

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Vayakhel:*** **Exodus 35:30—36:38**
 Haftarah: **I Kings 7:17-20**
 B'rit Chadasha: **II Corinthians 9:8**

He has filled him with the Spirit of God.

[Exodus 35:31]

Today's Meditation is Haggai 1:9-11;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is *the Avot*, the Prayer of the Fathers

Vayomer Moshe el-B'nei Yisra'el - Then Moshe told B'nei Yisrael ... ***re'u kara Adonai b'shem B'tzalel ben-Uri ben-Chur l'mateh Yehudah*** – the Holy One has called B'tzalel son of Uri, grandson of Chur, of the tribe of Yehudah by name ... ***Vayemale oto Ruach Elohim*** – and has filled him with the Spirit of God Exodus 35:30-31a.

Betzalel is an important character – not just in the Tabernacle-building narrative, but also in the greater story of B'nei Yisrael. He is a forerunner – what some like to refer to as a ‘type’ or ‘shadow’ of things to come. His story of Divine Infilling and Empowerment is destined to become Messiah's story – and, through the work of Messiah, to become our story as well. Bringing the things of Heaven's Beauty Realm to earth, and maintaining its holiness throughout the process, is not something can accomplish through natural talent, charisma, or study discipline. The secret of this particular skill is not in the artisan - it is in *the Artist Who indwells and counsels the artisan*.

Taking No Chances With the Tree of Knowledge

Though He knows fallen humanity's propensity to mess up everything he or she touches, the Holy One nevertheless keeps calling men to co-labor with Him in grand endeavors of tikkun. Still, He insists what we do it HIS way, not our way. He knows not to ever trust any important aspect of His Grand Plan to the pseudo-intelligence of any fallen human mind – much less to the short-sighted, propagandized groupthink of any ethnic group, government, institution, religion, denomination, or movement. His Plans are matters of life and death, of fullness and emptiness, of shalom and chaos, and of perpetuation and extinction. He therefore leaves absolutely nothing to chance. He calculates. He designs. He creates. He sequences. He connects – and disconnects. He engages – and disengages. He purges – and builds afresh off of purified foundations. He

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strategically moves pieces around the great chessboard of the Universe. He leads, guides, nurtures, trains, and disciplines humans much the way a shepherd does sheep; He inspires; He empowers; and, most gloriously of all, He actually INDWELLS AND INFILLS all who passionately seek, joyfully embrace, and yield to the gentle leading of His Ruach. And when that marvelous thing we call ‘infilling’ happens, all we, as sons and daughters of the Covenant, have to do is *color within the lines*. He is the Artist; we are just children invited to a finger-painting party. If we try to be more than that, the collateral damage we cause can be horrific.

***Are You In it for Anything But Love?
If So, It is Time to RECALCULATE!!!!***

The relationship between the Holy One and His chosen nation always has been and will always be one characterized by consuming passion and deep affection - on *both sides of the Covenant*. The Holy One LOVES *B'nei Yisrael* deeply – with a love beyond human imagination. He has AMAZING PLANS FOR US – PLANS TO HAVE US CO-LABOR AND CO-REGENT WITH HIM in His GRAND PLAN for the REDEMPTION OF MANKIND AS A SPECIES and for THE RESTORATION OF CREATION to its intended state of BEAUTY, FRUITFULNESS, and SHALOM. He is therefore both ZEALOUS FOR and JEALOUS OVER His Bride at a level and to an extent that no human institution, government, religion, or movement can comprehend. He is passionate about seeing us safe, protected, nurtured, and fruitful. He is unwavering in His intention to bring us to the fullness He has purposed for us as His Bride-nation. His love for us is not contingent upon anything – not our attitude, not our confession, not our belief system, and not our behavior. That is what *covenant* is all about.

Sometimes the emotional response of Israel is warm, and positive, and beautiful – as is the case in this week’s parsha of Torah. In other seasons the Bride-Nation’s emotions in response to the Holy One’s passionate love and tender care border on the childish and impertinent. And sometimes, alas, they are nothing short of brattish, shrewish, and rebellious. But the covenant remains 100% secure. With the Holy One there is no shadow of turning. He is in this for the long haul – *l’dor v’dor*, from generation to generation. It is not about our faithfulness to the Covenant protocols – it is about HIS faithfulness to them. Hence, even when the relationship is being tested it is always described by Scripture in passionate terms of love - whether the kind of love it pictures follows the imagery of bride and bridegroom as in the *Shir Ha-shirim* (The Song of Songs) or the story of Hoshea (Hosea), or whether it follows the more common imagery of father and son as in the chronicles of the patriarchs.

