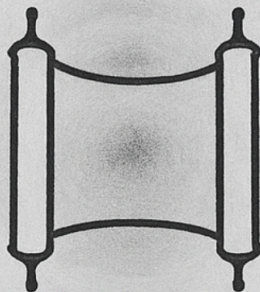


בס"ד

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel
of Horodak**

**Parshas Vayakhel & Pekudei
Parah**



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Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'eitz

Parshas Vayakhel

Introduction

Menachem Mendel Horodaker (1730–1786), also known as the Maggid of Horodok, was one of the foremost disciples of Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, and later became a central early leader of the Chassidic movement. He eventually led a group of Chassidim who settled in the Land of Israel in the Hebrew year 5537 (1777). His teachings often explore the inner meaning of Torah, the role of faith beyond intellect, and the spiritual process by which a person moves from imperfect service toward true attachment to Hashem. In this maamar on Parashat Parah and the construction of the Mishkan, he explains the paradox of spiritual growth: how service that begins with mixed motives eventually leads to a higher state of pure devotion and faith beyond all understanding.

The section of Parashat Parah.

פְּרַשְׁתַּת פָּרָה

Rashi, of blessed memory, explained that in Parashat Vayakhel, the warning regarding Shabbat was placed before the command regarding the work of the Mishkan to indicate that it does not override Shabbat.

פְּרַשְׁשִׁי וְיָלַע עַל שְׁהִקְדִּים בְּפְרַשְׁתַּת וַיִּקְהַל אֶזְרָתָהּ שָׁבַת לְצוּוֹי מְלֶאכֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן לומר שְׁאִינוּ דוֹחֵה אֶת הַשָּׁבַת

The Rav began his discourse in Parashat Pekudei with the verse, "And they brought the Mishkan to Moshe," and he enumerated and continued listing all the components of the Mishkan and its vessels.

פָּתַח הֶרַב בְּפְרַשְׁתַּת פְּקוּדֵי וַיְבִיאוּ אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְמוֹנֵה וְהוֹלֵךְ כָּל מַחְבְּרַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְכֵלָיו

Rashi, of blessed memory, explained that they brought it to Moshe because they were unable to erect it.

וּפְרַשְׁשִׁי וְיָלַע שְׁהִבִּיאוּ לְמֹשֶׁה עַל שְׁלֹא הָיוּ יְכוּלִים לְהַקְיֵמוֹ

Regarding the verse, "And the Mishkan was erected," Rashi, of blessed memory, explained that it was erected on its own.

וּפְסוּק "וְהוּקַם הַמִּשְׁכָּן" שֶׁפְּרַשְׁשִׁי וְיָלַע מֵאֵלָיו

The matter relates to the teaching of the Zohar on the verse, "And Moshe was unable to enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud rested upon it."

וְהַעֲנֵן הוּא מֵאָמַר הַזֶּהָר עַל "וְלֹא יָכַל מֹשֶׁה לְבוֹא אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד כִּי שָׁכַן עָלָיו הָעֲנָן"

The Zohar explains that this is analogous to the adornment of a bride, and it is not customary to stand there at the time she is being adorned.

וּפִירֵשׁ הַזֶּהָר שֶׁהוּא עֲנָן קְשׁוּטֵי כְּלָה וְאִין דְּרָךְ לְעַמּוּד שֶׁם בְּשַׁעַה שְׁמַתְקַשְׁטָת

This is the hidden wisdom of the Torah and the secrets of the Torah, for all their words are like fiery coals clothed in physicality to make it accessible for the ear to understand and comprehend the depths of these secrets.

הֵנָּה הוּא סִתְרֵי תוֹרָה וְרִזִּין דְּאוֹרֵיִיתָא שְׁפַל דְּבְרֵיהֶם כְּגַתְלֵי אֵשׁ הַמְּלוּבָשִׁים בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת לְשַׁבֵּר אֶת הָאֵזֶן לְהַבִּין וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל עִמְקֵי סוּדוֹתֵיהֶם

Behold, this is the secret of secrets, the most hidden and concealed within the mystery of Hashem.

'הֵנָּה הוּא רְזָא דְרִזִּין הַנְּסִתָּר וְנִעְלָם יוֹתֵר בְּסוּד הַ

Menachem Mendel of Horodak Pri Ha'eitz Parshas Vayakhel

And behold, regarding the two seemingly contradictory verses—"Take from among you an offering" and "From every generous-hearted person"—the Zohar explains that initially, even the Erev Rav had a portion in the Mishkan. Therefore, the verse specifically states, "Take from among you."

