

Kriyat HaTorah Companion

Questions Raised in Each Aliya

Vayakhel-Pekudei

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Shabbat Shalom

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Italics indicate author's comments

Aliya 1 | 35:1-29

Examine verse 35:1.

When did this gathering, initiated by Moshe, take place? What was the purpose of it?

Rashi suggests that this Moshe-initiated gathering happened the day after *Yom Kippur* when Moshe achieved forgiveness for the Jewish people and received the second set of *Luchot*. The **Ohr HaChaim** is confused that Moshe had to gather the Jewish people to speak to them. Surely they gathered every day to learn from Moshe, so what was different about today? He suggests that now that Moshe was radiant, the Jewish people hesitated in coming to him. Because of this feeling of intimidation, they needed to be actively encouraged to gather to continue learning from Moshe. Who better to do this than Moshe himself?

Aliya 2 | 35:30-37:16

Examine verse 35:30.

Who is Bezalel? Why is his grandfather mentioned here?

Rashi suggests that Hur was the son of Miriam, making Bezalel the great-grandnephew of Moshe. The **Sifte Chakhamim** suggests that **Rashi** is addressing our question above, and connects Bezalel's merit based on who his great-grandmother was. The **Da'at Zkenim** suggests that Moshe had initially thought that he, himself would build the entire *Mishkan*. With the appointment of Bezalel, there was some murmuring in the Jewish community that Moshe was guilty of nepotism. The **Da'at Zkenim** says that Hur is mentioned here to show that Bezalel's work would be in memory of Hur who was murdered by the Jewish people at the golden calf.

Aliya 3 | 37:17-29

Examine verse 37:17.

Why does "Menorah of Gold" mean? Why does the Torah change the way it describes this item from its initial description in Shemot 25:31?

The **Ohr HaChaim** suggests that **Menachot 28b** explains that the Menorah can be made out of any metallic material as indicated by the word *Tay'aseh* (**Shemot 25:31**). The **Ohr HaChaim** points out that the Menorah that Bezalel made needed to be constructed completely of gold. For this reason it is described in this verse as 'Menorat Zahav'. *Perhaps the Menorah that was to bring light into the Mishkan needed to initially be pure gold to reflect the purity of the source of light. As time passed, the light grew darker and therefore the vessel holding the light didn't need as much pure gold.*

Aliya 4 | 38:1-39:1

Examine verse 38:8.

What is the Kiyor? Whose contributions were used to create it and why?

Rashi suggests that it was the women who contributed their mirrors to be hammered into the *Kiyor*. The **Chizkuni** says that the *Kiyor* was placed in a location in the *Mishkan* that was viewable for the women who would visit. The **Kli Yakar** suggests that these mirrors were used for the *Kiyor* because mirrors play the same role as water. Your appearance is shown within them. The *Kiyor* would show the user of it whether they were beautiful and prepared for the service in the *mishkan* or, God forbid, if they were not beautiful and thus not ready for service. **Rabbeinu Bahya** points out that the gold used in the *Mishkan* was used without distinguishing its source, but the *Kiyor* was different.

Aliya 5 | 39:2-21

Examine verse 39:3.

Why does the Torah describe the crafting of this item here? Who created it?

Rashi suggests that this beaten gold was unique in that it was woven into the thread of every material used in the *Mishkan*. A string would be made up of 1 part gold string, 6 parts other material. The **Sforno** suggests that the Torah describes the creation of this gold thread because it was created by the donors themselves and then brought to the *Mishkan* ready to be woven. **Rabbeinu Bahya** suggests that this is the only place the instructions of how to create the material are offered because the creation of golden thread was really unusual. The **Ramban** extends this idea further and says that this was an innovative method and therefore unprecedented.

Aliya 6 | 39:22-43

Examine verse 39:32.

Why isn't Bezalel mentioned in this verse? What do the words 'Kein Asu' add?

Rashi suggests that this simply means that the Jewish people created the *Mishkan* exactly as God had instructed. The **Sforno** says that the work was attributed to the entire Jewish people because everyone played some role in the creation of the *Mishkan*. The **Netziv** points out that we are told in *Ki Tisa* that God's presence will manifest itself because of the work all of the Jewish people will do to build the *Mishkan*. The critical component of this will be that all of the Jewish people play a role in building and creating the *Mishkan*.

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Shabbat Shalom

Aliya 7 | 40:1-38

Examine verse 40:18.

Why doesn't this verse state that Moshe took down the Mishkan before he put it back up? Why didn't Moshe look for help in setting up the Mishkan?

Rabbeinu Bahya writes that, in general, we only try to increase holiness. We certainly do not mention when holiness is decreased. Therefore, the deconstruction of the *Mishkan* is not mentioned here. Only actions that increase holiness are spelled out in the Torah. The **Ibn Ezra** suggests that Moshe needs to put it together the first time to show the Jewish people how it all fits together. *This is consistent with the role of Moshe as a teacher. While everyone was involved in building the Mishkan, Moshe was the glue that held it all together.*