

טעמו וראו

A taste of the
Rebbe's teachings

Parshat
Vayakhel-Pekudei



>>

Between Right and Right

It is easy to choose between right and wrong. Choosing between right and right proves more difficult. How do we determine the correct course of action?

In loving memory of
Mrs. **Rivkie Barber**
Shlucha of the Rebbe
in Melbourne, Australia

Dedicated by her children
Rabbi **Yechiel** & **Chanie Biston**
and Rabbi **Efraim** & **Shaina Duchman**

A. Leaders Left Behind

Source 1 Exodus 35:21-29

Those who were ready to volunteer then came forward. Those who wanted to contribute brought a donation to G-d for the making of the Tabernacle, all its necessities, and the sacred garments. The men accompanied the women, and those who wanted to contribute brought bracelets, earrings, finger rings, and body ornaments, all made of gold. They also donated a wave offering of gold to G-d. Every person who had sky-blue wool, dark red wool, crimson wool, fine linen, goats' wool, reddened rams' skins or blue processed hides, brought these items. Whoever owned silver or copper brought it as a Divine offering, and anyone who had acacia wood that could be used for the work, brought it as well. Every skilled woman put her hand to spinning, and they all brought the spun yarn of sky-blue wool, dark red wool, crimson wool and fine linen. Highly skilled women volunteers also spun the goats' wool.

The leaders brought the sardonyxes and other precious stones for the *ephod* and breastplate, as well as the fragrances and olive oil for the lamp, the anointing oil, and the perfumed incense.

וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׂאוֹ
לְבוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רוּחוֹ
אֹתוֹ הֵבִיאוּ אֶת-תְּרוּמַת ה'
לְמִלְאכַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְלְכָל-
עֲבֹדָתוֹ וּלְבִגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ:
וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים עִלְהֵנָּשִׁים
כָּל נָדִיב לֵב הֵבִיאוּ חָח וְנָזָם
וּטְבַעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל-כְּלֵי זָהָב
וְכָל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֵנִיף תְּנוּפֹת
זָהָב לָהּ: וְכָל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-
נִמְצָא אֹתוֹ תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן
וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים
וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאָדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת
תְּחָשִׁים הֵבִיאוּ: כָּל-מֵרִים
תְּרוּמַת כֶּסֶף וְנַחֲשֶׁת הֵבִיאוּ
אֶת תְּרוּמַת ה' וְכָל אֲשֶׁר
נִמְצָא אֹתוֹ עֵצֵי שִׁטִּים לְכָל-
מִלְאכַת הָעֲבֹדָה הֵבִיאוּ: וְכָל-
אִשָּׁה חַכְמַת-לֵב בְּיָדֶיהָ טוּוּ
וַיָּבִיאוּ מִטְוֶה אֶת-הַתְּכֵלֶת
וְאֶת-הָאַרְגָּמָן אֶת-תוֹלַעַת
הַשָּׁנִי וְאֶת-הַשֵּׁשׁ: וְכָל-
הַנָּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂא לְבָן אֲתָנָה
בְּחֻכְמָה טוּוּ אֶת-הָעִזִּים:

וְהַנְּשֵׂאִים הֵבִיאוּ אֶת אַבְנֵי
הַשֹּׁהַם וְאֶת אַבְנֵי הַמְּלֵאִים
לְאַפֹּד וְלַחֹשֶׁן: וְאֶת-הַבֶּשֶׂם
וְאֶת-הַשֶּׁמֶן לְמָאוֹר וְלִשְׁמֹן
הַמְּשַׁחָה וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים:

Every man and woman among the Israelites who felt an urge to give something for all the work that G-d had ordered through Moses, brought a donation for G-d.

Rashi on verse 27:

The leaders brought: Rabbi Natan said: Why were the leaders first to donate for the dedication of the altar but not first to donate for the work of the Tabernacle?

