



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT VAYAKHEL

An Otherworldly Shine

R' Shlomo Farhi shared a beautiful idea.

We know that when two things are juxtaposed in the Torah, they share some connection and one can be expounded upon from the other. What, then, connects the ending of last week's Parsha, where Moshe's face shone bright, and the beginning of this week's Parsha, where he gathered all the Jews to teach them about Shabbat and the Mishkan...?

The Sefer Pri'ot Shlomo gave a fascinating answer. To understand, let us first analyze Moshe's immense glow. The Midrash describes that G-d took the remaining, leftover ink from the quill after having written the Sefer Torah in *Shamayim*, and smeared it on Moshe's face, which caused him to have an otherworldly shine. The *pasuk* says: "A mitzvah is a candle, and Torah is light." This remarkable concept extends to even a tiny drop of ink from a Sefer Torah, which can illuminate to such a high degree.

The obvious question becomes: where did this "extra" ink come from? A regular, human scribe doesn't know how much ink he needs to write with, but Hashem is perfect! How could there be leftover ink; can Boreh Olam have made a miscalculation?!

We know that there are two times in the Torah when Moshe asked Hashem to minimize on his behalf. One is where he asked Hashem to downplay his own greatness by not writing "*vayikra* / ויקרא," that Hashem called him, but rather "*vayiker* / ויקר," that G-d *happened upon him*, to illustrate that he wasn't singled out and called affectionately by G-d, but that it just "happened to be" that he was chosen as the messenger. Hashem refused to take away that *alef*, so Moshe "negotiated" to have that *alef* written smaller. Thus, less ink ended up being used – not due to an error, but out of Moshe's humility. One other example was when the Torah testified to this amazing trait Moshe possessed, that Moshe was "ענו מכל אדם" – the humblest of men. Generally, the word "ענו" (humble) is written with a letter *yud*, but Moshe pleaded to at least have that removed – another bit of ink now "leftover."

Why, though, was Moshe so insistent on these few tiny droplets of ink? The answer can be found from the juxtaposition the Torah uses right after discussing the glow emanating from Moshe's face: "*And Moshe gathered all the people...*" In his prophetic *ruach haKodesh*, Moshe envisioned the great *navi*, Shmuel, who actually matched the greatness of both Moshe and Aharon. What was so special about Shmuel? Among many things, Shmuel would pack his bags and go around traveling from city to city, judging the people's disputes and delivering *chizuk* everywhere. Moshe thus argued, "Shmuel is a much humbler prophet than I; he goes to the people himself, while I have them gather to me! So please, don't write *anav* with a *yud* or *vayikra* with an *alef*, for I am not as big of an *anav* as I could be."

Thus, it comes out that the Torah's juxtaposition actually serves to explain why exactly Moshe's face was shining! The light came from the "extra" ink that was leftover due his own humility, brought about from contrasting himself with Shmuel. The recognition of the fact that one isn't perfect, but can become even greater, is the greatest thing in the world, for that gives him room for growth. When we recognize the greatness in others, that brings out our own inherent greatness.

But this goes a step further. Moshe's light, in truth, was not his own; it was the light of G-d. Inside each person resides a Heavenly soul – a fragment of Hashem. Most often, that Divine spark is buried by layers of self and arrogance, which disrupt the light from emanating. Moshe radiated with light because he eradicated his ego; it wasn't about himself – he was merely a messenger of Hashem. We all possess that same spark; we are merely different conduits and channels for His light to bask throughout the world. Let us remove any level of haughtiness about us, to allow the G-dliness within each and every one of us to shine bright.

"The greatest sin any Jew can do is to forget that he is the child of the King." (R' Yitzchak of Vorka)

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Rahamim Ben Shifra Frida Bat Yaffa Miriam Bat Bakol
Yitzchak Ben Naama Chana Bat Malka Chaim Avraham Ben Shifra Zisel
Noach Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffa Esther Bat Frida Bakol Bat Zilpa

Time or Space?

At the start of this week's Parsha, which discusses Shabbat and the building of the Mishkan consecutively, Chazal famously learn out the 39 *melakhot* of Shabbat from the labors performed in the construction of the Mishkan.

What connection do these two share that all the *halachot* of Shabbat are built upon what was done in the Mishkan? Furthermore, why is it that constructing the Mishkan is prohibited on Shabbat; even the actual services performed in the Mishkan were permitted on Shabbat!

R' Leiby Burnham gave a profound explanation. Building the Mishkan was essentially creating a sanctified place in space, whereas Shabbat creates sanctity in time. Building the Mishkan cannot override Shabbat, says the Torah, because sanctifying time is more important than sanctifying a place. As we know, *Am Yisrael* throughout history wasn't always *zocheh* to enjoy the splendor of a sanctified place. We haven't had a Bet HaMikdash in around 2,000 years. We have been shunted from place to place, without the ultimate *makom kadosh* to live with. But that doesn't mean we are forced to live without holiness in our lives. Time is how we traverse our life in this world, and no matter where we are, we can always create holiness in time. Jews lit the *menorah* in Auschwitz; Jews held a Pesach Seder in the Warsaw Ghettos. Boreh Olam is teaching us: I value you learning to sanctify your time even more than you sanctifying your space. Furthermore, what good is a Temple without service, or a *shul* without Jewish practices? Hashem tells us: *Build Me a Mishkan, so I can live amongst you... but first and foremost, observe My Shabbat, so I can actually be in it...*