והנה על שני כוכבים המכחישין זה את זה שהם "קחו מאתכם תרומה" ו"מכל נדיב לב" שפירש הזהר שבתחלה היה גם לערב רב חלק במשכן לכו בא הפסוק "קחו מאתכם" דיקא.

The matter corresponds to two statements in the Talmud: one teaching that learning "not for its own sake" eventually leads to learning "for its own sake,"

הענין הוא שני מאמרי הש"ס שהם לקמוד שלא לשמה שמתוך כך בא לידי לשמה.

and another statement that contradicts this, saying that for one who learns "not for its own sake," it would have been better if his placenta had turned over upon his face.

ומאמר הסותר על הלומד שלא לשמה, נוח לו שנהפכה שליתו על פניו.

And it has already been explained that this refers specifically to one who learns "not for its own sake" with no intention other than that alone.

וכבר פירש שהוא השלא לשמה לבד שאין פונתו אלא לזה.

However, one who seeks to direct himself towards "for its own sake" but has not yet reached it—through learning "not for its own sake," he will come to learn "for its own sake."

מה שאין בו מי שרוצה לכוון את עצמו לשמה ועדנו לא הגיע אליה, מתוך שלא לשמה בא לידי לשמה.

This is what King Shlomo meant when he said about Parashat Parah, "I said, I will become wise, but it is far from me," for the matter is dependent on faith.

שהוא מאמר שדוד המלך עליו השלום על פרשת פרה "אמרתי אהבמה והיא רחוקה ממני" כי באמונה תליא מלתא.

And likewise, the statement of King David: "I considered my ways, and I returned my feet to Your testimonies," has already been explained.

וכן מאמר דוד המלך עליו השלום "חשבתי דרכי ואשיבה רגלי אל עדותיך" שפירש פירש.

For it is well known that the body is coarse matter and does not naturally conform to the obligations of the intellect.

להיות ידוע שהגוף הוא חומר עכור ואינו מסכים לעשות כהתחייבות השכל.

But only through the enticements that affect the body, such as fear of punishment, the reward of the World to Come, or the satisfaction and pleasure one feels in their service and love of Hashem.

כי אם על ידי פתויי משיגי הגוף, שהם יראת עונש או שכר עולם הבא, או נחת רוח ותענוג שמרגיש 'בעבודתו ואהבתו את ה'.

And in truth, no comprehension can grasp or attain the true attachment to the Infinite One through any intellect,

ובאמת, שאין שום השגה משגת ותופסת הדבקות, האמתי באין סוף בשום שכל

All the more so with feeling and delight

כל שכן בהרגשה ותענוג

Thus, it is understood that every sensation of fear, love, pleasure in attachment, and all human experiences are false,

ממילא מובן שכל הרגשת היראה או האהבה, או תענוג הדבקות, והרגשת עניני כל אדם—כזב

for "Hashem is not in the noise."

כי "לא ברעש ה'".

