

Bridging Potential and Reality

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The parsha contains 122 verses. It begins with 3 verses speaking about Shabbat. Then the remaining 119 verses speak of the donations to the Sanctuary and the assembly and erection of the Mishkan.

A discerning eye will notice that the parshah is basically a repeat of Parshat Terumah. There the Torah speaks of the commandment to build a Sanctuary. In our parshah, VaYakheil, it repeats the construction of the Mishkan with just about the same verses and cantillations as in Terumah! Why?

Rebbe Nachman teaches that there exist two ideas. One is

called Koach (potential), and the second is called Poal (actual). Potential seems to be the greater of the two because one can design an invention to have awesome results. But the actual results, after the testing and the experiments to actualize that idea, are more restrained. (Take Jules Verne's submarine in his book, "20,000 Leagues under the Sea." His machine was far more advanced than the early versions of actual submarines.)

In Torah teachings, Koach/Potential is seen as "prior to Creation," when God envisioned the world as it should be when it emerges into reality. At that point, all was one, HaShem. The Poal/reality of this world is not the same; it seems to exist as a "separate entity" from HaShem. But, this reality is not a true reality; it only "seems" that way, it only seems to be separated from HaShem. Thus, in Koach all is one, in Poal there can be many, and our mission is to reveal the Unity of HaShem from within the diversity found in this world.

Thus the Torah first commands to build a Sanctuary. In God's commandment, we find the Potential of "prior to Creation," as the Zohar compares the Sanctuary to the Creation of the World. Then afterward, the people, the denizens of this world, the creation in actuality, has to be constructed and assembled so that we can find God's Unity in this world. Thus the Torah separates between Terumah, the Potential, and repeats in VaYakheil the actual construction of the Mishkan. This is to teach us the importance of our work and deeds that it is we who must build and erect our Sanctuaries in order to reveal God's Unity.

Have a great Shabbat