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SHABBAT PARSHAT KI TISA - VAYAKHEL - PEKUDEI · 5761 · VOL. 8 NO. 22

PARSHA INSIGHTS — KI TISA

A Real Free Lunch

"I shall show favor when I choose to show favor, and I shall show mercy when I choose to show mercy." (33:19)

Popular wisdom has it that there is no such thing as a "free lunch." Somehow, somewhere down the road, you always seem to have to pick up even more than the tab.

Sometimes, however, that's not always the case.

A nice thing about banks is that they love to lend you money. Provided, however, that you have the wherewithal to repay. If you have no cash, no collateral — and no prospects, you will find that you will be quietly shown the door.

One of the pleasures of "banking" on the Creator is that He isn't in the banking business.

When Moshe went "upstairs" to receive the second set of the Tablets of the Covenant, one of the sights that G-d showed him was His storehouse of spiritual treasures. Moshe saw one massive chamber reserved for the righteous. As Moshe continued his tour around this celestial warehouse, he came upon a huge unlabeled chamber. He opened the door and saw a vast treasure. He asked for whom this was reserved. G-d replied that this whole storehouse was reserved for those who had no merits of their own. It was the storehouse of Heavenly favor.

Judaism is not a religion that answers questions with dogma. Almost every question has an answer in the Jewish scheme of things. Jews have always been known as a questioning people. There are even jokes about why Jews always answer one question with another. Come to think of it — Why do they?

We can ask almost any question — except the ultimate reason why G-d wanted to create this existence. We know that He desired a place to dwell in this lower world. We know that He wanted to bestow His goodness on a creature He created whose name is Man. But *why* He should want this — that we can never know. For what someone wants is who they really are. And G-d's ultimate essence can never be known by man.

This essence is what Moshe referred to when he requested to see *"Your glory."* G-d replied to him, *"I shall show favor when I choose to show favor, and I shall show mercy when I choose to show mercy."* This means that G-d sometimes shows favor to those who are undeserving. Why?

To answer that question, we would need to see *"G-d's face."* And as the next verse says *"You will not be able to see My face, for no human can see My face and live."* Understanding G-d's wishes is understanding Who He is. What He wants is Who He is — and that, by definition, is beyond the mind of man.

However, there is a consolation prize. For even those who don't deserve it may find themselves the recipients of a real free lunch.

Sources:
- *Talmud Berachot 7a; Yalkut 393*

HAFTARA — KI TISA - PARAH - YECHEZKEL 36:16 - 38

This year, accompanying *parshat Ki Tisa* is the *haftara* of *Parshat Parah*, the third of the four special *Parshiot*.

Just as *Parshat Parah* concerns the laws of spiritual purity, so too its *haftara* contains the words "and I will sprinkle upon you the waters of purity." Its prophecy consoles the exiled Jewish people, relating to the reasons of the exile and to their future restoration and establishment in the land of Israel. In the future, spiritual purity, together with a "new heart and new spirit," will be bestowed from above upon those who return to the Torah.

A New Heart

"And I will remove the heart of stone from within you and give you a heart of flesh."

When a person transgresses the Torah, he actually harms himself; his suffering soul introverts within his conscience, his feelings become numb and his emotions phlegmatic. This state not only hinders spiritual elevation but lures him to deepen his depression with additional sin. This is the meaning of the statement "a sin motivates a sin" (*Pirke Avot 4:2*), as the spiritual harm caused by the first decision to sin strengthens his desire for future sin.

Our Sages compared this situation to a thirsty sailor drinking salt water; the more he drinks the more he thirsts, never to quench his thirst.

Nevertheless, when a person is determined to return to the Torah path, Hashem removes his heart of stone and furnishes him with a new, sensitive heart of supple flesh, enabling him to embark on a new beginning.

