

# THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



**PARSHAT VAYAKHEL - PEKUDEI**

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
*TAL Founder & Director*

## THE ULTIMATE DETOX: SHABBAT

When the Torah wishes to convey a message of seriousness it tends to repeat (albeit in a different format) certain themes. One Mitzvah that is mentioned many times is the mitzvah of Shabbat. In this weeks Parsha we read that the Bnei Yisrael were specifically commanded to keep Shabbat before the building of the Mishkan. Sheshet Yamim TeAseh Melacha Ubayom Hashevii Yihyeh Lachem Kodesh Shabbat Shabbaton LaHashem (35:2). Six days work will be done, (i.e. you should work) and on the seventh should be Holy for you a Shabbat Shabaton.

Two questions stem from this sentence. Firstly why does the torah state TeAseh – literally meaning that work will be done, rather than YaAseh – you will work? Second, what is the meaning of Shabbat Shabbaton? These questions are further elaborated on when we delve into the torah and find that also in Parshat Ki Tisa and Emor the torah uses the language of TeAseh and YeAseh – implying that work will be done, rather than we shall work. Whereas in Parshat VaEtchanan and Yitro, the torah specifically states Yaaseh – we should work for six days. In addition, in Parshat VaEtchanan it does not state that on the

seventh day it will be a Shabbat Shabbaton; rather it states it will be a Shabbat.

The Gemara (Berachot 35b) cites a disagreement between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai over whether a person should work for a living or whether he should learn Torah full-time while depending solely on Hashem for sustenance. Rabbi Yishmael's opinion is that a person should work as well as learn Torah. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, on the other hand, is of the opinion that to engage in work is to neglect the Torah.

Rabbi Yishmael quotes a verse, from the second paragraph of the Shema "[T]hat you may gather your grain," as support for his view. But, the Gemara asks, is it not written (Yehoshua 1:8), "Do not remove this Torah from your mouth," which seems to suggest that a person should never stop learning Torah? Necessarily, says Rabbi Yishmael, our verse teaches that the verse in Yehoshua should not be taken literally.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, on the other hand, disagrees, supporting his opinion with a verse from Yishayah (61:5): "Foreigners will stand and tend your flocks." You need not do this yourself, they will tend to your affairs for you. As for the verse in the Shema (you may gather in your grain..."(11:13-14)), this refers to a time when we do not do the will of Hashem. That is when we will gather our own grain. If we do Hashem's will, however, we will not need to work.

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*Moshe ben Mazal*  
Betch Shaar Cholei Yisrael

MAZAL TOV TO JACOB DALAH  
*on his Bar Mitzvah*  
and to his proud parents  
Karen & Andrew and all the family.  
Much Nachat!

24TH ADAR 5786  
SHABBAT BEGINS:  
17:47pm  
SHABBAT ENDS:  
18:50pm

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Quiz

This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

The Gan Raveh explains that by taking Rabbi Shimons view we can now understand the difference in wording used in the separate Parshiot. Our Parsha which states TeAseh Melacha and Shabat Shabaton, is referring to a time when we do the will of Hashem, when we serve him with all our hearts, souls and possessions. If we serve him whole heartedly, then as Rabbi Shimon stated, Hashem will make sure that the nation of the world will work for us and take care of our prosperity. This would mean that the whole week would now be left free for us to learn torah. If this is the case then when Shabbat arrives, it will be deemed Shabbat Shabbaton – the Shabbat of Shabbat, since we have been resting so to speak from work the whole week, those six days are in itself considered a Shabbat. If

however we do not fulfill Hashems Will, the work of the six days will need to be performed by us, and then the only Shabbat that exists is that at the end of the week, when we refrain from working. That Shabbat is thus only termed as Shabbat and not Shabbat Shabbaton.

Some people take life as a vicious cycle. They work to eat, eat to live and live to work. There is a famous Mashal of a man imprisoned in Siberia where he was kept in solitary confinement. His daily work consisted of turning a large heavy wheel attached to the wall round and round. As he turned it daily his sweat unleashed and he would wonder what lay behind the walls of his cell. Perhaps this large wheel helped to grind wheat or perhaps draw water from irrigated fields. After many

years, he was released. At that moment, he asked his captors, "After all my hard work, I'd like to know what I achieved these past years. What's the wheel attached to?" The guard smiled and simply said, "Nothing. You were just turning a wheel". The man received an immediate heart attack and died. His whole life and all his suffering had been meaningless.

