



PEKUDEI

WE DON'T ALWAYS FOLLOW THE RULES

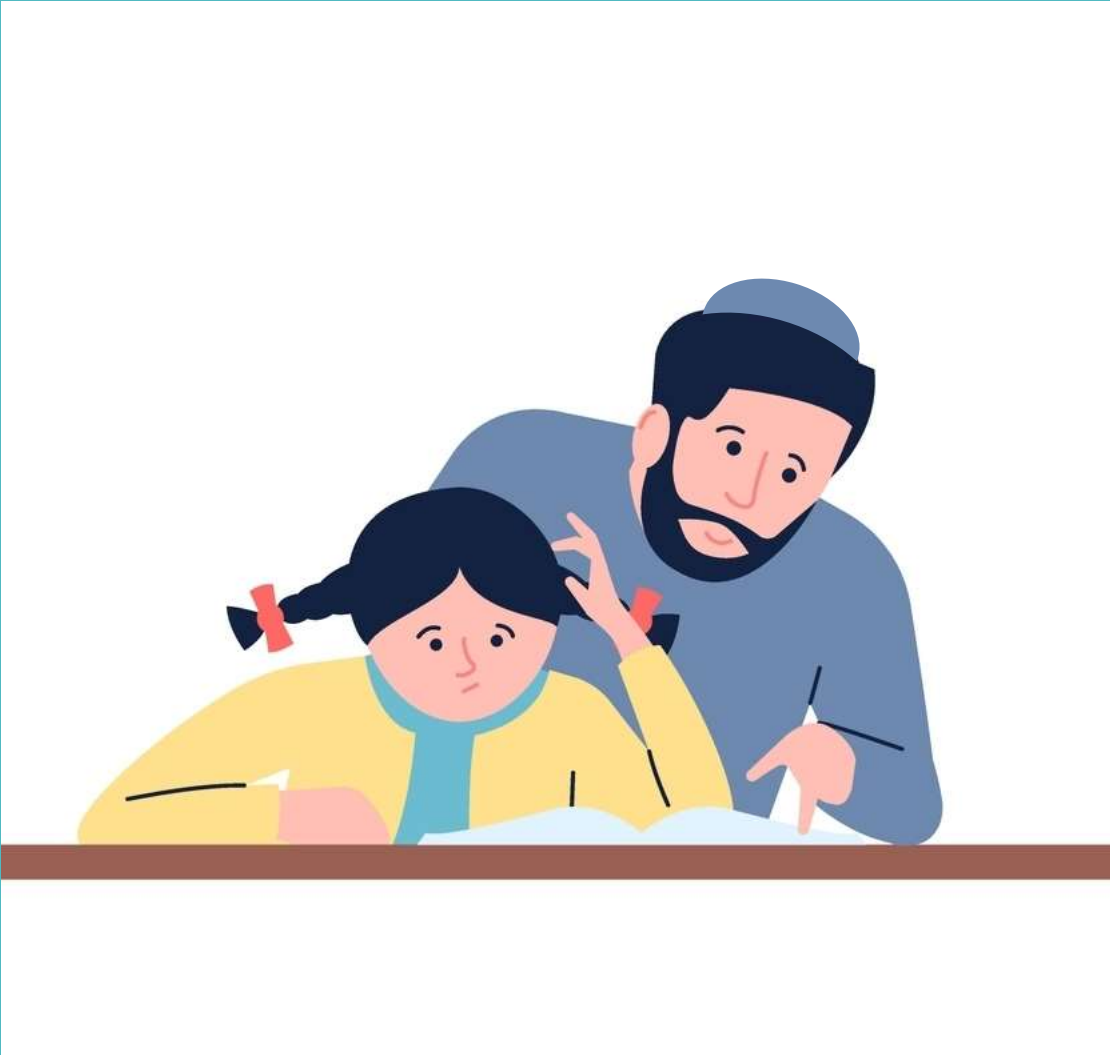
When It Comes to Teaching Judaism, We Take an Unconventional Approach

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Pekudei

An accounting is made of the gold, silver, and copper donated by the people for the making of the Mishkan. Bezalel, Aholiab, and their assistants make the eight priestly garments—the apron, breastplate, cloak, crown, hat, tunic, sash, and breeches—according to the specifications communicated to Moses in the *parshah* of *Tetzaveh*.

