



Parshat Vayakel Pekudei: Conduit of Holiness

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

The *midrash* says that the name Betzalel indicates his wisdom. When Hashem commanded Moshe to make the *Mishkan*, Moshe changed the order that Hashem had commanded him and told Betzalel to first make the vessels and then the actual *Mishkan*. Betzalel responded that the way of the world is to first build a house and then furnish it. If he would make the vessels first there would be no place to put them. He suggested that perhaps Hashem told Moshe to first build the *Mishkan*. Moshe responded that Betzalel had been fittingly called so, as his name connotes that he stood "b'tzel Kel, in the shadow of Hashem," for he knew precisely how to interpret Hashem's word, as if he was in His shadow.

This *midrash* seems perplexing. What does the *midrash* mean that Moshe reversed the order, and that Betzalel understood that reversal? The *Mishkan* did not follow natural law. Why did Betzalel compare it to the way of the world? Additionally, the *Mishkan* was completed in *Kislev* but was not established until *Nissan*, so what difference did it make in which order the vessels or *Mishkan* were fashioned?

The Nefesh Hachaim explains that when

Hashem created the world His ultimate desire was for His presence to be found in every place in the lower world. His abode in the higher world is secondary. When Adam sinned, Hashem's presence was diminished and localized within the *Mishkan* and *Beit Hamikdash*, and He waits for the day when he can once again rest where He so desires. In *Kabalah* our world is called *olam hagalgalim*, a world of circles. The circle constantly moves but one stays within it and does not reach any further point. When a person moves along a straight line he can advance. Living a solely physical life is living within a circle. You don't go anywhere. Spiritual living is living with the understanding that life is about growing, pushing ourselves further, and experiencing a deeper dimension of self.

At *Matan Torah*, the Jews reached a level of Adam before the sin. Therefore Moshe reasoned that the Jews did not need a physical structure to serve Hashem since they could sense His presence everywhere. All they needed were the vessels to express their emotional inspiration in a physical way. Betzalel received the command to build the *Mishkan* after the sin of *Cheit Haegel*. He realized that Hashem's intention now was to

create an environment to inspire spiritual feelings which would then be actualized through the vessels. The way of the world after *cheit haegel* would be that people would need the *Mishkan* to inspire them.

Parshat Hachodesh reminds us that the Jewish people count according to the moon which is related to renewal. This hints to the fact that even if we live in a static world we have the ability to rejuvenate ourselves and become something greater.

There are two ways in which we can relate to Hashem, "M'lamaiah l'mateh, from above to below and milmateh l'maleh, from below to above. The *Mishkan* functioned in both capacities in that the people served Hashem and His presence resided there. Moshe looked at the world from above to below. One must first make the vessels where Hashem is most intimately felt and then move outwards. Betzalel disagreed. He maintained that one must work from below to above. First an outer structure had to be built to attain spiritual inspiration and ultimately one would reach the *Aron*.

Let us take the message of Betzalel and move inward slowly, so we can reach elevated levels and ultimate perfection.

Bringing Torah To Life #9 - Helping Children Feel Content

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

In this class we will explore how to instill *simchat hachaim* in our children. Four and five year olds are naturally full of smiles and abundant laughter. You don't usually find this with sixty five year olds and certainly not with eighty year olds. What happened to the joy? Eighty year olds may not be that physically comfortable or may have gone through a lot of travail in life. But these are not the only reasons. Children see everything as a *chiddush*, new. Genuine *simcha* is retaining that sense of newness.

Appalling statistics show that one in ten college students admit to having thoughts of suicide. One in five high school students report the same. The problem is really two fold. We have no idea what contentment is and we have very little gratitude. We need to help our young children preserve their natural contentment, develop a sense of gratefulness, and teach them how to appreciate the beauty of the moment. Certainly there are things that are urgent and must be taken care of immediately but

these matters are not really all that critical in the larger scheme of things.

Show your children how to differentiate between what is temporary and what is and eternal. For example, you can say, "That was a great ice cream but I'll bet you won't remember it by tomorrow. Look at what a beautiful card you made for Aunt Celia. I'm sure she'll cherish it forever."

Hashem created us so we always feel as if we are lacking something. Nobody has *simcha* unless they feel grateful. Teach your children gratitude by pointing out the wonders of Hashem's creation. Tell them that rain is a life force. You can say, "Look at the beautiful rain and how Hashem made each drop separate. Soon everything will be green again. Isn't it amazing?" You have to point this out, otherwise their natural reaction will probably be, "Oh it's raining again. It's so boring to be stuck inside."

Use words to get them to appreciate life. Cleaning up for Shabbat should not be drudgery. Be enthusiastic and explain how

it's all in honor of Shabbat and it's like making the *Beit Hamikdash* ready for the King. Help your children appreciate the parts in their life that are whole and good. Show them that you believe in them. Fantasy is a good way to build up *simchat hachaim*. Play fantasy games with them to help them develop a feeling of gratitude for who they are and what they are part of.

In life, the more you have the more you want. You can keep your child happy by praising common everyday things and making ordinary life attractive. Appreciating the gift of a relationship builds gratitude. Feeling the love in a close relationship and sensing the good Hashem gives us comprise the core of *simcha*. In order to be happy, you have to learn to roll with the punches and look for the positive aspect in all of life's experiences. Teach your child to see everything as a gift and a part of a larger more significant picture.

