

*Shiur L'Yom Sheni*¹

[Monday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Pekudei:*** **Exodus 38:21-31**
 Haftarah: **I Kings 7:51 - 8:1**
 B'rit Chadasha: **I Corinthians 2:14 – 3:9**

A bekah for each man - that is, half a shekel

[Exodus 38:26(a)]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 90:13-15;

The Amidah Prayer Focus This Week is Part I of the *G'verot* [The Prayer of His Powers]

Eleh fekudei ha-Mishkan – These are the accounts of the Moveable Dwelling Place ...
Mishkan ha-edut - the Moveable Dwelling Place of the testimony **Exodus 38:21a.**

The *Mish'kan Chronicles* of Torah are in full swing - but the emphasis of the narrative is about to shift - from the five-and-a-half-month-long *season of material collection and component part construction* to the *triumphant day of final assembly and inauguration*.

The Winds of Change Are Blowing Again

For the past five and a half months the Camp of the Redeemed has enjoyed an unprecedented level of *Bayit Shalom* [i.e. household unity, wellness, goodwill, productiveness, and peace] at a stunning level. From old to young, tribe to tribe, and those of pure Hebrew lineage to the vast mixed multitude who accompanied them out of Egypt, we have enjoyed a delicious foretaste of '*Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.*' **Psalm 133:1.** The *Mish'kan*-building project has brought us back from the edge of despair. After the golden calf, we were like scattered sparks, dispersed by the wind. Every head of household took his or her family and retreated to the safety of his/her own tent. But then came the Creator's precious gift of the tablets of testimony – and the message of forgiveness, reconciliation, hope, and inspiration those tablets exuded. Add to that the dramatic changes we saw in Moshe after the stunning Cleft-of-the-Rock download, and we responded. The result has been a season of cooperation, collaboration, camaraderie, and commonality of purpose and destiny unheard of in human history. During this season not one person has complained about the heat of the day, the cold of the night, the dust, the food, the working conditions, the leadership, or anything else. There has not been a single argument over doctrine, theology, ideology, philosophy, politics, semantics, ethno-centric snobbery, social injustice, or *halakah*. There has not been even one skirmish over turf, authority, or

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who has said or done something that insulted and disrespected someone else. Not a single person has wiped out, fleshed out, wimped out, freaked out or bailed out. No one has gone postal. No one has gone prima donna. No one has gone AWOL. As a result we have seen amazing things accomplished in our midst. Moshe, *Betzalel*, *Oholiav* and hundreds of thousands of ordinary men, women and children with willing hearts [see Exodus 35:21-29 and 36:2-3], empowered by the *Ruach Elohim* [spirit of God], have flowed together in a stream of supernatural wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. And now the project is almost done. All the detailed work of constructing is complete. All the component parts of the *Mish'kan* are in place and ready to put into operation. The focus of the narrative is therefore ready to shift to a focus on *final inspection* – and the inspired report that details the results of that inspection. This is not just for bean counters and bookkeepers. This is for posterity. This is the story of what a humble, openhearted, surrendered, and fully engaged group of people can accomplish when they receive and flow in Divine Empowerment, stick to the script, and do not fall out along the way.

Can I get a Witness?

Meanwhile, did you note how the *mish'kan* was described in the opening verse of parsha *Pekudei*? It was described as *ha-Mish'kan*, *mish'kan ha-edut*. In English this is usually translated as '*the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Testimony*'. What meaneth *this*? What did the *mish'kan* have to do with '*testimony*'?

The structure the Redeemed Community built at the foot of Mount Sinai was properly described as the *mish'kan ha-edut* [the *Tabernacle of the Testimony*] because of what the *Mish'kan* contained as its core and essence. At the spiritual epicenter of the *mish'kan* was the *aron* [ark], containing the tablets of the Torah, in Hebrew called *luchot ha-edut*. These tablets of Torah, inscribed in stone by the Finger of God and physically delivered after the sin of the golden calf, testified to the world of the Holy One's *forgiveness*, His *unfailing love*, His *unshakeable covenant*, and His *absolute commitment to the redemption and restoration of such of mankind as would sh'ma His Voice*. Even beyond this however the *mish'kan* was properly called the *Tabernacle of the Testimony* because it was the stage upon which the drama of the redemptive plan of the Holy One for mankind was played out, year after year. The atoning death of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, in a *realm outside of time*, was there, within the *mish'kan's* enclosures, pictured and dramatically recreated day after day, Shabbat after Shabbat, Festival after Festival, and year after year, for all mankind who were interested to see.

