

CHEVRAH TORAH 5778...Seeking ✨ Spirituality

Shabbat Vayak'hel-Pekudai

Exodus 35:1-29

KEY KOSHI:

HOW DOES SHABBAT DEFINE THE MISHKAN BUILDING EFFORT & ITS PURPOSE/SPIRITUAL AIM?

P'SHAT—AWARENESS... The beginning of knowing about God is simply paying attention, being fully present where you are

35:1] Moses then convoked the whole Israelite community and said to them:

These are the things that the Lord has commanded you to do: 2] On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. 3] You shall kindle no fire throughout your settlements on the sabbath day.

4] Moses said further to the whole community of Israelites:

This is what the Lord has commanded: 5] Take from among you gifts to the Lord; everyone whose heart so moves him shall bring them—gifts for the Lord: gold, silver, and copper; 6a] blue, purple and crimson yarns, fine linen, and goats' hair; 7] tanned ram skins, dolphin skins, and acacia wood; 8] oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense; 9] lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and the breastpiece.

10] And let all among you who are skilled come and make all that the Lord has commanded: 11] the Tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its clasps and its planks, its bars, its posts, and its sockets; 12] the ark and its poles, the cover, and the curtain for the screen; 13] the table, and its poles and all its utensils; and the bread of display; 14] the lampstand for lighting, its furnishings and its lamps, and the oil for lighting; 15] the altar of incense and its poles; the anointing oil and the aromatic incense; and the entrance screen for the entrance of the Tabernacle; 16] the altar of burnt offering, its copper grating, its poles, and all its furnishings;

1 וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־עֵדֻת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֱלֹהִים הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אַתֶּם: 2 שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קָדֹשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן לַיהוָה כֹּל־הָעֹשֶׂה בּוֹ מְלָאכָה יוּמָת: 3 לֹא־תִבְעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל־מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: 4 פ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־כָּל־עֵדֻת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: 5 קָחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה כֹּל נָדִיב לִבּוֹ וּבִיָּאָה אֶת־תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנַחֲשֵׁת: 6 וּתְכַלֶּת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים: 7 וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תַּחֲשִׁים וְעִצֵּי שִׁטִּים: 8 וְשֶׁמֶן לַמָּאֹר וּבִשְׂמִים לְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים: 9 וְאַבְנֵי־שֹׁהַם וְאַבְנֵי מַלְאִים לְאַפּוֹד וְלַחֹשֶׁן: 10 וְכָל־חֲכִים לֵב בְּכֶם יָבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה: 11 אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶת־אֹהֶלוֹ וְאֶת־מִכְסָּהוּ אֶת־קַרְסוֹ וְאֶת־קַרְשָׁיו אֶת־בְּרִיחוֹ אֶת־עַמֻּדָיו וְאֶת־אֲדָנָיו: 12 אֶת־הָאָרֶן וְאֶת־בַּדָּיו אֶת־הַכַּפְּרֹת וְאֶת־פְּרֻכַת הַמִּסָּךְ: 13 אֶת־הַשְּׁלֹחַן וְאֶת־בַּדָּיו וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְאֶת־לֶחֶם הַפָּנִים: 14 וְאֶת־מִנְרֹת הַמָּאֹר וְאֶת־כֵּלָיָה וְאֶת־נֹרְתֵיהָ וְאֶת־שֶׁמֶן הַמָּאֹר: 15 וְאֶת־מִזְבַּח הַקְּטֹרֶת וְאֶת־בַּדָּיו וְאֶת־שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְאֶת־קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים וְאֶת־מִסָּךְ הַפֶּתַח לַפֶּתַח הַמִּשְׁכָּן: 16 אֶת־מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־מִכְבַּר הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֶת־בַּדָּיו וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר

the laver and its stand; 17] the hangings of the enclosures, its posts and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; 18] the pegs for the Tabernacle, the pegs for the enclosure, and their cords; 19] the service vestments for officiating in the sanctuary, the sacral vestments of Aaron the priest and the vestments of his sons for priestly service.