PARSHA OVERVIEW — KI TISA

Moshe conducts a census by counting each silver half-*shekel* donated by all men age twenty and over. Moshe is commanded to make a copper laver for the *Mishkan*. The women donate the necessary metal. The formula of the anointing oil is specified, and Hashem instructs Moshe to use this oil only for dedicating the *Mishkan*, its vessels, Aharon and his sons. Hashem selects Betzalel and Oholiav as master craftsmen for the *Mishkan* and its vessels. The Jewish People are commanded to keep the Sabbath as an eternal sign that Hashem made the world. Moshe receives the two Tablets of Testimony on which are written the Ten Commandments. The mixed multitude who left Egypt with the Jewish People panic when Moshe's descent seems delayed, and force Aharon to make a golden calf for them to worship. Aharon stalls, trying to delay them. Hashem tells Moshe to return to the people immediately, threatening to destroy everyone and build a new nation from Moshe. When Moshe sees the orgy of idol-worship he smashes the tablets and he destroys the golden calf. The sons of Levi volunteer to punish the transgressors, executing 3,000 men. Moshe ascends the mountain to pray for forgiveness for the people, and Hashem accepts his prayer. Moshe sets up the *Mishkan* and Hashem's cloud of glory returns. Moshe asks Hashem to show him the rules by which he conducts the world, but is granted only a small portion of this request. Hashem tells Moshe to hew new tablets and reveals to him the text of the prayer that will invoke Divine mercy. Idol worship, intermarriage and the combination of milk and meat are prohibited. The laws of Pesach, the first-born, the first-fruits, Shabbat, Shavuot and Succot are taught. When Moshe descends with the second set of tablets, his face is luminous as a result of contact with the Divine.

HAFTARA — VAYAKHEL - PEKUDEI • EZEKIEL 45:16-46:18

PARSHAT HACHODESH

The *haftara* of *Parshat Hachodesh* prophetically narrates the consecration of the third and everlasting *Beit Hamikdash*. As this will occur on the first of Nissan, we thus read this *haftara* on the Shabbat preceding the first of Nissan.

The *haftara* begins with the entire Jewish nation contributing towards the Temple's consecration by raising the funds of the festive inaugural offerings conducted by the prince *mashiach*. This festivity will be celebrated on Passover. The *haftara* ends with official regulations regarding the prince's authority in granting estates to his subjects, stating that he will not use his power to confiscate lands from their rightful owners, as some of the corrupt kings had done.

THE CHODESH FESTIVAL

The *haftara* refers to Rosh Chodesh as a festival (*46:1-3*). This festive nature is evident also from the obligation to bring a *musaf* offering on Rosh Chodesh (*Bamidbar 28:11*).

The Tur (*Orach Chaim 417*) states that Rosh Chodesh was in fact intended to be a holy day like a Yom Tov, with a prohibition of creative activity, but unfortunately we lost this opportunity subsequent to the sin of the Golden Calf. We were commanded to observe the three *regalim* festivals — Pesach, Shavuot and Succot — in the merit of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov; and the twelve Rosh Chodesh festivals were to have been observed in the merit of the twelve tribes. However, when the twelve tribes sinned, Rosh Chodesh lost an element of its holiness and became a day when toil is permitted. The custom for women to abstain from unnecessary work on Rosh Chodesh is because they did not participate in the sin of the Golden Calf. Thus, for them it retains an air of its original grandeur.

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I DIDN'T KNOW THAT! — KI TISA

"And they shall give" (*30:12*)

The Hebrew word *V'natnu* — "and they shall give" — is a palindrome. That is, it is spelled the same backwards as forwards. This hints that giving charity is a two-way street. When a person gives charity he should realize that he or his offspring might one day need to be on the receiving end of charity. And then his good deed will come back to assist him.

