

הַמִּשְׁכָּן
וְכֵלָיו

פרשת פקודי Parshat Pekudei

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THE MOST POWERFUL FORCE

RABBI AVI WASSER

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LIORA MAYER ('20)

MORDECHAI SHEKHTER ('20)

its posts, and its sockets" (Shmot 39:33).

The day had finally arrived. The Jewish people had enthusiastically donated their most precious treasures. They labored for months to create the beams, rods, coverings, and curtains that would form the Mishkan. They lovingly fashioned the keilim that would be placed inside it. The Midrash Tanchuma describes what took place next: When at last the work was done, the people waited for the Shechinah to descend and hover over it. At first, nothing happened and the people were distressed. The wise men advised the people to put it together themselves, and the people attempted to but they did not know how and they were unable to make it stand.

“וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן
אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, אֶת-
הָאֹהֶל וְאֶת-כָּל-כְּלָיו,
קְרָסָיו קְרָשָׁיו, בְּרִיחָיו
וְעַמֻּדָיו וְאֲדָנָיו:”

“Then they brought the Tabernacle to Moshe, with the Tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its planks, its bars,

Each time they tried, it fell apart. Bezalel and Oholiav were pushed forward -- they had worked so hard to construct the pieces and keilim, certainly they would be worthy of raising the Mishkan. They too tried to assemble it but were unable to do so. The people began muttering and complaining, saying: “See what the Son of Amram did to us when he took our possessions for this Mishkan? He made us assume this burden while promising us that Hashem would descend from the heavenly sphere and would dwell within the curtain of goats’ hair.”

The Midrash continues: Why were they unable to erect it? Because of the fact that Moshe was distressed at not having participated in the construction of the Mishkan. The offerings were given by the Jews, and all the work was performed by Bezalel, Oholiav, and the wise-hearted craftsmen. Because Moshe was distressed, Hashem concealed from them the proper way to erect it, and that is why they were unable to do so. Hashem told Moshe, “Because you were unhappy over the fact that you did not share in the work of the building of the Mishkan, these wise men are not able to erect it. Now Bnei Yisrael will know that if you do not erect it, it will never be set up.”

Rav Ben-Zion Bamberger, in the Sefer Sha’arei Tzion, won-

ders why Moshe was distressed about not having participated in the actual construction of the Mishkan. He was certainly involved otherwise. The Midrash Rabbah in Bamidbar teaches us that Moshe was always present at the construction site, overseeing the work and ensuring that it was all done exactly as required. Rashi similarly teaches us about Moshe's involvement in Sefer Bamidbar on the pasuk:

“וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם כָּלֹת מֹשֶׁה לְהַקִּים אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן:”

“On the day that Moshe finished setting up the Tabernacle, he anointed and consecrated it and all its furnishings, as well as the altar and its utensils” (Bamidbar 7:1).

Rashi comments that the Mishkan is attributed to Moshe because he devoted himself wholeheartedly to it; He expended great effort to show the workmen exactly how it should be made so that the shape of each component and kli was exactly as Hashem had shown him on Har Sinai.

So why was Moshe distressed that he did not have a part in the Mishkan's construction, when he had already played such a significant role. What level of participation was he lacking?

We learn a powerful lesson from Moshe Rabbeinu about the power of action. All of Moshe's contributions to the process so far were in a supervisory and educational role, and that was not the same as “rolling up his sleeves” and actually doing it. Moshe was so distressed by this that Hashem compassionately intervened and gave him the role of erecting the structure.

What is the secret of the power of action? The Chovot HaLevovot (Shaar Cheshbon HaNefesh, 21) explains that the primary intended purpose of the mitzvot which involve physical acts is to focus our attention on the mitzvot of the heart and mind. Our mission in life is to build who we are. Our job is to fashion ourselves in the image of Hashem. But a person is not able to affect his nature and inclinations through philosophical reasoning alone. Our innate nature is a powerful force, and the full body must be mustered up against it. The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 17) describes that a person's character is affected by his actions. The heart and thoughts are constantly drawn after one's actions. Moshe could not imagine that he would be left out of the experience of transforming his neshama through the physical effort of assembling what would be the home of Hashem's presence on earth. Indeed, his will to do it was so strong that it became so.

It has been said that, “you can't think your way into right action, but you can act your way into right thinking.” Put another way, “you don't think your way into a new kind of living; you live your way into a new kind of thinking.”

We imagine the person we would like to be in the future. There is no better way to get there than to start acting like that person today.

