

Outline of Shiur – Parashat VaYakhel

“Shabbat and the Mishkan”

...אלה הדברים אשר צוה ד' לעשות אתם. ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהי לכם קדש...

A. The Story

Following the incident of the Golden Calf, Moshe gathers the Jewish people together and transmits the full details of the command to build a Mishkan for the purpose of “containing Divinity” among them. Before he presents the entire program of the Mishkan, though, Moshe commands the people the mitzvah of Shabbat. This mitzvah had previously been commanded by HaShem to Moshe towards the beginning of parashat Ki Tissa, prior to the recording of the Golden Calf incident. It is now that Moshe is transmitting this mitzvah to the people.

B. Problems and Questions

1- Content Problems:

- a) Why does the Torah present the laws of Shabbat once again? The Torah had done so earlier: in parashat B'Shalach, with the Mann, in parashat Yitro in the Aseret HaDibrot, in parashat Mishpatim 23:12. Why the need for yet another Shabbat commandment?
- b) Why is the commandment of Shabbat presented at this point, right before the long instruction to build the Mishkan?
- c) Is there a connection between the command to build the Mishkan and Shabbat? After all, in parashat Ki Tisa these two mitzvot dovetail each other as well?
- d) Why is the order of the two commands reversed? In parashat Ki Tisa (really beginning with parashat Terumah), Moshe is first told to command the Jewish people to build the Mishkan and only afterwards is given the mitzvah of Shabbat. Here in VaYakhel, he first commands the people about Shabbat and then commands them regarding the Mishkan? Why did Moshe apparently reverse the order he was told to present it?

e) Why does Moshe seem to present only a part of the laws which HaShem had told him to transmit (in Ki Tisa) about Shabbat? Why is the prohibition in verse 3 not mentioned earlier by HaShem?

2- Textual Problems

a) אלה הדברים אשר צוה ד' לעשות אתם - To what do these (underlined) words refer – to Shabbat or to the Mishkan ?

1 - If they refer to Shabbat, is it true that the verb לעשות is applicable (since it's more about restraining behavior)?

2 - If it refers to the Mishkan, why interrupt the command of Mishkan with Shabbat? Why repeat (in verse 4) a similar introductory phrase again?

b) Verse 2 - " ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון " - Does this מלאכה refer to: מלאכת שבת or מלאכת המשכן? כל העושה בו מלאכה יומת

3- Definitional Questions:

a- What does the term מלאכה entail?

4- Orthographic Questions:

a) Why is the word לעשת spelled *chaseir*?

C. Related Issues

1- Was the original command to build a Mishkan (parshiyot Terumah, Tezaveh, and beginning Ki Tisa) given to Moshe before the Sin of the GC (as written) or only afterwards? This is a debate between Rashi (after) and Ramban (before).

2- Was the original command to build the Mishkan (as appears in Ki Tisa) meant to be done on Shabbat (דוחה שבת)? Rashi clearly says No, while Meshech Chochmah argues that Yes. Ramban's view is unclear (to me).

D. Solutions: Chazal

Chazal do not make many explicit comments about the juxtaposition of Mishkan and Shabbat in either parasha. The following are the comments they do make:

1- The Talmud (Shabbat 96b) does (implicitly) comment that there is a correlation between Shabbat and the Mishkan. As the term מלאכה regarding Shabbat is not defined (except for הבערה in the next verse) – we are left confused as to what is being prohibited (to be done) on Shabbat? Chazal say that the juxtaposition of these two laws indicates that all of the activities (מלאכות) that went into the construction of the Mishkan are to be prohibited on Shabbat.

2- Furthermore, the Talmud (Shabbat 49a) states that the number 39 of the 39 melachot of Shabbat is also derived from the melachot of the construction of the Mishkan. The Talmud does not explicitly explain the derivation, but simply states that the number 39 comes from the Mishkan. The Mechilta states that the number 39 is derived from the phrase אשר צוה ד' לעשת אתם אלה הדברים but does not explain how. Another Talmudic source (Shabbat 97b) derives it from the phrase אלה הדברים of our verse. The gematriya of the word אלה is 36, while דברים is a minimum of 2 plus the extra ה is darshened to add another 1 = 39. Incidentally, this Talmudic reading reads our verse, אלה הדברים אשר צוה ד' לעשות אתם, as referring to the Shabbat (and not to the Mishkan).

