, strong, and let us be strengthened).

The reader then repeats that phrase.

Some say that the person who receives the Chazak Aliya should NOT

say the phrase, as this might constitute an interruption between the Torah reading and his concluding bracha. Or possibly a different reason - that the congregation is saying Chazak... to him.

It is considered a special honor to receive this Book-completing Aliya.

Maftir - 2nd Torah - 20 p'sukim - Sh'mot 12:1-20

This Maftir adds to the Sedra Stats: 1 parsha (S), 20 p'sukim, 313 words, 1208 letters, 9 mitzvot.

Parshat HaChodesh is the fourth of the Four Parshiyot. It is the Shabbat of or the Shabbat right before Rosh Chodesh Nissan. We read of the mitzva to set up the Jewish Calendar (the first two p'sukim), followed by the commands concerning Pesach - Korban Pesach, Matza, Chametz, etc. (the rest of this 20-pasuk maftir).

The main theme of the Maftir is Korban Pesach (KP). KP is different from all other korbanot. All korbanot were brought in the Beit HaMikdash between the two daily T'midim, except for KP which was brought after the afternoon Tamid. KP is the only korban that was never eaten during the daytime. KP can be brought and eaten in a state of ritual impurity (under certain circumstances). This can be seen as a "compromise" by G-d to facilitate our performance of this

mitzva. (An individual is postponed until Pesach Sheni because of TUM'A, but the community brings and eats KP while TAMEI, rather than wait the month.)

The Maftir contains several mitzvot - the Jewish Calendar [4], to slaughter the KP [5], to eat it [6], not to eat it rare or cooked (but only fire roasted) [7], not to leave over any of KP to the morning [8], to destroy Chametz from one's possession [9], to eat matza on Seder night [10], not to possess Chametz on Pesach [11], not to eat any foods that contain Chametz [12]. We also find the source of SHMURA MATZA and the source of the permitted M'LACHOT on Yom Tov. Other mitzvot related to KP and chametz are found elsewhere in Parshat Bo and elsewhere in the Torah.

Haftara - 28 p'sukim - Yechezkeil 45:16-46:18

S'faradim start two p'sukim later and end three p'sukim earlier

The Haftara contains the prophecy of the building of the Beit HaMikdash and the restoration of Korban Pesach - hence the connection to the Maftir. Both the Torah and Haftara announce the holiday of Pesach, in very similar words, and both speak of putting blood on the doorpost. Not only do both readings talk about Pesach, but both focus on Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

Bringing the Prophets to Life

**Weekly insights into the Haftara
by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler**

Author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)

Nisan - The Month of Ge'ula

**HACHODESH - 28 p'sukim -
Yechezkeil 45:16-46:18**

S'faradim start two p'sukim later and end three p'sukim earlier

The special readings of both the Maftir and the Haftara of this Shabbat HaChodesh focus upon the mitzva of Korban Pesach. Primarily, the text details the ritual that should be followed by B'nei Yisra'el in Egypt one week later, although it also touches upon the observance of Korban Pesach in future years. Besides its spotlight upon the sacrificial rite, however, the Torah takes pains to include the importance of the month of Nisan itself - an important addition as well.

The opening p'sukim of the Maftir reading declare: HACHODESH HAZEH LACHEM ROSH CHODASHIM - that you must consider this month (of Nisan) as the 'head' of the months, to regard Nisan not only as the first of the months in the year but, also, as ROSH, the most significant month of the year. In keeping with that point,

the Torah records a listing of those mitzvot to be observed during that month specifically, thereby underscoring the importance of the month of Nisan itself.

Similarly, Yechezkel HaNavi quotes Hashem's charge (to the soon-to-be-liberated nation) in his opening verses of our haftara, by saying to his generation: ...BARISHON, B'ECHAD LACHODESH... - "In the first day of the first month..." The prophet proceeds to delineate those laws of the month, primarily, the laws of the Korban Pesach, just as the Torah does in the twelfth perek of Sefer Sh'mot, but in doing so, he includes the emphasis upon the significance of the month itself.

Rav Yehuda Shaviv enlightens us quoting the words of the Ramban who reminds us that one year after the first of Nisan, the Mishkan was dedicated (Chanukat haMishkan). In his introduction to Sefer Sh'mot, the Ramban submits that this dedication actually marked the conclusion of the GE'ULA process that began exactly one year earlier, when the first mitzvot were given to the nation. This approach is supported in the closing perek of Sefer Sh'mot that opens with G-d's declaration to Moshe: B'YOM HACHODESH HARISHON, B'ECHAD LACHODESH - "On the first day of the first month..." - TAKIM ET MISHKAN OHEL MO'ED - "you shall

erect the Mishkan..." [40:2]. And then in pasuk 17, we learn that Hashem's directive was properly observed "on the first day of the first month of the second month". The repetition of the command makes it clear that the day and month are essential to the construction of the Mishkan as that same date is crucial to the initial laws given to Israel.

I include this approach of the Ramban for, I believe, it is essential in order to properly understanding the message of Yechezkel in this week's haftara.

Upon reading the haftara we realize that it does not focus upon the Korban Pesach, as we might have thought. Rather, it speaks of the requirement to sanctify the Mikdash, starting with "the first day of the first month". It does make mention of the sacrifice that must be offered on the 14th day of the month (Korban Pesach), but Yechezkel continues by detailing the other offerings to be brought on the days that follow, i.e., the seven days of the holiday itself.

The bulk of the haftara (perek 46) makes no mention of Pesach or its korbanot. Instead, it is involved with the importance of the sanctity of the Mikdash and the many rituals and laws that are required to uphold its holiness. It is, therefore, not a message of preparation for the Korban Pesach or the chag itself. It is, rather, a demand of upholding the

KEDUSHA of the Beit HaMikdash and, with that, the nation itself.

For this reason, we should not regard Shabbat HaChodesh as a time to prepare for Pesach but, rather, to prepare for sanctity, holiness and care of that which is holy. The month of Nisan. Therefore, it should not be seen as a month of "miracles" (NISan) nor as the month of Pesach.

Yechezkel makes it clear to us that Nisan is the month of GE'ULA - not simply when we left servitude of Egypt but when we began the worship of the Divine! ✨



ParshaPix
explanations



The fun way to go over the weekly sedra with your children, grandchildren, Shabbat guests

