

Dvar Torah for Parshat VaYakhelel-Pekudei

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Based on Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom #196

The Rebbe also made the following comment when I [Reb Noson] showed him a transcript of [Likutey Moharan II, Lesson #67]. "The instruction contained in my lessons is far-reaching and quite powerful. If it were couched in a different style, if it were 'preachy,' it would arouse and then crush one's heart, because its lessons are deep and undeniable.

"So do your best to do as I told you and use my lessons as a springboard for your personal prayer (hitbodedut). Because the moment you start to turn a lesson into a prayer, it will inspire you and change your heart altogether."

The specific lesson being discussed in #196 quotes the following from this week's portion. "See! God has called by name Betzalel...and filled him with God-spirit; with wisdom, intuition, awareness and craft" (Exodus 35:30-31). One of the principles underlying Rebbe Nachman's approach to Torah study is that the Torah, on behalf of God*, is calling you—by name (Likutey Moharan I, Lesson #121; Tzaddik ##216 [90], 342).

Now, Torah is sometimes Talmudic, sometimes Midrashic, sometimes mystic and yes, sometimes even "preachy." But the holy Torah's lessons, however couched, are always deep and undeniable. Betzalel was called upon to build a mishkan (sanctuary, magnet for God-seekers**) in the desert, a mishkan that Aharon (one of the holiest Jews of all time) would officiate in, and all his contemporary Jews would come to to improve their connection with the Creator. Betzalel was given the abilities to build that mishkan. Just as importantly, if not more so, he felt and believed that he had them.

When God calls you by name, it may be for a mission that is, perhaps, a bit more humble. No dignitary may ever visit nor any person even know of your mishkan. But God will know, and will visit. What you have to know, and feel and believe, is that you have the “wisdom, intuition, awareness and craft” to build your mishkan. You have the ability—and the feeling—to take any Torah lesson(s) you learn, and turn it into a prayer that will change you, that will turn some God-forsaken place within you into a mishkan, a place for God to dwell, and a place to which others can turn in their quest for the Divine.

agutn Shabbos!

Shabbat Shalom!

*Often, the Talmud introduces a verse with the expression amar Rachmana, Rachmana says. In some yeshivas “Rachmana” is translated “God,” in others, “the Torah.” Literally, it means the Merciful One.

**From the root MoSheiKh, that which attracts.

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