



Shemini - Consumption and Integration

The Mishkan & Kashrus?

In this week's Parsha there is a strange combination of topics. The Parsha opens with the final establishment of the Mishkan. It was to be assembled and never taken down until the Jewish people would be commanded to relocate and the Kehunah passed to our Ahron and his children. That great event was marred by the tragedy of the burning of Nadav and Avihu. After Hashem warned to never do "Avodah" after having drunk wine, alluding to what Nadav and Avihu did wrong, the Torah launches into the laws of kashrus! The Torah lays out the signs of all the animals, birds, fish, and insects we may eat and those we may not eat. What does that have to do with the first half of the Parsha? Rashi (11:2) points out that Moshe, Ahron, Elazar, and Itamar were all equally appointed to teach the laws of kashrus to the Jewish people because they were equally silent and accepting Hashem's decree on Nadav and Avihu. What is the connection?

What make it the 8th?

Chazal say that this "eighth day" was as dear to Hashem as "the creation of Heaven and Earth", why? What's hardest understand is why this day, which was Rosh Chodesh Nissan is called the "**eighth day**". It ushered in a new order of the Kehunah of Ahron and his sons in their colorful 'bigdei Kehuna'. How is it part of the seven days where Moshe did the "Avodah" with a white garment with no hem, and the Mishkan was assembled and disassembled daily? Why is this the '8th' -

which became the name for the whole Parsha including the laws of kashrus?

Piece by Piece

We have discussed this in course of sefer shmos that the Mishkan represents a mini universe. That's why we can derive what is prohibited to do on Shabbos from the Mishkan. What it takes to make a Mishkan is what it takes to create a world! Chazal tell us that Betzalel, the architect of the Mishkan, knew to **combine** (see more on 'combine' further in this article) the Divine letters to create Heaven and Earth! The technology and resources that went into the Mishkan are the same technology and resources that went into the construction of the whole wide world (see more on this in the Midrash Tanchuma on parshas Pikudei). **The parallel runs also in the process**. By the genesis, in course of the seven days of creation, Hashem put different forces into place gradually **piece by piece**. The world did not come into being in an instant, it was made up of parts and those parts were connected over time. That's why we don't have the full name of Hashem "Havaya-Elokim" until after Hashem finished creation, as Chazal say: "a full name over a full world". When the world was "in pieces" only the name "Elokim", which means "Master of ALL (=separate and distinct) powers" is used. These "powers" were not in an integrated configuration that spells out Hashem's full Name until everything was in place. This goes even further. Chazal tell us that prior to the creation of our world Hashem "made worlds and destroyed them".

This means that even the 'pieces' of our world are themselves built out of 'shards' from the worlds before this one! What this means is: **life and destiny are all about assembly and integration**. Nothing is complete in its own right in any way shape or form. Everything needs to be assembled, first 'it within itself' and then 'it with the integrated reality'. Hashem did it that way because that's the way 'man' works. **Hashem put the world on 'man scale' so that man could affect the world and perfect it.**

Tzelem Elokim – holding it all together

Only Hashem can create something out of nothing. Hashem gave 'the pieces' but **He made Man a creator by entrusting him with the assembling the pieces**. It says at the end of the Genesis: "Hashem blessed the Shabbos and sanctified it because on it He ceased from all that He **created** (past tense) to be **made** (future tense). "**Created**" refers to bringing something forth out of nothingness, and that Hashem did already for all time. "**To be made**" refers to the assembly required moving forward, **that's what man does**.

The task of integrating the pieces of reality into the optimal integrated configuration is specifically something only man with a **Tzelem Elokim** can do. **Tzelem Elokim** is one of the most elaborate and deep Concepts in Kabbalah but for the purposes of our purposes it is **the meta system that holds all of reality together – "Tzelem" – the configuration of - "Elokim" all the different and diverse powers Hashem created**. Man's "**Tzelem**" is a perfect model for how all the powers of the cosmos should be integrated with each other. Reality is comprised of the spiritual and the physical, parallel to that man has a body and soul. The integration of the body parts with each other are perfectly parallel to the integration of all the physical cosmic forces with each other and the same

is true for the spiritual energies that make up man's soul. The integration between soul and body is the perfect model for how the spiritual forces should be integrated with the physical forces. **"Man" is the carrier of the form that needs to be imprinted on the entirety of reality**. In short: **if it would be possible to stand outside of a complete integrated reality and look at all of reality together – it would look like a whole "Tzelem"!**

Tzelem Elokim and the Mishkan

The true "Tzelem Elokim" is only by the Jewish people and that's the secret of Chazal's statement "you are called **Adam** and the idol worshippers are not called **Adam**". Therefore, only the Jewish people effect the cosmos! **Everything we do with our body and soul gets an immediate parallel reaction from the physical and spiritual forces of the cosmos! Therefore, the Jewish people alone were authorized to build and have the Mishkan**. The assembly of the Mishkan represents the assembly of all the cosmic forces in their proper configuration, just like the "human form". Therefore there are perfect parallels between all the items of the Mishkan and how they are positioned relative to each other to and the organs in human being. And the 'dwelling' of the Shechina in the Mishkan is parallel to the 'dwelling' of the soul in the body (Zohar, Kuzari, and in a letter attributed to the Rambam)

The real goal is for the Divine presence to rest in the Jewish people as the pasuk says "Veshachanti b'tocham"- I will dwell in **them**, as the Jewish people carry the "Tzelem" that's supposed to be imprinted on the entirety of the cosmos. **This is the "form" that holds everything together including the connection between the Divine presence and the world!** Since our "Tzelem" is tainted with the 'yetzer harah' as a result of the sins

of Adam and the golden calf we needed the Mishkan to be the Prototype of a pure "Tzelem". In the future, the Divine presence will rest in the Jewish people with their perfected "Tzelem" and the Bais HaMikdash will be the place where we simply do the avodah of the Korbanos (we will write more about this in Parshas Acharei Mos).