The Mishkan is completed and all its components are brought to Moses, who erects it and anoints it with the holy anointing oil and initiates Aaron and his four sons into the priesthood. A cloud appears over the Mishkan, signifying the Divine Presence that has come to dwell within it.



Should kids be told about challenging traditions up front, or should we focus on the fun aspects, addressing the tough stuff later?

TEXT 1

Rashi, Leviticus 9:23

שָׁכַל שִׁבְעַת יְמֵי הַמְלוּאִים שֶׁהֶעֱמִידוּ מֹשֶׁה
לְמִשְׁכַּן וְשִׁמַּשׁ בוֹ, וּפָרְקוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם.

During the seven days of initiation, Moses erected the Tabernacle, performed the services in it, and dismantled it each day.

Unusual occurrences during the seven days of initiation:

1. Moses performed the services.
2. Moses erected and dismantled the Mishkan each day.

TEXT 2

Exodus 40:29, 33

כט. וְאֵת מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה שָׂם פֶּתַח מִשְׁכַּן אֱהֹל מוֹעֵד, וַיַּעַל עָלָיו אֶת הָעֹלָה
וְאֵת הַמִּנְחָה, כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה . . .

לג. וַיִּקַּם אֶת הַחֹצֵר סָבִיב לְמִשְׁכַּן וְלְמִזְבֵּחַ, וַיִּתֵּן אֶת מָסַךְ שַׁעַר הַחֹצֵר,
וַיַּכֵּל מֹשֶׁה אֶת הַמְּלָאכָה.

29. He placed the altar of the burnt offering in front of the entrance of the Tabernacle—the Tent of Meeting—and he offered up the burnt offering and the meal offering as G-d had commanded him. . . .

33. He set up the courtyard around the Tabernacle and the altar, and put up the screen at the entrance to the courtyard, and [with this], Moses completed the work.

TEXT 3

Rashi, Numbers 10:21

בְּנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן וּבְנֵי מֵרָרִי שִׁקְּוּ קוֹדְמִים לָהֶם . . . הָיוּ מְקִימִין אֶת . . . וְעִדִּין
בְּנֵי קֹהַת בָּאִים מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם . . .

הָיוּ . . . מְקִימִין אֶת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, וְכֹשֶׁבָאִים בְּנֵי קֹהַת מוֹצְאִים אוֹתוֹ עַל
מְכוֹנּוֹ, וּמְכַנְיִסִין בּוֹ הָאָרוֹן וְהַשְּׁלֶחֶן וְהַמְּנוֹרָה וְהַמִּזְבְּחוֹת.

The Gershon and Merari families [in charge of erecting the Tabernacle] preceded the Kehat family [who carried the sacred furnishings]. . . . They would erect the Tabernacle . . . while the Kehat family traveled behind them. . . .

They . . . would erect the Tabernacle [in advance] so that by the time the Kehat family arrived, they would find it complete. They would bring in the ark, the table, the candelabrum, and the altars.

Typically, the yard was screened in before any of the furnishings, including the altar, were set up.



TEXT 4

Rashi, Exodus 38:22

אָמַר לוֹ בְּצַלְאֵל: מִנְהַג עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת תְּחִלָּה בַּיִת וְאַחַר כֵּן מְשִׁים כְּלִים בְּתוֹכוֹ?

