

# TRY! BUT NOT TOO HARD.

*by Shlomo Katz*

## Parshas Vayakhel

### Try! But not too hard.

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We read in our parashah, "On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a Shabbat Shabbaton / day of complete rest [dedicated] to Hashem." R' Moshe Zuriel shlita (former mashgiach ruchani of Yeshivat Sha'alvim) asks: What is the Torah teaching when it uses the phrase "the seventh day" instead of simply saying "Shabbat"? He explains:

The Gemara (Shabbat 69b) states: If one is traveling or is in the desert and does not know what day it is, he should count six days and then he should sanctify the seventh day with kiddush at its beginning and havdalah at its end. R' Zuriel writes: This halachah is alluded to in our verse, in which the Torah says, "The seventh day shall be holy for you." Even though the seventh day is not necessarily Shabbat, there are occasions when it is treated as holy.

R' Zuriel notes that it is not only a person who has lost track of time who sanctifies a seventh day that is not really Shabbat. R' Avraham Azulai z"l (1570-1643; Morocco and Eretz Yisrael) writes that true Shabbat observance occurs only in Eretz Yisrael, since that is the time zone by which Hashem "keeps time." Anywhere else in the world, Shabbat observance is only approximate. On the east coast of the United States, for example, it is already seven hours into "true" Shabbat when we light candles. In the lands to the east of Eretz Yisrael, on the other hand, they accept Shabbat before it has actually begun in Eretz Yisrael. [Halachically-speaking, a person is of course obligated to observe Shabbat based on the time zone where he is. The discussion here relates only to when the added restfulness and sanctity associated with Shabbat can truly be found.] This, writes R' Azulai, is what our Sages mean when they say that those who live in the diaspora worship idols in holiness-- i.e., we are technically compliant with the laws of Shabbat although it is not really Shabbat. (Drishat Zion; Chessed L'Avraham III ch.8)

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"On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem . . ." (35:2)

Why does the Torah say, "On six days, work may be done," instead of simply saying, "The seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem"? Furthermore, why is the mitzvah of Shabbat repeated here at all, after the Torah spoke of it in last week's parashah and several times before that?

R' Zvi Pesach Frank z"l (1873-1960; Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim) writes in the name of his brother-in-law, R' Aryeh Levin z"l (1885-1969; known as the "Tzaddik of Yerushalayim"), who quoted an unnamed scholar: The Tosafot (to Pesachim 2a) ask why the Torah is so stringent regarding the laws of chametz compared to other prohibitions. Why, for example, are we forbidden to own chametz on Pesach whereas we are not forbidden to own non-kosher food in general? The Tosafot explain that, because chametz is ordinarily permitted and we are in the habit of eating it, there is a real risk that a person will inadvertently eat it on Pesach if he possesses it. In contrast, we are not in the habit of eating non-kosher food; therefore, there is no prohibition on possessing it.

Similarly, R' Frank writes, because we work all week long, the Torah must repeat and emphasize the prohibition of working on Shabbat lest, out of habit, we work on Shabbat as well. Why? Because, our verse explains, "On six days, work may be done." (Quoted in Peninei Rabbeinu Zvi Pesach Al Ha'Torah)

Why does the Torah use the passive voice, "Work may be done," instead of the active voice, "You may work"? R' Moshe Shmuel Glasner z"l (1856-1924; rabbi of Klausenberg; known as the Dor Revi'i) offers two answers:

The Midrash states that although craftsmen from Bnei Yisrael went through the motions of building the Mishkan / Tabernacle, the Mishkan in fact (miraculously) stood up on its own. The Midrash says that the same thing occurred when King Shlomo "built" the Bet Hamikdash.

We know that construction is not permitted on Shabbat, but one might think that this type of building is allowed. Therefore, the Torah says that even passive work is permitted only on the six days of the week, but not on Shabbat.

Alternatively, one can answer our question as follows: It is G-d's Will that man work to earn his sustenance. However, one of man's constant challenges is recognizing when he has worked enough to fulfill G-d's Will and when he is working to earn money for luxuries. The Torah uses the passive voice to emphasize that man should have a more casual attitude towards working. Only the person who has such a proper attitude can fulfill the next part of the verse, "The seventh day shall be holy," says R' Glasner. A person who is too wrapped up in his work may observe the Sabbath because he knows G-d demands it. However, his Shabbat will never be holy. (Shevivei Eish)

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*"Moshe said to the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael saying, 'This is the word that Hashem has commanded to say.' (35:4)*

Why was this parashah taught in the presence of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael? R' Yosef Bechor Shor z"l (12th century; France) writes: Moshe did not want any person to be able to complain that others had an opportunity to bring donations to the mishkan before he did. Therefore, he gave the commandment to donate to the mishkan to everyone simultaneously. (Bechor Shor)

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*"But the work i.e., the donations was enough for all the work, to do it -- and there was extra." (36:7)*

R' Yoel Teitelbaum z"l (1887-1979; the Satmar Rebbe) asks: Was it "enough" or was there extra? Furthermore, if there was extra, why did Hashem inspire Bnei Yisrael to bring too much rather than just enough? Generally, our Sages say, Hashem does not perform wonders for no purpose!