KI TISA - PARA

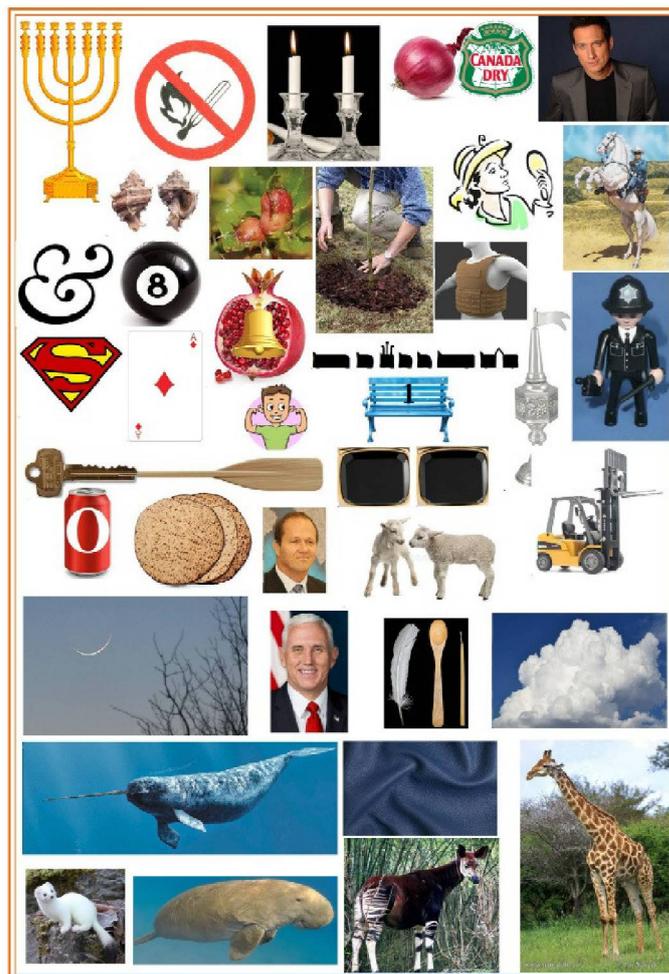
• and three Unexplaineds

There are 20 grains of wheat - the Biblical shekel was 20 grains of silver.

The washing machine is for the washing (immersing) of one's clothes as part of the Tahara process - part of Parshat Para.

D, CCL, CCL, D - Roman numerals for 500, 250, 250, 500 - amounts of the ingredients of Ketoret.

Vayakhel-P'kudei HaChodesh



Negation circle over the lighted match is for LO T'VAARU EISH... <> the Shabbat candles, on the other hand, emphasize that we are not supposed to sit in the dark, but light up our homes from before Shabbat in honor of Shabbat and for Oneg Shabbat <> and the Menorah is to remind us of the fact that it was lit on Shabbat in the Mikdash, as were other MELACHOT done therein <> Comedian Elon Gold is for the gold collected and used in the Mishkan <> Lone Ranger's horse, Silver for the silver collected and used <> British policemen are called coppers <>

b'samim box is for the b'samim used in the Mishkan <> Sapling being planted, for the Midrash that Yaakov Avinu planted trees on his way down to Egypt so his descendants would have wood for their needs (Mishkan) <> Murex Trunculus (twice) is the popular choice today for the original source of both T'cheilet and Argaman dyes. Depending upon exposure to sunlight and oxygen during processing, the dye from MT can become purple or blue <> the source of the third dye used in the Mishkan, SHANI. <> two SHOHAM (onyx) stones in gold settings for the shoulder straps of the Eifod <> fork lift is for moving the heavy foundation blocks of the Mishkan (ADANIM) <> pomegranates (pompoms) adorned the hem of the Kohein Gadol's M'IL; one opinion, based on the wording in the pasuk, is that the gold bells were within the rimonim, rather than alternating with them <> The onion goes together with the Canada Dry logo giving BATZAL-ALE <> according to Living Torah (Rav Aryeh Kaplan z"l), OROT T'CHASHIM, part of the upper covering of the Mishkan, might have been blue dyed leather <> or a particular animal's skin. The TACHASH might have been <> ermine <> narwahl <> dugong (a.k.a. sea cow) <> giraffe <> okapi (looks more like a zebra, but is a close relative of the giraffe, and is a kosher animal, like the giraffe <> Key-oar is the KIYOR,

and the soda can with the letter O is KANO <> the flak jacket is called an EIFOD <> Towards the beginning of Vayakhel, there is a portion that makes most BKs (Baalei K'ri'a) cringe. The word ALEF-TAV occurs many times, sometimes with a SEGOL (ET or ES) and sometimes with a TZEIREI (EIT or EIS) - these are symbolized by the ampersand, which is a stylized combination of E and T, as in the Latin ET, for AND; an 8-ball for the word EIT; the S from Superman's logo, for ES, and the ace of diamonds for EIS <> The Cloud is the Mishkan while covered with a cloud, as described in the final p'sukim of P'kudei and the whole book of Sh'mot. If you see just a cloud and not the Mishkan within it, then you probably only see the Little Prince's hat and not the boa constrictor that had recently swallowed an elephant. If you don't know what we're talking about, ask a child or grandchild who read the Little Prince <> for Parshat HaChodesh, we have - the first visibility of the lunar crescent <> a lamb and a goat - your choice for KP <> and three matzot <> the two gentlemen are Nir Barkat and Mike Pence. I do not remember what they were doing in the ParshaPics for Vayakhel-P'kudei - HaChodesh. Maybe I should have just left them out this time around. On the other hand, maybe a reader will figure out what they are doing in this ParshaPix. Hey,

maybe Mike Pence, who was vice president of the US back in Trump's first term - VP, vice president, Vayakhel-P'kudei. If so, I should have switched to a pic of JD Vance. And Barkat? No idea yet <> the woman is looking at herself in a mirror. This is for the donation of copper mirrors from the women to the Mishkan. Moshe did not want to accept them but HaShem told him how precious He considered their gift <> Three new Unexplaineds

לע"נ

הרב יעקב צבי ב"ר דוד אריה ז"ל

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

Three Types of Community

VAYAKHEL-P'KUDEI

A long drama had taken place. Moshe had led the people from slavery to the beginning of the road to freedom. The people themselves had witnessed God at Mount Sinai, the only time in all history when an entire people became the recipients of Revelation. Then came the disappearance of Moshe for his long sojourn at the top of the mountain, an absence which led to the Israelites' greatest collective sin, the making of the Golden Calf. Moshe returned to the mountain to plead for forgiveness, which was granted.

Its symbol was the second set of Tablets. Now life must begin again. A shattered people must be rebuilt. How does Moshe proceed? The verse with which the sedra begins contains the clue:

Moshe assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them: "These are the things God has commanded you to do" (Sh'mot 35:1).

The verb VAYAKHEL - which gives the sedra its name - is crucial to an understanding of the task in which Moshe is engaged. At its simplest level it serves as a motiv-word, recalling a previous verse. In this case the verse is obvious:

When the people saw that Moshe was so long in coming down from the mountain, they assembled around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us" (32:1).

Moshe's act is what the kabbalists called a TIKUN: a restoration, a making-good-again, the redemption of a past misdemeanour. Just as the sin was committed by the people acting as a KAHAL or K'HILA, so atonement was to be achieved by their again acting as a K'HILA, this time by making a home for the Divine presence as they earlier sought to make a substitute for it. Moshe orchestrates the people for good, as they had once been assembled for bad (The difference lies not only in the purpose but in the form of the

verb, from passive in the case of the Calf to active in the case of Moshe.) Passivity allows bad things to happen - "Wherever it says 'and it came to pass' it is a sign of impending tragedy" (Megila 10b). Proactivity is the defeat of tragedy:

"Wherever it says, 'And there will be' is a sign of impending joy." (Bamidbar Rabba 13)

At a deeper level, though, the opening verse of the sedra alerts us to the nature of community in Judaism.

In classical Hebrew there are three different words for community: EIDA, TZIBUR and K'HILA, and they signify different kinds of association.

EIDA comes from the word EID, meaning "witness". The verb YA'AD carries the meaning of "to appoint, fix, assign, destine, set apart, designate or determine". The modern Hebrew noun T'UDA means "certificate, document, attestation, aim, object, purpose or mission". The people who constitute an EIDA have a strong sense of collective identity. They have witnessed the same things. They are bent on the same purpose. The Jewish people become an EIDA - a community of shared faith - only on receiving the first command:

"Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household"

(Sh'mot 12:3).

