

another person's true value or abilities. It is very difficult to judge potential against achievement. That is Hashem's business, and His alone. It's never a good idea to play Hashem. When you judge another, judge leniently, and when you are evaluating yourself, be tough.

Our Sages teach that those who judge others favorably are given the benefit of the doubt when Heaven is judging them. When you take a critical view of other people's behavior, give them a break! This is not your job. Your job is to constantly review your own behavior and monitor your own self-improvement. By avoiding encroaching on Hashem's job and sticking to your own territory, you will buy yourself the benefit of the doubt in His evaluation of your behavior. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Nothing but the Truth

R' Ezra Attiah, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Porat Yosef*, had an unusual practice when one of his students received *semichah*, Rabbinic ordination. Although the budding *Talmid Hacham* had finished all the necessary studies and passed his tests, R' Ezra would not give him an official signed document attesting to the fact. Instead, he would prepare the document and leave it unsigned. Only when the scholar actually needed his *semichah* would he sign and give it to him. This was done, R' Ezra explained, to send a message to the students: Finishing your studies for *semichah* doesn't mean you have finished your learning. That is a lifetime commitment.

Once, one of R' Ezra's students needed his Rabbinic ordination for a job that he was to take abroad. R' Ezra took the document out to sign it and give it to him. First, he read it through.

Suddenly he stiffened. "I can't sign this."

The year was 1948, and fierce battles were raging throughout Israel, and particularly Jerusalem. *Yeshivat Porat Yosef* had been forced to flee from its spacious building in the Old City, and now its students and teachers were studying in *batei Midrash* and private apartments all through Jerusalem. (Its own new building in the Geulah neighborhood would not be built until more than seven years later.) But the ordination document had been written before the terrible loss, and thus it stated: "Signed in *Yeshivat Porat Yosef*, Old City, Jerusalem."

To sign such a document would be false! R' Ezra couldn't put his name on it!

The student needed the paper immediately; there was no time to rewrite it. Even worse, in those difficult times there was no guarantee that they would find paper available to write it up again. R' Ezra did the only thing he could. He left his home (without a coat, so as not to alert his wife to the fact that he was going out; he didn't want to have to answer any awkward questions!) and quickly walked to the Old City.

There, despite the fighting and the danger, he made his way to the deserted *Yeshiva* building that was still whole and untouched. (Later it would be destroyed by the Jordanian soldiers.) He stepped into its quiet corridors and then signed the document, "in *Yeshivat Porat Yosef*, Old City, Jerusalem."

A man of truth indeed... (Stories of Spirit and Faith)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition
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Congregation Magen Abraham

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444
 West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764
 (732) 870-2225



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SHABBAT VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI

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SHABBAT HAHODESH α/σ↔φ♥ω, □χ♦α
 Haftarah: Yehezkel 45:18 - 46:15

MARCH 24-25, 2017 27 ADAR 5777

Friday Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **6:00, 6:44 pm** Shaharit: **5:52, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am**
 Candlelighting: **6:54 pm** Morning Shema by: **9:12 am**
 Evening Shema after: **7:52 pm** Shabbat Class: **5:25 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **6:35 pm**
 Shabbat Ends: **7:53 pm (RT 8:25)**
 Sunday Minhah: **7:00 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Rosh Hodesh Nisan will be celebrated on Tuesday, March 28.

Mabrook to AJ & Joy Gindi on the marriage of their son, David, to Rini Chemtob.

Mabrook to Solomon & Denise Torgueman on the marriage of their son, Saul, to Sarah Cohen.

Rabbi's Message

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"This month shall be for you the beginning of the months" (*Shemot* 12:2)

This week is *Shabbat Hahodesh*. We read about the first *misvah* we received in Egypt, to declare a new month, *Rosh Hodesh*, when we see the new moon. The month of *Nisan*, the month of the Pesah holiday, is to be month number one. The Jewish months alternate between twenty-nine and thirty days for a total of 354 days, eleven fewer days than the solar year. Every year *Rosh Hodesh Nisan* will fall eleven days earlier on the solar calendar. In order to keep Pesah in the spring, the Jewish leap year has an extra month.

Rabbi S. Goldhaber tells a story that took place in the 1950's when Soviet Russia's Iron Curtain was impenetrable. Russian Jews were cut off from the rest of the world. One day they were informed that there would be a window of opportunity to send some religious articles for a few weeks. They sent *tefillin*, *mezuzot*, *sidurim*, with some gentile businessmen. As an afterthought they threw in some Jewish calendars. When the businessmen returned they said that everything went smoothly, except the authorities would not allow the calendars! Upon hearing about this, Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch, the

Rosh Yeshivah of Telshe in Cleveland, commented, “Now we can appreciate the importance of the *pasuk*, ‘This month shall be for you the first of the months.’ The entire framework of the lunar system was created for us, to enable us to observe each *misvah* in its correct time. Somehow, consciously or unconsciously, the Russians realized that allowing the Jews to receive their special calendars would give them control over themselves and their status. This allowance they refused to make. ‘This month shall be yours’ puts the control of the calendar in our hands.”

A true story is told of Rav Shemuel who was a prisoner in Siberia. With great devotion, he kept track of every day. The prison camp ran a ten day week with no month designation at all. Without his personal records he wouldn’t know when it was Shabbat. He knew which month had twenty-nine days and which month had thirty. He calculated when Pesah was and managed to procure some wheat. After his back-breaking day of work he was able to kosher an oven and bake a few kosher matzot. On that Pesah, he ate matzot and potatoes and was so grateful to Hashem. Months later the family got his release. When he celebrated his great exodus he was dismayed to find out that that year was a Jewish leap year and he had eaten matzot on Purim instead of Pesah.

