

בס"ז

# THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

# Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei

25 Adar, 5780 – March 21, 2020

Compiled from the works of  
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**The Lubavitcher Rebbe**

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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi  
Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei  
Likkutei Sichos Volume 6, Pages 221 – 224**

**Rashi in His Own Words**

שמות ל"ה, ד': וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-עֲצַת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יְהוָה הִדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה ה' לֵאמֹר:  
רש"י ד"ה זה הדבר אשר צוה ה' : לי לאמר לכם:

**Shemos 35:4:** And Moshe spoke to the entire community of the children of Israel, saying: "This is the word that Hashem has commanded to say:

**Rashi Heading - This is the word that the Lord has commanded:** me to say to you.

**Synopsis**

In this week's Torah portion, Moshe tells the Jewish people that he<sup>1</sup> "spoke to the entire community of the children of Israel, saying, 'This is the word that Hashem has commanded to say.'" Rashi cites the words from the verse "this is the word that Hashem has commanded" and explains that G-d commanded these words "to me, to say to you." A number of commentaries explain that Rashi is bothered by the fact that Torah says "*this* is the word." The word "this" refers to a word which Moshe will say immediately. In other words, G-d commanded Moshe to relay to the Jewish people the very next verse; "Take (second person) from yourselves an offering to the Lord." However, Hashem's commandment to Moshe was to<sup>2</sup> "Speak to the Children of Israel and have them (third person) take for me an offering." This being the case, how is it possible to say that "*this* is the word." Moshe seems to have changed Hashem's words!

That is why Rashi explains that "*this* is the word" refers back the words "to me." It is referring to the words that Hashem previously said to Moshe "and have them take for me an offering." The words "to say" begin something new. Moshe is to relay to the Jewish people the same content which Hashem told him, but in different words; namely "Take from yourselves an offering to Hashem."

However, this explanation has its difficulties. When Hashem told Moshe that "this is the word," He did not necessarily mean the same exact words. The Hebrew word דברים can be

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1. Our Parshah, Shemos 35:4.  
2. Parshas Terumah, Shemos 25:2.

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translated as either "words" or as "concepts, ideas." Whatever "this is the word" modifies is irrelevant. G-d told Moshe to tell the Jews to donate offerings, which he did! He was not commanded to repeat the words in a particular grammatical form.

Rashi is clarifying a totally different issue. The portion begins with Moshe gathering the Jews together. One would expect that Moshe would immediately command the Jews regarding the building of the Mishkan, but he doesn't. He begins with a discussion about Shabbos, in order to teach us that the building of the Mishkan does not override keeping Shabbos. When he begins speaking, and says<sup>3</sup> "these are the things that G-d commanded to do," that should suffice for both topics being commanded, Shabbos and the Mishkan, yet it doesn't. After the first few verses which discuss Shabbos, it says<sup>4</sup> "this is the word which the Lord has commanded to say."

Rashi is teaching us that the verses regarding Shabbos apply equally to Moshe and all of the other Jews, as is generally the case. However, regarding the commandments of actually donating and physically building of the Mishkan, Rashi explains to us that "this is the word that Hashem has commanded to me, to say to you." Moshe was commanded to tell us the commands, but not to actually perform them.

### **Rashi's Explanation**

In this week's Torah portion, Moshe tells the Jewish people<sup>5</sup> "Moshe spoke ... this is the word that Hashem has commanded to say." Rashi cites the words from the verse "this is the word that Hashem has commanded" and explains that He commanded them "to me, to say to you." A number of Rashi's supercommentaries explain that Rashi is bothered by the fact that when the Torah says "*this* is the word," it refers to the words at the end of the verse "has commanded to say." In other words, G-d commanded Moshe to relay to the Jewish people the very next verse, "Take (second person) from yourselves an offering to the Lord." However, Hashem's commandment to Moshe was<sup>6</sup> "Speak to the Children of Israel and have them take (third person) for me an offering." This being the case, how is it possible to say that "*this* is the word," despite the fact that Moshe used different words!

Therefore Rashi is explaining, that "*this* is the word" actually modifies the words "to me."

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3. Our Parshah, Shemos 35:1.

