



PEKUDEI

IF THESE WALLS COULD SPEAK

How the stories we live are worth repeating

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Pekudei

An accounting is made of the gold, silver, and copper donated by the people for the making of the Mishkan. Bezalel, Aholiab, and their assistants make the eight priestly garments—the apron, breastplate, cloak, crown, hat, tunic, sash, and breeches—according to the specifications communicated to Moses in the *parshah* of Tetzaveh.

The Mishkan is completed and all its components are brought to Moses, who erects it and anoints it with the holy anointing oil and initiates

Aaron and his four sons into the priesthood. A cloud appears over the Mishkan, signifying the Divine Presence that has come to dwell within it.

RASHI RULES

- Rashi addresses every basic question in the text. If he's silent, it means one of two things: either it's not a question to begin with (for whatever reason), or it is already addressed by a comment he made earlier.
- The precise words from the verse that Rashi cites in his "header" are significant to the content of his commentary.

EXERCISE

Do you have a story
about yourself that
you enjoy repeating?
If yes, why?



TEXT 1

Exodus ch. 35–39

לה, ד. ויאמר מֹשֶׁה אֶל כָּל עֵדֻת
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה ה' לֵאמֹר.

לה, ה. קָחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם תְּרוּמָה לַה'
כָּל נָדִיב לִבּוֹ יְבִיֵּאֶה אֶת תְּרוּמַת ה'
זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנַחֲשֵׁת . . .

לה, י. וְכָל חָכֵם לֵב בְּכֶם יָבֹאוּ
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' . . .

לו, א. וַעֲשֵׂה בְּצִלָּאֵל וְאַהֲלִיאֵב
וְכָל אִישׁ חָכֵם לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן ה'
חֲכָמָה וְתְבוּנָה בְּהִמָּה לַדַּעַת לַעֲשׂוֹת
אֶת כָּל מְלָאכַת עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכָל
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' . . .

35:4. And Moses spoke to the entire community of the Children of Israel, saying: "This is the word that G-d has commanded to say:

35:5. 'Take from yourselves an offering for G-d; every generous-hearted person shall bring it; [namely] G-d's offering: gold, silver, and copper. . . .

35:10. 'And every wise-hearted person among you shall come and make everything that G-d has commanded. . . .

36:1. 'Bezalel and Oholiab and every wise-hearted man into whom G-d had imbued wisdom and insight to know how to do, shall do all the work of the service of the Holy, according to all that G-d has commanded.'" . . .

TEXT 1

Exodus ch. 35–39

לו, ח. וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָּל חָכָם לֵב בָּעָשִׂי הַמְּלָאכָה
אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן עֹשֶׂר יְרִיעֹת יָשָׁם מִשְׁזָר וְתַכְלֶת
וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי כְּרֻבִים מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב
עָשָׂה אֹתָם . . .

לו, יד. וַיַּעַשׂ יְרִיעֹת עֲזִים לְאַהֲלָהּ עַל הַמִּשְׁכָּן
עָשִׂיתִי עֹשֶׂרָה יְרִיעֹת עָשָׂה אֹתָם . . .

לו, כ. וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַקִּרְשִׁים לַמִּשְׁכָּן עֲצֵי
שִׁטִּים עֹמְדִים . . .

לו, לה. וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַפָּרֹכֶת תַּכְלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן
וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְיָשָׁם מִשְׁזָר מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב עָשָׂה
אֹתָהּ כְּרֻבִים . . .

לז, א. וַיַּעַשׂ בַּצִּלָּאֵל אֶת הָאָרֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים
אַמְתִּים וְחֹצֵי אַרְכּוֹ וְאַמָּה וְחֹצֵי רָחְבוֹ וְאַמָּה
וְחֹצֵי קֹמָתוֹ . . .

36:8. Then all the wise-hearted people of the performers
of the work made the Mishkan out of ten curtains
[consisting] of twisted fine linen, and blue, purple, and
crimson wool. A cherubim design, the work of a master
weaver he made them. . . .

36:14. And [then] he made curtains of goat hair for a tent
over the Mishkan; he made them eleven curtains. . . .

36:20. And he made the planks for the Mishkan of acacia
wood, upright. . . .