20] So the whole community of the Israelites left Moses' presence. 21] And everyone who excelled in ability and everyone whose spirit moved him came, bringing to the Lord his offering for the work of the Tent of Meeting and for all its service and for the sacral vestments. 22] Men and women, all whose hearts moved them, all who would make an elevation offering of gold to the Lord, came bringing brooches, earrings, rings and pendants^b—gold objects of all kinds. 23] And everyone who had in his possession blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and in fine linen. 26] And all the women who excelled in that skill spun the goats' hair. 27] And the chieftains brought lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece; 28] and spices and oil for lighting, for the anointing oil, and for the aromatic incense. 29] Thus the Israelites, all the men and women whose hearts moved them to bring anything for the work that the Lord, through Moses, had commanded to be done, brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord.

וְאֶת־כִּנּוֹ : 17 אֶת קַלְעֵי הַחֲצָר אֶת־עַמֻּדָיו
וְאֶת־אֲדָנֶיהָ וְאֶת מָסַךְ שַׁעַר הַחֲצָר :
18 אֶת־יְתֹדֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־יְתֹדֹת הַחֲצָר
וְאֶת־מִיתְרֵיהֶם : 19 אֶת־בְּגְדֵי הַשָּׂרָד
לְשָׂרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ אֶת־בְּגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן
הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת־בְּגְדֵי בָנָיו לְכַהֵן : 20 וַיָּצְאוּ כָּל־
עַדְת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלִּפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה : [שְׁנִי]
21 וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׂאוֹ לְבוֹ וְכָל־
אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ אֹתוֹ הֵבִיאוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמַת
יְהוָה לְמִלְאכַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּלְכָל־עֲבֹדָתוֹ
וּלְבְגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ : 22 וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־
הַנְּשִׂים כָּל אִ נְדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וְנָזָם
וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל־כְּלֵי זָהָב וְכָל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
הָיָה בְּתוֹכָן תְּנוּפֶת זָהָב לַיהוָה : 23 וְכָל־אִישׁ
אֲשֶׁר־נִמְצָא אֹתוֹ תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת
שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים
וְעֹרֹת תְּחָשִׁים הֵבִיאוּ : 24 כָּל־מִרְיָם
תְּרוּמַת כֶּסֶף וּנְחֹשֶׁת הֵבִיאוּ אֶת תְּרוּמַת
יְהוָה וְכָל אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא אֹתוֹ עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים
לְכָל־מִלְאכַת הָעֲבֹדָה הֵבִיאוּ : 25 וְכָל־אִשָּׁה
חַכְמַת־לֵב בְּיָדֶיהָ טָווּ וַיָּבִיאוּ מְטוֹה אֶת־
הַתְּכֵלֶת וְאֶת־הָאַרְגָּמָן אֶת־תוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי
וְאֶת־הַשֵּׁשׁ : 26 וְכָל־הַנְּשִׂים אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂא לְבָן
אֲתָנָה בְּחֻכְמָה טָווּ אֶת־הָעִזִּים :
27 וְהַנְּשָׂאִים הֵבִיאוּ אֶת אַבְנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם וְאֶת־
אַבְנֵי הַמַּלְאִים לְאַפּוֹד וּלְחֹשֶׁן : 28 וְאֶת־
הַבָּשָׂם וְאֶת־הַשֶּׁמֶן לְמָאוֹר וּלְשֶׁמֶן
הַמִּשְׁחָה וּלְקִטְרֹת הַסַּמִּים : 29 כָּל־אִישׁ
וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָדַב לִבָּם אֹתָם לְהֵבִיא לְכָל־
הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּיַד־
מֹשֶׁה הֵבִיאוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל נְדָבָה לַיהוָה

REMEZ—UN-SELF-AWARENESS...

V.1-2 *These are the things Adonai has commanded you to do. Six days work may be done, but the Seventh day shall be holy to you, a Sabbath of complete Shabbos to Adonai; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.*

MECHILTA... Why mention the Shabbat again when it has already been discussed? Because it is written, “*Let them build me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them.*” [Exod 25:8] I might think, then, that they may do so during the week and even on Shabbat. It is thus written, “*Six days work may be done.*” During the week, yes, but not on Shabbat!

