Points to Ponder

Vayakhel Pekudai HaChodesh 5783

**שֵׁ֣שֶׁת יָמִים֘ תֵּֽעָשֶׂ֣ה מְלָאכָה֒ וּבַיּ֣וֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִ֗י יִֽהְיֶ֨ה לָכֶ֥ם קֹ֛דֶשׁ Six days you shall work (35:2)** - It seems incredible that after the days of Teshuva, of Kabbalas Hatorah and Yom Kippur, the first thing that happens when Moshe gathers the people and speaks with them is not about their experience nor about his on the mountain. Instead it is about Hilchos Shabbos. Why? **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi** explained that Shabbos is other-worldly. It is the chance that one has to disengage from the present world and engage the soul (וינפש= it turns you into souls). So powerful is the day that it creates a renewal that rejuvantes the person for the rest of the upcoming week. There is no other experience that can have that effect automatically. Hence Shabbos is so powerful it is even דוחה בנין המקדש! Hence, Moshe first spoke to the about the powerful experience of Shabbos and only thereafter addressed any other spiritual needs – Mishkan and forgiveness included.

**וְכָל־אִשָּׁ֥ה חַכְמַת־לֵ֖ב בְּיָדֶ֣יהָ טָו֑וּ  And every woman who had the knowledge of the heart spun the wool by hand (35:25) - Rashi** explains that they were able to spin wool while still attached to the living sheep. Why was this trick necessary? **Sforno** notes that the lesson here was one of doing the Mitzva in the best way possible. Somehow the quality was enhanced when the wool was spun while on the sheep and it was a positive. **The Meshech Chochma** explained that the women were able to participate even if they were Niddot and the **Arugas HaBosem** added that the ability to showcase a talent gave the people a bit of self esteem back that they had lost at the time of the sin with the Eigel. Being able to do something extraordinary set the tone for greatness.

**וְהַנְשאִם And the Tribal leaders (35:27)** - There is a missing letter Yud in the title Nesiim. **Targum Yonatan** translates the word as if from the clouds referring to the fact that the stones fell from Shomayim and the leaders gave them to the Mishkan. **Rashi** notes that they tarried in donating waiting for others to contribute first and then they would make up the shortfall. The only thing that was left for them was the stones. **Rav Shlomo Amar** noted that there is no contradiction in the explanations here. Rather, the Nesiim might have found the stones but were negligent in bringing them. Once they had these expensive stones in their hands; they should have contributed first, performed the Mitzvah swiftly and afterwards worried about what was missing. The fact that they sat there and waited for everyone to finish bringing was a great chisaron. Upon seeing נשיאים not bringing anything, or at least not swiftly, could have resulted in a weakening of the tzibbur.

וַיְהִ֥י הַמִּשְׁכָּ֖ן אֶחָֽד **And the Mishkan was one (36:13)** - What does the word Echad mean here? **Rav Wolbe** explained that it does not mean one and not two. Rather it means that it was a single entity that included everything in it. He likened this to the concept of Yichud as by Hashem Echad as if to say Hashem includes everything. He is everything, everything emanates from Him and everyone needs Him.

**בֶּ֚קַע לַגֻּלְגֹּ֔לֶת מַֽחֲצִ֥ית הַשֶּׁ֖קֶל בְּשֶׁ֣קֶל הַקֹּ֑דֶשׁ Half a Shekel per head (38:26)** - Why were the Adanim, the sockets specifically paid for, using the half shekel head tax as opposed to, say, the Aron? **Rav Eli Mansour** explained that when it comes to the sockets, they represented the foundation upon which Judaism is built, which in the spiritual sense refers to Emunah. In regard to Emunah, we must all participate, without any exceptions. Nobody can say, “I’m not ready yet for Emunah.” The belief in G-d and G-d’s providence is something expected of us all, from the most learned scholars down to the simplest layman. The half-shekel symbolizes the fact that we only know half the story. Emunah requires us to acknowledge that as human beings, our vision and understanding are very limited. We see and understand very little of how G-d runs the world.

**וַיְהִ֞י בַּחֹ֧דֶשׁ הָֽרִאשׁ֛וֹן בַּשָּׁנָ֥ה הַשֵּׁנִ֖ית בְּאֶחָ֣ד לַחֹ֑דֶשׁ הוּקַ֖ם הַמִּשְׁכָּֽן The mishkan was established And they established the Mishkan (40:17)** - **Rav Schachter** would often remark that there is a Rabbinic tradition that when Titus destroyed the second Beis HaMikdash he was merely grinding the flour that was already ground. According to Rav Schachter, this meant that the non-Jews do not have the ability to defile our holy sites. It must be that we had sinned to the point where the Mikdash had already been spiritually destroyed and there was little defilement left. The same is true, albeit on a lower level for our Shuls as well. Our comportment in our Shuls must reflect our appreciation of Bechiras Yisrael and carry and convey our respect for the place and the chance to interact there with Hashem too.

**וַיָּבִ֤יאוּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן֙ אֶל־משֶׁ֔ה  And Moshe set up the beams (39:33) -  Rav Zeidel Epstein** explained that obviously Hashem did the work on His own. Why did Moshe need to be a part of the charade? Rav Zeidel explained that it is important for one to know that if he is deserving he is the catalyst to have Hashem lower Himself to fit a mindset that humanity can experience His glory. Moshe was the catalyst that made Hashem able to fit the Mishkan despite the limitations of confined space.

**Haftara**

**וּבְי֚וֹם הַשַּׁבָּת֙ יִפָּתֵ֔חַ וּבְי֥וֹם הַחֹ֖דֶשׁ יִפָּתֵֽחַ: And on the day of the Chodesh it shall be opened (Yechezkel 46:1) - Rav Yigal Ariel**  explained that Rosh Chodesh became an important FAMILY celebration in the time of Dovid HaMelech as declared by Yehonasan to King Shaul. **Rav Tzaddok** explained that the reign of Dovid HaMelech is compared to the moon and Rosh Chodesh was a time for renewal. This is why we highlight Dovid at the time of Kiddush Levana. We find the same in the time of Elisha. In this Haftara, the Novi uses the opportunity that it was also the time that other kings would have the chance to shine on Rosh Chodesh on behalf of the people.