

# OHRNET

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## PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

You shall make a table of acacia wood..." (25:23)

They say that into every life, a little rain must fall. Sometimes, however, we might feel this "little rain" as a full-blown downpour, leaving us reeling and searching Terumah: The Jewish Spark for answers. But we should know that there is a little candle at the end of the tunnel, a light that can never go out.

In Yiddish it's called the *pintele Yid* – the Jewish spark. And a spark that can never go out, never needs to be more than a spark. For the greatest blaze can be ignited with just one spark.

After the original creation of the world, Hashem creates nothing *ex nihilo*; rather, every new creation has to have a pre-existing conduit from which it can flow.

In Hebrew, the word *beracha* (blessing) always connotes "increase." A blessing always takes some pre-existing state and infuses it with expansion. Hashem uses a pre-existing vessel and then injects blessing to swell and amplify what is already present.

In this week's Torah portion, the Torah describes the *shulchan*. The *shulchan*, which was an ornamental table, was the conduit through which material blessing flowed to the Jewish People.

And similarly, on our tables, when we say the blessings after a meal, Judaism teaches us to leave the bread on the table so that it should be a vessel to receive Hashem's blessings.

Another example of this is when the prophet Elisha helped a penniless woman. He asked her what she had in her home, and she replied that all she had was a small jug of oil. Elisha told her to borrow as many jugs and pots from her neighbors as she could. Then, she was to start pouring from this tiny jug of oil into the first container. Miraculously, that little jug kept on pouring oil until all the borrowed vessels were full.

And in our own spiritual lives, we should never despair, because there will always be that *pintele Yid*, that eternal spark that will re-ignite our hearts even when we feel to be running on mere fumes.

Sources: Ramban, Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe

# Q & A

## Questions

1. How many types of items were the Jews to donate?
2. The donation of silver for the Mishkan differed from the donation of the other items. How?
3. What property do techelet and argaman share that orot eilim m'adamim do not share?
4. What property do the above three share that shesh and orot techashim do not share?
5. Onkelos translates "tachash" as "sasgona." Why?
6. What kind of trees did Yaakov plant in Egypt?
7. Describe two uses of:
  - (a) oil ,
  - (b) spices,
  - (c) jewels.
8. The aron was made with three boxes, one inside the other. Exactly how tall was the outer box?
9. Why is the Torah referred to as "testimony"?
10. What did the faces of the keruvim resemble?
11. On what day of the week was the lechem hapanim baked?
12. What does miksha mean?
13. What was the purpose of the menorah's gevi'im (cups)?
14. How did Moshe know the shape of the menorah?
15. What designs were embroidered into the tapestries of the Mishkan?
16. What is meant by "standing wood"?
17. How long was the Mishkan?
18. How wide was the interior of the Mishkan?
19. Why was the altar coated with nechoshet?
20. What function did the copper yeteidot serve?

## Answers

1. 25:2 - 13.
2. 25:3 - No fixed amount of the other items was required. The silver was given as a fixed amount: a half-shekel.
3. 25:4,5 - They are wool; orot eilim are not.
4. 25:4,5 - They are dyed; shesh and orot techashim are not.
5. 25:5 - The tachash delights (sas) in its multi-colors (g'vanim).
6. 25:5 - Arazim ~ cedars.
7. 25:6-7:
  - (a) The oil was lit in the menorah and used for anointing.
  - (b) The spices were used in the anointing oil and for the incense.
  - (c) The precious stones were for the ephod and the choshen.
8. 25:11 - The outer box was one and a half amot plus a tefach plus a little bit, because it rose a little bit above the kaporet. (The kaporet was a tefach thick. ~ see 25:17)
9. 25:16 - It testifies that G-d commanded us to keep the mitzvot.
10. 25:18 - The faces of children.
11. 25:29 - Friday.
12. 25:31 - Hammered.
13. 25:31 - Purely ornamental.
14. 25:40 - G-d showed Moshe a menorah of fire.
15. 26:1 - On one side a lion; on the other side an eagle.
16. 26:15 - The wooden beams were to be upright and not stacked one upon the other.
17. 26:16 - 30 amot.
18. 26:23 - 10 amot.
19. 27:2 - To atone for brazenness.
20. 27:19 - They secured the curtains against the wind.

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# WHAT'S IN A WORD?

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by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

## Speedy Horsepower (Part 1 of 2)

Towards the end of the Story of Purim, when the Persian king Achashverosh decided to overturn his awful decree against the Jews, the king sent out messages to all one hundred and twenty-seven provinces under his dominion, announcing that the Jews had permission to fight back against their enemies. In describing how those messages were spread, the Scroll of Esther states, “And he sent scrolls in the hands of the runners with susim, the riders of the rechesh, the achashtranim, sons of the remachim” (Esther 8:10). While the word sus means “horse,” the meanings of the other three nouns are obscured. In this two part essay we will explore the meanings of the four nouns in that verse and consider the possibility that all four words are actually synonyms meaning “horse.” Part one focuses on the words sus and rechesh, while part two will be dedicated to the words achashtranim and remachim. We will also discuss alternate meanings of some of these words as well as the etymology of the name of Achashverosh’s horse.

