

**Wembley Synagogue**

וַיְקַהֵל פְּקֻדֵי

Insights from the commentators into the Sedra of Vayakhel and Pekudei

וַיְקַהֵל מֹשֶׁה - And Moshe assembled (the entire assembly of the Children of Israel) (35:1)
The Rabbis tell us that Moshe called together the entire nation every time that he had something important to tell them. If so, why does the Torah have to mention here that Moshe gathered all the Jewish people to tell them of the commandment to build the Mishkan (Tabernacle)?

According to the *Nachalat Yaakov*, the Torah is telling us that Moshe realised that the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) would come and dwell in the *Mishkan* only if it was built with the enthusiastic participation of all the Jewish people. If some Jews did not take part, even if their number was very small, the *Shechina* would stay away. For this reason, the Torah points out that Moshe assembled all of Israel when he commanded them about the building of the *Mishkan*. Another explanation, offered by the *Divrei Yoel*, is based on the *Zohar*, which reveals to us that the *Mishkan* was to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf. That sin came about mainly because of the "mixed multitude" – (*erev rav* – non-Jews who left Egypt with Bnei Yisrael). The Torah notes that Moshe gathered all the Jewish people to stress that only they would take part in the building of the *Mishkan*. The "mixed multitude" was excluded. Because they were instrumental in the sin of the Golden Calf, they were forbidden to contribute anything. (Source: Parsha Pearls)

וַיְקַהֵל מֹשֶׁה - And Moshe assembled (the entire assembly of the Children of Israel) (35:1)
The key message in this verse is that Moshe brought all the people together. *Ohr P'nei Moshe* comments that, as we know, the second Temple was destroyed because of *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred). Division and dispute have always undermined the foundation of our world. Therefore, before the *Mishkan* was built, Moshe brought the Jewish nation together; completion of the *Mishkan* depended upon the unity of the people. (Source: Something to Say)

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים שְׁבַת שְׁבִתוֹן - For six days (work may be done)..... a day of complete rest. (35:2) The Torah introduces the laws regarding the building of the Mishkan with a warning to observe Shabbat. Rashi notes the juxtaposition of these laws and infers that building the Mishkan does not override the observance of Shabbat. Abarbanel explains that since building the Mishkan is a symbol of the strong bond that exists between Hashem and the Jewish people, one might think that it should take precedence over everything, even Shabbat. After all, action is a positive expression of our love and commitment to Hashem. Should it not have preeminence over the observance of Shabbat, which represents a cessation from action? Specifically, in response to this line of thinking, the Torah emphasises the laws of Shabbat in connection with the construction of the Mishkan, in order to teach us that Shabbat takes precedence over the building of the Mishkan. Rabbi Eli Munk ztl suggests a reason for the predominance of Shabbat over the building of the Mishkan. He says that the Mishkan and its successor, the Bet Hamikdash (the Temple), would one day disappear. Shabbat, on the other hand, is a mitzvah which was to last forever. Its observance would ensure that the loss of the Mishkan and the Bet Hamikdash would not affect the relationship the Jewish people have with Hashem. Structures are temporary; mitzvot are eternal. (Source: Peninim on the Torah)

וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר נָשְׂאוֹ לְבוֹ - And they came, every man whose heart had elevated him, (that his spirit made him generous, brought the offering to Hashem). (35:21)
This verse indicates an interesting phenomenon that occurred during the operation to gather materials for the building of the Sanctuary. Ordinarily, when people are motivated to contribute to an important cause, often well-intentioned people do not end up carrying out their intentions to contribute. Here, however, the Torah states everyone carried out their intention to give. (Source: Chida quoted in Ma'ayana Shel Torah)

רָאוּ קְרָא ה' בְּשֵׁם בְּצִלְאֵל בֶּן אוּרִי בֶן חוּר לְמִטָּה יְהוּדָה - See Hashem has called by name. Betzalel ben Uri ben Chur, of the tribe of Yehudah. (35:30) Moshe emphasises that Hashem did not simply call Betzalel. Instead, he says that He called him by name. Indeed, the verse's trop (cantillation / notes) stress the words, "by name," by indicating that these words are followed by an *etnachta*, a note denoting a stop in the sentence,

rather than being read directly in connection with the following words of "Betzael ben Uri." The Targum Yonatan interprets "by name" to mean "good name," suggesting that Hashem called Betzael by a "good name."

