



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Presented by Rabbi Menachem Winter, Rosh Kollel
From our archives

Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of rest for Hashem; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death (35:2).

Parshas Vayakhel commences with Moshe assembling together the entire nation. As he addresses them, Moshe begins by reiterating the holiness of Shabbos and the proscription against labor on the holy day. Moshe goes on to relate God's instructions concerning the building of the Tabernacle (Mishkan), including the materials required and the many intricate details of its construction.

Why does Moshe preface the plan for the construction of the Temple with the laws of Shabbos? Additionally, in describing the six days of work, the Hebrew word תַּעֲשֶׂה is vowelized to read "tai'aseh," to mean your work "will be done," instead of the expected "ta'aseh," which would translate as "you should do" the work.

Rabbi Yaakov Niman proposes an answer based on a cardinal Jewish tenet: Our livelihood is not determined by our own intellect, talents, or even efforts. Rather, the blessings that we enjoy are bestowed upon us from Above. True, it is G-d's will that we work and exert ourselves for our sustenance, but our efforts are merely to satisfy that will. Actual success is simply a manifestation of G-d's goodness and desire.

It is for this reason that the Torah vowelizes the word in its passive form. It may be very difficult for someone to desist from labor for an entire day each week. He will understandably worry about providing for his family. To assuage this concern, the Torah reminds us that our livelihood isn't determined by our own exertions and aptitude, but rather by His goodness alone. We merely need to fulfill G-d's will, including undertaking the appropriate effort in the pursuit of a livelihood, and G-d will direct His blessing to us. With this understanding in mind, it will be easy and joyful to embrace the Shabbos.

Rabbi Niman continues: This too is the reason why Moshe begins his address about the Mishkan with the laws of Shabbos. Called on to donate generously to the construction of the Tabernacle, it might be hard for some to part with their wealth. One who believes that his success is the result of the fruits of his own labor will find it difficult to be magnanimous and charitable. Moshe, therefore, reminds the nation of the true source of their blessing before calling on them to contribute to the Mishkan.

This recognition of the genuine root of our success is a fundamental and powerful force in shaping our worldview and our actions. Understanding the message that Shabbos shares with us, and taking it to heart, will dispel any desire to breach the laws of G-d and man in pursuit of prosperity and further open our hearts in generosity and magnanimity.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

SPONSOR

To sponsor a Shabbos Delights, please contact info@gwckollel.org

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

On six days work may be done, but the seventh day... a day of complete rest... (35:2)

The Torah preceded the working on the Mishkan with the prohibition to work on Shabbos, to teach us that one may not desecrate Shabbos in order to build the Bais HaMikdash (Rashi).

All seven days of the Miluim, Moshe erected and dismantled the Mishkan, but on the eighth day he erected it, but did not dismantle it (Rashi Naso 7:1).

During the eight days there was a day of Shabbos. How was Moshe allowed to erect the Mishkan on Shabbos?

Parsha Riddle

Who planted the cedar trees that were used for the construction of the Mishkan?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How does the breaking of the luchos affect our learning today?

Answer: Before the Luchos were broken, one did not forget the Torah one learned. After the Luchos were smashed, it became possible for a person to forget the Torah they had learned. (Eruvin 44a)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

He filled him [Bezalel] with G-dly spirit, with wisdom, insight, and knowledge, and with every craft – to weave designs, to work with gold, silver, and copper; stone-cutting for setting, and wood-carving – to perform every craft of design. ... He filled them [Bezalel and Oholiav] with a wise heart to do every craft of the carver, weaver of designs, and embroiderer – with the turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool, and the linen – and the weaver; the artisans of every craft and makers of designs. (*Shemos* 35:31-35)

While Judaism has a venerable tradition of literary art, ranging from the poetry of the Bible to the liturgical compositions of the medieval period (and subsequent generations), it does not have a comparable tradition of visual art. Of course, Jews have always, from the Tabernacle in the desert and the Temples in Jerusalem to the present day, decorated their houses of worship and religious objects such as Torah scrolls and religious books in various styles (often reflecting, albeit certainly not aping, those predominant in their host cultures), but at least until relatively recently, there has been little in the way of characteristically Jewish styles or traditions of visual art.

One particular form of visual art that is discussed in the *halachic* literature is the illumination of manuscripts. Two great scholars of medieval Ashkenaz opposed the practice, at least in certain contexts: R. Yehudah ha-Chassid objected to the illumination of Biblical manuscripts on the ground that the drawings would obscure the important masoretic notes to the text (*Sefer Hassidim* #282), while R. Meir (Maharam) of Rothenberg objected to the illumination of *machzorim* (holiday prayer books) with drawings of beasts and birds on the ground that such drawings would distract from proper concentration during prayer (*Shut. Maharam* [Crimona] #24).

The bulk of Maharam's discussion is actually concerned with another potential objection to such drawings, that they violate the prohibition against making "carved images." He argues at length that this prohibition does not actually apply to illuminated manuscripts for a variety of reasons, including the limitation of the prohibition to three dimensional works, such as sculpture or relief carvings (ordinary or sunk), as opposed to two dimensional ones, composed of "mere coloring." (Interestingly, Maharam apparently assumed that the illustrations were generally done by non-Jews rather than Jews; this premise is his initial basis for permitting them.)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. We lost a letter.
2. Our delay caused our vigilance.
3. Our reasoning was distorted.
4. You read about us on Chanukah.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I am a heavenly reminder.
2. I was in the Mishkan.
3. I am a fringe benefit.
4. I help prove daytime.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Eigel Hazahav (Golden calf) (I was not from the women, I was a child, I caused a mother, I was not a golden opportunity.)

#2 13 Attributes of Mercy (I am for Yomtov, I am for Elul, I was taught by Hashem, My number is Bar Mitzvah.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Men's Programming

Master the skills to learn Talmud yourself with the Yesodei Hatorah Program!

Led by Rabbi Avraham Sussman

Wednesdays - 8:30pm

Beginner Level

at SEHC 10900, Lockwood Dr.

Thursdays - 8:15pm

Beginner/Intermediate Level

On Zoom. Link at gwckollel.org