An EIDA can be a gathering for bad as well as good. The Israelites, on hearing the report of the spies, lose heart and say they want to return to Egypt. Throughout, they are referred to as the EIDA (as in "How long will this wicked community grumble against Me?" (Bamidbar 14:27). The people agitated by Korach in his rebellion against Moshe and Aharon's authority is likewise called an EIDA ("If one man sins, will You be angry with the whole community? (Bamidbar 16:22). Nowadays the word is generally used for an ethnic or religious subgroup. An EIDA is a community of the like-minded. The word emphasises strong identity. It is a group whose members have much in common.

By contrast, the word TZIBUR - it belongs to Mishnaic rather than biblical Hebrew - comes from the root TZADI-BET-REISH meaning "to heap" or "pile up" (Bereishit 41:49). To understand the concept of TZIBUR, think of a group of people praying at the Kotel. They may not know each other. They may never meet again. But for the moment, they happen to be ten people in the same place at the same time, and thus constitute a quorum for prayer. A TZIBUR is a community in the minimalist sense, a mere aggregate, formed by numbers rather than any sense of identity. A

TZIBUR is a group whose members may have nothing in common except that, at a certain point, they find themselves together and thus constitute a "public" for prayer or any other command which requires a minyan.

A K'HILA is different from the other two kinds of community. Its members are different from one another. In that sense it is like a TZIBUR. But they are orchestrated together for a collective undertaking - one that involves in making a distinctive contribution. The danger of a K'HILA is that it can become a mass, a rabble, a crowd.

That is the meaning of the phrase in which Moshe, descending the mountain, sees the people dancing around the Calf:

Moshe saw that the people were running wild, and that Aharon had let them get out of control and so become a laughing-stock to their enemies (Sh'mot 32:25).

The beauty of a K'HILA, however, is that when it is driven by constructive purpose, it gathers together the distinct and separate contributions of many individuals, so that each can say, "I helped to make this." That is why, assembling the people on this occasion, Moshe emphasises that each has something different to give: Take from what you have, an offering

to God. Everyone who is willing to bring to God an offering of gold, silver and bronze ... All you who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the Lord has commanded ...

Moshe was able to turn the K'HILA with its diversity into an EIDA with its singleness of purpose, while preserving the diversity of the gifts they brought to God:

Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moshe's presence, and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to God for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments. All who were willing - men and women - came and brought gold jewellery of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments ... Everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn ... Those presenting an offering of silver or bronze ... Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun ... The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems ... All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to God freewill offerings for all the work God, through Moshe, had commanded them to do (35:20-29).

The greatness of the Tabernacle was that it was a collective achievement - one in which not everyone did the same thing. Each gave a different

thing. Each contribution was valued - and therefore each participant felt valued. Vayakhel - Moshe's ability to forge out of the dissolution of the people a new and genuine K'HILA - was one of his greatest achievements.

Many years later, Moshe, according to the Sages, returned to the theme. Knowing that his career as a leader was drawing to an end, he prayed to God to appoint a successor: "May God, Lord of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a person over the community" (Bamidbar 27:16). Rashi, following the Sages, explains the unusual phrase "Lord of the spirits of all flesh" as follows:

He said to Him: Lord of the universe, the character of each person is revealed and known to You - and You know that each is different. Therefore appoint for them a leader who is able to bear with each person as his or her temperament requires. (Rashi on Bamidbar 27:16).

To preserve the diversity of a TZIBUR with the unity of purpose of an EIDA - that is the challenge of K'HIL-formation, community-building, itself the greatest task of a great leader.

Around the Shabbat Table:

- (1) Think about the groups you belong to. Which feel like an EIDA, which are a TZIBUR, and which are a K'HILA?
- (2) Why is it sometimes harder to be part of a K'HILA than an EIDA?
- (3) Moshe's great task was to lead people with different temperaments. What is the key to making a diverse group work well together?

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Let It Spread

As I was working out this week's PTDT, my original idea actually spread to include a number of ideas. Let's see where this goes.

This week's double sedra begins with a three-pasuk portion about Shabbat. Shabbat is K'DUSHAT Z'MAN (Sanctity of Time), part one. This week's special maftir deals with the mitzva of setting up the Jewish Calendar - K'DUSHAT Z'MAN, part two.

The rest of the double sedra (211 p'sukim) deals with Mishkan and everything involved with it -

K'DUSHAT MAKOM (Sanctity of Place).

Each of the above K'DUSHOT is not confined to the target of its sanctification.

Shabbat's K'dusha spreads. First with the concept of TOSEFET SHABBAT, our adding to and extending Shabbat. Our acceptance of K'DUSHAT SHABBAT before Shabbat officially begins, takes part of our CHOL and sanctifies it. So too with our extending Shabbat until we daven Maariv and say Havdala.

And it further spreads if and when we turn Saturday night into Motza'ei Shabbat. Not just in what we call that period of time, but what we do with it. This includes Melave Malka and whatever else we might and can do to retain the mood of Shabbat a little longer.

And this goes for Friday. Friday can be Friday, but it should be Erev Shabbat. Preparing for Shabbat; cleaning for Shabbat; getting into the mindset of Shabbat.

And there are also aspects of K'dushat Shabbat that show up during the whole week. Starting with the fact that in Hebrew there are no names for the days of the week - only the number of days B'SHABBAT. But it is more than that. Seeing a food item or a fruit and saying (or thinking) "I'm buying this for Shabbat." Same

goes with an item of clothing that you might see and decide to buy.

K'dushat Shabbat spreads (if you let it).

K'dushat Z'man part two starts with HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem Rosh Chodashim. This month (of Nisan) is the first of the months of the year. That pasuk does not only teach us how we should number and count months of the year. It is the mitzva to sanctify Rosh Chodesh (based on halachic guidelines).

It does not stop at Rosh Chodesh. Sanctifying Rosh Chodesh imparts sanctity to all the holy days in a particular month.

Take, as an example, the upcoming holiday of Pesach. The maftir of HaChodesh, this week, begins with two p'sukim about the mitzva of Kiddush HaChodesh. The remaining 18 p'sukim of the maftir deal with Korban Pesach and the Chag that runs from the 15th of Nisan to the 21st. Including the prohibition of Chameitz and the mitzva of eating matza. And including the first and seventh days of Chag HaMatzot (what we call Pesach) which are MIKRA KODESH. But the sanctity of Yom Tov depends on and springs from, the sanctity of Rosh Chodesh.

Rambam states that if, G-d forbid, we neglect to sanctify Rosh Chodesh Nisan, then the 15th of the month is

not sacred. It isn't Yom Tov. You can eat regular bread. There is no mitzva to eat matza. The K'dusha of Rosh Chodesh spreads...

So too, K'dushat Makom. The Kodesh Kodashim (Holy of Holies) is sacred. So is M'KOM HAMIKDASH, the place where the Beit HaMikdash stands or stood. Yerushalayim is Kodesh. Eretz Yisrael is Kodesh. And so is a shul - wherever it is. And K'dushat Makom can and should extend to the Jewish Home. That's our challenge. It doesn't happen by itself. But K'dusha can and should spread.

