

Torah Musing on Ezra 5:16

אָדִין שֶׁשְׁבַצָּר דָּךְ אֶתָּא יְהִיב אֲשִׁיא

And Sheshbazzar Laid the Foundation

I have discovered from conversations with friends, colleagues and acquaintances who relate that they are tired, stressed, burnt out and overwhelmed, is that they all share one common denominator. The common denominator is that they possess a very extensive "to do" list. Their refrains are "I must take the kids to practice," "I have to finish my work project," "I must do minor home repairs," or "I have to go shopping." I have to... I must.... and very soon eighteen hours of the day are consumed by the "to do" lists. It is no wonder that they are burnt out!

We could learn from the example of Sheshbazzar, the first governor of Judah under Cyrus the King of Persia. Sheshbazzar was instrumental in the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem after Cyrus allowed the Judean captives to return to their homeland (538 BCE). He was directed by Cyrus to rebuild the Temple but what does Sheshbazzar do? Although he was instructed to build the Temple, he *only* constructs the foundation and left the remainder for others to complete (515 BCE).

אָדִין שֶׁשְׁבַצָּר דָּךְ אֶתָּא יְהִיב אֲשִׁיא דִּי בֵּית אֱלֹהֵא דִּי בִּירוּשָׁלַם וּמִן־אָדִין וְעַד־כְּעִן
מִתְבָּנָא וְלֹא שְׁלָם:

That same Sheshbazzar then came and laid the foundations for the House of God in Jerusalem; and ever since then it has been under construction, but is not yet finished. (Ezra 5:16)

He did not feel compelled to accomplish everything or to *do it all* and perhaps we should follow suit. Often it is only our task to lay the foundation or to establish the parameters and objectives. It is **not** incumbent on us to be *the Black Panther* of parenting but we must lay the foundation from which our children can

soar. We can perform adequate work and complete task/projects that we are proud of without devoting inordinate amounts of time to work. Like Sheshbazzar we should discover our true task, do it and leave the remainder for others and even future generations to complete.

In the end what Sheshbazzar completed was the *most instrumental* and God-pleasing aspect of the entire Temple. The foundation stone (הַשְּׁתִייה) he laid was at the exact location that the ark of the covenant was previously housed and the location that the High Priest placed the censor on Yom Kippur (see Mishnah Yoma 5:2, and Talmud Yoma 53b). While you may imagine that you are required to complete your interminable agenda, it may only be your task to build the foundation and like Sheshbazzar's actions, that foundation may indeed become the paramount aspect. The next time you feel "burned out," examine your "to do" lists and say:

אָדִין שֶׁשְׁבַצָּר דָּךְ אַתָּא יְהֵב אֲשִׁיא

And Sheshbazzar Laid the Foundation...

שַׁבַּת שְׁלוֹם מִבֵּיתֵנוּ לְבֵיתְךָ
Shabbat Shalom From Our House to Your House

Rabbi Malchah

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