RALBAG... Notice that Moses first told them the prohibition of working on Shabbat before commanding the construction of the Mishkan. This was to make clear that work of the Mishkan does not override Shabbat.

ABRAVANEL... “*Shabbat Shabbaton L’Adonai*” Since the building of the Mishkan was primarily a demonstration of the bond between God and Israel, we might have thought it takes precedence over all the mitzvot, including the cessation from work. Creating a sacred space for the Divine Presence is after all a project of extreme holiness. Yet there is something more sacred, “*Shabbat Shabbaton L’Adonai.*”

The LUBAVITCHER... “*Six days work may be done...*” Had it been written in the active, “*Six days you shall work,*” it would suggest an ongoing attachment, a preoccupation. So it is written “*Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but on the Seventh...*” [Exod 20:4] How is it possible for a person to do all his work in six days? It means, then, rest on the Sabbath as if all your work were done. For six days, work may be our occupation, but not our preoccupation. [based on MECHILTA, Yitro II]

ALSHECH... On the Seventh day there will be unto you *Kodesh*—a holiness. That is, the holiness will be part of you on that day... Failure to devote Shabbat to one’s spiritual advancement, even if one does not violate its injunctions, is an affront to *Shabbat Shabbaton*—the holiness God has bestowed...

R’ Elie MUNK... “*It’s desecrators shall be put to death---Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off...*” [Exod 31:14] What is the “death penalty?” That soul shall be cut off from his people, excluding himself, spiritually speaking, from the fellowship of Israel by cutting himself off from community. In cutting the roots for Sabbath renewal he is doomed to die.

V.3 *You shall kindle no fire throughout any of your dwellings on the Sabbath Day*

R’ S.R. HIRSCH... The prohibition against lighting a fire is viewed by the Talmud as the prototype for the 39 basic types of work—*Melachot*, forbidden on Shabbat. Kindling a fire is a creative human act that serves a useful purpose. Something new that was previously non-existent can result... Likewise, creative effort which results in destruction by kindling may result. For a 24 hour period the Jew pays tribute to the Creator by yielding all his human abilities to create—expressed in the 39 *melachot*—categories of work. [TALMUD, Shabbat 70a]

V.4-5 *Moses said further to the whole community of Israel: This is what Adonai commands: Take from among you, from everyone whose heart so moves him, gifts to Adonai*

HaK’TAV V’HAKABBALAH... The term “*Avodah*” includes all activities, even if the act does not require special skill or intelligence. Carrying rocks is *Avodah*, as is running from one place to another... The root is “*Eved—servant*” like things done by a slave for a master. The term “*Melacha*” is applied exclusively to an activity which results in something new being created—an improvement on the state of existence... These actions require skill or knowledge, thus *Melachah* includes all acts essential in creating the universe... Seeing that the construction of the *Mishkan* is considered by our Sages as a microcosm of Creation, the same activities from which God desisted apply to us as well.

M. WEINBERG... In *Vayakbel*, we discover what type of “work” is called for in making the *Mishkan*: the conceptualization, strategy and craft derived from *wisdom, understanding & knowledge*—the same ingredients used by God to create the world. When Moses opened the Assembly of all Israel by discussing Shabbat, he was not going off on a tangent. Shabbat is the fundamental ingredient of a central theme in this week’s *par’shab*: Creativity. *Melacha* is a distinctive term, one without a precise English equivalent: it refers to the mediation between abstraction and actualization... This term, *Melachah*, is intimately related to *Mal’ach—angel*... that is, “mediative messenger,” the agency for bringing about a sacred result.

D'RASH—READING BETWEEN THE WORDS...

Rabbi SHAI HELD

Exodus begins with the Israelites forced to build cities for a human king who views them as a potential threat to his rule and treats them accordingly; it ends with the people engaged in building a tabernacle (*Mishkan*) in which the God who has redeemed them can dwell. This trajectory is crucial to Jewish theology.

As slaves in Egypt, the Israelites work without respite against their will. When they build the *Mishkan* in this week's *parasha*, in stark contrast, Moses asks for voluntary contributions. Finally freed from slavery, the Israelites are slowly being taught that there is a form of service radically different from slavery, one that honors and nurtures one's sense of agency rather than degrading it and whittling it away.

