

בס"ד

# THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

# Parshas Vayakhel

25 Adar I, 5779 – March 2, 2019

Compiled from the works of  
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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi**  
**Parshas Vayakhel**  
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**Rashi in His Own Words**

**שמות ל"ה - א':** ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל ויאמר אלהם אלה הדברים אשר צוה ה' לעשות אתם:  
**רש"י ד"ה ויקהל משה:** למחרת יום הכפורים כשירד מן ההר, והוא לשון הפעיל, שאינו אוסף אנשים בידיים, אלא הן נאספים על פי דבורו,  
ותרגומו ואכניש:

**Shemos 35:1:** Moshe assembled the entire community of the Jewish Nation<sup>1</sup>, and said to them, "These are the things that the Lord commanded to do.

**Rashi Heading – Moshe assembled:** on the day after Yom Kippur, when he came down from the mountain. This is the causative form of the verb (i.e. he caused the Jewish people to gather indirectly, by speaking). This is because one does not assemble people directly, but rather they are assembled through one's speech. Targum Onkelos translates the word into Aramaic **וְאַכְנִישׁ** (which means that he caused them to be gathered).

**Synopsis**

The weekly Torah portion, Vayakhel-Pekudei, begins by telling us that Moshe assembled the entire Jewish nation (literally caused them to be assembled). Once they were gathered, he relayed the commandment to build the Tabernacle to them. Rashi comments that this gathering was on the day after Yom Kippur when he descended from the mountain. Rashi seems to understand this from the fact that Moshe would not push off telling the Jews this important Mitzvah until later. Rashi then goes on to say that Moshe did not directly gather the Jews; rather he caused all of them to be gathered with his speech.

There are several things in Rashi that we need to understand. For one thing, it seems obvious that Moshe would command us to build the Sanctuary at the first possible opportunity. Rashi does not seem to be adding something that the beginning student would not understand on his own. Secondly, if Moshe did not wish to put off telling the Jews of the Sanctuary, why did he wait until the next day? It would seem that he could have gathered them on the same day that he descended from the mountain. Also, Rashi first tells us when this gathering took place. He then teaches us that Moshe did not gather the Jews individually. What does one have to do with the other? It would seem more appropriate to comment on both issues separately, as he usually does with two unrelated comments.

The explanation is that without Rashi's comments we would think that Moshe gathered the Jews on Yom Kippur itself. Firstly as we said previously, he would not have pushed it off until later. Secondly, when all of the Jews saw Moshe coming down from Mount Sinai with the second tablets, they would have gathered on their own

1. The literal meaning is that he caused them to be assembled.

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in order to see and hear exactly what happened. We would have thought that it is for this reason that the Torah uses the causative form here; in order to let us know that Moshe gathered the people simply by coming down the mountain! Therefore Rashi starts off by telling us that this is not the gathering which the Torah is discussing. The Torah is discussing an assembly which took place as a result of something positive which Moshe did, meaning that he spoke. Therefore the Torah uses the causative form of the verb. From this we know that we are discussing the gathering on the day after Yom Kippur. The Torah is not discussing that which took place automatically on Yom Kippur.

### Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah reading, Vayakhel, the Torah tells us that<sup>2</sup> "Moshe assembled the entire community of the Jewish Nation<sup>3</sup>, and said to them, 'These are the things that the Lord commanded to do.'" He then proceeded to relay two matters to the Jewish people which he had heard from Hashem on Mount Sinai. He first told the Jews about keeping the Shabbos<sup>4</sup>. He then told the Jews of Hashem's commandment to build the Tabernacle.

Rashi cites the words "Moshe assembled" and begins his comments by explaining that this gathering took place "on the day after Yom Kippur, when he came down from the mountain<sup>5</sup> ..." How does Rashi know that this happened on the day after Yom Kippur? From which words does he derive it?

