

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



G-D'S GIFT!

As the curtain rises on Parshat Vayakhel, Moshe assembles the nation in order to convey G-d's commandments concerning the construction of the Mishkan (the Sanctuary).

Suddenly, however, he opens his remarks with the following directives concerning Shabbat:

"Six days work may be done and the seventh day shall be holy for you, a Shabbat, a day of complete rest for G-d; whoever does work (melacha) on that day shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire in any of your dwellings on the Shabbat day."

Moshe's clear purpose in assembling the nation at the beginning of the Parsha is to launch the construction of the Mishkan. Why, then, does Moshe abruptly insert the subject of Shabbat?

Rashi verbalizes the most immediate halachic lesson learned from the encounter between Shabbat and the Sanctuary: "[Moshe] prefaced the commandments concerning the work of the Mishkan with a warning concerning Shabbat – to convey [that work within the Mishkan] does not supersede Shabbat."

But there seems to be another distinct reason for the interruption of this important Mitzvah.

Shabbat and the Sanctuary represent two different realms of potential sanctification within Jewish tradition: the sanctification of time (e.g., Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and the festivals) and the sanctification of space (e.g., the Mishkan,

the Temple, the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem). Through the observance of G-d's laws, man is challenged with the investiture of holiness into each of these central domains.

Both of these realms are significant, but what happens when a choice between them must be made?

The Torah teaches us that the sanctification of time reigns supreme.

That is why the observance of Shabbat supersedes the construction of the Sanctuary.

Man is convinced that to extend his power over the world he must occupy more and more space through his constructions and creations. Hashem, however, is more concerned with time than space. The first time the Torah uses the word Kadosh is not to describe something physical, as would be expected, but to describe the non-physical, namely time. Hashem uses the word Kadosh to describe the seventh day, His day of rest. In fact, no physical being is described as Kadosh until Bnei Yisrael are told that they will be to Hashem an Am Kadosh at Har Sinai. Only after the downfall with the sin of the Golden Calf is an object – the Mishkan – referred to as Kadosh. But that object was used for the sole purpose of housing the Shechina. Thus, even the Mishkan was not holy in and of itself. It was holy because it provided a place for the Shechina to occupy.

The single most precious and tenuous commodity we possess in life is time. Our moments are limited; each moment exists...and before we know it, that moment is gone.

There could be no greater expression of our belief in and our loyalty to G-d than the dedication of some of our limited moments specifically to His service. The sanctification of time – the dedication of time solely to our relationship with G-d – is one of the highest religious acts possible, transcending other acts of sanctification.

Therefore, when Moshe underscores the laws of Shabbat immediately before the launching of the construction of the Mishkan, ►

> MAZAL TOV TO

Lindsey & Micky Evian
on the birth of their baby girl

Shmuel Elkouby
on the birth of his grandson a son to Yonatan and Sara

” THE WEEKLY QUOTE
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with patience than all the anger
in the world”

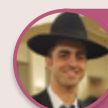
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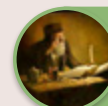
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he reminds the people to remember their priorities. As monumentally historic as the launching of the Mishkan may be, as overwhelmingly important as the Mishkan and all of its symbolism will be across the face of history, even more precious to G-d is the dedication of our own moments of time to His service.

The Gemara (Shabbat 10a) teaches: "One who gives a gift to another must tell him." Thus, Hashem said to Moshe, "I have a good present in My storehouse, and its name is `Shabbat.' I want to give it to the Jewish people; go and inform them (Lech Lehodium)!"

This last part is very interesting as we don't seem to find by any other mitzvah this idea that G-d tells Moshe that he must go and inform them.

What is the deeper meaning?

Once, a poor man came begging to the house of Rabbi Shmelke of Nikolsburg (1726-1778). The

Rebbe was used to giving charity, but this time he could not seem to find any cash at home.

After searching for a while and realising the plight of this poor man, the Rebbe looked through his wife's drawer and found a beautiful ring. He promptly gave it to the beggar and wished him well. When his wife came home, she asked how his day was and soon after realised that her ring was missing. He explained that he had donated it to feed this poor man. She screamed, "How dare you give that ring, it was worth so much money!"

