



Parashat Pekudei



English version

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THE ART OF BEING READY FOR MASHIACH

So, as it seems, Mashiach is around the corner. We have all the signs, again, and from the greatest Rabbis. Are you ready for Eliyahu Hanavi? He is going to ask you, What questions bothered you so long in your Torah learning that you waited for me to answer? What was your personal תיקון in your learning, your personal Tishbi Yeshev Kushyot Ubayot, (acronym of Teku) that you were waiting for me, for so long, to answer? What!?! You have no questions, except if you could eat OUD? You have no questions of how to understand any certain passuk, chapter, Gemara?!?

One of the criteria of Mashiach, is that he can judge people not by sight or sound alone, but by smell. He can smell your sins and smell your mitzvoth. As Yeshaya prophesized, *And Hoter (a shoot, but one of Mashiach's names) shall spring forth from the stem of Yishai, and a twig shall sprout from his roots. And the spirit of YKVK shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and heroism, a spirit of knowledge and fear of YKVK. And he shall smell by the fear of YKVK, and neither with the sight of his eyes shall he judge, nor with the hearing of his ears shall he chastise.* (Yeshaya 11, 1-3) This criterion of judgment through scent seems significant, as the Talmud states that Bar Kochba was proven that he was *not* Mashiach because he could not

judge according to smell. (Sanhedrin 93b) What is the significance of judging according to scent and not by sight or sound alone?

The way Mashiach will perceive you is at your deepest core, your deepest interests, agendas, and motives. Just as when someone faints, by giving them strong scents, you are able to get down to the deepest parts of the soul to awaken it, so too, Mashiach will be able to smell the deepest desires of your soul, not only the what, when, how, where, and with who of all your actions, but he will be judging the **why** of all your actions. And he will be smelling how much you couldn't stand the Galut, and how you waited for him. The reason why he is not here yet is because we don't mind the Galut that much. It doesn't bother us that much; it is not so much of a burden to live in a world run by heretical and unethical leaders and governments: we can endure it. The Jews were redeemed from Egypt only once they could not stand it anymore. וַיִּדְעֻהֶם כִּי אֲנִי יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. הַמּוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבְּלֹת מִצְרַיִם: *And you will know, that I am YKVK Who takes you out from under the endurance of Egypt.* (Shemot 6;7) Some people pray for Mashiach to come to make our Galut better, and that is why he is not coming. Mashiach will come, to make the world a more G-dly place. Mashiach is waiting for us to feel that we can't wait anymore, that



we can't endure the exile anymore, not that we are just looking for an improved exile. And he will smell how badly we waited for him.

I know that in the Jewish Music world, it seems as if when Mashiach comes, it will be just one big party, and everyone will just have a merry time, smiling to each other. That is true. It will be like that. אַז יִמְלֵא שְׂחֹק פִּינּוֹ וְלִשְׁוֹנָיו אֶזְרָא (Tehillim 126:1-2) But it will be because G-d will be recognized as the One and Only power in the universe, and there will be clarity and clear judgment, justice and recognition of G-d and the truth of His Torah, once and for all, צְדִיק וְטוֹב לוֹ רָשָׁע וְרַע לוֹ. Only good things will happen to the Tzaddikim, and only bad will happen to the wicked. And a great part of all the clarity will be the judgement on the quality of intentions.

When we do a Mitzvah, we are to do it לְעֵשׂוֹת לְעֵשׂוֹת רִיחַ לְיוֹצְרֵנוּ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן בּוֹרְאֵנוּ, *To make a pleasant scent to our Maker, and to do the will of our Creator.* G-d does not only judge you according to the what you have done, but He smells the reason why you do what you do, your intentions. Are you after money or respect, after self-actualization or acceptance? Or are you doing what you do, because you want to do G-d's will??? What have you done for G-d?? I believe that G-d will ask me, as a Rabbi, *Did you stand up for Me in a way that would be most effective? Did you, as a Rabbi, care about money or honor? How much effort did you put in collecting for My most important projects? Am I ready to honestly answer? Did I consult and listen to my Rabbis, to learn and discover what G-d wants from me, and live accordingly? A Rabbi, is only impactful, long term, when he is focused on, and motivated by, one thing: **To do G-d's will.*** Not if he gives great speeches, or knows how to learn on the highest level.

When the Torah mentions how Moshe built the Mishkan, it says 18 times, that Moshe did it all, just as G-d commanded Moshe. Why does it need to mention, so many times, that Moshe did everything, just as G-d commanded him? Why does it not just say that once, at the very end of the whole construction? Why 18 times?

The answer is deep. The Torah has many reasons for every single Mitzvah. And the Mishkan, as well, had many reasons in it. It is מכון לשבתך, which means that the Mishkan is מכון, parallel, to the Mishkan in Heaven. The Mishkan has in it the secrets of the creation of the world, the 39 acts of Shabbat; the spiritual power-grid of Torah learning is from the Aron, parnassah is from the Shulhan, wisdom from the Menorah. But that is not why Moshe built the Mishkan!! He built it to do the Will of G-d!!! Every single thing he did was not because it made sense, or for good reason. It was all about ***just doing the will of G-d!***

This is why men are supposed to recite, every day, the blessings of, שלא עשני גוי, שלא עשני עבד, Thanking G-d for not making me a gentile, for not making me a slave, and for not making me a woman. Because even a righteous gentile like Shindler, a righteous slave like the servant Tebi and a woman like Sarah Imenu, do not have the commandment of the 613 Mitzvoth that are time bound!!! Even if they do the time bound Mitzvoth with the greatest intent, they cannot reach the actual greatest intent, which is to do what G-d asked, just because He asked!

