

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU DO, IT'S HOW YOU DO IT

by Rabbi Dovid Green

This week's parshios, Vayakhel-Pekudei, both seem somewhat redundant. We find Moshe taking up the collection from the people to build the Mishkan, the Tabernacles and the actual building of all the vessels under Betzalel's direction. The Torah describes every painstaking detail involved in the construction of the Mishkan, despite the fact that it's all been mentioned earlier, at the time of the commandment in Parshas Teruma and Tetzaveh. What is the repetition trying to teach us?

Rashi(35:27) quotes a Midrash, that the princes, the *nesiim*, pledged to donate whatever would be missing after the community finished giving to the construction of the Mishkan. They underestimated the people's generosity and enthusiasm. The only things left to be donated were the precious gems needed for the Kohen Gadol's breastplate and garments, which weren't available in the desert. The Talmud (Yoma 75a) explains, the gems were deposited into the camp, and the princes brought these gems as their gift.

However, since the princes were remiss in their enthusiasm and efforts to dedicate to the Mishkan, they were taken to task, and the word **nesiim** is written in the Torah defectively, without a yud. Although the value of the princes' gifts may have surpassed that of all the other gifts, they were still taken to task. It's not the cost that counts. Hashem doesn't need our money. It's the effort and enthusiasm that goes with it.

It was for this reason that all the gifts had to be "asher yidvenu liebo," a person according to his generosity. Had the people been taxed a certain amount per person, the message would have been that **what** they gave was important, not **how** they gave it, which wasn't so.

This same point is seen again in Parshas Pekudei, 39:33 where the Torah relates how the people brought the Mishkan to Moshe. Rashi brings a Midrash, that Hashem wanted to honor Moshe with erecting the Mishkan, since he hadn't done anything else for the Mishkan. Moshe wondered how it was possible for any human being to raise such a heavy structure by himself. Hashem told him to just make the effort, and the Mishkan would raise itself up. That's why in 40:17 it says "hukam hamishkan," the Mishkan was erected, and not that he erected it, because in reality it stood by itself.

It seems kind of strange that Hashem would honor Moshe with something he couldn't even do. What kind of honor is that anyway?

But here too, the Torah is teaching us this same lesson. Even with someone as great as Moshe, more important is the effort we expend to try to accomplish, than in the accomplishment itself. The honor

given to Moshe was to allow him the effort in erecting the Mishkan, and not in the actual erection itself.

Living in the extremely result-oriented society that we do, this is an important principle to remember. We want the rich-tasting cup of coffee, without all the grinding and brewing. We look for the muscular physique with the least exertion possible. We wish that we could accomplish our goals- even spiritual ones- in an easier way, without all the challenges and difficulties we face. This is a mistake. In Iyov we're taught, that "Odom Le'omol Yulad," - man was born for hard work. The purpose of our existence is to meet the challenges and difficulties. Without them, the goals themselves would be meaningless. It's like working a crossword puzzle with all the answers already given.

The Torah finds it necessary to repeat all the details in the actual collection and construction of the Mishkan to inform us, that more important than all the pieces necessary for the Mishkan, was the **how** we go about fulfilling all the details.

L'zecher nishmas [In memory of] Reb Mordechai ben R.Ephraim
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