



Kinder Torah®



For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Vayakhel - Pikudei (HaChodesh)

Dedicated in Loving Memory of Yitzchak Dovid Ben Shmuel Yosef Lesorgen z"l

Quickly

What was the contribution of the Princes of the Jewish people to the Mishkan (Tabernacle)? They brought the precious stones for the apron and the breastplate (Bereshis 35:27). This seems like a relatively small gift compared to the huge amounts of silver and gold brought by the rest of the nation. Rashi explains that the Princes offered to supply anything that was lacking after all the other contributions were made. The Jewish people were so generous, however, that nothing was lacking. In fact, they gave more than was needed. There was nothing left for the Princes to contribute! When the time came for the inauguration of the Mishkan, the Princes brought their gifts first. Although each of their twelve gifts was identical, the Torah describes each one individually in detail. Altogether, 72 verses (Bamidbar 6:12-83) are written describing the gifts. We all know that the Torah does not waste words. Why then is the same thing repeated twelve times? The Chofetz Chaim zt"l explains that the Torah is teaching us a lesson in zerizus (quickness). The Princes gave their gifts the second time with zerizus. Hashem is showing us how dear it is to Him when people do His mitzvos with zerizus. The gemora writes (Pesachim 4a) "People who are quick do their mitzvos early."

Kinderlach . . .
Let us try to have a contest to see who can be the first one to wash after kiddush this Shabbos. Who will be the first one to be ready for school in the morning? Who will be the first one to change into pajamas in the evening? If zerizus is so dear to Hashem that He devoted 72 verses to it in the Torah, then it is surely important for us to try to do all of our mitzvos with zerizus.

Holy Places

This is the last of the parshios that deal with the construction of the Mishkan (tabernacle). This was the holy site where the Jewish nation would offer up their korbanos (sacrifices) to Hashem. The Shechina (Divine Presence) rested upon this

holy place. We no longer have the Mishkan or the Beis HaMikdash in our days. We still have holy places, however. Our shuls and Battei Midrashim are places of kedusha (holiness). The Mishna Breura calls them mikdash mi'at (small sanctuaries). We learned in Parshas Yisro that we have to behave differently on Shabbos because it is a holy day. Similarly, we have to behave differently in the shul and the Beis HaMedrash, because they are holy places.

Kinderlach . . .
The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 151) explains how to guard the sanctity of our holy places. Joking, idle conversation, and sarcasm are all prohibited there. We cannot enter them only for the purpose of gaining shelter from the outside weather, for a pleasure walk, or shortcut. We cannot discuss our business affairs there. Our clothing and shoes should be clean when we enter these holy places. We have to keep the shul itself clean. Children, our shuls and Battei Medrashim are places for tefillah (prayer) and learning Torah. Therefore, we have to behave with the utmost respect when we are there. It is a privilege to go shul with Abba. We cannot abuse that privilege. We have many places to play -- the park, the garden, the schoolyard, and the playground. The shul is not one of them. The shul is a place to be close to Hashem.

Always Hope

The scene was tense. Months of preparation had gone into these days. The Jewish people stood by the Mishkan (Tabernacle), waiting for the Shechina (Divine Presence) to come down. It all began on the 17th of Tammuz with the Chet HaEgel (Sin of the Golden Calf). Those who participated committed the three worst sins in the Torah: idolatry, immorality, and murder. Was there any hope for kaparah (atonement)? The long process began. Moshe Rabbeinu went back up to Har Sinai and prayed to Hashem for two forty-day periods. Then, on Yom Kippur he descended with the second tablets. Now they were instructed to build the Mishkan. Everyone made their

contributions of gold, silver, and other materials needed for the construction. They then contributed their labor and building skills. Headed by Betzalel, they worked the whole winter building the Mishkan and its vessels. Now it was the end of the month of Adar. Each day for seven consecutive days, Moshe Rabbeinu assembled the Mishkan, sacrificed the burnt offerings, and took down the Mishkan. All were awaiting the Shechina to come down as a sign of complete atonement. What would be? Had they made mistakes? Were they not yet worthy of forgiveness?

Finally, on the eighth day Aharon HaKohen offered the sacrifices. "And the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Glory of Hashem filled the Mishkan" (Shemos 40:34). The Shechina had descended to dwell among the Jewish people. They had received their atonement.

The Keli Yakar zt"l writes that Hashem wanted to give encouragement to those who want to do teshuva (correct their mistakes). Nothing can prevent a person from doing teshuva. The sinners among the Jews committed the three worst sins, and they received kaparah. How much more so those who commit lesser sins are capable of doing teshuva and receiving kaparah.

Kinderlach . . .
We all make mistakes. Hashem put us in this world to fix ourselves up by correcting our mistakes. Each mistake is an opportunity for teshuva. "I can't change. It's too hard. I have no koach (strength)." Hashem disagrees. He never gives anyone a test that is too difficult for him. You can surely stop talking during class. You have plenty of koach to listen respectfully to older people. If the generation that committed the Chet HaEgel was able to do teshuva, then you can too. No problem.

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