They made the following rationale: "Let the community donate what they can, and we will furnish the rest." Since the community furnished everything, as it says, "Their efforts brought more than enough," the leaders said, "What can we contribute?" So they brought the precious stones. Later, they made sure to be first to donate for the dedication of the altar.

Since they procrastinated at first, a letter is missing from their name; the verse states **וְהַנְּשִׂאִים** [instead of **וְהַנְּשִׂאִים**, with additional yuds].

Source 2 Exodus 19:14

Moses went down from the mountain to the people. He sanctified them, and they immersed themselves and their clothing.

Rashi on verse:

From the mountain to the people: This teaches us that Moses would not attend to his own concerns; he went from the mountain immediately to the people.

כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָדַב
לְבָם אֹתָם לְהָבִיא לְכָל־
הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה'
לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה הֵבִיאוּ
בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל נְדָבָה לָה':

רש"י על פסוק כ"ז

וְהַנְּשִׂאִים הֵבִיאוּ. אָמַר
ר' נָתָן: מָה רָאוּ נְשִׂאִים
לְהִתְנַדֵּב בְּחִנּוּכַת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
בְּתַחֲלָה וּבְמִלְאכַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן
לֹא הִתְנַדְּבוּ בְּתַחֲלָה?

אָלָּא כֵן אָמְרוּ נְשִׂאִים,
יִתְנַדְּבוּ צְבוּר מָה
שֶׁמִּתְנַדְּבוּ, וּמָה שֶׁמִּחֲסָרִים,
אָנוּ מִשְׁלֵמִין אוֹתוֹ, כִּינּוּן
שֶׁהִשְׁלִימוּ צְבוּר אֶת הַכֹּל -
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְהַמְּלָאכָה הִיְתָה דְיָם
- אָמְרוּ נְשִׂאִים מָה עָלֵינוּ
לַעֲשׂוֹת? הֵבִיאוּ אֶת אַבְנֵי
הַשֹּׁהַם וְגו', לְכֵן הִתְנַדְּבוּ
בְּחִנּוּכַת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תַּחֲלָה,

וְלִפִּי שֶׁנִּתְעַצְלוּ מִתַּחֲלָה
נְחָסְרָה אוֹת מִשְׁמָם,
וְהַנְּשִׂאִים כְּתִיב.

וַיֵּרַד מֹשֶׁה מִן־הָהָר אֶל־הָעָם
וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־הָעָם וַיִּכְבְּסוּ
שִׁמְלֹתָם:

רש"י על הפסוק:

מִן הָהָר אֶל הָעָם: מְלֻמַּד שֶׁלֹּא
הָיָה מֹשֶׁה פּוֹנֶה לַעֲסָקְיוֹ, אָלָּא
מִן הָהָר - אֶל הָעָם:

Source 3 Lekutei Sichot vol. 16 pg. 457

Why do we consider it notable that Moses chose to transmit G-d's words immediately without first attending to his own affairs?

It is notable because he disregarded not only his ordinary affairs but even the elements of the very same mission which pertained to him on a personal level—he too, needed to prepare for the Giving of the Torah and ready himself to transmit the Torah to the people.

Because he was a Jewish leader whose first responsibility is tending to his flock, he first delivered G-d's instructions to the People of Israel and ensured that they would be fulfilled. Only then, did he tend to his own spiritual relationship with G-d and prepare to receive the Torah.

מהו החידוש בכך שמשנה מסר את שליחותו של הקדוש ברוך הוא מיד ולא פנה תחילה לעסקיו הפרטיים?

אלא, החידוש "לא היה פונה לעסקיו" אין משמעותו רק לצרכי הגוף שלו וכדומה, אלא גם לעסקיו בענין השליחות עצמה הכנותיו שלו למתן תורה, כולל היותו ראוי ל"משה קבל תורה מסיני".

