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maskil Le'David

Man's Organs and the Holy Vessels of the Mishkan

"Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and said to them: 'These are the things that Hashem commanded, to do them'" (Shemot 35:1).

Why specifically now did Moshe assemble all the Jewish people, but not when he spoke to them at other times? What was unique about this command? The Ramban explains that after Moshe broke the Luchot [and subsequently gained forgiveness for Bnei Yisrael], he told Aharon, the leaders, and all male members of Bnei Yisrael everything Hashem had commanded him on Har Sinai. He then reassembled everyone, this time including the women, and spoke to them once again. He told them about the Mishkan, which, before he broke the Luchot, he had been commanded to fashion. And that now that Hashem had forgiven them, given them the second Luchot, and renewed His covenant that He will dwell in their midst, they have regained their previous status and love. It was now clear that Hashem's Shechina will rest among them, as He had previously expressed in the command, "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so I may dwell among them." Therefore Moshe now repeated everything he had been commanded originally.

It is clear from the Ramban that Moshe assembled Bnei Yisrael to tell them that the Shechinah will once again rest among them. When someone announces good news to others, he relates it at length, and this is the reason Moshe repeated the work of the Mishkan in detail.

Hashem was pleased with this and dedicated four *parshiyot* detailing and repeating the labor of the Mishkan (Terumah, Tetzaveh, Vayakhel and Pekudei): Terumah and Tetzaveh deal with Hashem's command to Moshe about the construction of the Mishkan, in the first part of Vayakhel Moshe repeats Hashem's words to Bnei Yisrael, and the second half of Vayakhel and Pekudei detail the work that was carried out. Why was this? After forgiving them for the sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem wanted to show

His affection for Bnei Yisrael and tell them that His Shechina will once again rest among them. Hashem wanted them to know that the purpose of creation is for Hashem to have a dwelling place in the Lower World, as Chazal say (*Midrash Tanchuma*), "When Hashem created the world, He desired a place in the Lower World as He has in the Upper World."

However, even though the Shechinah returned to the Lower World, it was manifested in a different way. Originally, Hashem's Presence in This World was similar to His Presence in the Upper World, and the whole world was filled with His glory. He did not condense His Presence to one location. But after Bnei Yisrael sinned with the Golden Calf, and Hashem said (*Shemot* 32:34), "On the day I make My account, I shall bring their sin to account against them," the Shechinah was confined to the Mishkan.

We learn that Hashem wished to rest His Shechinah among Bnei Yisrael themselves and not only in the Mishkan, from the words "They shall make for Me a Sanctuary so I may dwell among them." It does not say "inside it" but "among them." Before they sinned, Hashem wanted to reside inside each and every Jew. This is why although Moshe had not done so previously, he now assembled all Bnei Yisrael. He wished to impart the message that they should learn from the Mishkan to sanctify and rectify their own selves, and thereby become a fitting miniature Mishkan for Hashem's Presence.

The Midrash says (*Kohelet Rabba* 1:4) that Hashem created a resemblance in the land for everything He created in man. It can be said that a person's mind, where the soul resides, corresponds to the Mishkan and Mikdash — the resting place for the Shechina. Chazal compare the soul to the Shechina (*Berachot* 10a), as we know that man's soul contains part of the G-dly essence. Man's heart corresponds to the Aron in which the Luchot and Sefer Torah were placed, as Chazal say (*Berachot* 61b), "The heart understands."

The Mishkan resembles man in This World. Just as the Mishkan was dismantled and erected every time Bnei Yisrael journeyed and camped, and also accompanied them on all their travels, so too this is the way man must travel around in This World. Even though we sometimes fail to overcome our challenges, we must nevertheless continually strengthen ourselves in our *avodat* Hashem, just like the Mishkan was frequently dismantled yet erected each time anew.

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Vayakhel

Parshat Parah



Hilula

22 Adar

Rabbi Shlomo Zafrani,
Rosh Yeshiva of Keter Torah

23 Adar

Rabbi Yeshayahu Pinto, zy"ta

24 Adar

Rabbi Eliyahu Hakohen,
author of *Shevet Mussar*

25 Adar

Rabbi Shabtai
the bookbinder

26 Adar

Rabbi David Halevi,
author of *Turei Zahav*

27 Adar

Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv,
author of *Leshem Shevo*
v'Achlama

28 Adar

Rabbi Mordechai Chevronei,
Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron





PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

The Best Time for Unity

“Moshe assembled the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael” (*Shemot* 35:1).

This assembly of Bnei Yisrael took place the day after Yom Kippur (*Rashi*). The Kli Yakar explains that the purpose of the assembly was to instill peace between them, for “A person cannot live in a basket together with a snake.” Since Moshe wanted to inform the nation about the construction of the Mishkan, in which they would all participate, it was as if he was placing them together in one living space. Therefore, he first had to unite them.

