



ויקהל-פקודי
Vayakhel
Pekudei

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ENHANCING YOUR STUDY OF THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

שבת החדש

THE IMPORTANCE OF BITACHON

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Our parsha opens with Moshe assembling the Jewish people in order to communicate many of Hashem's directives regarding the Mishkan. However, before elaborating

on these details Moshe first warns the people about keeping Shabbat: "Work may be done for six days..." (Shmot 35:2). A question has been raised by a number of commentators: why is the *lashon* of the pasuk passive תַּעֲשֶׂה--instead of active (*ta'aseh*)? Implied is that one's work during the week will be done by itself.

The Mechilta on this verse comments that when Israel obeys the will of God, their work will be done by others. The Lubavitcher Rebbe (Likkutei Sichot v.1 p. 187) points out that this comment can be interpreted as an

attitude that a Jew should incorporate into his avodat Hashem: during his six days of work, a Jew should be occupied, but not preoccupied, by the mundane.

The Psalmist (128:2) writes: "If you will eat the labor of your hands, you will be happy and it will be well with you". The Alter Rebbe (Likkutei Torah, Shelach 42d) reveals the Chassidut behind the pasuk: that the labor in which one engages should only be of one's hands. That is, one's thoughts and feelings must remain bound up with Torah while his external self is engaged in the outside world. Only then will "you be happy - in this world -- and it will be well with you - in the World to Come" (Brachot 8a).

The conclusion from the discussion above is that only a man's practical faculties should be engaged in work, and that working should only be for fashioning a vessel for Hashem's brachot. This is the meaning behind the pasuk "And Hashem your God will bless you in all that you do" (Devarim 15:18). To go beyond what the Torah deems necessary work demonstrates a lack of *bitachon* (trust) that our substance comes from God, as a per-

son with strong *bitachon* in God has a calm resolve regarding his livelihood (and all matters of his life; Chavot HaLevavot: Sha'ar HaBitachon).

Taking this concept one step further, Chassidut brings down that *bitachon* itself serves as a medium that draws down brachot from above (Likkutei Sichot v.26, p.95). A man once came to the Tzemach Tzedek asking for a bracha of *refuah* for his son. Unlike the approach of other Chassidic rebbeim who would yield his request, the Tzemach Tzedek responded: “*Tracht gut vet zein gut* (think good and it will be good)”. That is, he told the chassid that bringing down brachot by thinking positively is a capability not only reserved for tzaddikim.

With all of the above, one can take away a deeper meaning from the opening pesukim of our parsha: the passive voice of “work may be done” reveals a hidden lesson that our thoughts can affect reality. By having a calm demeanor we demonstrate that we have trust that Hashem will provide for our needs. The challenge in our lives is not how hard we need to work to provide for our families, but rather how much trust we need to have that our six days of work are solely a vessel for Hashem’s brachot to be revealed.

MINOR CHANGE, MAJOR DIFFERENCE

TALIA STAUBER ('20)

THE FIRST WORDS OF THIS WEEK’S SECOND PARSHA, Parshat Pekudei, are, “אלה פקודי המשכן”--“These are the accountings of the Mishkan...” (38:21). In פרשת משפטים, the words, “ואלה המשפטים”--“And these are the laws...” (21:1) are used.

What is the significance of *ואלה* versus *אלה*? Rashi states, “כָּל מְקוֹם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אֵלֶּה”-- “Wherever it says ‘these’ in the Torah,” “פֹּסֵל אֶת הָרְאוּשׁוֹנִים”--“it is rejecting that which has been stated previously”; “ואֵלֶּה”--“however, *ואלה* is used to add something to the former subject.”

In this parsha, the word *אלה* is utilized, not *ואלה*, so one might ask: What previous accounting is the word *אלה* dismissing in this parsha if we follow Rashi’s ap-

proach, which is that the use of the word *אלה* signifies a rejection of something stated previously?

The word *אלה* dismisses the previous account of the Jewish people giving their wealth to the creation of the golden calf, which is considered the greatest sin the Jewish people committed. Therefore, it is possible that this *אלה* shows us how God dismissed this sin of the golden calf; we also see this when the pasuk continues with calling the Mishkan “the Mishkan of Testimony,” “משכן העדות,” to bear testimony to God’s forgiveness of this great sin. We can glean from this specific terminology how God does not only forgive us for our sins, but once we do proper teshuva, He considers them as if they had never happened.

PROPER PRIORITIES

YITZY LANNER ('19)

IN LAST WEEK’S PARSHA, PARSHAT KI TISA, HASHEM FINISHES GIVING MOSHE the details of how to build the Mishkan that he began giving to him in Parshiyot Terumah and Tetzaveh. Only after completing the commandment of the Mishkan does Hashem tell Moshe about a second mitzvah, Shabbat.

In this week’s Torah portion, Vayakhel (and Pekudei), it’s Moshe’s turn to relay these mitzvot to Bnei Yisrael. Oddly enough, when Moshe shares these mitzvot with the Jews, he flips the order of the two mitzvot. Moshe, in the first few lines of this week’s parsha, first tells the Jewish nation about the laws of Shabbat, and then he spends the remainder of the parsha telling them about the laws of the Mishkan. Why does Hashem put these two mitzvot in a certain order and then Moshe flips that order? What is the difference between these two ways of conveying the same two commandments?

The Kli Yakar gives a beautiful answer to this question. The Mishkan, as he points out, is a mitzvah where Hashem shows us, the Jewish people and the world, just how great and special we are. How blessed and fortunate are we that of all the nations and religions of the world, Hashem chose to build His home in OUR community. Shabbat, on the other hand, is when we, the Jewish people, show Hashem how great and special He is. We pause our busy lives once

a week to remember that He created the world and turned us into a nation when He freed us from Egypt.