There is no doubt that Rav Shemuel received full credit as if he ate matzah on Pesah. How fortunate are we to be able to fulfill Hashem’s *misvot* freely in their proper time. But, some people like Rav Shemuel are above time. They have their own calendar. Time is in their hands. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

Enough!

”וְהַמְּלֶאכֶה הֵיטָה דַּיִם”

“And the work (of bringing) was ‘*dayam*’, enough.” (*Shemot* 36:7)

The *Kli Yakar* notes that the root of this term, ‘*diy*’, was also used in regard to the creation of the world. Hashem is referred to as ‘*Kel Shakay*’, that He told the world ‘*diy*’, enough, at the time of creation.

The *Ohr Gedalyahu* explains this connection. The Hebrew word for world, ‘*olam*’, comes from the world ‘*he’elam*’, meaning hidden. The world is defined as the place where Hashem hides Himself. He said ‘*diy*’, enough, meaning that a limit was set on the degree to which He would be hidden. The act of creation was one of turning spiritual into physical. Past a certain point, it would be too hard to discern Hashem and our free will would be too severely challenged.

The building of the *Mishkan* involved the opposite process – turning the physical into spiritual. Here too, a certain point was reached. Past that point, Hashem’s presence would have been so easily discerned that our free will would not have been adequately challenged. “And the work was ‘*dayam*’, enough”, that balance must be maintained.

There are veritable gold mines of *kiddush Hashem* opportunities around us. Until Hashem proclaims: “‘*diy*’, enough!”, we must endeavor to fill this world with as much positive as we can; to do our utmost to turn the physical into spiritual. May we merit to ‘see’ our unique role here in this world, ‘see’ the opportunities, and actualize them to the best of our abilities. (Rabbi Yisroel Ciner)

Don't Flaunt It

Parashat Vayakhel-Pikudei are the fourth and fifth *perashah* in *Sefer Shemot* dealing with the building of the *Mishkan*. If the *perashah* seems somewhat repetitive, it is because it is indeed very repetitive. For a Torah that is very economical in its use of words, it seems very strange to spend so much ink repeating the same story.

The Torah not only describes the *kelim* that were in the *Mishkan*, but even the structure of the *Mishkan* itself. We can understand that since the *kelim* were basically the same as those used later in the *Bet HaMikdash*, we need to know for future generations how they were constructed. If one of the *kelim* of the *Mishkan* was lost or damaged, they would need to replace or rebuild it. However, the construction of the *Mishkan* itself was a once in history event. They built a *Mishkan* once. It was hidden after they built the *Bet HaMikdash* (which was a very different kind of structure) and it was never heard from again! We will never again need to know how to build such a structure.

The question thus needs to be asked – why do we need to know such detail about the boards and the sockets and the coverings of the *Mishkan*? The answer is that we do not need to know how to build a *Mishkan*, but we need to know certain lessons about it.

One of the lessons we learn from the *Mishkan* is about *Derech Eress*. After they built this beautiful *Mishkan* with beautiful wood and silver sockets -- elegant construction throughout -- they covered it with goats' hide. Why would they cover such a beautiful building with such a pedestrian covering? It is the equivalent of buying a Mercedes and covering it up with cheap tarp and not letting anyone see the magnificent craftsmanship. When a person has something beautiful – why not show it off?

A very interesting *pasuk* that is actually in *Parashat Terumah* [*Shemot* 26:13] applies to our *parashah* as well: "And it (the goats' hair cover) shall be draped over the sides of the Tabernacle...to cover it". *Rashi* comments: "The Torah taught proper conduct (*Derech Eress*), that a person shall take care of that which is beautiful."

What is the *Derech Eress* in covering something that is beautiful? The *Derech Eress* is that people should not show off what they have. If a person has something beautiful, do not show it off – keep it hidden. We live in a society in which the mantra of society is "If you've got it, flaunt it!" This is a very un-Jewish value. The Jewish ethic is "If you have it, cover it up!" Not everyone needs to know that you have it.

The *pasuk* in *Shir HaShirim* says, "I went down to the nut garden to see the green plants of the valley, to see whether the vine had blossomed, the pomegranates were in bloom..." [*Shir HaShirim* 6:11]. *Rashi* states: Why is Yisrael compared to nuts? Just as a nut appears to be nothing more than wood, but when cracked open, reveals the delicious contents, so too Yisrael is modest and humble; the scholars amongst them are not readily recognized. A *Talmid Hacham* covers up what he knows. He does not brag and engage in self-aggrandizement. However, someone who "opens one up a little" sees how much content is in that *Talmid Hacham*.

Look at nature. All the things that are beautiful and extraordinarily valuable in this world are hidden. To mine gold, one has to go to the depths of the earth and first remove tons and tons of rock. We need to remove tons and tons of rock to find a few diamonds. The same is true with silver. All this is a lesson. That which is beautiful and that which is dear is kept hidden. This should be a lesson to human beings as well – to keep hidden that which is beautiful.

It is for lessons like these that the Torah spends all this time and space telling us about the *Mishkan*. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

It Is Not My Job

People often pride themselves on being good judges of character. The truth is, however, that fathoming the true nature of another person requires a perceptive eye and a sensitive “nose.” Many will admit, after all is said and done, how wrong they were when evaluating a job candidate by means of the resume-interview process. The person

who was “so perfect” for the position sometimes fails terribly and needs to be fired, while the employee who was hired with reluctance sometimes turns out to be one of the stars of the company.

Evaluating a human being is a complex process with staggering, mind-boggling variables. No one can assess the challenges another has had to face, or accurately measure