

## Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

### פרשת ויקהל-פקודי

**ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל ויאמר אלהם אלה הדברים אשר צוה ה' לעשת אתם**  
**“And Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and said to them: These are the things that Hashem commanded, to do them” (35:1)**

The Olelos Efraim points out that this gathering occurred on the day after Yom Kippur, as we know that Moshe brought the second luchos down on Yom Kippur. The lesson we can learn from the communal gathering on the day after Yom Kippur is that that being nice to friends is not restricted to Erev Yom Kippur. The emphasis on unity, on gathering together, should also be continued after Yom Kippur. We must be together the entire year. The focus on interpersonal relationships should not end with Yom Kippur.

Similarly, repentance is not restricted to Yom Kippur either. We ask for assistance with our repentance in Shemone Esrei three time each day. Repentance is one of the 613 mitzvos. Even though we concentrate on repentance on Yom Kippur, we must remember that it is an obligation at all times, 365 days a year. Torah helps one accomplish the difficult task of repentance. Learning Torah gives one a special ability to accomplish more in repentance. This is why we begin the request for assistance in repentance in Shemone Esrei by asking Hashem to bring us closer to Torah.

**לא תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם ביום השבת**  
**“You shall not light fire in any of your dwellings on the Shabbos day” (35:3)**

Why is lighting a fire singled out as the one example of forbidden work of Shabbos? Chazal say that Hashem expresses His anger over an increase in the desecration of Shabbos by causing outbreaks of fire. This is hinted to in this posuk. Aside from the prohibition against lighting a fire on Shabbos, we are warned not to cause a fire by desecrating Shabbos.

**ויבאו האנשים על הנשים כל נדיב לב הביאו חח ונזם וטבעת וכומז כל כלי זהב וכל איש אשר הניף תנופת**  
**זהב לה'**

**“The men came in addition to the women; everyone who was generous of heart brought armband, and nose-ring, and finger-ring, and body ornaments - all sorts of gold ornaments - every man who raised up an offering of gold to Hashem” (35:22)**

The Malbim points out that when the people donated to the Mishkan, the men gave "in addition to the women." The women had already come and donated. In contrast, by the Golden Calf, the women refused to donate their jewelry. The women knew when to donate and when not to.

We find another instance of the righteousness of women later in the parsha, in connection with the construction of the Kiyor, the basin from which the Kohanim washed their hands and feet. The Kiyor was made from copper mirrors that the women donated to the Mishkan. Rashi comments that Moshe was not sure whether it was befitting that the mirrors be used for the holy construction because they were objects used for physical pursuits. Hashem told him to use them because they were used for lofty purposes in Mitzrayim. The men would come home from the hard work and the women would show themselves to their husbands in their mirrors. They would comment about how beautiful they looked compared to the men in order to entice them so that they would be with them despite their weariness. Because of this, many children were born in Mitzrayim. Because the women used these mirrors for a lofty purpose, it was only fitting that they be used in the Mishkan.

We learn from the women to be optimistic and to always have hope for the future, even in the worst of circumstances. Hashem wanted the Kohanim to be reminded of this optimism every time they began their service, when they washed their hands and feet, so that this optimism would be expressed through the service that they would perform. We should also reflect this optimism in our prayer, which is a substitute for the service in the Mishkan, and express our confidence that Hashem will answer our prayers in his great kindness (Orach Chayim 98:5).

We find that the Jews were redeemed from Egypt in the merit of the righteous women who ensured the continuity of the Jewish nation. This is why women are obligated in all the mitzvos of Pesach. In fact, women

play a big role in other holidays as well. Esther was the heroine of Purim and Yehudis struck a great blow to the Greeks in the time of Chanukah.

Rashi also writes that the Kiyor was used to give water to the sotah, the unfaithful wife. In this way, the mirrors continued their original use as tools to bring peace between man and wife. R' Moshe Feinstein comments that this was a rare occurrence. Most of the time the Kiyor was only used for washing the hands and feet of the Kohanim. Why should the mirrors be part of the Kiyor for use in a rare occurrence? He answers that all of the service in the Mishkan began with Kiyor. Since the women used the mirrors for Jewish continuity, it was only fitting that they enjoy the fruits of their labor. The continuing daily service in the Mishkan is owed to the contribution of the women in Egypt and thus the daily service begins with a tribute to their efforts by using the mirrors in washing the hands and feet. The daily service was followed by Birchas Kohanim. The Kohanim would bless the people that this continuity and increasing should always carry on at all times.

**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 gramatically 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."

**ורחצו ממנו משה ואהרן ובניו את ידיהם ואת רגליהם**

**“And Moshe and Aharon and his sons would wash their hands and feet from it” (40:31)**

The Rambam writes that one must wash his feet before praying every morning. We do not follow the opinion of the Rambam. Where does the Rambam get this idea from? The Torah Temima writes that prayer is a replacement for the service in the Beis HaMikdash and many laws regarding prayer reflect this purpose (Orach Chayim 98:4). Since the Kohanim had to wash their hands and feet before serving, the Rambam felt that it would seem appropriate that we, too, should have to wash our feet in addition to our hands before praying.

### **Parshas Hachodesh**

The month of Nisan is the first month of the year. Although this tends to be forgotten because Rosh HaShana is in Tishrei, nevertheless it is important to remember that although Tishrei is the beginning of the year, Nisan is the

first month for the Jewish people because it was in this month that we were redeemed from Mitzrayim and became a nation. The joy from Adar carries over into Nisan as we celebrate the time of our national freedom. Just as the Jewish nation was born in Nisan, Nisan is the first of the months of the Jewish calendar.

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