



## **Parashat VaYakhel-Shekalim**

### **29 Adar I 5784 – March 9, 2024**

The word VaYakhel is derived from the word kahal. Kahal means congregation or assembly. “And Moses gathered/assembled the Children of Israel...” Why did Moses gather them? To instruct them about Shabbos and building a Tabernacle. The next question is, why does Moses exhort the people to observe Shabbos before instructing them to build the Tabernacle?

This can best be explained with a parable. A monarch was planning to build a new palace. He called upon his most skilled architects, builders, and artisans. This monarch consulted with them for a long time and gave them a list of detailed instructions on how to put this glorious structure together. There would be glorious rooms with balconies for beautiful views of the grounds. The furniture was luxurious with beautiful tapestries filling the rooms.

It happened one night that the monarch’s spouse became upset and said, “You are paying too much attention to this new palace, I feel like you have forgotten me.” This monarch heard the message and planned a banquet in honor of the spouse.

Shabbos made a complaint to HaShem, “You made me holy when You created the universe. Now B’nei Yisrael will forget me and not truly rest because of their love in building You a Tabernacle!” That argument from Shabbos is why Moses exhorts the people not to neglect Shabbos for what they think is a greater cause, even the building of a house for HaShem.

As we approach Purim, we had two special Torah readings for Maftir. The first is Shekalim, which is this Shabbos. It reminds us that the time of Purim was a time of judgment for B’nei Yisrael. The half shekel was the way of taking a census of B’nei Yisrael. Our Sages teach us that the offer of 10,000 Shekalim (silver pieces) was made by Achashverosh to Haman to destroy the Jews. He was hopeful that amount would offset the amount of half shekalim that B’nei Yisrael made in the Sinai wilderness. We all know it didn’t. While there still may be Hamans and Achashveroshs of the world, they will never have an amount to equal the half shekel of B’nei Yisrael!

Good Shabbos!

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