

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT PEKUDEI · 29 ADAR I 5774 - MAR. 1, 2014 · VOL. 21 NO. 23

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### WHITER THAN WHITE

*“These are the accounts” (38:21)*

**T**ry and open a bank account today in a foreign country and you'll find yourself wading through a set of forms guarding against an extremely dangerous and unattractive denizen of deep-water banking — the money launderer.

The money launderer is a thriving, but hardly new species. For example, the Vatican faces a legal landmine that has been quietly wending its way through the American federal court system since 1999.

In November of that year, Ukrainian Holocaust survivors, later joined by Serb and Jewish plaintiffs, filed a class action lawsuit against the Vatican Bank, a Croatian right-wing political organization and the Franciscan Order, alleging complicity in the laundering of Nazi World War 2 loot, including the proceeds of genocide from several Croatian-run concentration camps where upwards of 500,000 Serbs, Jews and others were killed between 1941 and 1945.

The Vatican Bank has claimed sovereign immunity to the lawsuit, declaring that it is an arm of the Holy See.

According to a 1998 report issued by the US State Department, the Nazi Croatian Treasury was illicitly transferred to the Vatican Bank and other banks after the end of World War 2.

The Vatican has repeatedly denied any Franciscan participation in war crimes or the disappearance of the Croatian Treasury, yet it has refused to open its wartime records to substantiate its denial.

In this week's Torah portion, Moshe presents a complete accounting of all the donations to the Mishkan (Tabernacle). Not only did Moshe give an accounting, but he gave his calculations to Aharon's son, Itamar, so that Itamar could check his math.

G-d called Moshe “trustworthy” (Bamidbar 12:7). Why then did Moshe need to make a public accounting in front of all the people?

Moshe had overheard remarks such as “Ben Amram's (Moshe's) neck is getting pretty fat lately.” “No wonder. He's in charge of all that money for the Mishkan!”

Certainly, these remarks were only made by lowlifes. The Jewish People as a whole trusted Moshe but they were puzzled about Moshe's sudden wealth. They didn't know that G-d had let Moshe keep the fragments of sapphire left over from the hewing of the second Tablets. These splinters of sapphire made Moshe extremely wealthy.

Moshe was scrupulous to a ‘T’ with the donations he received for the Mishkan, but nevertheless he gave an accounting because he didn't want to be suspected falsely of doing a little laundering on the side.

From Moshe, our Teacher, we can learn that it's not enough for us to do the right thing, but we must also be seen to do the right thing.

• Source: based on the Midrash

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

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.

## TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

## SUCCAH 27 - 33

*“Four transgressions cause wealthy people to lose their wealth: delay in paying salaries, not paying wages, placing the burdens on others, and for being arrogant — and arrogance is ‘equal’ to all the other transgressions. But regarding the humble it is written, ‘The humble will inherit the world with great peace.’”*

The Sage Rav teaches this on our *daf* at the conclusion the second chapter of our *mesechta*. What is meant by arrogance being equal (lit. “*kneged*”) to all the others? The Maharsha explains that the trait of arrogance leads to all of the other wrongdoings, and causes a person to try to keep and grow his wealth even at the expense of hurting others. However, one who is humble will not transgress in order to preserve what he has — and he will end up on top materially as well as spiritually, as the verse concludes.

• *Succah 29b*

*“Because it’s a mitzvah that comes through transgression.”*

Rabbi Yochanan states this as the reason our *mishna* disqualifies a stolen lulav for the mitzvah. He bases this rule on a verse in the Book of the Prophet Malachi.

The Rishonim ask why a *different* reason is taught above in our *mesechta* as reason to disqualify a stolen succah and stolen *tzitzit* (9a and 27a). Various answers are offered, one of which is that the problem of “a mitzvah that comes with transgression” is not learned from a verse in the Torah. Rather, it is based on a verse in the Prophets. Therefore, it is not a reason to disqualify a stolen item for mitzvah use according to Torah law, and thus a Torah verse is cited by the *gemara* above to exclude a stolen succah and *tzitzit* (Tosefot 9a, Ramban).

