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The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

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ויקהל

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The Power of Unity

By Ariel Jeselsohn

In the very first פסוק of פרשת ויקהל משה, משה gathers all the Jews. The simple understanding of this פסוק is that משה gathered the Jews to command them regarding the building of the משכן. After all, that is what the rest of this weeks פרשה and next weeks פרשה are all about. However, there is a similar, yet slightly different way to understand this gathering of the Jews done by משה.

רש"י on the words "ויקהל" points out that this gathering took place on the day after כיפור, the day after משה came down with the second pair of לוחות. The יקר כלי explains the significance of this רש"י by saying that משה gathered the Jews to command them about the building of the משכן, because he worried that someone would donate something that he stole, for the building of the משכן. This is also the reason why משה judges בני ישראל in פרשת יתרו. In פרשת יתרו, the פסוק says: "ויהי ממחרת וישב משה לשפוט את העם" (שמות יח:יג). רש"י on this פסוק, following his opinion that the תורה was not written in chronological order, points out that "מחרת" in this פסוק is the day after משה came down from הר סיני with the second לוחות, which was also the day after כיפור, the same day Moshe gathered the Jews in this weeks פרשה to command them about the משכן. According to the יקר כלי, the reason why משה judged the Jews on this day, is because he wanted to make sure that no one was donating anything that was stolen, to the building of the משכן. This was also the same goal that the gathering of the Jews in the beginning of this weeks פרשה was meant to achieve. It was not fit for the very holy משכן to be built from stolen items, so משה had to make sure that did not happen. In פסוק ה' משה tells בני ישראל, "קחו מאתכם", "from you take the gifts for ה'" implying from your own property, and not from someone else's.

The יקר כלי also adds that another purpose of the gathering was to ensure that before the משכן was built, בני ישראל were living peacefully with one another. According to this explanation, the reason why רש"י's comment, that the gathering happened on the day after כיפור, is so important, is because before בני ישראל were constantly in a state of debate, with the exception of מתן תורה. משה was unable to gather the Jews when they were fighting with each other and he was only able to gather them when they were "באגודה אחת", one unified group. Therefore, משה decided to gather the Jews on the day after כיפור, because יום כיפור has the ability to create peace between people for a day or two. This also explains why משה judged the Jews on this day as well: משה judged the Jews on this day to see whether there was peace between each and every Jew. Only once they were unified were they ready to be commanded regarding the building of the משכן. But before that, they were not prepared, and not worthy of the great gift that משכן was. The Jews would have been unable to share the משכן if they were constantly fighting with each other. That is why משה had to gather the Jews: to ensure that they were unified, and thus prepared to share the משכן with each other. Once the משכן was built, the Jews were always in a state of unity and peace, for the משכן, along with its many other

important purposes, also served as a tool to create peace between people. It is quite interesting that the precondition for the building of the **משכן** was the same thing that the **משכן** produced.

Unity is a very important goal that we should always strive for. When Jews are in a state of dispute, we are held back, and cannot achieve things that we have the potential to achieve. 'ה hates it when there is strife between His creations. Therefore, 'ה holds things back from us, as punishment, for example the **בית המקדש** today, and the **משכן** in the **מדבר**. If all Jews in the world come together as one unified family, **משיח** will come, and with him, **בניין בית שלישי**.

True Generosity

By Aaron Banks

True generosity is when you give your all, but feel as though you have given nothing. Even though **ויקהל** is read as a single **פרשה** this year, this **דבר תורה** wouldn't be complete without including its counterpart, **פקודי**. In the beginning of **ויקהל**, **משה** asks **בני ישראל** to donate what they can in order to build the **משכן**. However, instead of donating just what they were required to, **בני ישראל** donated so much for the building of the **משכן** that **משה** had to tell them to stop.

While this a nice sentiment, it still doesn't explain a burning question at the forefront of our minds: Why are these **פרשיות** called **ויקהל** and **פקודי** in the first place? What is the significance behind these names? **ויקהל** means to assemble or gather - it embodies the concept of summarizing, tallying up the total, seeing a bigger picture. **פקודי** on the other hand, means numbers - it emphasizes counting each part, enumerating each item, and focusing on the details. While these two **פרשיות** may seem different, in reality they model the true generosity that **בני ישראל** are supposed to show.

To explain this, I'd like to tell a story: There was once a mechanic who was asked by someone to fix a car that had stopped working. At first he checked the brakes, then the gas, and then the tires, finding that none of them were the problem. Finally the mechanic turned one screw in the engine and the car immediately started to work again. A few days later the bill comes in for fixing the car and it comes out to \$10,000. Furious, the man calls the mechanic and asks why his bill is so expensive, after all the only thing the mechanic fixed was a single screw! To this the mechanic answered that yes, all he had fixed was a screw, but it was his knowledge of every little detail of the car that let him know that it was that single screw that was causing the problem.

So too we can take this as a lesson for generosity; there are two main parts in giving. The first is the main total or tally at the end just like **ויקהל**, we want our total actions to be good and righteous. The second part in generosity is the individual part just like **פקודי**. The second part of giving is even more important because there can be no high total sum if no one gives. This second part also teaches us that even giving a little bit is still an important contribution and that the only way to do something in full is by completing it in little steps.

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