The word sus (“horse”) appears approximately 140 times throughout the Bible, making it a fairly common word (although, in Isa. 38:14 it refers to a type of bird). A form of the word sus also appears in the personal name Gadi ben Sussi (Num. 13:11).

Rabbi Yonah Ibn Janach (990-1050) and the Radak (1160-1234) trace the word sus to the trilateral root SAMECH-VAV-SAMECH, while Menachem Ibn Saruk (920-970) sees its root as the biliteral SAMECH-SAMECH. Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim (1740-1814) offers two slightly different etymologies for this word. In his work Yeriot Shlomo, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that the root of sus is the monoliteral root SAMECH (“repellence”). That core root gives way to the term nisah (“fleeing/running away”), which relates to a “horse,” as this type of beast is used for running away and fleeing. In his work Cheshek Shlomo, Rabbi Pappenheim sees the core root of sus as SIN-SIN (via the interchangeability of the letters SAMECH and SIN), whose principal meaning is “liveliness.” This root also gives us the word sasson (“gladness”), as a jovial and happy person is said to be “full of life” (while the opposite is true of a depressed and melancholy individual). In line with this, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that a sus is likewise an active and cheerful animal.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (to Gen. 1:21) takes a similar approach that also links sus to sasson. He sees SAMECH-VAV-SAMECH as related to ZAYIN-VAV-ZAYIN, SIN-VAV-SIN and TZADI-VAV-TZADI (via the interchangeability of SAMECH, ZAYIN, SIN and TZADI). Words derived from all of these roots refer to “movement” in varying degrees: zuz (“moving/shifting,” the most basic movement), sasson (“gladness,” active movements of happiness), and tzitz (“blossoming,” fertile movement). All of these relate to sus, which also denotes a vehicle of “movement.”

The connection between sus and sasson already has precedent in earlier sources. For example, the Midrash (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:49) expounds on the presence of the word sus regarding Pharaoh (Song of Songs 1:9), as though Hashem said that just as He was “happy” to drown the Egyptian cavalry at the Red Sea, so is He always “happy” to annihilate the Jews’ enemies. The commentators (Eitz Yosef there and Rabbeinu Bachaya to Gen. 2:19) explain the basis of this exegesis as grounded in the connection between sus and sasson, and the way that horses are “happy” to engaged in warfare (see also Pesachim 113b, which states that horses “love” war).

Rabbi Avraham Saba (1440-1508) similarly writes in Tzror HaMor (to Gen. 2:20) that the horse is the happiest of all animals. In fact, he notes that happiness is so ingrained in the horse's nature that if a person was sad or worried, simply riding a horse will forthwith make him happy and glad. This is why the words *sus* and *sasson* are related. Rabbi Yaakov Ashkenazi of Janow (1550-1625) writes in Tzeina U'Reinah that when Adam encountered all the animals in order to give them their names, he saw that horses were especially jovial and happy, so he named them *sussim*, which is a word etymologically-related to *sasson*.

The Maharal (Ohr Chadash to Esther 8:1) makes a similar point in explaining that the Scroll of Esther stressed that the royal proclamations that allowed the Jews to defend themselves were specifically disseminated via horses, because that proclamation heralded happiness. In contrast, the earlier proclamations that called for killing the Jews were not said to have been sent via horses (see Esther 3:13-15), because they did not project happiness.

\*Next week, we will feature part two of this essay, which discusses the words *achashtranim* and *remachim*, as well as the etymology behind the name of Achashverosh's horse.

\*To read the rest of this first installment in the two part essay, please visit us at:  
[http://ohr.edu/this\\_week/whats\\_in\\_a\\_word/](http://ohr.edu/this_week/whats_in_a_word/)

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

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**H**ashem commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Jewish People are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard there is an Altar for the burnt offerings and a Laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the *Kohanim*, the descendants of Aharon. This contains the Table of showbreads, the *Menorah*, and the Golden Altar for incense. Entrance to the innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, was permitted only for the *Kohen Gadol*, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone which Hashem gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the instructions for the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

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# PEREK SHIRA: The Song of Existence

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by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

## The Song of the Mule

The Mule says:

“All kings of the land will acknowledge You, Hashem, when they heard the sayings of Your mouth.” (Tehillim 138:4)

**A** mule, the hybrid offspring of a horse and a donkey, is the product of the transgression of crossbreeding. Hashem chose specific designs for each of His creatures, and the mixture of species contradicts His will.

The Midrash teaches that when non-Jewish kings heard that Hashem commanded us in the Ten Commandments to respect parents like Himself, they acknowledged the utter correctness of all Hashem’s mitzvahs, unlike the selfish decrees of human kings, which are often unreasonable and unfair. The mule is a stark example of the correctness of Hashem’s mitzvahs. Although its breeder succeeded in creating a useful beast of burden, it is also clearly defective, as mules are sterile. They are also known to be harmful to people. Only when the world follows the natural order set by its Creator, and the Jewish people fulfill His commandments, does the world function successfully. The mule is thus a living song of the kings’ acknowledgment.

