



Wembley Synagogue

ויקהל

Insights from the commentators into the Sedra of Vayakhel 5768

What's the Sidra about?

1st & 2nd Aliyot: The Parsha begins with the Mitzvah of Shabbat and the penalty for her transgression. Moshe asked Bnei Yisrael to donate the time, talents, and materials for the construction of the Mishkan. Bnei Yisrael responded with unbridled enthusiasm.

3rd, 4th, & 5th Aliyot Talents and materials were donated and Betzallel and Oholiav were appointed as chief architects and artists. The response to Moshe's appeal was so great that Moshe had to command the people to stop their donations! The outer coverings of the Mishkan and the inner tapestries are detailed. The beams of the Mishkan, the Aron Hakodesh, and the Shulchan - Table are described.

6th & 7th Aliyot The Menorah and the inner Golden Altar are described. The outer ramped Altar, the Washstand, and the Mishkan's surrounding enclosure are detailed. (Source: Rabbi Aron Tendler)

The Gemara Sanhedrin 20b states that Bnei Yisrael were commanded to fulfill three mitzvot upon entering Eretz Yisrael. The three mitzvot were to establish a king, wipe out the nation of Amalek, and to build the Bet Hamikdash. It seems from this Gemara that the construction of the Bet HaMikdash was the last item on the agenda. However, we know that Bnei Yisrael were told to start work on this mitzvah right after they were forgiven for the golden calf, through the assembly of the mishkan. Why did the fulfillment of this mitzvah start while Bnei Yisrael were still in the desert, as opposed to taking effect upon their entrance to Eretz Yisrael, as was originally intended? Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l offers two answers to this question. The sin of the golden calf happened due to Bnei Yisrael's fear of losing their connection to Hashem. When Bnei Yisrael saw that Moshe was gone, they worried that they had lost their connection between the physical world and the world above. The calf was created to fill this void. In order to prevent this from occurring again, Hashem decided that the Mishkan should be built right away. The Mishkan served as a place in this world where the shechinah would rest. Whenever Bnei Yisrael would feel themselves losing their connection to Hashem, they could go to the Mishkan in order to strengthen their emunah (faith). R' Yaakov offers a second resolution to this difficulty. At the time of the giving of the Torah there was tremendous unity amongst Bnei Yisrael. As Rashi in Parshat Yisro tells us, when Bnei Yisrael camped at Har Sinai in anticipation of matan Torah, they camped **כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד** - "As one man with one heart." However, this unity was lost as a result of the golden calf. At the time of this sin, there was such great division amongst the various tribes, as the Talmud Yerushalmi Sanhedrin relates, that each tribe made its own calf, as they could not agree what type to make. As such, Bnei Yisrael was given the mitzvah of building the Mishkan, which would serve as a unifying force amongst Bnei Yisrael. Therefore when Moshe instructed Bnei Yisrael to build the Mishkan, the Torah uses the word **וַיִּקְהַל** "and he gathered." The purpose of the command to build the Mishkan was to gather the various arguing segments of Bnei Yisrael into one unified nation. (Source: Emet L'Yaakov)

Rav Shneur Kotler, zl, questions the sequence of the command to construct the Mishkan. First, Hashem tells the Jews to contribute willingly. The Torah places emphasis upon each individual contributing according to his heart's desire. Only after the Torah stresses the nedivut ha'lev, free will contribution, does it state the "purpose" of this contribution. "And they shall make for Me a Sanctuary." Should the Torah not have first mentioned the goal - the Mishkan - and only afterward the medium for creating it - the contributions? This formulation implies, claims Rav Kotler, that the free-will contribution was an essential part of the entire plan. Hashem did not simply desire a Mishkan. He sought the nedivut ha'lev of the Jews. Thus, we see that the "value" of the Mishkan, its character, was commensurate with each donor's nedivut ha'lev and personal commitment. Each person's donation created a "mishkan" which was the "size" of his free will and conviction. Some had larger portions than others. One thing was certain, however, -the Mishkan was missing nothing. A small donation created a "small" Mishkan, while a large open-hearted donation created a "larger" Mishkan. The size of the Mishkan was commensurate with the free-will of the contribution. Hence, the nesiim's (Prince's) stipulation that they would supply whatever was missing was not valid, inasmuch as nothing was missing! A lesser contribution resulted in a smaller Mishkan, a complete Mishkan, albeit a smaller one. The critique against the nesiim was simple. Had they donated towards the Mishkan, the Mishkan would have been larger. Now that they waited until the end, the Mishkan's size was "stunted" accordingly (Source: Peninim on the Torah)

