

## Parshat Vayakhel Prettifications Purified

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles  
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

In *Parshat Vayakhel* the *Torah* tells that the women accompanied by the men donated all their jewelry to the *Mishkan*. The *Torah* lists the various ornaments. Why these details? Further, the language is somewhat unusual: "The men came with the women..." But the word usually used for "with" is "im," not "al" which is used here. "Al" usually means "on" or "above". What is the significance of this?

The *Mishkan* was to be built after the nation sinned with the golden calf. The people sinned with golden ornaments, notes the *Midrash* and they will be forgiven through it. Perhaps this is the deeper significance of itemizing the jewelry, for that which has been previously dedicated to the worship of foreign gods cannot then be re-purposed to Hashem's service. As the *Ner Uziel* notes quoting the *Meshech Chochmah*, since this jewelry was still being worn by the women, al hanashim, it had never been dedicated or used for other purposes.

The Talmud stipulates that what a woman owns belongs to her husband. Therefore, explains *Seforno*, since the men had authority over (al) the women in these matters, the men came to validate the women's desire to make these donations. In addition, when a husband brings his wife jewelry, it creates happiness between them, writes *Vayovinu Bamikra*. Moshe was therefore reluctant to take the jewelry without the husbands' consent.

Rav M. Feinstein quoting Onkelos, says *al/on* refers to the jewelry still being on the women. They were beloved pieces that the women wore but they were happy to be able to donate them to the *Mishkan*. The opportunity

to do a *mitzvah* was more precious than the pleasure of wearing this jewelry. And the women were so eager to donate them they didn't wait to remove them, writes Rabbi Grossbard. The *Tiferes Shimshon* notes that money is the source of the greatest percentage of marital conflict. Yet here, the husbands and wives came to donate this gold to the *Mishkan*, for there is no greater joy in a household than having the *Shechinah* hovering over them as it did in the *Mishkan*.

Since jewelry is generally found with the women, writes Ramban, they eagerly ran to donate their jewelry and the men brought additional jewelry. But the women were obviously more zealous and were rewarded with *Rosh Chodesh*. Rabbi M. Miller quotes the Tur, that Hashem gave us the three Pilgrim Festivals in the merit of our three patriarchs. *Rosh Chodesh* was meant to be in the merit of the twelve tribes. However, when the men sinned, the women earned this holiday. The Baal Tosfos notes that the Sanctuary was permanently dedicated on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*, and therefore *Rosh Chodesh* constituted an appropriate gift to the women who had so enthusiastically contributed to its construction.

Could we not say that perhaps the women's generosity was a spur of the moment urge? Perhaps they would later regret their donation. Rabbi Miller z"l points out that the women had ample time to voice regret over their generosity. Prior to the permanent dedication of the *Mishkan*, it had been erected and then dismantled every day for seven days. So, when the *Mishkan* was finally permanently dedicated on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*, and the women still rejoiced, Hashem rewarded them

with *Rosh Chodesh* in recognition of their devotion to Hashem that culminated in the dedication on *Rosh Chodesh*.

The Biyaler Rebbe tells us that the letters of the first three words, *Rosh Chodesh le'amcha*.. form an anagram for Rachel, as she initiated celebrating *Rosh Chodesh*. Rabbi E. Kitov says that for seven years Yaakov worked to earn Rachel. During that time, he occasionally sent her jewelry through Lavan who gave it to Leah. Rachel, understanding what would transpire, kept silent and gave over the signs, and in other ways helped to foster tranquility between Yaakov and Leah. The women in the desert also gave up their jewelry for shalom bayis, for the *Mishkan's* purpose was to foster shalom bayis in addition to bringing us closer to Hashem. Since the women acted selflessly for the same reasons as Rachel, they were rewarded with the holiday of *Rosh Chodesh*, the holiday she initiated.

The Chidushei Harim understand our verse to mean that although the men came later, they rose above/al the women. By bringing gold now for the *Mishkan*, the men were atoning for their sin and "Where a repentant one stands, a completely righteous person cannot stand." A former sinner understands how much he needs the help and guidance of Hashem to stay on the right path; a completely righteous person who has never strayed has difficulty internalizing this. This gift of *teshuvah* that the men brought was in addition to the material gifts that both the men and the women brought. Because the men had to work harder than the women, backtracking first and then moving forward, the women could not stand in the same place as the men.



## The 6th Perek The Practicality of the Book of Mishlei

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

In the 6th chapter, Mishlei tells us, "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to lie." Sleep fills a physical and emotional need, but we have to ask ourselves what we will gain by it. People will use sleep as an escape route to avoid coping or dealing with things. You have to arouse yourself. This doesn't mean burning the candles at both ends, but rather not idealizing sleep as a lifestyle. The Rambam recommends 6-8 hours of sleep at night and not by day. You need to sleep because your body demands it. But you can also create the need for it until it becomes addictive. The reason why you shouldn't sleep too much is because there is so much to accomplish in life. If all a person is living for is to be able to say *shehakol* on water that's enough. In *olam habah*, there's no possibility of growth. Whatever you're doing, don't sleep through life.