What is the name and what is its connection to Betzael? In the Midrash Tanchuma, we are taught that during our lifetime, we receive three names: one from our parents, one from other people, and one is the name that we earn for ourselves. The last name, the one that we earn, supersedes the previous two. In support of this statement, the Midrash cites Betzael, who merited building the Mishkan as a result of the good name that he had earned for himself. This Midrash requires clarification. The name one receives from people is based upon their character and conduct. If we act respectably, we earn a good name. If we act inappropriately, we can blemish our reputation. What then is the difference between the name one receives from other people and the name that we acquire for ourselves? Are they not one and the same?

Harav Mordechai Gifter, ztl, suggests that a person's inner qualities, which are known only to Hashem, constitute what the Rabbis suggest is the name that man acquires for himself. He supports this idea with the episode in Samuel 1, 16:7, in which Hashem instructs Samuel to go to Bet Lechem and anoint one of Yishai's sons as king. Hashem did not, however, specify which son. After meeting Yishai's sons, Samuel was certain that Eliav, the oldest son, was most suited for the monarchy. He saw in him the necessary qualities and character that the Jewish king, should possess. Hashem did not agree. He said, "Do not look at his appearance or at his tall stature, for I have rejected him. For it is not as man sees; man sees what his eyes behold, but Hashem sees into the heart." Despite the fact that Samuel was a prophet and an individual who was at the top of the spiritual ladder, he was still not able to detect a man's true essence. After all is said and done, he was still a human being. Only Hashem knows a man's true character. Therefore, the name that one acquires for himself - i.e. the name that Hashem gives him, transcends all others. This name is indicative of his true identity.

While others may have presented themselves as more worthy and more suitable for building the Mishkan than Betzael, Hashem called him by name, "a good name." His reputation, as defined by Hashem is what counted the most. Thus, he became the Sanctuary's master builder. (Source: Peninim on the Torah)

אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן - These are the accounts of the *Mishkan*... (38:21) The Torah is careful not to repeat a word or write an extra letter. Hence, the *sidrot* of *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei* which are a repetition of *Terumah* and *Tetzaveh* should have been omitted?

The Torah in *Bereshit* discusses at great length the episodes that took place when Eliezer goes to find a suitable wife for Yitzchak. When he meets with her family, the entire story is repeated. Rashi explains, "The ordinary conversation of the servants of the Patriarchs is more pleasing before Hashem than the Torah of the sons. Therefore, the section of Eliezer is repeated in the Torah, whereas many important principles of the law were given only by hinting." (See Rashi on *Bereshit* 24:42)

The gravest sin ever committed by the Jewish people was the making and worshipping of the golden calf. It incited the anger of Hashem to the extent that He considered, annihilating the entire people. The *Mishkan* is referred to as the *Mishkan Ha'edut* (The Tabernacle of Testimony) because it serves as a testimony that Hashem forgave the sin of the golden calf (see Rashi on *Vayikra* 9:23). Consequently, since the *Mishkan* accomplished forgiveness for His much-loved people, Hashem enjoys talking about it repeatedly. (Source: Vedibarta Bam)

The Sidra of *Pekudei* opens with a very exact accounting of all the gold, silver and copper that was donated for the Tabernacle and delineates precisely the purposes for which it was used. This serves as a prime example of how careful leaders must be to account for public funds that pass through their hands. Although there was not even a shadow of a doubt as to Moshe's integrity, he was careful to fulfill the dictum written elsewhere in the Torah וְהָיִיתֶם נִקְיִים מֵה' וּמִיִּשְׂרָאֵל - and you shall be vindicated from Hashem and from Israel (*Bamidbar* 32:22)

Shabbat Shalom!



Shabbat starts 5.52pm



Shabbat ends: 6.55pm

The *Insights into the Sedra* sheet is edited by Chazan Anthony Wolfson

Online at: http://www.wembleysynagogue.org/html/sedra_notes.html