

Yad Avraham Institute
WEEKLY TORAH COMMENTARY SERIES
Parshas Pekudei
 March 11, 2005

Presented By: Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita*

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Yad Avraham Institute
New York
March 11, 2005

B"H

Parshas Pekudei

Presented by

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita*
Dean

1. The Far Reaching Effects of Integrity

The Torah states, “**These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle...**” Moshe had given a reckoning/accounting of how the materials of the Mishkan were invested. The Midrash states, “It is written, ‘A man who is faithful (ish emunah) has great blessing. Whoever is trustworthy/of great integrity, G’d brings through him blessing. One who is not of integrity and hurries to amass wealth, he will not be vindicated.’” The Midrash continues “Ish emunah” is referring to Moshe because blessing came upon whatever he oversaw and was engaged in, because he was one of great integrity....” King Solomon is telling us that blessing emanates from an individual who is faithful, truthful and honest. Why is this so?

The Torah describes the Holy Ark as something that was cast in pure gold on the inside as well as on the outside. The Ark contained the tablets, the broken tablets, and the Torah Scroll. The Gemara tells us that the symbolism of the Ark having an inlay of pure gold on the inside and outside is to teach us that only the person who is qualified to be classified as a “Talmud Chacham – Torah Sage” is one who is as pure on the inside as he appears on the outside - a person of integrity and sincerity.

It is interesting to note that gold (because of its reddish color) represents fire/the Attribute of Justice (Midas HaDin). The Gemara in Tractate Avodah Zorah tells us that the Torah itself is referred to by King Solomon in Proverbs as “(Absolute) Truth.” Thus, just as Torah is perfect and exact, so too is the Attribute of Justice. On the other hand, the Attribute of Mercy is not Absolute Truth because, although one is deserving of punishment, G’d delays retribution and holds punishment in abeyance in order to give the individual the opportunity to do teshuvah (repent). Torah itself has relevance only to Absolute Truth.

Only the true Torah Sage (Talmud Chacham) who is pure and sincere can be the repository to contain the Torah which is truth. In essence the Torah Sage is the equivalent of the Holy Ark.

Moshe Rabbeinu is identified by King Solomon as “ish emunos” who had the capability to give blessing and all that was associated with him was blessed. Because Moshe was an embodiment of truth, the pillar of Torah, he qualified to be the conduit of blessing. Just as all blessing emanates from G’d, whose signet is truth (*chosamoh emmes*), so too whoever reflects that characteristic will be a source of blessing.

The more one lives his life in conformance with Torah the more he will experience G’d’s blessing.

2. Seeing is Not Necessarily Believing

The Torah tells us that after the Mishkan was completed the Jewish people brought all of its parts before Moshe. The Midrash cites a verse from Proverbs which states, “The false lips which speak about the tzaddik shall be widowed (dispelled) and proven false.” The Midrash continues, “Moshe was engaged in the building of the Mishkan for a period of three months. After the Mishkan was completed there was a group of deprecators/scoffers (*leitzim*) who mocked Moshe saying, “We completed the Mishkan. Where is the Shechina (Divine Presence)?” Moshe explained, “The Mishkan will be fully erected in the month of Nissan, which is a special month because it was then that Avraham our Patriarch was informed by G’d about Yitzchak his son.” On the first day of the month of Nissan G’d said, “Now the lips of those who speak falsehood shall be dispelled.” All those who had initially deprecated Moshe began to transport the elements of the Mishkan to him.”

After the Jewish people received the Torah at Sinai, they sinned with the Golden Calf when Moshe had not descended from the mountain. Moshe beseeched G'd on their behalf to be forgiven. Had it not been for Moshe's supplication, the Jewish people would have been destroyed and a new nation would have emanated from him. When Moshe descended from the mountain his face radiated with such an intensity of holiness (kiddushah) that the people could not gaze upon him. Moshe was the intermediary between the Jewish people and G'd. In addition to all of this, Moshe had taken the Jews out of Egypt and performed all of the subsequent miracles – such as the Splitting of the Sea – leading up to the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Despite Moshe's credibility and accomplishment, there was a segment of Jews that deprecated and questioned his capability and motive. How could this be?