Menachem Mendel of Horodak
Pri Ha'eitz
Parshas Vayakhel

However, the true attachment, beyond what is felt, is that which is not grasped in any perception.	אָבֵל הַדְּבָקוֹת הָאֲמִתִּי אַחַר הַמּוֹרָגֶשׁ הוּא הַשְּׂאִינֹ מוֹרָגֶשׁ בְּשׁוֹם תְּפִיסָה.
And the proof: "For no man shall see Me and live."	וְהִרְאָהָ: "כִּי לֹא יִרְאֵנִי הָאָדָם וְחָי"
Only through faith, without any sensation, can one attain it, which is the concept of nullification of existence.	כִּי אִם עַל יְדֵי הָאֲמוּנָה בְּלִי שׁוֹם הַרְגָּשָׁה, שֶׁהוּא עֲנִיָּן בְּטוֹל הַמְּצִיאוֹת.
It is impossible to grasp it independently, let alone to understand and explain it to others.	שְׂאִי אֲפֹשֶׁר לְעֲמוֹד עֲלָיו בְּעֶצְמוֹ, כֹּל וְחִמָּר לְהַבִּין וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל לְאַחֵרִים.
This is called "for its own sake" (lishmah) for every person, according to their level.	הוּא הַנִּקְרָא "לְשִׁמָּה" שֶׁל כָּל אָדָם לְפִי חֵן דִּילִיָּה.
But it is impossible to reach it except through the enticements of the body,	אָבֵל אִי אֲפֹשֶׁר לְהַגִּיעַ אֵלֶיהָ כִּי אִם עַל יְדֵי פְתוּיֵי הַגּוּף,
combined with an initial intent "not for its own sake," which consists of fear, love, and pleasure.	עִם שְׂלֵא לְשִׁמָּה תְּחִלָּה, שֶׁהוּא הִירְאָה וְהֶאֱהָבָה וְהִתְעַנּוּג.
Which are also impossible to manifest except through faith in reward and punishment and other matters.	אֲשֶׁר בְּלִתֵּי אֲפֹשְׁרוֹתָם לְחַל גַּם כֵּן כִּי אִם עַל יְדֵי הָאֲמוּנָה בְּשִׂכָר וְעוֹנָשׁ וּשְׂאָרֵי עֲנִינִים.
And through this faith, one reaches a higher level, as mentioned.	וְעַל יְדֵי אֲמוּנָה זֹו מַגִּיעַ לְמַעְלָה הַיְמָנָה כְּנֹזֵכַר.
And this is [the meaning of] "I considered my ways"—at first, he considers the ways of the body and its enticements.	וְזֶהוּ "חִשְׁבֹתִי דְרָכַי"—תְּחִלָּה חִשַּׁב דְרָכַי הַגּוּף וּפְתוּיָיו.
And afterwards, "I returned my feet," which refers to faith, called "feet."	וְאַחַר כֵּן "וָאָשִׁיבָה רַגְלָי", שֶׁהִיא הָאֲמוּנָה הַנִּקְרָאת "רַגְלִי".
"To Your testimonies"—this refers to "for its own sake" (lishmah), true testimony without any mixture of foreignness or falsehood.	"אֵל עֲדוּתֶיךָ"—שֶׁהוּא הַלְשִׁמָּה, עֲדוּת אֲמִתּוֹת בְּלִי שׁוֹם עִירוּב זְרוּת וְשִׁקָּר.
And "testimony" (עדות) is also an expression of adornment (עדי) and an expression of connection, as in the combination of the letters of "knowledge" (דעות), which represents consciousness and attachment.	וְכֵן "עֲדוּת" הוּא לְשׁוֹן קָשׁוּט "עֲדִי", וְלְשׁוֹן חִבּוּר אוֹתִיּוֹת "דְּעוּת", שֶׁהוּא הַדְּעַת וְהַדְּבָקוֹת.
And this is [the meaning of] "Better one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the entire life of the World to Come,"	וְזֶהוּ "יִפְּהָ שְׁעָה אַחַת בְּתִשׁוּבָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה מִכָּל חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא"
for all the life of the World to Come consists of awesome perceptions and the immense pleasure derived from them.	שֶׁכֹּל חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא הֵם הַכֹּל הַשְּׂגוֹת נוֹרְאוֹת וְעוֹצֵם הַתְּעַנּוּג מֵהֵם.
However, the one hour in this world attained through repentance and good deeds is above all possible perceptions,	וְהַנֶּה שְׁעָה אַחַת שְׂמֵשִׁיג בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּתִשׁוּבָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים, הִיא לְמַעְלָה מִכָּל אֲפֹשְׁרוֹת הַשְּׂגוֹת.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'eitz

Parshas Vayakhel

which is the aforementioned faith in the nullification of all one's sensations and perceptions, beyond all attainable understanding.

שְׁהִיא הָאֱמוּנָה הַנִּזְכָּרָה לְעֵיל, בְּבִטּוּל מְצִיאוֹת כָּל הַרְגִישוֹתָיו וְתַפְסוּתוֹ, אַחַר כְּלוּי כָּל אֲפֻשְׁרוֹת הַהִשְׁגָּה.

And the attachment and pleasure that is possible cling to this faith.

וְהַדְּבָקוּת וְהַתְעֻנּוּג הָאֲפֻשְׁרֵי מִתְדַבֵּק בְּאֱמוּנָה זוֹ

But the truth is that it is impossible to reach this faith and attachment except after exhausting all possible attainments in fear, love, and perceived attachment.

