



TORAT IMECHA: WOMEN'S TORAH WEEKLY

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The fire crackles cozily in the hearth as Mamma adjusts her snow white kerchief and smoothes down her frilly lace apron. The fragrant scent of freshly baked challahs and bubbling chicken soup hovers in the air. Two rosy cheeked little girls, faces freshly scrubbed, their long blond braids neatly plaited, gaze at Mamma, eyes alight with awe, as they cuddle close to her. She is cradling her well worn Tzenah Urenah in her hands while painting a vivid picture of the weekly Parsha.

Fast forward into the 21st Century...Ipods, mp3's, blackberries, notebook computers, cell-phones. Somehow the whirr of modern technology has us running on a continuous treadmill all week long. And then comes Shabbat, a foretaste of Gan Eden. A cloud of serene peace and sanctity envelops us in a welcoming embrace. On this special day we connect to our source, draw from the deep wellsprings of spiritual wisdom, and become one with our foremothers of yesteryear who traversed the byways and pathways of our holy Torah with joy, wonder, and special reverence.

Sink into your favorite chair, take a sip of steaming tea, and enjoy our premiere issue of Torat Imecha.

Esther - A Woman's Hidden Power

Based on Rabbi Hershel Reichman's Chassidut shiur on Naaleh.com

By: Dina Weiss

The Shem Mishmuel asks an intriguing question. Why did Hashem need both Mordechai and Esther to bring about the Purim salvation? Couldn't one person have accomplished the same feat?

The struggle of Amalek and the Jewish nation is the age old existential battle between evil and G-dliness. Amalek's sole goal is to uproot Hashem, the Torah, and the Jewish people .

The Chassidic writings teach that man's existence is expressed via three levels of the soul: *nefesh* - *maaseh* (action), *ruach-dibbur* (speech), and *neshama-machshava* (thought). There is a higher fourth level, called *chayah*-the vibrant nameless part of the soul, which reaches beyond the physical world to connect to Hashem in the upper realms.

When various enemies such as Bilam and Balak tried to harm the Jewish nation, Moshe

and Aharon defeated them using the powers of the three levels of the soul, *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshama*.

Amalek personifies evil, and as such, must be combated with the strongest ammunition possible. When Amalek battled the Jewish nation in the desert, Moshe stood on the peak of a hill and raised his hands to heaven to defeat the enemy. He did not move, and he did not make any plans. He utilized the nameless potent weapon of *chayah*, tapping into the strength of the upper spheres where the evil impurity of Amalek can never reach. It was with the Heavenly power of *chayah* that Moshe Rabbenu defeated Amalek.

Haman utilized the three powers of the soul, thought, speech, and action, to plot, convince and bribe Achashveirosh to destroy the Jewish nation. Mordechai, who possessed a spark of

the soul of Moshe, utilized these forces to discern the heavenly decree, pray for salvation, and lead the Jewish people to true repentance.

Yet the ultimate salvation needed to come through Esther, whose name derives from the root word '*haster*', concealed. She utilized the hidden power of *chayah* to defeat Amalek in the upper realms. Her elevated spiritual stature, divine inspiration, and angelic qualities ensured that the Jewish people would ultimately prevail.

That is why Hashem needed both Mordechai and Esther to bring the Purim salvation. Whereas Mordechai battled Amalek in the lower world, Esther drew down the otherworldly power of *chayah* to affect a complete victory.

PARSHAT TETZAVEH – THE SILENT PAIR

Based on a shiur at Naaleh.com by Mrs. Shira Smiles

By: Channie Koplowitz Stein

The priestly garments described in Parshat Tezaveh , symbolize the Divine Service of every Jew. Specifically, the *ephod* (apron) and *choshen* (breastplate) represent the dual nature of the Jewish nation as both a collection of individuals and a united community.

The two stones on the shoulders of the *ephod* represent the totality and unity of Am Yisroel, with the names of six tribes engraved on each shoulder, while the breastplate had twelve individual stones, a different one for each of the twelve tribes. The entire nation must face upward, toward Hakodosh boruch Hu, as the stones on the shoulders. But that goal can only be achieved by recognizing the individual, unique characteristics of each tribe and each person and how he can contribute to the beautiful mosaic that completes service to Hashem.

We live in a physical world, but we aspire to create spirituality. The *ephod*, facing upward

and outward, represents *olam hazeh*, the physical world, which we must use to create a spiritual home worthy of the Divine Presence. The *choshen* lies on the heart of the Kohen Gadol, and as such represents the inner world of every Jew, which aspires to G-dliness. Together they form the simplest social unit necessary for building a "*mikdash me'at*", a spiritual home. The apron-like structure of the *ephod* represents the role of the woman. It is her responsibility to see that the home remains pure and clean, to create an environment of spirituality, while the husband must elevate the home by injecting it with Torah.

Just as it takes every member of the family to create and maintain the proper atmosphere in the home, so does it take all the different tribes together to reach the goal of making the entire earth a place of holiness. Each stone on the breastplate was different, for each tribe was different, and each contributed its own unique

character towards the achievement of shared goals. For example, the silence of Binyamin could be paired with the speech of Reuben. Each could bring his own salvation in the appropriate time. Reuben saved Joseph with his power of speech, by convincing his brothers not to kill Joseph, while Binyamin's descendent, Esther, saved the Jewish Nation with her silence, never revealing that she was the descendent of King Saul.