• *Vilna Gaon*

לע"נ

מרת ביילא בת ר' שלמה (קרבל) ז"ל

אלמנת ר' ישראל אייזיק הכהן קפלן ז"ל

נלב"ע ה' אדר תשס"א

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

THE INSIDE OF THE OUTSIDE

"See, Hashem has proclaimed by name Betzalel, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Yehuda. He has filled him with G-dly spirit, wisdom, insight, and knowledge and with every craft. (35:30-33)

Judaism has always had an uneasy relationship with art and artists. The Greeks made temples of great beauty to their gods. The Vatican heads a mighty throng of churches from Venice to Sienna to Notre Dame to Florence bespeaking the artist's striving to express his connection with that which is beyond.

If you look at the average synagogue, seemingly Jewish art has never attained the level of its non-Jewish counterparts, and in many cases has merely aped the non-Jewish world.

But it wasn't always that way.

The Talmud (*Bava Batra 4a*) tells us that if you never saw the Second *Beit Hamikdash* (*Holy Temple*) which Herod built, you never saw a beautiful building in your life. Its walls were constructed from blue-green marble and white Marmara marble. One layer was indented and the next protruded so that the plaster would have a "key" to adhere to. Herod thought to cover the whole edifice with gold plate. The Rabbis told him to leave it as it was — unplastered and ungilded — for it looked better in its natural state — the different levels of blue-green and white resembling the waves of the sea.

When was the last time you saw a Rabbi called in as an interior decorator? Did you you ever hear of a Rabbi invited to give his hallowed opinion on a building by Frank Lloyd Wright? What do Rabbis have to do with architecture?

Herod wanted to impose an external beauty on an intrinsic beauty. He wanted to cover the natural beauty with a painted beauty. He wanted to cover the sea with gold. Herod was gilding the lily.

In Jewish thought, only that which reveals the inside is beautiful. The word in Hebrew for "inside" is *p'nim*. The letters of *p'nim* are identical to the word *panim*, which means "face." The face is the only part of a person where flesh radiates the internal life, the soul. By looking at the face you can see what is inside.

The Hebrew word for "ugly" is *achur* which also means "opaque." Ugliness is defined as that which covers up the inside — however beautiful that surface might be.

In this week's Parsha the Torah speaks at length about the *Mishkan*, the Tent of Meeting. The *Mishkan* was like a portable *Beit Hamikdash*. Both were places where Heaven meets Earth, where the spiritual meets the physical, where G-d's presence was manifest and overwhelming.

The true beauty of the *Beit Hamikdash* was that it revealed the "inside" of this world. By showing the world's "face," it revealed its spiritual dimension. The *Beit Hamikdash* portrayed that existence is not bound by the physical constraints of space and time. It demonstrated that the world has a soul, that the world is connected to that which is.

The eye is a physical organ but it receives light. Light is as about as non-physical as you can get. The eye is the gateway to a non-physical existence called light. The *Beit Hamikdash* was called "the eye of the world" because it was a physical entity that was the portal for the light — for the spiritual dimension, for the worlds beyond.

Sources: Bava Batra 4a; Maharal Chidushei Aggadot

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*. Hashem appoints Betzalel 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. Betzalel 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 *Shemot* concludes with this *Parsha*. After finishing the different parts, vessels and garments used in the *Mishkan*, Moshe gives an accounting and enumeration of the contributions and of the 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 Hashem's specifications. Moshe blesses the people. Hashem speaks to Moshe and tells him that the *Mishkan* should be set up on the first day of 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 Hashem's glory was 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.

"Moshe gathered the entire community of* Bnei Yisrael" *(35:1)

At the time of the sin of the Golden Calf, dissent and disunity splintered the Jewish People. So much so that, according to the Talmud Yerushalmi, each tribe actually had its own golden calf, because they couldn't agree on one! Here, with the building of the *Mishkan*, Moshe seeks to rectify this; he gathers the entire community together, attempting to unite them as when they received the Torah "like one man, with one heart."

• *Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky in "Emet L'Yaakov"*

THE MISSING COIN

In order for a widow to collect from the orphans the money due her from her *ketubah* (marriage contract) she is required to verify that she did not receive any payment from her husband while he was alive. This verification was initially done by her taking an oath to this effect. When Rabban Gamliel observed that widows were losing their ability to collect payment because of their reluctance to take an oath, he decreed that it would suffice if the widow would take upon herself a vow of abstinence (from any particular kinds of food) designated by the orphans in the event that she had received payment.

