

Tzav - Rabbi Lerner - March 13, 2011

Perek 8: The Inauguration of Aharon and his Sons

8:1-3: *Hashem said to Moshe to take Aharon and his sons, the oil, clothes and korbanos, and gather the entire congregation at the Ohel Moed.* **Rashi:** this is one of the places in chumash that one is forced to say that the small area was able to accommodate an enormous number of people; everyone is brought to the entrance of the Ohel Moed to observe this ceremony, and they all fit into the small area; it was a tremendous miracle. **Oznayim LaTorah:** Why was this necessary - what was it trying to teach - what was it all about? There are several different approaches to this: 1) Hashem created the mitzvah of our building a mikdash for Him who would then dwell within, on the small space atop the Aron Kodosh, between the Keruvim. The brain of the human being cannot even grasp this - Hashem occupies the universe, He is infinite - now He must contract Himself to be in one place - how can He do this? If the heavens cannot contain God, how can this tiny mikdash contain Hashem? Hashem demonstrates the concept of tzimtzum, of contraction, by fitting the entire Jewish population into a small area; this demonstrates the concept of contraction, where the entire nation can squeeze into a tiny area - that is how Hashem can do it for his shechina as well. 2) The point of the Mishkan is achdus, to bring the nation together; Hashem doesn't want us splitting up into different nations, He doesn't want divisiveness. We go up to the Bais Hamikdash three times a year to appear before Hashem together as a unified people. Yeravam wanted to break away the ten tribes after the death of Shlomo Hamelech, and he had to set up road blocks to prevent the Jews in his land from going to Yerushalayim; going Alei Regel demonstrates the oneness of the people, and he had to prevent that because then they would want to reunite with the Southern Kingdom; the way to maintain a separate nation was to prevent the Jews from going to Yerushalayim and feeling united together with all other Jews; he chose to prevent that particular mitzvah to justify the split nation. Hashem always wants to gather the entire nation together in one place to encourage the idea of achdus. 3) What is the point of this whole coming together? The kohanim function as the agents of God and the agents of the Jewish people - part of the korbanos are given to Hashem, part to the kohanim. We want everyone to be present because here the kohanim are going to become holy - we needed the representation of both Hashem and the entire Jewish people as these kohanim are now to become the agents of both. 4) The building of the Mishkan was symbolically like the creation of the entire world; Moshe questions Hashem how he, a being of flesh and blood, could possibly make a house for Hashem; God answers that He will help - we would make the materials, and God would contribute His shechina. Thus, there are two builders of the Mishkan - we do our part, Hashem will do His. Hashem is making His home both in the heavens and here on earth. We had to have the representatives of both Hashem and the people at the inauguration of His house that was built by both.

8:5: *Moshe says that this is the matter that God commanded to be done, and he brought Aharon to be immersed.* **Abarbanel:** this is going to be the moment when Aharon and his sons will become the priests. It is the moment when Moshe can be accused of nepotism, choosing his own family to be the priests, instead of the bechoros as originally intended. All of the rest of the tribes will be cut out of this perk from here on. Therefore, Moshe reiterates that it is not coming from him, it is not emanating from Moshe, Aharon is appointed by the command of Hashem.

8:33: *Moshe commanded them that from the Ohel Moed they should not go out for 7 days, until the end of the 8 days of inauguration into the priesthood; at the end of those days*

their mission will be set. **Ibn Ezra**: when it says do not go out for seven days, it means just the days, not the nights - at night they were allowed to go out of the Ohel Moed; they didn't have to sleep there. Even more, they can go out when they had a need to, even during the day. The pasuk should not be taken literally that they are prisoners of the Mishkan. Are they locked in or not? This period begins with the 25th of Kislev; the final day is the first day of Nissan. From the literal reading of these pasukim, they are to stay in the Mishkan according to the commandment, not to leave there - but don't take it literally, as the **Yerushalmi** says. The proof to this idea is seen later - when Moshe dies, it says the people cry for him for 30 days; does that mean that there was not a moment during that time that they were not crying? You shouldn't take it literally - it is not every moment of the 30 days; there is weeping part of every day, it is not continuous. Here too, as well as other places in the Torah, it doesn't mean continually. They had permission to go out, depending on their needs.

