

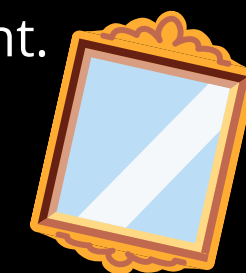


WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA?

Parshas Vayakhel begins as Moshe gathers the people and reminds them to keep **Shabbos**. Next, Moshe tells the Jews to bring donations for the Mishkan: gold, silver, copper, blue, purple, and red yarns, linen, goats' hair, animal skins, olive oil, spices, and various precious stones. He invites craftsmen to build the Mishkan from the donations. The Jews bring their materials and the skilled craftsmen and women volunteer to build the Mishkan. The women work with the yarns, linen, and goats' hair. The priests of the tribes bring the stones for the **ephod** and the breastplate, and the oil and spices. Moshe tells the Jews that **Betzalel** from **Yehuda** has been divinely endowed with the knowledge to build the Mishkan, as well as his assistant, **Aholiav** from **Dan**. The craftsmen, lead by Betzalel and Aholiav, start building the Mishkan, but then tell Moshe that the people are bringing too many donations, and Moshe tells the people to stop donating. The Torah describes the process of building the Mishkan and creating the garments for the Cohanim as first commanded in **Parshas Terumah** and **Tetzaveh**. **Betzalel** specifically made the **Aron**, ark, its coverings, and utensils, the **Menorah**, the **incense altar** and **spices**, the **anointing oil**, the **sacrificial altar**, the **kiyor**, the basin for the Cohanim to wash their hands and feet, and the **enclosure** of the **Mishkan**. **Parshas Pekudei** begins with an **inventory** of the materials of the Mishkan. The Jews finish building the Mishkan, and Moshe sees that they did everything exactly as Hashem commanded, and blesses them. Hashem commands Moshe to **inaugurate** the Mishkan on the **first day of the first month** - **Nisan**. He tells Moshe how to set up the Mishkan, and to anoint the Mishkan and its contents with the anointing oil. Then, to summon Aharon and his sons to begin their role as the **Cohanim** by donning their special garments and being anointing. Thus, on **the first day of Nisan in the second year** of the Jews being in the desert, Moshe set up the Mishkan, and Hashem's Presence filled it. Moshe couldn't enter when Hashem's Presence filled the Mishkan. A cloud that was over the Mishkan guided the Jews on their journey through the desert - they would travel when it lifted, and it became fire at night.

THINK ABOUT IT:

The Torah tells us that the Kiyor was made from the copper mirrors of the Jewish women. **Rashi** (1040-1105, France) explains that Moshe didn't want the mirrors, as he saw them as objects of vanity. However, Hashem said that the women used these mirrors to look beautiful for their husbands, and merited many children. What does this teach us about our assumptions?



HOLY ARCHITECTS

Betzalel and **Aholiav** are the two men singled out, by name, to build the Mishkan, which is the ultimate dwelling place of Hashem on earth. So, **who were Betzalel and Aholiav, and why were they chosen?** The **Gemara** (Sanhedrin 69b) teaches that **Betzalel** was only **thirteen** when he built the Mishkan! However, his lineage made up for his age: he was the grandson of **Miriam** and **Hur**. Hur is one of the two people who held up Moshe's hands during the battle against **Amalek**, but he does not appear again in the Torah. The

Midrash teaches that, when the Jews wanted to build the **Golden Calf**, Hur stood up to them, and the mob murdered him. Hashem repaid his self-sacrifice by having his grandson build the Mishkan. **Betzalel**'s name means "in the shadow of G-d", showing that he was truly divinely guided in this mission. **Ramban** (1194-1270, Spain & Israel) points out that Betzalel's architectural knowledge was miraculous because he couldn't have learned these skills in Egypt! On the other hand, **Aholiav** was from **Dan**, the oldest of the children of Rachel's handmaiden, **Bilhah**, and was the last tribe to march in the desert. **Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson** (1902-1994, Brooklyn) points out that the Mishkan was built through the partnership of these two figures, one illustrious and one humble, because we needed both sides to bring Hashem into this world.

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ
קָרָא ה' בְּשֵׁם בְּצַלְאֵל בֶּן אֹוֹרִי בֶן
חֹור לְמִטֵּה יְהוּדָה: (שמות לה:ל)

And Moses said to the Jews: See, the L-rd has singled out by name Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.

DISCUSS:

What would you look for in the architect of the Mishkan? Why do you think Hashem didn't have Moshe build it?

THE MISHKAN: ROUND 2?

The commandments to build the Mishkan are repeated **five** times in the Torah, in varying detail. **Abarbanel** (1437-1508, Italy) explains that the repetition shows that Betzalel **changed the order** of the Mishkan, building the Mishkan itself before the contents, but nothing else. **Rashi** (1040-1105, France) explains that Betzalel told Moshe that the order of building the contents first didn't make sense, because you wouldn't build furniture before a house. Moshe acknowledged that Hashem actually commanded the process of building the Mishkan in the order that Betzalel described! **Ramban** (1194-1270, Spain & Israel) explains that this repetition emphasizes how much Hashem **values** the Mishkan and the efforts of the Jews in building it. **Rabbi Yosef Blau** (Present, Washington Heights, NY) adds that this shows how much Hashem values our good deeds that sometimes feel repetitive, as we can truly elevate the world through those seemingly mundane actions.

THINK

What things do you do every day that can feel repetitive? How can you make those things more meaningful?