36:35. And he made the dividing curtain of blue, purple,
and crimson wool, and twisted fine linen; the work of a
master weaver he made it, in a [woven] cherubim design.
. . .

37:1. Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood, two and a half
cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half
high. . . .

TEXT 1

Exodus ch. 35–39

לז, י. וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַשֻּׁלְחָן עֲצֵי נֹשֵׁטִים
אֲמָתִים אָרְכוֹ וְאַמָּה רָחְבוֹ וְאַמָּה וְחֻצִי
קָמָתוֹ . . .

לז, יז. וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַמְּנֹרָה זָהָב טָהוֹר
מְקֻשָּׁה עֲשָׂה אֶת הַמְּנֹרָה יִרְכָּה וְקִנָּה
גְּבִיעֶיהָ כַּפֹּתֶיהָ וּפְרָחֶיהָ מְמֻנָּה הָיוּ . . .

לז, כה. וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת מִזְבֵּחַ הַקְּטֹרֶת עֲצֵי
נֹשֵׁטִים אֲמָה אָרְכוֹ וְאַמָּה רָחְבוֹ רְבוּעַ
וְאַמָּתָיִם קָמָתוֹ מְמֻנּוּ הָיוּ קִרְנֹתָיו . . .

לח, א. וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה עֲצֵי נֹשֵׁטִים
חֲמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת אָרְכוֹ וְחֲמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת רָחְבוֹ
רְבוּעַ וְשֵׁלֹשׁ אַמּוֹת קָמָתוֹ . . .

לח, ט. וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַחֹצֵר לְפָאֵת נֹגֵב תִּימָנָה
קִלְעֵי הַחֹצֵר נֹשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר מֵאָה בָּאַמָּה . . .

37:10. And he made a table of acacia wood two cubits long, one cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high. . . .

37:17. And he made the menorah of pure gold, of hammered work he made the menorah; its base and its stem, its goblets, its knobs, and its flowers were [all one piece] with it. . . .

37:25. And he made the incense altar out of acacia wood, one cubit long and one cubit wide, square, and two cubits high; its horns were [one piece] with it. . . .

38:1. And he made the altar for the burnt offerings of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide; [the altar was] square, and it [was] three cubits high. . . .

38:9. And he made the courtyard on the southern side; [there were] hangings for the courtyard of twisted fine linen, one hundred cubits. . . .

TEXT 1

Exodus ch. 35–39

לח, כא. אלה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן
הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר פָּקַד עַל פִּי מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדְתָּ
הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן . . .

לט, א. וּמִן הַתְּכֵלֶת וְהָאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת
הַשָּׁנִי עָשׂוּ בְּגָדֵי שָׂרָד לְשָׂרֵת בַּקֹּדֶשׁ
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לְאַהֲרֹן
כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה . . .

לב, וּתְכַל כָּל עֲבַדְתָּ מִשְׁכַּן אֶהֱל
מוֹעֵד וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה כֵּן עָשׂוּ.

38:21. These are the numbers of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony, which were counted at Moses's command; [this was] the work of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the Kohen. . . .

39:1. And out of the blue, purple, and crimson wool they made the meshwork garments to serve in the Holy, and they made Aaron's holy garments, as the L-rd had commanded Moses. . . .

39:32. All the work of the Mishkan of the Tent of Meeting was completed; the Children of Israel had done [it] according to all that G-d had commanded Moses, so they had done.

QUESTION

Why does this *parsha* repeat information already given in earlier *parshiot*?

TEXT 2

*Rabbi Don Yitzchak
Abarbanel, Exodus
35:1*

השאלה . . . בכפל והיתור שיראה
בזכרון מלאכת המשכן כי הנה תמצא
שזכרה התורה ה' פעמים, פעם בכלל
ופעם בפרט, מלאכת המשכן וכליו.