. . . אָמַר לוֹ מֹשֶׁה: בְּצֵל אֵל-ל הֲיִיתָ? כִּי בְּנֵדָאֵי כֵּן צְנָה לִי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

וְכֵן עָשָׂה הַמִּשְׁכָּן תְּחִלָּה, וְאַחַר כֵּן עָשָׂה הַכְּלִים.

Bezalel objected, “The common custom is to build the home first and then fill it with furnishings.”

. . . Moses replied, “You were in the shadow of G-d; surely that is what G-d said to me.”

Indeed, this is how he built it: the Tabernacle first and then the furnishings.

TEXT 5

*Nachmanides, Exodus
40:17*

וכן ויעל עליו את העולה ואת המנחה בזמנה. כי עדיין לא הקים החצר
סביב למשכן, ואין מקריבין בלא קלעים, כי יהיו שחוטי חוץ.

אלא כולם בזמנם.

[Moses] offered up the burnt and meal offerings at a later point. It is forbidden to offer up a sacrifice in an open yard that is not screened in. Doing so would have rendered the offering unfit, for it would have been slaughtered outside of the Tabernacle.

We therefore conclude that he brought those offerings at a later point.

QUESTION

Why did Moses reverse the order of how the Mishkan was usually erected by setting up the altar and bringing the offerings before the yard was screened in?

- A. Why would Moses start with the service of the Mishkan in the middle of construction?
- B. Isn't it halachically prohibited to offer sacrifices out in the open?

TEXT 6

Exodus 40:1-2

א. וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר.

ב. בְּיוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ, תָּקִים אֶת מִשְׁכַּן אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד.

1. And G-d spoke to Moses, saying:
2. “Erect the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the first month.”



The Mishkan was inaugurated on the first day of Nissan. This day marked the Mishkan's eighth construction.

TEXT 7A

Leviticus 9:1

וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי, קָרָא מֹשֶׁה לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו
וּלְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

It came to pass on the eighth day that Moses summoned Aaron, his sons, and the Jewish elders.

TEXT 7B

Rashi, ad loc.

וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי: לְמִלּוּאִים.

הוּא רֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ נִסָּן, שֶׁהוּקַם הַמִּשְׁכָּן בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם.

“And it came to pass on the eighth day”: of initiation.

This was the first day of the [first] month, Nisan, the day that the Tabernacle was erected.

TEXT 8

*Exodus 29:1, 4,
29–30, 35*

א. וְזֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם
לְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתָם לְכַהֵן לִי . . .

ד. וְאֵת אַהֲרֹן וְאֵת בְּנָיו תְּקַרִּיב אֵל
פְּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, וְרַחֲצָתָם אֹתָם
בַּמַּיִם . . .

כט. וּבְגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לְאַהֲרֹן
יְהִיו לְבָנָיו אַחֲרָיו, לְמַשְׁחָה בָהֶם
וּלְמִלֵּא בָם אֶת יָדָם.

ל. שִׁבְעַת יָמִים יִלְבָּשׁם הַכֹּהֵן
תַּחֲתֵיו מִבְּנָיו, אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא אֵל אֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד לְשֵׁרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ . . .

1. This is what you must do to sanctify
[the priests] to serve Me. . . .

4. Bring Aaron and his sons to the
entrance of the Tent of Meeting and
bathe them in water. . . .

29. The sacred vestments that belong to
Aaron should belong to his children after
him, to be exalted by them and to invest
them with authority.

30. The priest that succeeds him from
among his sons, who will enter the Tent
of Meeting to serve in the Holy, must
wear them for seven days. . . .



TEXT 8

*Exodus 29:1, 4,
29–30, 35*

לה. וְעָשִׂיתָ לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו כְּכֹה
כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֹתְךָ, שִׁבְעַת
יָמִים תְּמַלֵּא יָדָם.

35. Do for Aaron and his sons all that I have commanded you—initiate them for seven days.

The Mishkan was not erected during these seven days for the purpose of initiating the Mishkan. It was erected to provide a setting for the initiation of the Kohanim.