The Torah is the indispensable manual for life. It has stood the test of time throughout ever-changing world history, despite relentless assault from opposing theologies, and has emerged unchanged. At times, new philosophies confuse the masses to believe that another lifestyle is superior. So may it appear in one or two aspects – like the mule. However, it eventually falls on the roadside of history and does not bear fruits of true success – like the mule. By living according to the Torah in its purest form, passed down through an unbroken tradition from Sinai, our every step echoes the song of the mule.

Sources: Bamidbar Rabbah 8:4; Perek B’Shir based on Yerushalmi Berachos 8:5; Tzitzal Knafayim

\*In loving memory of Harav Zeev Shlomo ben Zecharia Leib

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# TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

## Nazir 16-22

### The Sinful Nazir

Rabbi Elazar Hakapar says, “Why does the Torah say ‘He will atone for sinning against himself’ – what did he sin against? He sinned against himself by forbidding the pleasure of wine. And we can learn by means of a kal vachomer: Since a nazir who denies himself from only wine is called a sinner, all the more so someone who lives ascetically and denies himself worldly physical pleasures is considered a sinner.”

There is another opinion in the gemara for why a nazir is called a sinner: Because defiled his state of being pure by coming in contact with the ritual impurity of death. This other opinion fits well with the fact that the Torah specifically wrote that the nazir sinned regarding one who became ritually impure (Bamidbar 6:11), instead with regards to a nazir who remained ritually pure.

The gemara, however, questions the placement of this verse, which calls him a sinner distinctively for a nazir who became ritually impure, according to the opinion of Rabbi Elazar Hakapar. Rabbi Elazar Hakapar deems the nazir a sinner for merely becoming a nazir, without becoming ritually impure. The answer provided by the gemara is that although every nazir is indeed considered a sinner because of self-denial, the Torah emphasizes that a nazir who became ritually impure is a “sinner” since he “compounded his sin.” One explanation for this “compounding” is that not only did he sin by forbidding wine to himself, but he also was negligent in not being careful to not become ritually impure (Rashi). Another explanation for the Torah calling him a sinner when he becomes ritually impure is due to the fact that his ritual impurity increased his sin by increasing the number of days of denying himself the pleasure of wine (Tosefot).

Nazir 19a

### Just in Time!

One who said, “Behold, I am a nazir”, and his friend heard this and only after ‘toch kdei dibur’ said “Me too.” The first one is a nazir and the second one is not.

This statement is taught in a beraita on our daf and the length of time of “toch kdei dibur” (literally “within the time of speech”) is explained in the gemara as the length of time for a student’s greeting to his Rabbi with the words “Shalom alecha Rabbi” (Rashi). The commentaries explain why this period of time is not called a “delay.” It is in order to allow for a person to display honor in greeting his Rabbi without losing the sense of continuity of his current involvement.

Nazir 20a

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# LETTER AND SPIRIT

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*Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch by Rabbi Yosef Hershman*

## The Menorah: Enlightened Spirit

The materials used in the construction of the Mishkan have symbolic value and convey a great deal about our relationship to Hashem and the manner in which we are to consecrate our lives. The meaning of the menorah would seem obvious – it is the source of light, of spiritual enlightenment.

Normally we associate light with knowledge and wisdom, intellectual or spiritual enlightenment. Rav Hirsch cites a plethora of verses from the Tanach where lamp and light denote teaching, wisdom and Torah. But he cites an even greater number of verses in which *lamp* and *light* are used as metaphors for the source of growth and life, of unfolding and flowering, of progress and joy.

Perception and enlightenment are only part of the spiritual symbolism of light. The other essential component is movement, which, together with perception, epitomizes the effect and meaning of light. This movement is not physical movement, but organic and spiritual movement. In this sense, the light of the menorah represents both perception – the element that enlightens, and movement – the element that mobilizes. In man, this duality takes the form of *perception* and *volition*. The exercise of these two faculties demonstrates the presence of the human spirit.

At their root, volition and perception are one, and they strive to reunite in their objectives. Any perception of truth is of value only if there is practical implementation. And conversely, all doing of good must be oriented towards the recognition of truth. Only from this perception of truth does the good deed derive its motivation and assurance that it is truly of value.

The menorah was constructed of three pairs of lateral branches emerging from a central shaft. Each pair, representing perception and volition, issued from the same point on the central shaft. When they reach up to the top of the menorah, the two branches directed their light towards each other, and also to the central branch common to both. This central flame points upwards, symbolizing the spirit dedicated to Hashem. The entire menorah is thus a call to set the dedication to Hashem as the goal of our united perception and volition.

The menorah ideally is to be constructed from single piece of gold, chiseled away to create its structure. It is to be made of gold, the noblest of metals, but if gold is not available it may be made of other metals, excluding scrap metal. If necessary, it may also be constructed piece by piece. While the menorah's ideal construction symbolizes the purity of spirit that the Jew aspires to, the fact that it may be fashioned from other metals, and even piecemeal, suggests that the call to spiritual ascent is for every Jew. In every circumstance, at his level, with the faculties with which he is endowed, whether he lives in turbulent or tranquil times – he can achieve moral perfection.

*Source: Commentary, Shemot 25:39*