

# א ביסל תורה!

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כ"ח אדר תשפ"ה · פקודי

## Ending שמות

By Ethan Ravid '27

Let us imagine you are to look at your life and tell someone all the critical details of your life. You can talk about school, sports, jobs, places you have lived, and the fun stories of your childhood. But how would you end that story? This is one of the parts of this week's פרשה. Here we have the last פרשה from ספר שמות, the same book that talks about leaving Egypt, receiving the תורה, and building the house of Hashem. After this week, the rest of the תורה is mainly telling the story of the Jews in the wilderness.

At the very end of this week's פרשה, we have the כ"י ענן ה' על-המשכן יומם ואש תהיה לילה בן לעיני: פסוק "for over the משכן a cloud of Hashem rested by day, and fire would appear by night, in the view of all the houses of ישראל throughout their journeys" (שמות מ"ל"ח). Why would the תורה need to end the book of שמות like this? We went through so much since the beginning of שמות, so why end with Hashem resting from within the camp? Why not do something about the future for בני ישראל or talk about all the stuff that happened to them in the past?

שמות began with how the Jews started in Egypt as slaves, then the 10 plagues, splitting of the sea, getting food and water in many miraculous ways, receiving the תורה, and we made a house for Hashem in the wilderness. The reason שמות ends like this is to illuminate the opportunity we find throughout שמות. We do all that and all we can say to finish the story is that Hashem rested. How does this make sense?

This is because it shows us the significance of rest and the peace it brings with it. As we learn from the upcoming holiday of פסח, we started in slavery and left in freedom. The entire book of שמות gives us this long story about how we went from being slaves to not just getting freedom but finding that inner peace that comes with freedom. Similarly, with שבת, we start with a hard grueling work week. We have deadlines and late nights. But when שבת comes, we can rest because we are free and have the time and energy to do and enjoy everything that Hashem wants us to do.

From this we can also truly appreciate the meaning and reason of שבת. We can appreciate the calm and beauty of the world around us. Many times while we speed to work or school we do not take in the beauty of the world around us. According to the גמרא in עולם הבא is considered to be  $\frac{1}{60}$  of שבת, ברכות נז. From this, we understand that having rest and peace is important and is what we can expect in the future.

This is why the פרשה ends the way it does, with an ending that fits with the overall theme of שמות. The reason is that it illuminates the positive change that has happened to בני ישראל since the beginning of the book. The ending here signifies that we have been through a lot, we have had our ups and downs, but Hashem is always with us and loves us throughout it all. This is why the תורה highlights this at the end of the פרשה and gives us the chance to tell our life stories with beauty, love, and peace.

## והנה עשו אתה

By Eliana Goldenholz '26

בְּקוּדֵי brings the story of the מִשְׁכָּן to its completion. After weeks of detailed and careful construction, the people present the finished product to מֹשֶׁה. The תּוֹרָה tells us: "וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-כָּל-הַמְּלָאכָה: "וְהִנֵּה עָשׂוּ אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' כִּן עָשׂוּ וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה: "And saw all the work, and behold, they had done it—as the Lord had commanded, so had they done—and מֹשֶׁה blessed them" (שְׁמוֹת ל"ט:מ"ד).

But, it makes you wonder, why does מֹשֶׁה need to "see" the work before offering a blessing? And why the repetitive language—"they had done it... so had they done"—along with the unusual use of the word "והנה" ("and behold")?

The אֹר הַחַיִּים offers several insights. First, he notes that the word "והנה" indicates מֹשֶׁה's surprise and joy at the speed with which the מִשְׁכָּן was built. It wasn't just completed—it was completed with zeal and energy, which really moved מֹשֶׁה.

Next, the תּוֹרָה says "עָשׂוּ אוֹתָהּ"—"they did it." The אֹר הַחַיִּים explains that this emphasizes the quality of the work. The artisans invested not only their hands but their intelligence and hearts, and the results reflected that.

Next, he points out the repetition of the word "עָשׂוּ"—"they did"—to teach that they fulfilled not only the obligatory parts of the commandment, but even the extra details. They went beyond the letter of the law, fulfilling both requirement and intention.

Finally, we read "וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה." The אֹר הַחַיִּים pays special attention to the way the תּוֹרָה phrases this. Instead of simply saying "he blessed them," or placing "מֹשֶׁה" at the beginning, the תּוֹרָה waits until the end of

the פְּסוּק. This, he explains, stresses the significance of the blessing itself. A blessing from מֹשֶׁה—a prophet of unparalleled and deep connection with Hashem—is not something ordinary. It carries spiritual weight and lasting impact. Had a lesser figure offered the blessing, it might not have been recorded at all. But the תּוֹרָה preserves this moment because of who מֹשֶׁה was. By positioning מֹשֶׁה's name at the very end, the תּוֹרָה draws our attention: take note, this is not a routine closing line—it's a climactic conclusion. The dedication of בני יִשְׂרָאֵל merited a blessing of the highest level.

מֹשֶׁה's blessing, then, wasn't automatic—it was a response to witnessing something extraordinary: the people gave their best, went beyond what was expected of them, and did so with love and purpose.

Connecting this to our lives, I think the message here is that when we engage in מִצְוֹת, the **way** we do it matters just as much as what we do. Rushing through the motions is not the same as bringing intention, care, and heart. And when we give our all, even in the "optional" parts of life, we open ourselves up to true blessing.



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