• *Succah 30a*

## LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

## TALE OF 43RD STREET

At the entrance to Jerusalem there is a street called “Rechov Ha-mem-gimmel”, literally translated as 43rd Street. But this name is not a mere number such as in Brooklyn’s Boro Park, Manhattan’s midtown, or any of the other big cities of the world that have abandoned names for numbers.

The number 43 given to this street is a memorial to the 43 Moroccan Jews who drowned while trying to reach Israel many years ago.



While the number recalls tragic death, the street itself expresses life. At the very beginning of the street is the Magen David Adom (Israel’s counterpart to the Red Cross) with its sophisticated emergency medical services, blood bank and fleet of ambulances. At the other end of the street (where the building is No. 43!) is the beginning of the religious community of Kiryat Mattersdorf which was established in 1965 with a substantial influx of American immigrants to Israel.

## PARSHA Q&A ?

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 Betzalel?
6. How many people contributed a half-shekel to the Mishkan? Who contributed?
7. Which material used in the *bigdei kehuna* was not used in the coverings of the sacred vessels?
8. How were the gold threads made?
9. What was inscribed on the stones on the shoulders of the *ephod*?
10. What was on the hem of the *me'il*?
11. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear between the *mitznefet* and the *tzitzit*?
12. What role did Moshe play in the construction of the Mishkan?
13. Which date was the first time that the Mishkan was erected and not dismantled?
14. What was the “tent” which Moshe spread over the Mishkan (40:19)?
15. What “testimony” did Moshe place in the *aron*?
16. What function did the *parochet* serve?
17. Where was the *shulchan* placed in the Mishkan?
18. Where was the *menorah* placed in the Mishkan?
19. Who offered the communal sacrifices during the eight days of the dedication of the Mishkan?
20. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as *kohanim*?

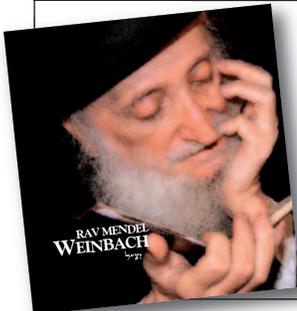
## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to This Week's Questions!

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

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.”
6. 38:26 - 603,550. Every man age twenty and over (except the *levi'im*).
7. 39:1 - Linen (See *Rashi 31:10*).
8. 39:3 - The gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (See *Rashi 28:6*).
9. 39:6, 39:7 - The names of the tribes.
10. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and golden bells.
11. 39:31 - *Tefillin*.
12. 39:33 - He stood it up.
13. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year in the desert. For seven days before this, during the consecration of Aharon and his sons, Moshe erected and dismantled the Mishkan. (*Rashi 39:29*)
14. 40:19 - The curtain of goatskin.
15. 40:20 - The *Luchot Habrit*.
16. 40:21 - It served as a partition for the *aron*.
17. 40:22 - On the northern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed*, outside the *parochet*.
18. 40:24 - On the southern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed* opposite the *shulchan*.
19. 40:29 - Moshe.
20. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the consecration of the Mishkan

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# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT PEKUDEI

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

In this Parsha the Torah repeats the narrative of the design, construction and setting-up of the Tabernacle. Abarbanel questions the necessity of repeating these details. The Torah relates that “Moshe saw the entire work and behold, they had done as G-d had commanded... And Moshe blessed them.” Rather than ending here, the narrative goes on to describe everything once again in detail. Abarbanel answers that the artisans who did the work did not show the completed components to Moshe as each was completed. Moshe, in turn, did not go out to continually inspect what they had produced, but rather viewed their work only after it was totally finished. The Torah therefore describes their work in detail to demonstrate that they did exactly as commanded, even though it would have been expected for them to forget a few details or deviate slightly. Abarbanel states that this is testimony to both their wisdom and zeal to serve G-d to the best of their abilities. It is for this reason that Moshe blesses them for their accomplishment.