Cosmic Consumption

By what means do things get integrated into the configuration of the "Tzelem"? Through consumption! Viewing the Mishkan and the Shechinah that dwells in it as a macro person Body and Soul, the Korbanos are consumed like food! **Mitzvos in general, and Korbanos and Tefillos in particular, are the "food of reality"**! The Tefillos done facing the Mishkan and the Korbanos done therein feed the world and keep the Divine presence connected like food keeps body and soul together. Divine service energizes the cosmos and furthers its development just like healthy food gives us energy and can make us even healthier. Similarly, the Zohar likens aveiros to poison, its infusion into reality makes the cosmos 'sick' and can even 'kill' certain Cosmic forces.

There is another aspect to this: At the Mishkan is a microcosm of an integrated reality **whatever is consumed on the Mizbeach (altar) actually finds its place in reality!** It is elevated and united with its 'spiritual root' and properly positioned in reality, and that 'Tikun' affects its entire species. The individual entity offered as a Korban elevates and properly positions its whole species in their proper place in reality. **This is what the "8th" is! The "8th" is the configuring of the components of reality that are in sevens!**

Integration: Going from 7 to 8

The seven days of the Mishkan being assembled and disassembled represent the seven separate components of reality,

parallel to the seven days of creation, each one is getting a **preparatory taste of integration similar to those worlds that were destroyed before the creation of this one which is the integrated World pulled together of all those pieces**. At the end of the seven days, representing all the seven forces of nature, comes the "8th" day which is the integration and everything can endure. **Since everything is now integrated things can supplement each other and therefore can contain the Divine light.** On the 8th day the Mishkan is a **combination and integration** of all the seven days that came before it! It is the fulfillment of the "New Creation" that "Hashem created **to be made**" and that's why **"that day was as dear to Hashem as the creation of heaven and earth"**.

[Moshe, who is representing Hashem, served in a "white garment with no hem (=borders)" alluding to the infinite light the worlds were not able to absorb. The Divine Light it was too powerful for them so they shattered. Why? Because these worlds were "fragments" a part cannot hold the power of the 'Whole'. They were parts and the purpose of creating them was to create 'pieces'. 'Pieces' are meant to be integrated. That's what was represented by the Mishkan being assembled and disassembled over those seven days. The seven forces of nature, were getting a preparatory type of integration by the Mishkan being assembled on its day, but then being disassembled because the time had not come yet. It's being disassembled represented that it was not yet capable of holding the unmitigated Divine Light that Moshe represents by himself and his special garment with no hem. With the integration even the light itself breaks up into colors, represented by Ahron's colorful garments, and integrates with reality in the proper "color matching" of energy to its parallel component]

Jewish Consumption

With this we could understand what how kashrus literally **fits in** to all of this. **When the Jewish people who have the Divine image eat, whatever they eat is being integrated into its proper place in the cosmos, no less than how the Korbanos find their place in the cosmos by being sacrificed.** But the human being is able to do even more for the cosmos, as the laws of Kashrus apply beyond the species that may be offered on the Mizbeach. Kashrus includes all types of vegetation, fish, and types of birds that may not be used as sacrifices, and even insects! The Ramchal (mesilas yeshorim, Derech Hashem) teaches that when a person eats for the sake of Heaven it is a Mitzvah! To the extent that he does it for altruistic reasons, just to have health and strength to serve Hashem it is no less than sacrifices and sacraments! The food that he consumed is integrated into his “Tzelem Elokim” and finds its proper place in the cosmic configuration. As the Gemara tells us: “in this day and age where we don’t have an altar to atone for us, our table is our Altar and the food consumed are the sacrifices that atone for us!

Nadav & Avihu

The mistake of Nadav and Avihu was that they wanted to connect and integrate themselves with the Divine above and beyond what the Torah commanded. This is alluded to in their names: ‘Nadav’ means ‘benevolent’ - he wanted to give more than commanded. ‘Avihu’ means ‘He (referring to Hashem) is my father’. They wanted to cling so much and they brought “a foreign fire that was not commanded”. The ‘foreign fire’ also alludes to their unchecked youthful passion which motivated them to do above and beyond what Hashem commanded. They had ‘done this before’, when they looked directly at the Divine presence by Matan Torah when they should have looked away. What was their mistake (asides from the fact that one

should always stick to the Halacha and not do anything other or in addition to what is commanded)? The “Tzelem Elokim” is meant and privileged to cling to the Divine, however it is not meant to be consumed, but to “endure forever enjoying the Aura of the Shechina”. Hashem does not want us to lose our existence in our connection to Him, but rather our connection to Him should actually enhance our existence! The “Tzelem Elokim” is the consumer – not the consumed. Nadav and Avihu missed that point because they viewed themselves as fragments that need integration. They saw themselves that way because their “Tzelem” was incomplete- because they weren’t married (Zohar). Since their intentions were pure they were indeed “consumed by the Divine fire” which demonstrated the awesomeness of the Mishkan as Moshe told Ahron: “Now I know that they were greater than me and you if they were chosen to be the example to display the awesomeness of the Mishkan”. It is not something that anyone should choose for himself, but because of their loft intentions their death was not in vain. Moshe, Ahron, Elazar, and Itamar, accepting the Divine decree demonstrated their understanding of what is meant to be consumed and that’s why they were authorized to teach Kashrus – the guidelines of consumption.

Good Shabbos



www.EvenShesiya.com