TRUE RELATIONSHIPS

SARA DEICHMAN ('19)

In Parshat Pekudei, the construction of the Mishkan proves central. After multiple parshiyot comprised of a detailed plan for the building of the Mishkan, we are finally told of the beginning of the building process. However, the repetition of the details of every task seems unnecessary. Rabbi Lord Sacks beautifully explains that while God's creation of the world was certainly no big deal for Him, as He is an all-powerful and infinite entity, Man's creation of a home for God was unprecedented. After standing before God at Har Sinai and uttering the words, “We will do and we will hear,” Bnei Yisrael discovered their love of God. Experiencing such a spiritual encounter prompted them to create a true relationship with God. Understandably, the awe Bnei Yisrael experienced in the moment God appeared before them inspired their willingness to do what He requested. Alternatively though, in this week's parsha, after the awesomeness of God had become diurnal, Bnei Yisrael built a “home” for God, putting all their efforts into His request.

As explained by Hanna Perlberger, God was ultimately teaching His people what the true nature of a relationship should be. It should not just be a spark or a moment of true love. Real relationships require multi-faceted dedication. God emphasizes the seemingly tiresome and lengthy construction of the Mishkan twice in order to stress the importance of building lasting, reliable relationships. God, the sole Creator of human nature, understands that important relationships do not endure due to one joyous moment, as Bnei Yisrael experienced with God at Har Sinai, but with the willingness to selflessly help one another with mundane tasks, as Bnei Yisrael built the Mishkan in exchange for God giving everything to them.

AN EVERLASTING JOURNEY

REBECCA HENNER ('22)

In this week's parsha, Parshat Pekudei, the construction of the Mishkan is completed. The Mishkan would give Bnei Yisrael a feeling of safety that they were clearly missing. This parsha is especially important because it finishes off the book of Shmot. There must certainly be significance in the last parsha of such an important book being about the tedious instructions in the building of the Mishkan.

Bnei Yisrael were faced with many challenges when in Egypt; however, with perseverance and belief in Hashem,

they were able to push through these difficult endeavors. It is clear that leaving Egypt is one of the largest journeys highlighted in the Torah. According to Google, the word journey means, “an act of traveling from one place to another.” However, throughout Jewish history, a journey has meant so much more than the physical aspect of moving oneself. Whether in Spain during the Spanish Inquisition, or living in Germany during the Nazi regime, each individual’s situation is part of a larger journey.

The people in the desert were often worried; they were wandering in an unknown place and were unsure what would happen next. Hashem knew they needed something tangible which would allow them to know that He would always be with them, especially after experiencing the *cheit ha’egel*. Many mefarshim explain that this is why He instructed them to build the Mishkan. It is extremely befitting that the last pasuk of Shmot ends with the following pasuk:

“כִּי עֲנַן ה' עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹמָם וְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה לִּילָהּ בּוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּכֹל מִסְעֵיהֶם”

“For the cloud of Hashem would be on the Mishkan by day, and fire would be on it at night, before the eyes of all the House of Israel in all their journeys” (40:38).

Rashi comments on this and says that a place where the Jews would camp is referred to as a **מסע** journey, for it says in Bereishit (13:3), “וילך למסעיו”. He explains that the reason for this is simply because they would travel and begin a journey from their place of encampment.

Figuratively, this shows the significance of every place that we encounter. A place is special and can always become the start of a new journey. Everywhere on Earth there are new people, new things, and new situations that we discover, which all have a way of benefitting us. Whether it was deepening their *emunah* at Har Sinai or learning patience in Marah, each endeavor taught Bnei Yisrael something new. Often, we find ourselves lost and don’t really know if Hashem is with us at any given moment. Although we may not have a cloud over our heads or a fire burning before us, Hashem walks with us through every journey. This sefer begins with the nation’s struggles and ends off with Hashem showing us that He will always have our backs. This perfect closure to a sefer about a journey signifies that we will never experience anything without the help of Hashem.

MASTERING CREATIVITY

LIORA MAYER ('20)

This week’s parsha, Parshat Pekudei, discusses the creation of the Mishkan. Details upon details are listed and described, but the Torah reminds us that every detail was

specifically commanded by God. So when the Mishkan is finally complete, the Torah says:

“וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל הַמְּלָאכָה וְהִנֵּה עָשׂוּ אֹתָהּ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה', כִּן עָשׂוּ וַיְבָרַךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה:”

“And when Moses saw that they had performed all the tasks as Hashem had commanded, so they had done and Moses blessed them” (Shmot 39:43).

Based on a midrash, Rabbeinu Bachya explains that this pasuk connects the building of the Mishkan to the creation of the world. By looking back at a similar pasuk in Bereishit that we say every Shabbat, this connection comes to life. The Torah says:

“וַיְבָרַךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכֹל-מְלָאכְתּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר-בְּרָא אֱלֹקִים לַעֲשׂוֹת”

And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done” (Bereishit 2:3).

