



Jewish Community Center of Paramus

A Home, A Family, A Spiritual Community



VaYakhel

Shmot (Exodus) 35:1 - 38:20

In *Parshiyot Terumah* and *Tetzaveh*, which we read a few weeks ago, G-d gave Moses the instructions for building the *Mishkan*, the portable sanctuary that the people used for worship while in the desert. That section of Torah concludes with *Parshat Ki Tissa*, which has a warning to observe Shabbat. Now in *Parshat VaYakhel*, before instructing the Children of Israel on how the *Mishkan* was to be built and furnished, Moses reminds them that on "six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of solemn rest to the Lord." Our Rabbis understand this repetition of warning to observe Shabbat to teach that although the *Mishkan* is sacred, the Shabbat is even more so. Jewish history has proven this insight; while we have lived for 1900 years without the Temple, the Shabbat is still at the heart of Jewish observance.

Moses asks the people to make contributions for the sanctuary, and the people respond willingly and generously. The men came with jewels, gold and silver, fine linens and animal skins, brass and acacia wood. Those women, who were able to do so, spun the linen in shades of blue, purple and scarlet. The leaders of the tribes of Israel donated precious stones, spices and oil, and every man and woman brought a freewill offering to the Lord. Their generosity was so overwhelming that Bezalel, Oholiav and their assistants were compelled to tell Moses that the people had brought more than was necessary; the Israelites, therefore, were restrained from offering more. May we be as fortunate in our generation!



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