The *gemara* cites a story to illustrate the severity of punishment for a false oath which frightened widows into refraining from taking an oath. A man once gave a widow a gold coin for safekeeping. She hid it in a container of flour and when she later took some flour for baking she failed to notice that the coin was baked into the loaf, which she gave away to a beggar. When the owner of the coin came to ask for it she was so adamant in protesting her innocence of any misappropriation that she took an oath that one of her children should die if she had any benefit from the coin. A short while later one of her children died and when the Sages heard about this they exclaimed: If this is what happens to someone who had not intended to take a false oath, how much more severe will be the punishment for one who swears falsely! It was the fear of inadvertently being guilty of a false oath that discouraged widows from collecting their *ketubah* money through an oath and necessitated the decree of Rabban Gamliel.

But why indeed was the widow in that story so severely punished?

Her oath was that she had received no benefit from the coin. In fact, however, had the coin not been in the batch of flour she used for baking that loaf, she would have used more of her flour supply. The amount of flour displaced by the coin thus turned out to be her benefit from that coin.

In regard to the innocence of her intention Tosefot contrasts this with the case of Rabbi Kahana and Rabbi Asa (*Mesechta Shavuot 26a*) who each took an oath that what they said in the name of their master, the Sage Rav, was what he had actually said. When Rav eventually vindicated one of them, the other asked whether he had been guilty of taking a false oath. Rav told him that because he was absolutely certain that he was swearing the truth he was not guilty of swearing falsely. This does not apply to the widow in our case, says Tosefot, because as guardian of the coin she was responsible for guarding it carefully and should have anticipated that an oath would be required of her if she failed to produce that coin. It was this dimension of carelessness which made her guilty of swearing falsely despite her lack of intention to do so.

• *Gittin 35a*

MAN-MADE TENTH MAN

There were only nine Jews in the synagogue without a tenth man in sight to complete the *minyan*-quorum necessary for communal prayers. Rabbi Eliezer deemed the situation an emergency and liberated his Canaanite slave to complete the *minyan*.

How could he do so, asks the *gemara*, when it is forbidden to liberate such a slave, in accordance with the Torah command "You shall enslave them forever" (*Vayikra 25:46*)? The answer given in our *gemara* is that this ban does not apply when the slave is liberated for the sake of fulfilling a mitzvah. (In Mesechta Berachot 47b this answer is challenged on the grounds that you cannot fulfill a mitzvah through the committing of a sin, and the response is that a mitzvah of communal nature has a special status.)

The question has been raised as to why it was necessary for Rabbi Eliezer to come into conflict with the ban on liberating slaves in order to complete his *minyan* if he could simply have created a tenth man? The Talmudic sages certainly had the power to do so as is evident from the incident described in Mesechta Sanhedrin (*65b*). The Sage Rava created a man by using the mystical formula in "Sefer Hayetzira" and sent his creation to his colleague Rabbi Zeira. When the latter spoke to this creature and received no response he realized that this was a man-made man with no soul and the power of speech that goes with it. He therefore ordered it to return to its dust.

If Rabbi Eliezer preferred liberating his slave to making a man, it would seem that this is proof that a man-made man is not considered a Jew who can complete a *minyan*. What is interesting, however, is that the question of whether such a creature (commonly referred to as a "*golem*") is eligible for inclusion in a *minyan* was actually dealt with some three centuries ago by Rabbi Tzvi Ashkenazi in his Responsa of Chacham Tzvi (*93*). He concludes that even though there is an argument to be made that since the creations of *tzaddikim* are considered as their offspring and therefore the *golem* should be considered a Jew, the aforementioned incident of Rabbi Zeira consigning Rava's golem to the dust bin proves that such a creature cannot be included in a *minyan*. His reasoning is that Rabbi Zeira decided that the speechless creature had no value and if he was capable of completing a *minyan* he would not have so readily disposed of him.