Since all Bnei Yisrael’s encampments took place with argument and separation, it would seem impossible to assemble them all together in unity. Therefore, Moshe decided it would be wise to gather them together on the day following Yom Kippur, since peace reigns among the people on Yom Kippur and they are united. So on the following day it would be easier to bring them together.

The Rush to Donate for the Mishkan

“The entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael left Moshe’s presence” (*Shemot* 35:20).

The holy Ohr Hachaim, *zy”a*, explains the stress on the words, Bnei Yisrael left “מלפני משה,” literally translated as “before Moshe.” Bnei Yisrael were concerned that Moshe would personally bring everything required for the Mishkan, since he greatly desired to perform Hashem’s command. He also had the means to do this as he possessed much wealth. Therefore, they rushed to bring their contributions, so they would manage to do so “before Moshe,” meaning before Moshe would precede them and donate everything required for building the Mishkan.

The Fifth and Sixth Section of Shulchan Aruch

“He filled him with G-dly spirit, with wisdom, insight, and knowledge” (*Shemot* 35:31).

The above-mentioned verse refers to Betzalel. A few verses later it says, “He gave him the ability to teach.” This seems to be unnecessary repetition since if he was filled with wisdom and insight, then certainly he was capable of ruling in halacha.

Rabbi Yosef Binyamin Vosner, explains in the name of his grandfather the Gaon Rabbi Shmuel Halevi Vosner, *zt”l*: Hidden in these words lies an important foundation with regard to determining halachic rulings. A person can be filled with wisdom and understanding, but will not necessarily know how to decide matters of law, since knowing how to rule and being able to take all the necessary details into account, requires a special blessing.

He added that there is a well-known maxim that in order to decide halachic rulings one also needs to be familiar with the fifth section of Shulchan Aruch (in fact there are only four sections). What is the fifth section? How to interact with people. Rav Vosner went one stage further and said that over the years he learnt the sixth section of Shulchan Aruch, which teaches appropriate conduct when faced with those who cannot be considered as people.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust
penned by Moreinu v’Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi
David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

A Tzaddik Sees Far Afield

Once, while staying in Lyon, France, a woman came to me and told me that after her mother’s marriage, she did not have children for many years. In her distress, she went to the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, *zy”a*, and asked him for a blessing for children. To her surprise, the tzaddik asked her to give him a certain amount of money, multiplied by three, so the merit of the mitzvah of tzedakah would be a conduit through which his blessing could be fulfilled. When the lady asked why she needs to multiply the amount by three, he replied that he wishes to include her daughter and granddaughter in the blessing. She did as Rabbi Chaim requested and indeed not long after, with Hashem’s great kindness, she gave birth to a baby girl.

Many years later, the headlines broadcasted shocking news. A plane flying from Lyon to Strasbourg had crashed, killing all its passengers besides a single survivor who had miraculously remained alive. This survivor was called Mrs. Levi, and she was the one who came to me and told me the story. Now she understands, she said, why the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim had asked her mother to give him a threefold amount of money. For what is the point of being blessed with offspring if one generation later they will be severed?

When I heard this story I began to tremble. Here was proof of a tzaddik’s far-reaching and all-encompassing vision. They are able to anticipate the future and calculate their steps accordingly.

Hearing these kinds of stories strengthens our *emunat chachamim* (faith in our great leaders). This inspiration should not remain merely as a feeling, but it should initiate some action. Each person must take this lesson to heart and be scrupulous about fulfilling the Torah commandment (*Devarim* 17:10), “You shall be careful to do according to everything that they will teach you.” Even if, at first, the Rav’s instructions seem puzzling, one must follow them blindly (see *Shoftim* 11), for it is only the *gedolei hador*, with their sharp vision, who can anticipate the future and foresee the results.

The reason they are endowed with this power is because they are bound up with the commands of Hashem which gladden the heart and enlighten the eyes. Each and every person can transform himself into a dwelling place for the Shechina, through occupying himself with Torah and fulfilling its commandments.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

The Rav who Saw the Vessels of the Mikdash

In the summer of 5689, the King of Italy, Vittorio Emanuel III, went to visit a number of countries that were under his rule.

The Jewish population of Tripoli arranged a beautiful reception in the king's honor, and the climax of the visit was his arrival, accompanied by the entire royal entourage, at the congregation's *beit kneset*. The town's elderly Rav, Rabbi Yitzchak Chai Bokovza, *zt"l*, went out to welcome the king, together with the leaders and the rest of the congregation.