In order for our lives to have meaning we have been blessed with the Torah – the instruction manual of how to maximize our lives in this world. We have been granted a day of rest – Shabbat, which helps us contemplate on our past week and its achievements and the future week ahead and our aspirations. May we use this time wisely and through it we should see great blessing.



**RABBI DAVID BAADANI**  
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

## ATEM: CREATING HOLINESS FROM IMPERFECTION

נהחודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים

The very first mitzvah given to Klal Yisrael appears in Parashat HaChodesh: the mitzvah of Kiddush HaChodesh. Before Har Sinai. Before Shabbat was commanded nationally. Before the great revelations. Hashem gives the Jewish people control over time.

How was this mitzvah fulfilled? Two ordinary Jews would see the faint sliver of the new moon and travel to Beit Din in Yerushalayim. After their testimony was accepted, the court would declare the new month. And based on their words, the entire Jewish calendar was established: Pesach, Yom Kippur and every Yom Tov.

The Gemara in Masechet Rosh

Hashanah makes an astonishing statement. The Torah says, "אשר תקראו" – the festivals that you shall designate. The word "otam" is written without a vav. Chazal read it as atem, you.

Atem afilu shogegin—even if you made a mistake.

Atem afilu mezidin—even if you were misled.

If Beit Din sanctifies the month, even on the wrong day, Heaven follows their decision. If astronomy says Pesach "should" be tomorrow, but Beit Din declares it today, then today is Pesach. Hashem aligns Himself with His people. The Ribbono Shel Olam builds sacred time around us.

The Chiddushei HaRim connects this to another verse: "בנים אתם לה'" – "אלקיכם" – You are children of Hashem. A child can make mistakes, can be confused, and can even rebel. But a child never stops being a child. "Atem, you." Even when you err. Even when you fall.

And when was this mitzvah given? In

Mitzrayim. In darkness. Spiritual depletion. Immersed in impurity. Almost beyond return. And precisely then, Hashem says: "You will sanctify the month."

Because the first thing a Jew must know is not what he must do, but who he is. You are My child. Your decision matters. Your voice creates holiness. Even if you are imperfect. Especially if you are imperfect.

Even in the smallest sliver of light, Hashem sees possibility. Just as the faint crescent of the moon is enough to declare a new month, even the smallest spark within a Jew, however hidden, however imperfect, is enough for Hashem to create holiness. Kiddush HaChodesh teaches that our worth is measured not by perfection, but by willingness. Every sincere effort participates in the sanctification of the world. Hashem does not wait for us to be complete; He waits for us to try. And when we do, He says: "Atem, you are Mine, and through you, time itself becomes holy."



## RABBI BENJI STONE, TAL Chavruta Program

*Tehillim for Our Times; Chapter 18:*

בְּצַר לִי אֶקְרָא יְהוָה וְאֵל אֱלֹהֵי אֲשׁוּעַ יִשְׁמַע מִהַיְכַל קוֹלִי וְשׁוֹעֲתִי לִפְנֵי תְבוּא בְּאֲזִנָּי

### TWO KINDS OF REDEMPTION (PART 3)

King David now turns to the case of one who earns redemption through their own merit and not just through prayer alone.

**"Hashem will benefit me according to my righteousness. According to the cleanliness of my hands will He pay me back" (Ibid; 21)**

What is the difference between "benefiting" someone (גמול) and paying someone back (ישיב לי)? The term "paying back" is generally used where the doer of the deed is remunerated directly in proportion to the greatness of the deed. In contrast, one who is "benefited" receives a reward which is more related to how much the donor loves (or hates) them. If the donor feels great love towards them, then they might receive disproportionate reward, far greater than they apparently deserve.

In this verse King David tells us that carrying out a positive act generally leads one to be paid back directly in accordance with that deed. On the other hand holding oneself back from doing something forbidden brings on the possibility of greater reward, unlimited by the demands of proportion. King David declares that he received both types of reward whether he performed a good deed or simply held back from transgressing a prohibition. The reason

for his special treatment was

**"because I guarded the ways of Hashem and I held back from performing wicked acts because of my G-d" (Ibid;22)**

The positive acts he carried out were not driven by any compelling logic or desire. They were carried out simply because he sought to fulfil Hashem's commandments and also to cleave to Hashem through his actions ("guarded the ways of Hashem"). As a result, his deeds generated not just proportionate payment, but also the more unpredictable "benefit". Alongside this, when King David held back from transgressing a sin it was not due to any personal rationale or sensitivity, it was simply "because of my G-d" – because he was commanded to. This purity of motive led him to be rewarded for his self-control as if he had actually performed a positive mitzvah.