The Mishkan was initiated on the “the eighth day.” On this day, the Mishkan was permanently erected to serve as G-d’s home. However, the eighth day was still a part of the initiation process.

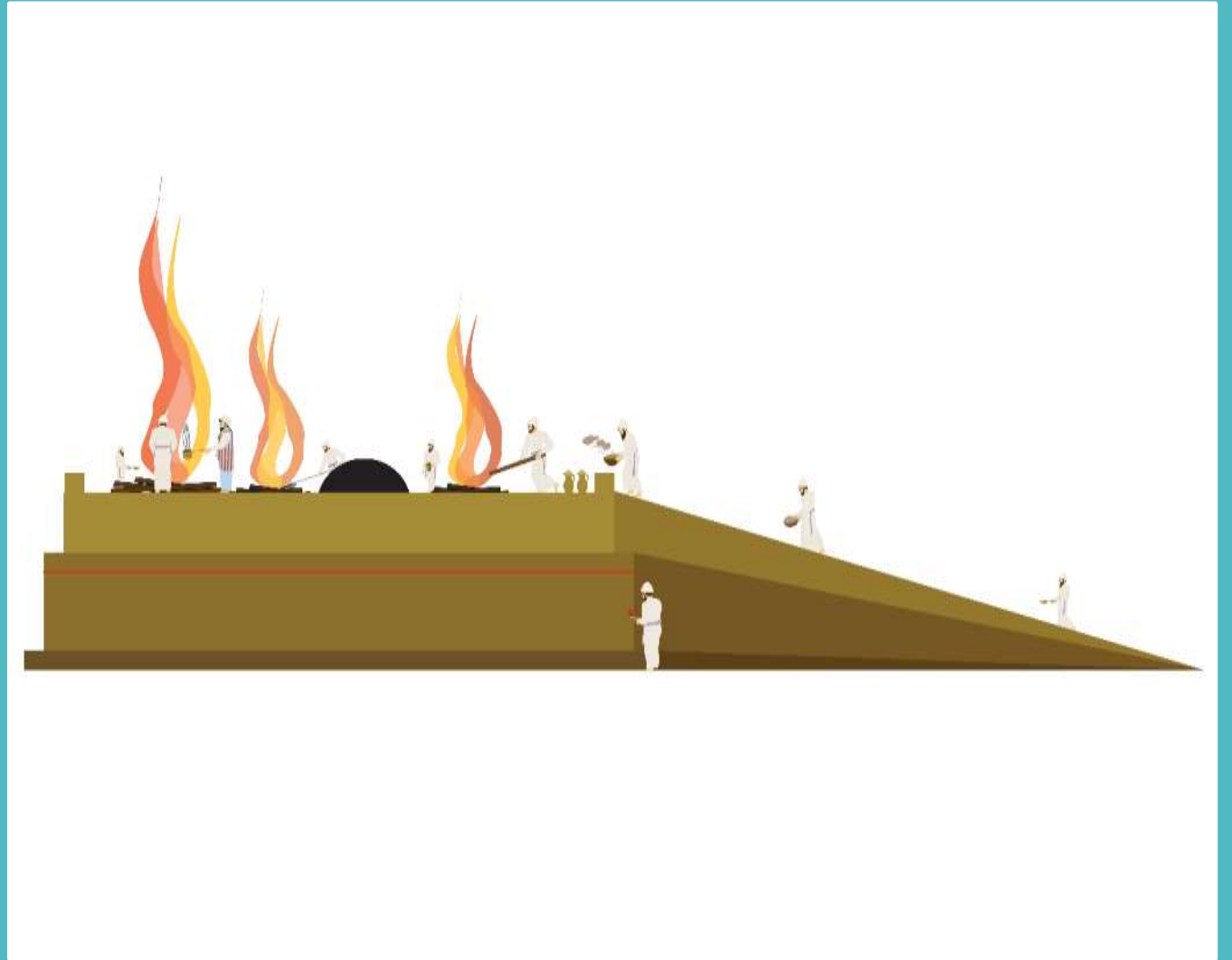
TEXT 9

Rashi, Exodus 40:29

אף ביום השמיני למילואים, שהוא יום הקמת המשכן, שימש משה והקריב קרבנות ציבור.

