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maskil Le'David

Shabbat, Mishkan, and their Connection

“Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel...On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem” (Shemot 35:1-2).

Our Sages explain why the section of the Mishkan precedes the commandment of Shabbat. But we must clarify an additional point: why are these two commandments given together, one after the other? There is obviously some deep, internal connection between Shabbat and the Mishkan.

According to our Sages, the word “*Vayakhel*” (“He assembled”) has special significance. The *Yalkut Shimoni* (beg. *Vayakhel*) writes: “Moshe assembled”: The *Ba’alei Aggadah* expound, throughout the Torah there is no other *parsha* that begins with the word ‘*Vayakhel*.’ Hashem said, ‘Form large gatherings and lecture to them publicly about the laws of Shabbat, so that future generations will learn from you to congregate every Shabbat in the *batei midrash* to teach and instruct the Jewish people about Torah laws, regarding what is forbidden and what is permitted on Shabbat, so that My Great Name shall be praised among My children.”

With this the Sages explain why the commandment of Shabbat is written in singular: it was said to a gathering of people united as one. But this leads to another question. At this same gathering, Am Yisrael were also commanded about the Mishkan. What is the significance of “assembling the people” with regards to the Mishkan? Why was it necessary to give this commandment over at an assembly?

I would like to suggest the following answer. We know that the Mishkan served as a rectification and atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. It was also a sign and proof that Hashem forgave and pardoned Am Yisrael for this sin and He once again rests His Presence among them. On Yom Kippur, the day on which Hashem forgave them for this sin, Moshe descended from Heaven and gathered

Am Yisrael together to command them about the Mishkan. The Midrash says, “Hashem said, ‘Let the gold of the Mishkan come and atone for the gold with which the Golden Calf was made.’ Therefore, they received atonement through gold, “This is the portion that you shall take from them: gold...”

The great sin of the Golden Calf involved denial of Hashem and serving *avodah zara*. Am Yisrael rectified this sin through building the Mishkan. To atone for discarding the yoke of Heaven, they now accepted the yoke of Heaven, by building a House for Hashem and crowning Him as King over them.

The *Midrash Tanchuma* writes, “‘Moshe assembled’: Hashem said to Yisrael, ‘If you congregate every Shabbat in the *batei kneset* and *batei midrash* and read from the Torah and Prophets, I will consider it as if you crowned Me as King in My world.” This explains that the purpose of commanding and warning about Shabbat specifically among an assembly was to achieve the crowning of Hashem as King.

Although the assembly’s purpose concerned the commandment of Shabbat, it also connects to the purpose of the Mishkan. The reason for the assembly is to accept the yoke of Heaven, which is an inherent part of the mitzvah of Shabbat — the purpose of Shabbat is faith in the constant renewal of the world and Hashem’s Divine Providence over us. At this gathering, Moshe stressed the concept of Shabbat as a day to crown Hashem as King (since he had already taught them the details and laws of Shabbat previously in Marah), which was the rectification for discarding the yoke of Heaven that was inherent in the sin of the Golden Calf.

Now we understand why Moshe said these two commandments at the same gathering. Shabbat, whose purpose is revealing Hashem’s Kingship, was the preparation for building the Mishkan, which came to rectify discarding the yoke by re-accepting the yoke of Heaven. If so, the special significance of assembling the people was also appropriate for the commandment of building the Mishkan: crowning Hashem as King is the preparation required to rectify the sin of the Golden Calf, which would be atoned for by building the Mishkan.