In both of these pesukim, *melacha* is stopped and then a bracha is given. With this understanding, the details in this week’s parsha make a lot more sense. The Sefer HaBahir develops this midrashic idea by connecting each day of creation to a specific part of the Mishkan. Different parts of the Mishkan represent different days of creation: the ohel for the heavens of the first day, the *parochet* for the separation between water and sky of the second day, the *kiyor* for the water of the third day, the *menorah* for the luminaries of the fourth day, the *keruvim* for the birds of the fifth day, the kohanim for man created on the sixth day, and finally the bracha Moshe gives to Bnei Yisrael after their melacha is complete for the bracha God gives Shabbat after He finishes His *melacha*.

This beautiful connection is also practical. The 39 melachot that are prohibited each Shabbat come from the 39 acts of creation involved in the construction of the mishkan. Why are Shabbat and the Mishkan so intertwined?

God created the universe in six days, and then rested on the seventh. His process of creation was only complete once the Jewish people built the Mishkan. Since the Mishkan represents human creativity and mastery over God’s creations, when it was built man and God became partners in creation. Although humans are capable of creativity, we must remember that all our creative abilities come from God. On Shabbat, we rest to remember that God is the ultimate source of creation.

FAITH IN THE DETAILS

MORDECHAI SHEKHTER ('20)

“וַיְבָרַךְ אֱלֹהֵי בְנֵי-אֹרֵי בֶן-חֹר לְמַטֵּה יְהוּדָה עָשָׂה אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת-מֹשֶׁה:”

“And Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that Hashem commanded Moshe” (38:22).

The mefarshim ponder the strange wording of the second half of this pasuk. In every other situation in the previous two parshiyot, Betzalel did everything; “אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֹתוֹ מֹשֶׁה” in the manner that Moshe had commanded him, but in this case, he did, “כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת-מֹשֶׁה” in the manner that Hashem commanded Moshe to do. Rashi answers this question by relaying a conversation between Moshe and Betzalel, in order to prove that Betzalel understood everything that Hashem told Moshe. Rashi quotes a gemara in Berachot (55a):

Hashem told Moshe to tell Betzalel to build him a Mishkan, then the Aron, and then the Keilim. Moshe went to Betzalel, and told Betzalel in a reversed order. Betzalel said, “Moshe Rabbeinu, the common practice is to first build a house and then decorate it with furniture, and you’re telling me to first make the furniture!? Where will I put the furniture? Maybe Hashem told you: Make the Mishkan, and then the Aron, and then the Keilim.” Moshe responded, “Perhaps you were in the shadow of Hashem (betzel E-I) and you are aware.”

The Ramban explains that this gemara is actually a praise of Betzalel. Betzalel was so gifted, that he knew and understood what Hashem told Moshe on Har Sinai and was intuitively able to understand ideas that even Moshe did not explain to him. We know that Betzalel was not the only one who did the work of building the Mishkan, but the pasuk says, “כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת-מֹשֶׁה” all that Hashem commanded Moshe to do. The Ramban explains this by saying that the pasuk is not coming to tell us that Betzalel actually did everything, rather that everything that was done under his supervision was done according to everything that Hashem told Moshe.

The Kedushat Levi shares a beautiful insight into this pasuk and teaches us a very important life lesson. He explains that there are two levels of *emunah* in Hashem. The first, most basic level is that which every single person in the world has: the knowledge that there is no other way the universe could have been created, and is still being created, except with the absolute perfection and Divine nature of Hashem. This knowledge does not require much effort, and is applicable to everyone in the world, and required of everyone. The second level, the level of being a dwelling place of the *Shechinah*, is one that is only accessible to B'nei Yisrael. This can only be attained through *limud* Torah, the learning of Hashem’s perfect Torah, *ameilut baTorah*, the toil in Hashem’s perfect Torah, and achieving an ultimate ahavat Torah, love of Hashem’s perfect Torah; only then can one achieve *hashra’at haShechinah*, Divine Presence.

Perhaps what Betzalel told Moshe, “the pieces of furniture that I am going to build, where will I put them?” can be applied directly to our lives. Only once one becomes a “Mishkan,” when one has unwavering faith in Hashem, can one fill oneself with “*keilim*,” Hashem’s perfect and holy Torah. When a person’s belief in Hashem works in perfect sync with his limud Torah, then that person can merit to be an embodiment of *hashra’at haShechinah*, Divine Presence.

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