



Parshas Pekudei

For the week ending 6 Adar II 5757
14 & 15 March 1997

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Overview

The Book of Shmos comes to its conclusion with this Parsha. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the *Mishkan*, Moshe gives a complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels which had been fashioned. The Bnei Yisrael bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to Hashem's specifications. Moshe blesses the people. Hashem speaks to Moshe and tells him that the *Mishkan* should be set up on the first day of the first month, i.e., *Nissan*. He also tells Moshe the order of assembly for the *Mishkan* and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the *Mishkan* is finally complete with every vessel in its place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that Hashem's glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the *Mishkan*, the Bnei Yisrael would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

Insights

O.H.M.S.

"...stones of remembrance to the Children of Yisrael" (39:7)

Ask someone from a non-religious background what it's like to wear a yarmulke in public for the first time.

He will tell you it feels like becoming an ambassador. An ambassador for the Jewish People. An ambassador for Hashem Himself. The entire Jewish People and Hashem may be judged by the way you now behave. Five minutes ago it was "Hey! - Look at that guy pushing in line!" Now it's "Hey! - Look at that Jew pushing in line!"

A Jew, unlike a person of color, always has the option to merge into the background, to shorten his nose, shorten his name.

But as soon as he 'comes out' and wears the signs of his Judaism with pride, his actions reflect not just on himself, but on the whole Jewish People, **and on G-d.**

On the *Choshen*, the breastplate, that the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) wore, were twelve stones. On these stones were inscribed the names of the Tribes of Israel. They were called the 'stones of remembrance before the Children of Yisrael.'

For the Jewish People would remember that their names were inscribed on this holy garment, and they would thus be ashamed to sin.

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU!

"And Moshe saw all the work, (of the Mishkan), and, behold, they had done it as the Almighty had commanded... and Moshe blessed them." (39:43)

Rabbi Moshe Helfan was a fund-raiser for the Telz Yeshiva in Cleveland. One of his regular donors was a Jewish farmer who had a farm in Pennsylvania. The farmer used to give a small yearly donation. However, in the 1970s, when the price of petroleum went up, the cost of the gas needed to drive to Pennsylvania and back was more than the amount that farmer used to give.

Rabbi Helfan was in a quandary: On the one hand he couldn't use the Yeshiva's money to finance a trip which he knew would definitely *lose* money. But on the other hand he couldn't deprive the farmer of giving his donation. As Rabbi Helfan said "This farmer's supporting Torah study in the Yeshiva is a tremendous merit for him. How can I deprive him of that?"

So Rabbi Helfan decided to drive to Pennsylvania and he himself would foot the bill for the gas.

Have you noticed that at a fund-raising dinner for a charitable cause, it's usually the staff who heap praise and blessing on the donors?

Really, it should be the other way round.

For through the efforts of the staff in creating a worthwhile charity, they give the donors much more than the donors have given them.

The charity has given the donors a deposit in the First National Bank of *Olam Habah* (the World-to-Come) and that's a bank which suffers neither from inflation nor poor management.

So why is it the other way round — that the staff of the charity thank the donors?

The answer is that we follow the tradition of Moshe *Rabbeinu*, who after itemizing the full accounting of the *Mishkan* blessed the people for all they had brought, even though they should really have blessed him.

As they say: "You can't take it with you — but you can send it ahead."

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THE GOLD STANDARD

"These are the accounts of the Mishkan..." (38:21)

In Moshe's accounting for the expenditure of the Mishkan, only the silver is reckoned for and not the gold.

The reason is that the silver was gathered through the mandatory half-shekel donation, which all the Bnei Yisrael had to give.

Moshe realized that, inevitably, there would be those among the people who would be of a suspicious nature — seekers of account — and so for this reason he gave an accounting for the silver.

However, the gold was donated only by the open-hearted and the generous, among whom was no place for suspicion and account-seeking.

AN UNIMPEACHABLE WITNESS

"...the Tabernacle of Testimony..." (38:21)

The Tabernacle was itself a testimony to the accuracy of Moshe's accounting, for had there been even the merest hint of misappropriation of funds, certainly the Divine Presence would never have rested upon it.

