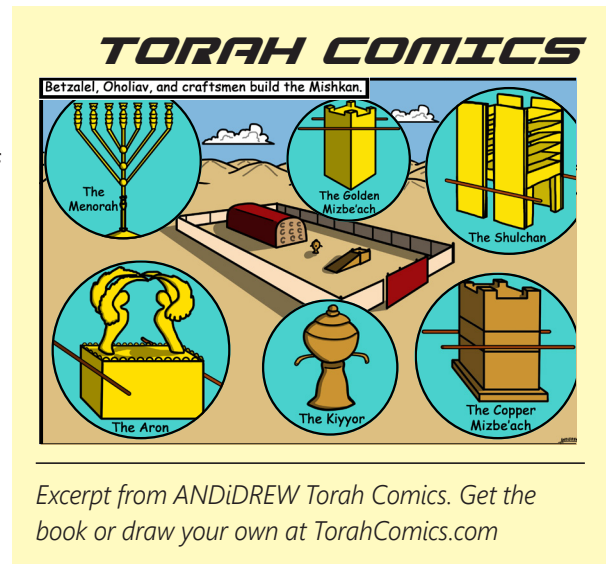


Vayakhel Wrap-Up

by Sammy Schaechter

On the day after Moshe came down from Har Sinai with the Second set of Luchot, after successfully being forgiven for the sin of the Golden Calf, he gathered all the Jewish people. The main purpose of gathering everyone was to inform them of Hashem's desire for a place to rest his shechinah to be built. He began, however, with a short reminder about observing Shabbat. This was followed by a description of the materials needed to build the Mishkan, and a list of the vessels, Mishkan parts, and Kohanim garments which were to be made. The men and

women came forward and generously donated all the materials that Moshe asked for. Moshe announces Hashem's choice of Betzalel and Oholiav to serve as the heads of the Mishkan construction project, and he gives them all the donated materials. The people, however, continued donating generously, until the craftspeople reported to Moshe that they have more than enough materials to complete their task, making Moshe issue a proclamation asking everyone to stop donating materials.



Pekudei Wrap-Up

by Sammy Schaechter

The craftspeople began their work. The wall-hangings that covered the Mishkan were assembled, and the craftspeople built the Mishkan with wall panels, their sockets, the curtains

which covered the entrance to the Kodesh and which separated the Kodesh HaKodashim from the rest of the Mishkan, the Aron, and the Shulchan. The construction of the Menorah and the Mizbeach are then explained. The building of the Mishkan is finished off with the construction of the Outer Mizbeach, the copper kiyor, the mesh curtains which surrounded the Mishkan's courtyard and the beams and hooks which held them. The Parsha continues to talk about how the garments of the Kohen Gadol were made. Hashem told Moshe to dedicate the Mishkan on the first of Nissan. Hashem told Moshe to be the one to place all the vessels in their proper places, and to anoint all of the items with the anointing oil, thus sanctifying them. He is also directed to dress Aharon and his sons in their Kohanim garments, and to

anoint them too. When Moshe finished all of this, Hashem's Presence and the Amud Anan filled the Mishkan. This Amud Anan also served as the Jews' guide throughout their desert journey: when the cloud lifted, the people would travel, following the cloud until it rested, where they would set up camp until the cloud would lift again.



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Not the Place for Manners

You shall not ignite fire in all of your dwellings on the Shabbos day (35:3)

R'Elya Chaim Meisels, rabbi of Lodz, stood guard against the desecration of Shabbos in his city.

Once some of his congregants came to R' Elya to inform him that a Jew had been seen lighting a fire in his house. The rabbi immediately put on his hat and coat and marched out.

The suspect saw the rabbi approaching from afar and hastened to put out the fire and destroy any evidence.

R' Elya Chaim arrived at the man's house and barged right in without even knocking first. He wanted to catch the violator redhanded and rebuke him face to face.

There was no trace of the fire and the man arrogantly confronted the rab-

bi with a smug look and said, "A rabbi is supposed to have the minimum of good manners. How come you barged into my house without even knocking?"

R' Elya Chaim replied, "I heard that there was a fire burning in this house. When there's a fire one dispenses with the niceties of good manners and does not wait for permission to enter. One hurries right in to save what one can save."

