

This week's *Parashah* opens with the dedication of the *Mishkan*. We read (9:7), "Moshe said to Aharon, 'Approach the *Mizbei'ach* / Altar and perform the service ...' *Rashi z"l* writes: "Aharon was ashamed to approach. Moshe said to him, 'Why are you ashamed? For this you were chosen!'" R' Moshe ben Nachman z"l (*Ramban*; 1194-1270; Spain and *Eretz Yisrael*) elaborates: "Aharon was sanctified to *Hashem*. He had no sins on his conscience except for making the Golden Calf, but that sin was always at the forefront of his thoughts. Moshe therefore told him, 'Have some pride and do not be so humble, for *Hashem* has already forgiven you'."

R' Shlomo Wolbe z"l (1914-2005) writes: It is true that our Sages have taught (*Avot*, Ch.4), "Be very, very humble!" We see here, however, that there is a limit to humility. When humility impedes a person's service of *Hashem*, it is no longer appropriate. The first key to serving *Hashem* is to recognize one's worth and importance. This is stated expressly in the work *Sha'arei Ha'avodah* which is attributed to Rabbeinu Yonah Gerondi z"l (Spain; died 1263): "The first step is for the person who is serving [*Hashem*] to know his own worth, to recognize his elevated level and the elevated levels of his forefathers, and their greatness and importance to the Creator and his affection for them. A person should then always strive and strengthen himself to live up to that level and to always act accordingly. If, G-d forbid, a person does not recognize his level and that of his ancestors, he can easily go in the ways of lawless people." (*Shiurei Chumash*)

Elsewhere in the Torah . . .

Rabbah bar Machsaya said that Rav Chama bar Guria said that [the sage] Rav said: If all the seas were ink, all the reeds were quills, all the heavens were parchments, and all humans were scribes, it would not be possible to record the depth of "*Rashut*." What verse teaches this? Rav Mesharshiya said: "The heavens for height, the earth for depth, and the heart of kings cannot be fathomed" (*Mishlei* 25:3).

(*Shabbat* 11a)

Rashi z"l understands "*Rashut*" to mean "government," and he explains: The depth of kings' hearts cannot be fathomed, for, in one day, they must focus on many different provinces: here, collecting taxes; there, wars; in another place, justice.

R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver z"l (1789-1852; rabbi of Suvalk, Lithuania) explains differently: It is a given that *Hashem* created the world for a reason. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to discover as much of that reason as we can. But, *Hashem's* reason is not like the reason why a human does something. Humans make new things because there is something missing in their lives. Not so *Hashem*, who lacks nothing and needs nothing!

King Shlomo wrote (*Mishlei* 25:2 -- the verse before the one quoted in the *Gemara*), "It is the honor of *Elokim* to conceal the matter, but it is the honor of kings to search out the matter." We can never know the ultimate reason why *Hashem* created the world; hence, "It is the honor of *Elokim* to conceal the matter" -- not to try to discover it. But, we do know that He created the world for mankind, the only being that has free will and on whose choices the rest of the world hangs. Because of that free choice, mankind is referred to in the above verse as "kings." That fact we should reflect on, so we will know our obligations; therefore, "It is the honor of kings [*i.e.*, mankind] to search out the matter." Nevertheless, says our *Gemara*, a complete understanding of man's free will is so deep that all the ink, quills, parchments, and scribes in the world could not capture it.

(*Si'ach Yitzchak: Likkutim* p.285)

Hamaayan / The Torah Spring

10815 Meadowhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901 / 301-593-2272

Send e-mail to: TheTorahSpring@gmail.com

Back issues at: www.TheTorahSpring.org

Donations to *Hamaayan* are tax deductible.



Dedicated in gratitude to *Hashem* on *Hamaayan's* 33rd birthday
and in memory of *Moreinu Ha'Rav Gedaliah ben Zev Ha'Kohen Anemer z"l*

“This may you eat from everything that is in the water: everything that has fins and scales in the water, in the seas, and in the streams, those may you eat.” (11:9)

The *Gemara* (*Chullin* 66b) states: All species that have scales also have fins [and are kosher], but there are species that have fins and do not have scales [and are not kosher]. If so, why doesn't the Torah just say that a fish is kosher if it has scales? [The *Gemara* answers, quoting a verse in *Yeshayah* (42:21):] “So that the Torah be made great and glorious.” [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R' Nosson Yehuda Leib Mintzberg z"l (1943-2018; rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim and Bet Shemesh, Israel) ask: How does it make the Torah “great and glorious” to say something that seems to be completely unnecessary [*i.e.*, that kosher fish have fins]?