Secondly, Abarbanel questions the discrepancy between the order of the initial commands and the order in which the various components were finally put into place. In both cases Moshe did exactly as he was commanded. This is why each time a component is put into place the verse ends with the words, “...as G-d commanded Moshe”, a phrase which could have been inserted once at the end of the narrative. This is a clear indication that these actions, even though they

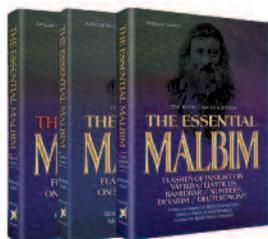
did not follow the order in which they were first presented, were carried out by Moshe in the exact order that G-d intended. By changing the order, G-d is communicating that for each of the components of the Tabernacle there are different degrees of importance based on different levels of symbolic meaning.

Since this Parsha concludes the Torah’s detailed description of the Tabernacle, it is worth briefly noting Abarbanel’s summary of the importance of studying the Tabernacle in detail, even though it is no longer in existence. This type of study gives provides insight into the Divine wisdom which enhances our spiritual growth and understanding. This concept is communicated in Moshe’s final charge to the nation, “You shall observe the works of this covenant so that you will succeed in all that you do.” Abarbanel explains that ‘observe’ refers to study while ‘success’ actually refers to the acquisition of sharpened understanding. In essence, even though action is the ultimate goal, the sharpened understanding and spiritual growth that results from intensive study remains in place even if the action is not relevant at the present time. Additionally, on a deeper level, Abarbanel points out that the construction and components of the Tabernacle correspond to the various steps in the creation of the universe itself and to its ongoing nature after G-d stopped the creative process with the creation of the Shabbat.

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## WOMEN'S PRAYER

From: Wanda

Dear Rabbi,  
Would you please clarify for me what a woman's obligations are in prayer? Is it the same as for men, or different? Might it vary depending on whether she's single or married, with children or without?

Dear Wanda,

This is a very interesting question, with varying approaches in the classical commentaries on the Talmud.

The first point is that regarding women's obligation to observe *mitzvot*, a very important general rule is that women are exempt from what's referred to as "positive time-bound *mitzvot*". This means that commandments which are "do's", like tefillin or succah, whose observance is brought about by the passage of time from a period of inapplicability to obligation, are not incumbent upon women.

Since tefillin is applicable only during the week but not on Shabbat, its obligation is brought on by the passage of time. Similarly, since succah is applicable only during the holiday of Succot, it is also time-bound. Notable exceptions to this rule would involve cases where women have a special connection the *mitzvah*, such as when it commemorates a miracle of salvation in which both men and women have a part; or when the positive time-bound *mitzvah* also has a prohibitive component, for example, Shabbat.

In any case, regarding prayer, which would seem to be considered a positive time-bound *mitzvah* from which women should be exempt, we find that women are, in fact, obligated. The question is why and to what extent.

Rambam is of the opinion that a person's obligation to pray to G-d is from the Torah verse, "and you shall serve G-d with all your heart". However, the Torah doesn't specify any particular wording or time for prayer – these are of Talmudic origin. The result of this is that the Torah *mitzvah* of prayer

is not time-bound, but rather applicable at all times and therefore incumbent upon everyone – both men and women. Everyone is required to pray in some way, every day, to G-d. But based on the general rule, the Sages exempt women from the additional rabbinic wording and time-bound components of prayer.

The majority of commentators, however, understand the *mitzvah* of prayer differently. They are of the opinion that the essential requirement to pray is not from the Torah, but rather entirely of rabbinic origin, together with its prescribed wording and times. Although according to the general rule women should be exempt from this rabbinic time-bound *mitzvah*, the Sages nevertheless obligated women to pray, since everyone needs to cultivate a relationship with G-d and to ask Him for their needs.

The practical difference between these approaches is that according to Rambam a woman must pray in her own way once a day; according to the others she must pray the formal "*amida*" prayer at its appointed times.

It seems that very many communities over much of Jewish history adopted the approach of Rambam, encouraging women to fulfill the Torah obligation of prayer by addressing their needs, whatever they may be, to G-d at least once a day.

