



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei/Hachodesh

March 20, 2020

A Taste of Torah Not Important Enough

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman

As the parsha of Vayakhel begins, Moshe gathers the entire Nation and addresses them. He begins by telling them that they must observe the Shabbos. Afterwards, Moshe issues instructions for the construction of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). Rashi explains that the reason Moshe preceded the construction of the *Mishkan* with Shabbos observance was to teach the Jewish People that the construction of the *Mishkan* does not override the laws of Shabbos, and so the *Mishkan* may not be built on Shabbos. Clearly, there is room to think that it would have been permitted to engage in the work of the *Mishkan* on Shabbos, and so Moshe's warning was necessary. What would the logic be behind such a notion?

The Chasam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer; 1762-1839) explains that the Torah is coming to negate a misconception that may occur to people who are engrossed in a task. Sometimes, a person becomes very involved in a project and is very committed to its success. This dedication and perception of the importance of attaining the goal can become so large in the person's mind that he begins to believe it is his mission in the world, and nothing else is significant enough to override its completion. Therefore, the Torah stresses that although the Jewish People were involved in the all-important construction of the *Mishkan*, the creation of the home where the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) would reside, it is not so great that the basic precepts of the Torah and mitzvos could be ignored.

This concept is also found in the second parsha that is read this week, Parshas Pekudei. The Torah stresses multiple times how everything in the *Mishkan* was done as Hashem had commanded Moshe. The Bais Halevi (Rabbi Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik; 1820-1892) wonders why this idea is mentioned so many times. He answers that the *Mishkan* was meant as an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. He explains at length that despite the exalted level of the Jewish People at that time, the creation of the Golden Calf occurred due to a fundamental error. While the Jewish People themselves were not looking for an idol to replace G-d, they were looking for a spiritual entity to replace Moshe, whom they presumed dead, as their means to connect with G-d. They thus sought to use their own intellectual abilities to create a leader, but, in the process, ignored the guidelines of the Torah, which forbids creating a graven image for any purpose (with the exception of the *Keruvim* (Cherubim), whose creation was expressly commanded by G-d). The construction of the *Mishkan* and its vessels, therefore, needed to be done exactly as Hashem commanded Moshe, as a means of atonement for the tragic error the Jewish People made in deciding on the course of action based on their personal perception of right and wrong instead of the Torah's. The Torah therefore makes a point to say that each step of the creation of the *Mishkan* was done precisely as G-d had instructed.

Although one may find satisfaction

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Stories for the Soul

Hard at Work

The Jewish community of Apta began the construction of a new synagogue. As a means of raising funds, it was decided that the rav of Apta, Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel (better known as the Oheiv Yisrael; 1748-1825), would sit at the construction site and people would come by and give their donations for the building to him. The word went out, and following the morning prayers, people began bringing their contributions to the rav.

After some time passed, the Apter Rav wanted to take a break, and asked his son, Reb Yitzchak Meir, to take his place for a short while.

Upon the Apter Rav's return, Reb Yitzchak Meir mentioned to his father that few people had come to donate during the time he had been present, and wondered why so many more had come while the Apter Rav himself had been present.

The Apter Rav responded that when discussing the contributions of the Jewish People toward the construction of the *Mishkan*, the Torah says that enough materials had been brought for the construction, and Moshe issued an order that nothing more be brought. The verse (Vayakhel 36:6) states, "Moshe commanded... 'Man and woman shall not do more work toward the gift for the Sanctuary.' And the people were restrained from bringing."

Why, wondered the Apter Rav, did Moshe command that no

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Kollel Happenings

KOLLEL 22ND ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION THIS TUESDAY!

The Kollel will mark 22 years of bringing Torah to Denver Jewry with its annual Celebration, 2020 Vision, on March 24 at Aish of the Rockies. Kerry and Mindy Berman will be honored with the Aish Tamid Award for their steady and unwavering dedication to Torah and the Denver Jewish community. Ads and reservations: Visit www.denverkollel.org, email journal@denverkollel.org, or call 303-820-2855

FATHERS & SONS IN WEST AND SOUTHEAST DENVER

The Kollel's Spring/Summer Fathers & Sons Program is back! Learning, nosh and raffles for prizes on Shabbos one hour before mincha at the West Denver Kollel Torah Center and Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissochor. To sponsor a week or for more details, email info@denverkollel.org.

MARCH FROM PURIM TO PESACH WITH THE SFAS EMES

Join Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky on Thursdays during the month of March as he explores the journey from Purim until Pesach through the lens of the Sfias Emes, focusing on Purim (3/5), Parshas Parah (3/12), Parshas Hachodesh (3/19), and Pesach (3/26). Thursday evenings from 8:15-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

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|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Day after atonement | 4) Out of order |
| 2) Spin the animal | 5) Over and under |
| 3) Good Evil Inclination | 6) All equal on the eighth |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk - Part XVII

The final vote was that rabbanim should learn a limited amount of Russian and be approved by the state, allowing communities to rid themselves of the institution of the *rav mita'am*. This proposal was accepted by the Czarist government.

During the meeting, Reb Chaim Soloveitchik disagreed so vehemently with Reb Meir Simcha's position that he refused to even look at him throughout the conference. Nonetheless, following the conference, Reb Chaim went to say goodbye to Reb Meir Simcha. When someone travelling with him inquired as to how

he could now take leave from the man whom he had refused to even look at during the conference, Reb Chaim replied, "Reb Meir Simcha is the *gadol hador* (greatest man of the generation); how can I not say goodbye to him?!"

In 1912, World Agudath Israel was founded in Katowice (then a part of Germany; today it is part of Poland) as an organization to represent Orthodox Jews who did not affiliate themselves with political Zionism. Although Reb Meir Simcha was unable to attend due to poor health, he sent a letter supporting the goals of the convention.

A Taste of Torah

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and spiritual fulfillment through various, often worthy endeavors, one must ensure that he does not deviate, even slightly, from the guidelines of the

Torah. This will prevent a person from being persuaded by his own intellect to do something that is against the Torah's dictates.

Stories for the Soul

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more work be done? Wouldn't it have sufficed to command that nobody bring any more donations?

The answer, said the Apter Rav, is that as long as people knew work was being done for the construction of the *Mishkan*, they were filled with a desire

to contribute, and Moshe's order wouldn't have deterred them from bringing. Once they were aware that nobody was actually working on their project, though, they no longer had the same drive to contribute toward the effort!

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| 1) Day after atonement 35:1 s.v. <i>vayakhel</i> | 4) Out of order 38:22 s.v. <i>uVitzalel</i> |
| 2) Spin the animal 35:26 s.v. <i>tanu</i> | 5) Over and under 29:31 s.v. <i>lases</i> |
| 3) Good Evil Inclination 38:8 s.v. <i>binmar'os</i> | 6) All equal on the eighth 40:31 s.v. <i>vinachartzu</i> |

Parsha Quizzers - Answers