TALES OF TZADIKIM

R' Chanina's Gift

All the generous of heart shall bring (35:5)

R'Chanina ben Dosa was a great Sage and tzaddik who served Hashem with all his heart. But he was also very poor.

Once R' Chanina noticed many Jews traveling along the road to Jerusalem. It was right before a Festival, a yom tov and they were making a pilgrimage bearing gifts of gold and silver for the Beis Hamikdash. They were also leading animals for sacrifices. He looked at their happy faces.

How he wished he had something to bring to the Beis Hamikdash.

But what could he bring? He could not buy any ornaments of gold or silver. He could not afford an animal for a korban. R' Chanina began walking. His feet carried him to the outskirts of the city and the stretches beyond. There, something caught his eye, a beautiful slab of white stone. A stone like this, hewn to a beau-

tiful shape and smoothness would glorify the Beis Hamikdash!

R' Chanina began to shape the stone. He worked hard and long. When he was finished, it was a real work of art. He stood back to admire it and was satisfied with his effort.

He found five strong porters and asked them if they would carry the heavy stone to Jerusalem. They were willing to do so for fifty coins. R' Chanina's heart fell. He only had five.

"Would you be willing to lower your fee to five?" he asked hopefully. They shook their heads and left. R' Chanina was still standing there beside the stone when, suddenly, a group of five men walked by. Where had they come from? He had not even seen them approaching.

Hoping against hope, he ventured to ask them if they would be willing to carry his stone to Jerusalem for five coins. They nodded in agreement. They were

willing on the condition that he help them. R' Chanina was more than eager to help out!

With a mighty heave the six men lifted the huge mass and began walking. Before R' Chanina even had time to catch his breath they had already reached Jerusalem! The men laid their burden down in the courtyard of the Beis Hamikdash. R' Chanina turned to pay them, but they had disappeared. Into thin air! There was no trace of the five men who had carried his heavy stone.

R' Chanina was confused. What should he do now? What should he do about paying the five men? He decided to go to the Sages who sat in the lishkas haga-zis and tell them the entire story.

When they heard the marvelous tale, they said, "Those men could have been none other than angels sent from Heaven to help you!"

(According to Koheles Rabbah 1:1)

TALES OF TZADIKIM

The Rejected Donation

All the generous of heart shall bring it (35:5)

R'Yom Tov Algazi was appointed to travel to the Jewish communities in

Europe to raise money for the poor of Jerusalem. Wherever he went, he first paid his respects to the rabbi of the city, who would then send his sham-mash out through the streets to inform

the people that a visiting scholar from Eretz Yisrael would be speaking in the central synagogue. The synagogue would always be packed. When R' Yom Tov would finish speaking and the time

PARSHA STORIES

came to give, they would open their purses, proud to have a share in the Torah studied in the Holy Land.

In the course of his travels, R' Yom Tov came to the illustrious community of Frankfurt in Germany. This community boasted great Torah giants, among them the rabbi of the community, R' Pinchas Horowitz, the Ba'al HaHaf-la'a, R' Nossen Adler — the Great Eagle — and his young disciple, Moshe Sofer who would go on to become the Chasam Sofer.

R' Pinchas Horowitz had the townspeople summoned to the Great Synagogue. R' Yom Tov did not disappoint his audience. When he was finished speaking and asked humbly for support, they gave lavishly and eagerly. People emptied out their wallets and pockets, showering him with money. Among

them was one distinguished-looking businessman who approached the rabbi and handed him a bag of gold coins — the largest single sum given.

R' Yom Tov Algazi gathered all of the donations together and warmly thanked his audience for their generous response. He stayed on another day to continue paying his respects to the gedolim in the city and exchange divrei Torah with them. Then it was time for him to go.

All of the prominent people were there to see R' Yom Tov off, among them the future Chasam Sofer. He accompanied the great man for a long way, unable to tear himself away from the mouth that gave forth such gems of wisdom. When he did turn to go, the visitor held R' Moshe back for a minute.

"Here, take this bag of gold coins,"

he said, handing him the contribution which the — distinguished businessman had given him. "I cannot accept it. Return it to the man who gave it. I have a feeling that it is not honestly-gained money."