He answers: The midrash relates that Moshe asked Hashem, "What should we do with the leftovers?" Hashem answered, "Make a home for the commandments." The commentary Yefeh To'ar writes that this refers to building a yeshiva. Why was it necessary to build a yeshiva in conjunction with the building of the mishkan? The Satmar Rebbe explains that the mishkan is a place where the Shechinah can rest upon a person. However, this requires preparation, and that preparation is Torah study.

Only if there was a yeshiva next door to the mishkan could the mishkan fulfill its purpose. Thus, the Satmar Rebbe concludes, the donations were "enough" only because there was enough extra left over to build a yeshiva as well. (Divrei Yoel)

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*"The wise-hearted among those doing the work made the Tabernacle . . . they made them with a ma'aseh chosheiv / woven design of cherubs" (36:8)*

Why does this verse follow immediately after the verse quoted above, "But the work had been enough for all the work, to do it -- and there was extra"? R' Eliyahu Hakohen z"l of Izmir (died 1729) explains:

The Midrash states that the Mishkan stood up on its own. Thus, all the work that had been done by the craftsmen was, in fact, "extra." However, Hashem rewards one's sincere intention to do a mitzvah as if he actually did the mitzvah. This is alluded to by our verse: The work of the wise-hearted was ma'aseh chosheiv, which literally means, "A work of thought." Although there was no need for the work of the wise-hearted, since the Mishkan "built" itself, nevertheless Hashem rewarded them for their thoughts. (Semuchin L'ad)

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*"For the entrance of the Tent he made a Screen of turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool, and linen, twisted; work of an embroiderer. Its pillars were five, with their hooks, and he plated their tops and their bands with gold; and their sockets were five, of bronze." (36:37-38)*

Why was the curtain over the entrance to the mishkan supported by five pillars? R' Yitzchak ben Arroyo z"l explains:

The Screen or curtain concealed the prophetic knowledge which one can attain within the mishkan. Rambam z"l writes (in Moreh Nevochim part I, ch.34) writes that there are five impediments to learning: (1) the difficulty of the material; (2) the fact that man is not born a scholar; rather, he must struggle to convert his intellectual potential into reality; (3) the necessity to proceed step-by-step, whereas man's nature is to want to know the conclusion of the matter; (4) unsuitable character traits; and (5) preoccupation with one's body. The five pillars that support the curtain represent these five impediments, R' Yitzchak ben Arroyo writes. The five pillars stood on bronze bases, which indicates how strong these impediments are. (Tanchumot Kel)

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### **Try! But Not Too Hard.**

*"Moshe assembled the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael and said to them: 'These are the things that Hashem commanded to do them: On six days work shall be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death. You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day'." (From our parashah - 35:1-2)*

R' Yosef Eliyahu Henkin z"l (1891-1973) asks: Considering what follows, should not the Torah have said, "These are the things that Hashem commanded not to do them"? Also, why does the Torah use a phrase - "On six days work shall be done" - which implies that one is obligated to work?

He explains: Shabbat represents two competing concepts that man is charged with balancing: bitachon / the recognition that everything that happens is in G-d's control, and hishtadlut / man's obligation to help himself. In the Aseret Ha'dibrot in Parashat Yitro (20:11) we read that Shabbat commemorates Creation. This alludes to man's obligation of hishtadlut, for we read at the end of the Creation section (Bereishit 2:3), "G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He abstained from all His work, which G-d had created to do." This verse teaches that the first Shabbat was the end of G-d's regular overt involvement with the world. From that point on, man would appear to be in charge. And, this verse conveys G-d's blessing that man will succeed when he uses G-d's creation "to do" for himself.

However, man can be led astray if he thinks that he alone is in control. Man must temper his hishtadlut with bitachon. Therefore, the Aseret Ha'dibrot in Parashat Va'etchanan (5:15) remind us

that Shabbat also commemorates the Exodus. We were helpless slaves in Egypt, and only because G-d redeemed us did we become free. (This, explains R' Henkin, is why Shabbat is not one of the universal Noachide laws. Creation was an event that affected all of mankind, not only the Jews. However, without the Exodus, the message of Shabbat would be incomplete and even misleading.)

In this light, we can understand our verses. The Torah uses a phrase - "On six days work shall be done" - that implies that one is obligated to work because man is obligated to engage in some form of hishtadlut. "These are the things that Hashem commanded to do them," for if man relied on miracles alone, he would not even perform mitzvot. Instead, he would believe mistakenly that G-d's Will will be done whether he (man) lifts a finger or not.

Chazal teach that just as Shabbat is a sign of our covenant with Hashem, so are tefilin. [This is why we do not wear tefilin on Shabbat.] R' Henkin observes: The tefilin on the arm alludes to hishtadlut, for the arm is the instrument of action. The tefilin on the head alludes to bitachon, for the head is the seat of the mind, where trust in G-d develops. (Perushei Ivra, Part II, Ma'amar No. 1)

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