Upon hearing this, the Rebbe ran out after the poor the man. As he approached, the poor man looked back and, seeing the Rebbe coming close, decided to run for it.

The Rebbe ran faster and eventually, although out of breath, managed to catch up with the poor man.

"Please don't take away the ring," begged the poor man.

Reb Shmelke lifted his hands and, still panting, replied: "I have just learned that the ring I gave you is worth a lot of money. Make sure you don't sell it for cheap!"

The same is true about Shabbat. It's a very special time, but if we are not aware of its beauty and

power, we will miss the opportunity. We will end up selling it for cheap.

Shabbat is the sanctification of time. It is a time when we are able to stop and be and enjoy the moment. A time out from our busy schedule. A gift from G-d.

If one takes the letters in the word "Rosh" - head- and replaces each letter with the letter that follows immediately after it in the Hebrew alphabet, the result is the word "Shabbat." The head (Rosh) of our faith and week is Shabbat. Keep it and it will keep you! ■ **Shabbat Shalom**

DAVID GARSON - TSUR YISRAEL

DVAR TORAH



A LEADER'S SINS

"If a leader ["Nassi"] sins unintentionally and commits one of all G-d's commandments, which may not be committed, incurring guilt." (Perek 4, Pasuk 22)

The Gemara (Horayot 10a) defines the leader referred to in this Pasuk, as the King. The Pesukim proceed to discuss the procedure a Nassi must follow if he transgresses a sin inadvertently. He must bring a sin offering ("chatat") for his mistaken sin.

The Gemara in Horayot (10b) cites the statement of Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai who comments on this Pasuk: "Praiseworthy is the generation whose Nassi brings an offering to atone for his sin."

The Ben Yehoyada (Ben Ish Chai) questions the Gemara's attribution of praise to the Nassi's generation, rather than just the Nassi

himself. Why does the Gemara focus on praising the generation and not just the Nassi for his offering?

Rabbi Reuven Leuchter offers the following answer. The average Jew living in the times of the Beit Hamikdash who committed a sin inadvertently, would bring his korban without hesitation. However, a Nassi may not have acted likewise. Why?

Bringing a korban was a public endeavour, taking place in the courtyard of the Beit Hamikdash. A Nassi may have been reluctant to own up to his mistake in such an open fashion, for the following reason.

There is a common tendency for people to attribute perfection and infallibility to their leader. Expecting complete perfection can have an adverse effect. This approach may cause one to be intolerant of even an inadvertent mistake, since it is viewed as inconsistent with the leadership role. Consequently, if a Nassi would offer his sacrifice in the public forum for his unintentional sin, it is possible that his generation would conclude that he is not worthy of respect and is no longer capable of leadership. Hence, a Nassi may refrain from publicising his imperfection with his sacrifice, lest he be stigmatised, lose respect and possibly his leadership position too.

A "praiseworthy generation" appreciates that its leaders are great individuals, but are human beings too, fallible like everyone else. A praiseworthy generation is one that does not perceive the leadership role as embodying complete perfection and infallibility. This creates a climate that allows a Nassi to publicly admit his mistake and bring an offering. He need not fear his role will be jeopardised, and will retain his respect and leadership. A generation which creates such an environment is singled out for praise, as it ensures a Nassi will not hesitate in rectifying his mistake.

Nowadays we do not have korbanot, but the concepts that arise from this topic are still relevant. The notion that our leaders are so quickly dismissed from their greatness due to any error that they may have committed, is rejected by the Gemara in Horayot.

It must be noted however, that certain sins, varying in their severity and occurrence, may justifiably put into question a leader's role (see Gemara Shabbat 55b-56b).

May we be able to acknowledge that making an error does not necessarily indicate an inability to lead. Shabbat Shalom. ■

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI MOSHE IDAN OF JERBA

Born on the Isle of Jerba in 1842, Rabbi Moshe Idan was without question one of the greatest Kabbalists of his time. He was also a poet and outstanding grammarian. His father, Rabbi Kalifa Idan, had as his disciples the majority of those who would eventually become the spiritual leaders of Jerba. To get an idea of the scope of his intelligence, we need only to cite the praise given him by Rabbi Massoud Cohen El-Haddad, of Beth El Yeshiva in Jerusalem, when he visited Jerba. After meeting with him, Rabbi Massoud was asked by his hosts what his impressions were. He replied, "Rare are those who have, in this world, attained his level in Kabbalah – even in Eretz Israel."