It is easy to do things לשם שמים, for G-d's sake, when you also have some side gain. When there is a mitzvah that a person runs to do, naturally, you need to ask yourself, what other agendas are there in all this? Of course, today, we are not strong enough spiritually to only do things that are totally for G-d's sake, when we



have no personal gain. But still, we should strive to do things, and ask our Rabbis, what exactly G-d wants us to do. When Naomi saw Ruth trying to convert, she tried her hardest to discourage her, because Ruth was *running* to convert, and Naomi was worried that Ruth had ulterior motives. But when she saw that Ruth still wanted to convert, even after the dissuasion, Naomi realized that her motives were genuine, and she accepted her conversion. וַתֵּרֶא כִּי־מִתְאַמְצֶת הִיא לְלֶכֶת אִתָּהּ וַתְּהַדְּלֵה לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ (Ruth 1;18)

When you are serving G-d לַשֵּׁם שָׂמִים, to do His will, to listen to His command, you are giving of yourself, you are genuinely serving. When you have other agendas, you are taking, not

serving, not giving. All life's problems begin, all depression comes from when we are looking to take from this world, and all problems and depression end, when we are looking to give of ourselves for G-d's Name. (Baal Shem Tov- צוואת הריבש; ידבק מחשבתו; למעלה) And this is something my mother always taught me, throughout my childhood. *Yosef, no matter where life will take you, no matter what happens in the world and how confusing the world looks, focus on one thing, and you will succeed. Focus on, ask yourself and your mentors, what does Hashem want from you in the situation that you are in. Do it, because that is what He wants from you. And life will be much simpler, more fulfilling and meaningful.*

BUILDING TRUST

“אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות אשר פוקד על פי משה”... – These are the calculations of the Mishkan...which were accounted for by the command of Moshe. (Shemot 38:21)

In this week's parsha, the Torah makes an accounting of where all the gold and silver that Klal Yisrael donated for the building of the Mishkan went. Why did Moshe feel the need to make this calculation and report to Klal Yisrael about how he had used these donations?

The Midrash explains that after the construction of the Mishkan, Moshe overheard a fellow Jew poking fun at his wide neck and knees, suggesting that Moshe was gaining weight – possibly because he'd been dining a bit more lately.

A second “mocker” joined in and said, “What do you expect? I'm sure the man who took

charge of building the Mishkan pocketed some of the donations for himself!”

Upon hearing this, Moshe told them, “I promise you, when we finish the Mishkan I will give you a detailed summary of every last penny!” And so he did, in this week's parsha.

Why was Moshe so concerned with what these “mockers” thought? And if they were interested in finding flaws in their leader, wouldn't they soon find something else to complain about even if Moshe appeased them now? After Moshe had been Hashem's messenger to bring the ten plagues, bring the Jews out of Egypt and split the sea, hadn't he already established himself as a man of integrity who kept his word?

The answer to these questions is simple, yet powerful. We are all familiar with how our bank account works – if you want to take money out, you need to first put money in. In

any relationship, we must consider a different type of bank account – our “emotional bank account.” Relationships are built on honesty, kindness and integrity; for a relationship to succeed, one’s “bank account” must be filled with actions which demonstrate these traits. If you make a deposit in the emotional bank account through honesty, kindness and integrity, you build up your credit, and trust is built.

Conversely, when one shows dishonesty, ignores others or acts selfishly, he is making “withdrawals” from this account, and eventually the emotional account is overdrawn.

Every relationship has its rocky moments – these moments are like applying for a loan. If one invested enough into his account, at these moments he can use the credit from this account to save the relationship. If the account is empty and one is in “debt,” however, his dubious credit history makes fixing the relationship difficult.

The sad reality is that while it might take a lot of time and effort to build this credit, it is very easy to overdraw the account with a few careless mistakes.

Consider parenting, for example. Parents who show their children that they are concerned with the children’s best interests will have “credit” available when their children grow into teenagers. If the parents did not inculcate this feeling into the children, however, when

the teenage years arrive the children probably will not consult with their parents even if the parents plead and promise the children that now they are interested in the children’s well-being.

Moshe Rabbeinu knew the importance of building trust. Moshe knew that someday, these “mockers” would rear their heads again and question Moshe and the Torah, and he would need credit in the bank. Additionally, Moshe knew that building trust would help ensure that when he said something, Klal Yisrael would know that Moshe was saying it for their best interests, not his own.

Trust between parents and children is especially important in Torah families. One of our strongest resources for emunah – faith in G-d – is the mesora that is passed down from parent to child. Judaism is unique in its claim that over 600,000 witnesses experienced G-d speaking to His nation at Mount Sinai. This testimony has been passed from parent to child ever since then. A child is naturally receptive to this testimony and believes his parents, and is sure that a parent would never lie about such a central life issue.

Unfortunately, sometimes children lose faith in their parents, and the child is ‘at risk’. Throughout childhood, a parent must treat his or her child with the respect due to a person, as opposed to the respect one shows to an e-mail that he can ignore until he is interested at looking at and dealing with it.

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF SONNY AND IRENE GINDI A”H



