



S. FLORIDA ZMANIM
CANDLE LIGHTING
 6:05 PM
S"Z KRIAT SHEMA
 9:36 AM
SUNSET
 6:24 PM
MOTZEI SHABBAT
 6:59 PM

"Written by a Multifaceted Student Body, Whose Ambition is to Enrich and Enhance Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion"

PARSHAT PEKUDEI

~ כ"ט אדר א' תשע"א ~

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WILL THE REAL *ADAR* PLEASE STAND UP

RABBI BEN SUGERMAN

Why are there two months of *Adar*?

Most people know the second *Adar* is akin to a Jewish leap year. Yet unlike the secular calendar, that adds one day every four years, the Jewish calendar adds a whole month about once every three years. To what end?

Judaism works with a lunar calendar, made up of 12 months that are 29 or 30 days long. The typical Jewish year extends for 354 days. The solar calendar is 365 days, leaving a yearly deficit of 11 days between the solar year and the lunar year. After three years that deficit accrues to 33 days, enough that the insertion of a month would more or less cover the deficit.

The purpose of adding the month is that the Jewish lunar year remains in alignment with the solar year, so that Pesach remains in the spring and Sukkot remains in the fall. (The numbers presented here are not exact. The precise numbers are slightly different because the lunar month is not exactly 29 and ½ days. I rounded off for the purpose of simplification.)

In the times of the Temple, the *Beit Din* made the determination whether the year needed a second *Adar* – a process known as intercalation. After the destruction of the second Temple and the exile of the Jews, the calendar was fixed so that we know exactly when the leap year will come about. (The leap year comes up 7 times within a 19 year cycle.)

Which *Adar* is the "Real" *Adar*?

The *Mishna* in *Megillah* states that there is no difference between the first *Adar* and the second *Adar*, except that the *Megillah* is read in the second *Adar*. The *Gemara* explains that the *Megillah* is read in the second *Adar* so that the *ge'ulah* of Purim can be within proximity to the *ge'ulah* of Pesach.

At first glance, the *Mishnah* seems to be saying that both months have the status of *Adar*, but the *Megillah* is read in the second *Adar* for a technical reason. Practically, this would mean that all other *Adar* obligations could be done within the first *Adar*, with of course exception to the reading of the *Megillah*.

The Rosh in his commentary to the *Gemarah* deviates from the simple understanding of the *Gemarah*. When is it true that the first *Adar* has "Adar" status? Only when the *Beit Din* decides during the first month of *Adar* to intercalate (add a second *Adar*), but if the decision is made prior to the first *Adar*, like nowadays, the first *Adar* has no "Adar" status at all. The Rosh writes that that first *Adar* is no different than the month of *Sh'vat*!

Continued on page 4

WHAT REALLY COUNTS

SHAYNA BENDER ('12)

In *Parshat Pekudei*, Moshe counted the gold, silver and copper that was donated by the Jewish People for the *Mishkan*. After the building of the *Mishkan*, "Moshe saw all the work [of *Bnei Yisrael*] and they built it as Hashem commanded, so Moshe blessed them." (Shemot 39:43).

Rashi writes that the blessing that Moshe gives in the name of Hashem was "that the Divine Presence should rest on the work of [their] hands!" This blessing was the greatest blessing Moshe could have ever offered *Bnei Yisrael*. It was a blessing that Hashem would finally settle within the infrastructure that the people created for Him and recognize the fruits of their labor.

In *Megillat Esther* "when Haman saw that Mordechai did not bow and prostrate to him, he became filled with anger." (Esther 3:5-6). Haman's animosity towards Mordechai was so great that Haman wanted to destroy all of the Jews. Although Haman had it all and was at the peak of his success, all of his belongings became worthless to him every time he saw Mordechai, the Jew, sitting at the gate. How is it that a person of such high stature could feel so inferior to a disobedient commoner?

Every time Haman, a man with such hedonistic desires, confronted Mordechai, a man aspiring for such spiritual and moralistic causes, Haman was constantly reminded of and tortured by the notion that his affluence would only remain valuable until his fraudulent life ended.

When one contrasts Haman's baseless desires with the values that lead *Bnei Yisrael* to build the *Mishkan*, one can truly observe and appreciate the greatness of Moshe's blessing. *Bnei Yisrael's* affluence and ultimate reward, unlike Haman's, will attain an eternal value- the value of having a close and unending relationship with Hashem.

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

JOSH BRODY ('12)

"When you take a census of the children of Israel..." (30:12)

The first of the four special *parshiyot* that begin this week and culminate with *Pesach* is *Parshat Shekalim*. It begins with Hashem telling Moshe to take a census of *Bnei Yisrael*. Each male over the age of twenty was to contribute one half-*shekel* to pay for the public sacrifices performed in the *Mishkan*. Through this process, Moshe would simultaneously raise funds and tally the number of Jewish males. This constitutes the 105th *mitzvah* in the Torah, the yearly contribution of the half-*shekel*.