Ramban: on the basis of the **Sifra**, this pasuk means they should not go out from the Ohel Moed at the time that the Avoda is going on - it doesn't mean the entire 24 hour period. They have to remain there until they finished their responsibilities; it really means they should not be derelict in their duties. This is a mitzvah for all generations, not just for those 8 days; it is for all time, one of the 613 mitzvos. And if a kohen is in the middle of some Avoda and walks out without completing it, it is a major sin and he is sentenced to a heavenly death. It doesn't mean they remain within the Mishkan all of the time. It is a mitzvah for all of the kohanim for all time, not just the kohen gadol. This job comes with important responsibilities, not just perks; it would be a major offense in the eyes of God if they walked out in the middle. So they can leave at times when there is no Avoda - for the time there is Avoda, they are locked in to do that; at other times, when they have discharged their duties, they can leave.

Netziv: it doesn't mean they could not go out at all times, just during the Avoda. We know this because there is a **Yerushalmi** that teaches that the Mishkan was not up permanently until the eighth day; it was put up and taken down each of the first 7 days - it was not a standing structure that was there during that entire time; they had to leave because there was no structure at night.

Maharal: the Ramban has a different position; the **Ramban** says that during the seven days they would erect it in the morning - it would stand all day and night; at the early morning of the following day, they would take it down and immediately erect it again - so it was up from sunrise until the next dawn when it would be taken down and quickly reassembled. So there was a place for them to stay; there had to be a structure for this pasuk to make sense; it went up and down as a token thing. It had to wait until the eighth day for the final consecration of the priests for it to stay up for good.

Ramban: this job is a mitzvah for all time, it is a calling in life.

8:35: *If they go out from the Mishmeres Hashem, the guarding of Hashem, they will die.*

Meshech Chachmah: what does this mean? It means they can leave at night when there was nothing to be done, but they should not approach their wives at night. Guarding the Mishmeres Hashem means they should not be involved with their wives either physically or even having lustful thoughts about them, so they should not become tamei; they should not even become a ba'al keri as a result of lustful thoughts, because then they would have to leave the area of the Mishkan. Their calling is to be there for seven days, and if they become Tamei, they would not be able to stay. This is what it means when the pasuk says that *so I have been commanded* - Moshe is saying this from experience, because he was not allowed to return to his wife. At Har Sinai, after the Ten Commandments, the nation was told to go back to their tents (back to their

spouses), but Moshe is told to remain with Hashem - he could not go back to his tent because he had to remain in a state of perpetual holiness and could never return to his wife. That is why Miriam spoke against him because she did not understand this. What Moshe is commanding the kohanim is that they cannot have the possibility of becoming Tamei because of their wives - he tells this from personal experience.

Meshech Chachmah: if you look into the **Rambam**, we know that the kohen gadol had his home in Yerushalayim and he could never leave Yerushalayim. His area that he had to stay put was the city of Yerushalayim. He had a small place in the Bais Hamikdash that was his office where he could stay - it was his glory to be there the whole day. He only left to go to his house at night or for a brief break during the day. The real house - the Bais Hamikdash - he would never really leave most of the time. His personal house had to be in Yerushalayim. The kedushah of Yerushalayim is the where God has His palace; the overflow of holiness of the Bais Hamikdash washed over the entire city. Even if he was not physically in the mikdash, he was able to remain in the city which had this kedushah - but he could not leave that area. The pasuk of Hinei Matovu, where it talks of the beauty of brothers living together - is a remez to Aharon and Moshe. But, it doesn't end with them. This pasuk means that the Kohein Gadol lives in Yerushalayim, and the Davidic king lived in the capital as well. Moshe was the first king of Israel and he was always in proximity and close to his brother, the Kohein Gadol. The two highest officials in the land have to be tied to the center of the Jewish people, the mikdash and its city. The highest religious officer and political leader had to be together in the place of the kedushah, Yerushalayim and the bais hamikdash.