



Vayakhel: The Language of Love

Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another (Ernest Hemmingway).

Judaism is focused on the details. From how we tie our shoes to how we conduct our lives, our Torah provides us a framework. Yet, when it comes to the Mishkan (Tabernacle), we cannot help but ponder, why so many details? And although the details are important, why the need to repeat them? The Torah portions of Terumah and Titzaveh provide an exhaustive study into the finer details of the construction of the Mishkan, the utensils, and Kohanic vestments. And yet, all of these details are repeated again in the portions of Vayakhel and Pikudei. In this week's Parsha, the Torah could have simply said, "*Va'yaasu Bnai Yisroel k'chol asher tzivah Hashem es Moshe, And the Jewish people did as all God commanded Moshe*" – done. Why the need to repeat all of the same details just articulated a few sections ago?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe provides a beautiful insight. (I apologize for the bit of poetic license with the Rebbe's idea.) The entire purpose of the Mishkan was to provide a dwelling place for God in our midst. Hashem wants to be with us. He wants a relationship. As physical beings it is helpful for us to have a material address at which we can connect with the Divine. Another thought: We value the power of words. The Talmud is filled with teachings urging us to measure our words, avoid slander and needless chatter. Speech is a gift and as such it should be used wisely. When we interact with others we must always think before we speak. Will my words help or hurt? Is what I am about to say necessary and positive, or will it be construed in a negative or harmful way? And if I live this way (which is an absolute struggle and uphill battle), I speak less but yet more effectively. This is all true when we interact with one another. But when I interact with someone who I love and feel very close to, we can "just talk." About what do we speak? It doesn't really matter because I am just so happy to be with my loved one that the subject matter doesn't matter as much as the fact that we are together, interacting, and bonding. As was stated above, the Mishkan represented the Divine desire to be with us, to live with us. Hashem orders Moshe to repeat the details of the Mishkan because He just enjoyed conversing with the people. Hashem loves us more than we can even imagine. He yearns to be in our company. He desires a real and meaningful relationship. There are times when He talks to us in a serious measured way, conveying details and important information. And there are times when information is repeated because it is just a way of spending more time together.

The parshios of Vayakhel and Pikudei contain very little new information, but they convey to us a most beautiful lesson – Hashem loves us. He loves us more than we can even imagine. He wants a relationship and is willing to put in the effort to make it meaningful. May we find the courage and wisdom to reciprocate this Divine overture and merit to create this loving, sustaining, and nurturing relationship with our Father.