3- Juxtaposition of Shabbat and Mishkan (in VaYakhel) – The Mechilta says that this teaches that constructing the Mishkan may not be done on Shabbat. This needs to be taught, since one may have derived the opposite from the fact that the operation of the Mishkan (i.e. the sacrifices and other Mishkan activities) may be done on Shabbat, despite the fact that they entail melacha. Our verse teaches that although operation of the Mishkan is allowed on Shabbat, its construction is not allowed on Shabbat. Interestingly, the Mechilta says nothing about the juxtaposition in parashat Ki Tisa.

E. Solutions: Rashi's presentation of Chazal

1- **Rashi** – Follows Chazal, in typical fashion, although he does not use the terminology of the Mechilta source. He says the same principle on the first presentation in parashat Ki Tisa, although Chazal themselves do not do so. In the two places, the textual basis of the law differs. Again, in Vayikra, he derives the same law from the juxtaposition of Mikdash and Shabbat (את שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו).

Critiques of Rashi:

a) **Ba'alei Tosafot:**

1) Why does Rashi link the rule of restriction to the fact that Shabbat is written first? After all, in Ki Tisa, Shabbat appears after Mishkan and Rashi still writes that Shabbat restricts the building of the Mishkan. (Chaim Paltiel)

2) Why would have thought that the construction of the Mishkan pushes off Shabbat – we have a principle that אין עשה דוחה לא תעשה ועשה (R"i in Moshav Zekeinim)

3) Why do we need to learn this rule from here – if Rashi (and the Talmud in Yevamot) derives it from the verse in Vayikra? (Moshav Zekeinim)

b) **Ramban:**

1) How can Rashi say (in Ki Tisa) that we derive that Mishkan is not דוחה שבת from the phrase אך את שבתתי תשמרו – that the word אך is used as an exclusion. The application here of this linguistic principle is that the exclusion applies to Shabbat itself – that although one must keep Shabbat, there are exclusions to this rule, such as where there exists potential “danger to life” (פיקוח נפש). Chazal themselves make this point on our verse. Ramban agrees with Rashi on our verse in VaYakhel about the rule that construction of the Mishkan does not take precedence over Shabbat – although he derives it somewhat differently (as we will see).

F. Link of Shabbat and Mishkan

1- Mishkan serves as the source of the definition of Melacha concept of Shabbat. How do we know what מלאכה means and what is actually prohibited by this term? The 39 melachot of Shabbat are derived from the מלאכות of the Mishkan. (Chazal in the Talmud assume this, but do not actually provide the textual derivation, Moshav Zekeinim derives it from our verse. Most Rishonim on the Talmud derive this, as MZ, from the סמיכות משכן לשבת in our parshiyot, such as: Rashi, Tosfot, and Rashba (Shabbat 49b) and Ran (Shabbat 74a).

Question – Why does the Torah derive the definition of melachot Shabbat from the melachot of the Mishkan? What is the connection?

Answer -

2- The link of the two is to teach that although the Jewish People are being commanded to construct the Mishkan, they are not to build it on Shabbat.

What is the derivation?

1- From the fact that Shabbat was written first before Mishkan. [Rashi]

2- From the meaning of the sentence itself (i.e. *peshat*). The verse states: אלה אתם דברים אשר צוה ד' לעשות אתם (ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש – that the מלאכת המשכן can only be done during the 6 days of the week, but not on Shabbat. [Ibn Ezra peirush aroch, Bechor Shor, Ramban, Chizkuni, Ba'al HaTurim aroch, Bachye, Abarbanel, Sforno with variation].