Moses also led the service and brought the communal offerings on the eighth day of the initiation phase, the day the Tabernacle was erected.

In addition to the *Kohanim*, Moses also brought some offerings on the eighth day. This proves that this day was still part of the initiation phase for the Mishkan.



Unusual occurrences during the seven days of initiation:

1. Moses performed the services.
2. Moses erected and dismantled the Mishkan each day.
3. Offerings were brought out in the open.

TEXT 10

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Likutei
Sichot 31, pp. 221–222*

יום השמיני, שמיני דימי מילואים, שהוא חינוך לעבודת המשכן, וקיום
הציווי דועשו לי מקדש . . .

ולכן לא קשה זה שנעשו כל פרטי העבודה בכל הכלים תיכף לאחר
העמדתם . . . לפי שבפרשה זו קאי ב"חינוך המשכן", ולא ב . . .
העבודה התמידית (הרגילה) במשכן, ו"חינוך" יש בו תנאים שונים.

The eighth day of initiation was part of the preparatory educational phase for the Tabernacle service and the commandment to “make for Me a sanctuary” (Exodus 25:8).

It was not problematic for the service to begin immediately upon the altar’s erection [before the screening of the yard] because the rules for an educational service are different.

ANSWER B.

Offering sacrifices in an open yard would be a transgression if the Mishkan was permanently set up. However, this was still part of the educational phase, and the rules differed, allowing Moses to bring offerings in an open yard.

TEXT 11A

Genesis 27:33

וַיִּחְרַד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְדוֹלָה עַד מְאֹד, וַיֹּאמֶר: מִי
אֶפּוֹא הוּא הַצֹּד הַצֵּיד וַיָּבֵא לִי וָאֲכַל מִכֹּל בְּטֶרְם
תָּבוֹא וְאַבְרָכָהוּ, גַּם בָּרוּךְ יִהְיֶה.

And Isaac shuddered a great shudder, and he said, “Who, then, is the one that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate of everything before you arrived, and I blessed him? He, too, shall be blessed.”

TEXT 11B

Rashi, ad loc.

"ויחרד". כתרגומו: ותוה, לשון תמיהה.

ומדרשו: ראה גיהנם פתוחה מתחתיו.

“And Isaac shuddered”: As rendered in the Targum, “ותוה,” he was perplexed.

The Midrashic explanation is that he saw Purgatory open beneath him.

TEXT 12

*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak
Schneersohn, Sefer
Hatoldot Admur
Hazaken, pp. 175–177*

On Wednesday, my turn arrived to be received by the Rebbe for a private audience in [the chamber that the Chasidim call] the supernal Gan Eden.

When I entered the Rebbe’s chamber, I was struck with fear and awe by the appearance of his face. His powerful and penetrating glance and his mighty and deliberate voice inquired, “What can I do for you?” But I immediately recovered and calmed myself.

I said, “I am an elementary school teacher in my hometown, and I teach my pupils according to the rules of Hebrew grammar. . . .”

The Rebbe leaned on his forearms. . . . Then, he raised his head, opened his eyes, and asked me how I explain the passage, “And Isaac was seized with very great trembling” to my students.

“I explain it according to the first interpretation of Rashi, that it means he was perplexed,” I replied.

“And why don’t you explain it according to the second interpretation of Rashi, quoting the Midrash, that he saw Purgatory open up beneath him?” he asked.



