



March 13-14, 2026

כה אדר תשפ"ו

Candle Lighting 6:48 PM

Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei ויקהל - פקודי

Exodus 35:1-40:38

Stone - p 516

Hertz - p 373

Etz Hayim - p 552

Special **Maftir (Ha-Chodesh)**

Exodus 12:1-20

Stone - p 348

Hertz - p 253

Etz Hayim - p 380

Haftarah (Ha-Chodesh)

Ezekiel 45:16-46:18

Stone - p 1218

Hertz - p 1001

Etz Hayim - p 1291

Kiddush following services
is sponsored by the congregation

Shabbat ends 7:49 PM

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon - Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com

Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director -
traditionalcong@gmail.com

WEEKDAY AND **SHABBAT** SERVICES

Tuesday - 6:30 PM

Shabbat - 9:30 AM

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We welcome new members!
If you or someone you know would like to receive
membership information,
please contact our office at 314-576-5230
or traditionalcong@gmail.com

On This Week's Parashah - Vayakhel-Pekudei

Back in 1981, when I was attending rabbinical college in Boston, there was a young rabbi – fresh out of seminary – who founded a small congregation in the Boston suburb South Brookline. He would often hang out with us as "one of the guys." From the day he started up his synagogue, he was quite successful. He developed a strong following and quickly put his name on the map. I often wondered to myself wherein lay the key to his success and popularity. Upon meeting him, one really could not notice anything particularly remarkable about him.

One day, I picked up a newspaper only to find a picture of this young rabbi sitting and chatting with President Ronald Reagan in the Oval Office, accompanied by a write-up about how he was sharing the message of Chanukah with the president. The story was carried nationally. That was enough for me. I had to find out how this young "shnook" was doing it. I asked him how he managed to accomplish all of these wonderful things. He put it very simply: "It's because I want to. It's not about brilliance, eloquence and experience [though those things are certainly useful and important] as much as it is about confidence, persistence and performance."

He went on to say: "Look, I decided I had something to say to the president and that I wanted to meet with him, so I went out there and made it happen."

In the Torah portion of Vayakhel-Pekudei, we learn about the various items contributed by the different groups among the Israelites toward the building of the Holy Tabernacle (Mishkan) during the journey in the desert. The Torah tells us that the Nesi'im – the leaders of the tribes – donated the precious gems for the breastplate of the High Priest.

The commentator Rashi takes note of the fact that when using the word "Nesi'im" to describe the leaders' participation, the Torah deliberately misspells it as "Nesm" as an indication of a flaw and deficiency in the leaders' manner of participation.

What was the flaw? You see, when the time came for each group to come forward and state what they would give, the leaders volunteered that they would cover whatever was missing after all other donations came in. As it turned out, the outstanding items were the stones and, as such, this was their contribution.

Now why is this manner of service – agreeing to underwrite whatever was not already covered – somehow deemed deficient? After all, it demonstrated a willingness to be there in whatever capacity they'd be called upon. And, in fact, they did end up donating some rather pricey materials. Where was the flaw in their approach?

The keys to the success of any significant project are capability and motivation. Potential + perseverance = success. Now between the two, which is primary? Our sages teach us, "There is nothing that can stand in the way of one's genuine will and desire (ratzon)." Simply put, skill without will leaves one an underachiever, whereas drive and perseverance enables one to rise above one's shortcomings and achieve greatness.

For example, this Torah portion describes the workers who volunteered to build the Tabernacle as "every man whose heart inspired him." These Israelites had absolutely no experience in this type of unique construction. What then made them qualified to carry it forth? The answer: Their "hearts inspired them." In other words, they had a desire. They were eager to do it. And by virtue of this desire and eagerness, they became qualified and rose to the occasion.

This is what G-d wants to see from us. "Don't tell Me how talented or untalented you are," the Almighty says. "Just tell me what you're ready and willing to do, and let Me worry about the 'able' part."

So they ask these Heads of the Tribes: "What will you folks be donating to the Tabernacle?" Essentially, they answer, "Well ... whatever. Just give us a call when all is said and done and let us know where you need us to come in. Metals, boards, stones – we've got it all."

That's very nice – extremely generous. It's nice to know what you're capable of. As leaders of the Jewish people, however, these tribe leaders should have demonstrated that when there is a call for action, it is not a time to talk about what you can do, but what you will do. With the excitement of the construction campaign in the air, they should have been the first in line – not the last – to act with initiative, diligence and specificity. Their failure to do so, however well-intended, is seen as a deficiency.

We're taught that the most essential ingredient is not contemplation or analysis, but action. When we're presented with an opportunity to do a mitzvah, to become more religiously observant or to get involved in a worthwhile endeavor, let us lighten up a bit on the philosophical introspection and self-examination and "Just do it!" It is not when we become spiritual that we can first decide to act spiritual. Indeed, it is only if we act spiritual that we can become spiritual.

I've seen it time and time again; it really is not about brilliance, eloquence and experience as much as it is about confidence, persistence and performance. In fact, I think I would like to have a conversation about this very issue with the President. Hmmm....

**Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Moshe Bryski**

Rabbi Bryski is executive director of Chabad of Agoura Hills and dean of the Conejo Jewish Academy

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Thank you to **David Holden** for once again creating fun cards and keeping every donation order straight!

Thank you to our chairpersons,
Nikki Goldstein & Mimi Levy,
for their always-creative take on Purim,
for shopping and schlepping,
packing and labeling,
and making this project happen!!

Thank you to **Jackie Webster** for setting up/breaking down assembly tables.

And thank you to everyone who participated by gifting Mishloach Manot!!

PRAYER

All Israelites are siblings, responsible for one another.

If there be among you a needy person, do not harden your heart.

Shut not your hand to your needy siblings, but surely open your hand to them.

Blessed are they who consider the poor; God will deliver them in days of evil.

Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, for all who are threatened with destruction.

They who shut their ears to the cry of the needy, shall one day cry themselves, and not be answered.

They who give to the poor shall be blessed with abundance,
But they that hide their eyes shall themselves be in need.

They that are gracious to the needy, honor their Maker, but they that oppress the poor, blaspheme God.

Let the poor rejoice in your joy; share with them your blessings.

Generous hearts shall be enriched, and they that satisfy others shall be satisfied themselves.

They who give when well, their gift is gold;
They who give only when ill, their gift is silver;
They who give only in their wills, their gift is copper.

From You O God, comes our wealth, and from Your own do we give You

Unknown

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Today I bent the truth to be kind and I have no regret, for I am far surer of what is kind than I am of what is true.

Robert Brault