

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT PEKUDEI

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

EIGHTEEN!

The Mishkan was an amazing edifice. It commanded awe, and Hashem's presence dwelled amongst our nation. Alas today we are without the Mishkan and without the Bet Hamikdash. Nevertheless our Sages have taught us that there are many hints throughout our Parasha as to how we can experience the Mishkan and its deeper effect, even in our generation.

Our Parasha deals with the final building of the Mishkan. After each item of the Mishkan was constructed the Torah repeatedly states that it was done "as G-d commanded Moshe".

The Ba'al HaTurim (40:33) explains that this was a reward for Moshe. When the Jewish people had sinned at the Golden Calf, Moshe pleaded with Hashem for forgiveness. He went as far as to say to Hashem that if you do not wish to forgive them, then "please erase me from your book". Out of reward for Moshe's selflessness and heroic defence of our nation, Hashem in this week's Parasha constantly repeats Moshe's name.

The Ba'al HaTurim notes further that the phrase "as G-d commanded Moshe" appears eighteen times in this portion, corresponding to the eighteen blessings of the weekday Amidah. (The phrase, "as G-d commanded, so

they did" appears once and corresponds to the additional nineteenth blessing against heretics.)

How are these three ideas – Moshe's pleading, the Amidah, and the construction of the Mishkan – related? The Gemara Berachot (28b) asks – what do the eighteen blessings of the Amidah correspond to? Several answers are given: Rabbi Hillel son of Rabbi Shmuel says they correspond to the eighteen times G-d's name is mentioned in Havu LaHashem B'nei Eilim (Tehilim 29). Rav Yosef says that they are in place of the eighteen times G-d's name is mentioned in the Shema and Rav Tanchum says in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi that they correspond to the eighteen vertebrae in the spine.

The Shema portrays the basis of our faith in One G-d.

Mizmor Havu LaHashem, portrays G-d's Might.

Both mention Hashem's Name 18 times, and we can understand why our Sages would wish us to replicate that in the 18 Berachot of the Amidah.

(We find a similar idea from the Chidushai HaRim who states that there were 100 Adanim used as the foundation blocks of the Mishkan. He states that these hint to the 100 Berachot that a person should say every day. Just like the Adanim were the foundation of the Mishkan, so too our Brachot are the foundation of Kedushat Yisrael.

Aden is from the Lashon of Adnut or

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Master, which is the way we refer to Hashem's name. Our one hundred daily Brachot serve as a reminder that Hashem is our Master. That they serve as the foundation of the Mishkan that each Jew builds for Hashem's Shechina in his heart.)

But what is the connection between the Amidah and the spine?

The Gemara hints at the answer to this with another statement of Rav Tanchum in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi; one should bow during the Amidah to the extent that the vertebrae stick out. Rav Tanchum explains that the essence of the Amidah is subjugation to G-d's will, evidenced through bowing.

This self-nullification in the presence of G-d is what Moshe did on Har Sinai. After the sin of the Calf, Moshe was prepared to sacrifice himself in order to save the nation. The Rashbam (32:32) explains that "erase me from Your book" refers to the book of life. Moshe was prepared to give up his role in this world and the next in order to save the nation. This is the ultimate in subjugation and humili-

ty. Moshe felt that he did not deserve any merit in his own right, but that his only value was as the leader of the people. Therefore if they were to be wiped out, he would forfeit his share of both worlds.

The construction of the Mishkan involved months of skilled and difficult work. Though everyone brought donations for the Mishkan, only a few people had the requisite skills to fashion the materials according to the Divine blueprints. Eventually, when Moshe assembled everything and the nation saw the beauty of the structure, with its gold silver and precious gems along with colourful woven tapestries, it would have been natural for those involved in the construction to take a certain satisfaction and pride in their work.

However, this would have negated everything that the Mishkan represented. How can a human being use their body, which is a gift from G-d, to fashion the materials which were created by G-d, according to a plan given by G-d – take any personal pride in their accomplishments?

This is similar to the statement in Pirkei Avot (2; 9), "If you have learnt

much Torah, do not claim credit for yourself, since you were created for this very purpose".

The Hebrew word for command – Tsavot, is similar to the word Tsevet – connected, for through the commandments we connect to Hashem.

The Torah repeats the phrase, "as G-d commanded Moshe" eighteen times, to show that the Mishkan was constructed with the same selflessness which Moshe embodied. The only purpose was to fulfil the will of G-d.

That intention, together with the enthusiasm to fulfil Hashem's Will, enabled the Shechina to dwell amongst our people.

Similarly, in prayer, we show our faith in Hashem (similar to Shema), our belief in His Might (similar to Mizmor Havu) and our commitment to serving Him, selflessly as Moshe did.

Today we might not have the Mishkan or Bet Hamikdash, but Hashem has promised us Bechol Makom – in any place that we mention His Name, He will come and bless us. When we pray with the right intention, in the right manner, the Shechina will dwell with us.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPARENCY

The Torah portion of Pekudei opens with a detailed account of all the materials donated for the construction of the Mishkan:

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

This raises a fundamental question: Why did Moshe Rabbeinu feel the need to provide a full accounting?