אך למרות זאת, בהיותו נשיא ישראל, שצריך לדאוג בראש ובראשונה לצרכי ישראל, הוא מוסר תחילה לישראל את שליחותו של הקדוש ברוך הוא והוא דואג לכך שהם יקיימו, ורק לאחר מכן הוא חושב על "עסקיו" הרוחניים, בינו ובין הקדוש-ברוך-הוא, כולל הכנותיו העצמיות למתן תורה.

>> The Rebbe

They waited until last, and were left behind

Regarding the donations of the leaders, Rashi comments: “Rabbi Natan said: Why were the leaders first to donate for the dedication of the altar but not first to donate for the work of the Tabernacle? They made the following rationale: ‘Let the community donate what they can, and we will furnish the rest.’ Since the community furnished everything, as it says, ‘Their efforts brought more than enough,’ the leaders said, ‘What can we contribute?’ So they brought the precious stones. Later, they made sure to be first to donate for the dedication of the altar. Since they procrastinated at first, a letter is missing from their name; the verse states **וְהִנְשִׂאִים** [instead of **וְהִנְשִׂאִים**, with additional yuds].”

At first, the leaders modeled their behavior after Moses, who ignored his material and even spiritual affairs to tend to the nation. As leaders, they felt that their first responsibility was to encourage and inspire the community to contribute.

Only after the community had contributed fully (including sufficient funds to purchase the precious stones for the breastplate) did the leaders say, “What can we personally contribute?” Only after they had fulfilled their roles as leaders, did they begin to contemplate their personal contribution to the Tabernacle and bring the precious stones.

However, their decision had a negative outcome: In contrast to the contributions of the people, their donations were not *essential*. You accomplish two things by donating: a) you make the Tabernacle possible, b) you earn the merit of participation. The leaders’ donations weren’t what made the Tabernacle possible, because the community had already provided enough funds to purchase whatever was lacking.

(Nonetheless, it is still a privilege to participate. My father-in-law, the [previous] Rebbe, repeated what the Rebbe Maharash said regarding a certain communal matter: “The goal will be reached regardless of your participation, but you could lose the privilege of carrying it out.” As Mordechai told Esther in the Megillah, “Salvation will come to the Jews from elsewhere, but you and your father’s house will be forgotten”—i.e. you will lose the privilege.)

In our case, the leaders lost the opportunity to make an *essential* donation to the Tabernacle's construction (as the precious stones could have been purchased with community funds) and they merely had the merit of participation.

Source 4 Igrot Kodesh Admur Harayatz vol. 4 pg. 46

"In the year 5640-1880," my father, the Rebbe Rashab related, "anti-Semitism grew stronger in our country. In many places the anti-Semites incited the local citizenry to organize pogroms against the Jews. My father, the Rebbe Maharash, then traveled to Petersburg to do what he could for the benefit of the Jewish people.

"My father was acquainted with high government officials and he had access to them. Within a few days, he had already established the necessary connections to dissuade those who were instigating the pogroms. The high officials suggested that the affair should be given greater publicity. For this purpose a delegation of the most prestigious Jews should visit the Minister of the Interior and the President of the Senate. The most powerful millionaires and noted intellectuals should participate in this delegation.

"In working for the public benefit, my father never asked for the views of the wealthy or the enlightened classes. Those people resented him because of this.

בשנת תר"מ - התחיל אבי,
הרבי מהורש"ב, לספר לי -
כשהתגברה השנאה לאחינו
בני ישראל במדינתנו, ובהרבה
מקומות הסיתו שונאי ישראל
את האזרחים המקומיים
לעשות ח"ו פרעות בישראל,
נסע אבי, הרבי מהר"ש,
לפטרבורג לעשות ככל אשר
יוכל לטובתם של ישראל.

