

הַדְגֵּב
הַיְסָדִים

פרשת פקודי Parshat Pekudei

Ashreinu | אשרינו

Enhancing your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

In memory of Lianna Tikva Saiman daughter
of Sheri (Adler '02) and Didi Saiman

Holy Purpose



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Benny Frank ('21)

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Sefer Shmot concludes with Parshiyot Vayakhel and Pekudei, which detail the building of the Mishkan. These parshiyot seem unnecessary;

they are almost identical to the earlier parshiyot where Hashem commands Moshe to build the Mishkan in great detail. Why is every detail regarding the building of the Mishkan repeated again at the end of the sefer?

One difference between the two descriptions is that the first is Hashem telling Moshe what He wants to happen and the second is the record of what actually happened.

How many times do we make a plan or have an idea and things don't go as we thought? We set a to-do list for ourselves and only get through part of it. We plan an event, down to the last detail, and then something

goes wrong. We know, in our minds, exactly how we want something to go, but it just doesn't play out that way in reality. More often than not, the actualization of a plan does not match the original plan exactly. But not in the case of the Mishkan. Betzalel and Oholiav were able to construct the Mishkan just as Hashem commanded. What a miracle!

The Mishkan represents the intersection of the spiritual and the physical. As Hashem said:

"Make for me a Sanctuary so that I may Dwell among them" (Shmot 25:8). The purpose of the Mishkan was for Hashem's Divine Presence to have a physical place to rest on earth. The repetition at the end of Sefer Shmot teaches us that the Mishkan served its purpose. It truly was a place where Hashem's presence rested among B'nai Yisrael.

May we merit to witness the Divine Presence dwelling among us again in the Third Beit HaMikdash speedily in our days.

Shabbat Shalom!

The Greatness of a Few Pennies

Chani Kaminetsky ('20)

Hashem has gifted every single person with a tremendous amount of brachot, ranging from money to talents or time, etc. The question that we must ask ourselves is, how do we utilize those brachot?

אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר פָּקַד עַל פִּי מֹשֶׁה עֲבֹדָת
הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד אִיתְמָר בֶּן אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן

“These are the records of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Pact, which were drawn up at Moshe’s bidding, the work of the Leviim under the direction of Itamar, son of Aharon the priest” (Shmot 38:21).

What are the פְּקוּדִים, the records, which Moshe is referring to? Rav Moshe Feinstein, in his sefer, “Drash Moshe,” explains that “פְּקוּדֵי” means a *cheshbon*, a mathematical accounting; its purpose is to outline how all the resources were used in order to make sure that they were used properly. For example, a business owner carefully looks through receipts and payments to ensure that not a penny was lost. Rav Moshe is teaching here about how a Jew should live his life and be a critical accountant of the gifts Hashem has given him.

A *mashal*, similar to one given by the Dubna Magid, is as follows. A child, not noticing that his button was attached to the thread of an intricate tapestry of artwork, was running around his house. As one can imagine, every move that he made resulted in the thread growing longer and unraveling the tapestry, and after a short amount of time the artwork was nonexistent. The “small” gifts from Hashem, whether a penny or a minute, may seem like loose threads but may really be what is holding together the entire piece. They seem so trivial, but what we do with those “small” gifts is extremely indicative of our outlook on life and keeping the goal of *ratzon* Hashem in mind.

An example from the Chofetz Chaim shows how to value the gift of one minute. One time there was a Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Tropp, who was very ill. In response to his illness his *talmidim* went around asking people to donate their time to help heal the Rosh Yeshiva. When a *talmid* asked the Chofetz Chaim he responded, “I will donate one minute.” Following the talmid’s shock the Chofetz Chaim expanded, “Do you not realize how much one can accomplish in a minute?” (Found in Rabbi Rosner’s sefer: Shalom Rav)