TEXT 12

*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak
Schneerson, Sefer
Hatoldot Admur
Hazaken, pp. 175–177*

“In my opinion,” I replied, “one shouldn’t fill the pupils’ delicate minds with Agadah in general, and especially with subjects such as Purgatory that might frighten them. We must especially abstain from teaching young children things that they can’t even imagine. The pupil will wonder how the large and wide opening of Purgatory could fit into Isaac’s small room. And how could its fires, which have been blazing uninterrupted for 5,555 years, enter the room, and yet Esau and his father Isaac survived and were not burned to a crisp?”

“And how does the Midrash know that he saw Purgatory open up beneath him?” he asked further.

I remained silent, making no reply. Obviously, I had no answer. Indeed, this would not be the first gross exaggeration found in the Midrash and Talmud.

When he saw that I remained silent, the Rebbe said, “When Esau entered Isaac’s room, Isaac asked him, ‘Who are you?’ To this, Esau replied, ‘I am Esau, your firstborn son.’ But this was a lie, for he had already sold the birthright to Jacob in a legal sale with all the required formalities.



TEXT 12

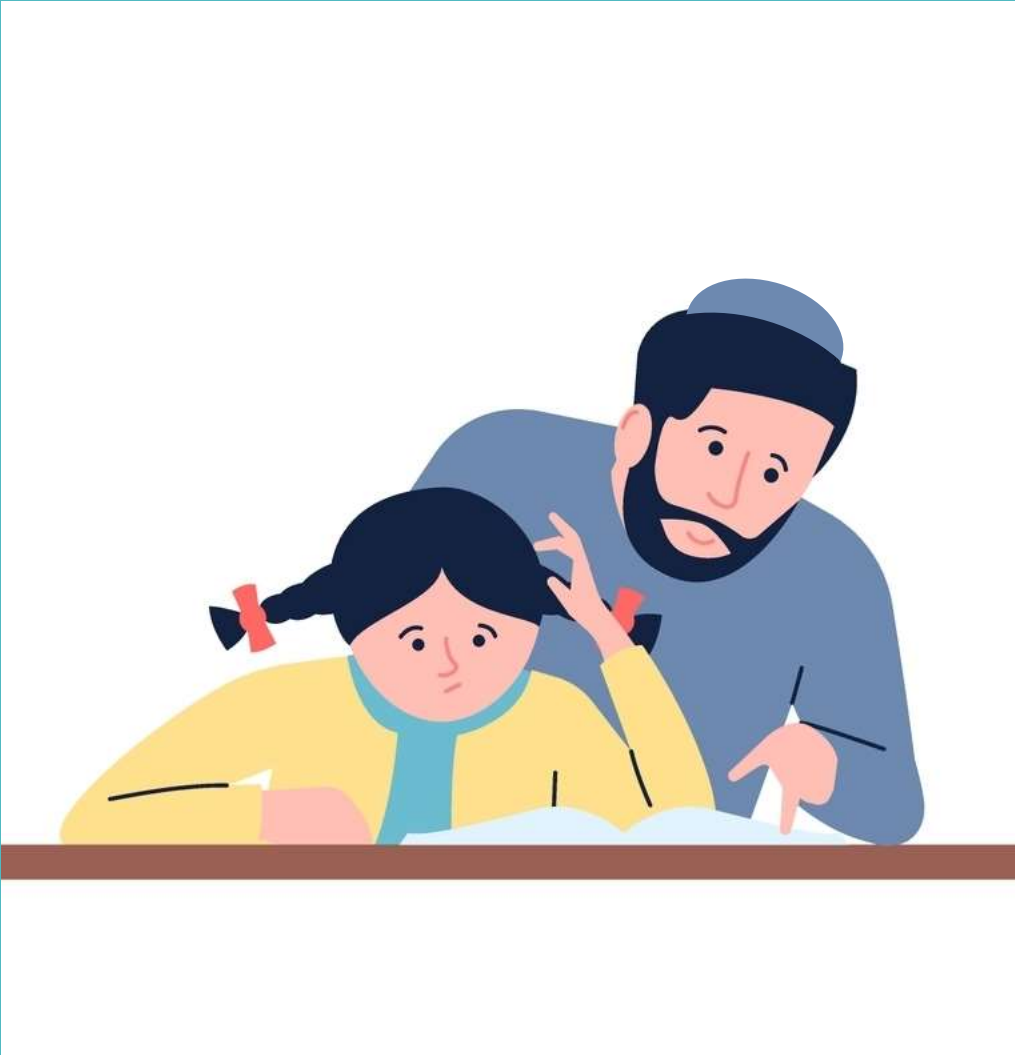
*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak
Schneersohn, Sefer
Hatoldot Admur
Hazaken, pp. 175–177*

