Points to Ponder

Vayakhel/Pekudai/HaChodesh 5781

**וַיַּקְהֵ֣ל משֶׁ֗ה אֶת־כָּל־עֲדַ֛ת בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל Moshe gathered all of Adath Israel (35:1) - Rashi** explains that Moshe gathered the nation the day after Yom Kippur to tell them about the building of the Mishkan. Why was this gathering necessary? **Rav Soloveitchik ztl**. noted that unlike the Ganav and Gazlan where we treat the private person more severely than the public thief, when it comes to Shabbos the rule is reverse. The reason, he explained, was that as far as the essence of Shabbos was concerned, Shabbos testifies to the fact that Hashem created the world. Public desecration of Shabbos is tantamount to apostasy. Thus, Moshe went to the entire people, the day after Yom Kippur when the people would be able to be witnesses (Edah= Eidim) to the sovereignty of Hashem over the world.

**זָהָ֥ב וָכֶ֖סֶף וּנְחֽשֶׁת Take Terumah from them...and copper (35:5) - Rav Yaakov Bender Shlita** quoted the **Novominsker Rebbe ztl.** who noted that in the Mishkan we needed gold and silver...and copper. If one of the copper hooks is not in the right place, the mishkan is not complete -- nor can it be replaced with gold or silver. The Rebbe added that a Yeshiva is like the Mishkan, all types of students are needed to make it successful. Rav Bender added that we are all trying to build places for the Shechina. We need to cherish every person regardless of person and limitation.

**וְהַנְּשִׂאִ֣ם The Nesiim (35:27) - Rashi** notes that they lost their “Yud” since they were lazy in responding to the call to pledge. But this wasn’t standard laziness, they were giving everyone a chance to get involved. Why punish them for that? The **Brisker Rav** explained that one does not make calculations when it comes to doing a Mitzva. If donating to the Mishkan was a mitzva then doing it should have been swift -- not calculated. So why were they given the chance to respond to the call for the gems for the Bigdei Kehuna? **Rav Dovid Soloveitchik ztl.** explained that the mitzva to donate applied to the Mishkan but the Bigdei Kehuna didn’t carry the same call for donation.

**הָֽיְתָ֥ה דַיָּ֛ם לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָ֖ה לַֽעֲשׂ֣וֹת אֹתָ֑הּ וְהוֹתֵֽר: Enough and even more (36:7)** – There is an inherent contradiction in these 2 words. Either the people brought enough with them or they brought too much – which is it? **Rav Meir Shapiro ztl, Lubliner Rav** explained that in terms of the amount donated, there was enough but in terms of the desire to give – the people desired to give much more.

**הַמִּשְׁכָּן֙ מִשְׁכַּ֣ן** **The Mishkan the Mishkan of testimony (38:21) Rashi** notes that the term Mishkan is repeated twice in order to hint to both Battei Mikdash that were destroyed because of our sins. It follows that if we do Teshuva we will merit the Beis HaMikdash and its rebuilding. **Rav Schachter Shlita** reminded us that this helps explain a difference of opinion in Halacha for in the Bentching there is a discussion as to whether we should include the word “B’Rachamav” in the third Beracha or not (Boneh Yirushalayim or Boneh B’Rachamav Yirushalayim). The Rema says to use the word but the Gra did not. According to Rav Schachter, those following the opinion of the Gra hold that since the Beis HaMikdash was taken away because of our sins, when we do teshuva, Hashem promises He’ll accept our teshuva. As such, it won’t be an act of Rachamim to return the Mikdash, but an act of Din, since He’ll be “mechuyav” to give us back the beis hamikdash

**וַתֵּ֕כֶל כָּל־עֲבֹדַ֕ת מִשְׁכַּ֖ן אֹ֣הֶל מוֹעֵ֑ד וַיַּֽעֲשׂוּ֙ בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל All of the work of the Mishkan was completed and Bnei Yisrael did according to all that Hashem commanded to Moshe (39:32)** - The order seems to be reversed -- it should highlight that Bnei did as they were commanded and THEN that the work was completed. Why the change? **Rav Dr. Abraham J. Twerski ztl.** quoted **Ramban** who noted that Bnei Yisrael didn’t really have the craftsmen skilled to complete the intricate work of the Mishkan. It was the help of Hashem that gave them the skills. Thus, said Rav Twerski, the Possuk is there to tell us that the work was completed by Hashem and credited to his Shlichim. Rabbi Twerski added that it is irresponsible to take responsibilities that we are not equipped to do but when it comes to Mitzva performance we need to give it our all, in order to bring a mitzva to completion.

**וַיָּ֨קֶם משֶׁ֜ה אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּ֗ן Moshe established the Mishkan (40:18) – Sforno** explains that the ten Yeriyos curtains were put up before the beams – essentially putting on the roof before the building itself. How it stood is a matter of discussion as to whether it was miraculous or perhaps by end pieces. Why was this necessary? Why the roof before the structure? **Rav Reuven Feinstein Shlita** explained that we need to always remember why it is that we are doing what we are doing before doing it. Once we know the goal, we are ready to reach it.

**Haftara Shabbos HaChodesh**

**וּבְי֚וֹם הַשַּׁבָּת֙ יִפָּתֵ֔חַ וּבְי֥וֹם הַחֹ֖דֶשׁ יִפָּתֵֽחַ: And on the day of the Chodesh it shall be opened (Yechezkel 46:1) - Rav Yigal Ariel Shlita** explained that Rosh Chodesh became an important FAMILY celebration in the time of Dovid HaMelech as declared by Yehonasan to King Shaul. Rav Tzaddok explained that the reign of Dovid HaMelech is compared to the moon and Rosh Choesh was a time for renewal. This is why we highlight Dovid at the time of Kiddush Levana. We find the same in the time of Elisha. In this Haftara, the Novi uses the opportunity that it was also the time that other kings would hve the chance to shine on Rosh Chodesh on behalf of the people.