The innocent blood poured out on the altar of the *mish'kan* on such occasions cried out with a ringing testimony, just as the innocent blood of the Lamb Slain Before the Foundation of the World cried out with a ringing testimony. Of what did the

innocent blood testify? It consisted basically of *seven statements*:

I thirst!

My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?

Father, forgive them! They know not what they do.

Woman, behold, your son; and you, behold, your mother!

I tell you truly, today you will be with me in paradise!

Father, Into Your Hands I commend My Spirit.

It is finished.

This is the testimony of the two great witnesses at the heart of the *Mish'kan*. It is the testimony of the witnesses of Heaven, echoing in and through the substances of earth. And if you listen closely you can hear this same testimony ringing out from these two great witnesses even today.

Eleh Ha-Pekudei – These are the Inspection Reports ...

The subject matter of today's aliyah is a detailed inventory/tally/accounting of all the various materials that the Redeemed Community utilized in the *Mish'kan's* construction. Not long ago Moshe, under the inspiration of the Divine Bridegroom, called for the people of the Camp to make tremendous sacrifices for the common mission of building the *Mish'kan*. Upon the completion of the *Mish'kan's* component parts Moshe decides he should make an inspection, take inventory of the materials used, and make *an accounting*. Among other things this accounting will accomplish, Moshe wants the hundreds of thousands of people whose extravagant gifts – and whose blood, sweat, tears and talent – have been employed in the great *Mish'kan* project to know where every single contribution they made wound up.

The person Moshe assigned to be responsible for the taking and recording of this inventory/tally/accounting was none other than his own nephew, *Itamar*, son of Aharon. Itamar conducted the inspection, took the inventory, and reported what he found to his uncle Moshe. Then, under the inspiration of the *Ruach HaQodesh*, Moshe recorded his nephew's inventory for posterity. And that is what we are privileged to read – and meditate at and marvel about - in today's aliyah. Contained within the verses we read today will be the heart and soul of Itamar's *detailed inventory/tally/accounting of all the precious metals that were utilized in the Mish'kan's construction*.

The first substance inspected and inventoried was the most valuable from an earthly standpoint – gold [Hebrew *zahav, zayin, hey, veit*]. The narrative reveals that:

All the gold that was used for the work in all the work of the sanctuary,

*even the gold of the terumah,
was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred thirty shekels,
after the shekel of the sanctuary.*

[Exodus 38:24]

Okay – 29 talents, 730 shekels of gold. So what, you say? Who cares, you ask? Well, *our Divine Bridegroom does!* That’s why He had Moshe record the amount *in Torah* – rather than on the rock walls of some Sinai desert canyon. The Holy One believed the amount of gold (and other materials) the rag tag slaves He had redeemed from Egypt contributed toward, and incorporated in, the building of the *Mish’kan* in the desert is relevant and valuable information for us.

Let’s see why He might think that. Each “talent” of gold, according to historians, weighed at least 75 and probably closer to 250 *pounds*. A talent of silver, which weighed at least 75 and probably closer to 125 *pounds*, was considered the equivalent of two years’ wages. A talent of gold would be about double that – four years’ wages. To put that into perspective, let’s extrapolate this measurement into today’s American society. The United States Government tells us that the average adult male in America earns a little over \$25,000.00 per year. Multiply that by 4, to get the value of one talent of gold, and you get one talent = \$100,000.00. Multiply that times 29 (i.e. the number of talents used in the *mish’kan*), and you get \$2,900,000.00 – in today’s dollars! And that is not counting the 730 shekels [shekel means “weight”] of gold that were used in addition to the 29 talents.

Think about that – a group of slaves, who had not worked in months, donate *over \$3,000,000.00* (in today’s dollars) JUST IN GOLD, for the *Mish’kan!*

A Silver Lining

What about silver? How much silver was incorporated into the *Mish’kan*?

