

From the High School

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The *Kli Yakar* asks, what are we to learn from the fact that the *aron's* measurements were all with half cubits, the *mizbeach's* measurements were all in full cubits, while the *shulchan* had some of each?

He explains: The *aron*, which held the Torah and the *luchot*, represented spirituality and closeness to God. In spiritual matters, the key to success in growing and reaching greater spiritual heights is to always look up to someone who is on a higher spiritual level and to strive to emulate that person (within reason, of course). One should never feel satisfied or complacent in their level of spirituality and closeness to God. The measurements of the *aron* were in halves in order to teach us that one should never feel satisfied and complete in their spiritual achievement.

The *Shulchan* represented materialism, as in what one merits receiving from God's "table." In worldly matters and the realm of the physical, the key to success is to feel satisfied with what we have rather than always thinking about what we don't have. One should be constantly aware of how much more he or she possesses in comparison to someone who is less fortunate. It's a natural tendency is to want more than what we already have, but someone who thinks, "If only I had that...then I would be happy," is caught in a never-ending spiral of dissatisfaction. Most of the measurements of the *shulchan* were in whole units in order to teach us that we too should feel whole in our material possessions, in the sense that we have everything that we need. At the same time, the one half-unit measurement is there as well, to teach us that one should break the natural feeling of always wanting more.

The *Mizbeach* was the vehicle for striving for perfection through the atonement that was achieved through its offerings and service, to fill in any gap that was created between man and God. This is why all of its measurements were in whole units!

- Rabbi Mayer Erps — HS, Judaic Faculty

Answers to questions on page 1

- (1) The Mishkan
- (2) Gold
- (3) Four
- (4) One
- (5) *Techelet*-turquoise, *Argaman*-purple, *Tola'at Shani*-scarlet

Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School KushnerComments

Parshat Terumah

Friday, February 16, 2018

א אדר תשע"ח

From the Lower School

1. What were Bnei Yisrael commanded to build?
2. What was the Aron Kodesh covered in?
3. How many rings were on the *Shulchan*?
4. How many pieces of gold was the *Menorah* made out of?
5. What colors were the *Parochet*?

— Rabbi Aron Srolovitz, JKHA Assistant Principal
Answers can be found on the last page.

From the Middle School

A Home for the Ten Commandments

We are accustomed to hearing the story of Matan Torah in the following, linear, way. Hashem gathers Bnei Yisrael around Har Sinai, Moshe ascends to the top of the mountain, Hashem (followed by Moshe) tells us the 10 commandments, he remains on top of the mountain for 40 days, Bnei Yisrael become impatient and build a Golden Calf, Moshe comes down and breaks the *luchot*, etc. However, the Torah doesn't present it exactly in this order, uninterrupted. Rather, the Torah presents to us the laws of building the Mishkan before there is any mention of the Sin of the Golden Calf or Moshe breaking the *Luchot*. It is almost as if, these laws are presented to Moshe while he is on Har Sinai during the 40 days. In fact, many commentaries say just that, most notably the Ramban. He says that Hashem told these laws to Moshe as a type of guide book for how to build the Mishkan. Why is this, what Hashem chooses to tell Moshe during the latter's most profound contact with the Divine? Rabbi David Fohrman points out that the answer can be found in how the Torah presents these instructions. One would expect Hashem to

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From the Middle School

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tell Moshe how to build the structure of the Mishkan, followed by the design of the interior. Instead, Hashem tells Moshe, first, to build the Aron. It is almost as if Hashem is saying, build the Ark first, because that is really the whole point of the Mishkan. And, what is the point of the Aron? To house the Luchot. Hashem tells Moshe to place the Luchot in the Aron, and He will speak to Moshe from there. Hashem will speak to Moshe from there, because the Luchot are there. The Aron, and thereby the Mishkan, is meant to be a home for the 10 commandments which represent the fundamentals of our spiritual and moral code. In the process of Hashem giving us the Torah, he tells us that this needs to be, physically and figuratively, at the center of our lives. He tells us to build a home for it in the Mishkan, in the Aron. This way it will guide our lives on a very practical level. We should merit having the Aron, and the Beit Hamikdash, once again becoming the center of our lives, as it houses within it our spiritual and moral guide, the covenantal commandments.

— Rabbi Adam Hertzberg — JKHA Director of Academic Affairs

From the High School

Focusing on What Matters

In the beginning of this week's *parsha*, in three different ways, Hashem said to Moshe to tell Bnei Yisrael to bring a *terumah*, or donation, to Hashem. Two of the three times, Hashem says this is mandatory, while the third time it is up to the people to choose individually. Rashi states that the two mandatory contributions are for the silver needed to support the Mishkan and for the *korbanot*, while the last contribution is for all the other contributions toward the Mishkan. But why did Hashem rely on the people's generosity rather than making this third request mandatory?

To address this question, Rabbi Yehoshua Berman of Aish asks us to image what it is like when a big and fancy yeshiva is going to be built. People generally get a good feeling when being involved in creating a magnificent yeshiva, so people naturally want to donate money towards its establishment. Hashem knew Bnei Yisrael would want to be a part of the building of the Mishkan, so He did not force them to contribute towards it. At the same time, if that is the case, then why did Hashem make the silver and the *korbanot* mandatory? Rabbi Berman explains that if we think again about the yeshiva, we may imagine that when there is an opportunity to donate for the "the main study hall," people would generally want to have their name on the entrance as it is a big focus of

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the building. But, if there is an opportunity to donate the janitor's closet, generally not as many people would want to sponsor it. Even though the janitor is the person who does all the behind-the-scene actions to keep the yeshiva running and even though his closet stores all of those supplies, it is not considered the main focus of the building. For the Mishkan, the people would not recognize the value of the silver on the bottom of the Mishkan, which helped it stand, or the even the *korbanot*, which are the main attraction, simply because they are not as visible for Bnei Yisrael.

This lesson teaches us that we should not just focus on the external parts that we see everyday, but rather we must also focus on and appreciate the internal or hidden elements that at times are the most crucial for our lives.

- Jesse Koppel is a Freshman at RKYHS

Deep Precision

Have you ever designed any kind of structure? Possibly a club house or tree house? The key to any type of successful design and sturdy construction can be summed up in one word – precision. Every measurement has to be precise and planned with much calculation.

This week's *parsha*, *Terumah*, details the plans for the building of the *Mishkan*. The *Mishkan* was similar to most structures in that all its measurements were delineated with great precision, as dictated by God. In *pasuk* after *pasuk* the Torah states the exact measurement of the outer structure, the curtains that covered it, as well as all of the sacred vessels. However, unlike other structures where the measurements are calculated based on the space available and the design desired, the *Mishkan's* measurements had profound spiritual underpinnings. The great commentator, Rabbi Shlomo Efraim Luntschitz, better known by the name of his commentary, the *Kli Yakar*, shares a fascinating thought on the deeper meaning of the measurements of some of the main utensils of the *Mishkan*.

Three of the central vessels in the *Mishkan* were the *aron*, the *shulchan*, and the *mizbeach*. The *aron* measured two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high. The *shulchan* measured two cubits long, one cubit wide and one and a half cubits high. The *mizbeach* measured one cubit wide, one cubit long and two cubits high.

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