In fact, despite his enormous knowledge in the revealed and hidden aspects of Torah, Rabbi Moshe demonstrated a humility that was proverbial in degree. Furthermore, not wanting to rest on any certainty of his spiritual state, he thought it good to undertake a great many fasts.

As we stated earlier, Rabbi Moshe Idan was the author of many literary works. Among them were Torah Moshe, Tif-Eret Moshe, and Shashuah Mitzvah, which contained commentaries on Torah, Kabbalah and mitzvot. This last item is explained in Shashuah Mitzvah by enumerating and explaining the mitzvot in the form of long poems.

What follows are some stories concerning this Tzaddik.

One day, while he was teaching at the yeshiva in the city of Gabes, a woman came and asked him to write a letter for her. Rabbi Moshe explained to her that he could not, on that day, help her because he was busy as a paid employee for the day. The woman didn't understand his explanation at all. Worse, she thought that he had insulted her and went to the Gabbai (synagogue's administrator).

The Gabbai asked her, "Are you sure that you remember exactly what the Rav said?"

"Yes," responded the woman. "He treated me as if I was his employee."

The Gabbai quickly explained to her that an insult (G-d forbid) was not intended here. In fact, what Rabbi Moshe had told her was that, as a salaried employee, he was responsible for keeping track of his time – to the minute – for the yeshiva. Once free of his obligations, he would no doubt make it his duty to write that letter for her.

The Gabbai added: "Go to his place tonight, to his house, and I am certain that he will kindly help you."

Reassured, the woman realized that it was all a simple misunderstanding on her part. She then went to Rabbi Moshe's home that same night, later to leave with the letter that she had so desperately wanted.

The following scene took place in a café in Gabes. One of the patrons, a non-Jew, began to tell everyone as follows: "There's not another person in the world like

Rabbi Moshe Idan." And since he was asked the reason for this compliment, he told them the following story.

"This morning, at sunrise, we heard a scream coming from the beach. We got there as quickly as possible and saw a man stuck in the sand up to his waist, unable to move, and even less to free himself.

"We asked him, 'What happened?' He answered us by pointing his finger at Rabbi Idan who, as he normally did, had come to immerse in the sea. The man added, 'That man bothers us every morning by coming to soak in the sea. To prevent him from returning, I got the idea of taking his clothes that he normally leaves by the edge of the water. Then it happened, after I snatched them, that I found myself frozen to the ground, not able to move. I beg you, do me a favor – get me out of here!'

"At the time, the Rabbi continued to bathe quietly, and we could see that while all this was happening, he was completely relaxed, oblivious to everything. We then approached the Rabbi to ask him to explain the man's mishap, and he replied to us, 'All that needs to be done is to put the clothes back in their place and the man will be able to go.' This was done, and the man's paralysis vanished as if by magic. He then took to his heels and, despite all our calls, decided not to return."

What follows is an excerpt from Rabbi Moshe Idan's book Tif-Eret Moshe.

There exists two traits that each one should cling to. First of all, respect for others, of which our Sages have said, "The arrogant are destined for hell, but respect for others leads to the Garden of Eden." The one who possesses this virtue lives among the righteous, of whom it is said that they are alive even after their death. Such a person will not be quick to sin. Our Sages have cited the word of the prophet: Shuvu! [Return!]. The reverse of the Hebrew letters give Bushu [Shame] – be ashamed of not respecting others. Be ashamed, they say, of the evil paths that you could have taken, and in this way you will merit the Garden of Eden and live eternally, just as the prophecy says, "Why should you die, O Children of Israel?"