3- The Shabbat is linked to the Mishkan in a Kabbalistic manner. The Mishkan represents the 3 levels of Reality (Upper, Middle and Lower Worlds). Shabbat, which reflects the Upper World of עולם הבא – is mentioned here in connection with the Upper World reflected in the Mishkan (קדש קדשים). [Tzror HaMor]

4- The building of the Mishkan represents HaShem's direction of Man's activity. Although it appeared as if the People were acting on their own in their creative work for the Mishkan, in actuality, their activities were being directed from above. This is the meaning of their bringing together all the parts of the Mishkan and everything fit perfectly in place, miraculously. What the People contributed was their doing everything לשם שמים. This is what Man can contribute and has freedom to do. This Will (שם) is what is known as Shabbat – doing and acting with the intent of fulfilling the Will of HaShem. [Mei Shiloach of the Ishbetzhe]

5- Both the Mishkan and Shabbat represent a reciprocal covenant of relationship between HaShem and the Jewish People. Both of them have an element of Man's role in the relationship as well as HaShem's role. However, there is a fundamental difference between the reciprocity of covenant between Shabbat and Mishkan. In the Mishkan, it is Man who must initiate the relationship, as it states: ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם. Regarding Shabbat, it is the reverse: HaShem sanctifies Shabbat and then Man makes it Holy. [E. Samet]

G. Alternate Explanation for Shabbat appearance here – Ohr HaChaim

According to the Ohr HaChaim, Shabbat appears here, not to juxtapose it to Mishkan, but rather to independently link it with the previous incident of the Golden Calf, as an atonement for the Sin. The Golden Calf represents the severe sin of Idol Worship and

rejection of HaShem. Shabbat serves as a כפרה for this sin, since it is a pure recognition of HaShem's absolute creation and ongoing involvement in the running of the entire World. The Talmud establishes that whoever worships עבודה זרה is equivalent to denying the entire Torah. Similarly, the Talmud establishes that the Shabbat is equivalent to the entire Torah. By keeping the Shabbat, the Jewish People is thus rectifying the results of the Sin of the Golden Calf.

H. Related Issues and Questions:

1- Why doesn't the Construction of the Mishkan override the Shabbat?

a- Talmudic Approach – R"י in Moshav Zekeinim – Shabbat constitutes a negative and positive command while the Mishkan only constitutes a positive command. The Talmudic rule is that the latter cannot override the former.

b- Peh Kadosh – Both fulfil the same role of bringing kedusha to the Jewish people. Therefore, there is no need to build the Mishkan on Shabbat, since it serves the same role of drawing Holiness into the world.

c- Hashkafa Statement - Ozneyim l'Torah and AJ Heschel – Precedence and priority of Holiness of Time over Holiness of Space.

2- Why does the Operation (עבודה) of the Mishkan take precedence over Shabbat (i.e. one can violate the Shabbat to bring sacrifices etc..) while the construction of the Mishkan cannot?

a- Torah Temimah – Talmudic principles of קבוע זמן vs. אינו קבוע זמן

b- Meshech Chochmah – Talmudic principles of אפשר לעשותו מבעוד יום

I. Why was the Order of Shabbat and Mishkan reversed?

According to the majority view that Shabbat and Mishkan are intentionally linked together, what is the reason for the reversal of the laws between Ki Tisa and VaYakhel?

Some of the explanations point to the interruption of the Sin of the Golden Calf as the reason for the reversal (assuming that the GC occurred in between). Other Commentators present other reasons (and do not see the Sin of the GC as the reason for reversal).

Presented in Chronological Order: (see Na'seach b'Chukecha for his presentation)

1- **R. Yehudah HeChasid** (Sefer Chasidim) (12th Century) – Practical advice - If a person gives instructions to someone to do several things, a general practical guideline is that whatever one wants to give importance to - should be commanded last. This way it will get done first.

2- **Abarbanel** (15th Century) – Unclear – Sounds like Rashi, that the law of Shabbat was given before Mishkan to ensure that Shabbat would not be violated in the process of fulfilling the mitzvah to build the Mishkan. But why it was reversed, is unclear.