It isn't just K'dusha that can spread. How about SIMCHA, joy. Simcha is not just confined to Yom Tov. It should be a significant part of our Torah learning, of our performance of mitzvot, of our acts of Chesed, of our home lives. Rabi Nachman said it well - MITZVA G'DOLA LIHYOT B'SIMCHA TAMID. Always? Not realistic, but let Simcha and K'dusha spread in your life as much as you can. And then, a bit more. **PTDT**

מִבְּזֶקֶת

מִבְּזֶקֶת
microULPAN

MIVZEKET is a shaker, as in
MIVZEKET MELACH, salt shaker
MIVZEKET PILPEIL, pepper shaker

Walk through the Parsha

with **Rabbi David Walk**



PARSHAT HACHODESH

We Are Moonies!

This Shabbat we read the special section in Sefer Sh'mot for the Shabbat either preceding or landing on Rosh Chodesh Nissan (Sh'mot 12:1-20). These verses begin by discussing the Mitzva of setting up our national calendar by sanctifying the day upon which the new moon appears as Rosh Chodesh. After that, we have the introduction to the Mitzva of the Paschal Lamb (KORBAN PESACH). This year I'd like to focus on verse 2 in this section, which informs us: This month (Nissan, also called Chodesh Ha'Aviv, the first New Moon after the Vernal Equinox) shall be the first month of the year for you.

Let's ignore all the laws of setting up a national calendar, and, instead, focus on two crucially important ideas contained in this statement. This first concept derived from this verse is that we Jews have the power to sanctify things (L'KADESH). That's why the blessing associated with prayers on Rosh Chodesh and our Biblical Chagim is built from this phase: M'KADESH YISRAEL V'HAZ-MANIM. God sanctifies us (Yisrael) and we, in turn, sanctify these calendar dates. Cool! And powerful.

In this piece, though, I'm going to turn my attention to the second idea: We identify with the MOON! As opposed to every other civilization in the ancient world, which identified with the Sun, and established their calendars accordingly.

Why is this so important? Because this idea defines us. Most of human history is a series of major civilizations rising, flourishing and, eventually, disappearing. The list is long: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome. Not one returned for an encore. But the Jews, we just keep coming back for more. Why? Because we identify with the Moon which goes through cycles only to shine brightly every fifteenth of the month.

The second critical idea: We have the power of CHIDUSH, renewal!

These are our two Jewish super-powers: the ability to sanctify and the power to renew. This second idea, of course, feeds into the capacity to repent. T'SHUVA is central to Jewish thought, and it derives from this faculty of CHIDUSH, renewal.

The centrality of the Moon and its cycles within Jewish tradition is very visible, if one endeavors to look. We, as a nation, are so impressed with the energy of the full Moon that most of the Full Moon days (the fifteenth of each month) in the calendar are celebrated: Pesach, Pesach Sheni, Tu

b'Av, Sukkot, Tu BiShvat, Purim and Purim Katan. We don't say TACHANUN on the majority of the Full Moon days.

It's really sad that light pollution has diminished the significance of the Full Moon in our modern world. But, please, go for a night hike in Midbar Yehuda or the Negev on a Full Moon night. It's amazing! You can actually read by the Moon's light when it's full. But the print does have to be rather big (and you do have to know how to read).

Rabbeinu Bechaye (B'reishit 38:30) notes that the entire history of the Jews in Tanach can be compared to one massive cycle of the Moon. The twins born to Yehuda and Tamar are Zerach ('shining' like the Sun) and Peretz (one who 'breaks through', like the Moon). It's Peretz who fathers the heads of Yehuda's tribe and our kings. The fifteenth heir to that lineage is Shlomo the Full Moon of our Biblical leaders, and the line goes on for 14 more generations before going dark with Tzidkiyahu, at the time of the Destruction.

So, it should be no surprise that our ancestors decreed that we should celebrate this rebirth of the Moon. That commemoration of the return of the Moon's light and our hope is called Kiddush L'vana.

Originally, we used to say that all-purpose nature B'RACHA: OSEH

MA'ASEI B'REISHIT (Who made the Act of Creation; Tosefta, B'rachot 9:2). This is the blessing we recite for amazing natural phenomena, like majestic mountains or beautiful vistas. But the blessing for the re-emerging Moon has grown over time.

Here's the present version:

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, King of the universe, Who created the heavens by Your command, and all their host by Your word. You subjected them to fixed laws and time, so that they might never deviate from their set function. They are glad and happy to do the will of their Creator, the true Author, whose achievement is truth. He ordered the Moon to renew itself as a glorious crown over those He sustained from birth, who likewise will be regenerated in the future, and will worship their Creator for His glorious majesty. Blessed are You, O Eternal, who renews the months. (Masechet Sofrim 20)

The most important of the 52 Hebrew words (Gematriya: BEN, suggesting progeny and continuity) in this blessing is: SHE'TICHADESH ('that You renew it'). That is what we celebrate. And, indeed, we are supposed to be celebrating.

There are a number of ingredients to this celebratory mindset. The most famous element is that we wait to

recite this blessing until **MOTZEI SHABBAT** (Saturday night), because at that time we are well-dressed and in good spirits. Many **POSKIM** (the Vilna Gaon in the lead), over the centuries, demanded that we recite the blessing as soon as possible (for Ashkenazim, that means three days after the **MOLAD** or 'birth' of the New Moon), for the 'zealous rush to perform Mitzvot'.

The Sfat Emet explains that the mitzva of sanctifying the new moon was given to Israel precisely because we are a people defined by renewal. Just as the Moon disappears only to shine again, so too the Jewish people possess an inner capacity for continual rebirth. Every time we recite Kiddush L'vana, we affirm our faith that the hidden light of Israel will ultimately shine once more.

So, in our joy, we greet each other (**SHALOM ALEICHEM**) and we sing (**TOVIM M'OROT**) and do a little dance. But the greatest joy: We feel that we are greeting our Creator as things were when God created everything, and our tradition is that the Moon was as great as the Sun then. This is our 'joy' and our hope: We can go back to our former greatness! The rebuilt Beit HaMikdash and the renewed Davidic Dynasty are on the way.

The 'renewal' can be absolute!

We get inspired every month by the

sight of the return of that silver sliver in the sky. So, yes, we are 'moonies' of a certain kind, and we're both joyous and proud of it. CHODESH TOV! 🌙

Rav Kook Torah



by Rabbi Chanan Morrison
www.ravkooktorah.com

Technology and Shabbat

Summary: The Torah specifically prohibits lighting fire on Shabbat, emphasizing that our progress in science and technology is also part of creation.

Do not ignite fire in any of your dwellings on Shabbat. (Sh'mot 35:3)

The Torah forbids 39 different categories of activity on Shabbat. Yet only one – lighting fire – is explicitly stated in the Torah. Why?

And why does the Torah qualify the prohibition of lighting fire with the phrase, "in any of your dwellings"? Is it not forbidden to start a fire in any location?

Guidelines for Technology

The control and use of fire is unique to humanity. It is the basis for our advances in science and innovations in technology. Even now, fuel sources

for burning, coal and oil, are what power modern societies. In short, fire is a metaphor for our power and control over nature, the fruit of our God-given intelligence.

What is the central message of Shabbat? When we refrain from working on the seventh day, we acknowledge that God is the Creator of the world.

One might think that only the pristine natural world is truly the work of God. Human technology, on the other hand, is artificial and perhaps alien to the true purpose of the universe. Therefore, the Torah specifically prohibits lighting fire on Shabbat, emphasizing that our progress in science and technology is also part of creation. Everything is included in the ultimate design of the universe. Our advances and inventions contribute towards the goal of creation in accordance with God's sublime wisdom.