Very literally the “Drash Moshe” discusses the donations to the Mishkan in a monetary sense, and similarly every

single person is obligated to give tzedakah, and we must be scrupulous in the halachot. The gemara (Avodah Zarah 18a) describes a discussion between Rabbi Yosef ben Kisma and Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon. Rabbi Yosef ben Kisma became very sick, so Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon went to visit him and they conversed about the predicament of Rome’s control. Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon asked, “רבי מה אני לחיי העולם הבא” – “My teacher, what will become of me? Am I destined for life in the World-to-Come?” He was only calmed and confident when he reflected on what could merit him Olam Haba. “מעות של פורים נתחלפו לי במעות של צדקה וחלקתים לעניים” – “I confused my own coins that I needed for the festivities of Purim with coins of charity, and I distributed them all to the poor at my own expense.” Just a few pennies? That is what makes him *zoche* for Olam Haba? Yes, because how we act with the few pennies is indicative of our awareness that those few coins belong to Hashem and it is our obligation to use them correctly.

Hashem has gifted us with many brachot whether in talents, money, possessions, etc. The lesson of פְּקוּדֵי is to teach us to reevaluate. With the realization that everything we have is from and for Hashem we can ask ourselves: Are we living our lives aligned with *ratzon* Hashem? Are we using all the gifts that He gives us for the right purposes? Are we recognizing the importance of a few pennies?

A for Effort

Benny Frank ('21)

This week’s parsha, Parshat Pekudei, recounts the finalization of the building of the Mishkan. With all the instructions and measurements mapped out in the past few parshiyot, Bnei Yisrael finally made this Mishkan into a reality. The Torah tells how the Jews did exactly what Hashem had commanded Moshe, and each piece of the Mishkan was made with precision and detail. After they finished building, the pasuk says:

וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶל מֹשֶׁה אֶת הָאֹהֶל וְאֶת כָּל כֵּלֵי קֹרְסָיו וְקֹרְשָׁיו
בְּרִיחָיו וְעַמֻּדָיו וְאֹדָנָיו

“Then they brought the Mishkan to Moshe, with the Tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its planks, its bars, its posts, and its sockets” (Shmot 39:33).

A pretty apparent question on this pasuk is, why did it need to specify all the individual parts of the Mishkan instead of just saying that they brought the Mishkan? Rashi explains that Bnei Yisrael tried to assemble the Mishkan, but were actually physically unable to complete its building, so they brought it unassembled to Moshe.

However, this answer of Rashi doesn’t make much sense with the words of the pasuk. If the Jews brought an unassembled pile of parts and pieces, why did the pasuk say

יָבִיאוּ אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן – “And they brought the Mishkan?” What they brought was not the Mishkan at all?! How could the Torah call this the Mishkan if the Mishkan is only complete when its parts are assembled?

Rav Yissocher Frand explains that the pasuk not only makes perfect sense, but teaches us a valuable lesson in *avodat Hashem*. It's true that Bnei Yisrael did not complete the entire building, but the attempt itself is enough to call it a full Mishkan. Even though, practically, there was no Mishkan to point to, Bnei Yisrael got the same amount of *s'char* that they would've gotten for its completion.

In *avodat Hashem*, sometimes we try with all our effort to achieve spiritual heights and yet we come up short despite the work we put in. But that effort is not in vain. It shows Hashem that we want a relationship with Him and we will try our hardest to become close to Him. As long as we are striving to be better Jews and better people every day, that is enough to make our actions considered full and complete. Good Shabbos.

The Real Tools of the Avodah

Saadya Levitt ('21)

The Mishkan has been completed. All the tools of the *avodah* have been divinely crafted. It is finally time for the *Shechina* to descend and be present in the Mishkan. Yet, even after performing the entire *avodah* for seven days, once the *Shechina* descends Moshe is unable to enter the Ohel Mo'ed. Moshe had previously been on Har Sinai while the *Shechina* was present (Shmot 24:18), so why can he not be in close proximity to the *Shechina* now that the Mishkan is complete!?

The Ohr HaChaim (Shmot 40:35) offers two answers to this question: Moshe was originally allowed near the *Shechina* because he was called by Hashem, or perhaps Moshe had not actually neared the nucleus of the *Shechina* on Har Sinai.