It was a huge sum. But R' Moshe did not say a word. He took it and returned it to the donor. A few days later R' Moshe's unasked questions were answered. He learned about the source of the man's wealth: He was a money-lender! He lent money with interest. He had gotten rich on the interest which he had squeezed from his impoverished fellow Jews! Now R' Moshe understood! "R' Yom Tov was right in rejecting this money as coming from an impure source. He intuitively felt that there was something wrong with the money. "What a great man he was, to have sensed this."

TALES OF TZADIKIM

The Chase After the Ring

And the princes brought the onyx stones (35:27)

R'Shmelke of Nikolsburg was famous not only for his vast Torah knowledge and piety, but also for his generous heart. He gave charity lavishly and was never known to turn anyone away.

With a reputation like that, he was besieged by the poor all the time, day and night. People came begging for help and no one left empty-handed.

Once a poor man entered, begging for help. R' Shmelke searched in all of his drawers but could not even find one penny. What could he do? He certainly was not going to send him away empty-handed!

R' Shmelke got up and went into the next room. There, on the table, he spied the rebbetzin's gold ring. He snatched it up and ran into the other room where the poor man was still waiting for him.

"Here," he said. "Take this ring and sell

it. The money you get should last you and your family for a long time." The poor man left the house with a light heart. Just as he had shut the door behind him, the rebbetzin came into the room, wringing her hands with distress.

She had lost her ring! She had taken it off to do some work and she was certain that she had left it on the table. But it had disappeared. Where could it be?

R' Shmelke explained that he had given it away to a poor man.

"What?! My diamond ring?! It is worth a fortune! Do you realize what you did?"

She was beside herself. While she was weeping and ranting, the rabbi beckoned to the shammash and said, "Run and catch that poor man and tell him..." The rest was a whisper. Off went the shammash.

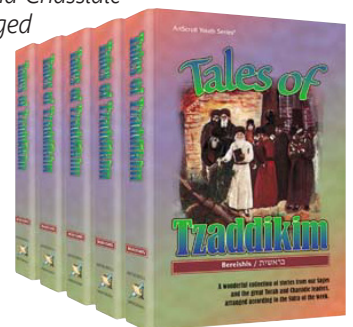
Some time later he returned, puffing and panting but with a smile of victory on his face. "I found him!" he announced joyfully.

The rebbetzin expected him to place her ring on the table. But the shammash did not have anything for her. "Where is my ring?" she demanded.

"It was not told to fetch the ring," he explained. She raised her eyebrows questioningly. He continued, "The Rebbe instructed me to find the poor man and inform him that there was a precious stone in the ring he had just received and it was worth a great deal. He was to take care and not let anyone cheat him out of its full value!"

Tales of Tzadikim by G. Matov is a wonderful collection of stories from our Sages and the great Torah and Chassidic leaders, arranged according to the Sidra.

The five-volume set is available from your favorite Jewish book store, or online at artscroll.com.



PARSHA PUZZLERS

Vayakhel Questions

TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

by Sammy Schaechter
and Dovid Saleman
Answers on page 7.

EASY Qs

1. What does the word Vayekel mean?
2. What metals did the Bnei Yisroel bring for the construction of the Mishkan?
3. Why did שֹׁמֵר tell the people to stop bringing contributions?
4. Who were the first to donate towards the building of the Mishkan?
5. Who were the last ones to donate towards the building of the Mishkan?
6. What do we learn from the juxtaposition of the Mishkan and Shabbat?
7. Who built the Mishkan and which tribe was he from?
8. Who helped him, and from which tribe?
9. Where were the Aron, Shulchan, and Menorah located?
10. Where was the Aron located?

MEDIUM Qs

11. What was unusual about the way the women spun the goat's hair?
12. What was the woven goat hair used for?
13. Why does the Torah attribute the building of the Aron to Betzalel?
14. What did the women donate to the

Mishkan?

15. What did the Nesiyim (princes) do wrong?

16. When did Moshe gather the Bnei Yisroel to tell them to build the Mishkan?
17. What were the mirrors used for?
18. How does the Torah show dissatisfaction with the Nesiyim's actions?
19. How did they repent?
20. What was the function of the Bigday Serad?

