

Parshas Vayakhel

This week's Parsha is Vayakhel, and it is Shabbos Mevorchim Adar 2. According to Rashi, Vayakhel happened the day after Yom Kippur after Moshe descended from Har Sinai with a second set of Luchos.

We know that Yom Kippur is called Yom Kipurim as if to say the holiness of Yom Kippur is like Purim, which means the holiness of Purim is superior if Yom Kippur is like Purim. The holiness of Purim doesn't come in the form of disengagement from work and complete engrossment in spirituality and prayer-like one would do on Yom Kippur through fasting and the commandments of the day. Instead, the day is filled with happiness and merriness- to the point where we should drink not to tell the difference between blessing Haman and cursing Mordechai.

At the beginning of the Parsha, Chassidus explains why it begins with the Mitzvah of Shabbos to teach us that for six days, one is involved in the mundane and for Shabbos, the person rests, but the weekly work isn't devoid of spirituality; instead, it is the time where we make ourselves a vessel through which to receive Hashem's blessings. Even with our mundane activities, the entire purpose of the week is to turn ourselves and completely engross ourselves in recognizing Hashem and that He is the master of the universe.

Whereas Yom Kippur itself is one day where we are forced into this frame of mind, 353 other days in the Jewish calendar are geared towards trying to

make our connection to Hashem in our regular lives. Purim is the culmination, in a way, of being able to act in a complete physical realm and overturn normalcy, which is so counterintuitive that we are safe to do so with utmost connection and belief in Hashem. Suppose you have achieved such a level of recognizing that Hashem is the Master of the Universe. In that case, even if you have become entirely intoxicated, you can turn on its head that, in Hashem's world, even Haman can be blessed and Mordechai the opposite. Because in Hashem's world, all is possible, and if everything is Hashem, then everything is good, even evil. But this can only happen, much like the entirely engrossing prayer of Yom Kippur once a year. But the preparation for this happens week in and week out when Shabbos tests us for our belief in Hashem. This means it is not a day in the calendar where we ought to believe in Hashem's kinship; we are given every week to come to Shabbos and recognize the same. And week in and week out, if we continue on this path and journey, our weeks are turned fully toward Hashem such that on a holiday like Purim, we can be so filled with happiness we can turn the world around to the opposites. Because even in the opposites, there is Hashem and, therefore, truth and goodness, even if we don't quite see it. It takes preparation and a lifetime of work.

So how fitting that we read this week's parsha in advance of Purim, just after Yom Kippur, to tell us that for six days, you work and are involved in the mundane, but on the seventh day, you rest and fully realize Hashem and His kingship because Shabbos is the ultimate weekly testament

to that, not just a singular day in the calendar.

The happiness we exude on Purim and in these months of Adar, for which this year we have 60 days to celebrate, is a key to getting into the world to come, as the Rebbe said in a Sichra on Shabbos Parshas Terumah (5752) that “the greatest joy a Jew can have is when he knows that in whatever situation he might be- even in the very lowest, in a world where outwardly it seems like, that it is a place of concealment of G-dliness, even so, the Jew is connected to Hashem, since even as he is found below, a soul in a body, he is the ‘only child’ of the King of all Kings...” as the Gemara in Taanis 22a recounted that the people who made others happy and rejoiced, had a place in the world to come.

In summary, while Yom Kippur is one day to sacrifice the day, and Purim is one day to recognize Hashem through happiness, even in an opposite way, the rest of the year is geared toward being able to achieve and acknowledge Hashem as the King of all Kings.

May the happiness of the months, weeks, and days be a blessing for all, and we are blessed with the ultimate Simcha with Mashiach and the freeing of the Hostages.