

Echoes of the Ages

Mr. Davies, a wealthy man, lived in the town of Kovno with his wife and two daughters. He taught his children to be G-d-fearing people who loved and respected תורה and its pursuers.

The Yeshiva of Baranovitch was in dire need for money and so the renowned ראש ישיבה, R' Elchanan Wasserman, set out for Mr. Davies' house. On his way a fierce storm, common in the cold winters blew up and by the time the Rav reached the rich man's home he was soaked through and covered in mud.

He is a good man" the ראש ישיבה thought as he approached the door, "he uses the vast wealth the ה has granted him for good and holy purposes". But before he knocked, the Rav realized that by entering the house in the state he was in, his wet coat and muddy shoes would ruin the expensive rugs and upholstery inside. He decided to try and find a back door instead.

After finding one and being let in by

a maid, R' Elchanan was directed to Mr. Davies. The rich man was shocked to see the ראש ישיבה in his current state and coming in the back door and when the Rav explained why he did it Mr. Davies burst into tears.

R' Elchanan!" he cried, "All their lives I have been teaching my daughters that respect for the תורה and its scholars is more important than anything. Nothing is worth more than the honour of the תורה! And now, what will my daughters think when they see the Rosh Yeshiva of Baranovitch entering our house through the back door? Are clean rugs and shining floors more important than התורה כבוד?"

An idea struck Mr. Davies. With tearful sobs, he turned to the Rav. "Please, Rabbi, go out through the door you came from and re-enter through the front door. The תורה's honour is more important than anything!"

Mr. Davies merited to marry off his daughters to great תלמידי חכמים.



לעלוי נשמת ר' אליהו רחמים בן מאיר דוד ע"ה ואחיו ר' עבדאללה פרג בן מאיר דוד ע"ה
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Time vs. Space

This week's פרשה ויקהל begins with משה relating to בני ישראל the Almighty's commandment to build the Tabernacle. However, before doing so he reiterates the command to observe שבת. It seems that משה linked two separate and unrelated commands.

Rabbi Dov Soloveitchik zt"l, enlightens us that the פרשה begins: "And Moshe assembled the entire Jewish Community and said to them, 'These are the words that Hashem has commanded [you] to do them.'" The use of the plural form – "These are the words (דברים)" – makes it clear that משה is consciously combining both of the mandates that follow: observance of שבת and the construction of the Tabernacle.

The union of שבת and the Tabernacle is not only found in this week's portion, but is also found in many others. The repeated connection of these two concepts confirms that there is indeed a relationship between them. By virtue of this juxtaposition, רש"י points out that we can deduce that the commandment to build the Tabernacle does not override the sanctity of שבת. The construction must pause over שבת.

Rabbi Soloveitchik finds a deeper connection to this. שבת represents holiness within time. Six working days; the seventh is holy. שבת is the point where a person is able to come close to Hashem; this Sabbath is a sanctuary of

time placed beyond the physical world, for Hashem has instilled this day with His presence.

In a corresponding way the Tabernacle represents holiness in space. Of all the places in the world, Hashem's presence resides in, and is felt in, His sanctuary – the Tabernacle (and later the First and Second Temples). One may seek to come close to Hashem by going to the Tabernacle, for it is there that Hashem's presence resides.

Time is represented by Torah learning, מצות and acts of kindness. Space is represented by the physical, such as Synagogues, בתי מדרש or

On the morning after the first כפור, where this week's portion begins, the Jewish people rose to an unmatched spiritual strength. משה introduces the two commandments of שבת and the construction of the Tabernacle. He then emphasises the similarities of the two, giving them a sequence. Sanctity of time prevails over sanctity of space. משה explains that to achieve spirituality and to retain it, one must first gain control over his or her time. Only then can one attempt to seize control over his or her space.

Adapted from Rabbi Moshe Krupka

By Alex Holder
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Working for שבת

The double פרשה of ויקהל-פקודי is mostly a repetition of the instructions for the building of the משכן and all its components. But there is a small addition at the beginning of ויקהל that would appear to be out of place – the instruction to בני ישראל to keep שבת. שבת comments that the commandment of שבת preceded the משכן to teach that the laws of שבת override the building of the משכן – otherwise people might have built it on שבת in their zeal, without realising that the building of the משכן does not override שבת.