והקשה הדבר יותר בדברי משה בסדר
הזה שאמר לישראל: "כל חכם לב
בכם יבואו ויעשו את כל אשר צוה ה',
את המשכן את אהלו וגו', וזכר שם
כל הדברים שצוה ה' לעשותם, ואחר
כך זכר העשייה בפרט כל דבר ודבר
בפני עצמו. והיה מספיק שיאמר
הכתוב: "ויאמר משה אל כל עדת בני
ישראל את כל המלאכה אשר צוה ה'
אותו". וכן "ויעשו כל חכם לב כאשר
צוה את משה כן עשו". ומה צורך
לפרט הדברים פעם אחר פעם?

Question: Why is the information about the building of the Mishkan repeated again and again? The Torah tells us about the Mishkan and its vessels five times, sometimes in a brief summary and other times in full detail.

The question is most acute in these Torah portions. First, Moses tells the Jewish people, "Every wise-hearted person among you shall come and make everything that G-d has commanded," and the verses go on to list all of the things they were commanded to build. Then the Torah goes on to describe the actual construction of every individual element in full detail. It should have been enough for the Torah to state, "And Moses related to all of the Children of Israel all of the work G-d had instructed him about," and then "all of the wise-hearted people did as Moses had commanded." What is the need to relate the details again and again?

QUESTION ON RASHI

Why is Rashi silent about this very basic question?

RASHI RULE #1

Rashi addresses every basic question in the text. If he's silent, it means one of two things: either it's not a question to begin with (for whatever reason), or it is already addressed by a comment he made earlier.

TEXT 3

Rashi, Exodus 35:5

"נדיב לבו". על שם שלבו נדבו קרוי נדיב לב. כבר פירשתי נדבת המשכן ומלאכתו במקום צוואתם.

"Every generous-hearted person"—because his or her heart motivated them to be generous, they are called "generous-hearted." I have already explained the account of the contributions to the Mishkan and the details of its construction in the passages where the instructions were given.



The Mishkan was long awaited, the fulfillment of creation's purpose—G-d's presence dwelling among us.

TEXT 4

Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi, Likutei
Torah, Pekudei, p. 3a

הנה ענין המשכן הוא השראת
השכינה בישראל, וכמו שכתוב:
"ושכנתי בתוכם" . . .

והוא כמאמר רבותינו זכרונם
לברכה: "נתאווה הקדוש ברוך
הוא להיות לו דירה
בתחתונים".

וצריך להבין, והלא גם בלאו
הכי כתיב "את השמים ואת
הארץ אני מלא"?

אך הענין, כי דירה זו היינו
שיהיה בחינת גילוי אלקותו
יתברך. והיינו בתחתונים דוקא,

The function of the Mishkan was to facilitate G-d's presence dwelling among the Jewish people, as the verse states, "And they shall make Me a Mishkan and I will dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

The sages also spoke of this when they said, "G-d desired to have a home for Himself in the lower realms" (Midrash, Tanchuma, Naso 16).

The question is that the verse states that regardless of all of this, "I, G-d, fill the Heavens and the Earth" (Jeremiah 23:24). So what added purpose did the Mishkan serve?

The answer is that a "home" means a place where G-dliness is revealed. This must be specifically in the lower realms.

TEXT 4

*Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi, Likutei
Torah, Pekudei, p. 3a*

דפירוש תחתונים אין רצונו לומר
במקום, שהרי הוא יתברך אינו בגדר
מקום . . . רק פירוש עליונים ותחתונים
היינו במעלה ומדרגה, שעולם הזה
השפל הוא היותר תחתון ושפל במדרגה,
דהיינו שהוא סוף ותכלית כל המדרגות
השתלשלות העולמות — שלכך השגת
אלקות הוא בו בהסתר וצמצום גדול
והחשך יכסה ארץ.

ונתאוה הקדוש ברוך הוא להיות בו
דוקא בחינת דירה וגילוי אלקותו יתברך
להאיר את החשך דוקא.

“Lower” here doesn’t mean a lower place in the physical sense because G-d is beyond the limitations of space. . . . In this context, “higher” and “lower” refer to their spiritual level. Our lowly world is spiritually the lowest of all, the final link in the chain of worlds. This is why G-dliness is heavily concealed in this world and it is filled with darkness.

G-d desired to dwell and reveal Himself specifically in this world and illuminate its darkness.

