

Chassidut: Parshat Teruma – The Mishkan

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

The Shem MiShmuel discusses a disagreement about when the commandment to build the Tabernacle was given. The Ramban and the Zohar maintain that the mitzvah came right after the giving of the Torah, before the sin of the Golden Calf. Rashi and the Midrashim say that it was given after cheit ha'egel, as a sign of the Jewish nation's reconciliation with Hashem.

Almost everything about the Mishkan was miraculous. The Aron fit into the Kodesh Kadashim despite the fact that its physical dimensions were larger than the space itself. The Leviim did not actually carry the Aron — it floated on its own. The wooden beams of the Mishkan, which were coated with solid gold, were so immense and heavy that they could not possibly have been transported in a few wagons harnessed to oxen. Yet they were. Even though the Mishkan was a physical structure, it went beyond the laws of nature.

On what basis were the Jewish people able to create such a miraculous phenomenon? The Shem MiShmuel answers that it was in the merit of their incredible love for Hashem. They demonstrated this love through their magnanimous donations to the Mishkan. Hashem repaid their extraordinary national expression of love with His own love, expressed through the miracles of the Mishkan.

Where did the Jewish people's profound love stem from? According to the Ramban and the

Zohar, it was a direct and natural outcome of Matan Torah. They felt Hashem's closeness so intensely that they poured out their ahavat Hashem through their donations to the Mishkan. Rashi and the Midrashim maintain that the Jewish people's love was aroused as a result of cheit ha'egel. After Moshe showed them how they had distanced themselves from Hashem, they did teshuvah at the deepest level of their souls. This engendered a tremendous yearning to do the will of Hashem, which in turn led to their outstanding donations to the Mishkan.

The Shem MiShmuel posits that perhaps both explanations are correct. The Jewish people received the mitzvah to build the Mishkan right after Matan Torah, when they were on the level of Adam before the sin. They were more spiritual than physical, and that is what the Mishkan was originally supposed to be. After the sin, when they lost the two crowns of naaseh v'nishma — and with them their immortality — they became physical, flawed humans again struggling with good and evil. Therefore, the Mishkan after cheit ha'egel had much more physicality than the original Mishkan that was meant to be built after Matan Torah.

Every person is given unique challenges and the opportunity to reach their own specific level of kedushah. Kedushah manifests itself on different levels in time, place, and the soul. The Mishkan had three points of holiness: the Chatzer was open to all Jews except those

who were impure; the Kodesh was open only to the kohanim; and the Kodesh Kadashim was closed all year except on Yom Kippur, when only the Kohein Gadol was allowed entrance.

Time also has multiple levels of kedushah. Rosh Chodesh is more holy than weekdays, yet work is permitted. On Yom Tov, we can perform work for ochel nefesh (food preparation), but all other work is prohibited. On Shabbat, even work for ochel nefesh is prohibited.

Holiness is found within every Jew. All Jews must maintain the holiness of Kedoshim tihiyu, avoiding all prohibited aveirot. The second level is restraining oneself from permitted pleasures in order to achieve greater holiness. The third level is knowing Hashem in all of one's ways — this is the level of a tzaddik.

One can come closer to Hashem by responding with love to the tremendous wonders, blessings, and love that Hashem showers upon us. This represents the first Mishkan after Matan Torah. Sometimes our sins separate us from Hashem; we feel lost and need our Creator to bring us back to the light. If we seek Him, we will find Him. This represents the Mishkan after cheit ha'egel.

May we merit to fulfill our roles in this world by drawing upon both levels of relating to Hashem.

Parsha Journeys: Parshat Terumah A Dwelling Place For Hashem

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hanoch Teller

The Torah conveys the significance of tzniut (modesty) through the account of the building of the Mishkan. Although it was a beautiful structure, it was covered with many curtains. The holier something is, the more modest it must be. Some Torah scholars who embody Torah wear a long coat; similarly, the Kohein Gadol was commanded to wear eight garments.

After the sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem said, "V'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'tocham" — build for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell

among you. However, the commandment to build the Aron was given before this, teaching us that the word of Hashem is more important than its physical domicile.

The menorah symbolized the majesty of the Mishkan. It was placed outside the Holy of Holies to teach that the Aron — and the Torah it contains — is its own light and does not require external illumination. The menorah was constructed from a single piece of gold, signifying the indivisibility of Torah. Jewish life embodies one set of values and must emanate

from a single source. The flames of the menorah pointed toward the center to teach that all intellectual achievements must be directed to the central authority of the Torah.

The Torah's command to make the menorah is given in the passive form, "It shall be made." This implies that the menorah came into being without human intervention. Why, then, was Moshe commanded to fashion it? A Jew must be willing to do his part — to study, learn, and accomplish as much as possible. Only then will Hashem step in and bless those efforts.



