

## Vayakhel-Shabbos, Holier than the Building of Holy Places by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

We are told about the holiness of Shabbos a number of times in the Torah. In Parshas yisro, in the Ten Commandments [Shemos 20:8] we are told to remember the Shabbos day to keep it holy. In Parshas Ki Sisa [Shemos 31:13 and in the beginning of Parshas Vayakhel [Shemos 35:2-4] we are told about Shabbos next to the building of the Mishkan. Chazal understood from these verses that as holy a task as the building of the Mishkan was, the sanctity of Shabbos had to be kept in the entire building process. Furthermore, the very labors of Shabbos that are forbidden are derived from the building of the Mishkan.

The holiness of Shabbos was manifested in that nothing new was created on Shabbos. Rashi tells us on Bereishis 2:3 and Shemos 20:11 that the holiness of the day was demonstrated even further in that the manna did not fall on Shabbos and a double portion fell on Friday. Rabbeinu Bachaya brings from this phenomenon, that the true testimony of the holiness of Shabbos was given specifically to the generation that ate the manna which shows the uniqueness of that generation. Rabbeinu Bachaya also explains on a more Kabbalistic level that Shabbos was the final sphere and element of the creation and this was linked to Am Yisroel whose distinctive role was to bear witness to Hashem's creation.

In Parshas Vayakhel Rabbeinu Bachaya explains, similarly to other commentators, that when the command was given to work for six days and rest on the seventh, the Torah phrases idea of working as *Te-aseh*, will be done as opposed to *Taaseh*, you will do. This is to teach us that when we do Hashem's will then our work gets done for us. In other words, we are told that we do not have to throw ourselves entirely into our work. When we do Hashem's will our material needs will be met easily as a merit of us doing what Hashem wants us to do. This certainly does not mean one should sit back, pray and expect miracles but rather if we balance our priorities properly and do not become completely lost in our material pursuits, then Hashem helps us to get what we need without going overboard in our working for a living.

What is difficult to understand though, is why the Torah tells us twice that the building of the Mishkan does not override Shabbos. Both here and in Ki Sisa the Torah mentions Shabbos next to the building of the Mishkan and Chazal give us the same reason; the Torah wants to emphasize that Shabbos must be kept even in the building of the Mishkan. Why twice? In order to answer this question, Rabbeinu Bachaya contrasts the phraseology between Vayakhel and Ki Sisa on the teaching that the Torah commands us not to violate Shabbos in the building of the Mishkan. In Ki Sisa we have the phrase,

*'ach es shabsosai tishmoru*, But my Shabbosos you shall keep' When the Torah uses a word such as *ach*, it generally is meant to exclude something as we find countless times in Chazal. In this case, when Moshe Rabbeinu is commanded to tell Am Yisroel the laws of Shabbos, he is to hold back from telling that masses of people the mystical aspects of Shabbos. The deeper esoteric meanings of the Torah are not to be revealed to everyone but only to a unique few in every generation. In Vayakhel, since Moshe was talking to the entire nation together there was no need to hint to anything mystical. Rather, Moshe Rabbeinu was to teach the people all of the laws of Shabbos and their application to the Mishkan.

The Kli Yakar has a different approach to the differences in phraseology between Vayakhel and Ki Sisa. The Kli Yakar notes that in Ki Sisa the details of the Mishkan are given before the command of Shabbos and in Vayakhel the command regarding Shabbos is given first. The Kli Yakar explains that when Hashem was talking to Moshe the emphasis was placed on the honor given to Am Yisroel that Hashem forgave him for the sin of the golden calf and he was allowing his *shechina*, divine presence to dwell among the Klal Yisroel. This revelation of the shechina was manifested in the Mishkan. This was a demonstration of Hashem's great love for Am Yisroel. Hence the Mishkan is discussed first. Moshe Rabbeinu, on the other hand, in Parshas Vaykhel, was emphasizing that Hashem's glory. Therefore he stressed Shabbos to be above and beyond the Mishkan which was for our benefit.

We find a similar idea to Rabbeinu Bachaya's reasoning in the Kedushas Levi regarding Pesach. The Torah calls the holiday *Chag hamatzos*, the holiday of matzos which is the mitzvah for Am Yisroel to do. We call the holiday Pesach which focuses on what Hashem did for us when he passed over the houses of Am Yisroel, punished our enemies and saved us. In Truth, there is always a two-way relationship between us and Hashem. Our job is to always be cognizant of this relationship and realize that we are avdei Hashem and we are to glorify Hashem in all that we do.