*The silver of those who were numbered of the congregation was one hundred talents,
and one thousand seven hundred seventy-five shekels,
after the shekel of the sanctuary:*

[Exodus 38:25]

As we have discussed each talent of silver was the equivalent of two years’ wages. In modern American society that would equate to about \$50,000.00. 100 talents would therefore equate to about \$5,000,000.00 - plus an abundant supply of shekels. So our tally so far is over USD \$8,000,000.00 in modern terms. Let’s go further. What about Copper/Bronze?

The Copper/Bronze of the Mish’kan

The third type of metal incorporated into the *mish’kan* was *nechoshet*, which can be translated either as *copper* or as *bronze*. The laver and altar in the outer court were both covered with this metal.

Unlike gold, silver, and copper, bronze does not occur naturally in Creation. It is an alloy, manufactured by man from naturally occurring copper² and tin. It has to be forged. After copper and tin ore are mined, high levels of heat] are applied to both separately so as to separate out the precious metals from their encasing rock. The molten liquids are then mixed together in a mold according to a functional formula, established by man through trial and error. The mixture is then heated again until the bonding of the elements is complete. The alloy is then removed from the mold and allowed to cool. Then it has to be hammered into usable sheets or forms. The most common usages for bronze in the time of the building of the Mish'kan would probably have been for weaponry, for armor, for cutting edges, and for chariot and wagon parts.

How much bronze did the Redeemed Community have before the project started? Probably not much. Certainly they were able to confiscate some bronze-containing weapons, armor, chariot and wagons parts taken from the Egyptians after the incident at the Sea of Reeds and from the Amaleki at the battle of Refidim. But they surely had to re-forged this – and possibly forge some afresh – to make the quantities and quality of bronze that were necessary for the Mish'kan project. After all, according to Itamar's bookkeeping entry:

*The copper/bronze of the terumah was seventy talents,
and two thousand four hundred shekels.*

[Exodus 38:29]

A talent of copper or bronze would equate in today's economy to approximately one year's wages. In modern America that would mean at least \$25,000.00. There were seventy talents of bronze brought for the project, so that would bring the present day value up to well more than one million, seven hundred and fifty thousand US Dollars³.

The Bottom Line

The final tally of the gold, silver, and bronze brings the value of the raw materials of the *mish'kan* – just in precious metals – to an amount equivalent to over TEN

² Copper is a naturally occurring ore. For millennia it has been mined by pit and shaft [see Job 28:2-11 for an ancient Biblical description of the process]. The ore was broken up into small pieces with mortars, and placed in a crude furnace. The heat would melt the copper, and cause it to run into a reservoir at the bottom of the furnace, where it collected. The copper was then taken out and allowed to cool, after which it was 'cold-beaten' with a hammer into whatever object or instrument the craftsman desired. Archaeologists have found that approximately 2000 BCE the process of adding a small quantity of tin, zinc or nickel to copper to form a harder, easier to mold alloy, [i.e. bronze] was well established. In Hebrew copper and bronze are both referred to as *nechoshet*. R. Gower, *The New Manners & Customs of Bible Times*, Moody Press, 1987, pp. 157-158.

³ Seven talents of bronze times \$25,000.00 per talent = \$1,750,000.00 USD. In addition, there were 2,400 shekels, so the amount was probably of a value which in present day would be worth a little over \$2,000,000.00.

MILLION DOLLARS in United States Currency. And we have not even discussed the elaborate fabrics, the precious oils and spices, the precious and semi-precious stones, the shittim wood, or the tremendous quantities of exotic animal pelts necessary to complete the project – easily another \$5,000,000.00 worth in today’s money. So we have a minimum of \$15,000,000.00, in today’s money spent by a generation of nothing but SLAVES for - a *TENT*! Does that put the miracle in perspective a little bit for you? Talk about extravagance! The crown jewel of all the earth – a ‘wonder of the world’ far greater in its time than the Great Pyramids, the *Taj Mahal*, the Great Wall of China or the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, in the midst of a refugee camp of former slaves in the Sinai desert. And we have this treasure in earthen vessels – in *living stones*, fitly joined together, and given life, breath and a testimony by the Empowering Spirit of the Bridegroom of Heaven.

