

Vayakhel-Pekudei 2017

1.

Shabbos isn't a time for work

"ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל ויאמר אלהם אלה הדברים אשר צוה יקוק לעשות אתם. ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי יהיה לכם קדש שבת שבתון ליקוק כל העשה בו מלאכה יומת."

"And Moshe assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel and said to them, "these are the words which Hashem commanded that you should do. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a Shabbos.'" (35, 1-2)

Rabbi Yaakov Neiman (Darchei Mussar) explains that it is easy to keep Shabbos when we recognize that the success that we have during the six weekdays aren't self-earned, rather they are from Hashem. Conversely, if we think that all of our accomplishments are self-earned, then it will be very difficult to leave the work atmosphere and mindset in order to properly transition into Shabbos. The reality is the money we make is from Hashem. The Ramban writes that decrees are truthful and diligence is false. The Ramban writes this by someone finding Yosef who was wandering in the field (Berashis 37, 16). He asked Yosef 'what are you trying to find?' Hashem prepared someone who would show Yosef the proper path to find his brothers. When Hashem decrees something it will be fulfilled. There is no way to prevent Hashem's decree. The Toldos Yitzchak explains that it is the way for people who don't know where they are going to ask for directions. Yosef didn't do this. On the contrary someone asked Yosef where he wants to go. The reason for this atypical situation is because this was divinely orchestrated because it was Hashem's decree. The Chafetz Chaim explains that putting another spigot on barrel filled with water won't increase the amount of water inside. It will only increase the speed that the water comes out. The same applies to us. If we want to have more parnassah it's like we are adding more spigots. We must realize that the main parnassah that we merit is from Hashem. The Dubno Maggid asks; why does the pasuk first mention working and then keep Shabbos? Why didn't the pasuk simply state don't work on Shabbos? The Dubno maggid answers that Hashem wanted to teach us the importance of believing in Hashem. Hashem could give us money even if we don't work if He wants to. We must rejoice because of Hashem's ability. One who believes this will have difficulty working during the week. Meaning, since he knows that Hashem could provide his needs without him working, therefore it is hard for him to work while knowing that he technically doesn't need to. This is really avoda, work for him. However, it is very easy for this type of person to keep Shabbos. This opposite is true regarding someone who doesn't have this belief and who thinks that his success is self-earned. Since he thinks that his success is dependent upon how much he strives, therefore it is easy for him to work and hard for him to keep Shabbos. It is for this reason that the pasuk starts by stating work. This is in order that we will have proper belief. Once we realize that all of our financial success comes from Hashem, it will be easy to keep Shabbos. With this we can also explain why Moshe gathered the Jews specifically in order to donate to the Mishkan. Moshe first taught them about Shabbos in order that they would generously donate. This is the foundation of working for six days. We must not think that our success is self-earned. One who thinks this will have great difficulties donating his money. With this we can understand the reason for shmita; to have belief in Hashem.

Another answer why the Torah said to work for six days is based on a story. The Chafetz Chaim was once in Russia. He was informed that a certain factory was opened on Shabbos. The Chafetz Chaim told the Jewish owner to close the factory on Shabbos. The owner said I will lose too much money if I do so. The Chafetz Chaim said because of your consistent public desecration of Shabbos your factory will be destroyed. The Torah only says to work for six days, not seven. If you want to work for six days and be successful, make sure not to work on Shabbos. If you don't stop working on Shabbos then even during the six days you will be unsuccessful. The owner said will a pasuk really completely close down my factory? After some time the Bolsheviks went into Russia and confiscated the entire factory. He left the country empty handed. He then sent the Chafetz Chaim a letter apologized for leaving the factory open. He admitted that he was wrong and that a pasuk in Chumash closed his factory.

The Gemara in Beitza (16a) states that all of one's income is determined on Rosh Hashana except for the money that is spent on Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, Yom Tov and chinuch (Jewish education). כל מזונותיו של אדם קצובים לו מראש השנה ועד יום הכפורים, חוץ מהוצאת שבתות והוצאת יום טוב, והוצאת בניו (לתלמוד תורה). שאם פחת פוהתין לו, ואם הוסיף מוסיפין לו. The Beur Hativ (242, 2) points out that the word תשרי stands for this. תשרי = יום טוב. The Gemara says that regarding the aforementioned exceptions the more one spends the more one will receive. The Shita Mikubetzes quotes the Ritva who says that the same applies to money spent towards any mitzvah, not just the aforementioned mitzvos. The more one spends on other mitzvos the more one will receive. The Gemara in Shabbos (150b) says that one of the reasons why people lose money is because they look at their fields on Shabbos. The Ohel Arya explains that even though most people don't have fields, nevertheless the concept is still applicable. We must not look at the business section and think about ways to improve our work on Shabbos. The Marsha explains that one who thinks about his work on Shabbos will not have success with that work in the upcoming week. The Gemara relates a story that a righteous man's fence was breached. He decided that he would fix the fence. This is prohibited on Shabbos because it is prohibited to build and it is finalizing (מכה בפטיש). He then changed his mind and didn't fix the fence. He actually finned himself and didn't fix it during the week as well. A miracle then occurred. A caper bush began to grow. This bush provided enough produce that enabled him to profit and be financially comfortable. The question arises; is it halachically permissible to think about doing prohibited acts on Shabbos as stated in the Shulchan Aruch (306, 8)? The Gemara in Eruvin says that it is only permissible to think about doing prohibited acts on Shabbos if it isn't recognizable. Even when it is technically permissible, nevertheless it is better not to because it will detract from one's oneg Shabbos. Once Shabbos arrives we should imagine as if all of our work is completed.

2.

Clothing

“they made holy vestments for Aaron.” (39, 1)

"ויעשו את בגדי הקודש."

The sefer Otzar Hamashalim relates that the Jews are compared to fire as stated in Ovadiah (1, 18). The other nations are compared to water as stated in Shir Hashirim (8, 7). The nature of

water is to extinguish fire. Water can only do this and is stronger than fire when its water against fire. However, if there is a separation in between the water and fire such as a pot than the fire over powers the water. Rebbi Akiva Eigar once visited a certain city. All of the city's leaders went out to greet the great talmid chacham. Some of them were wearing short clothing like the other nations. Rebbi Akiva Eigar told them that **the way we dress is like a pot between the water and the fire. This is what separates us from the other nations. This will prevent us from getting negatively influenced by the other nations. We, the fire will thus be able to overpower the water, the other nations. However, if we do not distinguishably dress then the water will overpower the fire.**

Rav Shimshon Pincus (Tiferes Shimshon (Shemos) pages 341-342) explains that all of the Jews are called Kohanim as the pasuk states (19, 6). Every single Jew is really a Kohan willing to serve Hashem through Torah and mitzvos. **Just like the Kohanim when they performed the avoda (service) dressed in a certain way, so too every single Jew needs to have designated clothing in order that it will be recognizable that he is a servant of Hashem and part of Hashem's army.** There are three categories that determine if the clothing that we wear represents us as Hashem's servants. **The first is modest clothing. The second is not to wear clothing that is forbidden such as shatnez. The third is we need to be wearing mitzvah clothing, for example, tzitzis.** The idea of clothing not being important is a misconception. The nature of clothing is that it protects us from exterior elements, such as the cold and heat. The emes (truth) is that it also protects our neshamos (souls). When someone sees us dressed a certain way, they can tell we are shomer (guard/keeper) Torah and mitzvos. When someone dresses in this way, he will automatically detach from those who have different goals than him. It will also keep him separate from negative influences as well.