Inherent in Shabbat are these two concepts, rectifying the body and soul, and also rectifying one’s possessions. We are commanded to rest on Shabbat, as well as to stop our monetary affairs. **cont. p. 2.>>**

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Vayakhel Pekudei

Parshat HaChodesh



Hilula

25 Adar
Rabbi Gershon of Kitov

26 Adar
The Prophet Ovadiah

27 Adar
Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv,
author of *Leshem Shevo*
Ve'achlomo

28 Adar
Rabbi Moshe Chevroni,
Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron

29 Adar
Rabbi Gershon Liebman,
Rosh Yeshiva Or Yosef,
Novhardok

1 Nissan
Rabbi Chaim David
Alkalai, renowned
Mekubal in Yerushalayim

2 Nissan
Rabbi Sholom Dov,
Admor of Chabad



The reason for this is because the purpose of Shabbat is to detach oneself from materialism and material activity, and connect to spirituality. We should feel we are solely dependent on Hashem and remove all thoughts of action and work from our hearts. It is even forbidden to *talk* about secular matters!

We have a King who cares for us and provides all our needs. Shabbat brings a Jew to tangible faith: everything he has is not a result of his own doing. If during the entire week he toiled and troubled himself for his livelihood, on Shabbat the light of faith ignites and he realizes it is not his efforts that sustain him, rather he is dependent on Hashem. He is the One who provides for us; everything comes from Him!

To achieve this level of faith, we are commanded to rest from any form of exertion, discard the yoke of work and effort, and tangibly feel how we are dependent on Hashem. To attain this feeling, Hashem commanded us to detach ourselves also from our possessions and money, that they too should rest on Shabbat and not do any work. For even though we may be resting, if our money is still working for us, we are still connected to and placing our trust in materialism, and this is not complete reliance on Hashem.

The purpose of resting on Shabbat is to establish in our hearts a detachment from materialism, to dedicate ourselves to Hashem. This act will have a direct influence on the rest of our week. Our money and possessions will take on a different significance completely. Resting on Shabbat affords a different view of our assets. We realize that they are only a means to serve Hashem and not an end in themselves. In this way we elevate and sanctify materialism.

Am Yisrael were beginning the process of rectifying the sin of the Golden Calf, which blemished both their spirituality and materialism. Their rectification was to accept upon themselves the yoke of Heaven and elevate and sanctify their possessions to the ultimate purpose of using them for Hashem's honor, causing the Divine Presence to rest among them. At this point, Moshe Rabbeinu came forward and at the same assembly commanded them about both Shabbat and the Mishkan. By resting on Shabbat, one's resources achieve a higher level, serving as a conduit for the service of Hashem. Material elements are transformed into spiritual substance, and impurity is converted to purity.

Through this purification, they became ready for their true purpose: increasing the glory of Heaven and becoming pure vessels in which the Shechina would rest.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

Protection in the Merit Shabbat Observance

The commandment to observe Shabbat is repeated in this week's *parsha*. Inherent in Shabbat is its great power to defend and protect those who observe and delight in it. We present a wonderful story (published by the Kol Beramah Magazine, Shevat 5781) which demonstrates how Shabbat observance protected a large city in the South of Eretz Yisrael, from a direct hit of rockets fired from Gaza.

A ceremony was held to pay tribute to several soldiers who, on their own initiative, with Hashem's help, saved an entire town from the devastation of rockets launched by Gaza; it played out in the following amazing way.

Some soldiers were on duty in the south manning the Iron Dome, when suddenly their radar picked up several rockets launched by Gaza, directed at large cities in the South.

According to particulars from the radar, these rockets would land right in the center of town, resulting in a terrible tragedy, G-d forbid. The soldiers had nano-seconds at their disposal to activate the Iron Dome which would neutralize the fatal rockets. The problem was, the soldiers had strict orders not to activate the Iron Dome without authorization from a senior officer, but he was not present.

They were unsuccessful in trying to reach him. Within a fraction of a second they realized if they did not activate the Iron Dome system on their own initiative, the rockets from Gaza would land in the city center in no time.

With great trepidation, the soldiers decided, counter to protocol, to activate the neutralizing rocket – and with G-d's help they succeeded in destroying the rockets flying overhead. In this way, with enormous Heavenly kindness, a great tragedy was averted.

At this ceremony they were awarded commendation titles. The senior army officials explained that they were receiving this award in recognition of them taking initiative, despite violating protocol.