Along with the recognition that all of our accomplishments are in essence the work of God, we must also be aware that we have tremendous power to change and improve the world. This change will be for a blessing if we are wise enough to utilize our technology within the guidelines of integrity and holiness.

Fire in the Mikdash

This caveat leads to the second

question we asked: why does the Torah limit the prohibition of lighting fire on Shabbat to "your dwellings"? The Talmud (Shabbat 20a) explains that lighting fire is only forbidden in private dwellings, but in the Mikdash, it is permitted to burn offerings on Shabbat (and light the Menorah). Why should fire be permitted in the Beit HaMikdash?

The Beit HaMikdash was a focal point of prophecy and Divine revelation. It was the ultimate source of enlightenment, for both the individual and the nation. The fire used in the Mikdash is a metaphor for our mission to improve the world through advances in science and technology. We need to internalize the message that it is up to us to develop and advance the world, until the entire universe is renewed with a new heart and soul, with understanding and harmony. Permitting the technological innovation of fire in the Mikdash on Shabbat indicates that God wants us to utilize our intellectual gifts to innovate and improve, in a fashion similar to God's own creative acts.

We need to be constantly aware of our extraordinary potential when we follow the path that our Maker designated for us. At this spiritual level, we should not think that we are incapable of accomplishing new things. As the Talmud declares, "If they desire, the righteous can create

worlds" (Sanhedrin 65b). When humanity attains ethical perfection, justice will then guide all of our actions, and scientific advances and inventions will draw their inspiration from the source of Divine morality, the Beit HaMikdash.

*Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 164-165.
Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. III, p. 53*

Rav Kook on T'hilim

*from an unpublished work
by Rabbi Chanan Morrison*

T'hilim 19 - Elevating Life Through Prayer

Summary: More important than the spiritual heights reached while praying is the practical impact that prayer should exert on our lives.

YIHUY L'RATZON IMREI FI...

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable before You, HaShem – my Rock and my Redeemer (T'hilim 19:15).

We add this verse to the end of the Amida, the central prayer recited three times each day.

Yet initially, the Sages were uncertain: should this verse be

recited at the start of the Amida, or at its conclusion? Is it a prelude to the words of prayer we are about to say? Or is it a closing statement regarding the prayer that we have just offered?

A Tool to Elevate Life

The meaning of this request – “May the words of my mouth... be acceptable” – hinges on this very question.

If recited at the start of the Amida prayer, then it refers to the prayer about to be said. It expresses our fervent wish that the prayers which follow will engage our soul and uplift our heart. We hope that we will succeed in directing our prayers with deep kavana. It is, in essence, a prayer for a powerful, meaningful Amida.

If, on the other hand, the verse belongs at the end of the Amida, then it speaks to the result of our prayer experience.

The twelfth-century philosopher Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, in his classic work - The Kuzari, explains that each prayer is meant to uplift and refine our lives. As we inevitably become entangled in the mundane affairs of daily life, the spiritual impact of our prayer wanes. This continues until it is time for the next prayer, when we rekindle the light of the soul. Spiritual life is thus a constant, cyclic pattern,

with gradual descents halted by swift climbs of spiritual ascent through prayer.

Thus, when recited after the Amida, the request of “May the words of my mouth... be acceptable” takes on a deep significance. It reflects our desire that our Amida prayer should uplift and enlighten our lives even after we have finished praying. The soul’s outpouring during prayer should not be limited to the hour of prayer but serve as a practical tool to sanctify life.

Chai Blessings

How did the Sages resolve this question? They noted that this verse appears in the nineteenth psalm, following eighteen chapters of prayer. Accordingly, the proper place for this verse is at the end of the Amida, after its Sh'moneh Esrei (eighteen) blessings.

This insight reveals the primary benefit and purpose of prayer. More important than the spiritual elevation experienced while praying is the practical impact that prayer should have on our lives. We can now understand the connection of prayer to the number eighteen – corresponding to the Gematria of the word CHAI (CHET-YUD), meaning ‘life’.

This is the message of this verse. It exhorts us to elevate our lives to

match the lofty feelings of holiness and closeness to God that we experience during the hour of prayer. “May the words of my mouth”, as well as my conduct and my life, “be acceptable L'FANECHA – before You, HaShem.”

*Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. I, p. 47
on B'rachot 9b, pp. 220-221*

The Daily Portion - Sivan Rahav Meir

The IKEA Effect

Translation by Yehoshua Siskin

Have you heard about the “Ikea Effect”? If we assemble a product we purchased by ourselves, we are more connected to it due to our personal involvement. A product that we take ready-made out of the box does not create a similar connection.

This week we finish the book of Sh'mot. The double parasha of Vayakhel and P'kudei that completes the book is concerned with the building of the Mishkan. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks explained that just as we speak about the “Idea Effect” we need to speak about what could be called the “Mishkan Effect”:

“The Israelites had seen God perform miracles: the plagues, the splitting of the sea, the manna from heaven. But

the building of the Mishkan involved no miracles. Instead it required human labour, skill and generosity. God deliberately withdrew so that the people could become His partners in the work.

God does not want us to remain passive recipients of miracles. He wants us to become active participants in the work of creation.

When parents do not do a child’s homework for them but instead teach them to work and make the effort themselves, the child becomes more engaged with the learning. When people help prepare something themselves, they feel a stronger sense of ownership and connection to it.

The greatest gift you can give someone is not a gift but a task – a challenge that calls on their best energies and allows them to become a partner in creation.”

B’hatzlacha.

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by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

VAYAKHEL-P'KUDEI

Fighting for Time

Building the Mishkan was an urgent priority. The work had to proceed with energy and alacrity.

But there was one proviso: Shabbat had to be a rest day: "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day you must have a holy day" (Sh'mot 35:2). Work had to be suspended for the Sabbath day.

A day had to replace a building in the consciousness of every Israelite. Not that there would not have been grumbles. "I have so many things to do", Moshe must have been told; "how can God expect me to drop everything for 24 hours?"

The modern rabbi hears the same complaint: "Rabbi, you don't know how fierce the pressure is; Saturday just simply has to be business as usual!"

But nothing should allow Shabbat to be pushed aside or compromised, and it is not because Judaism is harsh or inhumane.

The "business as usual" syndrome is possibly good for business, but it is

disastrous for human relations, for peace of mind, for personal sanity and the human spirit. People tend to have no time for the family: Shabbat gives them the opportunity.

They have no time to think: Shabbat gives them this precious gift. They have no time to breathe the air and look up from the frantic scurrying that keeps them chained: Shabbat clears their lungs, restores their equilibrium and calms their mind and heart.

Shabbat also turns a person into a mensch: life is so competitive that everyone else is a potential rival, but when Shabbat comes, the other person is a human being like oneself, a friend and not an enemy.

How right the sages were when they said that Shabbat is a foretaste of life in the World to Come, "the day which will be all Shabbat".

Account & Reckoning

The sidra is called P'KUDEI, "accounts". It reports the audit of the funds used towards the Mishkan.

Moshe, as the leader of the people, was entrusted with considerable sums, and he had to account for them all.

Would anyone have accused him of

fraud or embezzlement? Probably not. But even a Moshe has to show that all he does is totally above board, beyond all criticism or question.

The same applies to anyone who has money to administer. No-one is exempt from giving DIN V'CHESH-BON, "account and reckoning".