For this reason it is called the Tabernacle of Testimony.

Haftorah: I Kings 7:51- 8:21

The completion of the Tabernacle in the desert, which is the subject of this week's Parsha is paralleled in the Haftorah by the completion of the First Beis Hamikdash (Holy Temple) by Shlomo Hamelech.

THROUGH THE DARK CLOUD SHINING

"When the Kohanim left the Holy, the cloud filled the House of Hashem. The Kohanim were unable to stand and minister because of the cloud... Then Shlomo said 'Hashem has said He would dwell in the thick cloud.'" (8:10-12)

After Shlomo finished building the Beis Hamikdash, he saw through prophecy that in the future it would be destroyed; that a time would come when a cloud of darkness would descend on the Beis Hamikdash and the Kohanim would be forced to leave.

However, he was consoled by Hashem's promise that He would not abandon His people Yisrael even in the darkest and most difficult times; that He would be with them even in the blackest storm-clouds and the most gloomy mists of world events.

That is the hidden meaning of the above verse: Even during the celebration of the inauguration of the Mikdash it was revealed to Shlomo the sad vision of the "the Kohanim left the Holy," fettered with iron chains. "The cloud filled the House of Hashem," the cloud which represented the Divine Presence resting on the Temple was replaced with a somber cloud which

THE SECRETS OF THE WORLD

"Moshe erected the Mishkan; he put down its sockets and put into place its planks, and inserted its bars and erected its pillars." (40:18)

Where are the hidden secrets of the world stored? Where in Creation are they to be found?

When we study the Mishkan and its vessels, its ropes, and its fastening stakes, the Menorah, the description of its setting up and taking down, we are gazing into the secrets of the world.

Few are those who are able to penetrate to the depths of the Mishkan. Maybe one holy and wise man in each generation. Maybe a few more unique individuals with the instruction of a great Torah sage will be able to have some idea of these hidden secrets.

And yet, it is the obligation of every Jew to delve and to search and to pray to Hashem that his eyes be opened a little to glimpse a fleeting flash of these mysteries.

For when a person exerts himself, he finds. The Torah is wedded to the Jewish People. The Torah wants to impart its secrets to those who are worthy, for "more than the calf wishes to feed, the cow wishes to nurse."

Provided we direct our hearts Heavenwards, we have it within our power to constantly discover new insights in the Holy Torah. If we will only reach up, He will reach down and illuminate our eyes with His Torah.

filled the Sanctuary. The Kohanim were not able to fulfill the Divine service; rather strangers went in and desecrated it.

However, in spite of this, Shlomo was not dispirited nor downcast, because "Hashem had said He would dwell in the thick cloud." Hashem has promised that He will dwell with the Jewish People even in their darkest hour.

From our vantage point we can see how King Shlomo's vision has been vindicated. The People of Israel live. We live despite pogroms. We live despite holocausts. We live despite assimilation. We continue.

Even in the blackest mists of history Hashem has never, nor will He ever, desert His people. And even though we don't see Him clearly, if we gaze closely into the gloom we will see Hashem watching over His people through the darkest night.

Sources:
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You Can't Take It With You! - Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin; Rabbi Zelig Pliskin
in Growth through Torah
The Gold Standard - Ahavas Yonason
An Unimpeachable Witness - The Malbim
The Secrets Of The World - Degel Machane Ephraim
Through The Dark Cloud Shining - Ohr HaMeir Lhh"g MiLublin z"l



INSIGHTS INTO THE ZEMIROS
SUNG AT THE SHABBOS TABLE
THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS.

KOL MEKADESH - hghca asen kf
"WHOEVER KEEPS SHABBOS..."

"Who delay departing from the Sabbath and rush to enter."
How does one delay departing before he rushes to enter?
This may be a reference to a Jew's mental and emotional immersion in the sanctity of Shabbos.
The Sabbath observer should be so wrapped up in the holy experience of the day that if there is a momentary lapse in his connection he rushes to reestablish contact.
We therefore sing the praise of Jews who are loathe to leave this total connection with the Sabbath — "who delay departing" — and who therefore "rush to enter" by reconnecting themselves as soon as possible.

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