אבי, הרבי מהר"ש, היתה לו
היכרות ומהלכים עם השרים
הגבוהים, ובימים אחדים
לבואו מצא מסילות ודרכים
נכונות להעביר ולכבוש את
רוחם של הפורעים. אמנם כדי
לתת לענין אופי של פומביות,
יעצו השרים הגבוהים,
שנכון הדבר שמשלחת
כבודה ביותר תבקר את שר
הפנים ואת ראש הסינאט,
ובאותה משלחת ישתתפו גם
מאדירי ההון ומהמשכילים
המפורסמים.

אבי, הרבי מהר"ש, לא
התחשב בעבודתו הכללית
לא עם אדירי ההון ולא עם
הנאורים, ומשום כך היו
עוינים אותו.

“The Rebbe invited the above people to a meeting at his residence in Hotel Serapinsky. He suggested an agenda for the work they would do and requested that they select a group of people from amongst themselves to join him in the delegation that would visit the Minister of the Interior and the President of the Senate.

“One of the chief attendees (I do not wish to mention his name) replied in the name of all of them that they were not blocks of wood to be played like pawns in a chess game. If he considered them to be men of substance he ought to consider their opinions at all times. And if he did not consider them to be people of intellect, then he could do without them now also.

“The Rebbe replied:

“In the Megillah it is written, “...If you remain silent right now, salvation will come to the Jews from elsewhere, but you and your father’s house will be forgotten.” To me it is certain that salvation will come to the Jews. If you do not wish to have a part in this, then it will come from somewhere else. But then, the result will be that you and your father’s house will perish; you will lose the opportunity.”

אבי, הרבי מהר"ש, קרא לועידה מהנ"ל, במעונו במלון סעראפינסקי, והציע לפניהם סדר העבודה, ושיבחרו חבר אנשים מביניהם להשתתף אתו במשלחת לבקר את שר הפנים ואת ראש הסינאט.

אחד מראשי הקרואים - אינני רוצה לפרוש בשמו - ענה בשם כולם, שאינם גולמי עץ, שישחקו אתם כמו עם גולמי האשקוקי (כלים במשחק שח). אם אנשים בעלי צורה הם יש להתחשב עמהם בכל עת, ואם אינם נחשבים לבעלי דעה, הרי גם עתה אפשר לעשות הכל בלעדם.

הרבי מהר"ש ענה:

במגילת אסתר נאמר: “כי אם החרש תחרישי בעת הזאת רווח והצלה יעמוד ליהודים ממקום אחר ואת ובית אביך תאבדו”. בטוחני שרווח והצלה יעמוד ליהודים, ובאם אינכם רוצים להשתתף בזה, יהיה זה ממקום אחר, ברם אז הרי “ואת ובית אביך תאבדו” - אתם תאבדו זאת.

B. Identify the Source

>> The Rebbe

Where Does the Urge Come From?

The leaders understood, from the very fact that they had missed out, that their decision to delay their donations had included an element of laziness. This is why a person must have the ability to make a nuanced judgement—you must be able to discern whether the delay on your part comes from a place of holiness (to give the community a chance to donate) or from a place of laziness.

This idea is expressed in the story related by the [previous] Rebbe on Passover 1943: The righteous Rabbi Menachem Nochum of Chernobyl was destitute; his financial situation was always precarious, and he had accumulated large debts. One day, as he was receiving visitors, one individual brought him a gift of three hundred rubles.

He thought to himself, “Why did G-d orchestrate events such that I receive such a large sum in one installment?” The sum total of the rest of the evening's donations had been one hundred gold coins (including the three valuable gold coins he had received from the wealthy visitors, as the [previous] Rebbe pointed out), and here he had suddenly received three hundred rubles! He paused the private audiences to contemplate the matter.

He recalled that a short time earlier, a poor visitor had complained that lacked the funds to feed his family, pay his children's tuition and provide dowries for his daughters. The sum this fellow lacked was identical to the sum he had just received, three hundred rubles, so he decided to give him the entire amount.

But then another thought came to mind. Perhaps it wouldn't be worthwhile to give this one fellow such a large sum of money which could easily feed six families—including his own. After all, why were they less deserving?