DISCUSSION Qs

21. The Pasuk says, "On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you..." Why is it necessary to mention that they work for 6 days?
22. Where would the People get all these building materials in the desert?
23. In Termuah, the vessels (Aron, Shulchan, and Menorah) are discussed first, but when they are constructed, the curtains and boards are constructed first. Why?
24. Why are we told the measurements of the Aron and Shulchan again?
25. Why in the inner Mizbeach discussed here with the rest of the vessels when it was separate before?
26. Why do we use copper exclusively

HARD Qs

CRACK THE PARSHA CODE

by Rabbi Yaakov Levine
Answers on page 7.

1. M G all of B Y to T to them B the M
2. B B U was in C of the B
3. For 6 D you can W, but you must R on S
4. M and W from B Y D G and S to the M
5. W S the C for the M
6. The N D the S for the CH and the E
7. The A was 2 ½ A L, 2 ½ A W, and 1 ½ A T
8. 2 K were made on the C of the A, and had W S O
9. The S was made of W C in G
10. The M was made of P G, and had 7 B
11. The C of the M was 100 A x 50 A

Rabbi Yaakov Levine is the 5th grade rebbe and afternoon mashgiach at Yeshiva Toras Moshe in Queens, NY. He is also the Night Activity Director and a rebbe at Camp Lemala. Rabbi Levine can be reached by email at rabbylevine@gmail.com

outside in the courtyard and use exclusively gold on the inside?

27. Why did the Kohanim see in the Mishkan if there were no lights?
28. What is the difference between Vayakhel and Terumah? They both discuss almost identical things, why is it necessary to repeat it all again?

Pekudei Questions

TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

by Sammy Schaechter
and Dovid Saleman
Answers on page 7.

EASY Qs

1. Who offered the communal sacrifices during the eight days of the dedica-

tion of the Mishkan?

2. What role did Moshe play in the construction of the Mishkan?
3. Why is the Mishkan called Aydut HaMishkan (Mishkan of testimony)?
4. What is the meaning of the name

Betzalel?

5. Why did Moshe give the Bnei Yisroel an accounting of what was donated?
6. Who was appointed to carry the vessels of the Mishkan in the desert?
7. What was in the Kodesh Kodeshim?

8. Who set up the Mishkan?
9. When was the Mishkan put up?

MEDIUM Qs

10. What was inscribed on the stones on the shoulders of the ephod?
11. Where were the Aron, Shulchan, Menorah, and Mizbeach Haketoret located?
12. Where was the Aron located?
13. How many people contributed a half shekel to the Mishkan? Who contributed?
14. When was the Mishkan set up?

15. When was the Mishkan finished?

HARD Qs

16. What was inscribed on the stones on the shoulders of the ephod?
17. What covered the Ohel Moed?
18. How did the Bnei Yisroel know when it was time to start traveling?
19. What did Betzalel and Oholiav sew?
20. Which vessels were in the courtyard of the Mishkan?
21. Which vessels were in the Kodesh?

DISCUSSION Qs

22. Why do we need to know how much gold, silver, and copper material was donated?
23. The Kohenim needed to put the garments on in order (Underpants, tunic, belt, hat, Meil, Eiphod/Choshen, and the Tzitz). Why are we told about the special garments first, then the regular garments? Seems to be out of order...
24. What else happens on the 25th of Kislev? What is the connection?
25. If the Mishkan was completed in Kislev, why is Moshe told to wait till Nissan to construct it?

PARSHA PUZZLERS

TORAH RHYMES & RIDDLES

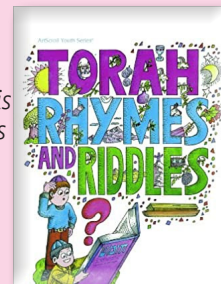
Answers on page 7.