אֲבָל הָאֱמֶת הַזֶּה הוּא שְׂאֵי אֲפֻשֶׁר לְהִגִּיעַ לְאֱמוּנָה וְהַדְּבָקוּת הַזֶּה כִּי אִם אַחֲרֵי כְּלוּי תַחֲלָה כָּל עֲנִינֵי אֲפֻשְׁרוֹת הַהִשְׁגוֹת בְּיָרֵאָה וְאַהֲבָה וְדְבָקוּת הַמְּוִשְׁגִים

And this is the preparation and the throne for that which is beyond comprehension, which comes afterward and is the essence.

וְזֶהוּ הַכֵּנָה וְכֶסֶף לְשִׂאינו מוֹשֵׁג שְׂאֵחַר זֶה, שֶׁהוּא הָעֵיקָר.

And this is the concept of the Parah [Adumah], which defiles the pure and purifies the impure.

וְזֶהוּ עֲנִינוּ פָּרָה, שְׂמֻטְמָא אֶת הַטְּהוֹרִים וְעוֹסְקֵיהֶּ וּמְטַהֵר אֶת הַטְּמֵאִים

This corresponds to faith in reward and punishment, and their attainment through love and fear, which is the beginning of "those called holy."

שֶׁהוּא עֲנִינוּ הָאֱמוּנָה בְּשֹׁכֵר וְעוֹנֵשׁ וְהַשְׂגָּתָם בְּאַהֲבָה וְיָרֵאָה, שֶׁהִיא תַחֲלָה לְמַקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ

And this is "the gate of Hashem," and it is impossible without it.

וְזֶהוּ "הַשַּׁעַר לַה'", וְאֵי אֲפֻשֶׁר בְּלִתָּהּ

However, one must not remain in this state forever, serving solely through it, but rather must cleave to that which is beyond comprehension.

וּבְלִבְד שְׂלֵא יִשְׂאָר פֶּן לְעוֹלָם בְּהֵם יַעֲבֹד, כִּי אִם בְּדְבָקוּת שְׂאינו מוֹשֵׁג

And this is the explanation of "it defiles the pure"—those who remain at this level—and "it purifies the impure"—those who begin their journey through it, as it is the opening of the gate.

וְהוּא פְּרוּשׁ "שְׂמֻטְמָא אֶת הַטְּהוֹרִים", הַעוֹמְדִים בְּמִדְרָגָה זוֹ, "וּמְטַהֵר אֶת הַטְּמֵאִים", הַמְתַּחֲיָלִים עַל נְדָה, שֶׁהִיא פֶתַח הַשַּׁעַר

And this is the concept of the construction of the Mishkan, which could only be erected by Moshe.

וְהוּא עֲנִינוּ מְלֶאכֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן, שְׂלֵא הִתְּה אֲפֻשְׁרוֹת הַקְּמָתוֹ כִּי אִם עַל יְדֵי מֹשֶׁה

For he represented Da'at, which is the connection and attachment of all of Israel.

שֶׁהוּא הִנָּה הַדְּעַת, שֶׁהוּא הַחֲבוּר וְהַדְּבָקוּת שֶׁל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל

Initially, the donations for the Mishkan came from "every generous-hearted person," even from the Erev Rav, which contained much foreign mixture.

וְהִנָּה תַחֲלָה נְדָבוֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן הִנָּה מִכָּל נְדִיב לְבוֹ, אֲפֵלוּ מֵעֶרֶב רַב, שֶׁהוּא תְּקוּרֻבַת זָרוֹת הַרְּבִיבָה

Afterwards, it came from Israel alone, representing a higher refinement and purity, as it says, "Take from among you" specifically.

וְאַחֲרַי כִּף מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל לְבַד, שֶׁהוּא הַזְּכוּת הַיְתֵרָה וְהַטְּהוֹרָה, כְּמֵאֵמֶר "קַחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם" דִּיקָא

For the Mishkan, which was hinted at in all its construction, vessels, pillars, and sockets, represented the entire chain of worlds from the beginning of thought to the completion of action,

שֶׁהִרֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן שֶׁהִנָּה מְרוּמָז בְּכָל צוּרַת מְלֶאכֶתוֹתָיו וּכְלוּי וְעֲמוּדָיו וְאֲדָנוּי לְכָל הַשְּׂתַלְשְׁלוֹת הַעוֹלָמוֹת, מִתַּחֲלַת הַמִּתְחַשְּׁבָה עַד סוּף הַמְעַשָּׂה

