

Parashat Vayakhel: Charismatic Communities

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Shemot 35:30-34

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ קָרָא יְהוָה בְּשֵׁם
בְּצִלְאֵל בֶּן-אוּרִי בֶן-חֹר לְמִטֵּה יְהוּדָה:
וַיִּמְלֵא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּחָכְמָה בְּתַבּוּנָה
וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל-מְלָאכָה:

And Moses said to the Israelites: See, God has singled out by name Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, endowing him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft...

1. Why Wasn't Moshe the Tabernacle's Lead Architect?

Bavli Berakhot 55a

אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: אִין מַעֲמִידִין פְּרָנָס עַל הַצָּבוֹר אֲלָא
אִם כֵּן נִמְלָכִים בַּצָּבוֹר, שְׁנָאֲמַר: "רְאוּ קָרָא ה' בְּשֵׁם
בְּצִלְאֵל", אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמֹשֶׁה: מֹשֶׁה,
הֲגוֹן עָלֶיךָ בְּצִלְאֵל? אָמַר לוֹ: רַבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, אִם
לִפְנֵיךָ הֲגוֹן — לִפְנֵי לֹא כָל שָׂכָן! אָמַר לוֹ: אָף עַל פִּי
כֵן, לָךְ אָמַר לָהֶם. הֲלָךְ וְאָמַר לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל: הֲגוֹן
עֲלֵיכֶם בְּצִלְאֵל? אָמְרוּ לוֹ: אִם לִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ
הוּא וּלְפָנֶיךָ הוּא הֲגוֹן, לִפְנֵינוּ לֹא כָל שָׂכָן!

With regard to Bezalel's appointment, **Rabbi Yitzhak said: One may only appoint a leader over a community if he consults with the community** and they agree to the appointment, **as it is stated:** "And Moses said unto the children of Israel: **See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel**, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah" (Exodus 35:30). **The Lord said to Moses: Moses, is Bezalel a suitable** appointment in **your eyes?** Moses **said to Him: Master of the universe, if he is a suitable** appointment in **Your eyes, then all the more so** in **my eyes.** The Holy One, Blessed be He, **said to him: Nevertheless, go and tell Israel and ask their opinion. Moses went and said to Israel: Is Bezalel suitable** in **your eyes?** **They told him: If he is suitable** in the eyes of the **Holy One, Blessed be He, and in your eyes, all the more so** he is suitable in **our eyes.**

Midrash Shemot Rabbah 48:3

דָּבָר אַחֵר, רְאוּ קָרָא ה' בְּשֵׁם בְּצִלְאֵל בֶּן אוּרִי בֶן
חֹר, מָה רָאָה לְהַזְכִּיר כָּאן חֹר, אֲלָא בְּשִׁעָה
שֶׁבִקְשׁוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲבֹד עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים נָתַן נַפְשׁוֹ עַל
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְלֹא הִנִּיחַ, עָמְדוֹ וְהִרְגִּיהוּ, אָמַר
לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חַיֵּיךָ שְׂאֵנִי פוֹרֵעַ לָךְ. מִשָּׁל
לְמֶלֶךְ שֶׁמֶרְדּוֹ עָלָיו לְגִינוּתָיו, עָמַד שֶׁר הַצָּבָא שָׁלוּ
וְנִלְחַם עִמָּהֶם, אָמַר לָהֶם עַל הַמֶּלֶךְ אַתֶּם מוֹרְדִים,
עָמְדוּ וְהִרְגוּ אוֹתוֹ. אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלָיו מִמּוֹן נָתַן לִי לֹא
הִיִּיתִי צָרִיךְ לִפְרֹעַ לּוֹ, עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה שְׁנָפְשׁוֹ

Another matter: "See, the Lord has called by name Betzalel, son of Uri, son of Hur" – why did He see fit to mention Hur here? It is that when Israel sought to engage in idol worship, he gave his life for the sake of the Holy One blessed be He and did not allow them to do so. They arose and killed him. The Holy One blessed be He said to him: 'By your life, I will repay you.' This is analogous to a king whose legions rebelled against him. His guard captain stood and battled against them. He said to them: 'Are you rebelling against the king?' They arose and killed him. The king said: Had he given me money, would I not be required

¹ All translations are from Sefaria, unless otherwise noted.