1. Now the Mishkan would be built
According to G-d's plan.
So Moshe spoke to everyone
Before the work began.
Said he: "This work is holy
And you shall all be blessed.
But when the Shabbos comes along
You all must stop and _ _ _ _
2. I come from the tribe of Dan.
I am Betzalel's right-hand man.
My talent's from Hashem above
And my name is _ _ _ _ _

3. Moshe asked the Israelites
To bring all kinds of riches.
And so they brought their jewelry
And linen with fine stitches
They brought long chains and
bracelets
And earrings made of gold,
Silver coins and copper pots
And wool dyed bright and bold
Olive oil, skins of rams,
And perfumes without measure
Precious stones, acacia wood
And every sort of _ _ _ _ _

4. The Israelites kept bringing gifts,
They overflowed the door.
So Moshe had to order them:
"Please don't bring any _ _ _ _"

Torah Rhymes and Riddles by Shoshana Lepon (Author) and Aaron Friedman (Illustrator) is filled with rhyming riddles that test young children's comprehension of the weekly Parsha. For more great children's Torah books, visit artscroll.com



PARSHA STORIES

STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

All for the Shabbos

"But the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem" (Shemos 35:2)

It was Friday afternoon. In R' Yeshaya Bardaki's home in Jerusalem, Shabbos preparations were long since completed. The air was fragrant with the Shabbos cooking. The beautiful silver candlesticks stood ready in their place. Rebbetzin Bardaki bustled about in the kitchen, keeping the food warm for

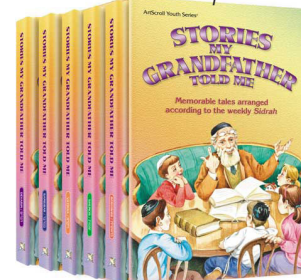
the meal later on. Her husband sat in his study, reviewing the week's Torah portion.

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. One of the town's poor men stood there, hand outstretched.

"Rabbi, help me!" he cried. "My house is empty. I don't even have a crust of bread with which to honor the Shabbos."

Stories My Grandfather Told Me by Zev Greenwald (Author) Libby Lazewnik (Translator) and Tova Katz (illustrator) is packed with short pleasant stories that teach children important life

lessons from the weekly Parsha. The five-volume set is available from your favorite Jewish book store, or at artscroll.com.



PARSHA STORIES

"Oy!" R' Yeshaya was distressed. "How can I help you when I don't even have a penny in the house?"

He went over to the table, picked up one of the silver candlesticks and removed the vial of oil that sat on top. Then he handed the candlestick to his dumbstruck visitor, saying, "Go quickly and sell this to a silversmith. With the money you receive for it, you will be able to buy plenty of Shabbos food. But remember that the candlestick is worth a great deal!"

Smiling, he closed the door behind the poor man.

Three weeks passed. Once again, the Shabbos Queen stood poised to spread her wings over the streets of Jerusalem. R' Bardaki's home sparkled with cleanliness, and the Rabbi's face wore the noble radiance of a prince.

There was a knock on the door. The same poor man stood in the doorway. He cried, "R' Yeshaya, please! My children are hungry for bread!"

R' Yeshaya stood up and went to search through the pockets of his weekday coat. Then he rummaged through his drawers. Not a cent could be found. Without hesitation, he went to the table, picked up the second silver candlestick, and handed it to the poor man. This time, he added no explanations. The man took the candlestick with open joy, murmured a quick word of thanks, and hurried away.

R' Yeshaya's heart rejoiced. Hakadosh Baruch Hu had given him the opportunity to feed hungry children!

Several weeks later, the man appeared in R' Yeshaya's doorway again, weeping. The rabbi was bereft of ideas.

What shall I do? he thought. I have no money, and the candlesticks are gone. How can I send this man away with empty hands?

He went to the closet, took down his beautiful shtreimel, and handed it to the man.

"Sell it," he said quietly. "With the money you'll get for it, you can buy what you need for Shabbos."

But the man was not listening. Angri-ly, he grabbed the shtreimel, hurled it to the ground, and screamed bitterly, "Don't you have even a little money for a poor man from your own town?"

R' Yeshaya did not return the anger. He merely picked up the shtreimel, brushed it off carefully, and thought, "If this man is reacting in this way, it is a sign that his situation is really terrible. It's made him lose his mind. I will go around to the other houses and collect money for him."

At once, R' Yeshaya put on his shtreimel and went out into the street. Who would see the venerable R' Yeshaya Barkani collecting tzedakah without contributing his share?

