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1. Sidra today primarily an accounting that Moses gives of how he spent the moneys donated by the people, in form of SHKALIM, for construction of Mishkan. It is a prosaic matter, dealing with costs and construction. And yet Midrash thought it important enough to quote an oral tradition dealing with this era & particularly this episode. It is prosaic, yes, but illuminating too, of importance to every J.community USA, & perhaps especially to Springfield.
2. Midrash: Moses overlooks 1,775 Shkalim. Misplaced appropriation. HIS'CHIL YO-SHEIV UMASMAH, AMAR: ACH'SHAV YISRAEL MOTZ'IN Y'DEIHEN LEIMOR MOSHEH NATLAN HEI'IR HAKADOSH BARUCH HU ES EINAV V'RAAH OSAM ASUYIN VAVIM LA'AMUDIM... OSAH SHAAH NISPAYSU YISRAEL AL MLECHES HA'MISHKAN.....
3. To understand why Tradition recorded this big issue over the VAVIM or hooks used in construction of this portable Temple, must first understand that Judaism has always taken MISHKAN & appurtenances as being symbols - sometimes of Universe, or Man - but usually of cong. of Israel, KNESSES YISRAEL, J.community & to understand this episode of the Missing Hooks, must first know what the HOOK may symbolize in total structure of a typical J.community. & must understand that if Mishkan is valid symbol of Israel, then it must apply today too. What, then, does HOOK stand for?
4. Not require great imagination see how our Mishkan, our J.cmnty, can be represented in form of the Mishkan. Pillars (AMUDIM) - physical survival Jews vs anti-semitism, whether Europe, Egypt, USA. Altar (MIZBEIACH) - State of Israel where people have sacrificed so much in order to survive as independent state. Roof - shelter impoverished, social services. Ark - synagogue. Ornaments - recreational institutions supported by Shkalim of J.community. All are necessary for firm Mishkan, for thriving J.community.
5. But VAVIM, hooks -least glamorous, least attractive or dramatic. SHEKEL-giver wants his Shekel to go to that which immediately appealing, urgent, obviously dramatic. Hooks, freinds, are that which hold the whole Mishkan together prevent roof from collapsing, curtains from dropping to ground, Ark from falling apart, ornaments from wallowing in mud, Altar from being torn from interior of Mishkan. HOOKS ARE SYMBOL OF JEWISH SCHOOLS? OF EDUCATION

VAVIM or J.schools have little material evidence of their importance - only some teachers, students books. Not as glorious as the wars of the State, as the roof over head of the poor, as urgent as curtain for refuge, as impressive as Temple structures today, as dramatic as self-interest in fighting common anti-semitic enemies or as appealing to convenience & comfort as ornaments of Recreational Judaism. Small compared to all else.

YET WITHOUT THEM? WITHOUT J. EDUCATION & STUDY TORAH? A JEWISH COMMUNITY CANNOT EXIST? THERE IS NO WAY OF RELATING ONE PART TO NEXT? THERE IS NO GUARANTEE OF SURVIVAL AS JEWS. IT IS THE MORTAR THAT HOLDS STRUCTURE TOGETHER.

WITHOUT HOOKS OF JEWISH ED THERE IS NO CONTINUITY BETWEEN ALL URGENT & VITAL PHASES OF THE WORK OF THE ENTIRE J.COMMUNITY. THERE CAN BE NO MISHKAN IF THERE IS NO JEWISH SCHOOL - SUPPORTED BY THE SAME SHKALIM THAT GO TO ADVANCE THE OTHER CAUSES REPRESENTED IN THE MISHKAN.

6. Now, friends, can begin to understand the Midrash, and begin to appreciate the urgency which Tradition painted of L'affaire VAVIM, why Moses so overwrought about this special appropriation of hooks. The situation is not really ancient. It is almost completely contemporary.