Metaphorically we all have to face an audit and give a DIN V'CHESH-BON every day of our lives. How we live, what we do, how we relate to other people, how we relate to God - nothing escapes scrutiny on some level.

The sages even hint that in the World to Come we will be required to account for how we handled all the opportunities that life presented us with.

Let us hope that the Chief Auditor on high will declare Himself satisfied.

-OZ

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Sedra Highlight

- Dr Jacob Solomon

VAYAKHEL-P'KUDEI

The Parasha, the long description of the building of the Mishkan, and the entire Book of Sh'mot finishes with:

The cloud (of G-d's Presence) covered

the OHEL MO'ED. The Glory of G-d filled the Mishkan... The Israelites would travel when the cloud was raised up from the Mishkan... But... they would not depart until the day it rose up (40:34-37).

Later on (Bamidbar 9:15-23), the Torah narrates at length the procedure through which G-d communicated His Marching Orders to the Israelites in the desert - by means of the cloud by day, and the fire by night.

What place does the travel arrangements of Am Yisrael have here, as conclusion material to the building of the Mishkan and indeed, to the entire Book of Sh'mot?

As a response, the Ramban (in his introduction to the Book of Sh'mot) observes that the entire Book is the story of the first Divinely-ordained national exile, and Geula - redemption from it. Even after departing from Egypt, they were still in foreign territory in the wilderness. But when they reached Mount Sinai, and built the Mishkan, G-d returned and rested His Presence among them. Their participation in that mitzva with their voluntary donations incorporated in the building of the Mishkan brought them close to Him, as had been their patriarchal forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov who, in building their own sanctuaries as altars to G-d, also brought themselves near to

Him. It was at that point that the Israelites, all working together L'SHEIM SHAMAYIM without quarrelling, were indeed a redeemed nation. It was in Geula that the travelling arrangements occurred. Indeed, the Book of Sh'mot is sometimes referred to as Sefer Geula - the Book of Redemption. And it is these last p'sukim that launch the focus of that Geula, with G-d signifying His working with Am Yisrael by ascending and descending in a cloud as He prompts them stage by stage towards their final destination.

In short, Sefer Sh'mot, Sefer Geula, finishes with the travel arrangements as it was the travelling arrangements that both sealed and aligned for the future the theme of Sefer Sh'mot, the Geula.

What is significantly important is that these events took place outside Eretz Yisrael. It was not Eretz Yisrael that redeemed them, but the reverse. The reality was that they were to arrive there as a redeemed people, with the Mishkan as a representation of it.

This observation is vital, as it constitutes a very important link in the chain of the spiritual development of the Israelite, and later the Jewish People. It has been pointed out that there were four great formative 'watershed' periods: under Avraham Avinu, under Moshe Rabeinu, during the century following

the Destruction of the First Temple, and in the exile from Yerushalayim to Yavneh and then beyond, following the Destruction of the Second Temple. None of the shaping events took place when Israel was in the Holy Land under its own rule... Indeed, the Rabbis place a much greater emphasis on the reconstruction of the work of Sanhedrin on its exile from Yerushalayim to Yavneh, than the Zealots' last stand against the Romans at Masada taking place at the same time.

That teaches us that Israel has a vital, but not exclusive part in the sacred traditions and directions for life for the Jewish People. For it is not just the place that contains the holiness, but it is that people bring holiness with them wherever they are, as represented by the travels of the Mishkan to its final destinations in Eretz Yisrael. 'Wherever I let My Name be mentioned, I will come to you and bless you' (Sh'mot 20:21).

It is what the people bring to living in Israel that makes Israel great. Everyone has a different positive contribution to make. It is on each person to ask themselves what difference their own personal involvement can make, and it the responsibility of each person to do what they can to make it happen. 🌿🏴‍☠️

Dvar Torah by Rabbi Chanoch Yeres

to his community at
Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe
Graciously shared with PhiloTorah

VAYAKHEL-P'KUDEI

"These are the reckonings of the Mishkan..." (38:21)

This reckoning of the items donated to the Mishkan interrupts between the narrative of the actual construction of the Mishkan and the fabrication of the kohanic garments like the Eifod (39:2).

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, in his sefer Darash Moshe, attributed this interruption to teach us a very important lesson. For these materials such as gold and silver to be elevated from just being used in an ordinary construction sight but rather a dwelling place for the Divine Presence, they had to be dedicated totally to holy purposes. Any diversion of these items for profane use would nullify their holiness. Therefore, before recounting the making of the Kohanic garments, the Torah makes a point of showing us that all the gold and silver, as well as all the other material, had been donated for the distinct purpose of constructing the Mishkan. Otherwise, the Kohen would not have been allowed to perform his holy services with them.

In addition, we can learn that just like in the Mishkan, they had to account for every bit of material that was donated, so too, we need to give a reckoning for all the bounty that G-d has blessed us with. Rabbi Feinstein felt that this includes the "time" we are blessed with. Do we devote that time for following the commandments of G-d or do we waste it on trivialities?

This type of thinking should be addressed to all our possessions and wealth. Do we assume that these items are ours and ours alone for our whimsical needs or are we carefully to spend it wisely and productively in helping other people who are in need?

The building of the Mishkan and the accounting, in hindsight, of all the materials donated and used for this holy purpose, sets a precedent for all future generations to give account to what we have utilized our possessions for, to ensure that they were used to fulfill G-d's will through his Torah and commandments.

We see how its not only the actual building of the Mishkan that sets it apart from all other construction but it is the method of how we kept track and accounted for all that was used in the process that also teaches us a definitive lesson in our lives today. 🛠️

The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

VAYAKHEL-P'KUDEI HACHODESH '81

Let us attempt to find a common theme linking Parshat HaChodesh and our Parshiot this Shabbat.

The special maftir Torah portion read this Shabbat discusses the mitzva of the Korban Pesach in all its details (Sh'mot 12:1-20). Rav Soloveitchik sees in this institution one of the central means through which we demonstrate our freedom on Pesach (Festival of Freedom, pp. 35-46). In the Rav's view, there are two aspects to slavery: one, physical servitude - a political juridic dimension, and two, a restrictive slave personality - a mindset of bondage and subjugation. A person may enjoy all the physical benefits of choice and autonomy and yet exhibit, in his behavior, a peculiar manner of thinking and feeling - of acting in a distinct fashion resembling more an EVED than a BEN CHORIN.

The Rav analyzes this personalistic type of slavery by examining the various limitations imposed upon the slave in halacha. One of them is a slave's inability to marry (Bava Kama 88a). Why should this be so? "To marry means to cut down the barriers that separate individuals from each other... Marriage is supposed to precipitate the transition from an

individual to a communal existence... Only people who ... are capable of thinking in terms of others... only they are able to ... surge toward another person, extend their concerns and create a covenantal community. The slave is in fear of his life... and that fright extinguishes every moral feeling within his person... He protects himself; he cannot think about others or be concerned with them." In a word, a servile and cringing mentality is so radically self-absorbed that the marriage norm as an ethical and existential value is completely alien to him. Hence, the covenant of marriage cannot be realized.