He explains: The Torah is more than a practical how-to guide for performing *Mitzvot*. Were it only that, it would have sufficed for the Torah to say that a fish is kosher if it has scales [since such a fish necessarily has fins also]. However, the Torah is teaching us an additional truth--that a fish is kosher because it has fins and scales. Fins and scales are not merely signs that the fish is kosher; rather, for reasons that only *Hashem* knows, fins and scales are what make a fish kosher. The Torah is made “great and glorious” each time it teaches us an additional secret of *Hashem's* creation, even if that information has no practical consequence.

(*Ben Melech Al Ha'Torah*, Introduction p.15)

R' Yehonatan Eyebchutz z"l (Central Europe; 1690-1764) writes: When the *Gemara* states, “All species that have scales also have fins,” it actually means, “Most species that have scales also have fins.” Indeed, throughout nature, laws have exceptions, as naturalists have testified. The Torah and *Mitzvot* are meant to address the predominant circumstances that exist--for example, that most species that have scales also have fins, and the fact that there are a relatively few species that are exceptions does not contradict the words of our Sages. (*Kraitit U'plaiti* 83:3)

R' Yaakov Zvi Mecklenburg z"l (1785-1865; rabbi of Koenigsberg, Germany) adds: The *Gemara* (*Eruvin* 29a) states expressly, “We do not learn *Halachot* from generalities, even when a *Mishnah* says, ‘All . . . except . . .’” One might think that since the *Mishnah* says, “Except . . .,” it is identifying all exceptions, and the statement, “All . . . except . . .,” should be taken literally; however, the *Gemara* teaches that that is not a proper way to interpret the words of our Sages. [Rather, we must rely on the classical commentaries to help us understand our Sages' words.]

(*Ha'ketav Ve'ha'kabbalah*)

“Moshe said, ‘This is the thing that *Hashem* has commanded you to do; then the glory of *Hashem* will appear to you’.” (9:6)

The *Midrash Torat Kohanim* interprets: “Moshe said to *Bnei Yisrael*, ‘Remove that certain *Yetzer Ha'ra* from your hearts and be unified in your desire to serve G-d. Just as He is One, so your service should be uniquely for Him. If you do this, then the glory of *Hashem* will appear to you.’” [Until here from the *Midrash*]

What is “that certain *Yetzer Ha'ra*”? R' Yitzchak Hershkowitz *shlita* (Israel) explains, citing several *Chassidic* works: When *Bnei Yisrael* heard that *Hashem* would reveal Himself to them on that day (*i.e.*, the day of the dedication of the *Mishkan*), their hearts burned with impatient anticipation. That was the *Yetzer Ha'ra* to which Moshe referred, for it meant that their service of *Hashem* was motivated by a desire to attain lofty spiritual levels, not a desire to simply do G-d's will. Moshe said, “If you want the glory of *Hashem* to appear to you, then you must serve G-d only because, ‘This is the thing that *Hashem* has commanded you to do’.” (*Ha'mal'ach* p.86)

A related thought:

R' Zvi Elimelech Shapira z"l (the *Bnei Yissaschar*; died 1841) writes about the commandment not to ascend to the *Mizbei'ach* / altar on steps: In my opinion, this *Mitzvah* hints that a person should not seek lofty spiritual levels such as *Ruach Ha'kodosh* or the revelation of Eliyahu Ha'navi. If he is honored by Heaven with such attainments, he should thank *Hashem*, for He is good. However, one's only intention should be to serve *Hashem* out of love and awe, and with simplicity, as a son serves his father and mother. If, G-d forbid, a person thinks he is worthy of lofty levels, his “account book” will be opened in Heaven, and his shame will be revealed. Therefore, a person should be content to do what he is commanded.

(*Derech Pikudecha: Mitzvat Lo Ta'aseh* 41:11)

Pirkei Avot

“Shammai says: ‘Make your Torah study a fixed practice. Say little and do much, and receive everyone with a cheerful face’.” (Chapter 1)

R' Chaim of Volozhin z"l (1749-1821) explains: Review your studies, and don't say that you are bored by them, just as a storekeeper doesn't get bored of sitting in his store day-after-day. Say, “Little!” -- *i.e.*, what I have learned already is very little. If you adopt that attitude, then you will “do much.” Moreover, this attitude will cause you to greet every person pleasantly, for you will assume that he has learned more Torah than you have.

(*Ruach Chaim*)