

SHABBAT SHEKALIM

The Wise Heart

Rabbi Hagay Batzri
Edited D. Ezran

In creating a civilization, what should reign supreme above all—pure logic or the wisdom of the heart? At first we might assume our behavior and our choices should be purely logical. But, after we read this week's parasha, Pekudei, we might think differently.

Pekudei explains that a distinction must be made between pure logic and the knowledge of the heart. Pure logic, suggests this week's reading, poses a danger to humans. The Torah expresses protest against the use of logic alone.

Usually the Torah conveys its meaning with few words. But in this parasha the same exact phrase—"As the Lord commanded Moses"—is repeated no less than nineteen times. It is as if the monotonous repetition prods our subconscious into realizing that the whole building of the mishkan, the tabernacle, could not rely only on pure, exact logic alone—that it required the guidance of the Divine, of the Shechina—a holistic, creative, inspirational and unifying force com-

bined with the contribution of the human soul.

In literal terms, the main theme of the parasha is a description of the actual construction of the Tabernacle. But the repetition of "as the Lord commanded Moses" after section upon section of instruction creates a background we could almost ignore, but not quite—like white noise or elevator music. The exact same phrase appears a total of nineteen times (19!) in this week's reading.

Indeed, it raises the issue of whether or not we are paying attention to what we are being taught through the construction of the mishkan. It makes us aware that, drowning within us is a profound awareness of the truth, the truth which is at the center of the construction of the mishkan or Tabernacle.

The truth is that God does not need to a place to dwell; he does not require a house or home. Building the Tabernacle required people—the children of Israel; and they required, they needed, the process of constructing the mishkan. As humans, Bne Yisrael still needed to understand the lessons of Creation—

(Continued on page 2)



Prayer Schedule

SHABBAT SHEKALIM MEVARCHIM HACHODESH

PARASHAT PEKUDEI

Friday, March 4th

Minhah & Arbit 5:25 pm

Candle Lighting 5:33 pm

Saturday, March 5th

Shaharit 8:30 am

Tehillim before Minhah

Minhah & Arbit 5:00 pm

Motzei Shabbat 6:37 pm

WEEKDAYS

Sunday, March 6th

Shaharit 7:30 am

Post-Bat Mitzvah Girls
Group Meeting 3:30 pm

ROSH HODESH ADAR II
Sunday & Monday, March 6-7
Women's Tehillim *at a private home Monday 11 am (Orly Batzri at orlybatzri@gmail.com)*

Monday to Friday

Shaharit 6:30 am

TALMUD TORAH CLASSES
Tuesday & Thursday 4:00 pm

**EREV SHABBAT
PARASHAT VAYIKRA**

Friday, March 11th

Minhah & Arbit 5:30 pm

Candle Lighting 5:39 pm

(Continued from page 1)

Hashem's Creation of the world. Through the process of building the mishkan, they learned that true creation involves the joining of our logical faculties with the wisdom of our hearts and our souls, in accordance with the will and guidance of Hashem.

Left to their own devices, to using logic alone, people would establish spiritual practices and rituals in accordance with the wishes and needs of their lives. They would turn towards whatever seems to fill the spiritual void within them. Left to their own devices, the best architects and builders would have presented Moses with the finest construction plans, to give honor and glory to the work of God. Who knew better than they what they needed? Isn't that what all people do in the world? Isn't that what people do today—create their own personal, spiritual beliefs based on their individual needs and national aspirations?

However, we know that the Tabernacle, was not created in this way. When God agreed to the Jewish people's demand for a spiritual home, a place to feel His presence, He told them, "Did you see the mountain?"—that was Mount Sinai, where the Ten

Commandments and Torah were given (Exodus). Why?

In his Kuzari, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, suggested the following explanation. He implied that without Hashem's guidance, our understanding of the wisdom in the Torah would be useless, or worse, harmful to us in much the same way that a layman sent to select his own medicine in a pharmacy without a doctor's guidance could harm himself. The drugs would be like tools for which he had no name, no understanding. He would simply select them at random, hoping that they would help his ailments.

