

Parashat Vayakhel-Pekkudei

Shemot 35:1-40:38

March 8, 2018

Ava *Evah bat Orah v'Henry*

YOUR PARASHAH: <http://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.35.1-38.20?lang=bi>

Summary

For the double *parashah* of *Vayakhel-Pekkudei* this week I will be reading *Shemot* chapter 35, verses 1-3, from *Vayakhel*. In *Vayakhel* we read about Moshe gathering together the Israelites to remind them about the importance of taking Shabbat as a day of rest.

Moshe also reviews God's instructions to the Israelites for building the אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד and sets the wise-hearted artists Betzalel and Oholiav as the people to lead the work.

When Moshe asks for the Israelites to donate the materials needed to build the אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד , they give so much that he has to ask them to stop giving. The artists then get right to work.

By the end of *Vayakhel* they have built the tent to go over the אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד as well as the screen for the entrance to the אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד , the ark, the *kruvim*--which some people translate it as angels--that sit on top of its cover, the bread table, the seven-branched *menorah* and the copper washbowl and stand.

Questions

1) In this week's *parashah* we learn that God has singled out Betzalel and Oholiav to be the artists responsible for building the *Mishkan* not only because they are highly skilled in so many different arts but also because each of them is *hacham lev--wise-hearted*. Why would God ask Moshe to choose people who are wise-hearted to build the *Mishkan*? <<pick 3>>

Building a place that can be a home for God takes more than being skilled in making beautiful things. It is a big job and will mean working with lots of different people. Wise-hearted might mean that they are comfortable reaching out to others for help.

2) We also read in the week's *parashah* that when Moshe asked the Israelites to donate all of the things that were needed to build the *Mishkan*, people were overly generous. They brought and brought until the artists had more than they needed, and Moshe had to stop them from giving. If people were feeling so generous, why do you think Moshe would stop them from giving to build the *Mishkan*? <<pick 3>>

Maybe the artists saw that they were not going to be able to use all of the things that people were giving so they told Moshe that they were receiving too many gifts. Maybe being wise-hearted meant that Betzalel and Oholiav knew that it was important that the *Mishkan* be able to be carried with the Israelites as they moved so that there would always be a place for God in the camp. They wanted to make sure that the *Mishkan* would not be too heavy for the Israelites to carry.

3) Why do you think the Israelites might be overly generous and give too much--even of really expensive gifts? <<pick 3>>

I think it might be because they see that it is important to have a place for God in their community. They *want* to be closer to G!d, but they grew up as slaves and they might have a tough time trusting others so they could be afraid that they have to give since others might not.