



# NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"l

THIS PUBLICATION IS DEDICATED TO THE HATZLACHAH AND ZECHUS OF נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה. MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE PARSHAH

## Your Efforts Deserve a Double Blessing

וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל הַמְּלָאכָה וְהִנֵּה עָשׂוּ אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' בֵּן עָשׂוּ וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה: (שמות לט, מג)

Moshe saw all the work, and behold, they did it, as *Hashem* commanded, so they performed it. And Moshe blessed them. (*Shemos* 29:43)

“And Moshe blessed them.” He said to them, “May it be His Will that the *Shechinah* should rest upon the work of your hands. ‘And may the pleasantness of *Hashem* our G-d be upon us...’” (*Rashi*)

After all the work of constructing the *Mishkan* was finally finished, Moshe blessed the people. Simply understood, this was a blessing to them for their efforts in building the *Mishkan*.

But the *pasuk* emphasizes that “as *Hashem*

commanded, so they performed it.” This was not a voluntary act on the part of the people. They were obligated to make the *Mishkan*, and had they been lax in doing so, it would have been a serious sin. But when they did the work well, all according to

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*Hashem's* command, Moshe showed his pleasure and approval, and blessed them ויהי נועם ה' אלקינו עלינו – “The pleasantness of *Hashem*” should rest upon them.

This teaches us an important practical lesson. At home, the wife prepares the house nicely, and sometimes it takes hard work, for instance on *Erev Shabbos*, when a lot of effort goes into preparing various tasty foods and cleaning up the house, with all the toil it entails.

It is common for the husband to think to himself that it's simply her job. That's what she's supposed to do. Due to this attitude, he forgets to smile to her and bless for her efforts.

The husband should rather learn from *Moshe Rabbeinu*, who blessed the Jewish people that the *Shechinah* should rest among them, after they did what they needed to do. This is the most wonderful of all blessings. It includes all the blessings and all the pleasant things.

We see this also in *Parshas Shemini*. After Moshe and Aharon finished offering *korbanos* in the newly erected *Mishkan*, it is written:

ויבא משה ואהרן אל אהל מועד ויצאו  
ועברו את העם – Moshe and Aharon came  
to the Tent of Meeting and went out and  
blessed the people.<sup>1</sup>

Also there, Rashi explains that they blessed the people this same blessing, that the *Shechinah* should rest upon the work of their hands, “And may the pleasantness of *Hashem* our G-d be upon us....”

So we see that the people were worthy of a blessing twice. Once here, when they made their efforts to construct the *Mishkan*, and a second time in *Parshas Shemini*, when Moshe and Aharon actually made use of the “work of their hands.”

The wife puts her efforts into her work in the “miniature *Beis Hamikdash*” of the Jewish home. This is a form of *avodah*. And the Jewish home is a place where the *Shechinah* and peace dwell when husband and wife act meritoriously.<sup>2</sup>

She deserves a double blessing and pleasantness and a smile. Once, right away on *Erev Shabbos* when the work is done, and everything is ready for the evening meal. And again at night after the *se'udah*, when the *avodas hakodesh* of the *Shabbos* meal has been completed and all the tasty foods were tasted and eaten. At that point, the wife deserves a second blessing.

*Chazal* say:

Someone who is ungrateful to his friend will eventually become ungrateful to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.<sup>3</sup>

Showing appreciation to human beings is equated to showing appreciation to *Hashem*. When it comes to *Hashem*, we must bless twice, once before and once after. The same goes with showing appreciation to our fellow human beings. We should bless them twice for what they did, once before we benefit from their efforts and once afterward, as Moshe blessed the Jewish people. ●

1 *Vayikra* 9:23.

2 *Sotah* 17a.

3 *Mishnas R. Eliezer* ch. 7.



# Just Use Your Dyes

וַיִּקַּם מֹשֶׁה אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּתֵּן אֶת אֲדָנָיו וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת קַרְשָׁיו וַיִּתֵּן אֶת בְּרִיחָיו וַיִּקַּם אֶת עַמּוּדָיו  
(שמות מ, יח)

Moshe erected the *Mishkan*. He placed the sockets and put in the planks and inserted the bolts and stood up the pillars. (*Shemos* 40:18)

R. Avin said: This may be compared to a king who had a beautiful image. He said to a member of his household, "Make me one like it." He responded, "My master the king, how can I possibly make one like it?" The king answered, "You use your dyes, and I will do my part."

