

# MISHKAN LIGHTS, SHABBOS LIGHTS, PESACH LIGHTS

by Shlomo Katz

## Parshios Vayakhel & Pekudei

### Mishkan Lights, Shabbos Lights, Pesach Lights

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*Sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Jules Meisler in memory of Jules' father Irving Meisler a"h  
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This week's parashah opens with the mitzvah of Shabbat. "On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death." R' Yaakov Sakly z"l (Spain; 14th century) writes: On Shabbat, souls enjoy the "sweet light" that souls enjoy in the World-to-Come. This is what the Gemara (Beitzah 16a) means when it says that Hashem gives a person a "neshamah yeteirah" / "extra soul" on Erev Shabbat. Our Sages also say that Shabbat is one-sixtieth of Gan Eden. On Shabbat, a person has added strength, and his neshamah had added intellect.

Therefore, R' Sakly continues, a person must practice oneg Shabbat / making Shabbat pleasurable, as an allusion to Olam Ha'ba, as Rabbi Yochanan said (Shabbat 118a), "If one practices oneg Shabbat, he merits a boundless inheritance." This refers to Olam Ha'ba, which has no boundaries or limits. Rabbi Yehuda says about one who practices oneg Shabbat (ibid), "All his hearts desires are fulfilled." How does one do this? With fish and vegetables [i.e., extra courses in the meal]. Rabbi Chiya bar Ashi says, "Even if one added only a small course, but he did so in honor of Shabbat, that is oneg Shabbat."

R' Sakly continues: Just as the reward of one who practices oneg Shabbat is very great, so the reward of one who honors Shabbat is very great. Honoring Shabbat means wearing clean clothes on Shabbat and dressing differently than one dresses during the week.

R' Sakly concludes: If you wish to know how great Shabbat observance is, take note that even the mishkan may not be built on Shabbat. (Torat Ha'minchah, no. 31)

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"Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael, 'See, Hashem has proclaimed by name, Betzalel son of Uri son of Chur, of the tribe of Yehuda. He filled him with G-dly spirit, with wisdom, insight, and knowledge, and with every craft.'" (35:30-31)

The midrash relates that Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Yonatan: Betzalel's name reflects his wisdom. When Hashem told Moshe, "Go tell Betzalel to make a mishkan, an aron, and utensils," Moshe went and reversed the order, saying, "Make an aron, utensils, and a mishkan."

Betzalel replied, "Moshe Rabbeinu! The way of the world is to build a house first and then bring in the furniture, yet you are telling me, 'An aron and utensils, and then a mishkan'?! Where will I place the utensils that I make. Is it possible that Hashem actually told you to make a mishkan first and then an aron and utensils?"

Moshe answered, "You must have been b'tzel E-l / in the shadow of G-d in order for you to know this." [Until here from the midrash]

R' Shlomo Wolbe z"l (1914-2005) writes: According to this midrash, Betzalel's wisdom was reflected in knowing the proper order in which to build. True, the aron and the utensils were, in a sense, the "goal," while the building was only a "preparation," i.e., a place to keep the aron and utensils. Nevertheless, the midrash teaches, a wise person knows how to make proper preparations for trying to achieve his goals.

R' Wolbe continues: This has application to "building" a human being, as well. Without a doubt, Torah study and avodah / serving Hashem are the goals. However, one must first prepare himself to be a fitting container in which to house Torah and avodah. This preparation is accomplished through acquiring a trait that R' Wolbe calls "da'at" / sensitivity to, and awareness of, one's surroundings--be they a person in need of assistance or a majestic sunset--above and beyond what the intellect requires. A person with da'at draws conclusions from every one of life's experience and recognizes that different stages in life require learning different lessons and different behavior. Da'at is that which connects one's intellectual knowledge with one's character traits. (Pirkei Kinyan Da'at)

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"He filled him with Godly spirit, with wisdom, insight, and knowledge, and with every craft." (35:31)

R' Yitzchak Parchi z"l (1782-1853; Ha'maggid Ha'Yerushalmi) writes: Wisdom is not acquired through one's own efforts, but rather, received from G-d. And, not every person merits receiving wisdom; only a person who has acquired yir'at Shamayim / fear of Heaven with his entire heart and soul

merits this.

He continues: We read in Pirkei Avot (ch.3), "If one's yir'ah precedes his wisdom, his wisdom will endure." This is because only wisdom that is preceded by yir'ah has a holy source. Wisdom that is not preceded by yir'ah necessarily is not from a holy or lofty source. (Matok La'Nefesh ch.1)

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"For the cloud of Hashem would be on the mishkan by day, and fire would be on it at night, before the eyes of all of Bnei Yisrael throughout their journeys." (40:38)

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (1785-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) writes: This closing verse of Parashat Pekudei ties back to its opening verse: "These are the reckonings of the mishkan, the mishkan of Testimony . . ." Our Sages say that the mishkan is mentioned twice to allude to the two Temples that were destroyed. The midrash Eichah Rabbah further states that the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash was "testimony" to G-d's love for us, for He took out His anger on the sticks and stones of the Temple building instead of on the Jewish People.