Mishlei (Proverbs) states, **"A deprecator (*leitz*) you should smite, but a fool (*pesee*)/hedonist could be made wise."** The Midrash explains that "A deprecator (*leitz*) you should smite (*sakaeh*)" refers to the Amalekite people and "a fool (*pesee*) could be made wise (*yaarim*)" refers to Yisro. One cannot enter into a dialogue with a *leitz* (deprecator) because he does not have the capacity to appreciate and process properly something that has intrinsic worth. He is spiritually blocked and shut down.

Chazal tell us that at the time of the splitting of the Sea, the Presence of G'd was palpable to the degree that even the maidservant who was present was able to sense Him as a reality. As a result of the splitting of the Sea, the nations of the world trembled and were in awe of the Jewish people. They realized that the Jews had an intimate relationship with G'd as a son has to his father. Despite this fact, the Amalekites attacked the Jewish people soon after the splitting of the Sea. How could the Amalekites consider attacking G'd's people when it was so evident and obvious that they would incur His Wrath as the Egyptians had?

Rashi cites Chazal who explain that the Amalekite's attack on the Jewish people is analogous to a person entering into a scolding bath where others are too frightened to approach it out of fear of being burned. However, if a fool should immerse himself in the bath, although he is scolded, nevertheless others will perceive the bath as approachable - despite the fact that they will be scolded to no lesser degree. Similarly although the Jewish people were revered and feared by the world, who stood in trepidation of them, after they were attacked by the Amalekites the aura of the Jew was diminished. Something that was so blatantly clear to the world, the

Amalekite people did not have the capacity to process or appreciate what they had heard.

The Jews that deprecated Moshe and questioned his integrity after experiencing the Sinai event and witnessing Moshe's holiness and relationship with G'd, had no capacity whatsoever to appreciate spirituality. Although the scoffers had no basis for their accusation against Moshe, there had to be a basis for their warped perception of their own reality.

The Mishkan was the location in which the Divine Presence dwelled. As it is stated in the Torah, **"Make for Me a Sanctuary so that I can dwell in your midst."** The Mishkan was the medium through which G'd's Presence dwelled among the Jewish people. The deprecators believed that since they had sinned with the Golden Calf, regardless of their repentance and Moshe's encouragement, they could not be reinstated to a level that G'd would dwell in their midst. Just as they had forfeited their special spiritual status (crowns of spirituality) as a result of the Golden Calf, so too they were no longer qualified to have an intimate relationship with G'd. Therefore, Moshe's concept to erect a Mishkan within which G'd would allow His Presence to dwell was something of folly. This was confirmed in their minds when Moshe delayed the erection of the Mishkan until Nissan. On the first day of Nissan it was proven that the Jewish people were in fact reinstated. Thus, "The false lips which speak about the tzaddik shall be widowed (dispelled) and proven false."

3. The Inherent Value of Torah and Its Study

The Midrash Tanchuma states, **"Reb Shimon Bar Yochai says, 'There is no testament other than the Torah itself.' As it states in the verse, 'This is the Testament, the Decrees, and the Statutes...' It is analogous to a king who has a daughter. He builds for her a palace, which contains within it an inner chamber that is within seven other chambers. The King announces, 'Anyone who approaches my daughter, it is as if he approaches me.'** [The word "Mishkan" is derived from the word "shochein- to dwell."] **The Torah refers to the Mishkan in two contexts – "Mishkan Ha'aidus – the Sanctuary of Testament (location that contains the Torah/Luchos)" and "Mishkan Hashem – the Sanctuary of G'd (location of the Divine Presence). G'd (the King) says, "If anyone were to disgrace My daughter (the Torah) it is as if he disgraced Me. If one enters into a synagogue and disgraces My Torah, He is disgracing My honor..."**

In the Sixth Chapter of Pirkei Avos (Ethics of Our Fathers) it states, “Reb Yehoshua Ben Levy says, ‘Every day a Heavenly voice emanates from Choreiv (Sinai) and says, “Woe to humanity because of the disgrace of Torah. Whoever does not engage in Torah (study) is considered rebuked/shunned.””

