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Gematria on the Parshah: Building the Beit HaMikdash

By: Reb Moshe Herskovits



In Parshat Pekudei, the Torah carefully lists every donation given by Am Yisrael to build the Mishkan. Chazal ask a fascinating question about the future Beit HaMikdash. Will it descend from Heaven already built by Hashem, or will it be built by human hands? Is there a way these two opinions can be reconciled?

Building Through Maasim Tovim

The Ruzhiner explains that Hashem will build the future Beit HaMikdash through the good deeds of Am Yisrael. Gematria alludes to this idea. Both the Mishkan and the Beit HaMikdash were built with עצי שטים (acacia wood). The gematria of עצי שטים is 529, the same as במעשים טובים (with good deeds). The acacia wood hints that the true building material of the Beit HaMikdash will be the good deeds of Am Yisrael.

The Ruzhiner is teaching us a powerful lesson. With every deed we perform, we are contributing material to the future Beit HaMikdash.

We Need Each Jew

The Chiddushei HaRim says each Jew had to contribute a machatzit hashekel (half-shekel) for the Mishkan. The rich could not give more and the poor could not give less. This teaches that in order to build the Mishkan we need every single Jew, from the greatest spiritually to the one who appears spiritually distant.

Every Jew possesses a unique spiritual quality that no one else can provide. When each person maximizes their potential, together we generate all the material necessary to construct the Beit HaMikdash. The gematria of the opening words of the parshah, אלה פקודי המשכן (these are the accounts of the Mishkan), is 651, the same as עם ישראל (the Jewish people). The Mishkan and Beit HaMikdash can only be built through the totality of the Jewish people.

Realizing the Potential of Each Jew

How can we bring out the potential of every Jew? Rav Zusha comments on the word פקודי (pekudei) and cites the opening verse of Ki Tisa, כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקודיהם (when you lift the heads of the children of Israel according to their count). He explains that in order to lift up Bnei Yisrael, it is through their פקודיהם (their mitzvot). Rav Zusha notes that פקודים in Aramaic means mitzvot. To elevate a Jew, we must focus on their mitzvot. Not only the mitzvot they have already performed, but the mitzvot their soul is capable of accomplishing.

The Zohar (Chaye Sarah 124b) says when Hashem judges a person, He doesn't just look at their present good, He sees all the potential good that their soul can accomplish. When we look at another Jew, we should try to see them the way Hashem sees them, not only as they are now, but the greatness their soul contains.

Rebbe Nachman teaches that when we identi-

fy goodness and holiness in a Jew who seems distant, our recognition itself helps bring that goodness into reality. If we truly see that every Jew holds a part of the future Beit HaMikdash, that vision has the power to actualize it.

There is a story of Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev. A known sinner came to him for a blessing. The sinner asked, "Rabbi, you know what I have done. How can you have patience with me?"

Rebbe Levi Yitzchak replied, "Because you are a powerful soul. You have been using your strength for sin. But if you would take that same energy and use it for holiness, how much light would you bring into the world?"

Challenge

This week, whenever you have a choice to do a mitzvah and you do so, whether it be treating someone as you want to be treated, saying an extra prayer or learning a piece of Torah, perform it consciously thinking, "This act is another brick in the Beit HaMikdash."

Israel's Avodah

By: Rabbi Adam Law



The Radzyner Rebbe shlita speaks about Or HaChaim, Pekudei (c. 5770).

It says in perek 39:32- "V'teichal kol avodas mishkan ohel moed v'yaasu B'nei Yisroel k'chal asher tzeva H" es Moshe ken asu."

"And it was finished, all of the work of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting which H" commanded Moshe, thus they did."

Why does it say "ken asu" again? It's obviously extra. M'farshim speak about it. The Or HaChaim says a very interesting thing- "V'teichal kol avodas..."

He explains not that B'nei Yisroel 'finished' the work- because if H" May He Be Blessed, commanded more of His service, they would do it, as they desired to. But rather it means that the work itself, which H" had commanded, was finished. Meaning not that they stopped to work... rather the work was finished. Sometimes there's someone who wants to do something- you give someone a job to do, so he wants the job to be finished. That's really what he's looking for- he doesn't want to work. But sometimes the person wants to work. So here it's saying the work was finished- meaning Klal Yisroel really would have worked more, they wanted to work. It was a mitzvah to build the mishkan- they were interested in it- but it was finished, so they had to stop building. They wanted to work more but there was no more work to do.

Then the Or HaChaim has another pshat- "V'teichal" means that it was finished by itself. Like the menorah. Chazal says that Moshe didn't know how to make the menorah. Moshe Rabbeinu was having a hard time making the menorah, so he threw it into the fire- and it came out. It was done by itself. So not all the kelim of the Beis HaMikdash Klal Yisroel did by themselves. Some were done of themselves. So you can't say Klal Yisroel

made the menorah. HaKadosh Baruch Hu made the menorah.