The Role Our Ancestors' Sinai Experience Is Designed to Play in the Lives of Those In Covenant With the Holy One

The revelation at Mt. Sinai represents the penultimate moment of Bride-Bridegroom imagery. It is an essential part of the DNA of every person who enters into or seeks to be engrafted into Covenant with the Holy One. It was at Sinai that Our Bridegroom-King called us His *am segulah*, His *mamleket ha-kohanim*, and His *goy kadosh*. It was at that Mountain that the Holy One declared His troth to us, proclaimed us to be His chosen people forever, and redefined our new nature as the Betrothed Bride-People of the Holy One. **Exodus 20:1-17**. It was here at this mountain that the Holy One began to teach us to think like He thinks about the tough issues of real-life. **Exodus 21-23**². As we are about to find out, it was also at this mountain that we learned to work together in humility and harmony in the great process of molding our lives and all our family and social interactions into a strategic beachhead through which the Kingdom of Heaven can invade and influence the kingdoms of this world.

Alas, it was also at this Mountain that we first ignored the Voice of the Almighty and bought into the humanistic, works-based, numbers-focused approach to religion that was taught to us by a charismatic sheik from a foreign nation. **Exodus 18:1-27; cf. Exodus 15:26, 16:28, and 19:5**. It was also at this mountain that we shrank back from the Holy One's Voice and Manifest Presence in immature terror. **Exodus 20:18-21**. and finally degenerated into abomination with the golden calf [**Exodus 32:1-6**]. These three folly episodes reveal the essence and essential points of origin of all human misdirection.

Our 11 ½ month sojourn at Sinai thus represents both the high points and the low points in the human side of the Covenant experience. Each of us has a Moriyah - or mountain of complete surrender - as did our ancestor Avraham. We all visit Moriyah from time to time, at appointed times and seasons in our lives. We all know such a mountain is our ultimate home. But in the routine, day-by-day, mundane affairs, interactions, experiences, and adventures of life our *base of operations* is the revelation we received at Sinai. Sinai represents our enormous potential for getting to know the Bridegroom-King in all His glory, and to receive and process His commissioning in the Great Plan of Redemption for mankind and creation – and the realities of the fact that we have to deal with a plethora of ‘other

² Exodus 21-23 contains the ‘*Mishpatim Discourse*’ of the Holy One. In this discourse the Holy One gave us a series of tough hypothetical fact situations and told us how people in Covenant with Him are expected to apply a beautiful blend of wisdom, compassion, and focus on the future instead of the past to bring about healing, reconciliation, and resolution

voices’, a gaggle of easily over-stimulated fleshly appetites, urges, and emotions, and a lot of sometimes charismatic, often angry, and almost always self-obsessed and self-righteous people. Every human being – including us – has some serious *holes in their souls*.

We must always be *people of Mount Moriyah* in spirit and in aspiration; in conducting the affairs of daily life, however, we are called by our Bridegroom-King to be people who have learned, and incorporated into their approach to life, the hard lessons of Mount Sinai.

***It is Time For Us to Cooperate and Work Together in Harmony
To Prepare a Place for the Bridegroom-King to Dwell on Earth***

The Holy One has called us to build Him a set of courts on earth corresponding to the glorious chambers He occupies in Heaven. Initially, due to our inability or unwillingness to deal with Him in true intimacy, He plans to both reveal the depth, width, height, and breadth of His great love for mankind and the *transformative power of His kippur (atonement) and kedusha (i.e. impartation of holiness, sanctity)* to those in Covenant with Him, through the Mish’kan. It is through the Mish’kan and its *avodah* that He plans to teach us to process and purify our attempts to give love and service back to Him. Ultimately, however, His plan is to have Messiah model the functions of the Mish’kan for us in human flesh, and then to have us, in union with the Messiah, following His lead, bring the Ultimate Mish’kan – i.e. the indwelt Covenant Partner - to every corner of earth and to every nation, tribe, and tongue of the human race.