3- **Kli Yakar** (16th Century) – This represents the Reciprocal love between HaShem and the Jewish People. The command of the Mishkan represents כבוד ישראל, as it indicates HaShem's forgiving the Jewish People for their sin and his dwelling among them. Shabbat, on the other hand, represents כבוד ד', as it focuses on HaShem as the Creator and sustainer of the World. HaShem presented the mitzvah of Mishkan first to give honor of Am Yisrael, while Moshe presented the mitzvah of Shabbat first, to focus first on HaShem's honor.

4- **Chiddushei HaRim** (19th Century) – Before the Sin, the six days of the week acted as preparation for the Shabbat. However, after the Sin, in order to correct the damage caused by their sin, they needed the power of Shabbat to help them in order to achieve the Shechinah to dwell among them. (See Sfat Emet as well, who cites him).

5- **Beit HaLevi** (19th Century) – A person who provides someone else with benefits can do so out of necessity or out of love. It is hard to ascertain what is going on in his mind. However, one can get an indication of his relationship and internal feelings by the order of presentation. Generally, if a person grants another gratuitous gifts first, this indicates eagerness to do so and reflects that person's positive feelings towards the recipient. On the other hand, if he gives him the necessities first and only later on gives him the non-essential goods, this can indicate a less than positive attitude and that he is giving only out of expectation. Similarly, the Mishkan represents a special gift to the Jewish People, which they can live without, as happens during the many years in galut. Shabbat, however, represents an essential gift to the Jewish People, without which the Jewish People cannot survive. Before the Sin of the Golden Calf, HaShem gave them the Mishkan first, the non-essential gift, to indicate his special love for them. However, after the Sin and his relationship with them changed for the worse, he gave them the essential gift of Shabbat first and only later gave them the non-essential gift of the Mishkan.

6- **Meshech Chochmah** (19-20th Century) – Similar to the Beit HaLevi, he also points to the GC sin as the reason for the reversal. However, his perspective differs. Taking a

Talmudic-Halachik approach, he differentiates between two halachik categories – the performance of a mitzvah itself, and an act which serves as only as a מכשירי מצוה, to prepare and enable the performance of a mitzvah. After the Sin, the construction of the Mishkan qualified merely as a מכשירי מצוה – to enable the Shechina to dwell among the people. Talmudic law only allows acts of מכשירי מצוה to be done on Shabbat (for mitzvot that can be done on Shabbat, such as Milah and avodat haMishkan) when they could not have been done before Shabbat. Therefore, after the Sin, the construction of the Mishkan was not allowed on Shabbat. Before the Sin, however, the Shechina already dwelled among the People. The purpose of building the Mishkan was to have a particular location for Divine service. Therefore, the construction of the Mishkan (before the Sin) constituted a mitzvah per se and it was to be done on Shabbat, just as regular Service (עבודת המשכן) and theoretically could have been done on Shabbat (had the People not sinned).

7- **Be'er Moshe** (19-20th Century) – Similar to the Rabbinic figures of the 19th Century before him, he also sees the GC sin as the reason for the reversal. Before the Sin, the People were aware that the Mishkan was merely an means of achieving closeness with HaShem, and not an end in itself, something to be adored and revered as a Holy object. However, following the Sin of the GC, when the People attempted to attain a physical representation of Divinity and to worship it, Moshe realized this weakness in the People and presented the law of Shabbat first. Doing so, indicated that, unlike before the Sin, the construction of the Mishkan was not to take precedence over Shabbat. This emphasized to the People that the Mishkan was not to be worshiped independently, but rather was merely a means to grow closer to HaShem.

8- **U. Cassuto** (19-20th Century) – Distinction between the theoretical presentation (original command of HaShem) vs. the practical-actual command (Moshe's instruction to the People). The initial command presents both commands on a theoretical level, and it can present the primary one (Mishkan) first and the secondary one (Shabbat) second. The actual command from Moshe to the People must take into account how it will be carried out. Since Moshe wanted to ensure that no one would do the work on Shabbat, he needed to emphasize this first, to make sure the message was not missed.