King David expands further on this point:

**"Because all his laws are in front of me and his statutes I will not remove from me" (Ibid; 23)**

A "law" is a mitzvah based on logic which we can comprehend. In contrast, a statute is a mitzvah which we would not ourselves have thought of and we do not understand. King David tells us that he did not distinguish between the two.

King David describes the "laws" as remaining "in front of me" whilst statutes are referred to as not being "removed from me". What is the significance of this change of language? Something which is "in front" of a person is clearly visible, but is nevertheless external to the individual.

The term "I will not remove from me" however, indicates that the concept in question is internal to the person, absorbed into his essence. King David is telling us that the "laws" which made sense to him were not kept because they made sense to him, but because Hashem commanded him to guard them. Thus, the laws were followed not because they were part of him but because of a reason external to him – the simple fact of Hashem's instruction. With regard to the statutes however - which escape logic - they were not simply "in front" of him and observed because of Hashem's command but they were absorbed into his essence up to the point where it would be necessary to "remove them from before him" should he wish not to observe them.

Someone who reaches this level where mitzvos are performed with such sincerity will be rescued from trouble when the need arises but in a completely different manner to the one who does not have this merit. In the case of the latter, the redemption will hold within it the potential for a whole new set of challenges. In the case of the former the rescue will be miraculous and permanent as the verse states (Nochum 1;9).

"The distress will not establish itself twice"

Indeed a person may at one point in his life experience the first kind of redemption and at another time experience the second kind of redemption. King David clearly considers that he was one such individual.



## WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Parshat Vayakhel-Pekudei

#### VAYAKHEL

Moshe Rabbeinu exhorts Bnei Yisrael to keep Shabbat, and requests donations for the materials for making the Mishkan. He collects gold, silver, precious stones, skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the menorah and for anointing. The princes of each tribe bring the precious stones for the Kohen Gadol's breastplate and ephod. G-d appoints Bezalel and Oholiav as the master

craftsmen. Bnei Yisrael contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations. Special curtains with two different covers were designed for the Mishkan's roof and door. Gold-covered boards in silver bases were connected, forming the Mishkan's walls. Bezalel made the Holy Ark (which contained the Tablets) from wood covered with gold. On the Ark's cover were two figures facing each other. The menorah and the table with the showbreads were also of gold. Two altars were made: a small incense altar of

wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for sacrifices made of wood covered with copper.

#### PEKUDEI

The Book of Shmot concludes with this Parsha. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the Mishkan, Moshe gives a complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels which had been fashioned. Bnei Yisrael bring

everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to G-d's specifications. Moshe blesses the people. G-d speaks to Moshe and tells him that the Mishkan should be set up on the first day of the first

month, i.e. Nissan. He also tells Moshe the order of assembly for the Mishkan and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the Mishkan is finally complete with every vessel in its place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating

that G-d's glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the Mishkan, Bnei Yisrael would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

**Rabbi Sinclair,**  
Seasonsofthemoon.com

**Q**

1. What three different words in this Parsha have the same four letters?
2. Why is the prohibition of work on Shabbat written prior to the instructions for building the Mishkan?
3. In verse 35:11, what is the Mishkan, the tent of the Mishkan and the covering of the Mishkan?
4. Why is the word Mishkan stated twice in 38:21?
5. Who was appointed to carry the Mishkan's vessels?

**A**

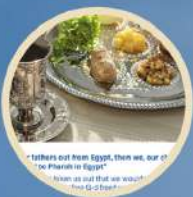
1. 36:35, 37:6, 19 - Parochet, kaporet and kaffor.
2. 35:2 - To teach that building the Mishkan does not supersede Shabbat.
3. 35:11 - The lower curtains visible from within, the goat-skins, and the ram and tachash skins, respectively.
4. 38:21 - To allude to the Beit Hamikdash that would twice be taken as a "mashkon" (pledge) for Jewish People's sins.
5. 38:21 - The Levimim.

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