Feelings of achievement make children very happy. Your responsibility as a parent is to

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Dedicated in memory of Rachel Leah bat R' Chaim Tzvi

אמר WOMEN'S TORAH WEEKLY

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find your child's point of excellence and provide opportunities for him to use his talents and abilities. Let your child sing, draw, or act.

Set things up so your child can be a giver. Children love doing *chesed*. Let them be the ones to put the *tzedaka* in the box. Tell them stories about where the money will go and how it will help poor families buy food

and necessities. Toys and sweets will only give them transient joy but spiritual *simcha* is eternal. Train your children to revel in doing *mitzvot*. People sometimes confuse *simcha shel mitzva* with the *mitzva* itself. You have to see that the actual *mitzva* causes your children joy. Tell *tzadikim* stories that illustrate this point. Teach children to want that moment of connection and spiritual bliss. They may not understand

it intellectually but they will sense it emotionally. A child should feel happy to be Jewish.

Connection brings *simcha*. Children need to be held and spoken to. Today many women are not available to their children as they once were. However, at least when you are there, be there fully for your children. Give them your complete attention. Talk to them and really listen to what they say.

Unraveling The Haggadah: History of the Haggadah #1

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Chana Prero

The *Haggadah* holds a coveted place in every Jewish library and has been reprinted in hundreds of editions throughout the centuries. What is our earliest source for the *Haggadah*? Who put it all together?

Rav Kasher explains that the basic text of the *Haggadah* was codified by the *Anshei Knesset Hagedola*, but it is not the complete version we have today.

The Gemara in *Pesachim* cites a disagreement between Rav and Shmuel about which negative point in history the *Haggadah* should begin with. The fact that there was still discussion about this in the time of the Amoraim hints to us that the text was not fully established. The Avudraham writes that originally there were two versions, one by Rav and Shmuel and another by Abaye and Rava. The compiler of the *Haggadah* combined these two versions into the text we use today.

Rav Amram Gaon, who died towards the end of the ninth century, wrote a *siddur*, which included the *Haggadah*. Approximately sixty years later, Rav Sadyah Gaon wrote another *siddur* with a *Haggadah*. These are two of the earliest texts we have

on the complete *Haggadah*. Rav Kasher posits that the text of the *Haggadah* was established during the Gaonic period. He quotes a letter by Rav Natronai Gaon, a contemporary of Rav Amram, who writes strongly against those who followed a different text of the *Haggadah*. The letter states, "These blasphemers do not follow our custom." The fact that it says "our custom" and not "the Rabbis' custom" suggests that the Gaonim established the text and not the Ammoraim or Tannaim. He conjectures that just as the *seder* of *Hallel* and the blessings on the four cups of wine were instituted by the Gaonim, they also agreed on the text of the *Haggadah*.

If you look closely at the *Haggadah*, you can see that it is comprised of selections from the *Mishna*, *Gemara*, and *Midrashim*. Although the actual *Haggadah* text may have been put together during the Gaonic period, most of its sources are from an earlier era. "*Ha Lachma Anya*" was written during the Babylonian exile. We know this because it was written in Aramaic, the spoken language in Bavel, and it mentions the enslavement of the Jews and their hope for the eventual redemption.

The source of *Mah Nishtana* is a *Mishna* in *Pesachim*. The question about the roasting of the *korban pesach* is not relevant in exile so it was left out of the *Haggadah*. *Avadim Hayinu* is mentioned in the *Gemara Pesachim* in which Rav and Shmuel argued over which negative point to begin the *Haggadah* with. We recite *Hallel hagadol* which includes *Hodu* and *Nishmat*. Tannaic and Ammoraic sources both point to the obligation to say this on the Seder night.

The songs at the end of the *Haggadah* were mostly added during the Middle Ages. This is the least important section of the *Haggadah*. The essential part, when we fulfill the actual *mitzva* of *sippur yetziat Mizrayim*, begins with *Avadim Hayinu*. Here each of the sections in the *Haggadah* are explained and include verses in the Torah upon which they are based. They discuss our suffering and redemption, which are intrinsically connected.

The actual *mitzva* is to verbally express our subjugation and redemption.

This year as we sit at the seder once again, let us pray to for ultimate freedom and eternal redemption speedily in our days.

Rebbetzin's Perspective II Part 1

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

Question:

What should a Jewish woman's responsibility be to everything that needs fixing in this world? So many people around me are struggling with problems and I feel that as much as I try to help, not always do I succeed. I know there are difficulties that I can't rectify, not to mention all the troubles that I don't even know about going on everywhere. What should be my approach?

Answer:

We were not placed in this world to change things, rather we are here for the sake of the journey. Only Hashem sustains the world and is "koneh ha'kol." Your responsibility is to become more similar to Hashem by assisting and supporting everything that's within your reach, but not more. This indeed is why our great leaders never get tired of constantly giving. They have bitachon in Hashem's capacity to bring about the ultimate tikun and they content themselves with doing whatever they can. I remember

that before the terrible turnover of Gush Katif, my friend asked the Amshinover Rebbe what to do. He answered that everyone should do whatever was within their ability and that his way would be tefilla. He didn't necessarily say, "Here's what you can do and it'll work out." He said you should try and everyone has their own way that fits their strengths and capacities. The line between not standing by with folded hands and not thinking that one has to complete the task fully is the line where perfecting oneself and tikun olam really fits in.