


CHABAD  
  
 RESEARCH UNIT

שבת..... *for Friday nights* ..... קדש

Friday 12 March 2010 - 26 Adar 5770  
 Sedra Vayakhel-Pekudei - Parshat HaChodesh

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### SHOWING THE BOOKS

**P**EKUDEI MEANS “ACCOUNTS”. SEDRA PEKUDEI, THE SECOND PART OF THE double Sedra<sup>1</sup> read this Shabbat, gives the accounts for the making of the Sanctuary: how much silver, gold and copper was donated, and how it was used. This gives us a directive for practical life.

Collecting and distributing charity are basic features of civilization. Two thousand years ago, in the Land of Israel, there was a highly developed welfare system based on regular collection from householders. This fund would provide for the needy on a weekly basis. In some places there were also daily distributions of money and food to the poor<sup>2</sup>.

Care was taken to ensure that people would not be suspicious of the administrators of these funds. Two different principles operate here. On the one hand there was an atmosphere of trust. In fact the Book of Kings tells us that the administrators of the Temple funds worked on the basis of trust and did not produce accounts (II Kings 12:16). However, there is also an ideal of being “innocent before G-d and Israel”. One’s innocence and honesty should be apparent not only to G-d, Who knows all our actions and thoughts, but also to fellow human beings. Despite the atmosphere of trust, the best approach is to produce accurate accounts.

Rabbi Yoel Sirkis (1561-1640), a great scholar of Jewish Law, cites the case of Moses when discussing the question of providing full accounts even if one is a person who is considered ‘obviously’

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trustworthy. Of course our great teacher Moses was beyond suspicion. Yet, in this week's Sedra, he was careful to give precise accounts<sup>3</sup>. We should follow his example - in all aspects of life.

### THE MONTH OF NISAN

This Shabbat we bless the New Moon of Nisan, the month of redemption from Egypt, and in honour of this a second Torah Scroll is read. This tells of the first stages of the Exodus from Egypt, which began with knowing when the month of Nisan commenced.

The Talmud has a section devoted to dreams. It tells us that if one sees in one's dream a name which includes the Hebrew letter *Nun* once, then one will experience a miracle. The Hebrew word for "miracle" is *Nes*, which begins with *Nun*. If however one sees in the dream a name in which the letter *Nun* occurs twice, this signifies that one will experience a "Miracle of Miracles", a truly wondrous event<sup>4</sup>. The name of the month Nisan has the letter *Nun* twice, and the word itself is suggestive of the Hebrew word for miracle: *Nes*.

From our earliest history the month of Nisan has signified the miraculous, expressed in our going free from Egypt and further wondrous events such as the Splitting of the Sea. This is the month when the normal order of Nature was suspended - or perhaps, we might say, when it revealed its true quality. From the beginning of Creation there was an inbuilt potential that the forces of Nature would visibly respond to G-d's command through His servant Moses. During Nisan, the month of miracles, this potential was actualised, as we will commemorate joyfully at the Seder table.

But what does this have to do with a *dream*? One might say that Exile itself is compared, to a dream. While asleep in Exile, we dream of the month of Nisan, a sign of wonderful miracles! We mention this dream-like quality of Exile in the well-known *Shir Hamaalot Psalm which we sing* before Grace after Meals. "When G-d will return the captivity of Zion we will realise we were dreaming (in Exile)" (Psalms 126:1).

Only after redemption, do we truly awake....

1. Exodus 35:1-38:20, 38:21-40:35. 2. See Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 9:1-3. 3. See his commentary Bayit Chadash to Tur Yoreh De'ah sec. 257. 4. Berachot 57a. See the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 22 p.277 (in note).

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*SEDRA VEYAKHEL-PIKUDEI - HACHODESH*

**GETTING THINGS MOVING**

Michael was feeling really frustrated; they were just talking, talking and talking!

You see Michael's class had been given a project: to make a model Matzah bakery for their school. That means, a model bakery making traditional round, hand-baked Matza.

It was great fun preparing for it. They had these great meetings with their teacher, who showed them an American fun video of a real bakery making Matza.

(Not on Shabbat, check out

[http://www.chabad.org/kids/article\\_cdo/aid/269485/jewish/Matzah-Documentary.htm](http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/269485/jewish/Matzah-Documentary.htm) ).

They came up with lots of ideas, such as to make a well from which they would draw the water to make the dough. Sam suggested that they take a rubbish bin, and put some paper around it, and paint the paper to look like bricks. Now that was a really solid idea.

And there was the idea of having hats and aprons, for all the people who were baking, getting rolling pins, making a big oven. It was good fun. They watched the video again.

The problem was, that they were meeting and meeting, but nothing had actually been done. They were supposed to be presenting the Matzah bakery next week on Tuesday during lunch break, and it was Thursday already, and they had not even started to do anything. At the next meeting Michael decided to try to get things moving:

“Class, I would like to say a few words” he called out, and his friends slowly quieted down. He continued “in this week’s Sedra it says...” “Hello Michael” butted in Sam “this is not a Sedra class”.

“True” said Michael “but this is a point which is very important for the meeting”. “Yes, go on,” said some of the other boys.

“Ok” responded Michael, “anyway” continued Michael “the double Sedra describes at length the building of the Sanctuary, and all of its contents. It says that Moses told them to do it, and then it says they did it.”

The other boys were listening. “Now Mr Benson in class asked the following question....”

“I know” interrupted Sam again “if the Torah already wrote in Sedra Terumah and Tezaveh, a few weeks ago, all the specifics about building the Sanctuary, all the plans, why does the Torah repeat the whole thing again in this week’s Sedra?”

“And the answer is!” said Michael “the Torah is telling us not to procrastinate, just get it moving! In Terumah and Tetzaveh there are the plans. In this week’s Sedra it actually happens. Get it done! And that applies to us here. We can speak and meet, speak and meet! That’s important but it’s not enough, we actually have to do it!”

“Okay,” said Sam “I hear what you’re saying. And I would add, that’s how we come to the passage in the second Torah scroll which is read this Shabbat, Parshat HaChodesh, in which they really start getting the ball rolling to get out of Egypt. So, listen guys, let’s roll. Who is going to paint the well?”

“I will” said Steve. In five minutes all the other tasks were distributed. At the end of the meeting, Michael breathed a sigh of relief. At last, things were moving!

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