The answer to our question may have already jumped out at you. When Hashem told over the mitzvot to Moshe, He first gave Moshe the laws of the Mishkan, and then the laws of Shabbat to demonstrate to Moshe His priorities. Hashem puts the Jewish people's greatness before His own when giving the laws to Moshe in that specific order. Then, when Moshe relays the laws over to the Jewish people, he flips the order and speaks about the laws of Shabbat first and only afterwards discusses the laws of the Mishkan. This way, Moshe conveys his priorities by putting Hashem's greatnesses and wonders before his own and those of his fellow people.

The lesson to take away from this is that the only way to have a genuine meaningful relationship with someone else is to put the needs and thoughts of the other person before his own. One should always prioritize by putting the other person ahead of himself. The relationship between Hashem and Moshe truly demonstrates a proper relationship for us to learn from and apply to our own lives.

BUILD-A-BAYIT

SARA MERKIN ('17)

IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA, WE READ ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MISHKAN and how Moshe was essentially the contractor, overseeing the process. However, when learning about the Beit Hamikdash, we often question why David was not allowed to build it, and the common answer given is that he fought too many wars to build such a holy Temple. Yet the Torah tells us in Sefer Shmot that Moshe killed an Egyptian and he was involved in wars in the desert, such as the war with Amalek. If so, why wasn't Moshe disqualified like David was? To explain this contradiction there is a Midrash that explains that when David questioned God on the matter, God said that if David were to build the Beit Hamikdash, it would be so holy that God would never be able to destroy it and would have to take His anger out on the nation instead.

Why is it that God couldn't bear to destroy something David would make, but had no issue letting Moshe, who was closer to Him than David was, make

a Mishkan that would be constantly dismantled and rebuilt?

Moshe and David had fairly different relationships with God, although both were extremely close and respectful. Moshe's relationship was a constant power struggle in the eyes of the people. God continually had to ensure that the nation didn't view Moshe as a god. In contrast, David was seen as very far from a God in the eyes of the nation. He started his career as a simple and unassuming shepherd, unlike Moshe who began life as a prince. Moshe already began with a higher status in society, and in Egypt at the time the kings were worshipped as gods, so the people could have easily aligned Moshe with that mindset, but not David, who came from a humble background.

Additionally, David made many mistakes, and the Tanach goes out of its way to point out those situations, while the Torah focuses more on Bnei Yisrael's sins rather than Moshe's. The people saw David as a very human king and didn't think of him as God, since he gave the impression of an extremely God-fearing human being who was there to simply follow God's desires.

It is possible to claim that God needed to have Moshe make the Mishkan since it was constantly being created and destroyed and wasn't a permanent figure -- just like Moshe, a mortal, wasn't permanent. If it had been permanent, then the Jews may have started to use it to worship Moshe. The act of taking the Mishkan apart and rebuilding it reminds them that they are there to worship God and Moshe is only a messenger. In David's situation, since he was so God-fearing and there was no doubt in the people's minds of the separation between David and God, the Beit Hamikdash could have been built as a long-term structure. But, God wouldn't have wanted to dishonor David and the legacy he created by unnecessarily taking out his anger on the one thing that still represented undying faith in God and he would have to release it on the people instead. Therefore, Moshe was allowed to oversee and essentially create the Mishkan while David was not.



SHINING OUR OWN LIGHT

AVIGAYIL BROIDE ('18)

ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל

“And Moses gathered all the congregation of the people of Israel together...”

(Shmot 35:1)

THE OHR HACHAIM ASKS, WHY IS IT NECESSARY for the Torah to tell us that Moshe had to assemble Bnei Yisrael to command them what Hashem told him? Doesn't Moshe tell Bnei Yisrael things all the time and they usually just come and listen? The Torah doesn't usually say that he actively gathers them. The answer is that specifically here Moshe had to assemble the nation because of how last week's parsha ended. Last week's parsha ends with a discussion of the light shining from Moshe's face: “Aharon and Bnei Yisrael saw Moshe and behold, the skin of his face had become radiant; and they feared to approach him” (34:35). The Ohr Hachaim explains from that pasuk that the Jews were afraid to approach Moshe because they were in awe and fear of the unique light coming from Moshe's face, so he had to go out of his way to assemble Bnei Yisrael to get them to come.

But how did Moshe convince the Jews to assemble? What did he tell them in order to suppress their fear of him? Well, what was he gathering them to command them about? He was gathering them to tell them about Shabbat! The Baal Haturim beautifully says that the reason for the juxtaposition of the beginning of this week's parsha discussing Shabbat and the ending of last week's parsha with the light of Moshe's face is that Moshe was telling them, “You guys are in awe of the light of my face!? You don't understand! The light radiating from my face is nothing relative to the light that a Jew can attain from observing Shabbat!

The message that Moshe is relaying to the Jews is extremely powerful. It is common for people to underestimate their potential, especially in religious matters. Moshe is saying, my light that you are in awe of, YOU can achieve so much greater than that!

Moshe and his face, the Mishkan, open miracles, Neviim, and Chazal are all gone but fortunately for us, the avenue for the greatest light, Shabbat, will always exist. We need to take advantage of this special gift from Hashem, appreciate its holiness, and not let it go to waste. Most importantly, we can never underestimate our abilities of what we can achieve in all matters, as we say in the first line of Kedusha, “Let us sanctify Your name in this world, as the angels do on high.” We can bring holiness in the world at the level of the angels in *shamayim*.

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