Hashem trusted him completely, as it is written: "He is trusted throughout My household" (Bamidbar 12:7). Why, then, did Moshe take the time to publicly clarify every contribution?

The Midrash explains that Moshe heard the scoffers of the generation whispering behind his back:

"Could it be that the man overseeing all the silver and gold for the Mishkan, with no external oversight, will not become wealthy?"

Even in the generation of Dor De'ah, a

generation that had seen open miracles—the Ten Plagues, the Splitting of the Sea, and the Revelation at Sinai—there were cynics who questioned Moshe's integrity. These individuals, blinded by their own skepticism, projected their distrust onto others, failing to recognize the purity of Moshe's character.

Moshe himself knew these suspicions were baseless. His wealth did not come from the Mishkan donations but from a different source. As the Midrash recounts,

when Hashem instructed Moshe to carve the second set of Tablets, He revealed to him a sapphire quarry, allowing Moshe to keep the valuable remnants of the stone. This was the source of Moshe's wealth, not any misappropriation of communal funds.

Nevertheless, Moshe understood the importance of maintaining not only actual righteousness but also public trust. As the Torah instructs:

"You shall be clear before Hashem and before Israel" (Bamidbar 32:22).

Even when a person knows they are innocent, they must avoid any appearance of wrongdoing. Moshe, therefore, chose to give a transparent, detailed account of every donation to the Mishkan. He wanted to ensure that no shadow of doubt remained, demonstrating that true leadership requires both honesty and accountability.

This lesson remains relevant in every generation. There will always be cynics and skeptics who assume that people act out of self-interest. However, true integrity is not just

about knowing one's own honesty – it's about living in a way that inspires trust in others. Whether in leadership, business, or personal relationships, maintaining transparency ensures that our actions are beyond reproach.

Thus, the opening words of Pekudei – "These are the records of the Mishkan" – serve as an eternal reminder for all of us:

A life of integrity is built not only on doing what is right but on making sure that others can see and trust that we do what is right.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Borer – Removing Edible Food From Inedible Food on Shabbat

The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 319:1) delineates three conditions that must be met for Borer – separating mixed substances from one another – to be permissible on Shabbat:

- 1) One must separate the Ochel (edible food) from the Pesolet (inedible food), and not the other way around.
- 2) One must separate "Be'yad" – by hand, and not with a utensil.
- 3) One must separate "Mi'yad" – for immediate purposes, and not for a later time.

The first condition, that the edible food must be separated from the inedible food, is based on the premise that the normal process eating entails taking food and placing it in one's mouth. Removing the Ochel from the Pesolet is thus considered eating, and not an act of separating, and is therefore permissible on Shabbat. Tosafot (Talmud commentaries by

Medieval French and German scholars), however, in Masechet Shabbat (74), impose an important restriction on this Halacha. They claim that this condition applies only if there is more edible food than inedible food. In such a case, the normal way of separating would be to remove the inedible food, which would be far simpler given that it is the minority. In order to avoid the Torah prohibition against separating on Shabbat, therefore, Halacha requires separating the Ochel from the Pesolet, which is the abnormal manner of separating in such a case. If, however, there is more Pesolet than Ochel, then the normal method of separating would be to separate the edible food from the inedible substance. In order to avoid the prohibition of Borer, one would have to separate in the opposite manner, removing the Pesolet from the Ochel. According to Tosafot, then, before separating two substances that are mixed together, one must first determine which substance constitutes the majority and which constitutes the minority, as this will determine the Halachically permissible

method of separation.

The Be'ur Halacha (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1839-1933) cites Halachic authorities who note that the Shulhan Aruch did not accept Tosafot's position, or even take it into account at all. According to the Shulhan Aruch, the respective proportions of the Ochel and Pesolet are of no Halachic consequence with regard to the laws of Borer, and in all situations, one must remove the edible food from the inedible food, and not the other way around. This is the ruling of Sephardic Chief Rabbi Shelomo Amar, in his work of responsa Shema Shelomo (Orah Haim 10:1), and this is, indeed, the accepted Halacha.

Summary:

If edible food is mixed with an inedible substance, one may remove the edible food from the inedible substance, but it is forbidden to remove the inedible substance from the edible food. This applies regardless of which of the two substances constitutes the majority in the mixture.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Pekudei

The Book of Shemot concludes with this Torah portion. 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 that 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. Why is the word Mishkan stated twice in verse 38:21?
2. Why is the Mishkan called the "Mishkan of Testimony"?
3. Who was appointed to carry the vessels of the Mishkan in the midbar?
4. Who was the officer in charge of the levi'im?
5. What is the meaning of the name Bezalel?

A

1. 38:21 - To allude to the Beit Hamikdash that would twice be taken as a "mashkon" (pledge) for the sins of the Jewish People until the nation repents.
2. 38:21 - It was testimony for the Jewish People that G-d forgave them for the golden calf and allowed His Shechina to dwell among them.
3. 38:21 - The levi'im.
4. 38:21 - Itamar ben Aharon.
5. 38:22 - "In the shadow of G-d."

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