

Vayakhel, The Mishkan, and Siyum HaShas

- Nisson Shulman.

The Mishkan would not stand. Neither Betzalel nor Moshe could erect it. Until "hukam", it rose by itself. Why? The prayer of Moshe, Yehi Ratzon... Viyehi Noam... Our devoted work together with Hashem's beracha/ Taht was what made the inspiration of the moment of Siyum Hashas. May we merit to see it again.

VAYAKHEL, THE MISHKAN AND SIYUM HASHAS

There is a remarkable series of Midrashim about the sidra of the week; where the Midrash tells us that when the artist-architect Bezalel erected the sanctuary, it immediately collapsed. When Moses did so, it collapsed again. Finally Moses prayed, and the sanctuary arose by a miracle.

Why was the miracle necessary if they had such an architect as Bezalel and such a teacher as Moses? (Reminder of the story about the Sukkah, Tosfot asks that question.)

The Midrash in fact is based on passages of the Torah which tell that Moses erected the sanctuary, and then uses the words, HUKAM HAMISHKAN, it arose, as if by itself. So there is some basis for the Midrash statements, and it would be important to see the meaning that lies behind it.

Why couldn't they erect the sanctuary? Because the sanctuary is not a building where physical dimensions are important. Physical dimensions, dimensions of beauty, inspiration, creativity, all this is not enough. Such a sanctuary cannot stand. The only dimension that can cause the sanctuary to stand is God's spirit. So Moses and Bezalel finished the work, but it was still incomplete. It was body without a soul. And therefore Moses had to wait for the spirit of God to descend before the sanctuary could stand. And that is the meaning of the Midrash that teaches Moses and Bezalel couldn't get it to stand, for it would only stand by miracle, by manifestation of God's spirit.

But what caused God's spirit to descend? The prayer Moshe uttered: One was the prayer that Israel be worthy of that spirit; YEHI RATZON SHETISHRE SHEHINA BEMAASE YEDEYCHEM; the other that God's spirit respond by resting on the work of our hands; VIYEHI NOAM ADOSHEM ELOKENU ALENU, UMAASEY YADAYNU KONENEHU; that the grace of the Lord God be upon us, and the work of our hands established, for we had worked diligently to carry out Hashem's mitzvah.

Most of us, all of us who attended the Siyum Hashas, had an experience of a lifetime. But what made that great spiritual moment in our lives? That we strove to learn to the best of our ability, as Hashem commanded, VESHINANTAM LEBANECHA, VEDIBARTA BAM, BESHACHBECHA UBEKUMECHA, BELECHTECHA BADERECH, SHESHIVTECHA BEBETECHA. That was our share, MAASE YADENU. But it is not enough, unless the SHECHINA envelopes MAASE YADENU and blesses what we do. That evening was the fulfillment of our prayer, that the Shechina rests upon the work of our hands. May it be so in the

future, so that as we start a new cycle of learning, we shall merit to see its completion again,
VIYEHI NOAM HASHEM ALENU, UMAASE YADENU KONENEHU.

(Submitted by Nisson Shulman)