Our Sages refer to the Exile as "night," whereas day is a time of Chessed / G-d's Kindness. A cloud also alludes to kindness [perhaps because it symbolizes rain]. Thus, "The cloud of Hashem would be on the mishkan by day, and fire [the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash] would be on it at night." All of this is "before the eyes of all of Bnei Yisrael throughout their journeys." Wherever they would go in their exiles, it would be evidence before their eyes of Hashem's love for them. (Chochmat Ha'Torah)

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As we were about to go to press, we were saddened to learn of the passing of R' Moshe Yehoshua Hager z"l (the Vizhnitzer Rebbe in Bnei Brak) at the age of 95. Below we present a thought that he offered on this Shabbat in 5734 / 1974.

"They continued to bring him od nedavah / additional voluntary gifts each morning." (36:3)

The gematria of the Hebrew words "od nedavah" (together with the seven letters of those Hebrew words) equals the gematria of Pesach. This alludes to the obligation to increase one's giving of tzedakah before the upcoming holiday. In this way, one can cheer up someone needy, the way a sunlit morning cheers up a person. (Sichot U'ma'amarei Kodosh 5732-5734 p. 129)

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### **The Power of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim**

R' Yitzchak Arieli z"l (1896-1974; mashgiach ruchani of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and author of Enayim La'mishpat) taught: When a person relates the story of the Exodus, he can attain lofty levels,

especially when he does so on the Seder night. Telling the story on that night has the power to light up the darkness of the exile in every generation and, through this story, one can attain pure emunah in the coming geulah / redemption as well as merit the geulah itself.

One can learn how great is the power of sippur yetziat Mitzrayim / relating the story of the Exodus from that which is said about the shofeit / judge Gidon. We read (Shoftim 6:13), "Gidon said to [the angel], 'I beg of you, my master, if Hashem is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all His wonders of which our forefathers told us, saying, "Behold, Hashem brought us up from Egypt?" For now Hashem has deserted us, and He has delivered us into the grip of Midian'." Rashi z"l explains that this discussion took place on Pesach, and Gidon was saying, "Last night my father led me in the recitation of Hallel, and I heard him say, 'When our ancestors left Egypt . . .'" Who was Gidon's father? He was an idolator who was so dedicated to his idolatry that he fattened a bull for seven years in order to prepare it to be an offering to his idol. Even so, when he related the story of the Exodus to his son on Pesach night, he instilled in his son the strength to kill that fattened bull and otherwise risk his life for the Jewish People, ultimately bringing about their salvation from Midian. Note that Gidon received this inspiration despite not being a great believer himself; see Shoftim 6:17.

R' Arieli continues: Salvation from Above depends on our reawakening below and on our willingness to sacrifice ourselves, both traits that come from sippur yetziat Mitzrayim-the foundation of emunah and the key to the miracles that occurred in every later generation. One who recites the words of the Haggadah, "In every generation, one must view himself as if he left Egypt," with innocence and honesty and with pain for the troubles of the Jewish People and the resulting chillul Hashem, as Gidon said, "Where are all His wonders?"- that person will merit what was said to Gidon, "Go with this strength of yours and you shall save Yisrael!" (Quoted in Haggadah Shel Pesach Mi'shulchanam Shel Gedolei Yerushalayim)

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## **Lessons from the Haggadah**

R' Ben Zion Gossenbauer z"l (Komarno, Galicia; early 20th century) lists a number of lessons and benefits that one can take away from different parts of the Pesach Haggadah, including some parts that seem to be tangential:

- (1) We learn from the Haggadah that even when a situation seems hopeless, it is not, for Hashem is capable of saving a person from any predicament. This is why we recite, "Ha lachma anya . . .," for it alludes to the very difficult straits that Bnei Yisrael were in before the Exodus.
- (2) Relating the story of the Exodus instills in a person faith in the Creator and the belief that no one can move a muscle absent His Will. We should not think that our ancestors could not save themselves from Pharaoh only because they were poor or not wise. No one could have saved himself without Hashem's intervention! Therefore, the Haggadah relates, even wise men like Rabbi

Akiva and rich men like Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah must relate the story of the Exodus.

(3) The Haggadah teaches that when G-d decrees that a person should suffer, that suffering will not last a moment longer than was decreed, but it could end earlier as a result of a person's prayer. This is why we tell the wise son the laws of afikoman, which alludes to the "chipazon" / the hurried exit of Bnei Yisrael from Egypt.

(4) The word "sippur" / "telling a story" alludes to the gem called "safir" / "sapphire." This is because by telling the story of the Exodus, we cause great spiritual lights to shine from the Upper Worlds. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Shulchan Ha'tahor p.54)

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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