In Vayakhel the Holy One is teaching us to *embrace Bridal passion, to harness that passion for Kingdom purposes instead of personal ones, and then to work together with others who are doing the same thing to transform our Bridal passion into concrete, responsible manifestations of devotion*. The entire portion echoes this feeling of deep, yet sedate devotion to the Bridegroom-King, to His Ways, to His Words, and to His Glorious Plan for the Redemption of mankind and Creation. *And we are by no means alone – or left to our own devices - in this endeavor!*

The Divine Bridegroom told Moshe that He had prepared *Betzalel* and *Oholiav* for the task of overseeing, inspiring, and directing the building the Tabernacle in advance. He made it clear how He had done so. It was by *filling them both with the Ruach Elohim* [i.e. the same Creative breath of God through which the Heavens and the earth were brought into being from the primordial deep³]. As a result of this infilling the Holy One promised that these two very ordinary men would be supernaturally enabled to

³ See Genesis 1:2-3.

flow in a continuous stream of *wisdom*, of *understanding*, of *knowledge*, and of *skill in all kinds of workmanship*. This was not just natural learning or skill that the Holy One harnessed, appropriated, and caused the men to employ for Kingdom purposes - this was all a product of *Divine impartation* and *supernatural empowerment*. Betzalel and Ohaliav were no more skilled craftsmen before the infilling of the Ruach than you or I. It was not natural talent or training that qualified them to build on earth, out of earthly materials, a scale model of the Throne Room of Heaven. It was the *Ruach Elohim* with which the Holy One caused them to be filled. The key to the wisdom and skill of Betzalel and Ohaliav was not them having studied under a good human teacher or refined their artisanship through years of engagement. The wisdom and skill of these men came with and emanated from only one source - their willing and total surrender to the infilling of the *Ruach*.

The Holy One did not, however, stop the wisdom, understanding and skill download with Betzalel and Ohaliav. He told Moshe “*in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may craft all that I have instructed/enjoined you to make.*” Exodus 31:6(b).

Our First Season of Extreme Bridal Passion and Extravagant Giving

When the people of the Holy One share a powerful, Divinely inspired vision of Heaven coming to earth in their day, in real time, truly *amazing things begin to happen* in their midst. First of all, *the people who catch the vision become exuberant, extravagant givers*. Compelled by love and gratitude, they redefine not only their *priorities* but also what they consider to be *necessities*. They gladly give away – *For the Bridegroom-King, and for the Kingdom of Heaven!* - things they have in previously seasons clutched tightly to their bosom.

Consider the Redeemed Community at Sinai. Every Hebrew left Egypt as a slave. Not one of them had ever had a single possession that Pharaoh – or any Egyptian, for that matter – could not take from them at will, without any consequence whatever. The day before the plague of the firstborn, however, at the Holy One’s instruction each man was told to go to the house of their Egyptian neighbors and ask of them *gold, silver, and fine fabrics and garments*. The Egyptians showered these things in great quantities upon each Hebrew who asked for them. Finally each Hebrew had something of value to call his own. This would, they almost certainly assumed, be their ‘nest egg’ or ‘grubstake’ – i.e. that with which they would establish themselves in agriculture or profession in the land to which they were going. The gold, silver and fabric/garments the Egyptians gave were not

viewed as a luxury by anyone; they were viewed as a necessity.

But then the Holy One appeared to them at Sinai. Then they experienced not only His majesty and His holiness but His *transformative forgiveness*, His *unwavering kindness*, and His *unshakeable Covenant love*. And they found out that, wonder of wonders, despite their sinfulness and immaturity the Creator of the Universe actually wanted *to come and dwell with them on earth, in the midst of them, in real time*. As each man stood at the entrance to his own tent and watched the Holy One's Manifest Presence abide in Moshe's tent, they began to hunger to have that happen in a way they could not only see from a distance but participate in personally. Suddenly thinking about – much less holding onto - a 'nest egg' or a 'grubstake' seemed downright petty in comparison. Suddenly each man redefined 'necessity' in light of the revelation he had received of the greatness, goodness, faithfulness to Covenant, protection, provision, promises, and Presence of the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak, and of Ya'akov. What could be more valuable, or more important, to them, their wives, and their children, than building a resting place for the Holy One in their midst? What happens if and when and to the extent the people of the Holy One *simultaneously receive and walk in forgiveness and catch a Divinely imparted vision for coming of the Kingdom of Heaven to earth*? Torah tells us:

*Everyone came whose heart was stirred,
and everyone whose spirit was willing,
and they brought the Holy One's t'rumah
for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments.
They came, both men and women, as many as had a willing heart.*

[Exodus 35:21-22(a)]

*Moshe called Betzalel and Aholiav,
and every gifted artisan in whose heart the Holy One had put wisdom,
everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work.
And they received from Moshe all the t'rumah that the children of Israel had brought
for the work of the service of making the sanctuary.
So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning.
Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came,
each from the work he was doing, and they spoke to Moshe, saying,
"The people bring much more than enough
for the service of the work which the Holy One commanded us to do.*

[Exodus 36:2-6]

They gave more than enough? No actually, they gave much more than enough [in Hebrew, *mar'bim*]. Wow! They gave *much more than enough* for the greatest project the world had ever seen at the time? Recently redeemed slaves, who had been destitute all their lives, gave *much more than enough* – all for the joy of building of a beachhead from which the Kingdom of Heaven would launch a cross-

generational, strategic invasion of planet earth? More than enough was given by people who, by all human reckoning, were going to need everything they possibly had to give and more to establish themselves in the land to which they were going? Yes, Dear Reader, a great miracle happened there. This was not a tax levied, or a gift commanded. This was exuberant, extravagant, and totally voluntary giving by people who suddenly shared a vision for Heaven coming to earth in their lives.

This was a far cry from ordinary human philanthropy. No wing of the Tabernacle was named after anyone who gave a large donation. There was no tax write off, no self-promoting photo op, and no puff piece in the local paper. No memorials were erected commemorating the ‘generosity’ of anyone’s gift. All the givers were going to get was the joy of seeing Heaven touch earth – and raising their children in a camp where holiness was constantly being imparted from above.

Our First Season of Honorable, Trustworthy Stewardship

Not only did the people throughout the Camp move in supernatural, inspired giving, but those who were appointed by the Holy One to be custodians and stewards of the wealth donated by the people also moved in a supernatural gracing. They did not misuse or take advantage of the people’s Spirit-driven urge to give to the vision of Heaven coming to earth. They did not use manipulation, guilt trips, or appeals to vanity to increase the people’s giving. They did not for even a second see any of the donated items and wealth as being ‘theirs’, or ‘for them’. They did not appropriate a single donated thing to any personal use. They did not build themselves fancy tents with the donations; nor did they buy themselves better camels or donkeys with the gold and silver. They did not even make themselves fancy suits. They did not vote themselves a salary, a bonus, or an expense account. They did not start a retirement fund. And when they had received what was clearly enough to complete the project they had been commissioned to build, they actually told the people to please, *stop giving*. Wow! Now that is a miracle!

And then there is the little issue of everyone in the camp actually laying aside all conflicting personal agendas, all differences of opinion, all complaints, all suspicions, all accusations, and all offenses, and working side by side, for months, in a spirit of cooperation. This was indeed a season of miracles! When people are amazed by the forgiveness and covenant faithfulness of the Bridegroom-King, and share a vision for Him coming to earth in their lives, in real time, miracles like that happen all the time.

If, therefore, your community sees more complaint, accusation, offense, reluctance to give, misuse of funds, and self-promotion than the kind of sweet giving, faithful

stewardship, and respectful collaboration that we read about this week in Torah, consider whether the people in your community might have a significant problem in one or more of the following areas:

1. No fresh remembrance of the mercy and forgiveness of the Holy One our God;
2. No vision for the Holy One coming to/moving upon/performing wonders in your community in real time;
3. No willingness of heart to redefine necessities in light of the Greater Plan of Redemption of the Holy One; and/or
4. No persons in a leadership trust who are living in full surrender to the indwelling *Ruach Ha-Elohim*, and who are therefore trustworthy, unselfish, stewards of whatever the people give.