We invite readers of Ohrnet to suggest why Chacham Tzvi did not prove his point from Rabbi Eliezer's reluctance to make a man.

• *Gittin 38b*

HALF-SLAVE, HALF-FREE

Two cases of half-slave, half-free people are mentioned in our *gemara*. One is the male Canaanite slave owned by partners and liberated by one of them, and the other is the same situation in regard to a female slave.

In the case of the male slave there is a consensus in the *mishna* that we compel the owner of the half still in bondage to liberate him and accept a promissory note from him as payment. The reason for this is that the half-slave will otherwise be denied the opportunity of fulfilling the mitzvah of procreation, since his unique status renders it impossible for him to marry either a free woman or slave.

In the case of the female, however, the *gemara* cites a precedent in which the owner of a half-slave was compelled to liberate her but rejects the suggestion that this was in order for her to be enabled to fulfill the mitzvah of procreation. The majority view of the Sages is that a woman is not obligated in this mitzvah and the reason given for liberating her is that she was being exploited for promiscuity and the only way to protect her and the public was to liberate her and enable her to marry (*Gittin 43b*).

Tosefot calls attention to the *mishna*'s citing as a source for the half-slave's mitzvah of procreation the verse (*Yishayahu 45:18*) "He did not create (the world) to be desolate but rather to be populated" rather than the Torah command to "Be fruitful and multiply" (*Bereishet 1:28*). The reason given for this by the Tosefist Rabbi Yitzchak ben Mordechai is that a slave, like a woman, is also exempt from the obligation of "Be fruitful and multiply" but he is expected to fulfill the Divine plan for populating the world. Since this mitzvah relates to his entirety it is cited by the *mishna* rather than the Torah command which relates to only half of him.

But if the issue is populating the world, this should apply to the female slave as well, just as it applies to regular Jewish women and male slaves? True, concedes Tosefot, but we nevertheless would not compel the owner of the female half-slave to liberate her for the sake of this mitzvah if the issue of promiscuity was not involved. This is so because while we can be confident that a male slave will marry upon being liberated because he then has the Torah obligation of "Be fruitful" like every regular Jew, we do not have that confidence in the liberated female slave doing so because she will not be obligated by Torah law to "Be fruitful," since Jewish women are not thus obligated and might therefore ignore the need to fulfill the lesser mitzvah of populating the world. Without concern of promiscuity, therefore, her situation would not warrant a coerced liberation.

• *Gittin 41b*

BIRD TALK

In the course of the *gemara*'s discussion of the laws pertaining to a community's responsibilities for ransoming Jewish captives from their heathen kidnappers, the fascinating story of Rabbi Ilish's experience is cited.

Seated next to this sage in captivity was a man who understood the language of the birds. When a raven flew by and chirped Rabbi Ilish asked this fellow captive what the bird had said. "Ilish, flee! Ilish, flee!" he answered.

"The raven is a liar," said Rabbi Ilish, "and I cannot rely upon him."

Then a chirping dove flew by and once again the sage turned to his companion for an interpretation. "Ilish, flee! Ilish, flee!" was again the message he relayed.

"The Jewish people are compared to a dove," said the sage, "and I can safely conclude that I will be favored with a miracle."

Rabbi Ilish did indeed escape and miraculously crossed a river and safely eluded his pursuers.

The simple reading of this story indicates that Rabbi Ilish did not understand the language of the birds and was dependent on the skill of his fellow captive. One of the early commentaries, the Aruch, surprisingly concludes from our *gemara* that this sage did understand bird language. Rabbi Akiva Eiger, in his "Gilyon HaShas" footnotes mentions that this approach has already been challenged as being at odds with the simple reading.