This is how it is with us when we purport to craft our own "spiritual beliefs" without guidance from Hashem. Using logic, thinking we know what we need, we act like fools. We use logic to create the values that we feel will help and guide us. We try to repair personal, religious, social, national and even international moral problems in this way. However, this is not the true purpose or use of logic. Separated from the wisdom of the heart, from Hashem's divine guidance, cold, pure logic always leads to disaster.

We have seen, in generation after generation, the collapse of values,

which were at one time in vogue and were filled with glory—the Crusades, Nazism, and Communism are only a few of many examples. The blood of millions of innocent people blood has been spilled over charming ideas intended to correct social and human ills, ideas that man, thinking logically, had conceived.

If so, where was people's mistake? **The mistake is this: in our faith that the human potential inherent in reason alone may heal the ravages of spirit.**

An individual person recognizes that to heal himself physically he must often turn to someone outside himself, to forces and knowledge beyond what he possesses. Similarly, humanity, faced with the question—what is our purpose, as people, in the world; or, individually, what is our unique purpose in life—must turn to something beyond the human, beyond pure logic and rationality. The ability to heal our lives, to find a way to build a proper framework for our existence, requires a greater physician than us. We are like the foolish layman randomly selecting medications in the pharmacy. He relies on logic, reading the package instructions perhaps, but not knowing the various diseases or the nature of the various medicinal drugs. In particular, he does not know

anything about the correct dosage of drugs, or how to formulate the medicine.

In this case, pure logic, rather than enabling humanity, has been the cause of its failure. Using logic as our guide, we have been roaring around in the pharmacy of life and history like fools. Consumed with mental distress, we have been searching for purpose in life. But, we have no authoritative information about the nature of life itself.

Going back to the mishkan, to our parasha, Pekudei, and to the phrase repeated nineteen times: Moses built the tabernacle as God commanded him. Emphasis is on every detail of action, made without reliance on human logic. The creators of the Tabernacle were smart. The Torah calls them "the sages of heart." That is, their logic was clean and sharp as a diamond, but their heart—in accordance with the will of Hashem—was involved in deciding and doing, in

(Continued on page 4)



In Memoriam

It is customary to light a memorial candle in the evening and to donate tzedakah. Family members are encouraged to attend prayer services in honor of loved ones.

Shabbat / 29 Adar I
Tefara bat Ezra

*To update, please call the office
at 310.474.0559.*

Refuah Shlemah

Yonatan ben Alizah • Mazal Tov
bat Sulha Mitana • Matilda
Louisa • Yaheskel ben Regina •
Ayala bat Naomi • Khayah Noa
bat Sara • Haim ben Mordechai •
Pnina bat Esther • Yosi ben
Esther • Victor ben Latif • Ramah
Regina bat Farha • Aziza bat Sara
Judith bat Malka • Ofek ben Yochai
• Efrayim Zev ben Fayga • Sulha
Matana bat Mozelle • Gershon ben
David • Farangis Miriam bat
Touran • David ben Leah •
Avraham Haim ben Miryam •
Yaakov ben Freda • Rachel bat
Mazal Tov

Learn to Chant The Haftarah

Wouldn't you like to chant the final portion from the Torah on Shabbat—the portion known as the Haftarah? Reserve a Haftarah reading by calling Sarah in our office at 310.474. 0559. The Haftarah portion can be dedicated in honor of a family event such as a memorial, a bar/bat mitzvah, or a baby-naming. Then, schedule time with Haz-zan Saeed Jalali & learn the authentic Baghdadi ta'amim, Iraqi melodies for singing from the Torah & Tanakh.