TEXT 5

*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak
Schneersohn, Sefer
Hamaamarim 5710, p.
111, Basi Legani 5710*

באתי לגני אחותי כלה, ואיתא
במדרש רבה (במקומו) לגן אין
כתיב כאן אלא לגני לגנוני,
למקום שהיה עיקרי בתחלה.

דעיקר שכינה בתחתונים
היתה, ועל ידי חטא עץ הדעת
נסתלקה השכינה מארץ
לרקיע, ועל ידי חטא קין
ואנוש נסתלקה השכינה
מרקיע א' לב' וג'. ואחר כך
בדור המבול נסתלקה מרקיע
ג' לד' . . .

"I have come into My garden, My sister, My bride" (Song of Songs 5:1). Midrash Rabah on this verse observes that the word used is not legan ["to the garden"], but legani ["to My garden"]. This possessive form implies a private place, "My bridal chamber." The Divine Presence is thus saying, "I have come into My bridal chamber, into the place in which My essence was originally revealed."

The Midrash continues: "In the beginning, the Divine Presence was apparent in this lowly world. However, in the wake of the cosmic sin of the Tree of Knowledge, the Divine Presence departed from the Earth and rose to the Heavens. Later, on account of the sin of Cain and then of Enosh, the Divine Presence withdrew even further from this world, rising from the nearest Heaven to the second, and then to the third. Later yet, the sins of the Generation of the Deluge caused it to recede from the third Heaven to the fourth, and so on."

TEXT 5

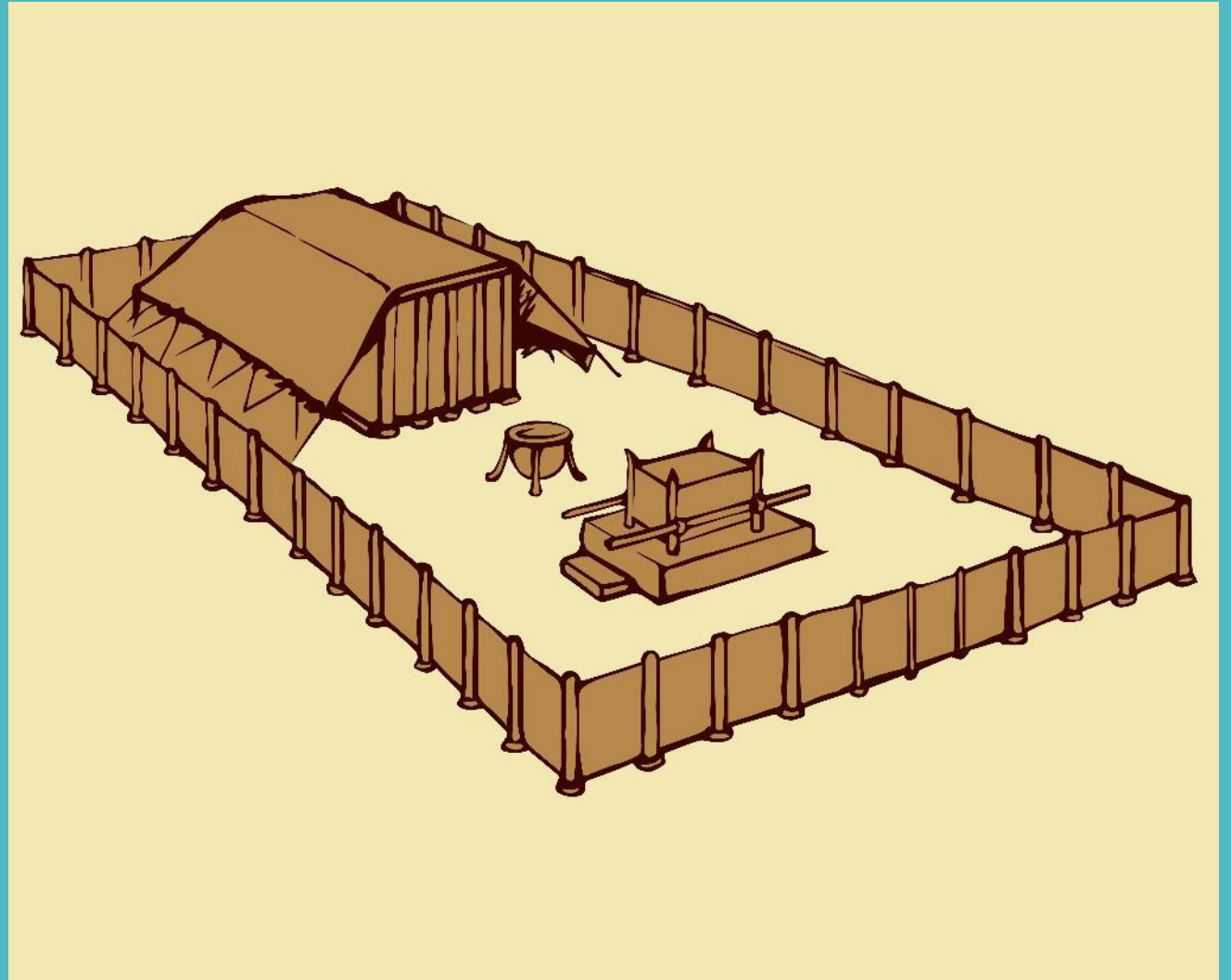
*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak
Schneersohn, Sefer
Hamaamarim 5710, p.
111, Basi Legani 5710*