Remember He Who Gives to Man the Ability to Acquire Wealth

Where, one may legitimately wonder, did a bunch of recently freed slaves get this kind of wealth? Where did they locate all this stuff in the middle of a vast desert? They carried a good part of it – at least the gold and silver portions - with them from Egypt, of course. This was the bulk, if not all, of the wealth the Egyptians had showered upon the Redeemed Community as they left on the night of the Death of the Firstborn. Remember?

*The children of Yisra'el did according to the word of Moshe;
and they asked of the Mitzrim jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and clothing.*

*The Holy One gave the people favor in the sight of the Mitzrim,
so that they let them have what they asked. They despoiled the Mitzrim.*

[Exodus 12:34-36]

The Redeemed at that time surely thought this would be their “grubstake” – that with which they would establish their new life in the land to which they were going. But *not so*. They gladly gave it all away – trading a grubstake in a new land – for what? They gladly traded everything they had of value in the world – for the opportunity to have the Manifest Presence of the Holy One travel in their midst. A contemporary songwriter has said it this way:

*Ah, but I'd trade it all, even mountains of diamonds!
To sing before kings would not sway me at all!
My time which is precious I would pour out like oil!
Foolish perhaps – but then, maybe not! Oh, to be the Friend of God!*
[Kevin Prosch, “Friend of God”]

I suspect that we have *much* to learn about what is foolish . . . and what is *wise*!

Garments For Beauty and for Honor

Later in today’s aliyah we also see ordinary people given special Divine empowerments and giftings to make the garments that the Holy One instructed be

made for the *kohen gadol* [high priest]. Our text tells us in Exodus 39:1:

Umin-ha-t'chelet v'ha-argaman v'tola'at ha-shani

And out of the sky-blue, dark red and crimson wool,

asu vigdei-s'rad l'sharet b'kodesh

they made plaited cloths for use in the service of holiness

vaya'asu et-bigdei ha-kodesh asher l'Aharon

And they [also] made the holy garments for Aharon to wear,

ka'asher tzivah Adonai et-Moshe

- exactly as the Holy One had instructed/enjoined Moshe.

We were first introduced to the garments that the Holy One had designed for the *Kohen Gadol* to wear back in parsha *Tetzaveh*. At that time the Holy One utilized a whole chapter of Torah [Exodus 28] to instruct Moshe very specifically about the garments He wanted Aharon and his sons to wear when they engaged in their assigned duties in the *mish'kan*.

The Holy One specifically instructed Moshe at that time that Aharon, as the one assigned to act in the earthly realms of the *Mish'kan* as *kohen gadol*, was to wear eight garments “*echavod u'letiferet* [i.e. *for glory and for honor*]” when ministering. The Holy One also instructed Moshe how to reproduce on earth, to the extent possible considering the earthly limitations of time and space and materials, the garments the Great High Priest of Heaven wears. The earthly materials/colors to be used in reproducing these garments on earth for the earthly *kohanim* that were to function as ‘shadows’ of the Heavenly Kohen are identified in Exodus 28:6, as *zahav* [gold], *techelet* [sky blue (thread)], *argaman* [dark red (thread)] *tola'at shani* [crimson (thread)], and *shesh* [linen].

The eight garments the *kohen gadol* was to wear consisted of:

1. A breastplate;
2. An efod;
3. a robe;
4. a tunic;
5. a turban;
6. a sash;
7. shorts made of linen; and
8. a ‘crown’ made of gold.

The Holy One then described each of these special garments to Moshe in intricate detail. As we discussed at the time, the High Priest was to *dress for success*. No matter how sinful he might be, if he put on the garments selected by the Holy One, *righteousness was imputed to him because of the garments*. Whose righteousness?

The righteousness of the great high priest of Heaven, of course – the righteousness of Messiah Yeshua, the great high priest after the order of Melki-tzedek.

The garments that the Holy One made for Adam and Chava, and the garments the Holy One directed Israel to make for Aharon, were, you see, merely prophetic remembrances – things the Holy One agreed as He looked upon them would *remind Him of Messiah’s perfect priesthood, His perfect ‘ministry’ and His perfect ‘offering’*. Like the *bow in the cloud* mentioned in Genesis 9:11-17 and the *blood on the doorposts* mentioned in Exodus 12:21-23, these garments were *signs of and down-payments on* a covenant. The Holy One promised that when He saw such things – when His appointed representatives of His people clothed themselves in them in accordance with His instructions – He would impute righteousness to them and forgive their sin and would therefore not visit them with judgment.

