

The 'Forrest' and 'Its Trees'

The name of a Torah-portion captures the content of its entire portion. So too, it is with the name of the two Torah-portions that we read this week (as one), 'Vayakhel' and 'Pekudei'. However, at first glance, the name of each of these portions are actually in *direct contradiction* to their content! *Vayakhel* means to gather together, in a manner that each of the individual (people or objects) leave their individuals identities, and become a new identity of *one collective whole*. *Pekudei*, which means *numbers (tally)*, emphasizing the *individuality of each on its own*, which allows for us to count each as a separately *one*. Now, let us look at each of these portions, which are both about the building of the *Tabernacle*. However, *Vayakhel's* portion speaks of making each of its components, specifying *individual details* of the curtains *individually*, beams *individually*, Menorah, Table, etc., *individually*. Contrary to this, the novelty of *Pekudei's* portion (after giving us *one total tally* of the gold, silver and copper used, and as a *sidebar*, concluding the previous portion's descriptiveness of vessels and the *Priestly Garments*), is that of the conclusive *general* bringing of the *entire* works of the *Tabernacle* to Moses, and its consequential erecting of the *Tabernacle*, all as *one* sanctuary for (-Exodus 40:34-35), "*And the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of G-d filled the (one solitary being of the) Tabernacle.*" Hence, each of the portions seem to express the very *opposite*¹ of their name!?

The answer lays in an interesting emphasis of Maimonides (-Sefer HaMitzvot, Mitzvah Asei 20), "*The 20th mitzvah* (of the 248 Positive Precepts) *is that we are commanded to build a Sanctuary to serve [G-d]. In it we offer sacrifices... 'Make a Sanctuary for Me'... We have already explained* (-Introductory, Principle 12) *that this general term ("Sanctuary") includes many parts. The Menorah, the Table, the Altar, etc. are all parts of the Sanctuary, everything together is called by the name, 'Sanctuary,' even though the Torah gives a distinct command for each individual element.*" Maimonides begins with *one* all-encompassing mitzvah of, "*to build a Sanctuary,*" and yet, goes on with the *opposite* approach of, "*Torah gives a distinct command*² *for each individual element*"?!

The Explanation: The relationship between the *Tabernacle* and its vessels, can be in one of three ways:

- (i) Each component is *not* an identity of its own, other than, through all of them then being unified, they become *one collective* identity of the *Tabernacle*. In other words, making each component unto itself is but making a *preparation* for the *one-and-only mitzvah* of building *a Tabernacle*.
-Example: A 'half-measurement' of a biblical prohibition (according to *Reish Lakish* (-Link) who rules is permissible) is *not* an identity of prohibitive object. However, when joined with another 'half-measurement' it now *together becomes* an identity of a prohibitive object.
- (ii) Each component *is* an identity of its own, but nevertheless, through all being unified they become a *new one* collective identity.
-Example: When ten men join to form a *minyán* (quorum) they are not merely a group of ten men, but have transformed into one congregation.
- (ii) *Originally* each component is *not* an identity of its own, but then, when becoming unified together, they *then* also (besides the, "*become a new one collective identity.*") *individually* become an *identity unto their own*.
-Example: Within the *Tabernacle* itself, the *Courtyard*, *Tent*, and *Holy of Hollies*, each *on their own* had *no* holiness, until the *entire Tabernacle* was constructed, after which, *each area* then received their *individual* (different level!) of holiness (besides the *one collective* all-encompassing holiness of *the Tabernacle*).

So too, concerning making each component of the *Tabernacle*: (i) Each had *no* importance, *until* the *Tabernacle* was built, and they were placed into it. (ii) Each *had* importance, nevertheless, *after* the *Tabernacle* was built, and they were placed into it, they have a *new one collective holiness*. (iii) Each had *no* importance. However, *after* the *Tabernacle* was built, and they were placed in it, they now *each* (also) had their *own individual holiness* (*holy Menorah, holy Table, etc.*).

The *Legal Difference* is within the law (-Maimonides, Laws of Beit Habechirah, C1, L20), "*All the utensils must initially be made* (with the intention) *for sacred purposes*": #i -The intention is, "*Building a sanctuary*". #ii -The intention is, "*Building this individual vessel*" (i.e. Menorah, Table, etc.). #iii -The intention is, *both*, "*Building a sanctuary,*" *and*, "*Building this individual vessel.*"

Hence, Maimonides is telling us, that besides the necessary intention being of, "*We are commanded to build a Sanctuary,*" we must also set our intention of, "*Torah gives a distinct command for each individual element,*" like #iii. And with this, we cannot glean insight as to why each portion was given its precise name, even though they each seem to be the *antitheses* of the content of their portion:

Vayakhel: Even though this portion speaks of making each *individual* component, with a separate of, "*And they made...*," nevertheless, *this* portion, being the onset of the, "*Make a Sanctuary for Me,*" the name *Vayakhel* (*gather together; identity of a collective whole*) is telling us that at this point the intention of making *each individual* component --cannot be only of, "*Building this individual vessel,*" but also-- is of the *all-encompassing* (*Vayakhel*), "*Make a Sanctuary for Me*". Being that at *this* point, "*Originally* each component is *not* an identity of its own."

Pekudei: When we have the (-Exodus 39:32), "*All the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting was completed,*" we *now* can sense the *Pikudei* (*numbers; individuality of each on its own*) of, "*After* the *Tabernacle was built*, they now *each* (also) had *their own individual holiness.*"

1. Concerning *Vayakhel* we can say that it speaks of (-Exodus 35:1), "*And Moses gathered the Children of Israel,*" turning them all into *one* people, which is a prerequisite (-ibid 25:8), "*And they shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell within them.*"
2. Nevertheless, in his Introductory, Principle 12, Maimonides concludes, "*And after that the scripture comes to explain the its components and how to make them. And it is not appropriate to count all that is stated within the, 'And you shall make* (for Me a sanctuary),' *as a mitzvah in itself.*"