In a relatively short time, he was able to hand a respectable sum of money over to the poor man — and the giver was as joyous as the receiver.

One Friday night, during the Shabbos meal, the Shpoler Zeide told his disciples that he was suffering from great anguish of the spirit. It seemed to him that he had been late in lighting the Shabbos candles that day.

The men began to calm him. Some said that a tzaddik would not be led to stumble in such a way. Others quoted the words of our Sages to the effect that even a tzaddik's beast of burden does not have a transgression occur through it; how much more so would the tzaddik himself be protected. The Shpoler Zeide listened quietly to everything they told him. Then he asked the opinion of R' Raphael of Bershad, a man known for his absolute commitment to truth.

R' Raphael said, "It is certain that the

Rebbe must do teshuvah. Is even the possibility of having desecrated the Shabbos a small thing?"

The Shpoler Zeide liked this answer. He turned to his other disciples and scolded, "Because of you, I might have died without doing teshuvah!"

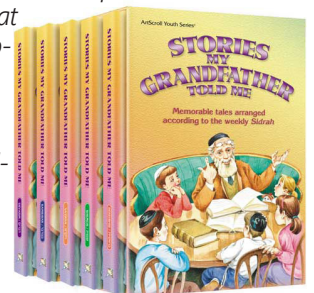
During his internment in Auschwitz, the Klausenberger Rebbe tried his best to maintain all of his chassid-ische customs, even at the risk of being beaten. He would trade his small portion of bread for a small onion, in order to follow the custom of eating onions on Shabbos. One who had not witnessed the Rebbe's joy at receiving a piece of apple for Rosh Hashanah, in exchange for several days' rations of bread, had never seen true happiness.

The Klausenberger maintained that all the stringencies he undertook while living in the valley of death were the very things that protected him. Who knew if it was not in their merit that he was alive today?

He would go from block to block in the camp, seeking a piece of onion. "Have pity on me. I want to keep the Jewish custom of eating onions on Shabbos," he would say. And, sometimes, someone would toss him a piece of onion skin that was hardly fit to be eaten. Then the Rebbe's eyes would light up with joy. He would sit down in a corner with the peel in his hands, tears coursing down his cheeks.

That was the Rebbe's Shabbos table in Auschwitz.

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JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

Eliezer Jaffe

10 November 1933 – 25 May 2017

Eliezer Jaffe was the founder of The Israel Free Loan Association that helps new immigrants as well as people in need in Israel.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Eliezer Jaffe first came to Israel in 1957 where he volunteered at the Maabarot helping new immigrants. He made Aliya in 1960 with a PhD in Social work and was one of the founders of the first Department of Social Work in Israel at Hebrew University in Yerushalayim.

In 1989, Jaffe took his children to visit an immigrant absorption center in Yerushalayim. Busloads of Ethiopian Jewish straight off the plane arrived at

the center and he explained to his children that they were watching history in the making- the gathering of exiles. When he got home afterwards he thought to himself and realized that he needed to get involved.

Together with friends and colleagues, Eliezer tried to figure out the best way to help the immigrants. He didn't want to give out food or clothes. He looked up the Rambam's eight degrees of tze-

dakah which says that "The highest level of tzedakah is to give the poor a loan or job that allows them to keep their dignity and become self-sufficient. The Jerusalem Post published an article by Professor Jaffe discussing his plan. Many people were impressed



by the article and before long \$20,000 was raised. With these first donations The Israel Free Loan Association (IFLA) was born. "We started with a table in the middle of a room, with volunteers on one side and loan applicants on the other," said Eliezer.

LEADER TIP:

There are so many people in the world who could use help with different things. Eliezer Jaffe couldn't stand by and not be a part of it. Do you ever see things and say to yourself "I need to help"? Do you? Or is it just a thought?