ואחר כך עמדו שבעה צדיקים
והורידו את השכינה למטה.
אברהם זכה והוריד את השכינה
מרקיע ז' לו', ויצחק מו' לה', עד כי
משה שהוא השביעי (וכל השביעין
חביבין) הורידו למטה בארץ.
ועיקר גילוי אלקות היה בבית
המקדש, דכתיב "ועשו לי מקדש
ושכנתי בתוכם".

The Midrash proceeds to explain that seven righteous people subsequently arose and their Divine service drew the Divine Presence down to this world below once more. Through the merit of Abraham, the Divine Presence was brought down from the seventh Heaven to the sixth; through the merit of Isaac, the Divine Presence was brought down from the sixth Heaven to the fifth, and so on. This culminated in Moses, the seventh of the sequence of righteous people ("the seventh is cherished" (*Midrash Vayikra Rabah* 29:11)), who drew the revelation of the Divine Presence down into this world below once again.

The ultimate revelation of G-dliness took place in the Holy Temple, as the verse states, "And they shall make for Me a sanctuary and I shall dwell within them" (Exodus 25:8).

The Mishkan, housing the Divine revelation, served as a testimony that G-d had forgiven the Jews for the Sin of the Golden Calf.



TEXT 6

Rashi, Exodus 38:21

"משכן העדות". עדות לישראל שויתר להם
הקדוש ברוך הוא על מעשה העגל, שהרי
השרה שכינתו ביניהם.

"The Mishkan of the Testimony." The edifice of the Mishkan testified to the Jews that G-d had forgiven them for the construction of the Golden Calf because His presence was now dwelling among them.

TEXT 7

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Likutei
Sichot 16, p. 461*

דער משכן וכליו איז פון די ענינים הכי עקריים וחביבים ביי אידן, דורך דעם
איז געווען השראת השכינה ביי אידן וכו' . . .

ובמילא איז פארשטאנדיק אז אט די גרויסע חביבות פון דעם משכן ביים
אויבערשטן (און ביי אידן), דאס איז דער טעם וואס די תורה רעכנט אויס אלע
פרטי המשכן און חזר'ט זיי איבער איין מאל און נאכאמאל כו' מיט אלע פרטים.

The Mishkan and its vessels were of critical importance to the Jewish people, as they facilitated the dwelling of the Divine Presence among the Jewish people. . . .

This explains the great fondness both G-d and the Jewish people had for the Mishkan, and this is the reason why the Torah lists all of the elements of the Mishkan again and again, in great detail.

ANSWER

The Torah repeats information about the Mishkan because it's so important and central to everything the Torah is about. The Torah delights in emphasizing it.

TEXT 8

Rashi, Genesis 24:42

אמר רבי אחא: יפה שיחתן של עבדי אבות לפני המקום
מתורתן של בנים, שהרי פרשה של אליעזר כפולה בתורה,
והרבה גופי תורה לא נתנו אלא ברמיזה.

Rabbi Acha said, "The conversation of the patriarchs' servants is held in higher esteem by G-d than the Torah discourses of their children. This is evidenced by the fact that the story of Eliezer is repeated in the Torah, whereas many principles of the Torah were given only through allusions in the text."

