

initially starts with the completion of the מצות of the קרבנות to the כהנים. These are very intricate and detailed instructions, which are completed by רביעי. Then, in רביעי, the תורה resumes the narrative of preparing the משכן and the כהנים for the עבודה. It says (8:3) וְאֵת כָּל הָעֵדָה הִקְהֵל אֶל פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד - a seemingly simple פסוק, but upon reflection, it is quite astounding. The entire congregation gathered in front of the אהל מוֹעֵד. How big was the אהל מוֹעֵד? Approximately 50 by 100 אמות. And yet, we are talking about three million people. How could that possibly have happened?

The answer is simple. How is הקדוש ברוך הוא greater than עוג מלך הבשן? עוג מלך הבשן can fit into a mouse hole, but עוג מלך הבשן cannot. רש"י on the פסוק alludes to this and says: זֶה אֶחָד מִן הַמְקוֹמוֹת שֶׁהַחֲזִיק מֵעֵט אֵת - Hashem can fit all of ישראל into a suitcase if He so desires. The הקדוש ברוך הוא performed this נס to ensure that all of ישראל could participate in the inauguration, the חנוכת הבית, and the חנוכת העבודה of the כהנים.

There are two important lessons to take from this. First, הקדוש ברוך הוא desires the participation of every single Jew because each and every one of us is significant. Second, הקדוש ברוך הוא's גבורה is evident even in the smallest details - like this seemingly simple פסוק, which hides within it an incredible נס. This is Hashem's דרך, to embed profound miracles in the mundane.

There's a story that I saw recently in the TorahAnytimes Tetzaveh 5785, which I thought I would share with you, keeping these two topics in mind. It's a story from Rabbi YY Jacobson, a גאון wonderful, and it's a story about a painter named Elyasaf Mariah.

"A kind and humble man, a painter living in southern Israel. His story is inspiring. For years, the relentless barrage of rockets from Gaza had left the residents of southern Israel with mere seconds, five, ten, twenty, at most thirty, to seek cover. In response to this ever-present threat, Israel constructed מיגוניות, stand-alone steel-reinforced bomb shelters on nearly every street corner in the south designed to withstand artillery fire. Picture a young mother and her children huddled inside one of these shelters as rockets rained down around them. Though these structures offered physical protection, their stark gray concrete exteriors only added to the sense of fear and isolation.

Enter Elyasaf, the painter. With his palette and brushes in hand, he began transforming these shelters - both inside and out. A flock of birds in flight. The brilliance of a sunrise. A splash of vibrant color. A child's laughter immortalized in paint. A graceful animal. A majestic mountain. A breathtaking landscape.

With each stroke, he infused these lifelines with warmth and serenity, reminding the trembling Jews within that beyond these walls, there was still beauty in the world. And he was meticulous - each shelter bore a unique painting, giving it a distinct identity and character. The community cherished him, grateful for his kindness and sensitivity. And that was that - until the horrors of October 7th.

Sirens blared. Thousands of rockets rained down upon Israel. Civilians fled to the nearest מיגוניות, desperate for safety. At the Novo Music Festival, thousands of young Jews ran in all directions, searching for shelter. Moments later, the unthinkable became reality. Terrorists had infiltrated Israel in a brutal massacre, a modern-day pogrom.

Huddled together inside these bomb shelters, panicked civilians began making frantic calls. "Please come save us. We're inside a מיגונית, a bomb shelter." "Where are you? Which shelter?" came the desperate replies. But how could anyone find them? With hundreds of identical shelters scattered across the region, locating a single one was like searching for a needle in a haystack.



The trapped civilians didn't have an address. The only thing they could describe was the artwork - the images painted on the walls of their shelter. Elyasaf's phone erupted with calls and messages from frantic family members. The only clue we have is a painting, they told him. Our loved ones sent us pictures, a butterfly with two small boys chasing it, a girl in a green dress holding a white balloon. Call after call described one of Elyasaf's murals, but he knew exactly where each shelter was because he remembered every painting he had created. Shelter by shelter, he guided families and rescue teams to their precise locations, helping save countless lives.

We often fail to recognize the true impact of our work. Had you asked Elyasaf on October 6 2023, "What do you do for a living?" He likely would have answered, "I'm just a simple painter, nothing special". But he couldn't have realized the significance of what he had been doing. He would think he was merely adding color to concrete walls. In reality though, he had unknowingly created a life saving system, a network of markers that on one of the darkest days in Jewish history became beacons of help and hope. Because wherever we are, and whatever we do, is guided by השגחה פרטית. When we give our whole heart to our work, planting seeds of goodness, kindness and love, we can never fully grasp the magnitude of what we are accomplishing. Consider this, had the police contacted the chief of staff of the IDF, the Israeli Ministry of Defense, the head of the Mossad, the head of the Shin Bet, even the prime minister himself, not a single one of them would have been able to locate those shelters. There was only one person in all of Israel who could, Elyasaf Mariah. The גמרא teaches us, every person should always say, בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז). We often struggle to believe this. Really? For me, the entire world was created? But Elyasaf's story proves it so. There was something only he could accomplish - something no one else in Israel, or even the world, could have done. We often see ourselves as ordinary people, simply trying to make it through life. This is a shallow perspective.

אידישקייט teaches us that Hashem tells each of us, "I need you. No matter where you are, what you do, your emotional state, your circumstances, your presence in this world is purposeful. You are here to save lives, to lift hearts, to bring light into darkness." Like Elyasaf, you have something to offer that no one else can. Hashem is waiting for you to paint your picture and to illuminate the world with your unique light."

Good Shabbos!

