



TORAH WEEKLY

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Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei/Chodesh

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A Taste of Torah Rest Assured

by Rabbi Aharon Wilen

Moshe, upon his final descent from Mt. Sinai after receiving the second set of *Luchos* (Tablets), gathers the Jewish People for a public address. One would expect that the very first thing Moshe would tell the *Bnai Yisrael* after his descent from Mt. Sinai would be the most important and relevant information he received during his time on the mountain. Moshe told the *Bnai Yisrael* about building the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). Why was the *Mishkan* the most vital item to convey?

The Jewish People had reached the highest level possible in their relationship with Hashem at the revelation on Mt. Sinai. The *Mishkan* was to be the place where that relationship would continue. It would provide a place for the constant interaction with Hashem and would be where His *Shechina* (Hashem's presence in this world) would reside among His Nation. It is understood, then, that the most important thing to teach the people at this moment was how to construct the *Mishkan* and capture that relationship forever.

The strange thing is that Moshe prefaced this teaching about the *Mishkan* with the laws of Shabbos. Shabbos is, of course, of utmost importance. In the Torah, we find the term "*Shabbos laShem*," Shabbos is sanctified for Hashem. It is a time to think of Hashem, to contemplate the basics of *emuna* (faith in Hashem) and to put those ideas into practice. Nonetheless, one must still wonder, why did Moshe need to discuss Shabbos before getting to the *Mishkan*?

This is especially perplexing if we look back to when Moshe himself was being taught about the *Mishkan*. When Hashem taught Moshe the plans for the *Mishkan*, He first told him about the *Mishkan* with all its details, and followed that with the mitzvah of Shabbos. Why did Moshe switch the order and put Shabbos first?

Rabbi Yehoshua Heller (1814-1880), in his work *Ohel Yehoshua*, points out that in the myriad details of the *Mishkan*, there are actually many differences between the

initial command to construct the *Mishkan* in the parshios of Teruma and Tetzaveh and its actual construction in the parshios of Vayakhel and Pekudei. The fundamental difference that resulted in all these changes is, as Rashi (Shemos 31:18) points out, that the initial command occurred before the Sin of the Golden Calf, while the actual construction of the *Mishkan* took place afterward.

When the Jews believed Moshe dead and turned, to some degree, to idol worship with the Sin of the Golden Calf, their relationship with Hashem was shaken. Committing this sin also seriously reduced their spiritual level. The *Mishkan's* original design was for a people who were spiritually perfect, on the highest level ever reached by humanity, a continuation of what they achieved at Mt. Sinai. After this dramatic drop in the spiritual state of the Jewish People, the *Mishkan* had to be modified in order to be able to function for a people on a much lower spiritual level. Many details in the construction were therefore changed to compensate for this new reality.

With this idea, Rabbi Matisyahu Salomon explains why it was necessary for Moshe to switch the order of Shabbos and the *Mishkan*. At the time of the original command to make the *Mishkan*, *Bnai Yisrael* still had an untainted bond with Hashem and were on the level to continue the relationship created at Mt. Sinai through the *Mishkan*. After the Sin of the Golden Calf, however, the relationship was damaged by idol worship, which left them with weakened *emuna*. Left at that level, they were not deserving of a *Mishkan*. The path to repairing their *emuna* and relationship with Hashem, and thereby regaining the ability to have a *Mishkan*, lay in Shabbos.

Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski (1899-1985; better known as The Steipler) wrote to numerous people who complained to him about challenges in their *emuna* that a *segula* (spiritual remedy) to rise above questions in *emuna* is to improve one's observance of

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Stories for the Soul

Against All Odds

based on a story on mishpacha.com

The day Bergen-Belsen was liberated, an American officer came to the camp to help the inmates with their immediate needs. He met Rabbi Gershon Liebman, who had been part of the leadership of the Novardok Yeshiva before World War II. One aspect of the Novardok Yeshiva's unique approach was to decide what needed to be done and to go ahead and do it, no matter how difficult and unlikely success appeared, and place one's reliance upon Hashem.

"What would you like?" asked the officer to Rabbi Liebman. "To establish a yeshiva!" Rabbi Liebman exclaimed. The soldier hadn't been expecting such a forceful answer, and hadn't heard such a request before. "Where?" he asked. "Right here," said Rabbi Liebman. "And who will be the leader of this yeshiva?" "I will!" "And who will be the students?" "I will be the student!" Rabbi Liebman said. "What else do you want?" asked the officer. "Nothing," said Rabbi Liebman.