According to the Ashkenazic tradition, the “Yekum Purkan” is recited on Shabbos. It is a prayer that beseeches G’d to provide health, children, good eyesight, sustenance, etc. In this prayer, one requests from G’d success and good fortune in the material sense. What relevance does this prayer have to the Shabbos? Reb Yehudah Chasid explains that Shabbos is a time that G’d, the King of Kings, enters into the home of every Jew. If a king enters into one’s home, one would be consumed with pride and joy for having the opportunity and privilege to host the king. He would not be distracted or preoccupied with anything other than the present situation. If he would, this would be a clear indication that he does not appreciate or understand the value of the king. It is considered disrespect and thus deserving of punishment. If a Jew has any sense or inkling of the meaning of G’d, the Omnipotent Being, gracing his home, he should be overjoyed and only occupied with the spirituality of Shabbos. Since the average Jew does not internalize or appreciate G’d’s presence or the sanctity of the Shabbos in this manner, it is considered disrespect, thus causing the individual to deserve punishment. One recites the Yekum Purkan prayer on the Shabbos to beseech G’d to ensure him of the blessing despite his failing.

Reb Shimon Bar Yochai explains that the Mishkan, which contained G’d’s presence is identified as “the Mishkan of Testament” to indicate that in essence G’d and Torah are one. When one engages in Torah it is as if he is engaging directly with G’d. If this is so, then how could one not engage in Torah study if it is within one’s ability to do so? Thus Pirkei Avos teaches us that the one who does not engage in Torah is considered rebuked and shunned.

The Torah states, **“I (G’d) will meet you from between the two Cherubs.”** The Cherubs were located on the cover of the Holy Ark (the Aron). Its location was the Holy of Holies which was the place where G’d’s Presence dwelled. The Ark was the vessel that contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments, the broken tablets, and the Torah scroll that was written by Moshe. G’d communicated to Moshe from the location that contained the Torah. From this we understand that G’d communicates with the Jew through His holy Torah. One

who engages in it properly will have an understanding of what G’d wants from the Jew.

In his work Chomas Ha’Daas, the Chofetz Chaim cites a Sifrie that in the first paragraph of the Shema it states, “You shall love G’d with all of your heart...” and then it continues “you shall teach your children (students) and speak in them (Torah).” What is the relevance between the mitzvah to love G’d and to study Torah? A Jew can only have a sense of G’d when he studies Torah because this is what gives him the capacity to appreciate G’d and to love Him.

4. Comprehending The Innateness of the Mishkan

The Torah states regarding the making of the Priestly Vestments (*Bigdei Kehunah*), **“You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aaron your brother, for glory and splendor.”** Aaron and his sons wore the Priestly vestments when they were installed as the Kohanim by Moshe on the eighth day of the Mishkan. Prior to this, Moshe acted as the Kohen and officiated for the first seven days of the Mishkan. The Gemara in Tractate Avodah Zorah asks, “When Moshe officiated as the Kohen, what garment did he wear?” the Gemara answers, “He wore a white tunic.”

Shalah HaKadosh explains that when Adam was created by G’d, his physicality was spiritualized to the degree that he radiated holiness. His radiance was such that the angels confused it with the radiance of G’d Himself. After Adam sinned, his radiance was dimmed and his physicality was no longer fully integrated with his spirituality. Consequently, Adam assumed the status of a physical being that had no relevance to his original dimension of person.