<p>נתן עלי, מה אני עושה לו, אלא כל בנים שיצאו ממנו אני מעמידם דכסים ואפרכים. כך בשעה שעשו ישראל העגל עמד חור ונתן נפשו על הקדוש ברוך הוא, אמר לו חייך כל בנים היוצאים ממך אני מגדלם שם טוב בעולם, שנאמר: ראו קרא ה' בשם בצלאל, וימלא אתו רוח אלהים.</p>	<p>to repay him? It is true all the more so that he gave his life for my sake. What will I do for him? I will appoint all the descendants who emerge from him as generals and officers. So, too, when Israel crafted the calf, Hur stood and gave his life for the sake of the Holy One, blessed be He. [God] said to him: 'By your life, all the descendants who emerge from you, I will elevate them and grant them a good name in the world,' as it is stated: "See, the Lord has called by name Betzalel. He filled him with the spirit of God."</p>
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Midrash Shemot Rabbah 52:4	
<p>כמה חכמים היו שם ובאו להם אצל משה ולא היו יכולין להקימו, אלא אמר שלמה (משלי לא, כט): רבות בנות עשו חיל ואת עלית על כלנה, שמשה היה מעלה מכלם. ואת עלית על כלנה, למה שעשו את המשכן ולא היו יודעין לישובו, מה עשה נטלו כל אחד ואחד מלאכתו ובאו להם אצל משה ואומרים הרי קרשים, הרי בריחין, כיון שראה משה אותם מיד שרתה עליו רוח הקדש והקימו. ולא תאמר משה העמידו, אלא המשכן נעשו בו נסים ועמד מעצמו, שנאמר (שמות מ, יז): הוקם המשכן. ואם תמה אתה על זה, הרי שלמה כשבנה בית המקדש הוא נבנה מעצמו. אמר רב הונא בשם רבי יוסי, הכל מסייעין אותו כשבנה את בית האלהים, הבריות והרוחות, מנין, שכתוב (מלכים א ו, ז): והבית בהבנתו אבן שלמה מסע נבנה ומקבות והגרזן כל כלי ברזל לא נשמע בבית בהבנתו, מעצמו היה נבנה, לפיכך במעשה נסים נבנה. וכן כשהוקם המשכן במעשה נסים עמד, הוי' ויביאו את המשכן.</p>	<p>There were numerous wise men there, and they came to Moses, but they were unable to erect it. As Solomon said: "Many daughters have performed valiantly, but you have surpassed [alif] them all" (Proverbs 31:29); as Moses was the most excellent [meuleh] of them all. "But you have surpassed them all." Why? Because they crafted the Tabernacle but were unable to put it together. What did they do? Each and every one took [the product of] his labor and they came to Moses. They said: 'Here are the boards, here are the bars.' When Moses saw them, the Divine Presence immediately rested upon him and he erected it. Do not say that Moses set it up; rather, miracles were performed regarding the Tabernacle and it stood on its own, as it is stated: "The Tabernacle was erected" (Exodus 40:17). If you are astonished about this, note that when Solomon built the Temple, it was built on its own. Rav Huna said in the name of Rabbi Yosei: Everything assisted him when he built the House of God, [including] the angels and the spirits. From where is it derived? As it is written: "The House, in its construction, was built of whole stones that were transported; hammers, the axe, or any iron tools were not heard in the House in its construction" (I Kings 6:7). It was built on its own. Therefore, it was built with miraculous acts. Likewise, when the Tabernacle was erected, it was established with miraculous acts. That is, "they brought the Tabernacle."</p>

2. Charismatic Organizations

Shirley Sagawa and Deborah Jospin, <i>The Charismatic Organization</i>
<p>...certain qualities of organizations are more important than charismatic leaders. Charismatic organizations attract people by achieving powerful results and building a community that others want to join...they build strong social capital. Social capital refers to a network of relationships that yield benefits to those who are part of the network. These benefits flow from trust, norms of reciprocity, information flow, and cooperation embedded in these relationships...These networks lead to other essential forms of capital—financial, human, and political—that allow the organization to increase its impact and influence even more, beginning a continuing cycle of impact growth.</p>
Saul Alinsky
<p>Never do for someone what they can do for themselves.</p>