Menachem Mendel of Horodak
Pri Ha'eitz
Parshas Vayakhel

<p>to bring the Divine Presence into the lower realms, as it is said, "And I will dwell among them."</p>	<p>להיות שכינה בתחתונים כמאמר "ושכנתי בתוכם".</p>
<p>And likewise, within every person, the Mishkan connects the end of action with the beginning of thought.</p>	<p>וכן בכל אדם, והמשכן הוא המחבר סוף המעשה עם תחילת המחשבה.</p>
<p>And it is impossible to attain refinement and purity except gradually, little by little,</p>	<p>ובלתי אפשרות הנפות והטהרה פי אם מעט מעט וזעיר זעיר,</p>
<p>which is the concept of ascending from world to world through the chain of worlds.</p>	<p>שהוא ענין לכתו מעולם לעולם דרך השתלשלות העולמות.</p>
<p>But in truth, this is not the ultimate path of purification, for it is not the true purpose.</p>	<p>אבל באמת, לא זו הדרך מטרתו להיות תכליתי</p>
<p>For the ultimate goal is "for its own sake" (lishmah), and that which is beyond comprehension is the foundation that supports and upholds everything.</p>	<p>שהרי התכלית הוא הלשמה, ושאינו מושג הוא עיקר העמידה המעמיד ומקים את הכל</p>
<p>Therefore, it was impossible for the Mishkan to be erected except by Moshe,</p>	<p>לכן לא היתה בלתי אפשרות ההקמה פי אם על ידי משה,</p>
<p>who was above the entire people, as it is said, "Did I conceive this people?"—as Moshe said, "For You say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries a suckling child.'"</p>	<p>שהנה גבוה מכל העם, כמאמר "האנכי הריתי את כל העם הנה זה?", שאמר משה: "כי תאמר אלי, שאהו בחיקו פאשר ישא האמן את היונק"</p>
<p>All of Israel, with all their refinement, even though they were a "generation of knowledge," were like an infant and suckling in the eyes of Moshe, who does not cleanse its filth.</p>	<p>שהיו כל ישראל עם כל עניני הנכונותם, שהיו דור דעה, כעולל ויונק בעיני משה שלא רוחץ מצאתו</p>
<p>For such is the nature of all that is "not for its own sake" (shelo lishmah).</p>	<p>פי כן דרך כל השלא לשמה</p>
<p>The primary establishment of the Mishkan was through Moshe, who elevated, connected, and established all its work within all of Israel.</p>	<p>ועיקר הקמת המשכן היה על ידי משה, שהעלה וחיבר והקים את כל מלאכת המשכן בתוך כל ישראל.</p>
<p>This represents the Divine Presence within all of Israel.</p>	<p>שהוא השכינה שבתוך כל ישראל</p>
<p>Each and every one of them experienced elevation through Moshe, who was the Da'at (knowledge) and the attachment beyond comprehension.</p>	<p>וכל אחד ואחד מהם, תקומה היתה לו על ידי משה, שהיא הדעת והדבקות שאינו מושג אצלו</p>
<p>Likewise, Shabbat is the elevation of all worlds, including all attributes and perceived attachment, which correspond to the six days of creation.</p>	<p>וכן ענין שבת, הוא ענין עליית כל העולמות, שהוא כל המדות והדבקות המושגות שהם ששת ימי המעשה</p>
<p>And on the seventh day, "He rested"—this is the attachment beyond comprehension that elevates all.</p>	<p>וביום השביעי שבת כו', הוא הדבקות שאינו מושג, המעלה את הכל</p>

Menachem Mendel of Horodak

Pri Ha'eitz

Parshas Vayakhel

And if one were to say, "Why should I begin with shelo lishmah—represented by the six days of creation and the work of the Mishkan, which parallels the Parah Adumah that defiles those who engage in it?

ואם יאמר האומר: למה לי להתחיל בשלו לשמה, שהם ששית ימי המעשה, שהם מלאכת המשכן, שהיא מעשה פרה המטמא את עוסקיו?

For the ultimate goal is to be purified even from this—why should I engage in it at all?"

שגרי העיקר להטהר גם מזה—למה לי לאחז בזה?

This is why our Sages, as explained by Rashi, taught that the juxtaposition of Shabbat to the work of the Mishkan indicates that the work of the Mishkan, which is the beginning of purification, does not override Shabbat, which is the essence of purification.

הוא שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה, כמו שמבאר בפירוש רש"י ז"ל, שסמיכת שבת למלאכת המשכן מורה שאין מלאכת המשכן, שהיא התחלה להטהרה, דוחה את השבת, שהיא עיקר הטהרה.

