



The Community

Boruch Hashem

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Rabbi's Article

Keeping it Alive

This week's Torah-reading is the portions of *Vayakhel* and *Pekudei*, together as one. The Rebbe presents a question on a Rashi in each of these portions, and the brings them together, through the answer.

Portion *Vayakhel*: On the verse (-Exodus 35:26), "And all the women whose hearts uplifted them with wisdom, spun the goat," Rashi comments, "Spun the goat": This constituted a superior skill, for they (the women) spun it on the backs of the goats." Yet, Rashi does not explain to the student of what benefit it is to have, "spun it on the backs of the goats," when seemingly, it is the contrary! The work would be of better quality, if spun (more efficiently) once cut from upon the backs of the goats?! Additionally, being that (-ibid, verse 22), "The men came together with the women (-Rashi: 'next to (following) them,') meaning that the devotion of the men was secondary to that of the women, then why do we find this, "super skill," only by the goat's hair, and not by the wool of the bottom curtain-roof, where the verse also explicitly states, "And every wise hearted woman spun..."?!

Portion *Pekudei*: Rashi comments (-Exodus 38:22), "Moses commanded Bezalel to first make the furnishings, and afterwards the Tabernacle. Bezalel said to him: 'Surely, it is the way of the world (the usual way) first to build a house and then to place the household utensils in it!' He (Moses) replied to him: 'So, indeed, did I hear from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He' ...And so he did: (Bezalel) first [made] the Tabernacle, and afterwards he made the furnishings." Question: Being that the Tabernacle was made in, "the way of the world," and "the way of the world," is to first build the walls, and afterwards the roof, and yet nevertheless, we find (-ibid 36:8 and onward) the roof-curtains being made first, and only afterwards (-ibid, verse 20 and onward) were the beams that made up the walls made --And so too, we find (-ibid, 26:1 and onward) this order in Moses' commanding the Israelites?!

The Explanation: Let us begin with two emphasis within the Rashi of *Vayakhel*: (i) Why doesn't Rashi begin with, "They (the women) spun it on the backs of the goats," and then explain, "This constituted a superior skill," especially since starting with the pronoun, "This," --before telling us what *this* is talking of-- isn't proper writing structure?! (ii) Why does Rashi change the wording of the verse, "with wisdom," and instead uses, "superior skill"? Rashi's reasoning is, being that the earlier verse already stated, "And every wise hearted woman spun with her hands, and they brought spun material: blue, purple, and crimson wool, and linen," and nevertheless, now isolates, "spun the goat hair," with again making mention that we are speaking of, "women whose hearts uplifted them with wisdom," hence, it is self-evident that this *spun* of the goat's hair is distinctly different than the previous verse's, "(wise hearted woman) spun with her hands," of all the other materials! And what is the distinction that the verse (Rashi, Shabbat 74b: "They extrapolated from the verse, 'spun the goat,' meaning, upon the goat's body") is intending? That it was spun while still upon the goat's back.

Here, the student understands of what special value this *superior skill* is. The student already learned in Genesis, concerning the different offering of Cain and Abel, in which Abel's offering was of the living *Animal Kingdom*, while Cain's was not, and being that Abel brought from the more valued, hence, "And G-d turned to Abel and to his offering. But to Cain and to his offering He did not turn," thus, it is self-understood to the student, that when G-d commands, "Take for Me an offering... make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst," that the Israelites would bring of the highest caliber, 'offering' possible! Therefore, when it is possible to spin the threads (hairs) while they are still growing, and *part-and-parcel* of the *living Animal Kingdom*, and bring it as such (spun, and yet still one with the goat) definitely, this would be a far superior, "Take for Me an offering"! Concerning the *wool* however, being that the wool has to first be dyed into (-ibid 25:4), "blue, purple, and crimson wool," therefore, the "Take for Me an offering," (and much less so, its being spun) of the wool could not be as *part-and-parcel* of the *living Animal Kingdom*.

Being that Rashi is coming from the --*spun* of the *goat's hair* was distinctly different, that-- it was spun while still upon the goat's back being self-evident to the student, therefore, Rashi is careful to tell us

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FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2023 ★ כד' אדר תשפ"ג

Shabbat Candle Lighting: 7:21 PM · Kabbalat Shabbat: 7:00 PM

This Week...

SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2023 ★ כה' אדר תשפ"ג

BIRTHDAY: [Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka](#); wife of the Rebbe, of blessed memory (1901-1988).