We need the speech of Moshe teaching Torah paired with the controlled silence of Aharon. We need to operate in the outer, physical world of the *ephod* while maintaining the integrity of the inner world of the *choshen*. We need to value each individual, but understand that our strength lies in our unity and in working together for our national mission. May we be zocheh soon to see the return of the kohain in his vestments performing the service in the Beis Hamikdash.

Rebbetzin's Perspective Part 2:

Excerpted from Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller's Question and Answer series on Naaleh.com

Question

I heard a story about a Rabbi, it may have been the Chofetz Chaim, who wished to change the world. Then, realizing that was impossible, wanted to change his community. Then realizing that too was a foregone dream, wanted to change his family. Until he finally realized his real goal in life was to change himself. He accomplished just that, which I think is the point of the story. He wouldn't have gotten around to changing himself if all his efforts would have been invested in others. However if this is the Chofetz Chaim or another great Rabbi, then he did actually change others and in fact is still affecting change today long after his death, even

though he decided to work on himself. How do we as women and mothers go about changing ourselves when most of our lives are dedicated to changing others? Don't we need to focus primarily on developing our husbands and children?

Answer

Ultimate self-improvement is best accomplished by giving. Being a developed person means finding the part in yourself that is in Hashem's image and giving it a voice. The most accessible of all of Hashem's attributes is *midat hachessed*-our capacity to give. Working on yourself without *midat hachessed* is almost impossible. Therefore, the more you work on the development of others, the more you

awaken the kind, transcendental, and compassionate aspects of your soul. The Rabbi could have just as easily said the same thing in reverse. The more one gives, the more one grows. It seems to work in both directions, provided you accomplish it honestly. It is very easy to develop others out of the will to give forth and not as an act of kindness. In the same vein, we enjoy watering plants but don't necessarily want to be plants, we can make the mistake of wanting to change others but not wanting to change ourselves. In this sense, we are excluding ourselves from the process of change and growth. However, a person who approaches the act of giving honestly, will definitely develop as they develop others.

Shabbat Scenarios-Borer, Part I

Based on a Naaleh.com Hilchot Shabbat shiur and demonstration, by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

The *Melacha* of *Borer* is derived from the agricultural process of separating dirt and pebbles out of edible wheat grain kernels. This *melacha* applies to a mixture of at least two different types of items.

It is raining outside and you want to don your green raincoat. You open your front closet which is stuffed to the brim with a disorganized jumble of umbrellas, boots, coats, and rain-hats. You need to do some selecting, and it's Shabbat.

Here are three requirements to make it permissible:

- Select the *ochel* (the good part) from the *p'soles* (the bad part). *Just take your green coat.*
- Separate it for immediate use. *Grab it on your way out.*
- It needs to be performed by hand without any special instrument. *Don't use a fishing rod to fish it out.*

More Examples: An array of different types of fruit in a basket or a platter of different types of cold cuts arranged on one dish both constitute a situation where one can come to violate the prohibition of *Borer*. One may not take several pieces of fruit and/or slices of meat from the morning *seudah* meal and set it aside to eat later in the afternoon.

If one washes a mixture of different types of cutlery and places them in a drain rack, one may not subsequently sort them out and put them away on Shabbat.

Class Spotlight: Tehillim Perek 26

"Tehillim Series at Naaleh.com by Rabbi Avishai David
By: Devora Kaye



An accomplished Talmid Chacham and veteran educator, Rabbi Avishai David is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Torat Shraga in Bayit Vegan, Jerusalem. Rabbi David has contributed in a concrete way to the advancement of women's education as the founding Dean of Michlelet Mevasseret Yerushalayim and a popular lecturer at Michlala Jerusalem. Rabbi David teaches Sefer Tehillim and Sefer Yirmiyahu at Naaleh.com.

Sefer Tehillim is replete with tears, joy and praise for Hashem. A superficial reading will leave one unable to truly appreciate the uniqueness of each *perek* (chapter), as the praise and pleading seemingly repeat themselves again and again. Rabbi David employs a unique learning style where he utilizes a dazzling array of commentaries to break down every *perek* into its components and clarifies the distinctions between them. What emerges is a new understanding and appreciation of the precision and pathos contained in Sefer Tehillim. To date, Naaleh.com has

featured a series of five courses with 63 inspirational lectures on Tehillim.

In his latest class on Tehillim, Rabbi David sheds new light on the verse: "For Your kindness is before my eyes and I will walk in Your truth." (Tehillim 26:3). King David tells us that the root of Avodat Hashem (service of Hashem) is *Hakarat Hatov* recognition of the good that Hashem constantly bestows upon us. The Chovot Halevot writes that a Jew who is lacking in *Hakarat Hatov* is lacking in his very humanity and spiritual essence. The key to 'walking in Hashem's ways', is to recognize the debt of gratitude we owe Him.

In another explanation, the Ibn Ezra states that the word *V'hit'halachti* can be translated to mean *L'hargil*, to accustom oneself. What is the key to walking in Hashem's ways (emulating G-d)? Training oneself to do acts of kindness.

If a person has one dollar set aside to donate to charity, should he give it to one person or divide it into 100 pennies to give to 100 recipients? The Rambam answers that he should divide the money and give it to 100 needy people. He explains that charity not only benefits the recipient of the money, but also affects profound change in the giver. Therefore, the more a person trains himself to give, the more he develops as a giver. This is expressed in the words of King David -"Ki Chasdecha L'Neged Eina"- when I witness Your Kindness, "V'hislachti B'amitecha"- I train myself to emulate Your Truth, through repeatedly doing acts of kindness with others.