Please send your

Donations for KJ's Mishloach Manot

ATTN: Purim Gift Baskets
Kahal Joseph Congregation
10505 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Community News

THANK YOU

The Sisterhood of
Kahal Joseph Congregation

for planning and preparing the
delicious & beautiful luncheon

for last weekend's Lunch &
Learn with Rabbi Tessone

SEUDAH SHLISHEET

is sponsored
in memory of their mother
Clara bat Esther, z"l

by Benjamin F. Elias and Family
& Diana Gazal and Family

KJ's PURIM CARNIVAL IS COMING!

Save the Date
Sunday, March 27, 2011

**Game Booths !
Amazing Food !
& Best the Prizes in Town!**

PURIM MITZVAH: MATANOT L'EVYONIM

GIVING GIFTS TO THE LESS
FORTUNATE FOR PURIM

Abe Abraham will be collecting donations for matanot l'evyonim and contributing them to Tomchei Shabbat, an organization that prepares food boxes for Jewish families on Shabbat and holidays. Please send your contribution by Thursday, March 17, 2011.

Women's Tehillim & Rosh Hodesh Adar

Join Rabbanit Orly Batzri this Monday, March 7th at a private home to read Tehillim and celebrate Rosh Hodesh Adar. Rosh Hodesh is a special time for women. To reserve, please contact Rabbanit Batzri before 5 pm on Sunday at orlysbatzri@gmail.com.

Torah Readings

Parasha pp.385-391
Haftara pp. 992-995
Extra Readings TBA

SHABBAT MITZVOT

We offer for donation the following Mitzvot.

- 1. Petichat Hechal** opening of the ark;
- 2. Carrying of the Sefer Torah & Sefer Haftara;**
- 3. Hakamat Sefer** lifting of the Torah;
- 4. Mashlim*** The seventh aliya to the Torah who recites Kaddish;
- 5. Maftir*** The last aliya to the Torah which includes the Haftara (read by the clergy unless member reading is preapproved). We suggest a minimum donation of \$126 or multiples of \$18 or \$26. You will receive confirmation before Shabbat to confirm if you will receive the aliya. Members may reserve in advance by calling the office. Non-members reserving aliyot should contact the office for availability at 310.474.0559. We appreciate your support.

(Continued from page 2)

constructing a place where Hashem's presence existed among us.

This is true wisdom, when every one of man's actions is fully harmonious with his heart and with Hashem's guidance. Brilliant human architects, left to their own devices, could have constructed amazing buildings, showcasing the unique intelligence of each individual—but these beautiful buildings would have been empty, not a mishkan at all. Even though the mishkan was a physical edifice, Hashem has to be involved in it—in every detail. He had to make sure that it followed his design.

The main quality of those who built the mishkan was "hochmat ha'lev"—wisdom of the heart. The wisdom of the heart meant that they knew, with all their being, that even in our world, when we create something, we must put God in charge of our work. As we say in our prayers, "maaseh yadenu konenehu"—may our handiwork know His will, may what we create be in harmony with Hashem. When we recognize that the value of any logical action depends upon the emotional and spiritual intelligence that accompanies its performance, then we will have found the wise heart.

Shabbat Shalom



Kahal Joseph Congregation Purim Celebration & Seudah

Sunday, March 20th at 3:00 PM

DINNER!

LIVE MUSIC & BAND!

ENTERTAINMENT!

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM!

TICKETS

\$40 / ADULT includes dinner, entertainment
and 2 bar drinks

\$20 / CHILD

includes dinner & children's program

Seudah Purim Celebration

Purim



Baking for Community Gift Baskets



Sunday, March 13th

Starting at **10:00 am**

Do a Mitzvah—or Two!

Give a few hours and have some fun baking treats for Kahal Joseph's beautiful Purim gift baskets. We personally deliver these cheery baskets to many appreciative members of our community. Donations in support of the Purim Baskets mitzvah project are welcomed. Please send your check to:
Kahal Joseph Congregation—Purim Baskets
10505 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A. CA 90025.

For more information
call the office at
310.474.0559 or e-mail
ydabby@sbeglobal.net.



Purim Sameah! ♦♦♦ Happy Purim!