Isaac knew this, and he was very frightened by the lie that attempted to annul a reality that was valid by Torah law. This caused him to tremble, for telling such a lie resulted in Purgatory opening beneath him.”

When the Rebbe finished speaking, he leaned on his forearms as he had done before. Then, he raised his head and opened his eyes. It is customary that whenever he receives people, even during the daytime, there are two lit candles, a *Chumash*, and a *Zohar* on the table. He now lifted one of the two candles, scrutinized me, and said:

“You come here from Vilna, but you claim to come from Zamut; you convert little children to the idolatry of *Haskalah*, but you claim to be a *melamed*. [Because of these lies] Purgatory opens beneath you. How many souls have you already destroyed? Yet, you continue to betray. Yes, it’s true: you are a heretic, and anyone who goes down that road will never return!”

I quickly fled his chamber.



Two objectives in education:

1. Progressive Education
2. “Shock Treatment”

TEXT 13

*Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov
Weinberg, Biurim
Bedivrei Razal, p. 175*

כלל גדול ויסוד ראשון בכל פדגוגיה
מעשית היא הקביעות, הסדר הרגיל.

כל חינוך משתדל להקנות לחניכים
ידיעות שלא היו להם מקדם ולפתח בהם
תכונות נפשית מסוימת.

וכיצד מגיעים אל המטרה הזאת?

משיגים אותה בעיקר על ידי חזרה
ותרגיל, על ידי מידה וקצב בעשיית הדבר
יום יום ושעה שעה. על ידי עשייה שקולה
מדודה וקצובה בזמן ומקום, יעל ידי
תדירות ודייקנות.

The first principle of practical pedagogy
is to establish a regular order.

Every form of pedagogy seeks to
impart knowledge the pupils do not
possess and to develop certain
character traits.

How is this achieved?

Primarily through repetition and
habituation. Through daily and hourly
measured repetition. By progressing in
a balanced, deliberate, and progressive
way in all times and places, and by
using consistency and precision.

TEXT 14A

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Likutei
Sichot 31, p. 225*

כל ילד וילדה בישראל, שאף שצריך להיות "חנוך לנער על פי דרכו" (משלי כב, ו) דוקא, אין להסתפק רק בחינוך בעבודה "מוגבלת" שעל פי סדר ונוהג שבעולם, אף שזהו גם לפי סדר דקדושה.

אלא צריך להיות החינוך באופן שלמעלה מטעם ודעת, עד לאופן של עבודה דמסירת נפש.

Although it is important that every Jewish child be taught “according to their path” (Proverbs 22:6), we mustn’t be content with the limited pedagogy that is common around the world, though this, too, is consistent with the Torah’s approach.

Rather, our education must also include sacred [transcendental] content, even if it is beyond the child’s [current] understanding. We must even teach the concept of self-sacrifice [on occasion].

Teaching Jewish children ideas that are beyond their understanding nurtures a commitment to Torah that transcends their understanding.



TEXT 14B

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, ibid.*

ודוקא חינוך באופן כזה, מביא ד"גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה"
(משלי כב, ו) בענין הקיום והנצחיות של תוקף יהדותו של
המחונך, דגם כאשר אינו נמצא בבית ומחיצות דקדושה, עומד
חזק ותקיף בעבודת ה'.

