



Parshat Vayakel: Removing The Mask

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

There is an intriguing juxtaposition in Parshat Ki Tisa and Parshat Vayakel. In Vayakel, Hashem first tells Moshe to command the Jews about the *mitzva* of Shabbat and he singles out the prohibition of kindling a flame. He then tells the people about the *mitzva* of building the Mishkan. In contrast, Parshat Ki Tisa, which is a culmination of Parshat Terumah and Tezaveh and the building of the Mishkan, begins with the *mitzva* of Shabbat. Why the switch and why does the Torah continually connect Shabbat with the Mishkan?

The Siftei Chaim notes that Adam lived a pure existence before the sin of *eitz hadaat*. Every action he performed, even if it was physical, was entirely sanctified. His only goal was to do the will of Hashem. After the sin, Adam was thrust into a world of confusion. Suddenly he acquired *busha* (shame), which is a contradiction between what one knows to be correct and his actions. Every action from then on contains a mixture of good and evil, to the extent that man could now never say that his motives were completely altruistic. Before the sin, Adam's food did not require preparation. After the sin, producing bread became a long arduous process. This reflects life in microcosm. Life is about working with a mixture of good and evil and extracting the grains of goodness.

On Shabbat we can reach the state of Adam before the sin. All week long we mimic

building the Mishkan by taking the physical and elevating it for Hashem. On Shabbat we enter a dimension of Gan Eden where we don't need to work and can still achieve this same level of spirituality. Shabbat is about rejoicing with the kingship of Hashem. On this day we crown Him as master. Our sages say that on Shabbat we receive an extra soul, an expansiveness of the heart. We can enjoy physical pleasures and our souls will not despise them because on Shabbat both the physical and spiritual work in tandem. Rav Wolbe notes that this level can be reached with the first *kezayit* of *challa* at the meal. If you consume it as if you are eating that first piece of *matza* at the seder, you can experience a foretaste of The World To Come.

At *matan Torah*, when the Jews completely nullified themselves before Hashem, they reached the state of Adam before the sin. After *chet ha'egel* they lost this level again. However, our Sages say that Moshe retained it. The *parsha* notes that he had a *keren* or, his face shone and he needed to wear a mask in order to speak to the Jewish people. His face, a reflection of his inner being, embodied a perfect melding of physical and spiritual. On Shabbat we return to this level.

The Netivot Shalom teaches that Shabbat is a propitious time for *teshuva*. The mask we wear all week long is lifted. We can return to our inner essence. Shabbat is a time to meditate on our true selves. Every Jew can recognize

that life is about elevating the physical to the spiritual and about coming closer to Hashem. Our challenge is to take this message into our week and create a *Mishkan* for Hashem. The models of this were the women in *Mitzrayim*. They knew how to live *Shabbat* during the week. The Ibn Ezra writes that they were so committed to Hashem that they donated their mirrors, signifying their preoccupation with physicality, and came to the *Ohel Moed* to pray and learn.

Rav Kanatovsky notes that the reason for the reversal in the Parshiot is to teach us that we need to buttress the fundamental aspect of Shabbat-connection to Hashem, with action. Shabbat is the focus of Jewish belief. We need to recognize that we are not in control. Our job is to do our part, but ultimately the results are up to Hashem. This is why the Torah singles out fire. Fire symbolizes man's mastery over the universe. The suspension of this act represents relinquishment of control. Shabbat is about recognizing that there is a larger force behind our everyday actions. Similarly, the word *vayakhel* means community. We belong to something bigger than ourselves.

The Klei Yakar writes that *Ohel Moed* reflects the women's tents. The greatest accomplishment of a woman is dedicating herself to a greater aspect of self, namely her home and family. May our efforts to reach these lofty levels bring ourselves, those close to us, and all of Klal Yisrael to true *sheleimut*.

Shabbat Scenarios: Kotev & Mochek Demonstrations- #10

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

The *melacha* of *kotev* is derived from the identifying letters that were written on the beams of the Mishkan and their corresponding sockets. The Torah prohibition of *kotev* includes letters and images, and only applies to writing that will last. Writing that is temporary is rabbinically forbidden.

- Etch-A-Sketch is similar to writing with a pencil. Although it is erasable, it can last a long time. Therefore it is a Torah prohibition.
- Making snow angels on Shabbat, which is a temporary image, is rabbinically forbidden.

- If a doctor needs to write on Shabbat, he can minimize the *d'oraita* prohibition to *d'rabanan* by using disappearing ink.