There are commentaries that explain that this is a logical deduction, which was not learned from a specific verse<sup>6</sup>. There is a rule taught by the Sages that<sup>7</sup> "the zealous hasten to perform Mitzvos as soon as possible." From this it is understood that Moshe did not push off telling the Jews the commandment of building the Mishkan which he heard on Mount Sinai. Rather, after descending from the mountain, the very next day he gathered the Jews in order to relay to them Hashem's command. G-d's forgiveness of the Jewish people would be manifest in the "dwelling place" which they would build for Him, within which His presence would rest. From there He would

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2. Our Parshah, Shemos 35:1.

3. See Footnote 1.

4. There was a special reason for teaching the Jews about Shabbos here, before telling them about the building of the Tabernacle. He was teaching them that as important as the Tabernacle was, its construction does not supersede the laws of Shabbos. See Rashi's comments to our Parshah, Shemos 35:2. Moshe's main point, however, was to give over the command regarding the building of the Tabernacle.

5. After the entire Jewish Nation heard the Ten Commandments, Moshe went up to Mount Sinai for 40 days and nights. Upon his descent on the 17th of Tammuz, he discovered that his nation had sinned with the Golden Calf. He then broke the original set of tablets. He went back up to the mountain to pray and intercede with G-d on behalf of the Jews for another 40 days. After descending, he went back up for yet another 40 days and continued praying for the Jews. He descended the third and final time on Yom Kippur carrying the second set of tablets. At that point, Hashem forgave the Jews. From then on Yom Kippur became a day of atonement for all time.

6. See the commentaries of the Mizrachi and the Gur Aryeh.

7. See Talmud Pesochim 4, a. See also Midrash Tanchuma Torah Portion of Vayeiro, Chapter 22. This is also explicit in Rashi's comments to Parshas Vayeiro, Bereishis 22:3.

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reveal Himself to the entire world.

Rashi then goes on to tell us that "this is the causative form of the verb (i.e. he caused the Jewish people to gather indirectly, by speaking). This is because one does not assemble people directly, but rather they are assembled through one's speech. Targum Onkelos translates the word into Aramaic שְׂבַחֵם (meaning that he caused them to be gathered).

### **Difficulties in Understanding Rashi**

As a rule, Rashi does not tell us the time that a particular event took place. The only exception to this rule would be an instance in which it adds to our understanding of Peshat<sup>8</sup>. Why does Rashi tell us that this assembly took place on the day after Yom Kippur?

Furthermore, it is obvious that Moshe would command us to build the Sanctuary at the first possible opportunity. Even had Rashi said nothing, we would know on our own that Moshe gathered the Jews and commanded them these special laws the very day after his descent. What does Rashi add that the beginning student would not understand on his own.

Additionally, if Rashi is telling us that Moshe did not wish to put off telling the Jews of building the Sanctuary, why did he wait until the next day? It would seem that he could have gathered them on the very same day that he descended from the mountain. One might think that perhaps he came down from the mountain late in the day, so there was no time to do so. However this is not the case. We know that the first time that Moshe descended from the mountain was in the morning<sup>9</sup>. The third series of 40 days on the mountain are compared to his first 40 days. Just as he descended in the morning the first time, so too can we safely assume that he descended in the morning on the third time. Hence he would have had time on the day of Yom Kippur itself. If the point is to do it immediately, why wait until the next day?

Also, in the beginning of his comments Rashi tells us when this gathering took place, i.e. on the day after Yom Kippur. Rashi then teaches us that Moshe did not gather the Jews individually. What does one thing have to do with the other? They appear to be unrelated concepts. Generally, when Rashi explains two disparate things, he presents them as separate comments with separate headings. However, here he includes them both together. We need to understand why. We also need to understand why Rashi tells us that Moshe did not gather the Jews individually one by one. In fact, one cannot gather people in that manner. People are always gathered by speech.

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8. A good example of this is found in the Torah portions of Terumah and Tetzaveh. The detailed commands given to Moshe regarding the Tabernacle, its vessels and the priestly vestments are all laid out in these sections. Rashi does not mention a single word about when any of these commandments were given to Moshe. The reason is that it would not add anything to our understanding of Peshat. However, in Parshas Ki Siso, Shemos 33:11 where the dates do concern our understanding, Rashi goes into great detail.

9. See Rashi's comments to Parshas Ki Siso, Shemos 32:1. There Rashi writes that Moshe descended from the mountain on the 40th day within six hours from sunrise.

