

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 16

Vayakhel-Pekudei

Two Questions on Two Rashis:

In parshas Vayakhel, the Torah relates the unique contribution of the women in the construction of the Mishkan:

“And all the women whose hearts uplifted them with wisdom, spun the goat hair.” (Shemos 35:26)

Rashi explains: “Spun the goat hair — This constituted a superior skill, for they spun it on the backs of the goats.”

What Rashi does not explain is the significance of this skill. Why is it important, noteworthy, or advantageous to have the goat hair spun while still attached to the goat?

In Parshas Pekudei, Rashi records a conversation between Moshe and Betzalel concerning the correct order for the Mishkan’s construction. In the end, Moshe agrees with Betzalel that “It is common practice to first make a house and then to

put furniture into it.” (Rashi to Shemos 38:22)

Common practice dictates that the walls be made before the ceiling. Yet in the construction of the Mishkan, the curtains for the roof were made before the pillars and the walls. (Shemos 36:8) If Betzalel was correct that the Mishkan should follow common building practice, why was the covering made before the walls?

Because Rashi does not address either of these two issues, the resolution must be plain and evident from the straightforward reading of the narratives.

The Explanation:

In describing the work of the women artisans, the Torah first states, “And every wise hearted woman spun with her hands, and they brought spun material: blue, purple, and crimson wool, and linen,” and then continues in our verse, “and all the women whose hearts uplifted them with wisdom, spun the goat hair.”

Because these two acts of spinning wool are divided into two separate verses, it is clear that they were performed differently. The

wool in the previous verse had to be dyed “blue, purple and crimson,” therefore, it had to be sheared from the animal before being spun. This implies that the wool in our verse, which did not have to be dyed, could be spun on the backs of the goats.

There are two reasons why this is advantageous: 1) The donation is considered to be from a living animal, being that the wool is still attached to the goat, which is a loftier form of donation than inanimate material, such as sheared wool. 2) When the wool is still attached to the animal, it retains more moisture and therefore results in better quality wool.

This also explains why the curtains for the roof made from the wool were made before the walls: Because the women had spun the wool while still attached to the goats, if the builders would wait to weave the coverings until the pillars were done, the hair would grow longer and no longer be spun wool. Additionally, the discomfort of the animals having their wool spun tightly on their bodies would be unnecessarily prolonged. Out of concern for the animal’s well-being,

the wool was sheared immediately and the curtains were woven before the pillars.

The Lesson:

The women who possessed this talent to spin wool while still attached to the goats were not commanded to do so. It was their own initiative and inspiration to use their fullest potential in the construction of a home for G-d. So, too, every person is blessed with resources or talents that must be used to their fullest potential in making this world into a home for G-d.

Secondly, just as the correct order for the construction of the Mishkan was upended due to the consideration of the animal’s discomfort, so, too must we upend the conventional priorities when a Jew is suffering from material or spiritual pain. Instead of following the conventional schedule for first tending to our own needs and then thinking about others, we must urgently “feed and dress” the hungry and unclothed souls who need spiritual nourishment.
