

## Moshe assembled the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael... This is the word that Hashem has commanded. (35:1,4)

Our *parsha* receives its name from the *Hakhel*, assembly of the people, so that they could receive their instructions concerning the building of the *Mishkan*. This gathering together of all the people was an essential prerequisite for the construction of the *Mishkan*. Why is this? To understand the significance of this gathering, it is important that we understand the power of “one.” In order to do so, we should examine how breaking a large singular item into many parts reduces its potency.

**Horav Mordechai Miller, zl**, cites a powerful analogy from the *Yalkut Shimoni on Sefer Tehillim*. A king was angered by his son. In a moment of rage, the king declared that he would throw a large boulder which was in front of him – at his son. A few moments later, the king realized what he had said. What could he do? If he were to throw the boulder at his son, it would kill him. If he did not keep his word, his inaction would impugn the integrity of his word. The king was literally between a “boulder” and a hard place.

Then an idea dawned on him. He smashed the boulder into little pebbles and pelted his son with them – one by one. Thus, the king kept his word, but his son was not harmed. Likewise, Hashem does not inflict us with the full force of the punishment and strict justice which we deserve. He waits, meting out retribution in small doses, so that He does not destroy us. Perhaps the next time we feel that we are getting it from “all sides” or “one after another,” we should realize that we are being struck by the “pebbles.” The alternative would be devastating.

From the above analogy, we may derive a general principle: Breaking a large item into many parts has the effect of reducing its potency. Splintering a huge boulder into thousands of pebbles dramatically compromises its potential power. Likewise, the impact of Hashem’s justice is minimized when it is fractured into many pieces.

The flipside is the power of a united entity whose degree of strength is incomparable with the sum of its many parts. They may both contain the same weight, but only the one which is cohesive, united, not fractured, is truly strong.

To become close to Hashem; to establish an attachment to Him, one must develop a similarity to Him. Otherwise, it is impossible for a human being to cleave to Him. *Ma Hu af atah*, “What He does, so should you.” The obligation to emulate Him is incumbent upon us. As G-d is One – so, too, must we be one.

With this principle in mind, *Rav Miller* explains why an assembly of people was a vital prerequisite for constructing the *Mishkan*. The *Mishkan* was a place where the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, could repose. The word, *Shechinah*, is related to the word, *shachen*, neighbor, which clearly indicates the nature of the *Mishkan*. It was a place where the immediacy of Hashem was readily

apparent. It was the venue in which the intimacy between Hashem and *Klal Yisrael* was achieved. Closeness with Hashem, however, can only mean being similar to Him. This can only be effected by total solidarity within the Jewish People. As He is one, so, too, is the demand for unity among Jews – without compromise. It is a demand for the ultimate harmony which once existed, as every Jew was connected to one another as part of the conglomerate of all men within the body of *Adam HaRishon*, Primordial Man. Whereas we are physically separated, our souls are inextricably bound together.

In his *Michtav Mei'Eliyahu*, **Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl**, writes that, prior to Adam's sin, all souls were centralized within him. The entire mankind was concentrated in one man. Had Adam and Chavah not sinned, they alone would have achieved the purpose of Creation. Everything could have been accomplished by Adam and Chavah in only one day, through one act of free choice. Sadly, after the sin, the world was shattered into multiple shards. Instead of six days, it would now take six millennia and millions of people to fulfill the mission that could have been completed in one day. When all is concentrated together in one concerted effort, the power is awesome.

*Rav* Dessler takes this idea further, citing **Horav Moshe Cordovero, zl**, who explains why *Yom Kippur* is not *mechaper*, does not atone, for sins committed between man and his fellowman. On *Yom Kippur* we penetrate to the pure origins of each person's soul. If antagonism exists between two people, these people are separate, creating a rift with the Source. In order to facilitate the reception of the Divinely bestowed Heavenly Light, it is crucial that complete unity between people be established.

We see from the above that the unanimity connected with the *Mishkan* must be manifest in the manner of its construction. If there were to be a lack of harmony associated with the construction of the *Mishkan*, it would be considered a work of diversity and difference. Therefore, the *Shechinah* could not repose in this edifice, because it would lack the necessary closeness with One G-d. Unity in all areas was the prerequisite needed to achieve closeness with One G-d. The *Hakhel* experience was needed to catalyze strengths that otherwise would have been impossible to achieve. Everyone's work melded closely together, as if only one person had built the *Mishkan*.

In closing, *Rav* Miller observes that an application of this idea is particularly relevant to those who are members of Torah institutions and organizations. If a multitude of people coalesce, all sharing similar goals and objectives, this group will be able to attain overwhelming results. By soldering diverse wills and strengths into a commonly accepted identity, all devoted to Hashem, the united entity can have an awesome affect. *K'ish echad b'lev echad*, "As one man, with one heart." Each individual discovers hidden strengths and abilities, which he would never otherwise have deemed possible.