וַיֵּצְאוּ כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלִּפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה - And all the congregation of the children of Israel went out from before Moshe (35:20) Why did the Torah mention that the Children of Israel left "from before Moshe"? It was already mentioned in the beginning of this portion that Moshe had assembled all the Jews. Is it

then not obvious that when they left, they were leaving "from before Moshe"? The phrase "from before Moshe" indicates that this experience made an impression on the Jewish people. That is, their demeanour and behaviour reflected the fact that they had just been learning at the feet of the greatest and holiest prophet who ever lived - Moshe. (Source: Alter of Kelm - Rabbi Ya'akov Neiman - P'ninim MiShulchan Govoha)

וַיֵּצְאוּ כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלִּפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה - And all the congregation of the children of Israel went out from before Moshe (35:20) Moshe assembled all of the Jews to tell them of Hashem's command to gather materials to build a Mikdash. As soon as he finished speaking, all of the Jews left his presence. No mention is made in the Torah of a dismissal, so it would seem that the people left without waiting for Moshe's permission to leave. Why did the people leave their eminent leader's presence without being dismissed? Wouldn't respect for Moshe warrant their waiting for dismissal? The Jews, in their great zeal to fulfill Hashem's will to build the Mikdash, felt the necessity to run to do this Mitzvah before Moshe actually adjourned the gathering. They recognised Moshe's greatness of spirit and realized that Moshe may want to donate all the necessary materials for the Mikdash on his own. Everyone else would thus be deprived of the opportunity to participate in this worthy project. In order to prevent this from happening, the Jews wildly exited before Moshe actually dismissed them - and before Moshe had a chance to bring a donation of his own that would cover everything needed for the Mikdash. Thus, they were ensured a share in that holy undertaking. This interpretation is implied by the Torah's choice of words. One of the alternative interpretations of "Milifnei" (literally from before) is "preceding". Hence the verse would read as "And all the Children of Israel went out "preceding" Moshe". The verse thus indicates the great zeal of the Children of Israel who rushed to precede Moshe to get materials for the Mikdash. (Source: Ohr Hachayim)

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עִלְתָּנִים כָּל נָדִיב לֵב הָבִיאוּ חָה וְנָחוֹם וְמַבְעַת וְכוּמָז - The men came with the women; everyone whose heart motivated him brought bracelets, nose-rings, rings, body ornaments. . ." (35:22) The Da'at Zekeinim Mi'ba'alei Ha'tosafot states: Because the women did not give their jewellery willingly to make the Golden Calf and they did give it willingly to make the Mishkan, they merited that Rosh Chodesh was set aside as a holiday for women. Why Rosh Chodesh? Because the Mishkan was assembled on Rosh Chodesh (as related in next week's parashah). R' Yissachar Ber Rotenberg z"l observes: The Midrash from which the above comment is apparently drawn does not mention that the women gave willingly for the Mishkan, only that they did not give for the Golden Calf. However, the Da'at Zekeinim apparently understood that the women's mere refusal to give up their jewellery for the Golden Calf was not sufficiently meritorious. Perhaps the women merely wanted to keep their jewellery. Only when they willingly gave it for the Mishkan was the righteousness of their previous behaviour evident. (Source: Parsha Pearls)

כָּל-אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָדַב לִבָּם לָבֹא אֲתָם לְהָבִיא לְכָל-הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה הֵבִיאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל נְדָבָה לָהֶם - Every man and woman whose heart motivated them to bring... the Bnei Yisrael brought a free-will offering to Hashem. (35:29) This *passuk* seems ambiguous. It begins by stating that every man and woman contributed toward the *Mishkan* and ends by saying that all *Bnei Yisrael* contributed. Why is there a change in the text? Does the *Torah* seek to convey a secret message? Rav Gavriel Ze'ev Margolis, zl, suggests that the *Torah* implies a fundamental lesson for parents. If we want our children to grow up as committed Jews, we must train them as such. Being an observant Jew is no different than any other endeavour - it takes training. What better time to educate a person than when he is young? King Solomon states in *Proverbs 22:6*, הִנֵּה לְנַעַר עַל-פִּי דָרְבָנוּ נִם כִּי-יִזְקֶן לֹא-יִסֹר מִמֶּנָּה, Educate a child according to his way, so that when he grows old he will not turn away from it." To infuse a child in the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*, a parent should model the *mitzvah* and require them to participate actively in the *mitzvah*. *Bnei Yisrael* did not come alone with their contributions. They sent their children to bring the money to Moshe. They realised that only through such training will their children continue along the same path. (Source: Peninim on the Torah)

שבת שלום!
Shabbat Shalom!



Shabbat starts 5.25pm



Shabbat ends: 6.28pm

לע"נ ר' מרדכי צבי ב"ר חיאל משה וולפסון ז"ל
The *Insights into the Sedra* sheet is edited by Chazan Anthony Wolfson

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