But an inside source added to the story. He praised their heroic actions and then announced that the real medal should go to... our holy Shabbat! In fact, the entire miracle of this city being saved occurred thanks to Shabbat observance.

He then related the important background information. On Friday, the commander of this Iron Dome received orders from his superiors to dismantle the Iron Dome and move it to a different location. They were sure this area in the south was already sufficiently secure and no longer needed the Iron Dome.

The commander realized they would not complete the dismantling before the onset of Shabbat, and since it was not a matter of life and death, he made the decision to delay the dismantling until after Shabbat. And since it was to remain for the time-being, the commander decided to leave it ready for operation with soldiers manning the system.

It was that very Friday night that the radar picked up the rockets from Gaza!

In the merit of observing Shabbat, thousands of residents were saved from what could have ended in great tragedy.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

Remember We Are Dust

I once attended the funeral of a woman who had lived for over one hundred years. My acquaintance with her family was long and deep, going back decades.

This woman was exceedingly wealthy. She lacked for nothing. Her mansion boasted a staff of servants. Modern technology was at her beck and call. Whatever she desired was immediately granted.

But when I observed the chevrah kadisha lowering her body into the ground, I could not help but think, "Where is the splendor and aesthetics now? Where is all the pleasures and delights that were such an intrinsic part of her life? Where is her gold and silver jewelry, her diamonds, which she wore with such pride?" All of her earthly acquisitions remained behind.

This is the end of every man. As rich as he may be, when his day of death arrives, he returns to the ground from where he came. Only his soul endures, ascending to the World that is entirely good, escorted only by the Torah and mitzvot which he performed down here. Therefore, it is worthwhile investing in Torah and good deeds while in This World, for they will be one's sole companions as he makes his way to a better and infinite world.

A similar story which drove home this point happened to my wife's relative. He was fantastically wealthy. With his astounding assets, he could have supported many Torah institutions and needy individuals for countless years.

This man wished to arrange a meeting with my wife, his relative, to decide which charities would receive his money after he passed away. Unfortunately, he died a sudden, tragic death and the meeting never took place. The last time he traveled in his magnificent car, he was involved in a terrible car accident. His car went up in flames leaving him trapped inside. He called for help but no one could save him. His wealth was useless in his hour of need. He died in this tragic way and was buried in Casablanca, without having the chance to perform the good deed of donating his funds to charity, a move which would have benefited his *neshamah* greatly.



PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

The Women Brought Out of Love

"The men came with the women; everyone whose heart motivated him brought bracelets, nose-rings, rings, body ornaments" (*Shemot* 35:22).

The precise wording of the verse "על הנשים" is translated as "with the women" and therefore it should have been written as "עם הנשים," comments Hagaon HaTzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto *shlit*^a. He goes on to explain the reason for this wording in his exemplary fashion. The Mishkan was a rectification for the sin of the Golden Calf. The men were the ones who sinned and they had to rectify their actions. The women had no part in this sin at all (*Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* 45). Therefore the men had a stronger desire and aspiration than the women to assist with the building of the Mishkan, to atone for their sin. That is why they hurried to bring their donations more than the women did. It says "האנשים על הנשים" to tell us that the men came along with more haste since they were the ones who sinned so they now hurried to elevate themselves. But the women brought only out of love for the mitzvah.

This can also be understood from the difference in the spelling of "נשים" (women) and "אנשים" (men). The only difference is the addition of the letter "aleph" in "אנשים." The "aleph" alludes to the "Alufo Shel Olam," the Almighty. With the act of the Golden Calf, the men sinned against Hashem, as alluded to by the "aleph."

The Mouth Reflects the Heart

"And the Breastplate would not be loosened from above the Ephod" (*Shemot* 39:21).

Harav Hakadosh of Sadiklov *zt"l* in his *sefer Degel Machane Ephraim* questions why this commandment of "And the Breastplate would not be loosened" is counted as one of the six hundred and thirteen mitzvot. And how can we fulfil this mitzvah nowadays?