The entourage entered the *beit kneset*. The king stood on the *bimah* next to the Aron Hakodesh, and the Heichal was opened, revealing the Sifrei Torah that glistened in all their magnificence and splendor. The king was fascinated by the sight. Harav Bokovza melodiously recited the blessing, "... Who grants salvation to the kings," while a translator translated the content of the blessing. With great emotion, the congregation answered "Amen" on hearing this rare blessing. The king was truly gratified by the great honor he was accorded by the Jewish congregation, and he was especially captivated by the Rav. The king shook the Rav's hand, thanking him for the heartfelt blessing, and as a sign of appreciation gave the Rav a decoration of honor from the Italian government.

As they took leave, the king invited the Rav for a reciprocate visit to Rome, to join the celebration for the prince's upcoming wedding. The Rav answered that it would be difficult for him, as it would take him away from his Torah studies. The king replied that he will send his royal ship and the Rav should come together with his wife and several *talmidei chachamim*. In this way the Rav will be able to continue his regular Torah study. And so Rav Bokovza agreed.

On the appointed day, the king's ship was sent to fetch the Rav and his *talmidim*. On arrival in Rome, the Rav was welcomed with great honor and taken to the king's palace, where the magnificent wedding was set up. All the distinguished leaders and officials of Rome were seated around the tables, together with the many guests who had come to participate in this joyous occasion.

After the wedding, the Rav was invited to an audience with the king. The Rav was welcomed with great honor and the king agreed to fulfill all requests on behalf of the Jewish congregation. Finally, the king asked the Rav if he has any personal request. At first the Rav refused and said he doesn't need anything for himself, but after the king insisted, the Rav asked for permission to enter the Vatican, where several of the holy vessels from the Beit Hamikdash were concealed. At first, the king explained that he could not authorize such a visit since the Vatican was not under his authority. But when the king saw that the Rav was not interested in any other favor, he spoke to the Pope and even exerted pressure. Eventually, the Pope agreed to allow the Rav to enter the Vatican on the following day, on his own.

Throughout that night the Rav secluded himself, sanctifying himself by learning Torah. After praying the morning prayers, he set out for the place where they had arranged to meet. His *talmidim* waited outside the gate, while a servant from the Vatican accompanied the Rav inside. They went down to the basement where the servant moved aside a curtain behind which the vessels of the Mikdash were held. Rav Bokovza glanced at the vessels for just one moment and then announced that he wished to leave, explaining that he had seen enough.

The *talmidim*, who were waiting for their Rav with eager anticipation, imagined that he would leave the Vatican with his face shining. However, the Rav seemed distant and did not utter a word. He immediately set out on the return journey to Tripoli. Once home, he began a *ta'anit dibbur* which he kept for forty days, during which he studied Torah without interruption. After forty days, at the age of seventy-seven, he returned his soul to his Maker. And the secret of what he saw was buried with him.



FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

The Holiness of Shabbat — Our Highest Priority

"Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and said to them: 'These are the things Hashem commanded, to do them. On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death.'" (Shemot 35:1-2).

Parshat Vayakhel begins with Moshe commanding Am Yisrael regarding the mitzvah of Shabbat. The main reason for this assembly was to instruct them about donating for the building of the Mishkan. Nevertheless, the Torah begins with the prohibition of doing work on Shabbat, and only after that mentions Moshe's request to Am Yisrael to donate all different materials for the sublime goal of building the Mishkan: "Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem, everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it, as the gift for Hashem: gold, silver, copper ..."

The order is not happenstance and contains a practical lesson for us. Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to instill in Am Yisrael the knowledge that even though he is now assembling them to ask for donations for the Mishkan, nevertheless Shabbat observance is immeasurably more important, and overrides even the mitzvah of tzedakah. There are people who tread on the sanctity of Shabbat, but to quieten their conscious they disperse charity and generously assist the needy. These people reassure themselves by saying that although they do not observe Shabbat, they are most particular about giving charity and does it not say (*Mishlei* 10:2), "Charity saves from death"? So they rely on this merit that nothing bad will happen to them, and they will not be punished for desecrating Shabbat.

By instructing Bnei Yisrael about the mitzvah of Shabbat, Moshe Rabbeinu was instilling the message that although the mitzvah of tzedakah is very important, and one who is meticulous about its observance will merit great reward, Shabbat is more important. Hashem created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. We too must honor the day Hashem rested from His work and dedicate the day to Hashem.

G-d forbid these words do not come to diminish the importance of giving charity. Rather, they remind us about the importance of Shabbat, and the need to meticulously observe all its laws and details.

a NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Challenges



We assume that the women came and handed over their jewelry for the building of the Mishkan out of their desire to take part in its construction.

However, the Seforno writes: “Those women despised the matter of their jewelry. They dedicated their mirrors to show they no longer required them.”

