

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Vayakhel

22 Adar, 5785 – March 22, 2025

Compiled from the works of
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THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi Parshas Vayakhel

Likkutei Sichos Volume 6, Pages 221 – 224

Rashi in His Own Words

שמות ל"ה, ד': וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-עֲבֹדַת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יְהוָה הַדְּבָר 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 the Lord has commanded me to say to you.

Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Moshe tells the Jewish people that he¹ "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." Several commentaries explain that Rashi is bothered by Torah's saying, "*This* is the word." "This" refers to a word that Moshe will say immediately. In other words, G-d commanded Moshe to relay the following verse to the Jewish people: "Take (second person) from yourselves an offering to the Lord." However, Hashem's commandment to Moshe was to² "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 to the words "to me." It refers to the words Hashem previously said to Moshe, "and have them take for me an offering." The words "to say" begin something new. Moshe is to relay the same content Hashem told him to the Jewish people, but in different terms, 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 exact words. The Hebrew phrase דברים can be translated as either "words" or as "concepts, ideas." Whatever "this is the word" modifies is irrelevant. G-d

1. Our Parshah, Shemos 35:4.

2. Parshas Terumah, Shemos 25:2.

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told Moshe to tell the Jews to donate offerings, which he did! Hashem did not command Moshe to repeat the words in a particular grammatical form.

Rashi is clarifying a 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. Moshe begins by discussing Shabbos to teach us that constructing the Mishkan does not override keeping Shabbos. When he starts speaking and says³, "These are the things that G-d commanded to do," that should suffice for both topics that Hashem commanded, Shabbos and the Mishkan, yet it doesn't. After the first few verses, which discuss Shabbos, it says⁴, "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 other Jews, as is generally the case. However, regarding the commandments of donating and physically building the Mishkan, Rashi explains that "this is the word that Hashem has commanded to me, to say to you." Hashem commanded Moshe to tell us the commands but not perform them.

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Moshe tells the Jewish people⁵, "Moshe spoke ... this is the word 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." Several 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 next verse, "Take (second-person) from yourselves an offering to the Lord." However, Hashem's commandment to Moshe was⁶ "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" even though Moshe used different words?!

Therefore, Rashi explains that "*this* is the word" actually modifies the words "to me." It refers to the words Hashem previously said to Moshe, "and have them take for me an offering."

3. Our Parshah, Shemos 35:1.

4. See footnote 1.

5. Ibid.

6. See footnote 2.

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The words "to say" begin something new. Moshe is to relay the same content Hashem told him to the Jewish people, but in different terms, 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 exact words. The Hebrew phrase 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! Hashem did not command him 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 the questions that a total beginner may ask. If he explains which words "this is the word" are modifying, why does he not explicitly say so?

The Explanation

Rashi is clarifying a 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 necessary as building the Mishkan is, it does not override keeping Shabbos. When he starts speaking and says⁷, "These are the things that G-d commanded to do," that should suffice for both topics Hashem commanded, Shabbos and the Mishkan, yet it doesn't. After the first few verses which discuss Shabbos, the Torah seemingly repeats⁸, "This is the word which the Lord has commanded to say."

Furthermore, the Torah tells us⁹ that "these are the things that G-d commanded to do." The verse discusses that "this is the word which the Lord has commanded to say." Both of these seem to have the same content. Nonetheless, there is a significant 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 other Jews, as is generally the case. However, regarding the commandments of donating and physically building the Mishkan, Rashi explains that "this is the word that Hashem has commanded to me, to

7. Our Parshah, Shemos 35:1.

8. See footnote 1.

9. See footnote 3.

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say to you." In other words, Hashem commanded Moshe to tell us these commandments; however, He did not command Moshe to perform them. This also explains something that Rashi says further on:¹⁰ "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! Moshe is the one who erected it. Yet we say that he was the 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 building 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 only one who received the Torah from Hashem for all Jews in all generations. Our Sages tell us¹¹ that even "young students studying Torah are not permitted to neglect their learning to build the Bais Hamikdosh." That is why Moshe did not care that he was not involved in building the Tabernacle. The entire point was that his level, that of Torah is even higher than the Mishkan.

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

Furthermore, this provides us with a lesson for all times. Some can and must make Torah their constant occupation. This is an even higher form of Divine service for one who can transform the world's "gold, silver, and copper" 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 responsibility to pass on Hashem's words and teach Torah to others. They must teach others who are not exclusively devoted to Torah study how to transform this physical world into a sanctuary for Hashem. Not

10. Parshas Pekudei, Shemos 39:33.

11 Talmud Shabbos, 119, b

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only will sharing their Torah with others improve their study, but that is why Hashem gave it to them.

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

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

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THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE**

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IN HONOR OF

the Soldiers of Tzivos Hashem **Chaim, Aiden Oded, and Zacharya Matan** שׂיחׂוֹי Morris

May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride
to their family and a Torah light to their community

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DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Menachem M. and Chaya Mushka** שׂיחׂוֹי

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IN HONOR OF

Mrs. Esther שׂתחׂי **Sharabani**

May she go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

*

DEDICATED BY HER SON

Mr. Gershon (Geri) שׂי **Bentov**

מוקדש לזכות

כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

* * *

לזכות

חיילי "צבאות השם"

חיים, עזן עודד וזכרי' מתן שיחיו

מאריס

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נדפס ע"י הוריהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו

מאריס

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לזכות

מרת אסתר שתחי' שרבני

לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות עד ביאת גואל צדק
ומתוך בריאות הנכונה ולשנת ברכה והצלחה בגו"ר

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נדפס ע"י בנה

ר' גרשון שי' בן טוב