"And your poverty shall come like a fast walker and your want as an armed man." If you are lazy you'll end up lacking materially, physically, and emotionally. People don't necessarily want to work towards their goals, although they'd like it to happen anyway. "An unscrupulous man, a man of violence, walks with the stubbornness of his mouth." The word used is *blial* which means a person without a yoke. He doesn't want to work towards anything. A person who sins to get his way will go with the stubbornness of his mouth.

I read about this horrific crime in Los Angeles. Some robbers broke into the home of an 81 year old philanthropist woman, murdered her, and took whatever they could. It was defended in the US Congress. People had a different narrative. They claimed the victim took advantage of a corrupt sin to gain wealth. She deserved what she got. People talk like this,

and they forget one critical thing. There have always been people who have and those who don't. The way to have more is to ask for Hashem's help and to work hard. There's no narrative in which stealing will mean having.

"He winks his eye, stamps his foot, points with his finger." He has all of these ways of suggesting things without making a commitment. "The opposite of what he suggests is in his heart, he plots evil and incites quarrels." This person whose doing his best to deceive people through everything that requires nothing in the way of commitment – "Calamity shall come suddenly; he shall be broken beyond repair." The sentence he can't escape is the prison of living with himself, with his mind, heart, and corrupt commitment. There's no one who will be able to release him from his self-made prison of materialism, evil, blame, and self-deceit, but himself.

## Traveling the Journey of Life Tehilim 18 Part III

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

When the *Torah* speaks about *Shabbat*, there are two terms used for work- *avodah* and *melacha*. The *Klei Yakar* says *avodah* comes from the root word *eved*- servant. When the *Torah* says, "You shall work six days..." it refers to the service of Hashem. We are all servants of Hashem and the *Torah* is telling us to serve Him during these six days. Start your day with prayers, *Torah* learning, and *chesed*. Begin with a spiritual act and then continue the work day. Even if we work during the week, it's not separate from *Shabbat*. To remember *Shabbat* means doing business in a way that we remain servants of Hashem. If our main priority is our relationship with Hashem, we would make sure to have time for spirituality during the week. We would be honest in business. We would be role models in the workplace. This is remembering *Shabbat* throughout the week and that is why the *Torah* discusses working during the week in connection to *Shabbat*. If we don't remember *Shabbat* throughout the week, we cannot fully experience its sanctity on the seventh day.

"*Ki sheshet yamim asah Hashem...*"-For in six days Hashem made..." Why doesn't it say *B'sheshet*- in six days? "And he rested on

the seventh day..." What does it mean Hashem rested? In six days, Hashem created something out of nothing and then He stopped on *Shabbat*. Doing something and then stopping indicates that there was a plan and purpose which was accomplished. Hashem created the universe for a purpose and when everything was set in place there was no further reason to continue. He then handed the world over to us to complete its purpose and that is why we have to sanctify the seventh day. The *Alshich* explains that everything physical is finite and in the process of disintegrating. This is the opposite of rest. However, when *Shabbat* comes to the world, there is *menucha* because *Shabbat* is the soul of creation. Rest means there's a soul that gives it eternal existence. *Shabbat* is the spiritual aspect that gives the world eternal existence.

The *Ohr Hachaim* further elaborates that from the moment that Hashem created the world, there's no possibility for it to exist for more than six days unless *Shabbat* is kept by at least one person. *Shabbat* instills the soul into the world that gives it existence for six more days. It ensures our relationship with Hashem. If there isn't at least one individual who cherishes a bond with Hashem, there's no

reason for this world to exist. That is why it says, "*Ki sheshet yamim...*" *Shabbat* is an essential factor of creation and if a person desecrates it, he denies the purpose of the world. It says, "Hashem blessed the *Shabbat* and sanctified it." What does it mean, He blessed the day? *Berach* means an addition. When we bless someone, we wish him more in whatever area he needs. The *Ibn Ezra* says our soul has the potential to absorb more wisdom on *Shabbat* than on all other days. Hashem gave the day extra spiritual capacity. He wants us to recognize that He created the world for a purpose and we are meant to accomplish this mission. He's with us in the process, helping us to get there. *Shabbat* is meant to be dedicated to developing our relationship with Hashem and is the way to ensure we will have an ongoing eternal existence of closeness to Him. By not keeping *Shabbat*, a person indicates he isn't interested in the greatest gift Hashem has given us. He's bringing us to His treasure house and offering us a chance to take as much as we can.

A Jew should invest thought, time, and effort to sanctify the *Shabbat* on an ongoing basis and in this way he can ascend level by level up the mountain of Hashem.