An interesting defense of the Aruch's approach was offered by Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz, the late Rosh Hayeshiva of Yeshivat Mir in Jerusalem. Rabbi Ilish certainly did understand bird language for otherwise he would not have attached any significance to their chirping. But he was also aware that his intense desire to be free might cause him to be so subjective that he might be hearing what he would like to hear rather than what was actually conveyed by the birds. He therefore turned to his companion for an objective confirmation that he was being informed by Heaven that his escape would be successful.

The difference between this sage's reactions to the messages of raven and dove is explained by Maharsha on the basis of the performance of both those birds when sent by Noach after the Deluge to test the dryness of the land. Since the raven proved unfaithful, his message was distrusted by Rabbi Ilish. The dove could be relied upon, however, and even if his companion was lying the very appearance of a dove symbolizing Jewish survival was accepted as a reliable sign to flee to safety.

• *Gittin 45a*

PARSHA Q&A ? — KI TISA

1. How many "*geira*" are in a shekel?
2. What was the minimum age of military service in the Jewish army?
3. What were the three different types of *terumah* donated?
4. The Jews were counted after Yom Kippur and again after Pesach. Both times they numbered the same amount. How can this be? Didn't some 19-year olds turn 20 during that six month period?
5. How many ingredients comprise the incense of the *Mishkan*?
6. According to Rashi, why are sailors called "*malachim*?"
7. What is the difference between *chochma* (wisdom), *bina* (understanding), and *da'at* (knowledge)?
8. Shabbat is a "sign." What does it signify?
9. When did the Jewish People begin to give contributions for the building of the *Mishkan*?
10. How many books are there in Tanach?
11. From where did the men take the earrings that they donated to make the calf?
12. Why did Aharon build the altar for the golden calf by himself?
13. Why did Moshe break the Tablets?
14. How can two brothers belong to two different tribes?
15. Why did Moshe ask that his name be erased from the Torah?
16. How has the sin of the golden calf affected the Jewish People throughout history?
17. In verse 33:2, Hashem says that the inhabitants of *Eretz Canaan* would be driven out of the Land. In that verse, only six of the seven Canaanite nations are mentioned. What happened to the seventh?
18. How did Hashem show that He forgave the Jewish People?
19. How did Moshe become wealthy?
20. How do the light rays shining from Moshe's face show us the powerful effect of sin?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Ki Tisa's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 30:13 - Twenty.
2. 30:14 - Twenty.
3. 30:15 - For the *adanim* (sockets), for the purchase of communal sacrifices, and for the building of the Mishkan.
4. 30:16 - Their ages were calculated based on Rosh Hashana, not based on their individual birthdays.
5. 30:34 - Eleven ingredients were used making the incense.
6. 30:35 - Because they stir (*malach*) the water with their oars.
7. 31:3 - *Chochma* is knowledge acquired from others. *Bina* is the deduction of new knowledge from what one has already learned. *Da'at* is holy inspiration.
8. 31:13 - It is a sign between Hashem and the Jewish People that He has chosen them and a sign to the nations of the world that He has sanctified the Jewish People.
9. 31:18 - The 11th of Tishrei.
10. 31:18 - 24.
11. 32:2,3 - From their ears.
12. 32:5 - He hoped that by building it by himself it would take longer and in the interim Moshe would return.
13. 32:19 - Moshe reasoned: If the Torah forbids those who have estranged themselves from the Torah to partake in even a single commandment (Pesach sacrifice), surely the entire Torah cannot be given to a whole nation which has estranged itself from Hashem!
14. 32:27 - Half-brothers, sharing the same mother.
15. 32:32 - So people shouldn't say "Moshe was unworthy to plead for mercy on behalf of the Jewish people."
16. 32:34 - Whenever Hashem punishes the Jewish People, part of that punishment comes as payment for the sin of the golden calf.
17. 33:2 - The seventh nation, the Girgashites, voluntarily emigrated.
18. 33:14 - He agreed to let His *Shechina* dwell among them.
19. 34:1 - Moshe carved the Tablets out of precious stone. Hashem commanded Moshe to keep the leftover fragments.
20. 34:35 - Before the sin of the golden calf, the people would not have been afraid to look at the light rays, but after the sin they were afraid.