Simcha- The Essence of Purim Part 1

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

Chazal say, "Mishenichnas Adar marbim b'simcha" — when Adar arrives, we must increase our happiness. One can be commanded to perform actions, but how can a person be expected to control emotions? The Torah tells us that curses will come, "because you did not serve Hashem with happiness and a good heart." If Hashem expects us to serve Him with simcha, it means that attaining joy is within our reach.

Tehilim begins, "Ashrei ha'ish — happy is the man..." The verse continues, "He will be like a tree planted by water that yields fruit in season, whose leaves never wither, and in all that he does he succeeds." If you were to ask someone how they define a happy person, they might say, "A successful person has everything he wants." But what about the righteous, joyful tzaddik who possesses little materially — would we not consider him successful? Success does not mean getting everything we want. Success means having a clear goal and persistently moving toward it.

The word l'tzloach, related to hatzlacha (success), means to cross a river. It does not imply that the person has already reached the opposite bank, but rather that he is in the process of getting there. He knows where he is going. The current may push against him, yet he continues advancing toward his destination.

Rabbi Tatz offers the following analogy: Imagine a Martian landing on Earth and peering through the window of a gym. He sees people lifting weights, sweating, and breathing heavily, and assumes they must be slaves. In truth, although exercise is difficult, these individuals are happy because they are working toward a goal and succeeding. When we are told to be happy in Adar, it does not mean we must constantly play music, dance, or manufacture feelings of joy. Rather, we are meant to cultivate inner happiness by striving

toward a higher purpose.

Consider again the person crossing a river. He leaves his comfort zone because something on the other side calls to him. If we want to grow and awaken a yearning to be close to Hashem, we must appreciate that relationship. No Yom Tov demands as much preparation as Pesach — Chazal instruct us to review its laws thirty days in advance. We must recognize what we are working toward.

This idea is expressed in Parshat Shekalim, which begins with "Ki tisa et rosh Bnei Yisrael." The word tisa means "to lift," teaching that our essence lies in our attachment to the One Above. Investing in spirituality and building a relationship with Hashem elevates a person and brings happiness. The more we devote ourselves to spiritual growth in Adar, the greater our joy becomes.

The foundations of the Mishkan — the adanim — were built from the donations of the Jewish people. Everyone contributed the same amount: a half-shekel. Rav Hirsch explains that this teaches us that our possessions are not truly ours; they come from Hashem. We should not be distracted by how much we have. What truly matters is the desire for connection with Hashem — and that is what brings genuine happiness.

Ultimately, simcha is rooted in faith. In Tehilim, David HaMelech says, "Ivdu et Hashem b'simcha; deu ki Hashem Hu Elokim — serve Hashem with joy; know that He is God." If you believe that whatever Hashem gives you is for your ultimate good, you will be happy. Hashem — representing the attribute of mercy — is also Elokim, the attribute of judgment. His actions may sometimes be hidden, but they all stem from love.

At the Yam Suf, the Torah says of the Jewish people, "Va'ya'aminu b'Hashem u'v'Moshe avdo — they had faith in Hashem and in

Moshe, His servant." They understood that events were guiding them toward a purposeful destiny. When you know who you are and where you are going, you can feel pain and still sing.

The salvation of Purim came through a dramatic reversal — v'nahafoch hu. When we read the Megillah, it is clear that Hashem was orchestrating events. Yet the story unfolded over nine years, during which no one could perceive Hashem planting the seeds for salvation. The situation appeared bleak and frightening. Haman told Achashveirosh, "Yeshno am echad — there is a certain nation." The word yeshno shares a root with yesheinim, meaning "sleeping." The Jews had grown apathetic in their relationship with Hashem; they hid from Him, and He, in turn, concealed Himself from them.

But then, "Ba'layla hahu — on that very night," everything changed. No one could attribute the sudden turn of events to coincidence. The miracles strengthened our faith in Hashem on many levels, revitalizing our connection to Him and generating profound joy.

The Chidushei HaRim notes that Adar is the time when the King says, "Adur b'neichem — I will dwell in your midst." The seven days of miluim concluded in the final days of Adar, and on the first of Nissan the Mishkan was erected. Likewise, during Adar we prepare a dwelling place for Hashem within our lives. The more space we create for Him, the more His presence rests upon us — and the happier we become.

The joy of Adar lies in the preparation, in striving toward a meaningful goal. It is the investment that generates happiness, not merely the achievement. No matter where we are, if we are advancing toward the goal of drawing closer to Hashem, we hold the key to a life of meaning and joy.