"Veteichal" means it was finished- but you can't say they did everything themselves. Moshe just banged out the corners, banged out the gold, but it made itself. He just banged on it with a hammer, but all the kanim and details he couldn't make. The menorah was made of all one big piece of gold, you can't take different parts and put them together.

Then the Or HaChaim brings another explanation from the pasuk (Tehilim 84:2)- "Nechsafah v'gam kalsa nafshi l'chatzros H""

"My soul longs, even pines for the chambers of H"..."

So what does kalsa mean? Very nice pasuk in tehilim, right? Nischafah means a person wants to, he has a desire. He's kosef. Kalsa means also like nechsafah, it's the same type of word, he has desire. He can't wait until he gets to the chatzros of H". So when it says "Veteichal kol avodas" the avodas were done with a desire, with a wanting. They did the avodah with a big desire, a cheshek. They didn't build the building just to be yotzi, they had a big cheshek when they built it.

Or HaChaim continues- Now the end of the pasuk is "V'yaasu b'nei Yisroel" Now who made the mishkan, who did the melacha (work)? Betzalel and Ohiliav. Klal Yisroel gave the money, the zehav and the kesef, but Betzalel and Ohiliav built it. So what does it say "V'yaasu bnei Yisroel?" -that they did everything which H" commanded Moshe, if they didn't build it?! Shiluchos shel adam k'moso. The agent of a person is like him- it's like Yisroel did it. But (yet) we find that Betzalel did it, as H" had said, and Klal Yisroel did not tell him?! So what does this have to do with 'shiluchos shel adam k'moso?!' He answers- they were maskim, so it was like shlichus. (End of part 1)

Where God Meets Your Real Life

By: Reb Adam Klasner



The Torah gives only a brief account of the creation of the world, yet it spends hundreds of verses on the Mishkan.

Why?

Because the real wonder is not that an infinite God created a vast universe. The deeper wonder is that a human being can create a home for God within the limits of ordinary life.

There is the Mishkan of vision, the one God describes to Moshe on the mountain. Then there is the Mishkan the people actually build, with gold, silver, wood, fabric, effort, mistakes, generosity, and human hands.

One is the dream. The other is the lived reality.

And the Torah repeats the details because the second Mishkan is not just a copy of the first. It is where the Divine presence actually comes to rest.



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This touches something very real in life.

Most of us carry two versions of our story. There is the life we imagined, and there is the life we are actually living. There is the marriage we hoped for, and the marriage we are building. There are the children we pictured, and the children we are raising. There is the person we thought we would become, and the person we are still trying to become.

That gap can break a person. Sometimes we escape into fantasy. Sometimes we collapse into disappointment.

But the Torah teaches something deeper. God does not dwell only in the ideal version of your life. He dwells in the life you are actually living now. In the home you are trying to build. In the heart that still struggles. In the reality that feels unfinished.

The Mishkan was built from physical things, ordinary things, even messy things. That is the point.

Holiness is not only found in the dream. It is found in what you do with the reality in front of you.

The question this week is not whether your life looks the way you once imagined.

The question is whether you are willing to make a dwelling place for God out of the life you actually have.

Stop Building Alone!

By: Rabbi Avrohom Jacks



Your exhaustion is proof that you are entirely ready for the miracle you are currently blocking.

In Parshas Pekudei the Torah describes the efforts of the Jewish People to build G-d's sanctuary. Every meticulous detail of the Tabernacle is constructed exactly as G-d had commanded. The Jewish people hammered the heavy gold, and they wove the intricate tapestries. They did everything right. Yet they failed to stand the structure up on their own. To put the final and complete edifice together, they had to bring the finished pieces to Moses. Their handiwork needed Moses' blessing and involvement to reach its completion.

Your life might be following a similar trajectory. Perhaps you have been grinding for years. You have done the deep internal work. You have pushed yourself to the outer edges of your physical limits. You may feel frustrated because you are holding all these brilliant pieces of your life, wondering why they refuse to click together.

You must know that you are exactly where G-d needs you to be. It is a strict spiritual law that you must do the heavy lifting of your own healing. You must carve the materials of your inner sanctuary through relentless personal accountability. You must embrace the sweat equity of your personal growth.

If you are experiencing friction, it stems from the illusion of your independence. You hold yourself back if you refuse to ask a higher authority for help. You need a Moses in your life; a trusted mentor and spiritual teacher. Their objective clarity will take your raw materials and lock them into divine alignment.

Here is your urgent call. Drop the heavy burden of total self-reliance. All the beautiful pieces of your potential are entirely ready to be activated. Reach out to a mentor today. Let an elevated guide help you raise your inner sanctuary so G-d

can finally manifest His infinite presence in your life right now. Your soul, together with the help of a mentor, is perfectly primed for greatness.

