

Vayakhel- Each participant Must Feel like the Only Participant

by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

In Shemos 36:8-19 we read of the weaving of the curtains of the Ohel Moed. In the very beginning the Torah uses the word *vayaasu*, and they made, in the plural. However, afterwards, the Torah uses all singular verbal expressions. The Ohr Hachayim explains that even though a number of people were involved in the weaving, every part of it came out similar enough to look as if one person made it. [Before the age of Xerox copies and certainly of computers and laser printers, each individual's workmanship displayed more individuality.] We see very often that when more than one craftsman is working on a project, it becomes obvious that there were a number of artisans contributing. However, the curtains of the Ohel Moel had uniformity in the design and beauty.

My Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Moshe Feinstein, Zt' l, adds a nuance to this idea from the Ohr Hachayim. In partnerships we often find that each individual partner does not work as hard because he relies on the other partner. In holy things, however, each partner must feel that he is the sole proprietor. While it is true that in many Mitzvos there are many participants, nevertheless, each one should feel that he/she alone is doing the mitzvah and therefore solely responsible for the mitzvah to be performed. In this way, the proper diligence is maintained. This is what took place in the Mishkan's assembly. Every individual contributed to the making of the Mishkan as if he/she was the sole participant in the Mitzvah which is reflected in the singular usage of the verbs.