Shalah HaKadosh explains that initially the vestments of man were his physicality. His physicality was the equivalent of the Holy Vestments because man was truly holy. However when Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge his physical vestment became invalidated because of the impurity that was introduced into his being. Therefore he no longer qualified to stand before G’d to officiate as His Kohen. Thus, the Priestly Vestments were needed to compensate for the physicality of man that was invalidated. This is what is meant when G’d said regarding the vestments that were made for Aaron that they were for “splendor and glory.” However Moshe was qualified to officiate in the Mishkan while only wearing a white tunic. He did not need to wear the Priestly Vestments. Why was this so?

Moshe's dimension of physical being was so spiritualized that he had a semblance of the status of Adam before the sin. His physicality qualified as the vestment for his soul. He did not need to compensate with the Priestly Vestments to validate his service. There is similarity between the Kohen who officiates in the Mishkan/Temple and Adam's state of being in the Garden of Eden.

Rabbeinu Asher z'tl in his commentary on the Portion cites a Midrash which explains that every aspect of the Mishkan corresponds to the days of Creation. The Midrash tells us. "On the Fifth Day of Creation G'd created the birds. Similarly, about the Cherubs on the cover of the Holy Ark in the Mishkan the Torah states, "their wings extended." On the Sixth Day of Creation G'd created man. What corresponds to the creation of man? The Torah states, "You shall bring your brother Aaron close ..." Thus, the installation of Aaron in the context of the Mishkan corresponds to the creation of man in the Garden of Eden. Meaning, the level of qualification that was required to validate the Kohen was similar to that of Adam in the Garden. The Kohen needed replicate the pristine spiritual state of man, Adam, before the sin. This was brought about with the Priestly Vestments.

We see from this that the Mishkan was not only a microcosm of existence but it was a replication of the original pristine Creation that was brought about by G'd. Thus, it is understandable why it was the source of such unlimited blessing.

5. The Evolution of Holiness

The Torah tells us that the copper that was used to make the laver (*Kiyor*) came from the copper mirrors that were used by the Jewish women in Egypt. The Torah refers to these mirrors as "*maaros ha'tzovos*" (the mirrors of the legions).

Rashi cites the Midrash which explains the *maaros ha'tzovos*, **"The daughters of Israel had in their possession copper mirrors, which they would look into when they would beautify themselves. Even these mirrors (that were necessary for their beautification) they did not withhold from the building of the Mishkan. Moshe detested them because they were made for the Evil Inclination. G'd said to Moshe, "Accept them because these are dearest to Me of all, for by means of them, the women established many legions of offspring in Egypt. When their husbands would be exhausted from the hard labor imposed upon them by the Egyptians, the women would go and bring**

their husbands food and drink, and feed them. Then they would take the copper mirrors and each would view herself with her husband in the mirror, and entice him with words, saying, "I am more attractive than you." By these means, they would bring their husbands to desire, and would cohabit with them and conceive and give birth there."

The Torah tells us that in addition to the mirrors, the personal jewelry of the Jewish women was given for the building of the Mishkan; among them were bracelets, nose rings, and other jewelry/ornaments that were worn on the lower extremities of the woman's body. The purpose of the jewelry, especially those that were worn on the lower extremities, was specifically to entice the male for cohabitation. These ornaments were smelted down and provided the gold that was needed for the Mishkan. Why did Moshe not reject these ornaments for the same reason that he had initially rejected the copper mirrors?

The foundation is the most vital element of a building or legacy. For example, the Patriarchs went to great length to ensure that their offspring married appropriate mates because of its ultimate impact on the qualitative spiritual development of the Jewish people. Canaanite women did not qualify to be the mates/spouses of the Patriarchs because they descend from Cham – the cursed son of Noach. As Avraham had said to Eliezer, "Your daughter is not eligible for my son, Yitzchak, because you are of cursed stock and my son is of a blessed stock (because he descends from Shem – the blessed son of Noach). Something cursed cannot cleave to something that is blessed." The Gemara in Tractate Bava Basera tells us, according to one opinion that the sons of Yaakov, although they were the Tribes of Israel, were permitted to marry Canaanite women. If it was considered inappropriate for the Patriarchs to marry Canaanites, why was it permitted to their children? Once the foundation of the Jewish people was established through the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, who all descended from Shem (the blessed son of Noach), the future of the Jewish people was secure. However, if the foundation of the Jewish people was flawed and deficient, then that deficiency would manifest itself and permeate the Jewish people in an adverse manner until the end of time.