However, the מעינה של תורה asks a brilliant question: if the commandment to observe שבת really does take precedence over that of building the משכן, then why did the commandment of שבת not come before the פרשה of כי תשא, which we read last week? The instructions regarding the construction of the משכן are also given!

The מעינה של תורה brings the answer of the חדושי הרי"ם. What cataclysmic event had occurred in the intervening period between the description of the משכן in the last סדרה and the one in this סדרה? The חדושי הרי"ם answers that it was the חטא העגל, the golden calf that

prompted this change in approach. Before חטא העגל, all of the work people did on a day-to-day basis was motivated by holiness. Their every action was done with holy intentions. In a sense, this could even have been considered as constantly preparing for שבת. There was therefore no need for the instruction to keep שבת to be given, as the people themselves were already in a state of mind of such intrinsic holiness that it was obvious.

After חטא העגל, though, this changed. Whereas before, people had done work with holy thoughts, now their everyday business was carried out exactly as it sounds – in an everyday manner. The people had lost that "שבת" state of mind. They could no longer rise to that special level where they were preparing for שבת all week round without the real thing – a שבת. This is the explanation as to why משה taught the commandment to keep שבת now, because now it was really needed. This way, when the people started building the משכן, they could do it in that holy, "working for שבת" way they had used before.

By Yisroel Greenberg

Riddle of the Week

This week's riddle: Is it possible for a בכור (first born male) not to receive a double portion of his father's inheritance?

Last week's riddle: What letter from the Aleph Beis is missing from ברכת המזון and why?

Answer: Peh sophit - the final peh. The reason given is that whoever says the ברכת המזון properly will be saved from "אף [anger], שצף [fury] and קצף [wrath]". All of these words are expressions of Hashem's anger and they all end with the letter peh sophit (תשב"ץ קטן, שסו).

Two Aspects of שבת

This weeks פרשה starts off by discussing the concept of שבת and then goes on to discuss the construction of the משכן. This is in contrast to the beginning of the פרשה we read last week, כי תשא, which also mentions the very same two topics, yet has them in the opposite order.

Why is it that in last week's פרשה the discussion of the משכן precedes the topic of שבת, yet in this week's פרשה we see that שבת precedes the משכן?

To answer this, רב צדוק הכהן Lublin (פרי צדיק) quotes the גמרא where two אמראים argue about what to do if a person loses track of time and doesn't know which day שבת is. One opinion says he should count six "weekdays" and then observe שבת, just like the שבת of Creation, which came after six days of חול. The other says that he should instead guard the first day as שבת and only then keep the next six days as חול, just like אדם הרישון who was created on a Friday and saw שבת before he encountered the six mundane days of the week.

So רב צדוק explains that we see from this גמרא that there are in fact two different aspects of שבת. On the one hand שבת is an end point- the culmination of the week, which is the zenith of the preceding days of labour where a person can stop and look back over the week's accomplishments with satisfaction.

On the other hand שבת is a beginning just as it was from the perspective of אדם. It's the מקור הברכה, the source of blessing for the following six days. Commensurate with our שבת experience will be the amount of Divine assistance that we can expect during the next six days.

This helps us understand the contrasting order of שבת and the משכן, which we mentioned above. The משכן is always associated with the six חול days of the week. It could not be constructed on שבת and in fact necessitated all thirty-nine variations of creative labour-quintessential weekday activity.

We see then that there is one aspect of שבת which comes after the week, as a culmination to the six days of activity represented by the משכן and referred to in כי תשא and there is the other aspect of שבת, alluded to in ויקהל, which is the source of ברכה for our weekday endeavours which follow it. This is the reason for the change in order, to represent these two aspects of שבת.

By Rabbi D Tugendhaft

Quote of the Week

"Love the one who rebukes you and hate the one who praises you" – אבות דרבי נתן - "you"