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They are not objects which can be collected one at a time. The fact is that despite this, quite often the Torah refrains from using the causative form of the verb to gather. For example, Hashem tells Moshe<sup>10</sup> "gather 70 people from among the elders of the Jews." The Torah then says<sup>11</sup> "and he gathered 70 people." The same form is used earlier<sup>12</sup>; "go and gather the elders of the Jews." Why specifically in our verse is there a need to use the causative form of the verb?

### The Explanation

Without Rashi's explanation we would have a completely different understanding of what the Torah is telling us here. We would have understood that the assembly for which the people were gathered took place on Yom Kippur itself.

We would have thought so for two reasons. First of all, as we said earlier the zealous hasten to perform Mitzvos. Who is more zealous in the performance of Hashem's commandments than Moshe Rabbeinu? That would certainly seem to be a good reason for him to gather the Jews immediately upon his descent from the mountain. Furthermore, this verse does use the causative form of the verb. As we pointed out in the questions, this form of verb is not always used for assembling or gathering people. The Torah seems to be emphasizing the fact that this gathering came about by itself. It was indirectly caused by Moshe Rabbeinu. Can we begin to imagine the excitement and commotion which must have been caused by Moshe descending the mountain and approaching the camp with the new tablets in hand? This certainly would have caused every Jew to stop whatever he was doing and approach Moshe. This certainly could have been described by the Torah's words that "Moshe caused the Jews to be assembled."

That is the reason that Rashi must help us understand what the Torah is *truly* conveying here. Granted, that (in Rashi's words) "one does not assemble people directly, but rather they are assembled through one's speech." However, in order to be able to even say that Moshe Rabbeinu caused them to be gathered, there had to be some action on his part, at least speech as Rashi says. His descent from the mountain was not enough. As Rashi says, "this is because one does not assemble people directly, but rather they are assembled through one's speech." What the Torah is discussing is the next day, when Moshe *told* them to gather together. This was when Moshe called upon the Jews to reach their complete atonement by building G-d's dwelling place down below.

Who among us can imagine the joy which reigned in the Jewish camp? They were finally reunited with Moshe! They had received the second set of tablets, meaning Torah. In a way the joy of the second tablets was even greater than that of the first. Rashi tells us that<sup>13</sup> "On the tenth of Tishri the Holy One blessed be He was

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10. Parshas Beha'aloscho, Bamidbar 11:16.

11. Parshas Beha'aloscho, Bamidbar 11:24.

12. Parshas Shemos, Shemos 3:16.

13. Parshas Ki Siso, Shemos 33:11.

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appealed to Israel joyfully and wholeheartedly. He told Moshe ‘I have forgiven, as you have spoken.’ He gave Moshe the second tablets, and Moshe descended.” It marked the fact that Hashem had forgiven us. We spent the day with Moshe immersed in the words of Torah which he had heard from Hashem. We spent the day rejoicing with him over finally having attained forgiveness from G-d. The next day, the day after Yom Kippur, Moshe called us together once again. At that point we were able to get down to business. We were ready to begin working on the Tabernacle, i.e. Hashem’s physical manifestation in this world.

### **A Deeper Lesson from Rashi**

Rashi provides us with a tremendous lesson in our daily service of Hashem. There are those who are totally involved in Torah study. At the time of learning, we must be completely involved in our learning, just as the Jews were when Moshe came down from the mountain.

However, this does not suffice. We see that the very day after Yom Kippur, immediately after our learning, we had to get busy with the world, building Hashem’s Sanctuary.

*(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel, 5725)*

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Mr. **Sholom Moshe** ben Reb **Shlomo Meir** Hacoheh ע"ה **Cohen**

Passed away on Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 13 Shevat, 5779

May His Soul be bound in the Eternal Bond of Life

\*

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## מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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## לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם" חיים ועדן עודד שיחיו מאריס

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## נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו מאריס

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## לעילוי נשמת

ר' שלום משה בן ר' שלמה מאיר הכהן ע"ה כהן

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ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

\*

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתו שיחיו