The Kiyor (Laver) was the vessel that was used to ritualize the hands and feet of the Kohen so that he should be qualified to officiate the holy service of G'd (*avodah*). Even if the Kohen was to wear his holy vestments, if his hands and feet were not first ritualized, his service was considered invalid. Thus, the vessel that initiated the qualification of the Kohen was the Kiyor. Moshe believed

that something so fundamental and crucial to the qualification of the Kohen should not be in any way associated with anything which has relevance to the evil inclination. He therefore rejected the mirrors and considered them “detestable” in this particular context. G'd explained to Moshe that had it not been for these mirrors, there would not be a Jewish people. The legions of Jews who left Egypt as G'd's people were initiated through these mirrors. Therefore it was appropriate and correct that these mirrors should be used to initiate and qualify the Kohen for the service.

However, the gold jewelry contributed by the women was not used for building the foundation of the Mishkan. It was only part of the totality of the Mishkan.

The Gemara in Tractate Megillah asks, “Where do we find Mordechai alluded to in the Torah?” The Gemara answers, “A primary ingredient among the spices that was needed to produce the anointing oil was “*Mor dror – pure myrrh.*” Targum Unkalus interprets, ‘*Mor dror*’ (which is Hebrew) into the Aramaic as ‘*mari dachya.*’” Thus, the Torah alludes to Mordechai through one of the essential ingredients of the anointing oil. What relevance does Mordechai have to the anointing oil alluded to in this context?

It is interesting to note that after the Mishkan was erected and all of its unique and intricate elements were completed, it only became functional after the anointing oil was applied. The anointing oil gave meaning and value to the Mishkan. Without the anointing oil, the Mishkan would be ineffective. Just as the anointing oil gave value and meaning to the Mishkan, it was Mordechai who galvanized the Jewish people in Shushan. He united them and instructed them to fast, do teshuvah (repent), and meticulously adhere to the mitzvos. The Jewish people under the reign of Achashverosh (Persian Emperor) did not fulfill even the most fundamental obligation of tefillin and circumcision. It was Mordachai who motivated the Jewish people to understand and appreciate their relationship with G'd and thus correct all the areas of their failings. Through Mordechai's leadership, the decree of Haman to annihilate the Jewish people was annulled.

YAD AVRAHAM DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

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5:50- 6:00 am	Chumash with Rashi
6:00- 6:15 am	Mishna
6:15- 6:30 am	Mishna Berurah

6:30- 7:25 am	Halacha
6:30 -6:45 am	Mussar
6:45 -7:25 am	Talmud—Tractate Avodah Zorah
7:25 - 8:20 am	Davening Followed by Breakfast
8:20 - 8:45 am	Mishna
9:00 -10:00 am	Daf Yomi

2:00pm	Mincha
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Special Weekday Classes

Monday

11:15 – 12:15pm	Talmud: Sanhedrin Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL.) Enter on 54 th Street
12:30 – 1:30pm	Talmud: Avodah Zorah Location: Shandholt 488 Madison Avenue Between E.51 st and E.52 st

Tuesday

12:15 - 1:15pm	Torah Insight Based on the Parsha Location: Yad Avraham
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Talmud: Sanhedrin Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL.) Enter on 54 th Street

Wednesday

11:30 – 12:30 pm	Talmud: Sanhedrin Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL.) Enter on 54 th Street
1:00—2:00 pm	Derech Hashem Location: Yad Avraham

Thursday

10:30 –11:30am	Tehilim with Malbim Location: Yad Avraham
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Talmud: Sanhedrin Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL.) Enter on 54 th Street

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