The second trait that one should cling to is humility, a trait that the Sages have already praised by pointing to Moses himself as a role model. Even though he had thousands of virtues, the one that the Torah recalls to his credit is precisely humility: "Now this man Moses was very humble, more than all the men upon the face of the earth." Our Sages have also written that, in the history of Israel, three righteous people have had their humility recognized: Abraham, David, and Moses. Now the initials of these names form the word adam (man). I myself have cited this sacred adage: "A man's pride will finish by humbling him." No doubt, therefore, that it's necessary to recall the humility of these three righteous men in order to bring one's heart to its senses and thus escape pride.

Rabbi Moshe Idan returned his soul to the Creator on Elul 4, 1894 at the age of 52. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

COMBING HAIR ON SHABBAT

The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 303) explicitly forbids combing one's hair on Shabbat, given that combing invariably results in the removal of some hairs from the head (listen to audio recording for precise citation). Pulling hair from one's head on Shabbat falls under the category of Gozez – shearing. During the construction of the Mishkan, the hair of animals was removed from the skin as part of the process of preparing the skin for use in the Mishkan. Since the Shabbat prohibitions are modeled after the categories of work done in the construction of the Mishkan, it is similarly forbidden to remove hair from one's head on Shabbat. As a result, one may not comb his hair, as this always causes hairs to be removed.

At first glance, one might argue that this should be permissible on Shabbat due to the principle of "Melacha She'ena Sericha Le'gufa." This principle makes an exception in cases where the person's action is not intended for the purpose of the Melacha (forbidden act). Here, the individual's intent is to comb his hair, not to remove hair, and this would therefore seemingly qualify as a "Melacha She'ena Sericha Le'gufa." The Ran (Rabbenu Nisim of Gerona, Spain, 1290-1380), however, refutes this argument, noting that in the original Melacha of Gozez, during the construction of the Mishkan, the intent was not the removal of the animal's hair per se. The hair was removed for the purpose of preparing the skin, and not to use the hair. Therefore, since the model of Gozez is a case where the act was not performed for the purpose of hair removal, the prohibition similarly applies to all cases of hair removal, even if this is not the person's objective or intent.

Another argument that could be raised is the fact that one has no interest in removing hair while combing. His concern is not that hairs should fall, but rather that he look presentable, and therefore perhaps it should be permitted. The Sha'ar Ha'siyun (notes to the Mishna Berura by that work's author, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, 1839-1933), however, notes that since one cannot comb his hair without causing hairs to fall, he is considered as though he wants the hairs to fall, and combing is therefore forbidden.

The Mishna Berura cites the Yeshu'ot Yaakov as decrying the fact that so many people are unaware of or unwilling to accept the prohibition against combing hair on Shabbat (listen to audio recording for precise citation). The Yeshu'ot Yaakov condemns these people as willful Shabbat violators who actively desecrate the Shabbat by combing their hair. The Mishna Berura exhorts Rabbis to teach their congregations about this prohibition, so that hopefully at least some people will be alerted to this issue and will refrain from combing their hair on Shabbat.

One should therefore arrange his hair on Shabbat with either his hands, or with a soft-bristle brush that does not uproot hairs. Women must also be instructed to comb their hair with only soft-bristle brushes, and not with regular combs.

Interestingly, the Maharam Shick (1807-1879) wrote that if a person appears in the synagogue on Shabbat with combed hair, he is classified as a public Shabbat violator, as he must have violated the prohibition of combing hair on Shabbat. We, however, do not follow this view, given the possibility of combing in permissible fashion, as discussed. A person who appears with combed hair may be given the benefit of the doubt that he combed his hair through permissible means. In any event, this is a Halacha of which many people are unfortunately unaware, and something that we should all be mindful of.

Summary: It is strictly forbidden to comb one's hair on Shabbat, except with one's hands or with a soft-bristle brush. This applies to both men and women. ■



Yossi & Co.



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- Who does the word "eilav" in verse 1:1 exclude?
- Name all the types of animals and birds mentioned in this week's Parsha.
- What two types of sin does an olah atone for?
- Where was the olah slaughtered?
- What procedure of an animal-offering can a non-kohen perform?

Answer

1:1 - Aharon, 2:31,2:14,3:12 - Cattle, sheep, goats, turtledoves (torim), and doves (bnai yona). 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command, and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command. 1:5 - In the Mishkan courtyard (azarah). 1:5 - Ritual slaughter.



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