

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Vayakel, Pekudei, Chodesh 5786

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The people were moved to give more than enough.

**וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַקְּרָשִׁים לְמִשְׁכַּן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים עֹמְדִים:**

“And he [the group] made planks for the Sanctuary, uprights of acacia wood.” (Shmos 36:20).

The pasuk says, “he made.” It can be translated as “it” made and it is referring to the group. While Betzalel and Oholiav both supervised the work, and they did much themselves, building the Mishkan and its vessels was a group effort. As the pasuk says, “And all the wise workers came, who were doing all the work of the Holy, each man to what work he was doing.” (Ibid 36:4). “And then all the wise hearted people did the work...” (Ibid 36:8).

There appears to be a differentiation, though, between Hashem’s instructions and the way the Mishkan was built and assembled. In this parsha, the walls of the Mishkan and its coverings were made first. The order is the materials – curtains, loops, clasps – to wall and cover the Mishkan. (Ibid 36:9-38). Then the Aron was made (ibid 37:1), followed by the Shulchan (ibid 37:10), Menorah (ibid 37:17), inner mizbeach (ibid 37:25), and outer mizbeach (Ibid 38:1).

When Hashem commanded Moshe to build the Mishkan the Torah records the order differently. The instructions commenced with the Aron (ibid 25:10), Shulchan (ibid 25:23), and Menorah (ibid 25:31), then the instructions for the curtains, planks, and the covers (ibid 26 et seq.). Then came the instruction for the large mizbeach. (Ibid 27:1). The instruction for the inner mizbeach is all the way at the end. (Ibid 30:1). Why was the order of construction apparently changed from how Hashem instructed it?

A further question is how Moshe himself appears to deviate from Hashem’s instructions. Hashem commanded Moshe to erect the Mishkan on the First of the First Month. (Ibid 40:2). The order was for the Aron to be placed and then cover it with its curtain walls. (Ibid 40:3). Then arrange the inner vessels – Shulchan, Menorah (ibid 40:4), gold mizbeach (ibid 40:5), and kiur (ibid 40:7), then assemble the courtyard (ibid 40:8). Yet, Moshe first set up the walls of the Mishkan (ibid 40:18), spread the covering over the Mishkan (ibid 40:19), and then brought in the Aron (ibid 40:20). Moshe first built the Mishkan then brought in the Aron. Hashem had told him to set the Aron and build the Mishkan around it. Why the change? Also, if Moshe changed the order, why does the Torah say, “and Moshe did all that Hashem commanded him, so he did.” (Ibid 40:16)?

The building of the Mishkan did not deviate from Hashem’s instructions. Hashem did command Moshe to build the inner sanctum vessels first, starting with the Aron, then Shulchan and Menorah. Moshe conveyed that order to Betzalel and the people. However, the Torah wanted to give credit to the zeal of the regular people.

It is a credit to the people that more than enough was donated. (Ibid 36:5). Then, many artisans, craftsman, carpenters, and skilled laborers volunteered their time and efforts toward the building. (Ibid 36:8). Then the Torah switches to the singular form of “he did” the rest of the way. It was this group that performed a lot of the work. To credit them for volunteering, not only their materials but also their labors, the Torah wanted to acknowledge it first. It does not mean they necessarily constructed the wall and coverings first. It was actually Betzalel that made the Aron, the Shulchan, the Menorah, inner Mizbeach, and outer mizbeach. He very well may have made these first, or simultaneously. Since the group of artisans made the curtains, beams, and hangings, they are stated first. The order of construction did not deviate from what Hashem said. Hashem gave the instructions to build innermost to out. Betzalel took care of building his implements in that order while the artisan group did their duties.

The reason why initially the inner mizbeach is instructed toward the end, with the kiur, is because it had to do exclusively with the kohanim. Moshe never did service on it, even during the inauguration week. Only Aharon and his children did. Therefore, the ketores, its mizbeach, and kindling materials for the Menorah, and the kiur were saved for last. However, for construction, it made sense to build the gold mizbeach first as the order was innermost to out.

Moshe, though, seemed to deviate in assembly. Hashem said to set the Aron first then cover it. However, Hashem does not instruct him to put up the walls of the Mishkan. Instead, it says, place the ketores mizbeach at the entrance of the Mishkan. (Ibid 40:7). The next instruction from Hashem was to assemble the courtyard. (Ibid 40:8). Therefore, Moshe really did follow the instructions. One cannot spread a curtain without support. Therefore, it seems obvious to Moshe to first erect the entire Mishkan tent, minus the dividing curtain. He assembled it as Hashem commanded. (Ibid 40:19). Then he put the Aron inside and covered it with the dividing curtain. (Ibid 40:21). Then he was able to set the Shulchan, Menorah, and the mizbeach at the entrance of the already standing Mishkan.

The instructions were very particular. The innermost is the most sacred. The most sacred has to be focused on first. The focus of a project must be its end result. There are two ways to think of construction. Some start with the look of the building and then worry about how the insides will look. Some start with function. For example, a home that has guests will start with the kitchen, dining room, and bedrooms. A home for a family will start with the family room and bedrooms. Then everything else will be built around it. The focus of the Mishkan, clearly, was the Aron – Hashem dwelling there. That had to be instructed, made, and set first. Then the other inner implements, then the outer courtyard, then vestments for the kohanim. That was the focus, order of instruction, order of construction, and order of assembly. Moshe assembled the Mishkan and immediately brought in the Aron. It was the focus but also cannot just stand out in the open. The Mishkan had to be made ready for it. Hashem does not wait around for the walls to be assembled. They are assembled in preparation for Hashem’s arrival. The Mishkan was its vessels. The rest was vital but just window dressing.