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נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

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עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

Parashat Vayakhel

Serenity Amidst the Storm of Life

Questions:

- 1) The Abarbanel asks the following question: Why is it that In *Parshiot Ki Tisa* [31:15-16] and *Vayakhel* [35:1-3], when the Torah speaks about constructing the *Mishkan*, it once again commands us to observe Shabbat? This was already mentioned in *Parashat Mishpatim* [23:12].
- 2) Would it not have been more logical for the Torah to say [*Vayakhel* 35:2], "*Sheishet yamim ta'aseh melacha*, For six days **you will do work**," as opposed to "*Sheishet yamim teiaseh melacha*," which implies that the work will be done on its own?
- 3) Furthermore, the Abarbanel asks in *Parashat Ki Tisa*: If the mitzvah of Shabbat consists of abstaining from *melacha* on the seventh day alone, why is the command to observe Shabbat always accompanied by the instruction, "*Sheishet yamim ta'aseh melacha*," etc. It is not because the Torah is coming to allow us to work during the six days of the week, for when did the Torah forbid this that it must now come and permit it?
- 4) The Abarbanel asks further: In *Parashat Ki Tisa* there are four different admonitions to keep Shabbat. I heard from the Rav of Naharia, Rav Matailis *shlita*, who quoted Rav Frankel z"l, the Rav of Tel Aviv, as asking why Moshe Rabbeinu speaks with the Jewish people about Shabbat several times, both in the *Aseret HaDibrot* as well as in the previous *parshiot*, as mentioned above?

A Mistaken Perspective

Many have unfortunately not experienced the sublime joy of Shabbat. They therefore perceive Shabbat as being a restrictive day which does not allow them to enjoy their "day-off" to the fullest degree possible. However, if they would be graced with Torah wisdom, they would realize that Shabbat is a gift that the King of All Kings stored in his treasury and gave only to the Jewish Nation, his beloved children. A non-Jew who observes the Shabbat is sentenced to death, because he has trespassed into the realm of holiness reserved for the Jewish people alone. When we understand just how great a gift Shabbat is, we will understand how the Creator of the World and of Man knows precisely what benefit Shabbat accrues both to man and his family. It is to the degree that without Shabbat, their lives are totally lacking, never having experienced true calm, serenity, and delight in their lives. Therefore it is stated that the delight of Shabbat is a sample of the World to Come, and it is also the source of blessing and success for man's life and business endeavors. Those who have failed to observe the Shabbat have seen their businesses collapse like a house of cards, despite the fact that they had previously been so successful and confident that it would endure. These words are not only intended for those who actually desecrate Shabbat. Rather, all those who do not observe Shabbat according to the dictates of *halacha* degrade the Shabbat. The *Mishnah Berurah* quotes the *Ya'arot Dvash* as stating that one who is not an expert in the laws of Shabbat, is sure to desecrate it, even if he sits in bed all day! Furthermore, R' Yisrael Salanter, who headed a kollel of Torah greats in the city of Kovno, once heard that there was Shabbat desecration in the city. He therefore went before his kollel and delivered strong rebuke regarding the matters of Shabbat. Following his speech, he was approached by one of his students who asked if they were actually suspect of desecrating the Shabbat. "No," answered R' Yisrael, "but if there is Shabbat desecration in the city, it indicates that you have grown lax in your own Shabbat observance."

The Rest of Shabbat is Greater than Building a Dwelling Place for the *Shechinah*

The Abarbanel therefore explains that this is why the Torah writes about Shabbat observance when commanding the Jews to build the *Mishkan*. It is in order for us to understand and internalize the lofty level of Shabbat. The purpose of building the *Mishkan* was to enable the *Shechinah* to dwell amongst us, and was obviously of inestimable importance especially after the *cheit ha'eigel*, when Hashem removed His *Shechinah* from our midst. Nevertheless, the Torah commands us not to desecrate Shabbat, despite the fact that it will delay the



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construction of the *Mishkan*, because the loftiness of Shabbat exceeds even that of building an abode for the *Shechinah* to reside.

It is Specifically Total Abstinence From Creative Activity Which is the True Delight

It is specifically by totally abstaining from creative activity that we experience the true serenity of the soul and are able to feel the delight of Shabbat. The moment man feels free to engage in creative activity and tend to his material needs, he and his family no longer merit the delight and happiness of Shabbat. Additionally, the result is tragic, because there is no longer a day to bind the family together, as each family member goes in his own way. This is in contrast to a family that observes Shabbat, who sits around the table and eats the special Shabbos meals together. They dress in regal attire, singing Shabbat *zemirot*, and also add a *dvar Torah* about the weekly *parashah*. There is no greater joy for the entire family; it is a taste of Hashem's goodness, and a sample of the World to Come.

In the *sefer Mishlei HaChafetz Chayim*, it is written that in the town of the Chafetz Chayim there was a Jewish storeowner who would tarry in closing his store on *Erev Shabbat* and was quick to open it on *Motzei Shabbat*. The Chafetz Chayim rebuked him and told him the following parable: There was a non-Jewish villager who did not know how to read or write. He would bring his merchandise to the market each week and sell it to a wholesaler. In order to know how many sacks merchandise he sold to the wholesaler were sold, he would remove his hat; each time the wholesaler took a sack, he would place a coin in the hat. Afterwards, they would count the coins and determine how many sacks were taken. Once, the villager's hat was filled to the brim with the wholesaler's coins, and when he thought the wholesaler did not notice, the villager scooped up a handful of coins and placed them in his pocket. Even though the wholesaler actually realized what was happening, he pretended not to notice, saying to himself, *It is his mistake; he is only stealing from himself*. After the entire wagon was emptied, he counted the coins and paid him accordingly. The villager left happily, thinking that he had tricked the wholesaler. "You fool!" screamed his friends, "You stole from yourself; for every coin you stole, you lost an entire sack!"

"So too," said the Chafetz Chayim to the storeowner, "is in relation to Shabbat. The Zohar states that the six days of the week receive their blessing from Shabbat. The more we extend the Shabbat, the more the blessing to the six days increases accordingly. But if we shorten Shabbat, the blessings decrease as well. Therefore, every moment that you shorten Shabbat, you correspondingly decrease your blessings and success."

Explanation of the *Ohr Hachayim* Why it States *Teiaseh* and Not *Ta'aseh* – Because Shabbat is the Source of Blessing

We asked previously why the Torah states *teiaseh* and not *ta'aseh*. The *Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh* explains why the Torah uses the word *teiaseh* when mentioning weekly labor, which implies that the work is performed automatically: This teaches us that if one sanctifies the Shabbat day, then the work one needs to accomplish during the six days of the week will be done automatically. However, one whose Shabbat day is rendered mundane will not merit having his work performed for him during the week.

Why Does the Torah Repeat Three Times that Shabbat is a Sample of the Next World?

Rav Frankel *zt"l* answered that the Jewish people saw Moshe Rabbeinu ascend to the Heavens three times and return to them – a supernatural feat that had never been performed before. They therefore were curious what took place in the Heavens, as it is otherwise impossible to know. In present times, man flies to outer-space and the world is so curious to discover what they saw – how much more so in Heaven! So Moshe Rabbeinu tells them, "If you wish to know what takes place in Heaven and what I did there for 120 days, observe the Shabbat which is a sample of the delight of the Next World." Moshe therefore repeats the commandments of Shabbat observance, for it is the source of all blessing.

**Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka**