

## COMPLETING THE FINAL DETAILS

### **BEGIN WITH A GRIN**

*A construction worker on his first day was sent to pick up supplies from the lumberyard.*

*He walked into the office and said, “We need some 4x2s.”*

*The clerk said, “You mean 2x4s, right?”*

*The worker said, “Let me go check,”*

*He went back to the truck, soon returned and said, “Yes, 2x4s.”*

*“Alright, how long do you need them?” asked the clerk.*

*The man paused for a bit and said, “For a very long time. We’re building a house.”*

### **DETAILED PRECISION**

Parshas Vayakhel, at first glance, is a repetition of parshiyos Teruma and Tetzave where the Torah teaches us about the structure of the Mishkan and the vessels and how to fashion the priestly garments and all that entails. We don't seem to learn or see much that is new on the central topic of the parsha – building the Mishkan. Even Rashi seems to “have gone on vacation” somewhat, as he doesn't have that much to say by way of commentary (relative to his lengthy comments on Teruma and Tetzave as we remember from those endless shiurei Chitas ...).

Rashi himself gaily announces at the beginning of his commentary to this parsha that he already explained the donation and work of the Mishkan at the time it was commanded as though to say, “Rabosai, I have nothing else to tell you; it was all written already.”

[Some people will breathe a sigh of relief because that means the Chitas for Vayakhel and Pikudei are very short ...]

On the other hand, this declaration of Rashi also teaches us that if there a comment of Rashi in this parsha, if he finds it necessary to explain something, that means it is actually something we would not have known without parshas Vayakhel. It's a detail that the Torah had not mentioned or it wasn't explained well enough until now, and it is explained only by studying the verses in this parsha.

Indeed, in a few places we find details that we did not know previously about the construction of the Mishkan as you will see if you carefully examine the verses of this parsha and the commentaries. The question then arises on Rashi on the verse (35:18) “the pegs of the Mishkan and the pegs of the courtyard, and their ropes,” on which he says, “ [used] to drive [into the ground] and to tie the ends of the curtains with them into the ground, so that they [the curtains] would not move with the wind.”

Rashi already explained the “pegs” at the end of Teruma, on the last verse of the parsha. He said that the pegs were a like copper bars tied with cords all around [them] at their bases [i.e., at the bases of the curtains and the hangings], so that the wind would not lift them up. Why does Rashi need to repeat that in Vayakhel? Did he have nothing to say so he repeated himself? Can't be!

Furthermore, over there, at the end of Teruma, Rashi is unsure whether the pegs were stuck in the ground or whether they weighed down the curtains so they wouldn't move in the wind, while here, Rashi leaves no room for

doubt and he states decisively that the pegs were wedged in the ground. Rashi is so certain that he doesn't even mention any other possibility. He doesn't even hint to the uncertainty he had a few chapters earlier. What compels Rashi to state with certainty that the pegs were firmly planted in the ground? Why didn't he write in a way that considers both possibilities he mentioned earlier in Teruma?

What changes in Vayakhel that clarifies the matter for Rashi and what is the lesson for us in our daily lives? At the beginning of the parsha, it says, 35:10, "And every wise-hearted person among you shall come and make everything that the Lord has commanded," from which Rashi learns a fundamental rule (which he mentions indirectly in his comment on a later verse in the parsha (verse 14), that all the details mentioned and enumerated here in Vayakhel, are details that need to be done specifically by the "wise-hearted," people who are gifted and well thought-out, people of great knowledge and superior talent, not merely artisans or simple people.

### ***NO SMALL DETAIL***

Every detail mentioned in these verses is something special and unique. Therefore, Rashi finds it hard to understand why the wise-hearted are needed to make pegs and ropes. What's so difficult about making copper bars? What's so complicated about making sharp metal pieces? After all, any kid in Boy Scouts knows how to pitch a tent and every entry level soldier in the IDF knows how to prevent a tent from collapsing.

Precisely here lies the central instruction of the parsha. Everyone understands that the curtains of the Mishkan were of unprecedented craftsmanship. They were three (or four) layers of pure talent which combined weaving, dyeing, craftsmanship, exactitude and much more. Only people like Betzalel, Ohaliav and their colleagues would be able to create something as beautiful as this, something the world had never seen. And if the "wise-hearted" do something, they do it all the way!

It's not possible that the wise-hearted wove, designed, dyed and prepared the curtains without completing all the details, even the smallest and most minor of them. It is inconceivable that a true chacham would leave something incomplete. If the wise-hearted were making curtains without pegs, the curtains would be lacking; they would be precarious and unfit for use as roofing materials. They would move in the wind and who know what would happen to them...

The wise-hearted had to do the work completely, down to the last detail including the hooks, ropes and pegs, and this was to ensure proper use of the curtains. This is also the reason that Rashi explains the pegs as being firmly stuck in the ground, to emphasize that the pegs are an inseparable part of the curtains as marginal as they might seem. According to the explanation that they only served as free-hanging weights to hold down the curtains, the pegs would appear as something additional, something separate and peripheral relative to the curtains and not an inseparable element. In order to emphasize the fact that the wise-hearted made the curtains from beginning to end, including every single detail needed for their use, Rashi is compelled to explain that we are dealing with pegs that are grounded, strong and solid, serving as an innate part of the curtains.

The lesson for us is important and encouraging. Not only the wise-hearted of that time needed to do the work in its entirety; the wise-hearted of our generation need to learn not to do half a job, and "we cannot leave the wounded on the battlefield." There is no such thing as "someone else will do it" or "it's not for me." A wise-hearted person must ensure that everything he does, he does to perfection! He must ensure that his works of holiness "don't move in the wind," that they are not affected by winds that blow in the world and work their way into the mind. We have to build something solid with force and strength, faith and devotion, even down to the little details that seem

insignificant because if there is a detail of the work that is not thoroughly grounded it is possible that in the end it will call the entire project into question.

We, the people of the bottom generation “the heels of Moshiach,” the generation of the bottoms of the curtains, of the end of exile and the beginning of Geula, must see to it that our curtains don't blow in the wind, that we are grounded and aware of all the details that are needed from us so as to “implant” ourselves securely and firmly in the era of the Geula.

### ***TO CONCLUDE WITH A STORY***

We will end with a story which teaches a thing or two about being (not) stuck!

Mrs. Miryam Swerdlov doesn't need an introduction. She was once invited to attend a N'Shei Chabad convention in Detroit. It was in the middle of the winter and she was supposed to return the next day along with other women from Crown Heights but a blizzard made the airport shut down.

Mrs. Miriam Popack, who was the organizer of the event, called the Rebbe's office and cried to Rabbi Binyamin Klein, “We are stuck in Detroit!”

After a brief wait, R' Klein came back on the line and said the Rebbe wanted to know what “stuck” meant. She explained that they were stuck in Detroit and the husbands were home with the children. R' Klein said that the Rebbe spoke English fluently and knew the meaning of the term but said that a Jew is never stuck. If they were in the airport in Detroit, they needed to be there.

That was all they needed to hear. The women jumped up, opened their bags and took out all the candle-lighting kits they had. They went from woman to woman in the airport asking if they were Jewish and giving out these kits.

Years passed, said Mrs. Swerdlov, and today there are women all around the U.S. who have been lighting Shabbos candles for decades because of a group of women who were (not) stuck in Detroit!

Good Shabbos!