

Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

פרשת ויקהל-פקודי

ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון לה' כל העשה בו מלאכה יומת

“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” (35:2)

Why does the Torah phrase this posuk passively, writing that on six days "work may be done"? Moreover, why is it necessary for the mitzvah of Shabbos to be preceded by a comment that work should be done on the other six days of the week? R' Shlomo Ganzfried, the author of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, writes that only one who believes that material belongings come directly from Hashem and are not completely dependent on his own work can rest with full tranquility and calmness on Shabbos. Such a person recognizes that working on this day will not earn him anything extra. A person who thinks that all he has is a result of his business acumen and his intelligence will want to work on Shabbos too so that he can make more money. He views resting on Shabbos as lost profits. That is why the posuk says that you should recognize that six days work is "being done," as if it is being done on its own, because material blessings are only found through work because of Hashem's assistance, without which all a person's hard work would be for nought. When a person realizes that he is not really an active player in earning his livelihood, he will truly appreciate Shabbos and be able to rest on this special day, without any worries for what his resting is costing him.

ועשה בצלאל ואהליאב וכל איש חכם לב אשר נתן ה' חכמה ותבונה בהמה לדעת לעשת את כל מלאכת עבדת הקדש לכל אשר צוה ה'

“Betzalel shall carry out - with Oholiav and every wise-hearted man within whom Hashem had endowed wisdom and insight to know and to do all the work for the labor of the Sanctuary - everything that Hashem had commanded” (36:1)

Why does the Torah describe wise men by referring to them as those "within whom Hashem had endowed wisdom"? Obviously wisdom only comes from Hashem?! R' Dovid Feinstein provides the following answer: The posuk teaches us that Hashem gave them wisdom in order to do something with it. The posuk emphasizes that the wisdom was endowed to certain individuals with a purpose, that they should use it for something worthwhile and not waste it. Each one of us should think about how he uses his talents and if he directs them toward the ultimate goal of serving Hashem. The gifts that a person receives from Hashem are meant for a purpose and we should not squander them on worthless pursuits. Hashem gave each individual a unique set of talents so that he can serve Hashem in a way that nobody else can.

ויעשו כל חכם לב בעשי המלאכה את המשכן עשר יריעת שש משזר ותכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני כרבים מעשה חשב עשה אתם

“The wise-hearted among those doing the work made the Tabernacle-spread: ten panels of twisted linen, and turquoise wool, and purple wool, and scarlet wool; they made them, the work of an artist - cherubim” (36:8)

This posuk is grammatically incorrect. First it says "And they made," in plural form, but the posuk ends "he made them," in singular form. The Or HaChayim explains that the work of two craftsmen is never exactly the same. Every worker usually injects a little personal touch into his work so that it is not exactly the same as the next person's. However, in the construction of the

Mishkan, Hashem provided every single craftsman with the same knowledge and ideas so that their work was uniform. Each finished product looked exactly the same. Although every part of the construction is introduced with the words "and he made," it refers to many people working together. Because their work looked exactly the same, it was as if it were all made by one person, and so they are referred to in singular form.

R' Moshe Feinstein gives a different explanation. The Gemara in Bava Basra says that two partners in a business act differently than a person who owns a business himself. In a partnership, each person depends on his partner. In a sole proprietorship, the owner knows that he is only one who will do the work. However, in the construction of the Mishkan, even though it was a group effort, each person felt responsible as if it was he doing the work alone. This is why the singular form is used. Each individual felt personally responsible for every facet of the construction. If he was not doing it himself, he would at least ensure that it was being done.

One should never feel that someone else will do things instead of him. There is a rule that if one is involved in a mitzva, he is exempt from another mitzva that comes up. Nevertheless, even if a person is busy with something, he still must ensure that the other mitzva is taken care of, even if he does not do it himself. One should feel that he is responsible for everything that needs to be done. Even if one does not do something himself, he should feel responsible to ensure that it is being done. This is the lesson of the posuk. They all shared the work but they each felt responsible for all of it and made sure that every step of the process of the construction of the Mishkan was done. This is an important attitude that a person must have in life. Everyone should feel that "the buck stops here."

**ויהי מאת ככר הכסף לצקת את אדני הקדש ואת אדני הפרכת מאת אדנים למאת הככר
ככר לאדן**

“The hundred talents of silver were to cast the sockets of the Sanctuary and the sockets of the Partition; a hundred sockets for a hundred talents, a talent per socket” (38:27)

Why were the half-shekels used to form the sockets of the Mishkan? R' Moshe Feinstein writes that silver is a luxury, as opposed to other materials used such as copper. Hashem wants us to have material blessings and success, but the foundation of that blessing has to be service of Hashem. The sockets were the foundation of the Mishkan which kept the edifice standing. This came from the half-shekels, a portion of the wealth of the people, symbolizing that the blessings which Hashem gives us have to be used to build a solid foundation for our homes, built on dedication to Hashem and his Torah.

וישם אתם על כתפת האפד אבני זכרון לבני ישראל כאשר צוה ה' את משה
“He placed them on the shoulder straps of the Ephod as remembrance stones for the sons of Israel, as Hashem had commanded Moshe” (39:7)

The Meshech Chochma points out that the stones of remembrance served as a reminder to the Jewish people, not to Hashem. The names of the tribes were inscribed on stones worn by the Kohen Gadol so that when the people would remember that their names were involved in the service before Hashem, they would be ashamed to sin. The stones on the ephod were a deterrent against sinning from much earlier. The Gemara in Sotah 36b says that when Yosef was about to give in to the temptation to be with the wife of Potiphar, he saw a vision of his father Yaakov, who told him that if he sinned, his name would not be among those of his brothers on the Ephod. One who realizes that his name resides in such a special place is embarrassed to sin.

Wherever we are, we are always in the presence of Hashem. If we remember this, it will prevent us from sinning because we will be ashamed to be seen by Hashem. As the Rema writes: "I place Hashem before me always - this is an important rule in the Torah and among the

levels of the righteous who walk before Hashem. The way one sits, moves and acts when he is alone is not the way he sits, moves and acts when he is before a great king... Certainly when a person remembers that Hashem, the great King Whose glory fills the entire world, is standing over him and sees his actions... Immediately fear and humility will seize him in his trepidation before Hashem and his shame before Him." (Orach Chaim 1:1)

This too is on the Orchos Tzadikim's list of thirty things to constantly remember: "One should remember how afraid and confounded those who stand in the king's service are at the possibility of the king's punishment. How much more should one fear the punishment of the King of kings and run to serve him." (No. 26)

Kesharim Baruch College/NYU Parsha Shiur

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