- Writing on a temporary surface such as leaves, which will eventually disintegrate, is rabbinically prohibited.

- Writing with a *shinui* (in an unusual manner) can downgrade a Torah prohibition to a rabbinic prohibition.

- Moving your finger in the shape of a letter, but without forming any real letters, such as on someone's back or in the air, is permitted.

- Bringing letters together is not *kotev*. Similarly

erasing words by breaking apart letters is not *mochek*. The prohibition only applies to creating or breaking the actual letters.

- The Magen Avraham rules that the act of affixing letters to a surface is *kotev*. This applies to magnet boards. However, if the letter is already on a background, attaching the letter to another background is permitted. Therefore, one may not form words with magnet letters on Shabbat. One may affix words already on a background to a magnet board to form sentences.



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Leaping Higher: Utilizing a Leap Year

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shoshie Nissenbaum

What is a leap year and what is its purpose? We base our calendar on both the lunar and solar calendar. Every year we lose eleven days. After three years the lunar calendar will be a little more than a month behind the solar. However, since Pesach must always fall out in spring time, we add an extra month in Adar.

The midrash tells us that man is a miniature world. The sun symbolizes wisdom while the moon signifies emotions. Emotions are fickle, similar to the changing moon as it waxes and wanes. The world also is comprised of different types of people. Some are more intellectual, while others are more emotional. Men are predominantly rational and women are more sensitive. Within our own selves, there is a constant battle between our hearts and minds. This tension is reflected in the solar and lunar calendar. Both need to work in synch. Neither the *sechel*, intellect, or *regesh*, emotions, can be supreme. The way to serve

Hashem is by balancing both aspects.

Rav Tzadok explains that this is the point of a leap year. Our avoda, particularly in *Adar aleph*, is to make peace between our minds and hearts. In Kabbalistic terminology, the sun, which is *chochma* is called *aba*. The moon which is *regesh*, is *ima*. When both the sun and moon work in synch, the result is a *shana meuberet*, a year which brings results and accomplishment.

How do we bridge our *sechel* and *regesh* and how do we create peace within ourselves and the people around us? Our Sages gave us a gift, another month of Adar, a month to increase our *simcha*. When we are happy, the path between our mind and heart becomes clear and we are free to focus on our goals. Adar is the month meant to yield desired results. By tapping into the energy of *simcha* we can reach our purpose.

How does a person put himself into the mindset of happiness? The Baal Hatanya suggests dancing. When we dance, we lift our feet off the ground. This represents elevating ourselves from the hardships and physicality of this world to a higher more focused plain. This is genuine *simcha*. The greatest *nachat* for parents is to see their children happy. Hashem, our loving father, desires our joy. Anything that gives us happiness, such as singing, listening to music, or telling jokes can help put us in a wholesome state of mind and heart.

Hashem has the power to redeem us from both our personal and national exile. He waits for our first step – to be *b'simcha*. May this double Adar yield bountiful joy, serenity, and eternal redemption.

Rebbetzin Perspective III: Class #3

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

Question:

When we were dating, my husband said he wanted to live in an established frum community in order to have access to the Torah learning readily available there. Although I had reservations, I ultimately told him I could live where ever he wanted and we'd make the most of our opportunities. Now that's it coming down to it, I'm afraid I'm not going to be happy. I realize there's plenty of community service to do even in a frum city, but it's not the same as living in a less Jewishly developed area, where I can be a part of actually making the community.

Answer:

It's up to you to be happy. *Simcha* is a *mida*, not

a response to external circumstances. You can choose to develop your inner joy by believing that wherever Hashem put you is where your potential can be maximized.

If you agreed to your husband's choice, you meant it and saw it as possible. You can be very happy in a frum community. Don't deceive yourself into thinking otherwise. You don't have to be in Charan in order to make souls. I suggest you get involved in Project Inspire so that you can still be involved in creating a community by introducing people from the outside.

We are naturally affected by our role models. Don't devalue the advantage of being in a frum

environment. Your husband wants exposure to serious Torah learning and to people who are *ovdei Hashem*. Look for the people in your frum community who live 'bigger than life' lives. Let them be your inspiration. There is no reason for you to feel spiritually frustrated. There is plenty to do wherever you live. In addition to *kiruv*, there are kids off the derech, women in distress, and families that need help coping.

You need to honestly ask yourself if your *dimyon* is taking you to a place that you've fallen in love with, instead of falling in love with Hashem's will. Keep that promise to your husband, make the most of your opportunities, and be happy wherever Hashem ultimately leads you.