He answers that the main mitzvah of the Breastplate was that it always remain on the Ephod. The word "אפוד" (Ephod) has the same numerical value as "פה" (mouth). The meaning of "And the Breastplate would not be loosened" is that the heart should not be loosened from the Ephod, the mouth. One's mouth and heart should always be "equal" – the heart must be in agreement with that which is expressed by the mouth.

All Our Deeds Should be for the Sake of Heaven

"All the women whose hearts inspired them with wisdom" (*Shemot* 35:26).

Rabbi Abba said (*Zohar Hakadosh Tazria* 50a), "As the women were working they would say, 'This is for the Mikdash, this is for the Mishkan, this is for the Parochet.' And this is also what all the craftsmen did, so that holiness should rest on their hands and the work should be sanctified. In this way, when the work was completed and set in place, it was full of holiness."

Similarly, anyone who builds an edifice must say aloud at the outset that he is building for the sake of *avodat Hashem*, as it says, "Woe to him who builds his house without righteousness." In this way he will be blessed with Heavenly assistance and Hashem will bless it with holiness and peace. This is the meaning of the verse "You will know that your tent is at peace."

a NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



Spiritual Growth decreases Material Desires

We assume the women donated their jewelry for the building of the Mishkan out of their desire to take part in its building. However, the Seforno stresses that they despised their jewelry because of their love of Hashem Yitbarach.

This is what the Seforno writes: “Those women despised the matter of their jewelry and dedicated their mirrors to show that they no longer required them.”

This is a great lesson for us: one who is connected to spirituality no longer desires materialism. This is a level that every Jew can attain on his individual level. A person’s life is full of challenges. In fact, every step we take in This World is a challenge from Hashem, to see how we tread and where we direct our footsteps.

The *Gaon* Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein *shlit”a*, in his *sefer Borchy 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, and so was greatly surprised when the gentile merchant offered him the fur at a greatly reduced rate, only twenty percent of the market price!

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

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 furs and sold them, once again growing very wealthy from the business deal.

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

When he quoted the discounted price, the merchant became agitated. While waving his finger he began threatening the Jew harshly, calling him a thief and claiming he had pressured the merchant until he agreed

to this unrealistic price. He then demanded that he return all the furs...

The Jew was stunned; he could not understand the sudden change. 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, 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 the Jew was imprisoned. The Jew declared that he had never stolen a penny from anyone and this time too he was not guilty, but all his protestations were to no avail. The investigators believed the merchant, and the Jew was put behind bars.

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

The Jew who had no idea what the merchant intended to suggest, listened intently to what he had to say. This was his proposal:

“I have with me here a statue of our god. If you agree to kiss it, I will tell the prison warden 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 had no intention whatsoever to fulfil this wish. “I am a Jew and it is forbidden for me to do what you are asking. I am even expected to give up my life rather than commit this sin and I am ready and prepared to give myself up to be killed. Nothing will tempt me to do otherwise!”

The merchant tried to persuade him several times but he saw that the Jew remained a faithful son to his G-d. Suddenly, he changed his tone and treated the imprisoned Jew with tenderness and amiability.

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

“I was left with very pleasant memories from the period that I worked for you.

Your uprightness and good virtues, 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 you entered 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 paid for it. But it was worth it for me, I wanted to bring you pleasure.

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

“As soon I remembered this, I decided to test your faith. I would allow you to become incredibly wealthy by selling you the furs at this bargain price, and then test you by demanding you kiss my idol. Then I would see if all your talk is sincere, if you believe in your G-d all the way – or maybe it was all just lip service.

“Now, when I witnessed your strong faith and came face to face with your faithfulness to the Creator, I leave in your hands all the furs you bought from me, together with the great profits, and will even sell you more fur, at a further reduced price, so that you will successfully earn more money and become significantly wealthy.”

What do we learn from this story?

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 this great test and proving his belief in Hashem, that everything is for the good and no one can succeed in taking away this faith, were the gates of success and Heavenly Assistance opened for him.