When the Jew, however, engages in the mitzva of the Korban Pesach, he demonstrates a commitment to family and fellowship. The Pesach is a symbol of freedom "because freedom expresses itself in the realm of bayit, of community, of being together" (see Sh'mot 12:3). This sacrifice is unique because it is predicated on the concept of chavura - community which is completely non-existent regarding the other Biblical offerings (Sh'lammim, Chatat, Olah and Asham). Because the Pesach is that offering around which one displays chesed and tzedaka - of sharing, it becomes the perfect counterpoint to the slave's self-preoccupation. Even better, it is principally within this healthy family laboratory, as defined by Pesach, that the Jewish marriage

ethos is nurtured and inspired.

Can we now find in our Parshiyot a theme which resonates with a message similar to that of the Korban Pesach? Indeed so.

When the Torah characterizes the people who willingly donated toward the construction of the Mishkan, the text states (35:21): "And every person whose heart inspired him - came, and everyone whose spirit motivated him - brought Gd's portion ..."

The Ohr HaChayim HaKadosh flags the obvious redundancy of N'SA'O LIBO - "whose heart inspired him", and NADVO RUCHO - "whose spirit motivated him", and offers a very telling distinction. The NADVA RUCHO describes a person who willingly contributes but only what he can afford. The N'SA'O LIBO, however, portrays a very different type of donor. It speaks of an individual whose heart is possessed of an innate goodness that makes it impossible for him to be other than overflowing in his generosity. He gives far beyond his financial capacity. And because his giving is a reflection of his heart - TUVIYOT LIBO, in the words of the Ohr HaChayim - the deeds of a N'SA'O LIBO translate into much more than a generous monetary contribution. It becomes a matter of deeply ingrained and innate goodness. It is as much - if not more - about the time and energy - the

genuine devotion to the sacred task at hand - that elevate his Mishkan offering to a notch above the rest.

There is something in the Jewish DNA which predisposes us toward charity and generosity (see Yevamot 79a). We almost can't help ourselves when it comes to showing compassion and empathy for others, especially the unfortunates in our society. The Rav often spoke about how the Egyptian exile molded the moral quality of the Jewish people for all time. (Reflections of the Rav I, pp. 189-192) He distinguished between two words which, while employed interchangeably, are not synonymous: MERACHEM and RACHAMAN. A MERACHEM describes a person who performs many charitable acts. However, such acts of kindness are not necessarily consistent. A MERACHEM often hesitates and deliberates whether to perform the noble deed. In short, "he feels no dominant compulsion to do so."

A RACHAMAN, on the other hand, speaks not to the deed as such, but rather to an attribute. Such a person only has one choice - to act compassionately. "His attitude flows naturally from his personality. He does not hesitate; he is not self-conscious. He cannot act otherwise; he is able only to love, and is unaware of any other alternative." For good reason, we have been described

ideally as RACHMANIM B'NEI RACHMANIM, a people where compassion and kindness run through the very fabric of our being. Of course, a person is not born a RACHAMAN, but "the halacha directs him to act with compassion and gradually transforms him into one who responds spontaneously with RACHAMIM." Over time, the NADVA RUCHO metamorphosizes into a N'SA'O LIBO. And the downtrodden Israelite under Egyptian tyranny becomes the liberated Jew of the Korban Pesach!

The festival of Pesach is a time of profound gratitude to HaShem for having bestowed upon us the capacity to love and share, to be generous and compassionate - to be a Jew of N'SA'O LIBO and Pesach. In our daily prayers, we recite: "Happy are we, how good is our portion, how lovely our fate, how beautiful our heritage!" And at the Pesach Seder, we declare in the Haggada: "It is our duty to thank ... and to acclaim the One who did all these miracles for our ancestors and for us. He took us from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to festivity, and from deep darkness to great light, and from bondage to redemption!"

In that spirit, ours is the obligation to concretize that gratitude in deeds of CHESED and RACHAMIM to all! 🙌



GM In Parshat Vayakhel, we find a pasuk (Sh'mot 36:1) which sums up the actual plan for carrying out God's command of V'ASU LI MIKDASH...

וַעֲשֵׂהָ בְּצִלְאֵל וְאַהֲלִיאֵב וְכָל אִישׁ
וְזָכֵם-לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה וְזָכְמָה
וּתְבוּנָה בְּהִמָּה לְדַעַת לַעֲשׂוֹת
אֶת-כָּל-מִלְאָכֶת עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכָל
אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה:

Betzalel and Aholiav and every wise hearted man into whom God had imbued wisdom and insight to know how to do, shall do all the work of the service of the Holy, according to all that HaShem has commanded."

The gimatriya of this pasuk is 6516.

In contrast to carrying out God's command to build the Mishkan and everything in it, we find a pasuk in Parshat Va'etchanan (D'varim 7:5) which commands the destruction of... I guess we can call it, the opposite of the above.

כִּי אִם-כֹּה תַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מִזְבְּחוֹתֵיהֶם
תִּתְּצוּ וּבִמְצַבְתֵּם תִּשְׁבְּרוּ וְאֲשִׁירֵיהֶם
תַּגְדֵּעוּן וּפְסִילֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרֹפוּן בָּאֵשׁ:

But so shall you do to them: You shall demolish their altars and smash their monuments, and cut down their asherim trees, and burn their graven images with fire.

This pasuk is a Gimatriya Match to our pasuk from Vayakhel, at 6516.

We can even say that these two p'sukim echo ANOCHI and LO YIHYEH L'CHA from the opening p'sukim of the ASERET HADIBROT.

GM - HACHODESH

GM There are differences between Shabbat and Chagim, halachic differences, and different origins. But there are more things that connect Shabbat and Chag. Yom Tov is called SHABBATON, a Shabbat with some permitted melacha. A Shabbat with a lesser punishment for violation. The major concept that unites Shabbat with Yom Tov is the concept of K'DUSHAT Z'MAN - the sanctity of time. The mitzva of ZACHOR ET YOM HASHABBAT L'KAD'SHO, extends to and includes Yom Tov in several ways. Just one example: the mitzvot of Kiddush and Havdala come from this pasuk, and apply to both Shabbat and Yom Tov. The concluding pasuk of our introduction to Shabbat after the Six Days of Creation, is B'reishit 2:3 -

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכֹל־
מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

God blessed the seventh day, and He declared it to be holy, for it was on this day that God ceased from all the work that He had been creating [so that it would continue] to function."

And the pasuk that first introduces us to Yom Tov is Sh'mot 12:16 (in Parshat BO) -

וּבַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרֵא־קֹדֶשׁ וּבַיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרֵא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם
כָּל־מְלַאכְתָּה לֹא־יַעֲשֶׂה בָהֶם אֵךְ
אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל לְכָל־נֶפֶשׁ הוּא לְבָדוֹ
יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם:

The first day shall be a sacred holiday, and the seventh day shall [also] be a sacred holiday. No work may be done on these [days]. The only [work] that you may do is that which is needed so that everyone will be able to eat.

These two p'sukim are gimatriya matches at 4928.

And, there is one other pasuk in the Torah that also has a numeric value of 4928, also from Parshat Bo - Sh'mot 11:1 -

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עוֹד נִגַּע אֶזְרָח
אֲבִיא עַל־פְּרַעְיָה וְעַל־מִצְרַיִם אֶזְרָח־יָכֵן
יִשְׁלֹחַ אֶתְכֶם בְּעָהָב כְּשֶׁלֶחַוּ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
יִגְרַשׁ אֶתְכֶם בְּעָהָב:

HaShem said to Moshe, "I will bring one more plague upon Par'o and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go from here. When he lets you out, he will completely drive you out of here."