9- **Da'at Mikra** (20th Century) – Offers two suggestions for the order reversal.

- 1- Chiastic Structural style (visual)- AB - BA. (Somewhat reminiscent of Y. HeChasid's idea, but rather than audial impact, this sounds more like a visual artistic idea)
- 2- Basically, Cassuto's idea.

10- **Ta'am v'Da'at** (20-21st Century) – Assumes the pre- vs. post- Sin explanation. The normal presentation is Mishkan first, since this is the primary mitzvah (Shabbat simply qualifies this). The post-Sin required a reversal, as the people fell in their spiritual level and they required the spiritual inspiration of Shabbat in order to merit HaShem's

Shechina to dwell in the Mishkan they were to build. (This sounds same as Chiddushei HaRim)

11- **Y. Sacks** (20-21st Century) – Distinguishes between Divine perspective (first command) and Human perspective (second command of Moshe). From the Divine perspective, Shabbat is the culmination of the 6 days of Creation, as actually occurred. However, since Man was created immediately before Shabbat, from Man's perspective Shabbat is the first day. This is further explained in terms of a fundamental difference between HaShem's and Man's perspective. The former can predict outcome, while the latter has limited control over outcome. The singular solution for attempting to ensure a successful outcome is to reveal at the outset what the outcome should look like. Shabbat, in our world, is a day which reflects the "world to come" and as such, it is our way of keeping the ultimate goal of Olam Haba constantly in our minds in order to enable us to achieve it.

I. Parshanut Points

1- **Role of Ba'alei Tosafot** – They focus on Rashi's Commentary and critique it. They are not partial, as are the later Rashi Super Commentators, such as Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh (Maharal) and others, who come to defend Rashi's commentary. Ba'alei Tosafot also seem to serve as continuers of the Talmudic discussion, as in this case, they (Moshav Zekeinim) suggest an alternative explanation for the juxtaposition of Shabbat and Mishkan, not explicitly stated in the Talmud.

2- **Bachye and the issue of publicizing the Kabbalah** – During the period of Bachye (late 13th- early 14th Century Spain) several Kabbalistic works were appearing in Spain, such as the Zohar. Bachye appears to be addressing the issue of publicizing and making these works available to the public. His grand-Rebbe, Ramban, although he included this approach in his Commentary, made sure to restrict and maintain its secrecy for only the initiated.

3- **Tzror HaMor** – Perspective of Kabbalah.

4- **Ishbetzhe – Hashkafa influencing Commentary.** R. Mordechai Leiner, author of the Mei Shiloach, accepted the principle that Man does not actually have Freedom of Action. All of his actions are pre-determined by Hashgachat HaShem, who runs the world and all events. The only thing Man has is Freedom of Will, that is to have the Will, intent, and the כוונה in his actions. This controversial view runs counter, of course, to standard Jewish belief, such as Rambam, who emphasizes many times Freedom of Action as a basic Jewish belief.

5- **R. Yehudah HeChasid** and his practical and “Down to Earth” approach to life and parshanut.

6- **Contemporary Parshanut – Structural-literary approach** – evident in Da’at Mikra (chiasmus).

7- **Rashi vs. Ramban** – Do we need a drasha of “Mishkan does not override Shabbat” in two places – i.e. both in HaShem’s original command and in Moshe’s command to the people? Rashi has it in both places while the Ramban does not. Rashi is understandable – for just as HaShem is telling Moshe that construction of the Mishkan cannot be done on Shabbat, so too Moshe needs to instruct the People this as well. Ramban may be understood in one of two ways. Either, the construction of the Mishkan could have been done on Shabbat, pre-Sin (as claimed by the Meshech Chochmah) or else this information was transmitted to Moshe orally and he then communicated it to the People explicitly (as he reads it as *peshat* of the words).