Our Aron

By: Rabbi Nachum Aaron Kutnowski



In this week's Parsha, the Torah enumerates the fabrication of the vessels of the Mishkan. When describing the Aron, it states: "Betzael made the Aron of acacia wood..." (Shmos 37:1).

Interestingly, when Hashem first commands its construction, the Torah uses the plural: "and they shall make the Aron" (Shmos 25:10). Yet when recounting its actual creation, it is written in the singular, associating the Aron with Betzael by name.

Rashi explains this discrepancy: because Betzael devoted himself to the work more wholeheartedly than the other craftsmen, the Torah attributes the Aron specifically to him (Rashi on Shmos 37:1).

But the question remains: why does the Torah originally use the plural "they shall make"? Rashi does not address this directly. For that, we turn to the Kli Yakar, who explains that the Torah's plural language reflects an essential value: everyone was invited to participate in the construction of the Aron, so that every member of Klal Yisrael would feel included. In this way, the crown of Torah - the Keser Torah - is accessible to all, not just a single individual (Kli Yakar on Shmos 25:10).

Thus, when the command was given, the Torah emphasized inclusivity: the Aron - and by extension, Torah itself - belongs to all. Yet when it was built, Betzael's extraordinary devotion distinguished him, and the Torah honors his effort by associating the Aron with his name specifically.

Perhaps this teaches us the following lesson: Torah is available to every Jew, but the "crown" of Torah - deep mastery, insight, and the ability to generate Chiddushim - is earned through personal dedication and effort. Each of us can have a share in Torah, and those who rise above in commitment may merit that their efforts are remembered and associated with their name, just as Betzael's name lives on through the Aron.

The Power of Gathering

By: Reb Yacov Aboudi



לרפואה שלימה לאהרון צבי רפאל בן ריזל

Sometimes the most important step in rebuilding something sacred is simply bringing people back together.

Parashat Vayakhel begins with a striking moment:

"וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל עֵדֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל."

"Moses gathered the entire congregation of Israel." (Shemot 35:1)

Moshe had spoken to the people many times before. Why does the Torah emphasize this gathering now?

Only a short time earlier the Jewish people had experienced the painful rupture of the Golden Calf. That moment did not only damage their relationship with Hashem; it also created division among the people themselves. Some had been involved, others had resisted, and the nation was left shaken and fractured.

Before the Mishkan could be built, Moshe first needed to bring the people back together.

The Zera Shimshon explains that Moshe gathered the nation because the Shechinah cannot dwell where there is division among Israel:

"לֹא תִשָּׁה הַשְּׁכִינָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲלָא כְּשֶׁהִם בְּאַחֲדוּת."

"The Divine Presence rests upon Israel only when they stand in unity." (Zera Shimshon, Parashat Vayakhel)

Chazal express this idea clearly. The Midrash teaches:

"גָּדוֹל הַשְּׁלוֹם שְׁאִין הַשְּׁכִינָה שׁוֹרָה אֲלָא בְּמָקוֹם שִׁישׁ שְׁלוֹם."

"Great is peace, for the Divine Presence rests only in a place where there is peace." (Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim 1)

The Zohar echoes this same idea:

"בְּרַךְ לֹא שְׂרִיא אֲלָא בְּאַתֵּר שְׁלִימוּתָא."

"Blessing rests only in a place of wholeness." (Zohar II, 196a)

Moshe understood something very deep. Before building the Mishkan, the people themselves had to stand together again.

First gathering.

Then the Mishkan.

Then the Shechinah could dwell among them. The Ramban explains that the Mishkan was meant to restore the Divine Presence that the Jewish people experienced at Sinai - that Hashem's Presence would dwell among them once again (Ramban, Shemot 25:1).

But unity does not begin with a nation. It begins with a person.

When someone feels connected to Hashem, a certain inner calm and wholeness develops. That inner harmony begins to spread outward. It strengthens a marriage. It deepens friendships. It brings patience and kindness into a home.

The Zohar teaches:

"אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה זָכוּ שְׁכִינָתָא שְׂרִיא בֵּינֵיהוּ."

"When husband and wife merit it, the Divine Presence rests between them." (Zohar III, 7b)

Peace between people often grows from peace within a person.

We are seeing something similar in our own time. Pressures from the outside have reminded Jews everywhere that we are one people. People who once felt distant suddenly feel connected again. Perhaps what Jews the world over are experiencing is exactly this reminder. When the world looks at us and sees one people, it quietly reminds us that we are one people.

The unity was always there.

Sometimes we simply need to remember it.

Moshe understood this.

Before building the Mishkan he did not begin with construction. He began with gathering.

"וַיִּקְהַל."

Perhaps the question of Vayakhel is not only how the Mishkan was built then, but how we help build it now. Where in my life can I help bring people closer together?

Because when hearts gather again, the Shechinah finds a place to dwell.

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