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* said similarly to Moshe, "See [the form of the *Mishkan*] and make it." Moshe responded, "Master of the World, am I G-d?! How can I make like these?" He answered, "According to their shape, with sky-blue dye and scarlet dye and crimson dye. Just as you see above, so shall you make below.... And if you make below like the one above, I will leave the Heavenly entourage behind and bring My Presence among you, below. (*Shemos Rabbah* 35:6)

When *Moshe Rabbeinu* saw what was entailed in constructing the *Mishkan*, he realized it was impossible. Only G-d could make a *Mishkan*. Then *Hashem* told him that he has only to do his part. He only needs to build the *Mishkan* according to the prescribed plan, and *Hashem* will do His part and bring the *Shechinah* to rest in it. This is in fact what happened. Moshe built the *Mishkan* from physical materials and *Hashem* brought down the *Shechinah* to dwell in it.

We can apply the same principle to every area of life.

When we are about to do a *mitzvah* we recite the blessing of אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו. We thank *Hashem* for sanctifying us through His *mitzvos*. But why do we call them "His" *mitzvos*? It is our job and obligation to do the *mitzvos*, so we should call them "our" *mitzvos*!

When we do *mitzvos*, *Hashem* completes our actions and grants them their *kedushah*, their special spiritual qualities, their heavenly power. It is written:

אֶקְרָא לְאֱלֹהִים עֲלִיוֹן לְאֵל גָּמֵר עָלַי – I will call out to the exalted G-d, to the G-d Who finishes for me (עלי).<sup>1</sup>

When we do *mitzvos* to the extent we can, when we learn Torah on our level, *Hashem* finishes the act and brings it to completion and absolute perfection. He places great *kedushah* on the *mitzvos* we do. He finishes what we were unable to.

This is the meaning of אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו. The *mitzvos* we perform do not receive their value from our actions alone because then they would be lacking and malformed. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* comes and completes what we can't do ourselves. The level of sanctity that our *mitzvos* have is thus according to *Hashem's mitzvos*.

When we recite a blessing before doing a *mitzvah*, we are saying, so to speak, "Ribono shel Olam, we did as You commanded, we finished our part. We can't do more than that. Now we ask of you to sanctify us with Your *mitzvos*. You finish whatever is needed so the *mitzvos* we did will receive the value and the qualities appropriate to Your *mitzvos*. Give our *mitzvos* what only You can give them."

And *Hashem* hears our request. He examines our deeds, and if we did all we can, He finishes our *mitzvah* acts and grants them His sublime *kedushah*. ●

<sup>1</sup> Tehillim 57:3.

וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֹתוֹ כִּן עָשָׂה: (שמות מ, טז)

**Moshe made it, according to all that Hashem commanded him, so he made it. (Shemos 40:16)**

There is a big question that people ask about the *parshiyos* of *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei*. The entire contents of *Vayakhel* seem to be a repetition of what was already stated in *Terumah*, and the contents of *Pekudei*, i.e., the *Bigdei Kehunah*, were already stated in *Tetzaveh*. Why did the Torah say it all again, when it was already stated in great detail?

The following question will lead us to the answer.

There is a verse that says:

לֵךְ ה' הַגְדִּילָהּ וְהַגְבוּרָהּ וְהַתְּפָאֶרֶת וְהַנִּצָּח וְהַהוֹד  
וְגו' לֵךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָהּ וְהַמְתַּנְשָׂא לְכֹל לְרֹאשׁ.<sup>1</sup>

*Chazal* say that this verse enumerates the seven ways by which Hashem runs His world, the seven *midos*. The seventh is *הַמְּמַלְכָה*. Why does the verse repeat לֵךְ ה' before this last one? Those very same words were already stated at the beginning of the verse.

The answer is that everything has two aspects to it, as will be explained. *Chazal* say about the above-quoted verse:

We see that everything that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* created above, He created below.<sup>2</sup>

Every trait in the world has two stages to it. For instance, the trait of *chesed*, which is called *הַגְדִּילָהּ* in the above-quoted verse. If we try to define this trait as it manifests itself in the human soul, we will find that it has two parts.

The first part is the potential of *chesed*. This is the trait in its essential state. It is understanding and appreciating *chesed*, as well as possessing a true desire to do *chesed*. Every good Jew, if he is asked, "If you had a lot of money, what would you do with it?"

will not answer, "I would buy a really fancy car." His first answer will always be, "I would do *chesed* with it." This stems from the essential trait of *chesed* that is part of human nature.

The second part of the trait of *chesed* is its practical application. This is the actual ability to perform acts of *chesed*. Once a person has acquired the first part, once he has the potential for *chesed*, once he wants to do *chesed* and understands what it is, he will surely perform acts of *chesed* if he has the ability to do so.

