Points to Ponder

Vayakhel/Shekalim 5782

**וַיַּקְהֵ֣ל משֶׁ֗ה Moshe gathered the people (35:1) - Rashi** notes that this happened the day after Yom Kippur, the day he came down the mountain. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 20b) notes that there were 3 Mitzvos that the people were commanded when they came into the land and the last one was to build a Beis HaBechira. Why did they start to build it so early? **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl.** answered that when the Eigel episode happened then it became apparent that the people would not last without a shepherd and the Mishkan was supposed to be that source..So it was pushed up.

**וַיָּבֹ֥אוּ הָֽאֲנָשִׁ֖ים עַל־הַנָּשִׁ֑ים The men came with the women (35:22) - Klei Yakar** notes that the women didn’t bring their jewelry on their own because they did not want to make it seem that they too, were complicit with the Eigel. **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** added that their initial reluctance demonstrated that they were interested in contributing but not just unloading. They wanted their donations to demonstrate their sincerity.

**וְכָל־אִשָּׁ֥ה חַכְמַת־לֵ֖ב  Women whose hearts uplifted them in wisdom”(**[**35:25**](https://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.35.25?lang=he-en&utm_source=ravkooktorah.org&utm_medium=sefaria_linker)**)** - What was this special wisdom? According to the Gemara (*Shabbos* [99a](https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.99a?lang=he-en&utm_source=ravkooktorah.org&utm_medium=sefaria_linker)), the wool was washed and spun — while still attached to the goats! **Rav Kook ztl.** explained that the two coverings of the Mishkan relate to two spheres of wisdom in the world. The first level of wisdom is abstract and general, while the second is practical and detailed. The abstract wisdom shines with brilliant flashes of the intellect and variegated hues of the imagination. This wisdom deals with inner, sublime matters, and therefore corresponds to the colorful inner covering. Practical wisdom, on the other hand, would appear to be a simpler matter, serving primarily to protect and watch over the abstract concepts of the inner wisdom. But in truth, the practical wisdom of how to apply abstract principles in everyday life is profound and rare. Spiritual abstractions may be revealed through prophecy and Divine inspiration. But the practical Torah of mitzvot could only be revealed through the unique clarity of Moses’ prophetic vision. These women were blessed with the gift of the highest wisdom. By virtue of its profound insight, their “hearts were uplifted,” thus elevating all feelings and emotions, all actions and deeds, all aspects of life. Their wisdom was so great that “they spun [on] the goats.” They were able to elevate the material world — even life’s vexing aspects, as symbolized by a mischievous goat — binding and tying it to the lofty eternal light.

**ְהַנְּשִׂאִ֣ם The Nesiim brought (35:27)** - The commentaries point out that the Nesiim failed to be among the primary donors to the Mishkan preferring to allow the others to come first. As a result they didn’t really get to donate much. However, they WERE able to contribute the stones for the Ephod and the Choshen. If the Jewish people contributed so much more, why did Hashem make sure that these items were not contributed by others? **Rav Nissan Alpert ztl.** explained that there is an implicit message here: Nesiim are not to lord power OVER the people. Their job is to be the building block - the bedrock and foundation upon which they will be able to carry the people. They will be the stones that Bnei Yisrael are supposed to establish their names.

**רְא֛וּ קָרָ֥א ה בְּשֵׁ֑ם בְּצַלְאֵ֛ל בֶּן־אוּרִ֥י בֶן־ח֖וּר לְמַטֵּ֥ה יְהוּדָֽה Behold Hashem called in the name of Betzalel son of Uri Son of Chur (35:30) - Rashi** comments that Chur was the son of Miriam. Why did he wait to tell us this NOW? And why was it important? And why note the word Reu in the plural after last week when Hashem said behold to Moshe in the singular? **Rav Shmuel Barenbaum ztl.** explained that initially Moshe understood that the building of the mishkan was going to require a person who had unique strengths and spiritual abilities. He thought that it was going to be he, Moshe, who would be worthy of the project. Hashem told him that no, it was going to be Betzalel’s job. Moshe accepted the idea. But the people might not. Thus, Hashem told them Reu – see that this was not nepotism or something worse, rather Betzalel who was the right man for the job and is the descendant of Chur, son of Miriam was selected to atone with the Mishkan for the death of Chur and the Eigel.

**וְהַמְּלָאכָ֗ה הָֽיְתָ֥ה דַיָּ֛ם The job was enough…and more (36:7)** - Either it was enough or it was more than enough but how can it be both? **Rav Meir Shapiro, Lubliner Rav ztl**.explained that while people might have given enough, their inspiration and desire to give, was for much more.

**וַיַּ֧עַשׂ בְּצַלְאֵ֛ל  Betzalel made the Aron (37:1) - Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that the Keilim of the Mishkan and the Mikdash had significance even if they could not be utilized functionally. If that is the case, why was there no Aron in the time of the Second Beis HaMikdash? Rav Schachter quoted Rav Moshe Soloveitchik who noted that this demonstrated that the Aron was NOT a part of the Klei HaMikdash but rather existed to bring Kavod to the Sefer Torah alone. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik ztl. added that the same is true for a Yeshiva, we cannot build it if the people do not learn in it.

**Haftara:**

**רַ֥ק הַבָּמ֖וֹת לֹא־סָ֑רוּ  Only the Bamos were not removed (Melachim II: 12:4)** - This sin permeates the Nevi’im. Why is it that the Bamos non-removal was such a hard thing to overcome**? Rav Dovid Feinstein ztl.** explained that the Bamos referred to the private Mizbachos which became forbidden when the Beis HaMikdash was built. It should have been forbidden in favor of encouraging people to come to Yirushalayim with their Korbanos as the Torah instructs. However, Yehoash and Yehoyada were afraid that the people would refuse to accept that prohibition and rebel as the other 10 Shevtim did years earlier. So they didn’t enforce the issue. The Bamos though, were not the right answer.