KASHA! (KASHA MEANS "QUESTION") — KI TISA

Kasha

Even though the Torah generally calls a person by his name and the name of his father, the Torah refers to Betzalel using his father's *and* his grandfather's names (*31:2*). Can you think of a reason why?

Betzalel's grandfather was Chur, the son of Miriam and Kalev. Chur was killed when he protested the making of the golden calf. Since the *Mishkan* comes to atone for the sin of the golden calf, Chur, who gave his life trying to prevent that sin, is mentioned in connection with the *Mishkan*.

• *Da'at Zekainim*

Do you have a KASHA? Write to kasha@ohr.edu with your questions on any Parsha!

PARSHA Q&A ? — VAYAKHEL - PEKUDEI

Vayakhel

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. What were the *bigdei hasrad* for?
5. What was unique about the way the goat's hair was spun?
6. Why did the princes contribute last? How does the Torah show dissatisfaction with this?
7. Who were the two primary builders of the *Mishkan*? What tribes were they from?
8. What image was woven into the *parochet*?
9. Why was the building of the *aron* attributed to Betzalel?
10. What was the *mizbeach ha'olah* made of?

Pekudei

1. Why is the word *Mishkan* stated twice in 38:21?
2. Who was appointed to carry the *Mishkan*'s vessels?
3. What does "*Betzalel*" mean?
4. How many people gave a half-*shekel*?
5. Which material used in the *bigdei kehuna* was not used for covering the sacred vessels?
6. How were the gold threads made?
7. What was on the hem of the *me'il*?
8. On which day was the *Mishkan* first erected and not dismantled?
9. Where in the *Mishkan* was the *menorah* placed?
10. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as *kohanim?*

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Vayakhel - Pekudei's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

Vayakhel

1. 36:35, 37:6,19 - *Parochet*, *kaporet* and *kaftor.*
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. 35:19 - They covered the *aron*, *shulchan*, *menorah*, and the *mizbechot* during transport.
5. 35:26 - It was spun directly from the goats' backs.
6. 35:27 - The princes wanted the people to contribute first, and only then they would contribute whatever was lacking. Hence, the Torah omits a letter from their title.
7. 35:30, 35:34 - Betzalel ben Uri from Yehuda; Oholiav ben Achisamach from Dan.
8. 36:35 - *Keruvim*. (*See Rashi 26:31*).
9. 37:1 - He dedicated himself to its building more than anyone.
10. 38:1-2 - Wood covered with copper.

Pekudei

1. 38:21 - To allude to the *Beit Hamikdash* that would twice be taken as a "*mashkon*" (pledge) for Jewish People's sins.
2. 38:21 - The *levi'im*.
3. 38:22 - "In the shadow of G-d."
4. 38:26 - 603,550.
5. 39:1 - Linen. (*See Rashi 31:10*)
6. 39:3 - Gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (*See Rashi 28:6*)
7. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and gold bells.
8. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year. For seven days before this, Moshe erected and dismantled the *Mishkan*. (*Rashi 39:29*)
9. 40:24 - On the southern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed* opposite the *shulchan*.
10. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the *Mishkan*'s consecration.

KASHA! (KASHA MEANS "QUESTION") — VAYAKHEL - PEKUDEI

"And the 100 silver kikar were melted for the (100) sockets...one kikar per socket...and the (remaining) 1775 shekalim were fashioned into hooks..." (38:27)

QUESTION:

Why does the Torah specify exactly what was done with the silver, whereas the Torah is not as specific regarding the gold?

ANSWER:

Being that everyone gave exactly half of a silver *shekel*, the total amount of silver was public knowledge. Therefore, the more relevant question regarding the silver was "How was it used?" The gold, however, had been a free-will offering, each person giving as much as he wanted. Therefore, the more relevant question regarding the gold was "How much was donated?"