Potential and actual are two different parts. A person could have a profound understanding of *chesed*, *gevurah* and all the other traits, but that doesn't necessarily mean he has the ability to bring them to actuality.

Bringing things from potential to actual – that is what the trait of *malchus* is all about. This trait is called *הַמְּמַלְכָה* in the above-quoted verse. A *melech* is not someone who has the necessary talents and qualifications to be a king. It is someone who possesses the power to actually get things done.

*Chesed* is one of the traits by which Hashem runs His world, and also with Hashem there are two parts to it. There is the part of *הוּא חֹסֵד הוּא* – "Hashem desires *chesed*,"<sup>3</sup> which is Hashem's Will to bestow unlimited goodness upon His creatures. And then there is the part of actualizing His Will, of performing acts of kindness. This is the aspect of *Melech*. A king is someone who has the ability to do.

*Malchus* is practical rulership, governing. As regards Hashem's ways, this means practically implementing His various traits as they are stated in the above-quoted verse. This is the *midah* of *malchus*. Only *malchus* actualizes Hashem's ways in the world.

This is why the verse repeats the words לֵךְ ה' before

1 I *Divrei Hayamim* 29:11.

2 *Shemos Rabbah* 33:4.

3 *Michah* 7:18.

the *midah* of *malchus*. There are two parts – the potential and the actual – and each is introduced by the words 'ה לך, which mean: “You, *Hashem*, have....”

In other words: “You, *Hashem*, have” the potential of *chesed* and *gevurah* etc. And “You, *Hashem*, have” the ability to actualize it all.

Getting back to the original question: the *parshiyos* of *Terumah* and *Tetzaveh* have the command to make the *Mishkan*, the *Menorah*, the *Bigdei Kehunah* etc. They say, “You shall make....” These commands to make the *Mishkan* are the potential for the *Mishkan*. They are not the actual *Mishkan*. The *parshiyos* of *Vaykhel* and *Pekudei* are the practical aspect. They are the actual doing, the actual making of the *Mishkan*. Here it says, “And he made....” The *Mishkan* is complete only when it has both parts, the potential and the actual.

## It's Not Just the Mishkan

This is a general rule with everything in the world. There is the “potential” and there is the “actual.”

For instance, let's say someone wants to know how to ride a bike. It's not so deep; such a deep subject; you can learn what to do in a few minutes. You sit on the seat and rotate the pedals. That's basically all there is to it. Knowing how to drive a car is a little harder but it still doesn't take very long. You have the gears or the transmission, you have the brakes, and that's about it. But all this is true regarding “potential” bike riding or car driving.

Besides this, you have the actual riding or driving, and that's something else altogether.

This is a universal principle. There is a difference between a person who knows theoretically what *hasmadah* is and a person who actually learns Torah constantly. There is a difference between someone who knows theoretically how to bake a cake and someone who actually bakes the cake. The practical realization of the matter is something else altogether.

In *Kabbalah*, this gap between the potential and the actual is described by the metaphor of the sun and the moon. In our world, the light of the sun is always much greater than the light of the moon. The light of the moon is *pagum*, it is deficient. This represents the gap between the potential and the actual. The potential is always much greater than the actual implementation. Thus we pray in *Kiddush Halevanah* that the light of the moon should return to be like the light of the sun, as it was in the Six Days of Creation.

The sun is the source of the light. The sun's light reflects off the moon, and the moon is the one that has the main influence on the world. When we say that the light of the sun reflects off the moon, it means that practically speaking, the trait of *malchus*, which is associated with the moon, is a mere reflection of the sun's true power. The sun is like a king who is strong and wise but his influence on the kingdom is weakened and does not reflect his true potential.

Every one of us has a lot of potential. We have the desire to learn Torah, we understand that Torah learning requires constancy, and so forth. But all this is our potential.

*Kabbalah* describes this also in terms of male and female. The male aspect is the source, the potential, from which the actuality flows. We lack nothing in essence, in potential. In theory, we know everything. But the feminine aspect needs to receive it and “give birth” to it, in other words, to bring it into actuality.

We need to take all our good desires and intentions, and all our understanding, all that well-developed theory, and actualize it. To work at being a true *masmid* and *davening* with proper *kavanah* as we know theoretically that we should.

The practical implementation is not the same as knowing intellectually what Torah and *avodah* is all about, and sometimes the potential and the actual are just too far from each other. What we need work on is bridging that gap. ●