

Vayakhel Pekudei

Vayakhel Pekudei when combined becomes the largest Sedra in the Torah with well over 200 verses. It's a marathon run and a real whopper. Most of the Sedra speaks about how the B'nei Yisrael collect all the materials for the building of the Mishkan and how the Mishkan was constructed.

In addition we learn a rather interesting item: Moshe personally supervised the collection of all the gold, silver and copper and he exactly directed how the metals and materials were allocated for the mishkan's construction.

We've heard Moshe the Prince of Egypt- Moshe the true Shepherd and indeed Moshe *Rabbeinu*- our teacher. But this is a new one. Moshe, the greatest man of our people has now become an accountant.

The question is; here we have the greatest leader that the Jewish world has ever known. Moshe was the one who led the Children of Israel out of Egypt from slavery to freedom. He was the one who stood on the Mountain for forty days and forty nights receiving the Torah and speaking to G-d face to face. He was the man about whom the Torah says that there never has arisen in Israel- and there never will arise in Israel, a prophet of the stature of Moshe. Why does the Torah therefore have to concern itself with this petty bit of information that Moshe collected from the B'nai Yisrael so many talents of silver and used these to make the hooks for the pillars?

The Midrash Tanchuma explains that there were scoffers of that generation who suspected Moshe (G-d forbid) of pocketing the money for himself, that somehow Moshe was misappropriating funds and using it for his own means. Therefore, comes along the Torah and describes how Moshe goes out of his way to give a precise accounting of the money coming in and the money going out.

And the question is why should Moshe have to do that – after all he's the leader of the generation there might have been a few undesirables who thought he might have been embezzling some of the money- but, he has to answer to them?

The answer is that we learn from Moshe how **we** should act. Of course Moshe was upright in the eyes of G-d and would never have stolen or misappropriated funds. However, he had to be seen also to be upright in the eyes of man as well. Therefore, he had to be seen to give the exact tally of money coming in or out, in order that he should be clean in the eyes of G-d **and** in the eyes of man.

I believe that in these words there is an inspiring lesson for all of us. The law of *Kal vachomer* –the inference from minor to major applies here. If in the case of Moshe who was the leader of the Jewish people, yet he had to always ensure that he was

above suspicion even though he was far above that, how much more so should we attempt to be upstanding in the eyes of G-d and man.

Sometimes we use the terminology of “frum” to describe a person’s level of religiosity or observance. An individual is a frum person means he/she keeps Shabbat, Kashrut, family purity, davens three times a day. But according to what we have just learnt..Frumkeit also should mean that an individual finds grace and good favour in the eyes of G-d and man.

Indeed in the Talmud we find numerous cases where people in positions of importance had to be extra careful to ensure that they could be trusted. Members of the family of Cohanim in charge of the incense would never wear perfume in case they would be accused of using the ingredients of the incense for personal gain. Collectors responsible for tzedaka funds were instructed to always go around in twos, in order that nobody would accuse them of misuse of public funds.

This Torah message applies to contemporary society as much as it did when it was first given, if not more.

Shabbat Shalom