However, there is a deeper theme to Moshe's newfound limitation. There is now a distinct, more powerful source of Hashem's presence within Bnei Yisrael, a source even greater than Moshe. The Ohr HaChaim in Bereishit (46:4) explains that there are many levels to the *Shechina*, with the Kodesh HaKodashim second only to Hashem's Presence above Har Sinai. The list even extends to those learning Torah (Pirkei Avot 3:6). This development exhibits a shift in the *Shechina's* focal point within Bnei Yisrael. The nation cannot rely on Moshe for eternity, but instead the *makom HaMikdash* is designed to serve Bnei Yisrael constantly and continuously.

There is a practical parallel to the levels of *Shechina* that became very apparent to me through my time in yeshiva.

Moshe, the primary conveyor of Jewish observance, was not ordained to endlessly guide Bnei Yisrael. He could not ensure the continuity of the Kohanim's *avodah* and Jewish observance, yet he could build a system by which that continuity can more easily be ensured: the *avodah* in the *makom HaMikdash*.

Similarly, our learning of Torah, math, and science from nursery through high school is not intended to gift us a guaranteed vat of knowledge and success in our academic and religious pursuits. Rather, our shiurim and classes stand to give us the tools we need to elevate all our endeavors.

It is imperative upon us to take that base of knowledge, skills, and drive, and continue our *avodah* to bring the *Shechina* into the world. As we learn in Pirkei Avot (3:6), even one person learning Torah is powerful enough to achieve that.

All Comes Together

Tehila Zaghi ('20)

Growing up, my approach to religion was a little bit childish. I had the attitude of, if I see it on my terms, I'll believe it. With that, whenever I was alone, I would often find myself saying “Hashem, just show me right now. I won't tell anyone. I swear.” I did this with the intention of luring Hashem into calling out of the sky for me or appearing to me as a talking burning bush as I was told He had done for Moshe. It wasn't until relatively recently that I understood my faulty perspective by learning Parshat Yitro with a new lens to understand what really happened at *Ma'amad Har Sinai* and what followed in Parshat Ki Tisa. Bnei Yisrael had just seen and interacted with Hashem in a way that today we can only dream of. What did they do immediately afterwards? They build the Golden Calf – a symbol now known as the epitome of going against Hashem and straying from His path. By way of this sin, we see that one's *emunah* cannot rely upon a miracle.

Following Parshat Ki Tisa, in Parshat Vayakhel, Bnei Yisrael were instructed to build the Mishkan, as Hashem said:

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשִׁכְנִתִּי בְתוֹכָם – “And they will make for me a Sanctuary so that I may Dwell among them” (Shmot 25:8).

This phrase is seemingly referring to a singular Mishkan, however, the word בְּתוֹכָם is used, which means “in them” – plural.

The Shelah explains that בְּתוֹכָם is referring to Bnei Yisrael and that each person is expected to build within themselves a Mishkan for Hashem so that he may reside within us. Thus, a real relationship with Hakadosh Ba-

ruch Hu does not require being shown a miracle, rather it requires hard work on ourselves so that we can make ourselves a *kli*, a vessel, for Hashem to reside in.

To understand this concept better, my rebbe once used the *mashal* of a house. One does not see an empty lot one day and then a house built the following day. Rather, if you have ever lived anywhere where there was construction, you would know that there are drills and hammers in the morning starting at 6 am and lasting until 6 pm. The construction goes on for 12 hours a day for at least a year. In some cases, it can take a year to simply build the foundation of the house, another year to build the walls, windows, and doors, and a final few months to finish coating the paint. Even then, the house is not furnished and ready to host its residents.

Parshat Pekudei, while seemingly an uneventful parsha full of technical details, is one of the deepest and most important parshiyot in the Torah. It is in this parsha that the hard work in building the Mishkan is validated with Hashem's *Shechina* coming to dwell within it.

We learn the value of our work in creating a space for Hashem, and we reap the benefits through *kirvat Elokim*, closeness to God. May we all be successful and *mechazek* one another to build the proper Mishkan within ourselves so that we can have Hashem's *Shechina* reside within us.



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