

## Parshat Vayakhel

Shemot 35: 21- 25

וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁאַן לִבּוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ אֶת-וְהָבִיאוּ אֶת-תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה  
לְמִלְאכַת אֶל הַל מוֹעֵד וְלִכְל-עֲבֹדָתוֹ וּלְבִגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ: וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל-הַנָּשִׁים כָּל  
| נָדִיב לֵב הָבִיאוּ תַח וְנָזָם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל-כְּלִי זָהָב וְכָל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הָיָה תְּנוּפֶת  
זָהָב לַיהוָה: וְכָל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-נִמְצָא אֶת-וְתַכְלֵת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים  
וְעֹרֹת אֵילָם מְאֻדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תַּחֲשִׁים הָבִיאוּ: כָּל-מְרָאִים תְּרוּמַת כֶּסֶף וְנִחֲשֶׁת הָבִיאוּ  
אֶת תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה וְכָל אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא אֹתוֹ עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים לְכָל-מִלְאכַת הָעֲבֹדָה הָבִיאוּ:  
וְכָל-אִשָּׁה חֹכְמַת-לֵב בִּידֶיהָ טָווּ וַיָּבִיאוּ מַטָּה אֶת-הַתְּכֵלֶת וְאֶת-הָאַרְגָּמָן  
אֶת-תוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וְאֶת-הַשֵּׁשׁ:

Every man whose heart uplifted him came, and everyone whose spirit inspired him to generosity brought the offering of the Lord for the work of the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. The men came with the women; every generous hearted person brought bracelets and earrings and rings and buckles, all kinds of golden objects, and every man who waved a waving of gold to the Lord. And every man with whom was found blue, purple, or crimson wool, linen, goat hair, ram skins dyed red or tachash skins, brought them. Everyone who set aside an offering of silver or copper brought the offering for the Lord, and everyone with whom acacia wood was found for any work of the service, brought it. And every wise hearted woman spun with her hands, and they brought spun material: blue, purple, and crimson wool, and linen.

## Ellen Morgan - Class of 2023: An original thought- "A generous people"

These pesukim are describing the gifts that the Jews brought to the Mishkan. Bnei Yisroel were asked to bring materials in order to build the Mishkan they did not just give a little but they gave everything that they had. Everyones brought things and contributed in the ways that they could. This part of the parsha is describing Bnei Yisroel being so happy to have the Mishkan where Hashem could live amongst them, that as soon as they could donate, they gave everything they had.

One of the things that interested me from these pesukim was how it says

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל-הַנָּשִׁים כָּל | נָדִיב לֵב

The men came with the women; every generous hearted person".

When reading this I was confused why it said all the men and women and then all the generous people. Why did it need to say all the generous people when we already know that everyone went, does it really matter if they were considered generous or not? They still gave even if it was not out of the goodness of their hearts but because the people around them were doing it. I think that the reason why they said the men and women, and every generous person was to show that all of Bnei Yisroel were excited and wanted to give they were giving all that they could. The Torah is describing these people as generous and therefore they brought gifts to the Mishkan.

**Isaac Gateno- Class of 2020: Rambam: Acknowledging our talents**

Perek 35 opens with the famous line regarding the construction of the Mishkan and the first and only Tanach prohibition of melacha: kindling a fire on Shabbat. Then Moshe instructs the Jews to begin donating materials to help aid the construction of the Mishkan. He goes on to list a whole host of precious metals, stones, and fabrics that were ultimately used to build Hashem's temporary home, including what each material was used for in the final construction. In our portion, we learn of the generous men and women who were "uplifted" to come and donate their skills and belongings to build the holy Mishkan.

**Rambam**—the famous Sephardic commentator who lived from 1138 to 1204 in Spain and later Egypt—takes note of the first words of pasuk 21, "every man whose heart lifted him." Rambam contrasts this wording to what one would normally expect when the Torah is referring to donors: "every man whose heart impels him (*asher yidvenu libo*)." He notes that the language of pasuk 21 indicates the donation of artisans, who are endowed by Hashem with a particular set of skills. Artisans discover that they are naturally gifted at certain skills and are thus "lifted up" spiritually and inspired to offer their services to Moshe. These artisans, utilizing their God-given talents, helped construct the Mishkan because they were inspired to give back to Hashem for the gift that he had given them. I feel like this commentary is very insightful for its analysis of our own unique abilities. We all have special talents; it's our job to discern our purpose and give praise to God for allowing us such unique strengths.

**Jacob Plumb- Class of 2021: Acacia Wood- a rare commodity?**

In this week's Parsha, Parshat Vayakhel, Moshe gathers Bnei Yisrael and instructs them on the building of the mishkan. These pesukim are detailing the materials that the members of Bnei Yisrael contributed to the building of the mishkan.

**Rabbi Asher Wassertail** is the Author of the Birkat Asher. Born on the 23 of shvat in 1921 in Kashanov, Poland, and was niftar on the 9th of kislev, 1921. He spent his youth as a member of the zionist youth group, Ezra, eventually making aliya in 1943.

