

LEAD TORAH Fresh Look at an Old Topic

The Old Topic we are taking a fresh look at is the extensive duplication in the Torah of the details of the Mishkan.

We have 236 p'sukim devoted to the topic in T'ruma, T'tzaveh, and the first third of Ki Tisa. Not counting the p'sukim about Shabbat.

Then, in Vayakhel and P'udei, we have 211 p'sukim devoted to the Mishkan. And that too, does not include the opening 3 p'sukim about Shabbat.

No small thing!

The way it seems to us - Jews who have read and studied Torah throughout the generations - is the following:

Simply put, the first time, it is a glimpse - bad word; it's a lot more than a glimpse - of what happened between G-d and Moshe Rabeinu on Har Sinai, during the first 40 days and 40 nights they spent together. No one else witnessed what happened there and no one else knew any of what was presented by G-d to Moshe. It would remain between G-d and Moshe until Moshe came down from the Mountain and began transmitted G-d's words and teachings to B'nei Yisrael. That was the plan.

but for us, it is different. Because of the Torah, we all became privy to that part of what happened during those 40 days and nights. At least to that part of the whole experience that G-d wanted us to know about. And this point is very important.

To digress for a moment and give a different example, to hopefully make

things clear. The bulk of Parshat Balak describes things that happened that no one of the multitude of B'nei Yisrael were witness to. We can even say that Moshe Rabeinu did not know what was happening. That is, until G-d decided to tell, so to speak.

By including that 95-pasuk parsha of Balak (the last 9 p'sukim are their own parsha, the goings on of which, the people definitely knew about) G-d was telling us about something He felt we should know about, even though we weren't primary participants or witnesses.

It's the same for the 236 p'sukim of T'ruma, T'tzaveh, and the first part of Ki Tisa. The point is that G-d wanted us to have those 236 p'sukim. That, even though all the details are repeated and contained in the second 211 p'sukim.

Pull out those 236 p'sukim (and the Shabbat ones that follow) and we would not be missing the details. We would have the command to build the Mikdash. What we wouldn't have, though, if the background and context. Those 236 p'ukim have as a backdrop, the events of Matan Torah, and before that the Exodus and Splitting of the Sea. We are able to see the Mishkan (Mikdash) as a lofty project to raise ourselves spiritually and be closer to G-d. We need to see it that way, before everything gets colored by the golden calf.

Once that happened, we need to see the Mikdash in a second context - not instead of, but side by side. Hence, 211.