For great preparation is necessary at the beginning, and on the contrary, it is what brings one to the essence—it is the entranceway, and it is impossible without it.

כי הכנה דרבה היא התחלה, ואדרבה, היא המביאה אל העיקר, והיא פתח הכניסה, ואי אפשר בלתי.

And this is why it does not override Shabbat—rather, it facilitates Shabbat, as explained in "I considered my ways" above.

וזהו שאינה דוחה שבת, כי אם אדרבה, מועילה לשבת, במאמר "חשבתי דרכי" הנזכר.

And this is what our Sages taught regarding the early pious ones who would wait three hours before each prayer, reaching a state of attachment to faith and nullification of existence, as mentioned above.

וזהו ענין מאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה בתסידים הראשונים, שהיו שוהים שלוש שעות בכל תפלה, שהיו מגיעים לדבקות האמונה ובטול המציאות, כנזכר לעיל.

This totaled nine hours each day.

ט' שעות בכל יום.

And this is what the Talmud asks: "When did they study Torah or perform their work?"

וזהו שאלת הגמרא: "תורתן או מלאכתן מתי נעשית?"

The meaning of the question pertains to their attributes, which are called "work" and the "six days of action"—which bring one to this attachment.

והפרוש: שאלתם על מדותיהם, הנקראות בשם "מלאכה" ו"ששית ימי המעשה", המביאים לדבקות זו.

When did they accomplish this, given that they stood in this attachment for nine hours each day, as explained in the writings. See there.

מתי נעשית, שהרי ט' שעות היו עומדים בדבקות זו, כמבואר בכתבים. ע"ש

[NOTE Summary:

The teaching begins with the section of Parashat Parah and the discussion surrounding the building of the Mishkan. Rashi explains that the Torah first warns about Shabbat before discussing the work of the Mishkan in order to teach that the construction of the Mishkan does not override Shabbat. At the end of the book of Shemot, the Torah lists all the components of the Mishkan and states that the people brought it to Moshe

Menachem Mendel of Horodak
Pri Ha'eitz
Parshas Vayakhel

because they themselves were unable to erect it. Rashi explains that although the Israelites constructed all the pieces, the Mishkan ultimately stood up by itself when Moshe erected it.

This idea is connected to the teaching of the Zohar on the verse describing how Moshe could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud rested upon it (Shemot 40:35). The Zohar compares this to the adornment of a bride, explaining that when the bride is being adorned it is not proper for others to stand nearby. This metaphor hints to the deepest secrets of the Torah. The Torah speaks in physical language, yet its inner meaning contains profound spiritual mysteries concealed within the garments of simple narrative.

Within this hidden wisdom lies a deeper contradiction in the verses describing the contributions to the Mishkan. One verse says, "Take from among you an offering," while another says, "From every generous-hearted person." The Zohar explains that initially even the Erev Rav participated in the donations. Therefore the Torah first speaks broadly. Later the Torah restricts the command to the people of Israel themselves, reflecting a process of purification and refinement.

This idea parallels two apparently contradictory teachings of the Talmud about learning Torah "not for its own sake" (shelo lishmah). One statement teaches that through learning not for its own sake a person will eventually come to learn for its own sake (lishmah). Another statement seems to condemn learning not for its own sake entirely. The explanation is that these teachings refer to different intentions. If a person studies solely for selfish motives with no desire to reach truth, such study is destructive. But if a person intends to eventually reach pure devotion, even if he begins with imperfect motives, his learning will ultimately bring him to the state of lishmah.

This paradox is hinted to in the words of King Shlomo regarding the laws of the Parah Adumah: "I said I will become wise, but it is far from me" (Kohelet 7:23). The mystery of the Parah Adumah cannot be grasped through intellect alone. Its essence is connected to faith that transcends understanding.

King David similarly said, "I considered my ways and returned my feet to Your testimonies" (Tehillim 119:59). At first a person evaluates his behavior according to the motivations of the body. The physical body is coarse matter and does not naturally follow the dictates of intellect or holiness. Therefore the body must first be influenced through incentives such as fear of punishment, hope for reward, or the pleasure experienced in serving Hashem.