TORAH READING: [Vayakhel](#) (Exodus 35:1-38:20), [Pekudei](#) (ibid 38:21-40:38), & [HaChodesh](#) (-ibid 12:1-20)

HAFTORAH: [Ezekiel](#) (45:18-46:16) · [Shabbat Mevorchim](#) · [Shabbat Chazak](#) · [Parshat HaChodesh](#)

[Shacharit](#): 9:30 AM · [Mincha](#): 6:30 PM · [Shabbat Ends](#): 8:05 PM

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2023 ★ א' ניסן תשפ"ג

[ROSH CHODESH](#) (NISSAN): Recite *Hallel* · Resolve to add this month in Torah-study, prayer, and charity
Begin 13 Days of "The Nasi - [Inaugural Prayers](#)" for the Holy Temple

that this is about it being, "a superior skill," and not about, "women whose hearts uplifted them with wisdom." With this, Rashi's clear implication is that we are not just speaking of the, "spun it on the backs of the goats," being of a higher offering, but also of its being a finer skilled craftsmanship, being that, while connected and alive, the goat's hair is softer and moister.

And with this, we can now turn to the Rashi of *Pekudei*, with a clear understanding of why the roof-curtains had to be made *before* the wall-beams were, even though the, "way of the world," is to build the walls before the roof. Being that the women's devotion had them work swiftly the spinning of the goat's hair, and then swiftly bringing it --while still *alive* on the goat's back--, therefore, the shearing could not be prolonged. The reasons being, (i) the goat's hair was still growing, and (ii) according to *Jewish Law* it would be forbidden to cause, "Pain to a Living Creature," in prolonging its total freedom from having its hair bound together. After which, the closer the weaving is to the shearing, the better, being that the goat's hair is softer and moister.

The Legal Aspect: The law is that women are only obligated to perform the mitzvot that are not defined with any time constraints. Now, concerning the mitzvah of constructing the Holy Temple, we learn (-Shevot 15b) from the verse (-Numbers 9:15), "And on the day that the Tabernacle was erected," that, "We erect it during the day, but we do not erect it at night." Thus, according to *Rabbeinu Tam* (-[Link](#)) who rules (-Gittin 45b, d"h Kol), that a woman cannot prepare a mitzvah of which she is not obligated to observe, how can the women have spun the wool for the Tabernacle?!

Rabbi Yoseph Rosen, the *Rogetchover Genius* (-[Link](#)), explains that concerning the existence of a Holy Temple there are two mitzvot. One is the actual building of the Holy Temple, and this mitzvah is only during the day. However, there is a second mitzvah of having a Temple in which to bring sacrifices built, and this mitzvah is without any time constraints. Hence, a woman's participating in preparing any part of the Tabernacle, of which without, there can be no, "having a Temple in which to bring sacrifices," is permissible, while any part of the Tabernacle which is not crucial in rendering it a Temple kosher to bring sacrifices in (and must only be made because of the mitzvah of actually building a Tabernacle with this included), is not permissible for a woman to prepare.

With this, we have an amazing legal insight to this Rashi. The Tabernacle had three roof-curtains. The bottom one was made out of linen and color wools. The one on top of that, was the *Goat's Hair*. The Talmud (-Shabbat 28a) rules that the verse (Exodus 40:19), "He placed the 'tent' above it," is referring to the bottom roof-curtain. Meaning, the Talmud only sees the bottom roof-curtain to be necessary to render the Tabernacle fit for bringing sacrifices, and hence, women may prepare the spinning or its threads. But not for the *Goat's Hair Roof-curtain*! However, Rashi, clearly states that the women were the one who spun the *Goat's Hair*, for Rashi follows his approach of (-Rashi, Genesis 3:8), "the simple meaning of the Scripture," in which Rashi defines the, "He placed the 'tent' above it," to mean, "They are the curtains of goat hair." Hence, Rashi tells us that the women's spinning the goat's hair (on the goat's back) was a, "superior skill," meaning, actual work of preparing the mitzvah of making the, *Goat's Hair Roof-curtain*!¹

The Lesson: Of what eternal lesson is the one-time Tabernacle building experiences of, (i) "superior skill... they spun it on the backs of the goats," and (ii) that regardless of it being contrary to, "the ways of the world," they made the roof-curtains before the wall-beams?

- (i) When G-d blesses one with a, "superior skill," they must use it, not only for their personal gain, but for the service of, *Making for Him, blessed be He, a dwelling place in the lower* (physical) world."
- (ii) The importance of alleviating pain from a fellow, including that of the spiritual nakedness from mitzvot, and hunger from Torah-study. If we are taught concerning alleviating pain from an animal, even when it is in contrast to --not only, "the ways of the world,"-- how G-d commanded the ways of the world be, we give priority to the animal's pain, how much more so, when it comes to a fellow human, a fellow Jew, and of their spiritual pain.

1. The Talmud (-Shabbat 74b) states an opinion that extrapolates from the verses', "whose hearts uplifted them with wisdom," that spinning wool while still connected to the animal is not punishable for desecrating Shabbat, since it is a, "wisdom," and not a, "skill (work)". Some commentaries want to force this opinion upon Rashi, being that he states the women spun it as such in the construction of the Tabernacle, which serves as the foundation of what constitutes "work" on Shabbat. However, with understanding that Rashi is explicitly calling this a, "superior skill" --and not a "wisdom" we do not have to confine Rashi to this solitary opinion, of it being a "wisdom," not punishable for desecrating the Shabbat.