

Parshas Pekudei – R. Eli Pick

ב אדר ב' תשע"ו – 12th March 2016 – שבת פי פקודי

The Torah does not waste its words. So why is it necessary for the Torah to repeat the lengthy details of the Mishkon, when all the information had been taught previously? Surely it would have been enough to write, "The Mishkon was constructed, just as Hashem had commanded Moshe."

To avoid accusations of mishandling public money, Moshe promised a full audit (Midrash Tanchuma 7). We therefore are given a detailed account as to how the donations had been spent.

However, there is one particular phrase which is seemingly repetitious. On numerous occasions in this sedra we are told:

כאשר צוה ה' את משה
"Just as Hashem had commanded Moshe"

Baal Haturim (40:33) counts this phrase in our sedra eighteen times, and Chazal alluded to this by initially fixing the 'shemoneh esreh' prayer with 18 brochos. (Only later Chazal instituted a 19th brachah - 'velamalshinim' – against the heretics.) There is a strong connection between the mishkon and the shemoneh esreh. Both constitute an 'avodah', in which we surrender ourselves to Hashem's greatness.

Yet, despite the numerous mentions of this phrase, there is one specific activity of Moshe where the verse does not mention it. See 40:33 regarding the 'chotzer' – the courtyard:

"And Moshe erected the courtyard around the Mishkon...."

Rabbi Yehudah Leib Eger (1817-1888 – grandson of Rabbi Akiva Eger) notes when it comes to the final touch, to erect the courtyard around the Mishkan, there is no phrase of *כאשר צוה ה' את משה*. The courtyard had clearly been prescribed (27:9-19), so why couldn't the verse in 40:33 simply say that it had been installed, "just as Hashem had commanded Moshe?"

He answers that when it comes to erecting a 'courtyard', there is an element which also needs to be accomplished by one's own initiative.

Although Hashem prescribed the chotzer, we have to apply the concept in our personal ways, in order to avoid any pitfalls. The idea of a 'chotzer' is to provide a protection to what holds dear to us, to recognise the parameters in which we live; to protect our identity, and to ensure we are not tempted to go astray.

We each need to establish a 'chotzer', to enable us to remain within the fold. We need the *וגדר סייג* to provide a fence and protection. (Counting these two words, and adding that number to the gematria of *סייג וגדר*, we will get the numerical value of *חצר*), If we have no recognised protectives and boundaries, then we could lose our Torah identity. Each one of us individually has to initiate our own 'chotzer', realising our personal limitations, in order to safeguard our spiritual welfare.

Esav had no 'boundaries' – he was an 'ish sadeh' - the field, which is wide and open, is without any suitable fencing. In contrast, Yaakov was 'yoshev oholim' – within his defined boundaries. We cannot function as practising Jews unless we have set ourselves specific boundaries and adhere to them. Hashem will not do that for us. We have to do it ourselves.

חצר is also the same gematria as *רחמים*. When Moshe stood outside in the courtyard, prohibited from entering the sanctuary itself, he displayed a humility which attracted Hashem's 'rachamim'. He was rewarded by being 'called' at the start of the next week's parsha. If we enhance the status of the protective 'courtyard' in our lives, and don't just do the things Hashem told us to, we will attract Hashem's 'rachamim'. If we initiate our precautionary measures, Hashem will turn His 'midas hadin' to 'midas rachamim'.