Once in Israel, he learned in some of the foremost yeshivot in the country and then worked to help other Jews make aliyah. He worked in an official capacity as an author and an editor.

The **Birkat Asher** comments on pasuk 24, which talks about members of Bnei Yisrael contributing Acacia wood to the building of the mishkan. He says that obtaining the acacia wood was really not so *pashut* (easy/simple) as some of the other items used in the mishkan, like the gold for instance, which they had in the form of ear and nose rings. He states further that, at the minimum, it was uncommon for a member of Bnei Yisrael to have Acacia wood. This is why we should read the pasuk to mean that “whoever might have it, should bring it” as it was something uncommon.

#### Parshat Pekudei

#### Shemot 40: end of 33-38

וַיִּכַּל מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הַמִּלָּאכָה וַיְכַסּוּ הָעָנָן אֶת-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּכְבֹּד יְהוָה מִלֵּא אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן:  
וְלֹא-יָכֹל מֹשֶׁה לָּבוֹא אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד כִּי-שָׁכַן עָלָיו הָעָנָן וַיִּכְבֹּד יְהוָה מִלֵּא  
אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן: וּבַהֲעֵלוֹת הָעָנָן מֵעַל הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִסְעוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל לַמַּסְעִיָּהֶם: וְאִם-לֹא  
יָעֹלָה הָעָנָן וְלֹא יִסְעוּ עַד-יוֹם הָעֹלָתוֹ כִּי עָנָן יְהוָה עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹמָם וְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה לַיְלָה  
בּוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָל-בֵּית-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל-מַסְעֵיהֶם:

and Moses completed the work. And the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Mishkan. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud rested upon it and the glory of the Lord filled the Mishkan. When the cloud rose up from over the Mishkan, the children of Israel set out in all their journeys. But if the cloud did not rise up, they did not set out until the day that it rose For the cloud of the Lord was upon the Mishkan by day, and there was fire within it at night, before the eyes of the entire house of Israel in all their journeys.

#### Noa Geralnik: Class of 2023: Ibn Ezra: “Moshe in the Mishkan”

Moshe finished building the Mishkan. The cloud of Hashem covered the Ohel Moed and his glory filled the Mishkan. Moshe couldn't enter the Mishkan because the cloud was covering it and because Hashem's glory was filling it. When the cloud rose, that is when Bnei Yisrael set out on their journeys. If it didn't rise then they didn't set out until it did because it was a cloud during the day and it was fire at night.

**Avraham Ibn Ezra** was born around 1089 in Tudela and lived until around 1167. He is best known for his commentary on the torah.

I found it interesting why it said Moshe wasn't allowed to enter the Mishkan. After all he was the one in the Torah who came closest to Hashem so why wasn't Moshe of all people allowed to enter. The commentary I found on this was from the **Ibn Ezra**. He says that Moshe was the one who placed the cover with the cherubim on the ark in the first place and was also the one who covered it with the paroches whenever they broke camp because no one else could look upon Hashem's glory. From this it is understood that it is not that Moshe was unable to enter the Mishkan; it is that he had to be summoned before going in. We can see this from the first verse in Vayikra where it says "And He called to Moshe".

I think that this proof makes a lot of sense and it answers my questions. It gives an answer for why Moshe wasn't allowed to enter the Mishkan while the cloud is there even though he is the person who has come closest to Hashem. It is not that he wasn't allowed to, it is that he had to be summoned before going in. I think this is a very good explanation and makes a lot of sense.

### **Noah Diner: Class of 2021: "Moshe is still a man"**

Summary:

As soon as the tabernacle was completed the Jews brought Moses the Kelim that belonged inside. Then Hashem spoke to Moses ordering him to pour oil on the tabernacle and the objects so they could be holy on the first day of the month. Soon after the objects were completed Moses brought Aaron and his sons to have them wash their hands and feet in the water and following this purification process, Aaron and his sons were anointed as the high priest and priests, respectfully. As soon as Moshe finished the anointing process the cloud of God appeared over the tent of meeting and the presence of God filled the tabernacle.

After Moshe had finished setting up the tabernacle the cloud covered the tent of meeting and therefore Moshe was prohibited from entering. Personally, I find this extremely odd that after Moshe had finished constructing the tabernacle he was unable to enter the tent of meeting solely due to God's presence. One would think that if someone were to build something they would be able to admire it and enter the building. However, this was not the case. While the Jews were in the desert Moshe was seen as the humanly figure of God to the Jewish people, since he not only conversed with God directly but he also built God's temple. For this reason, I find it extremely odd why God's most trusted human was unable to enter the tent of meeting. After thorough research of the commentaries, I was not satisfied with the answer "because Gd was present...". Ergo, I began to intensely ponder a satisfactory answer and after a brief moment I came to the realization that a reason Moshe could not enter the Tent of meeting even after he had built it was a symbolic measure for Jewish people. It was to represent the strict dichotomy between man and divinity. No matter how significant Moshe was, how close to the divine he was. Moshe was still not divine; he was still a man and could not be present in the tent of meeting alongside God as his equal.