This serves as a lesson to us that one who is connected to spirituality no longer requires worldly matters. Every Jew can attain this level in some manner, according to his particular stage. A person’s life is full of challenges, and in fact, every step a person takes in This World is a challenge from Hashem to see how he directs his footsteps.

The Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, *shlita*, in his *sefer Barchi Nafshi*, relates the story of a European Jew who wished to buy a piece of fur for his coat. He was prepared to pay the costly price that such a product was worth. How great was his surprise when the gentile merchant offered him the fur at a greatly reduced price — only twenty percent of the fixed market price!

If, for example, the regular price of fur was one thousand shekels, the merchant was prepared to sell it to this Jew for only two hundred shekels.

At first he could not believe his ears and asked the merchant a second and third time to name a price for the fur. When the merchant confirmed his original offer time and again, the Jew decided to purchase a number of furs from him and sell them at the regular price, using this opportune deal to make a fortune.

He went ahead with his plan and amassed a large profit.

On seeing his good fortune, he decided to try his luck again. This time too, the merchant was prepared to sell him the furs at the discounted price.

The Jew bought a large stock of fur and sold them, once again gaining greatly from the deal.

The third time around, the merchant suddenly changed his tune. He raised his voice and asked, “Tell me, how much money did you pay me for the furs I sold you?”

On hearing the discounted price, the merchant began shouting and even threatened the Jew harshly, calling him a thief and claiming he had exerted pressure

until the merchant had no choice but to agree to this unrealistic price. He then demanded that the Jew return all the furs.

The Jew was stunned and could not understand what had happened. Why had the ship suddenly begun to rock?

“You were the one who offered me this price for the furs, so what do you want from me now?” he asked in bewilderment.

But before he could turn around, the police arrived and handcuffed and arrested him.

It turned out that this merchant had close connections with the authorities, and due to his honorable position, they carried out his instructions and imprisoned the Jew. Although he declared that he had never stolen a penny from anyone, and this time too he was not guilty, all his justifications were to no avail. The investigators believed the merchant and the Jew was put behind bars.

Several days later, the merchant entered the Jew’s cell and said: “I want to offer you a certain deal. If you fulfill my condition, you will immediately be released from prison.”

The Jew, who had no idea what the merchant intended to suggest, listened to the proposal:

“I have here with me a statue of our god. If you agree to kiss it, I will tell the prison wardens to release you immediately.”

The Jew heard the suggestion and was shocked. He immediately pulled himself together and replied with faith and courage that he has no intention whatsoever of doing so. “I am a Jew, and it is forbidden for me to comply. I am even expected to give up my life rather than commit this sin. Indeed I am prepared to be killed. Nothing will stand in my way!”

The merchant tried to persuade him several times, but when he saw that the Jew was not prepared to exchange his G-d for a different god, he suddenly changed his tone and treated the imprisoned Jew with tenderness and amiability.

“Do you not recognize me?” He asked. “Look at me and tell me if you don’t remember that I worked for you thirty years ago! Either way, I wish to inform you that you are released. Come, I will explain the chain of events starting from the moment you came to the market to buy my fur.

“I was left with very pleasant memories from the period I worked for you. Your uprightness and good *middot*, your forbearance for all different people, and your efforts to create a pleasant atmosphere, remained constantly in my mind, even in later years when we parted ways.

“As soon as I saw you enter my fur store, I decided to sell you the merchandise at a reduced price, to repay you in some small way for all you did for me during the time I worked for you.

“Indeed, I willingly sold you the fur at that ridiculous price, a sum that did not even cover what I had paid for it. But it was worth it for me; I wanted to give you pleasure.

“When you returned the second time, I did not change my treatment toward you. But following that, I recalled that when I worked for you, you would talk at length in praise of the Jewish religion and the importance of faith in the Creator of the World. And you completely disregarded talk about any other deities.

“As soon I remembered this, I decided to put you to the test and demand that you kiss my idol. Then I would see if all your talk was really sincere and you believe in your G-d all the way, or maybe it was all just lip service.

“Now, after witnessing your strong faith and coming face to face with your faithfulness to the Creator, I leave in your hands all the furs you have bought from me, together with the great profits. I will even sell you more fur, at a further reduced price, so you will successfully earn more money and become even wealthier.”

What can we learn from this story that was told over, as mentioned above, by one of the *roshei yeshivot*?

Success and prosperity were waiting for that Jew behind the door. Had he not withstood the challenge, G-d forbid, and kissed the idol, or uttered one word against his faith, he would never have merited attaining all that he did.

Only after withstanding the great test and proving he believes that all Hashem sets in his path is for the good, and that no one can succeed in taking away this faith, were the gates of success and Heavenly Assistance opened for him.