****Moses had overlooked fact of his use of community funds, of Shkalim, for VAVIM...suddenly began to worry. He was challenged on it by those whose interests included everything from Altar to Pillar to Ark to Ornaments - from Israel to Defense work to Refugees to Temples to Centers. Everything but the small hooks, the little given to Jewish education. Was worried they'd say: MOSHEH NATLAN - he's prejudiced, selfish, pursuing own narrow interests, that's why took off 1,775 shkalim for hooks when should go for better altar, stronger pillars or fancier ornaments. And began to think: what will I tell them? Perhaps they are right - so many urgent matters, how do I have right to spend so many shkalim on study of Torah.**

****then, amidst his doubts and worries, G-d suddenly enlightened him - showed him that J.education was deserving of 1,775 shkalim but of much more. Pointed to VAVIM - hooks. See, Moses, that's what J.education is - a hook, a link in the chain without which all else is doomed.**

**** And so Moses was assuaged. & he turned to his people & explained to them the function of education & its great value & worthiness. And had Moses been living today, would have said it in this way: Look, friends, you are giving so many Shkalim for the Mishkan, for complete J. commty. True: must have Ark or synagogues. Without them we are nothing. Altar is of greatest urgency - Israel must survive as a State. Same for Pillars (vs anti-semitism) and Curtains (refugee) and Ornaments. But the J.school undramatic tho it may seem, is the hook. It links past & present - parent and child....between Israel and Diaspora (Wed.someone asked Hyman will my children love Israel as I do? Ans: No, if no J.education where they will learn what Eretz Yisrael has always meant to us). Without these hooks, your ornaments become secularized, no relation to rest Mishkan, no matter how much talk about "Jewish content". Without VAVIM Synagogue isolated from life its people, soon none understand what it has to say..... WITHOUT VAVIM? JEWISH EDUCATION & SCHOOLS? YOUR WHOLE MISHKAN WILL COLLAPSE? AND ALL YOU HAVE PUT INTO WILL HAVE BEEN IN VAIN. STOP THIS PITTANCE OF A MERE 1,775 SHKALIM FOR EDUCATION AND YOU ARE OUT OF BUSINESS AS A JEWISH COMMUNITY - YOUR MISHKAN? YOUR TOTAL CMNTY IS THEN EMPTIED OF CONTENT AND WILL SURELY FALL APART NO MATTER HOW MANY SHKALIM YOU PUT INTO IT.....**

****When Moses had done that, brought that message to the people at large & not only to those of special and narrow interests, NISPAYSU KOL YISRAEL AL MLECHESH HAMISHKAN - were all Jews, no matter what own particular preferences, satisfied. It slaved the Mishkan - it brought PIYUSS - or Peace, Unity - to the entire community. Without that message & its acceptance, Moses discovered, there could be neither a Mishkan nor Piyuss, neither a functioning, thriving cmnty or peace and fellowship.**

7. Friends, in appealing to you to recall this teaching of Moses as to the importance of the VAVIM...I am not being parochial and exclusivist. Every activity of the total J. cmnty desreves community support, none excluded. It is unnecessary for me to affirm the importance of the Synagogue. From this Pulpit we have more than once pleaded the cause of Israel as a State and the people of Israel who are being driven from their homes. All activities of the cmnty are important, some more so some less.

But what I do say is this: do not omit J.education. You are the cmnty. Make sure that you understand the importance of Jewish schools as links in the chain of centuries and hooks that tie American Jewry to Israel and the various agencies in USA and Springfield to each other.

Do not overlook the VAVIM in appropriating your SHKALIM merely because they sound less dramatic, for to do so is no less than sinful. Let us resist tendency to donate only on a crisis basis. ..only to most glamorous and to biggest.....story R.Elimelech & Mezritcher in "fun die chassidisher otzross", p. 264.

8. This Sabbath is a double occasion - because in regular Torah reading we learn of the Mishkan, representing the J.Community, and the special Parshass Shkalim, the commandment to give. In recalling these matters, let us remember too the Tradition of how G-d instructed Moses in the giving of Shkalim. He showed Moses MATBEIA SHEL EISH - a shekel made of fire, & said, KA'ZEH YITNU.... Charity is sometimes playing with fire, because it can be, like fire, either creative or destructive. What determines the outcome is how we give. Let us obey the KA'ZEH YITNU - give in G-d's way, as he would want us to, and then our giving will be effective, our Mishkan strong and durable, and our work - blessed.

תקנות - 46 מיום 11/11/57
 הנהלת הקהילה - ישיבת אור ישראל
 100 סנטרל בולדינג, אשדוד
 כח'מנחם אביב
 יוני 1957, ישיבת אור ישראל