Again, this dilemma requires nuanced judgement. And as the [previous] Rebbe pointed out, this question is equally relevant to all people, even the

most righteous. We each need wisdom to differentiate between the urges of our Good Inclination and the impulses of our evil one.

Rabbi Menachem Nochum came to the following conclusion: If the second thought (to split the money) would have come from his Good Inclination, it would have occurred to him immediately. The fact that it came to him as a second thought indicated that it was from the Evil Inclination: at the outset, the Evil Inclination did not want to suggest splitting the money, in the hope that he would choose to keep the entire sum for himself. But seeing that he entertained the idea of giving the entire sum away, the Evil Inclination suggested splitting it to six—at least salvaging one portion for himself.

Regarding the specific case of the leaders: They made their mistake because they lacked the ultimate level of humility—as evident from the fact that a *yud* is missing from their name. As leaders, they felt that they could take credit for the donations of the entire community, and therefore, their own (delayed) donations came to be lacking. In truth, they should have hastened their own contributions while inspiring others to donate as well, because the ultimate goal was to erect the Tabernacle as soon as possible.

This is a lesson in leadership for every person: with a proper sense of humility, you won't make the mistake of believing that you fulfill your personal obligations by inspiring others; you need to make your own efforts as well.

Shabbat Parshat Vayakhel-Pekudei 1966

Toras Menachem 5726 vol. 2 pg. 232

C. How to Make the Choice

Source 5 Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch, Hayom Yom 23 Sivan

In a private discussion in the winter of 5635 (1874-75), my grandfather [Rabbi Shmuel, the Rebbe Maharash] said to my father [Rabbi Shalom Dovber, the Rebbe Rashab]:

The Evil Inclination is called the “animal soul,” not because it is necessarily a brute animal. At times it may be a fox, the most cunning of beasts, and great wisdom is needed to perceive its machinations. At other times it may clothe itself in the garb of an earnest, straightforward, humble righteous person, possessing fine traits of character.

The animal soul manifests itself in each person according to his individual character. One person may suddenly experience a powerful longing to study Chassidism or to meditate deeply on some chassidic concept, but it is actually nothing more than the Evil Inclination’s counsel and the animal soul’s machinations to prevent him from engaging in the pursuit of prayer or a similar activity.

Take this as a general principle and remember it always: Any matter that is effective towards or actually leads to active service of G-d, and is confronted with opposition of any sort, even the most noble, that opposition is the scheming of the animal soul.

My father concluded: Until then I had not known that there can be a “pious” animal soul, let alone a “chassidic” animal soul.

מענה אאזמו"ר לאאמו"ר
ביחידות חורף תרל"ה:

היצר הרע נקרא נפש
הבהמית לא מפני שהוא
בהמה דווקא, כי לפעמים
הוא שועל פקח שבחיות
וצריכים לחכמה מרובה
להבין תחבולותיו. ולפעמים
הוא מתלבש בלבוש צדיק
תמים ענו ובעל מדות טובות.

בכל אחד ואחד הנפש
הבהמית שלו היא לפי מהותו
הפרטי. ויש אשר מתעורר
חשק גדול ללמוד חסידות
או להתבונן היטב באיזה
השכלה, ובאמת הנה זהו רק
עצת היצר ומתחבולות נפש
הבהמית למנוע מעבודת
התפלה וכדומה.

ונקוט האי כללא בידך וזכור
אותו תמיד, כי כל דבר
המועיל או מביא לעבודה
בפועל, הנה כל מניעה
שתהיה לדבר זה - אפילו אם
המניעה היא מדבר היותר
נעלה - הוא רק מתחבולותיה
של נפש הבהמית.

וסיים אאמו"ר נשמתו עדן:
עד אז לא ידעתי אז עס קען
זיין א פרומער נה"ב, ווער
רעדט נאך א חסידישער
נה"ב.