"The rich shall not increase nor the poor diminish than half a shekel..." (30:15)

Our Rabbis derive many lessons from the specific way in which this *mitzvah* was carried out. Both the rich and the poor were ordered to give the same amount. Each person would have an equal share in the sacrifices that were given on behalf. Everyone was equal in the eyes of Hashem. (Reb Yochanan Kirshblum)

"This they shall give, all who pass to be numbered, a half-shekel..." (30:13)

Hashem specifically requested that each person contribute half and not a whole *shekel*. The Rambam explains that *Bnei Yisrael* were not told to give a full *shekel* because no individual Jew is full or complete by himself. Only when Jews help their fellow Jew can the two halves combine to become a whole. Only when the Jewish people learn from each other can they properly grow in Torah observance and complete each other. Only together can the Jewish people really stand up and be counted as part of *Bnei Yisrael*.

GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WORK

BECKY SHACHTER ('12)

This week's *parsha*, *Parshat Pekudei*, discusses the construction of the *Mishkan* in great depth. The Torah describes each and every detail of the walls, curtains, menorah, clothing, ark, and altars. It then continues to discuss the completion of the *Mishkan*. Once the *Mishkan* was completed, it was Moshe's job to examine the completed project.

It states, "The Israelites had done all the work just as the Lord had commanded Moshe. Moshe saw all the work, and behold- they had done it just as the Lord had commanded. And Moshe blessed them." (*Shmot* 39: 43) The language in this *pasuk* parallels the language that was used to describe the creation of the world: "Hashem saw all He had created, and behold- it was very good" (*Breshit* 1:31). Both of these *psukim* say "*Vayar*"- he saw, "*et kol*"- all and "*veheineh*"- and behold.

Why is there such a strong parallel between the completion of the creation of the universe and the completion of the creation of the *Mishkan*?

After Hashem created the world, He inspected His work and then proclaimed His satisfaction over it. Similarly, Moshe, upon the completion of the *Mishkan*, said that the *Mishkan* had been completed correctly. Then, with the work completed, Moshe blessed *Bnei Yisrael*. What was the point of the blessing? Moshe had already told *Bnei Yisrael* that their work was good!

The blessing is given to reward the hard work and to commemorate the completion of that hard work. Similarly, in *Bereishit*, Hashem said that his creation was good, but did not actually bless it. Instead, He blessed the day of rest that followed it.

As it states, "And G-d blessed the seventh day and made it holy" (*Bereishit* 2:3). Like after the creation of the world, the people were blessed with a type of "Shabbat" afterwards to appreciate, while resting, the successful completion of creation. Moshe, too, stepped back, saw what was built, and then blessed the people who had a share in it.

We can learn by the principle of *gzeira shava* that this blessing is like the Shabbat that Hashem created after the creation of the world. The principle of the Shabbat is a general one. We all need to work hard and complete our tasks. But, we also need to be willing to rest and celebrate their successful completion.

Hashem and Moshe's blessings came at the end of a full and successful completion of a very complex task. So too, in our lives we must work hard to successfully complete the goals we set for ourselves. It is easy to wake up in the morning and want to commit to something. But it's a lot harder and a lot more impressive to finish an ambitious endeavour.

Moshe teaches us that once we have accomplished a great task or have reached a goal, we then have the right and the obligation to "rest" in order to appreciate what we have accomplished. May we all have the strength to achieve our great aspirations and the opportunity to take pleasure in our accomplishments.

Rabbi Sugerman continued

In practical terms, the Rosh would give no significance to the first *Adar*. He would say *Tachanun* on “Purim *Katan*”, which is the 14th and 15th day of *Adar Rishon*. The Rosh would fast and eulogize on those days as well. It may be called *Adar*, but in point of fact it's not legally *Adar*!

Most *Rishonim* disagree with the Rosh. The Smag, Rif, Rambam, and Ran all maintain that the first *Adar* is *Adar* and fasting and eulogizing on the 14th and 15th of *Adar Rishon* is prohibited. They understand the *Gemarah* on its simple level unlike the Rosh.

The Rema rules like the Rambam et al. Rav Yechiel M'Paris, one of the *Ba'alei HaTosafot*, who had the custom of holding a festive meal on the 14th day of *Adar Rishon* -- indicating that even though the holiday of Purim may not be formally observed until *Adar Sheini*; there still is significance to the first *Adar*.

TABLE TALK

HADASSAH TIRSCHWELL ('11)

The past few parshiot have described the building of the *Mishkan*. The Torah tells us:

G-d spoke to Moses saying, 'See I have called by name Betzalel, son of Uri son of Hur, from the tribe of Judah. And I will fill him with the spirit of Elokim -- with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.' [Exodus 31:1-3, see also, 35:30-31, 38:32]

From these *psukim*, we see that Hashem chose a man named Betzalel as the architect for the *Mishkan*, we also see that He tells Moshe that Hashem will fill Betzalel with His spirit so that he can design the *Mishkan*. Still, what did Betzalel, a boy who, according to *Sanhedrin 69b*, was only thirteen at the time, do to deserve this honour and responsibility? What could he have done to merit this great *zechuy*?

What do you think: Why was Betzalel chosen as the architect for the *Mishkan*?

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