Not surprisingly, then, as Moses lays out instructions for how to build the *Mishkan*, he starts by invoking Shabbat. An unbridgeable chasm divides enslavement to a human tyrant and service of the God of creation and covenant: Whereas the tyrant prohibits even a moment of Shabbat, God actually mandates and regularizes it. ...Whereas serving Pharaoh had stripped the Israelites of their dignity, serving God will now affirm it. Moreover, and critically, God commands them to take their own dignity seriously.

Is Shabbat about affirming that God, and God alone, or is Shabbat a testimony to human dignity and the importance of rest? The biblical answer is that it is both.... Observing Shabbat is a dramatic statement about Who the Israelites serve, and, also, crucially, about how the One they serve understands and treats them.

Whereas the latter systematically dehumanizes his subjects, the former values and cherishes them. Work and service come in dignified and degrading versions. The Torah captures the transition the Israelites undergo linguistically. In Egypt their mode of labor is called *avodah*, from the same root as *eved*, or slave. In building the *Mishkan*, in contrast, the word predominantly used to describe their work is *melakah*, from the same root as *mal'akh*, or messenger. The word *melakah* conveys immense dignity, since it is the same term used to depict God's work in creation (Gen. 2:2-3). The Israelites, in building the Mishkan, are in some sense mirroring God's work in creating the world.

The journey the Israelites take is, crucially, from one building project to another. They are transformed from slaves of an earthly ruler to servants of a Heavenly One. Freedom, as imagined by Exodus, is decidedly not about casting off the burdens of service altogether. In fact it says a great deal about our secularized society that while we often cite the demand that Pharaoh "*let my people go!*" we usually omit the telos of that call, "*that they may serve Me.*" "The Torah is passionately concerned with a journey from slavery to freedom, but it imagines freedom in ways that are different from (one is tempted to say antithetical to) the ways freedom is commonly spoken of in contemporary consumerist America. Doing whatever I want, whenever I want, is arguably not freedom at all, but enslavement to impulse. The depths of freedom are discovered not in self-assertion but in rare moments of authentic self-transcendence. Authentic freedom, Jewish theology insists, is found in service of something (and Someone) greater than oneself.

[The Heart of Torah Held, pgs 213-216]

SOD—The SELF of the UNIVERSE... God's "I am" has the psycho-theological force not of dissolving individual selves but of reminding us that we were never individual selves in the first place...Our selfhood endures by virtue of its participation in some greater Self,

Prof DAVID KRAEMER...

If you were to read the list of prohibited labors [the 39 *Melachot*] recorded in the *Mishnah* and ask yourself what kinds of work are represented, you would probably say, "This is the work necessary for the preparation of food, clothing, shelter..." That is, labors fundamental to basic life-support... Thus, the Rabbis understood that special skills, such as playing musical instruments, are not prohibited on Shabbat...

As we have now understood, Shabbat is meant to be a time when basic human labors are unnecessary. It is a time when all needs are already provided. It is, in other words, a re-enactment of the human experience in the garden of Eden, when the Holy One provided all and we could live in complete harmony with the world, and with each other.

Alternatively, it is likewise a re-enactment of the Exodus from Egypt, when God too provided for all our needs. Shabbat is a Garden in Time, or an affirmation of our Liberation...

Which is why it is all the more true that Shabbat is a time when the work of the Tabernacle/Mishkan is unnecessary. The structure is built, the altar is ready, the incense prepared... Shabbat is a Tabernacle in Time, a day on which we are all Priests in God's Sacred Service...

Rabbi ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL...

The higher goal of spiritual living is not to amass a wealth of information, but to face sacred moments... A moment of insight is a treasure, transporting us beyond the confines of measured time. Spiritual life begins to decay when we fail to sense the grandeur of what is eternal in time.

...When history began, there was only one Holiness in the world—*Holiness in time*.

When at Sinai the word of God was about to be voiced, a call for *Holiness in man* was proclaimed: "*You shall be unto Me a Holy People.*" It was only after the people had succumbed to the temptation of worshipping a thing, a golden calf, that the construction of the Tabernacle, *Holiness in space*, was commanded.

Yet the sanctity of time came first...

...The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to Holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

[The Sabbath, A.J.Heschel, pgs 6-10, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951]