As the representative and first fruit offering of ascended and glorified humanity, Messiah the *Kohen Gadol* of Heaven wears on our behalf *garments for beauty and for honor*. To the extent we are ‘*in Messiah*’ we are clothed in those garments as well. As a result, His righteousness is imputed to us. Abiding *in Messiah*, and therefore wrapped up in his *garments for beauty and for honor*, we are enabled to constantly experience and draw strength from intimate relationship with the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven. United with Messiah and clothed in His garments of righteousness *all our prayers are acceptable and all our offerings and sacrifices are a sweet savor to the Holy One*. Hence the garments that are to be worn by the *kohanim* in the earthly scale model of the *Mish’kan* – the part anchored in the physical realm – must be of both Divine design *and* Divinely empowered construction. There is no room for improvement upon the Holy One’s way or His Word.

Questions Concerning Today’s Study

1. The name of this week’s second Sidra is *Pekudei*.

[A] What does that mean in English? [Hint: find the first significant word in today’s verses in the King James Version; then, look up that word in Strong’s.]

[B] In what verse is that word found?

2. Of which of the three metals used in the construction of the *mish'kan* was the greatest quantity used? Of which metal was the least quantity used?

3. There is one phrase repeated at the end of each series of verses in chapter 39.

[A] What is that phrase?

[B] Make a list of the verses where that phrase appears.

[C] Why do you think that phrase is repeated so often?

4. In the Haftarah verses for today, Shlomo assembles the elders [*zakenim*] and princes [*nasim*] of the tribes of Israel to the City of His Father – on *Har Tzion* [Mount Zion]. A procession is then held from *Har Tziyon* to *Har Moriyah* [Mount Moriah]. What a day! Let's read the account:

*Thus all the work that king Shlomo worked in the house of the Holy One was finished.
Shlomo brought in the things which David his father had dedicated,
[even] the silver, and the gold, and the vessels,
and put them in the treasuries of the house of the Holy One.*

*Then Shlomo assembled the Zakenim of Yisra'el, and all the heads of the tribes,
the princes of the fathers' [houses] of the children of Yisra'el,
to king Shlomo in Yerushalayim,
to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Holy One
out of the city of David, which is Tziyon.*

[I Kings 7:51 – 8:2]

[A] Did Shlomo follow the example set by Moshe and order a *pekudei* [accounting] of the gold, silver, and other materials used in the construction of the *Mik'dash*?

[B] There was no gold, silver, or other materials 'left over' in connection with the construction of the *mish'kan*. Why were the silver, gold, and vessels donated by David 'left over' and put in the 'treasuries' of the House of the Holy One? How did this happen – and what prophetic significance do you think it has?

[C] Get out your Bible atlas or check another source for a map of ancient Jerusalem [in David and Shlomo's time]. How far did Shlomo have to move the ark?

5. In I Corinthians 3:7-9 Shaul of Tarsus also speaks of constructing a place for the Holy One to dwell:

*So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters,
but the Holy One who gives the increase.
Now he who plants and he who waters are the same,
but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.*

*For we are the Holy One's fellow workers.
You are the Holy One's farm – the Holy One's building.*

[I Corinthians 3:7-9]

[A] What place of dwelling for the Holy One is Shaul talking about?

[B] Look back at I Corinthians 3:1-6. What problem is Shaul addressing in this week's Brit Chadasha passage?

[C] What does Shaul mean when he says: "*Each will receive his own reward according to his own labor*"? Relate that to Torah.

[D] Shaul mixes his metaphor at the end of this aliyah – saying we are both "the Holy One's farm" and "the Holy One's building". Write a one-page essay consisting of two paragraphs, the first being how you are 'the Holy One's farm',

and the second being how you are ‘the Holy One’s building’.

*May we all see the marvels of His House
established on earth, in our lives, and in our world.*

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today’s Study

Psalm 90:1-2

A Prayer by Moshe, the man of God.

*O Holy One, you have been our dwelling place for all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever You had formed the eretz and the world - even from everlasting to everlasting -
You are the Holy One.*