ANSWER ON RASHI'S SILENCE

Rashi doesn't need to comment on the repetition of the Mishkan information because it is already explained by his earlier comment on a similar question.

TEXT 9

*Paul William Davis,
"What are examples
that show one is
passionate about
something?"
paulwilliamdavis.com*

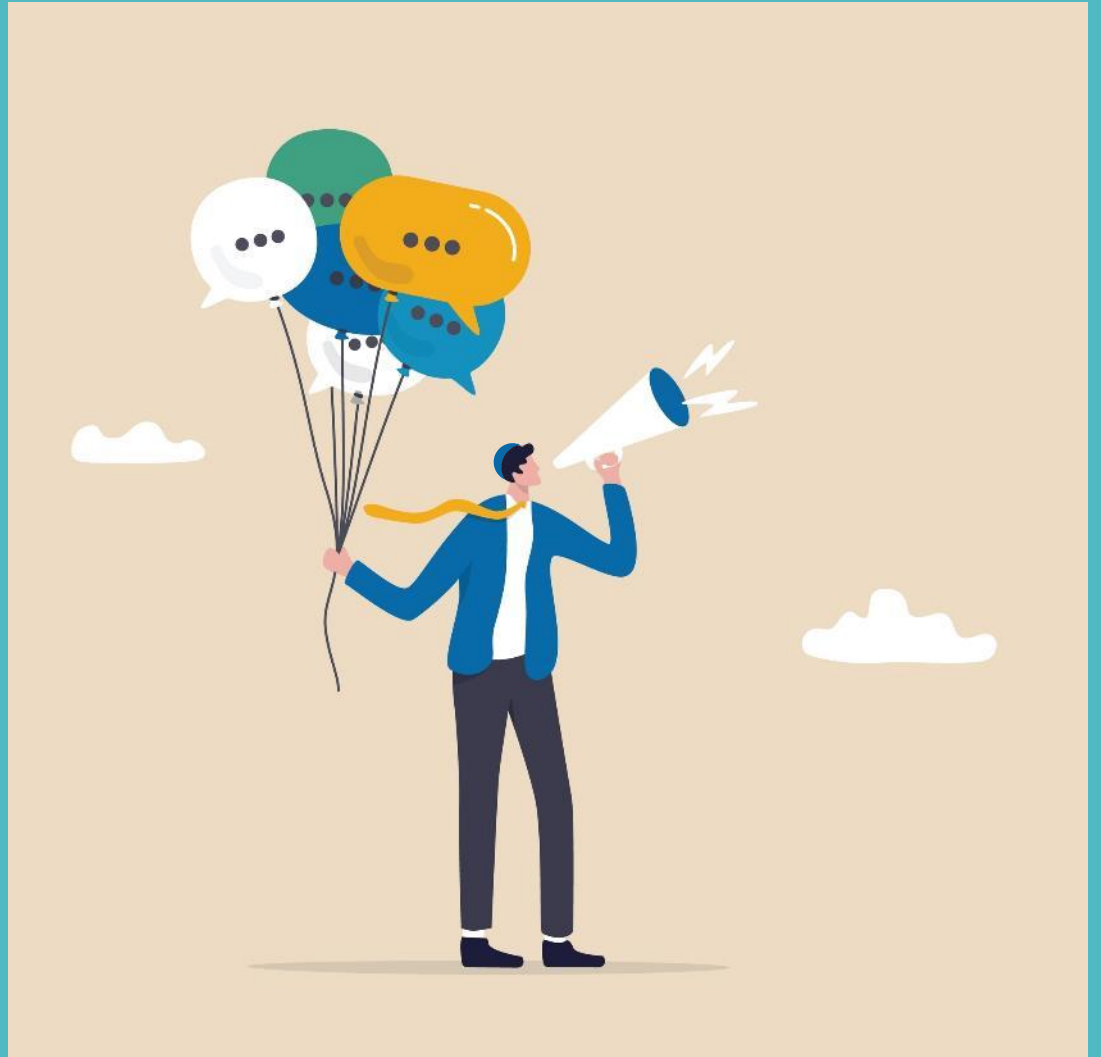
Passion is defined as a strong and barely controllable emotion. When one is passionate about something, they are eager to do it and feel a strong sense of affection towards it. There are many examples that can show when someone is passionate about something.