• *Ahavat Yonatan (thanks to Rabbi Sholem Fishbane)*

IBM

From: Name@Withheld

Dear Rabbi,
As a Jew and IBM employee, I feel very uncomfortable about the recent revelations about IBM's involvement in supplying computer equipment to the Nazi regime. I have a lot of conflicting thoughts about it. What are your views on this? Thanks.
(If you publish this, please do not use my name.)

Dear Name@Withheld,

I think this is more a matter of feeling and sensitivity than a matter of Halacha. I can't tell you how to feel; I can only tell you how I feel.

I personally do not find the idea of working for IBM to be reprehensible. If you scratch the surface of a myriad of different companies that were in business during the Second World War, I have no doubt you will find many that had connections to the Nazi regime. Also, even if you were to leave IBM and go work for Microsoft, for example, established years after the war, the company itself is based on IBM technological know-how. Where do you draw the line?

I feel the same approach applies to buying German goods. Some wonder, "After the holocaust, how can a Jew buy German goods?" I understand this sentiment, but if so, we shouldn't buy Spanish goods either, or goods from any country where anti-Semitic atrocities were public policy. (That doesn't leave too many countries!)

I took my family to Disneyland a few years ago and we had a wonderful time, even though Walt Disney himself was an avowed anti-Semite and did not hire Jews or blacks. Today, of course this is not the case, and even the CEO of Disney is Jewish.

Wuzzy Jewish?

From: Joe Mezrahi <JoeMezrahi@aol.com>

Dear Rabbi,
In your Purim e-mail you indicated that Esther "brought Darius up to be favorable to the Jews." Wasn't he in fact Jewish himself, being that his mother was Jewish? Isn't it fair to assume that Esther brought him up as a Jew, taught him the mitzvot, gave him a brit milah, etc?

Dear Joe Mezrahi,

Yes, if Esther was his mother, then that would make Darius Jewish. Certainly, too, we can assume that Esther would have done all she could to raise him as a Jew.

But I imagine that King Achashverosh had a great deal to say about the upbringing of his beloved son, the future heir to his throne. Esther may not have been allowed to apply her influence.

And let's not forget one of the great principles of Judaism: People have free will. Even Yitzchak had a wicked son, Esav. Esav, despite his exceptional upbringing at the hands of two of the world's greatest *tzaddikim*, was the worst of the worst. Why? Because he chose to be so. So too, perhaps Darius, despite whatever Esther may have taught him, fell prey to the lures and difficult temptations of being the world's emperor.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

Re: Jewish Lite (Ohrnet Shemot):

Your answer to the young man who asked if his partial observance of Judaism had any merit was the most beautiful, sensitive, positive response I have ever seen to this issue. I wish that all Jews would be able to read this letter, as it epitomizes the positive attitude and inclusive, welcoming approach we should have towards all Jews.

I get so much out of your column — with the hundreds of emails we get every day, yours is one of the few things I actually read when it comes in, and it's always rewarding.

• *Adina Sherer <sherer@actcom.co.il>*

Re: Two Haftarot in a Row (Ohrnet Terumah):

A recent Yiddle Riddle cited a case of the same *haftara* read two weeks in a row. There is another instance: When Acharei Mot and Kedoshim are separate and neither is a special Shabbat, the custom of some old time Jerusalem synagogues is to read the same *haftara* (*Amos* 9) on both weeks.

• *Tzvi Goldman <goldmat@ecf.utoronto.ca>*

Re: The Lost Megillah (Ohrnet Terumah):

In response to my recent appeal for help locating the owners of the lost "*megillah*," replies from all over the world helped get the *megillah* back to David B.'s family in time for Purim. They were very appreciative to get back this family heirloom. That total strangers take time out of their busy schedules for the mitzvah of returning a lost object...what a merit for you all.

• *Rachael Shields <rachaelfri@juno.com>*