Yet in truth, none of these motivations capture the essence of true attachment to the Infinite. The deepest connection to Hashem cannot be grasped by intellect or even by emotional experience. All sensations of love, fear, and pleasure are ultimately limited and imperfect, for "no person can see Me and live" (Shemot 33:20). True attachment exists beyond all perception and sensation. It is reached only through faith and through the nullification of the self.

Menachem Mendel of Horodak
Pri Ha'eitz
Parshas Vayakhel

Nevertheless, this higher faith cannot be reached immediately. A person must first pass through the stage of service motivated by fear, love, reward, and personal experience. These motivations serve as the preparation and the throne for the higher state of faith beyond comprehension.

This explains the paradox of the Parah Adumah, which “defiles the pure and purifies the impure.” The initial stages of service, which involve reward and punishment and emotional attachment, purify those who are spiritually distant. They open the gate of divine service. But those who remain permanently within this level without progressing further become “defiled,” meaning they remain trapped within limited perception rather than advancing to the higher faith beyond understanding.

The same principle appears in the construction of the Mishkan. The Mishkan represents the entire chain of spiritual worlds, from the highest divine thought to the lowest physical action. Its purpose is to bring the Divine Presence into the lower world, as it says, “And I will dwell among them” (Shemot 25:8).

Within the soul of each individual the Mishkan represents the connection between the beginning of thought and the end of action. A person refines himself gradually, ascending step by step through levels of spiritual awareness. Yet even this process is not the ultimate goal. The final purpose is the level of lishmah, pure devotion beyond comprehension.

Because this ultimate level transcends the spiritual capacity of ordinary individuals, the Mishkan could only be erected by Moshe. Moshe represents the quality of Da'at, the inner connection that unites all the people of Israel with the Divine. Even though the Israelites were called a “generation of knowledge,” compared to Moshe they were like an infant carried by a nurse. Their service, though sincere, still contained elements of shelo lishmah.

Moshe therefore established the Mishkan and elevated the work of the entire people. Through him the Divine Presence rested among Israel. Each person's spiritual service became elevated through Moshe's level of Da'at, which represents attachment beyond intellectual comprehension.

This concept is also reflected in Shabbat. The six days of the week correspond to human effort, emotional service, and spiritual refinement. Shabbat represents the elevation above all these levels into the state of transcendence and faith beyond comprehension.

For this reason the Torah juxtaposes Shabbat with the work of the Mishkan to teach that the work of the Mishkan does not override Shabbat. The initial stages of spiritual labor are necessary preparations, but they exist only in order to lead a person to the ultimate state represented by Shabbat.

The Talmud describes the early pious individuals who would spend three hours preparing themselves before each prayer, entering a state of profound attachment and nullification before Hashem. This meant they spent nine hours each day in such devotion. The Talmud asks how they found time to study Torah or perform their work. The deeper meaning is that these activities correspond to the “six days of action,” the attributes and

Menachem Mendel of Horodak
Pri Ha'eitz
Parshas Vayakhel

spiritual labor that prepare a person for the higher state of attachment. Their entire life was structured around this movement from preparation to transcendence.

Practical Takeaway:

The path of spiritual growth is gradual and often begins with mixed motivations. Fear, reward, emotional inspiration, and personal satisfaction are legitimate entry points in serving Hashem. One should not reject these early stages simply because they are imperfect. They are the necessary preparation that allows a person to progress toward deeper levels of faith.

At the same time, a person must remember that these motivations are not the ultimate goal. True devotion lies beyond emotional experience and intellectual understanding. The goal is a level of service rooted in faith and self-nullification before Hashem. Spiritual work should therefore move from external motivations toward a deeper inner connection.

Chassidic Story:

A well-known teaching from early Chassidic tradition tells of a young student who once approached a great Chassidic master and confessed his frustration. "I try to serve Hashem," he said, "but my motivations are not pure. Sometimes I learn Torah because I enjoy the honor it brings, sometimes because I want reward in the World to Come. I feel that my service is flawed."

The master smiled and answered gently, "Tell me, when a child first learns to walk, does he walk perfectly?"

"Of course not," replied the student.

"He stumbles, he falls, and he holds onto furniture and walls," the master continued. "Yet every step brings him closer to walking properly. If he waited until he could walk perfectly before taking the first step, he would never learn to walk at all."

The master then concluded: "Serve Hashem with whatever motivation you have today. Use the love, the fear, the hope for reward, even the personal satisfaction you feel. These are the first steps. If you continue walking, eventually you will reach the place where you serve Him purely for His sake."

END NOTE]