



Pekudei

When Appearances Matter

The portion of Pekudei is extraordinary. Nearly the entire parsha is devoted to presenting a balance sheet to us.

In the last few parashiyot, we learnt how Hashem had instructed Moshe to take contributions from the people, then to build the Mishkan - the sanctuary in the wilderness – to erect it, and then to furnish it. And now, in this portion, we are given, item by item, a list of everything that the nation contributed, and how Moshe, took responsibility for utilising those contributions.

Clearly, the Torah wants to show us how critically important it is that leaders must be people of integrity. They are accountable to the nation and to the Almighty to do what is right.

But why is so much space in our Torah devoted to this?

Well, you see, we have a concept in Jewish tradition called *Marit Ayin* – we should never inadvertently mislead people. For example, one shouldn't walk into a non-kosher butchery to buy some bones for their dog.

Why? Well, some people might think, "Oh, they're going into that butchery – it must be kosher." Or others might think, "Oh my gosh, I saw so-and-so going in to buy treif food for themselves and their family."

We need to be *seen* to be doing what is right.

In Temple times, the Garmu family was entrusted with the responsibility to bake the

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showbread in the Temple. They had a family tradition. Their recipe for bread was a secret, handed down from generation to generation, but they never baked bread in their own homes, lest anybody think, "Aha, they're using the Temple recipe, and they're taking ingredients from the Temple in order to make food for their own family."

The Avtinas family was entrusted with the responsibility to prepare the incense for the Temple service, and they had a family custom that for all weddings in their family, the brides never wore perfume, lest anybody say, "Aha, they're taking some of the incense from the Temple and using it to their own personal advantage."

That is the purpose of Parshat Pekudei: to teach us how wrong we can go when it comes to *Marit Ayin*. From Moshe - his outstanding leadership, his sense of responsibility and accountability, and his deep integrity - we learn that it's not only important to do what is right, but it's also important to be *seen* to be doing what is right.

Shabbat Shalom.