Some examples of when someone is passionate about something are when they talk about it constantly, they are always eager to do it, and they feel a great sense of affection towards it. For instance, if someone is always talking about how much they love to play the piano, it is clear that they are passionate about it. Similarly, if someone is always keen on playing sports or going for runs, it is also an indication of their passion for those activities.



When something is truly cherished, the Torah will prefer storytelling over conveying Jewish Law.

When you're excited about something, you'll spend time talking about it—even when it's not practical.



RASHI RULE #2

The precise words from the verse that Rashi cites in his “header” are significant to the content of his commentary.

TEXT 10

Aharon Loschak,
“From Pale to
Passion,”
chabad.org/5465992

Everyone gets animated and excited about something. Some people are into sports, avidly following their team and screaming with excitement when they win the [S]uper [B]owl. Others get excited about money, while still others are passionate about art, boring everyone around them with long discourses about the beauty of this painting and the finesse of that sculpture. Everyone has something they’re excited about.

So, if your sports passion is red-hot, but your Judaism is pale white, that’s a . . . problem. If you get excited discussing politics with your friends, but you’re dragging your feet to shul, or dreading a Shabbat meal with your family, then your Judaism is “pale” and it runs the risk of sputtering and dying out. . . .

The spiritual life of your soul and its connection to G d . . . [is] something worth getting excited about. So don’t let the Yankees get all your red-hot passion; leave some of that for your Judaism as well.



If we throw our **hearts** into it and become passionately involved, our Judaism will, indeed, become the story we're always telling.

TEXT 11

*Rabbi Shimon Posner,
“My Grandma’s
Selective Memory,”
chabad.org/364326*

My grandmother came to America from Russia—with a four-year stopover in Israel—around 1930. She, her husband, and two infant boys settled in a Jewish neighborhood in New Jersey. The older boys in the neighborhood welcomed her sons by snatching their yarmulkes off their heads.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, visited America around that time. His Soviet-imposed death sentence had only recently been commuted to life in internal exile, and shortly thereafter he was deported from Workers’ Paradise. In America, Jews lined up to seek his counsel, his blessing.

My grandmother visited the Rebbe for a blessing, her two-year-old on her arm, her three-year-old holding her other hand. She saw the Rebbe’s face and burst into tears, crying, “How will I raise children in such a hard land?”

The Rebbe smiled so widely that he was almost laughing; she thought at her, and was insulted. “It is a hard land,” he conceded, growing serious, “but in this land you will raise gutte Yiddisher Chassidishe kinder (good Jewish Chassidic children).”

In her later years, my grandmother was no longer encumbered by recent memory. She told this story with its full emotion, and ten minutes later she told it again, not missing the slightest detail, the slightest emotion.

TEXT 11

Rabbi Shimon Posner,
“My Grandma’s
Selective Memory,”
chabad.org/364326

She would always end the story by saying, “But I did not let that blessing sit; I put it to work!”

I don’t think she ever lost her initial enthusiasm. I think if she had, she would never have been the person she was. . . .

For two *parshiot*, the Torah told us the details of the Tabernacle, the portable sanctuary: the sockets of the walls, the decorative cups of the menorah, the seams of the clothing. Now, for two *parshiot*, the Torah tells us that it was all fulfilled. The exhaustive repetition begs explanation, until we notice two words, “*nediv libo*,” describing one who gave for the Tabernacle—that “his heart was full of giving.” . . .

We will read these portions. We will think they are redundant. We will remember that bringing Heaven to Earth demands a passion of the heart that allows for no redundancy. We will repeat it with a passion that has not abated.

KEY POINTS

1. The story of the Mishkan with all its details is repeated numerous times in the Torah.
2. People repeatedly talk about matters they cherish.
3. That accounts for the repetitiveness about the Mishkan—because it was critically important and cherished by G-d and the Jewish people.
4. We know this idea from one of Rashi's previous comments earlier in Genesis.
5. We must be passionate about our Judaism such that it becomes the matter we're constantly talking about.