Nowadays, it seems most communities encourage women to fulfill the other authorities' opinion that the rabbinic aspects of prayer apply to them as well – requiring them to pray the formal "*amida*" prayer at its relevant times. However, even this approach has two important qualifications:

One, it does not apply to the evening "*ma'ariv*" prayer since initially, even for men, this prayer was voluntary and not obligatory, and, unlike men, women never took upon themselves the custom of "*ma'ariv*" as an obligation. Two, a woman who has her hands full with the supreme *mitzvah* of bearing and raising children, and finds this privilege to conflict with the burden of formal prayers limited by set times, is encouraged to rely on Rambam's approach by turning to G-d once a day, in her own way, night or day.

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## PRAYER FUNDAMENTALS - PART 5

### G-d's Love and Kindness

***I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His name, created the world in order to bestow His goodness upon His creations, in particular - Man (Eitz Chaim).***

In order to truly rely on G-d for help, one must not only believe in Divine providence, but also that G-d cares and is always there to help.

One may ask, "Why does G-d lower Himself to deal with our trivial requests?" The answer is that since G-d genuinely cares for each of us in a perfect way, He wants to be involved in the details of our lives.

A story:

There was once a king with twin sons. One was very wicked. He was a constant embarrassment and burden to his father. The other was extremely righteous, a source of constant pleasure and praise. When they turned twenty the king decided to send them away, explaining that they needed to experience life on their own in order to become independent. To the bad son he gave a thousand gold coins for his journey. However, to the good son he gave only ten gold coins.

Surprised at how little money he was given for his trip, the good son asked, "Father, what will I do when the money runs out?"

The king answered, "My dear son, if you are close to the palace, come back and I will give you what you need. If you are too far to return, then send me a letter, and I will send you more money. And please include in the letter details of how your trip is going."

By giving an abundance of wealth to his wicked son, the king was in reality severing his ties with him, making sure that he would not return for some time, while, by giving so little to the son which he cared for very much, he was in fact insuring that he would remain connected and involved in his life even if he would be far away.

This story gives us a deeper understanding of why G-d commanded us to pray to Him each day. Through prayer we always remain connected to G-d. Even if we feel distant, when we stand in prayer He is there to answer. When we are in need of help G-d wants us to share our troubles with Him. When we feel unable to go on, He wants us to call out from the depths of our hearts. The walk of life is, in reality, a walk with G-d. We share it all with Him, and He, in His infinite love and kindness, provides us with the good that He desires to bestow on each and every one of us.

## @ OHR *Profiles of Ohr Somayach Staff, Alumni and Students*

### Matthew Kitzen-Abelson

**Matthew Kitzen-Abelson - Age 27  
Collegeville, PA (near Philadelphia)  
Curtis Institute of Music  
and Peabody Conservatory  
JLE Summer Program 2012 Alumnus**

Matthew's path to Judaism went uniquely and directly through his career in music. He was in the middle of pursuing his Masters Degree in music in Baltimore when he began to give private trumpet lessons to a boy from an Orthodox Jewish family, the Steins. He tried to set up the first lesson on Shabbat, not knowing what Shabbat was all about. He mentioned to them that he was Jewish, but obviously not very knowledgeable. They invited him for Shabbat lunch, and from that point, though somewhat hesitatingly, he occasionally came over for Shabbat lunch. After teaching their son for a few

months he met a neighbor of the Steins who ran a weekly Jewish learning program. Matthew ended up attending that program almost every week for a year and a half, culminating in a major and very satisfying decision.

Matthew describes his next steps: "After a great deal of gentle cajoling I decided I would check out Israel and get a taste of Yeshiva life. My first trip to Israel was on the Ohr Somayach Summer 2012 JLE program, during which I was finally able to have a Bar Mitzvah ceremony. The program may very well have been the most inspiring experience of my life. Upon my return to the States I immediately made plans for my next visit to Israel, which lasted nine months, four of them (July-November 2013) at Ohr Somayach, where I really dove into Judaism, strengthened my understanding of the mystery of G-d and acquired the basics of observance. It was a special time in my life for which I will always be grateful."