4. See footnote 1.

5. Ibid.

6. See footnote 2.

It is referring to the words that Hashem previously said to Moshe "and have them take for me an offering." The words "to say" begin something new. Moshe is to relay to the Jewish people the same content which Hashem told him, but in different words; namely "Take from yourselves an offering to the Lord."

### **Difficulties in Understanding Rashi**

When Hashem told Moshe that "this is the word," He did not necessarily mean that Moshe must use the same exact words. The Hebrew word דברים can be translated as either "words" or as "concepts, ideas." Whatever "this is the word" modifies is irrelevant. G-d told Moshe to tell the Jews to donate offerings, which he did! He was not commanded to repeat the words in a particular grammatical form.

As we find so often in Rashi's commentary, he wrote it to explain Peshat; the simple meaning of the Torah. He is answering all questions which may be asked by a total beginner. If he is explaining which words "this is the word" are modifying, why does he not explicitly say so?

### **The Explanation**

Rashi is clarifying a totally different issue. Our Parshah begins with Moshe gathering the Jews together. One would expect that Moshe would immediately command the Jews regarding the building of the Mishkan, but he doesn't. He begins with a discussion about Shabbos. This teaches us that as important as it is to build the Mishkan, it does not override keeping Shabbos. When he begins speaking, and says<sup>7</sup> "these are the things that G-d commanded to do," that should suffice for both topics being commanded, Shabbos and the Mishkan, yet it doesn't. After the first few verses which discuss Shabbos, the Torah seemingly repeats<sup>8</sup> "this is the word which the Lord has commanded to say." Furthermore, the Torah tells us<sup>9</sup> that "these are the things that G-d commanded to do." In the verse we are discussing tells us that "this is the word which the Lord has commanded to say." Both of these seem to have the exact same content. Nonetheless, there is a major difference between the two. Whenever the Torah says "לאמר - has commanded to say," it always means that one must repeat it to others.

Rashi is teaching us that the verses regarding Shabbos apply equally to Moshe and all of the other Jews, as is generally the case. However, regarding the commandments of actually

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7. Our Parshah, Shemos 35:1.

8. See footnote 1.

9. See footnote 3.

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donating and physically building of the Mishkan, Rashi explains to us that "this is the word that Hashem has commanded to me, to say to you." In other words, Moshe was commanded to tell us these commandments. However, he was not commanded to actually perform them. This also explains something that Rashi says further on<sup>10</sup>, that "Moshe had done no work in the Mishkan."

There are, however, two remaining questions. The first, more obvious question is why? How can we say that Moshe was not involved with the Mishkan? He was more involved with its building than anyone else! He is the one that erected it. Yet we say that he was the one and only Jew who did not participate in the building of the Mishkan? Secondly, when the leader of each tribe brought presents for the dedication of the Altar, Aharon was very upset about being excluded. Yet we do not find anywhere that Moshe was upset about being excluded from the building of the Mishkan. Why? We can answer both of these questions based on the deep mysteries hidden within the Torah.

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

Moshe's entire being was Torah. Therefore he was the one and only who received the Torah from Hashem for all Jews in all generations. Our Sages tell us<sup>11</sup> that even "young students studying Torah are not permitted to neglect their learning to build the Bais Hamikdosh." That is the reason that not being involved in the building of the Tabernacle did not bother Moshe. The entire point was that his level, that of Torah, is even higher than the Mishkan.

However, he was the one and only that could convey this important commandment, this part of the Torah to the Jews. The reason that Hashem told it to me, was in order that I would be able to command it to you.

Furthermore this provides us with a lesson for all times. There are those who can, and must, make Torah their constant occupation. For one who can, this is an even higher form of Divine service than transforming the "gold, silver and copper" of the world into a sanctuary for G-d. Nevertheless, this does not exempt them from the obligation to teach others. This does not free them of their obligation pass on Hashem's words, to teach Torah to others. They must teach others who are not exclusively devoted to Torah study how to transform this physical world into a

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10. Parshas Pekudei, Shemos 39:33.

11 Talmud Shabbos, 119, b

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sanctuary for Hashem. Not only will sharing their Torah with others improve their own study, but that is the reason for which it was given to them.

*(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel and Shabbos Parshas, 5730)*

**I hope that you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.**

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