

דרכים בפרשה ויקהל-פקודי

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ויאמרו אל משה לאמר מרבים העם להביא מדי העבדה למלאכה אשר צוה ה' לעשת אתה

“And they said to Moshe, “The people are bringing more than is needed for the tasks entailed in the work that Hashem has commanded to be done.”

Although it is true that one shall endeavor to do everything possible to fulfill a *mitzvah*, the *halacha* is that – המבזבז אל יבזבז יותר מחומש (כתובות דף נ') – one may only spend a maximum of twenty percent of his assets for a *mitzvah*. The Vilna Gaon finds a *remez* to this *halacha* in the *pasuk* in Parshas Ki Sisa, לאֲרִבָּהּ – *The wealthy may not add*. The *trop* above these words are *munach revi'i*, which means to say leave over 4/5 and only use up to 1/5.

That *pasuk* was referring to the donations that would be used in order to build the *Mishkan*. However, in our *parshah*, the *pasuk* states that when the people brought, they kept on bringing more and more without a limit. Over here, we do not find any *remez* to only spending 1/5 for *mitzvos*. Why were they not careful with this *halacha*?

On a simple level, we can answer that the amount of gold and silver that the Bnei Yisroel collected at the Yam Suf (*bizas hayam*) was so much that whatever they gave over here was still less than 1/5, so there was no issue giving what they gave.

Alternatively, the opinion of the Ra'avad (as quoted in the Rashba) is that the reason for this *halacha* is כדי שלא יבוא לידי עוני ויפיל עצמו על הצבור – that one shall not become poor and then end up as the communal responsibility. Between the daily *mann* and the entire Bnei Yisroel's involvement in this *mitzvah*, this would not be a factor.

Additionally, the Chochmas Adam (144:6) writes that an *ashir muflag* is required to spend on *mitzvos* and *tzedakah* a lot more than a *chomesh*. This is also the opinion of the Chofetz Chaim (Ahavas Chesed) and the *psak* of Rav Elyashiv *zt"l*. Therefore, we can explain that between the wealth which they took from Mitzrayim and the daily *mann*, not only was there no worry that it would result in poverty, but possibly that they would still be wealthy even after all that was given. We find support to this idea from the fact that Rabban Gamliel spent one thousand gold coins for an *esrog* (Maseches Sukkah, 41b). As exorbitant as it was — in his position as *nasi* and tremendous *g'vir*, he would certainly not fall on the shoulders of the community.

On a deeper level, the Baal Hatanya (Igeres Hateshuva) brings the story of Hillel Hazaken (Maseches Yoma 35b): Each day, Hillel would chop wood and earn one *tropick* (half *dinar*). Half of this money would be paid to the guard of the Beis Medrash as his entrance fee (to cover the shul expenses — Ben Yehoyada), and the other half would be given to his family for their daily needs. The Baal Hatanya asks: how did Hillel have a right to spend half of his earnings to go and learn Torah? What happened to the *halacha* of spending a maximum of 1/5 for *mitzvos*?

He explains that we find, for example, that a person can spend on the purchase of his own home much more than a *chomesh* of all his money. Grocery bills, utility bills and all the other expenses can very often add up to more than a *chomesh* as well. Why is that allowed? The answer of course is that when it comes to *mitzvos*, the Torah placed a limit of 1/5. But for life itself and one's own personal living expenses and needs, not only is there no limit, but one must do whatever is necessary to take care of these needs, even if it means going into debt.

Says the Baal Hatanya: for Hillel Hazaken, the money that he spent for the Beis Medrash was not for the *mitzvah* of learning Torah, but rather *כי היא חייו* — *this is life itself!* For Hillel, learning the *heileger Torah* was a need like any vital necessity of life, and therefore there was no limit of only being allowed to spend a *chomesh*.

The Meshech Chochma writes that the purpose of building the *Mishkan* changed from before the *cheit ha'eigel* to after. Initially, the *Mishkan* was meant to be a place to bring the *korbanos*. After the *cheit ha'eigel*, there was a new purpose. ושכנתי בתוכו — It was now being built to be the place of *hashra'as haShechinah*.

Accordingly, the *sefer* Aish Tomid suggests that in Parshas Ki Sisa, the Torah was referring to the *mitzvah* of building the *Mishkan* for the purpose of bringing *korbanos*. When it comes to a *mitzvah*, there is an upper limit of a *chomesh*, so the *pasuk* needed the reminder of *munach revi'i*, i.e. do not exceed 1/5. However, in our *parshah*, it is after the *cheit ha'eigel* — and we are no longer focusing on the *mitzvah* of *korbanos*, but rather, the idea of housing the Shechinah, which is something that every Yid needs to have a connection with. Living a life that incorporates the *Shechinah Hakedosha* is not just a *mitzvah*, but rather life itself — and for that, there is no limit!

מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,