As far as the officer could tell, Rabbi Liebman had become unhinged by his sufferings. He left him and made no effort to fulfill his request. Still, on his own initiative, Rabbi Liebman announced the opening of a yeshiva in Bergen-Belsen. He was the *rosh yeshiva* (head of the yeshiva), and he let it be known that anyone who wanted to learn could join him. He found an old synagogue in Hanover with a full set of *Mishnayos*. He soon had over a hundred students.

Rabbi Liebman later moved to France in 1948. With no family, money, or knowledge of the French language, he decided he was opening a yeshiva there. Despite the enormous challenges, he succeeded in opening a yeshiva in Lyons, France. And he was successful. Over the years, he and his students opened dozens of Jewish institutions, from elementary schools to old-age homes, across France.

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Kollel Happenings

SPRING-SUMMER AVOS UBANIM BEGINS THIS SHABBOS AFTERNOON

The Kollel's spring-summer Avos Ubanim program begins this Shabbos afternoon at the Kollel Torah Center in West Denver and Southeast Denver. Learning begins one hour before mincha, followed by nosh and prizes. For sponsorships and more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

KOLLEL CLASSES CONTINUE VIA ZOOM MEETING

The Kollel is continuing many of its classes and offering new classes via Zoom Meeting. You can tune in to live classes online or call in on a phone. For a full schedule and the links and phone numbers to access this treasure trove of Torah, visit www.denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is one of 28 local organizations selected to be part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit www.denverkollel.org, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

Halacha Riddles

Last week we asked: How is it possible that a raw, unprepared vegetable would require a different blessing due to the location where it is being consumed?

Answer: It would depend on whether the vegetable is normally eaten raw or cooked in a particular location. The halacha is that a fruit or vegetable that is normally consumed cooked, not raw, requires a *shehakol* if eaten raw. Conversely, if it is normally eaten raw, one would recite a *shehakol* when eating it cooked. If it is eaten in either state, the regular blessing of *ha'eitz* or *ha'adama* is recited (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 205:1). The same halacha would apply for a food normally eaten only after baking/roasting (e.g., certain nuts) or pickling (e.g., green tomatoes). (If one

erroneously recited *ha'adama* or *ha'eitz* instead of *shehakol* in these scenarios, no additional blessing is recited.)

Therefore, if a particular vegetable – for example, green beans, which are eaten raw in some cultures but not in others – is eaten both raw and cooked in one locale, one would recite *ha'adama* if eating it raw, while a *shehakol* would be recited by one eating it in a place where it is normally eaten only cooked. (It is sometimes difficult to ascertain what is regarded as “normal,” and a halachic authority should be consulted in case of uncertainty.)

This week's question: How is it possible to create a requirement of a bracha for a food by adding a coating to it (where the coating is *tafel* [secondary] and does not get its own blessing)?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Saadia Gaon - Part XX

The Jews living in these Moslem-ruled areas were influenced by this “enlightened” culture, and various heretical approaches and movements, such as Karaism discussed previously, sprang up in Jewish communities.

Rav Saadia sought to present a clear approach of Judaism's principles and foundations in matters of belief in an era where philosophy and reason played a major role in religious thought and belief.

A Taste of Torah

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Shabbos by properly observing the laws of Shabbos and by deepening one's connection to the spirit of Shabbos. He explained that the Talmud (Shabbos 118b) says, “If someone guards the Shabbos, even if he is as idolatrous as the generation of Enosh (the third generation following the creation of Mankind, during which idolatry began and spread), he is forgiven.” The reason that even idolatry is forgiven for one who guards Shabbos is because Shabbos itself, which builds a person's faith in Hashem, will help him correct his ways. Shabbos is the day upon which a Jew withdraws from the world as he recognizes that despite the efforts a person invests during the six days of the week, everything one has in the world is ultimately because Hashem

provides it. Shabbos is thus a major source of *emuna* that Hashem created and continuously runs the world at every moment.

This idea that Shabbos is not only an expression of *emuna* but also a means of building *emuna* is expressed in the verse (Shemos 31:13), “You must guard My Shabbos... to know that I am Hashem Who makes you holy.” Using this principal, Moshe taught the Jewish People about Shabbos before he taught them about the *Mishkan* to provide them with the means to reconnect to their *emuna* in way that would make them deserving of a *Mishkan*.

Shabbos is a time to reflect on the fundamental principles of our faith and to reinforce our commitment to those principles by living the day of Shabbos in the fullest way possible.

Stories for the Soul

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In this week's parsha, Hashem instructs Moshe to erect the *Mishkan*. Moshe wondered how he could lift the massively heavy walls into place, but Hashem assured him, “You do

your part and I will do Mine.” And that's what happened. And so it has occurred with Jews determined to do what they can, against all odds, throughout the ages.