

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

EARS, NOSE, FINGER & ARM

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

During a visit to Riga in 1934, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe addressed a group of women. He noted two instances where the Torah mentions women before men. One of those instances appears in this week's (double) parsha, Vayakhel-Pekudei, and concerns the contributions made for the construction of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) in the desert.

From the Torah's description of this event, Ramban understands that the women preceded the men.

What follows is a translation of this address:

...Women are mentioned before men in the Torah's account of how the people contributed valuables and building materials for the Mishkan, the Sanctuary in the wilderness, and its furnishings.

One should keep in mind that the Holy Temple is not a temporary, one-time edifice. Rather, every Jewish home builds a Beis HaMikdash, in fulfillment of the command, "And they shall build Me a Sanctuary and I shall dwell among them."

In the wilderness, when G-d desired to bestow upon our people the greatest gift possible, the construction of a Sanctuary for His Name, even though "the silver is Mine and the gold is Mine," He asked them to contribute the necessary materials. And the first to respond were the women, who brought four kinds of gold jewelry. As understood by Ibn Ezra, these comprised rings worn on the ears, nose and fingers, and bracelets.



Only a husband and a wife together can transform the life of their family into a Beis HaMikdash, but it is the woman who must take the first step. She must make a spiritual contribution of four kinds of jewelry towards their children's education, for it is this that will turn their home into a Sanctuary for Torah and mitzvos, a place in which G-d's Name will abide and which He will bless with happiness.

Contributing one's earrings signifies listening attentively to the directives of the Torah and its sages on how to bring up children and how to conduct a Jewish home. It also signifies listening attentively to how one's sons and daughters speak among themselves and with their respective friends. Since the tone of their speech normally echoes what they hear from their parents at home, the parents' speech needs to set an example of respect and refinement.

The second kind of jewelry, noserings, suggests the sense of smell. A mother needs to be sensitive to the question of which boys and girls her children come in contact with and exchange home visits with, and she needs to monitor these contacts.

The third kind, rings worn on the finger, suggests that building a Sanctuary at home needs something more than the two previous kinds of jewelry. One also needs to point the way. One needs to explain the child the consequences of obedience and proper conduct and (G-d forbid) of disobedience and improper conduct.

The fourth kind of jewelry mentioned is the bracelet. Children should be brought up with a firm hand, not only when they are disobedient, but also when they are obedient, in order to arouse a lively interest in tackling their studies conscientiously.

I am certain that all or almost all of those present would like to see their children growing up with not only physical but also spiritual health, as observers of the Torah and its mitzvos. Mothers and fathers must know, however, that merely wanting is not enough: one must take such action as will turn that desire into a practical reality. 

Hayom Yom

24 Adar

To R. Hillel Paritcher's question whether to review Chassidus even in towns where the people have no conception of Chassidus, the Mittlerer Rebbe responded: "The soul hears words of Chassidus." It is written, "Flowing from Lebanon." Lebanon is spelled (in Hebrew) l'b nu'n. "Lebanon" thus represents chochma and bina of the soul. When the soul hears, from there issues a "flow", a "stream of droplets" into that "radiance" or ha'ara of the soul which vitalizes the body; this results in a strengthening of "do good" expressed in the 248 positive mitzvot, and of "turn from evil" expressed in the 365 prohibitions..



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The Bread of Healing

Pekudei Paradox

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

I was curious how the name of the second of this week's parshas, Pekudei, would be translated, so I poked around a bit, finding five translations:

Appointments, reckonings, accounts, records, and sums. There are probably more.

Perhaps I will defer to Rashi, who explains that all the weights of the metals given as contributions to the Mishkan are counted in the parsha.

While all these translations are quite similar, the Zohar offers an altogether different option.

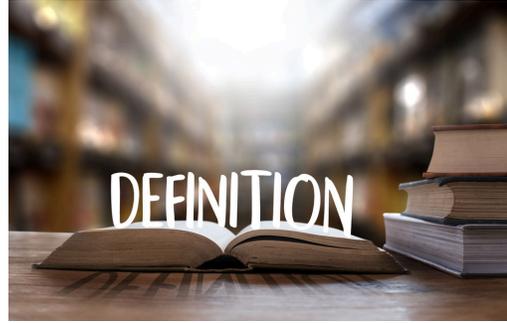
Instead of understanding the word Pekudei as having to do with counting, the Zohar notes the similarity to the Hebrew word for visit, as the Talmud states: "Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said, 'A man is obligated to visit (Pekudei) his wife for the purpose of intimacy when he is about to depart on a journey.'"

When there are numerous interpretations of one verse, and certainly of the very same word in the Torah, we must conclude that there is a connection between them.

What is the connection between the simple meaning of counting, and the deeper meaning of intimacy between husband and wife?

In order to explain, we have to understand what was taking place in the Mishkan, namely, the dwelling of the Shechina (Divine Presence).

In other words, the Mishkan was a paradox: It featured the joining together and drawing down of infinite holiness into finite physical items.



And that is the simple meaning of Pekudei: counting. When we count something, we are by definition asserting that it is finite.

And this is the great novelty of the Mishkan: even though it was comprised of finite, material items, but it was specifically there that the Shechina would dwell, merging infinite and finite.

This can help us decipher the connection to the Kabbalistic explanation of Pekudei having to do with intimacy between husband and wife.

Through the joining together of two finite people, the infinite power of Hashem is revealed. This is particularly apparent through the creation of new life, the birth of a child.

This sheds light on the Pekudei paradox: *Both the simple and deeper meanings of Pekudei are in fact one thing, the drawing down of infinite into finite.*

The word Torah means instruction. What practical instruction can we draw from this idea?

Generally speaking, we live our lives in a measured manner, which is why it's forbidden to knowingly place ourselves in a dangerous situation. We even say every morning in prayer, "Don't bring me to a test!"

Nevertheless, sometimes we need to go beyond our measured manner, stepping beyond ourselves.

Going beyond ourselves draws down and reveals the Oneness of Hashem in this world. This is something that we all have the power to do. 

Chassidic Custom



One Passover, someone offered the Mezritcher Maggid some schnapps to say l'chaim. It was kosher for Pesach, (Slivovitz or something like that).

He demurred, saying that the Zohar says that matzah is the bread of healing, and everyone knows that one doesn't take schnapps with medicine. Indeed, to this day, many have the custom to not drink schnapps on Pesach. 

Just שׁו"ת Me A Question

Q: Do I need to move heavy furniture or the fridge and oven to clean underneath for Pesach? What should I do if there is chametz under the radiator and I can't reach it?

A: According to halacha, chametz that is buried under 3 tefachim does not need to be searched for or destroyed – so no, you do not need to move these types of items. When possible, the best thing to do is to pour some bleach on the food under the radiator to make it inedible, and be *mevatel* it.

Q: Can I wrap some chametz items in a bag, put them in the back of my freezer and include them in my chametz sale? Does it help if I double-wrap them?

A: This is a subject of disagreement in halacha, as there is an opinion that sold chametz must be behind a mechitza that is 10 tefachim high. There is also a disagreement if chametz should be double-wrapped if it is sold without a mechitza that is 10 tefachim. It is better to be stringent and only sell an entire freezer.

**Women's Shabbos Shiur
5:00pm**

with Mrs. Tzipah Wertheimer
at Chabad (corner Main & 69th Ave.)

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