This pedagogical approach produces the desired result that “even when they grow old, they do not turn from your teaching” (Proverbs 22:6). It inspires pupils to a firm, durable, permanent commitment to Judaism. Even when they step out of the home and the environment of holiness, they remain strong and firm in their Judaism.

ANSWER A.

Moses performed the service in an open yard to show that our connection with G-d isn't confined to sacred spaces like the Mishkan or our homes. It endures even when the walls are down and we are exposed to the world's influences.

TEXT 14C

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, ibid.*

ו"מקריב" (את גופו ונפשו הבהמית לה'), "אף על פי שאין (נמצא ב) בית" – דירה שבה מאירה קדושתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא בקביעות ובאפן גלוי (בבית הכנסת ובית המדרש).

וגם "אוכל קדשי קדשים", דענין קדושה בתקפה נעשית אכילתו — מזונו וחיותו, "אף על פי ש(הסביבה) היא חריבה ואינה מוקפת במחיצה" — הגבלות דקדושה.

We offer sacrifices (sometimes of bodily pleasures and the animal soul) even if we are not in a home that is illuminated permanently and obviously with G-d's holiness (such as houses of prayer or study).

We also eat sacrificial meat. This represents the idea that our firm commitment to Judaism becomes our food and nourishment. We remain committed even if we are in an environment that is spiritually arid and is not surrounded by the walls and boundaries of holiness.

TEXT 15

*Rabbi Aharon Loschak,
“Don’t Wait for the
Right Time,”
www.chabad.org*

Many parents take a “common practice” approach with their children. “I don’t want to overwhelm them with anything over the top or too intense, so I’ll leave it to them to discover religion slowly, without pressure.” And so, they are shielded from anything their parents deem too extreme or fanatic.

Teach them some Hebrew, a little about Israel, and rituals around the holidays. That’s nice. Who doesn’t like apples in honey and *afikomen* treats? That’s great.

But asking them to pray at age 10? To not watch TV for a whole Shabbat every week? To really not eat non-kosher candy? Relax, let’s take it easy, they’re just kids! Let’s not scare them off with too much too soon.

You’re forgiven for thinking so. But Moses teaches us that sometimes, you must buck the “common practice” and leapfrog a couple steps. Pile it on early without worry. On the contrary, doing so will ensure that even when the walls of whatever holiness they have come down, they’ll still be strong with the values and passion you imbued within them before the walls went up.



TEXT 15

*Rabbi Aharon Loschak,
“Don’t Wait for the
Right Time,”
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And as it is with children, so it is with us. Who wants to go crazy and bite off more than they can chew? You think to yourself, “I’ve got to take this slowly and methodically. This is a process, and I shouldn’t take on too much too soon.”

You’re right and you’re wrong. You’re right on an average day. But not every day is average. Sometimes, you must get on the express train. Don’t wait until you’ve built an entire building of Jewish infrastructure before signing on for that all-night Shavuot learn-a-thon, getting your own pair of *tefilin*, or committing to monthly *mikvah* visits.

Taking the cue from Moses, who offered a sacrifice even before the walls went up: You, too, can take the plunge right now. You’re not ready? That’s OK—the Jews in the desert weren’t either. Moses did what he did anyway—and it worked.

Be like Moses. It’ll work for you, too.



Sometimes it's
necessary to take the
leap in our Judaism.

KEY POINTS

1. Moses performed the service on inauguration day of the Mishkan in what seemed to be the wrong order.
2. He learned this from other elements of the service up to that point, namely, that in the educational/inauguration stage, things are different.
3. The reason why he specifically changed the order is that in the educational stage, we sometimes must buck conventional, progressive pedagogical methods.

KEY POINTS

4. This idea was developed and expanded through the story of the Alter Rebbe and Shimon of Zamut.
5. Don't be afraid to sometimes “bite off more than you can chew” in areas of religious commitment.