This pasuk links the events in Mitzrayim to the Chag whose observance is a direct result of the Egyptian experience and the Exodus therefrom.

USFUNEI T'MUNEI CHOL is the title of my book of Gimatriya Matches - IY"H and BE"H. The title translates to Hidden in the Sand. That's how I feel about my Gimatriya searches. Like walking along the beach with a metal detector. Beep-beep-beep. Lean down and find something. Usually, nothing of note. But sometimes you find something special.

RED ALERT!

VAYAKHEL-P'KUDEI - HACHODESH

*by Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED)
of the Young Israel of Hollywood -
Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)*

DIVREI TORAH

• This double Parsha is long and quite tedious; it can be classified as one of the more boring readings of the year. But when you begin to analyze what is being read, you begin to realize how precise the Torah must be. The Mishkan was a powerful place, even dangerous, as the case may be. Nadav and Avihu learned the hard

way just how dangerous it truly was. This repetition of Parshiyot T'ruma and T'tzaveh is necessary to instruct us how precise the builders had to be.

Rabbi Steinsaltz zt"l compared it to constructing a rocket ship in our times. The builders need to be very precise and exact in their work or the result could be quite disastrous. And in working there, the Kohanim had to be careful in fulfilling their jobs. They had to follow the rules. We don't know why Hashem created these rules. We just know to follow them.

• The Building Fund Appeal was successful beyond anyone's expectation. Even the tribal princes were quite surprised as to the success. When conducting any appeal, we plan a strategy to ensure success. What we do first is to identify the wealthier supporters and approach them before going out to the masses. This is what King Solomon did when he constructed the First Temple. And Herod did the same thing in refurbishing the Second Temple. Moshe, on the other hand, did not. He immediately opened the appeal to everyone, allowing all the people to bring themselves closer to Hashem. Rashi commented that the tribal princes did not contribute right away. They waited to see how the people would do, figuring that they would give whatever was needed at the end. But the people gave more than was

needed. The women were remarkable, as they were quite generous in donating what they had in jewelry. They established the zeal that led the way to the most successful appeal ever in history.

- Betzalel was given the credit for creating the Aron because he dedicated his total soul to the holy task at hand. (37:1 and Rashi on that verse). Obviously he took his job very seriously. As stated before, Betzalel was quite young at the time, and even though he was gifted by Hashem in knowing how to do each craft correctly, he applied himself seriously in doing what was necessary. He made the two staves that were attached to both sides of the Aron because the Aron had to be portable. Even when the Aron was installed within the Holy Temple in Yerushalayim, it had to have these two staves. I believe that the message was that the Torah always had to be portable. The Torah will always accompany the people wherever they go, Yerushalayim or even New York or Florida. The Jews will take the Torah with them no matter where they go in this world.

- There is a standing difference of opinion as to the final shape of the Menorah. The Rambam drew his opinion of its shape as having straight line branches emanating from the central shaft, making the Menorah

look like a Y. Some commentators agree with the Rambam. Others claim that the Menorah's branches were semi-circular in design as is depicted in the Arch of Titus in Rome, where Titus paraded it in Rome upon his return from sacking Yerushalayim and the Temple in the first century CE. Where is the Menorah now? Don't really know. Some say it is hidden in the Vatican. More likely is that it was melted down for its gold content in the 5th century CE. If a talent of gold is about 50 kilograms, that means the Menorah's gold would be worth over 8 million dollars today. We will never know.

- There is clear transparency in the precious metals that were donated to the Mishkan project. I notice that there was no call for transparency when the people donated to the making of the Golden Calf. This distinction exists throughout time. When people do something wrong, they don't care how much was raised or who donated what. Only when people do something good is there a demand for transparency. I am not a psychologist or a sociologist, so I don't dare comment as to why this is so. Therefore I am not going to explore the reason this is so, but I recognize it is. One is heartfelt and religious and the other is an emotional outburst of rebellion. One is the demand for accountability of a leader, while the other is leaderless.

Be it as it may the same is true in today's society as well.

- The Halacha is clear: the Kohen Gadol is required to wear his special clothing when in the Temple and is not permitted to wear these special clothes outside the Temple. One time that I can remember it happening with no punishment is when Alexander the Great had invaded Israel in the early years of the third century BCE. The scene is described in the Talmud and in Josephus. Each with a different name for the Kohen Gadol, but it is basically the same story. The Kohen Gadol had left the Temple and Yerushalayim dressed in his finest garb to meet Alexander as the latter was on the way to Yerushalayim. Alexander greeted the Kohen Gadol and bowed to him. He proclaimed to all the men with him that the night before each battle, he would see this image of the Kohen Gadol in a dream, who came to tell him that he would be victorious. Alexander didn't know who it was, until now. So he bowed to him!

- MIDRASH. The Halacha clearly states that when dealing with Tzedaka money, there should be at least two people involved. Not just one person. So how could Moshe be the lone person in charge of the Building Fund Appeal in the Torah? The answer is that in the beginning of P'kudei, Moshe called for an audit on

the appeal. And it was done to everyone's delight.

Questions by RED

From the text

1. What image was woven into the Parochet? (36:35)
2. What was the Outside Altar made of? (38:1,2)
3. What three different words in Parshat Vayakhel have the same four letters? (36:35 and 37:6,19)
4. How many people gave a half-shekel? (38:22)
5. On which day was the Mishkan erected and not immediately dismantled? (40:17)

From Rashi

6. What were the Bigdei HaS'rad (knitted vestments) used for? (35:19)
7. What was unique about the way the goat's hair was spun? (35:26)
8. Who was appointed to carry the Mishkan's utensils? (38:21)
9. How were the gold threads made? (39:3)
10. How was the Tzitz (Headplate) fastened to Aharon's head? (39:31)

From the Rabbis

11. How many different categories of labor were needed to build the Mishkan and make the Kohanic

clothing? (Shabbat 97b)

12. Hashem really didn't need any contributions to build the Mishkan. Why did He call for them? (Or HaChayim)

13. Moshe took the Tablets and placed them in the Aron. Where were they until then? (Baal HaTurim)

From the Midrash

14. Which is a more joyous day, a person's birth or a person's death?

Haftara of HaChodesh - Yechezkel

15. What three Mitzvot did the Greek-Syrians try to abolish by force?

Relationships

- a) Moshe - Betzalel
- b) Chur - Itamar
- c) Reuven - Zerach
- d) Miriam - Elisheva
- e) Elazar - Aminadav

ANSWERS

- 1. The K'ruvim
- 2. Wood covered with copper (and filled with dirt).
- 3. Parochet, Kaporet, and Kaftor.
- 4. 603,550
- 5. Rosh Chodesh Nissan of the second year in the desert.

6. They covered the Aron, Shulchan, Menorah, and the Altars during transport.

7. It was spun directly from the goat's back.

8. The Leviyim

9. Gold was beaten into thin plates which were then cut into threads.

10. By three blue cords. Two tied to the ends of the Tzitz and one on the top. Then the 3 cords were tied behind his head.

11. 39. The same number as the categories of work prohibited on Shabbat.

12. To allow the people to feel closer to Hashem.

13. In a wooden Ark in Moshe's tent.

14. Death. We should celebrate his successful journey in life.

15. Rosh Chodesh, Shabbat, and Circumcision.

Relationships

- a) Great-great Uncle & Great-great nephew
- b) First Cousins
- c) Uncle & Nephew
- d) Sisters-in-law
- e) Grandson & Grandfather