PUZZLERS ANSWERS

PARSHA CODE

1. MOSHE GATHERED all of BNEI YISROEL to TELL to them BUILD the MISHKAN
2. BETZALEL BEN URI was in CHARGE of the BUILDING
3. For 6 DAYS you can WORK, but you must REST on SHABBOS
4. MEN and WOMEN from BNEI YISROEL DONATED GOLD and SILVER to the MISHKAN
5. WOMEN SEWED the CURTAINS for the MISHKAN
6. The NISSI'EM DONATED the STONES for the CHOSHEN and the EIPHOD
7. The ARON was 2 ½ AMOS LONG, 2 ½ AMOS WIDE, and 1 ½ AMOS TALL
8. 2 KERUVIM were made on the COVER of the ARON, and had WINGS SPREAD OUT
9. The SHULCHAN was made of WOOD COVERED in GOLD
10. The MENORAH was made of PURE GOLD, and had 7 BRANCHES
11. The COURTYARD of the MISHKAN was 100 AMOS x 50 AMOS

TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

1. And he gathered
2. Gold, silver, and copper.
3. There was too much
4. The women
5. The Nesiyim (heads of the tribes)
6. That the 39 melachot are assur on Shabbat
7. Betzalel from Yehuda
8. Oholiav from Dan
9. In the Kodesh
10. In the Kodesh Kodeshim
11. It was spun directly off the backs of the goats
12. It was made into curtains to be draped over the Mish
13. Because he dedicated himself to its building more than anyone else
14. Their copper mirrors
15. They waited to see what was needed after everyone else gave, but nothing was needed by then
16. The day after Yom Kippur
17. The Kiyor
18. A letter was deleted from their title ('IT is missing)
19. They were the first to bring the Korbanot for the Meluim (the dedication of the Mishkan)
20. They covered the Aron, Shulchan, Menorah, and Mizbechot during transport

TORAH RHYMES & RIDDLES

1. Rest.
2. Oholiav.
3. Treasure.
4. More.

PARSHA GAMES

What are they doing anyways?

by Sammy Schaechter

GOAL: For the kids to understand that G-d gave Bnei Yisrael very specific instructions to build to Mishkan. They had to follow step by step not knowing, seeing, or understanding what the outcome would be.

TYPE: Moderate, indoor, group game.

HOW TO PLAY: In this game, one pair of two people act out a scene without using any words or sounds and three other pairs must come in and try to figure out what the scene is. The way it works is as follows. Three pairs of two are sent outside while one pair stays inside with the rest of the group. The group decides on a scene they want the pair to act out. One pair is then called in from outside and the initial pair acts out their scene without using any words or sounds. The second pair watches closely and then acts it out for the third pair, again not using words or sounds. The fourth pair then comes in and watches the third pair act it out without using words or sounds. Now, the fourth pair then tries to guess what the scene was and acts it out using words and sounds. We see how close the original scene was and

ask the other pairs what they thought they were doing.

DISCUSSION: In this game we are asked to do things without knowing the whole story. We convince ourselves that we really do know exactly what's going on when in reality we only know very little. That being said, we believe that our group leaders will help us out when we're struggling to find meaning in what we're doing and that even though it may seem like what we're doing may be pointless, we know there's an important point.

Hashem gave Bnei Yisrael very specific instructions to build the Mishkan. They had to follow step by step not knowing, seeing, or understanding what the outcome would be.

- Do we see that a lot in life where Hashem commands us to do something and we don't fully understand why?
- Why do you think Hashem sometimes leaves us out of the loop?
- Does it make it harder to practice your Judaism? Add meaning? Take away meaning?

TEFILAH TREASURES

Shemona Esrei - Et Tzemach

In this fifteenth bracha of Shemoneh Esrei, we say "Et tzemach David avecha meheira tatzmiach", "the offspring of Your servant –David, may you speedily cause to flourish." Zecharia teaches that Mashiach's name will be Tzemach, which means the sprouting or flourishing of a plant. The Midrash explains that when a "tzomai'ach," a plant, is first planted, its seed lies in-

active under the ground. After a time, when the seed sprouts and flourishes, its existence finally becomes evident and its hidden potential is realized. The bracha of "Et Tzemach David" refers to the sprouting of the geulah, because the process is gradual just like a growing plant. If you were to continuously watch over a plant you will not notice

it growing, yet over time, it becomes obvious that the plant did indeed grow. Similarly, it is as difficult for us to see how each challenging period of Jewish history contributes to the final redemption as it is for us to see a plant grow. Nevertheless, the seeds of the geulah are already present, waiting to be nurtured by Hashem.

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