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Parshiyot VaYakhel-Pekudei
Shabbat HaChodesh
March 13, 2021 – 29 Adar 5781

This Shabbat completes the Four Parshiyot cycle. There are two Sifrei Torah taken out of the ark. The first is for the parashah (in this case two parshiyot) of the week, and the second is for Parashat HaChodesh.

Shabbat HaChodesh is taken from Parashah Bo and begins with the words: “This month shall be to you the head of the months.”

This is significant in that the Torah declares that Nissan is the first month of the year. It is also meaningful in that the commandment for Passover is given, in that the lamb is taken on the tenth (of Nissan) and sacrificed on the eve of the fifteenth (of Nissan).

In the Gemara of Rosh HaShanah it opens with the statement: “there are four days in the year that serve as a New Year, each for a different purpose: On the first of Nissan it is the New Year for kings. It is from this date that the year of king’s rule is counted. The first of Nissan is also the New Year for the order of the Festivals, as it determines which is considered the first Festival of the year and which is the last.”

What we learn from this is that Passover is the “first” Festival of the year. It is the Festival of “Freedom”, and freedom should be first when “a People” are born; and it was at this time, that one could opine, “B’nei Yisrael” were born.

Let us now turn to the double Parshiyot VaYakhel-Pekudei. Our double parshah deals primarily with the building of the Tabernacle. Moses is directed with the task of getting it built. All kinds of gold, silver, bronze, skins and precious stones are donated. It is to Moshe that everything donated is brought.

There is a story that is told that says people were speaking negatively about Moses saying that he became rich from the donations of Bnei Yisrael. Then Moshe heard another response which said; “why shouldn’t the builder of the Mishkan be wealthy?”

Moses responded to such talk saying; “I’ll give you a full accounting upon completion.” The question is how could the people not trust Moses? The answer is that cynicism overrides reason and truth. Moses could only defend himself with an accounting.

Today, in the time of social media and political rhetoric cynicism has become the normal commentary. Truth and trust are becoming old ideas and values of the past. All those who value truth and respect must be aware that they are forever values that bring us all to a better future.

Shabbat Shalom!
Rabbi Nathan W. Langer