Matters of Sequence

When the Holy One introduced Moshe to the Divine blueprint of the Tabernacle He began the download with the specifications for the *aron ha-qodesh* – *i.e.* the holy ark. When Moshe, Betzalel, and Ohaliav began the construction however they did not begin with the Ark (the innermost, central feature of the *Mish'kan*), but with *the outermost walls* – that which was *farthest away from the ark and the interaction/communion/intimacy it promised.*

When the actual construction began, why did the *construction efforts* not follow the sequence of revelation? Because we - the Betrothed Bride-to-be were simply not yet ready for intimacy with the Divine Bridegroom. As you will remember, even as the Holy One was speaking the *Aseret HaDibrot* [Ten Words of Prophetic Declaration] in the hearing of the entire Redeemed Community, we shrank back, and asked for chaperoned, mediated interaction. The mere sound of the Bridegroom-King's Voice overwhelmed us. We could not deal with *al p'nei* [Face to face] intimacy. Like the maiden in Shlomo's Song of Songs, when the Divine Suitor called for His Beloved to "*arise, and come with Me!*" [Song 2:10], we shyly replied ***Turn, my lover, be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the rugged hills.*** Song 2:17.

Like an immature Bride-to-be wanted to put our Bridegroom under what our minds considered to be safe *boundaries*. And that is why when the construction began, the inspired artisans constructed the exterior curtains and their framework – *i.e.* the 'safe' boundaries - first. Only after the boundaries were clearly established and understood could we seriously think about the inner chambers where our chaperones would take us to meet with the Bridegroom-King. And only after the

protocol of the chaperones was established and understood could we think about things like meeting with Him, seeing His Face, and hearing His Beautiful but Overwhelming Voice with our own ears once again.

And so it is even today. The Holy One looks upon our relationship with Him *from the inside-out*, focusing on the *internals*. We on the other hand have a hard time handling the internals, so we tend to *focus on the externals* instead. But this is changing, Dear Reader. As the Bridegroom brings us toward maturity, more and more people are beginning to seek Him who our heart loves in a real and radical way. In this regard, be assured that the *Song of Songs* is a *prophetic book*. Let the voice of the prophet call forth this passion from you:

*All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves;
I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares;
I will search for the one my heart loves*

* * *

*I found the one my heart loves. I held Him and would not let Him go
Till I had brought Him to my mother's house, to the room of the one who conceived me."*

[Song 3:1-4]

Questions For Today's Study

1. In today's aliyah Moshe tells the Redeemed Community the names of the men the Holy One has chosen to direct them in the process of building the *Mish'kan*.

A. What are the names of the two men the Holy One chose to oversee the construction of the *Mish'kan*?

B. From which tribe was each man?

C. What does the name of each man mean?

2. Also in today's aliyah the Redeemed Community respond to Moshe's call to bring all the materials which the workmen will need in order to make the *Mish'kan* exactly like the pattern the Holy One showed Moshe on the Mountain.

[A] How would you describe the response of the people to the call for donation of materials to the common cause?

[B] What did the overseers report to Moshe about the people's level of giving for the project?

3. List in the sequence of their construction the parts of the *Mish'kan* that were made first according to the assigned verses of Torah.

4. In the haftarah assigned for today Hiram of Tyre is described as building certain things for Solomon's Temple.

[A] List the things today's haftarah describes Hiram as building.

[B] What decorative images did Hiram have inscribed on the things he made as per today's aliyah?

5. In today's reading from the apostolic Scriptures Shaul of Tarsus says to the talmidim at Corinth:

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

[II Corinthians 9:8]

[A] Shaul says that the Holy One is able to 'make all grace' abound toward us.

- i. What is the Greek word our English Bibles translate as 'grace' in this phrase?
- ii. The corresponding Hebrew word would be *chen, chet, nun sofit*, Hebrew word #2580. What is the first Biblical usage of that Hebrew word and what do you think it means?
- iii. The verb root of the Hebrew word *chen* is *chanan, chet, nun, nun sofit*. Strong's Hebrew word 2603. that word mean? What is the first Biblical usage of that Hebrew verb, and what do you think it means?

[B] The purpose of the release of 'grace' by the Holy One is said to be that we '*may have an abundance for every good work.*' What do you think 'every good work' consists of in the eyes of the Holy One?

*May the Holy One release His Wisdom, Skill,
And Creativity into your life as He did into the life of Betzalel.
And may you ever live in the shadow of the Almighty.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Haggai 1:9-11

***"You looked for much, but indeed it came to little;
and when you brought it home, I blew it away.***

Why?" says the Holy One of hosts.

***"Because of My house that is in ruins,
while every one of you runs to his own house.***