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BS"D

PARSHAT PEKUDEI

The Key to Success

Our Parsha starts off: "These are the records of the Mishkan..."

I heard a fascinating idea from R' Yaniv Meirov. How can a person make oneself successful and accomplished? Of course, success only comes from *siyatta d'Shmaya*, Heavenly assistance, but what steps can an individual take to contribute his own *hishtadlut* (personal effort)?

The answer can be summed up in one word – the name of this week's Parsha – "Pekudei." When a person makes an accounting – recording what his goals are, and noting what he has accomplished – it's a game-changer. We have so many dreams and aspirations of what we want to achieve in life – in various areas of our lives – and often, with the day-to-day grind, we become busy with other things and may tend to forget some of them, or let laziness get the better of us. If a person has a daily checklist, though, then he can remind and even motivate himself of what he wants to fulfill and what his day should look like. Most, if not all, people that were successful in life took advantage of this amazing tool to map out what they want to get done, from the moment they wake up in the morning to the moment they go to bed at night. Obviously, Hashem runs the world and things don't always go the exact way that we planned or anticipated, and one needs to roll with the punches. Things pop up, meetings get cancelled, and new responsibilities arise out of nowhere, but successful people try to not get knocked off balance, and attempt sticking to their schedule as best they could. Without making a *cheshbon*, it becomes very easy to fall into the trap of taking life for granted. When you make a daily checklist to account for what you want to achieve, you'll find yourself accomplishing so much more. A person will keep track of himself, making sure that today, he prayed 3 times a day, that he learned even some Torah by day and night, that he gave charity, that he encouraged another person with a kind word, that he said "thank you," etc. With this "To Do List," a person can make sure that he didn't let the day go by without having accomplished whatever he wanted to achieve, and every day will carry significant meaning and purpose. The same is true in all areas of life, including school, business, and relationships – when a person accounts for his goals and achievements, he raises his productivity and becomes a powerhouse.

Imagine you see someone sitting in a bus and throwing five dollar bills out the window. He's just sitting there, with a thick wad of cash in his hands, and in a complete daze, he casts away bill after bill. "Fool!" you think to yourself in utter shock. "What are you doing?!"

Despite the popular saying, time isn't money. Time is worth much, much more than money. How often do people find themselves waiting on a bus, train, plane, Uber, waiting room, or even an elevator, and kill their time as they either wait in complete boredom or scroll aimlessly on their phone? People that have a burning desire in them to live life to the fullest and capitalize on every precious moment take advantage of even those "small" and "insignificant" moments. They use that time to accomplish *something*, whether it be to learn a mishnah, say a chapter of Tehillim, or send a text to a friend to cheer someone up. There's a powerful line that sums up this idea: "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." This week, try making a personalized checklist of what you want your own daily routine to include. See how much you can accomplish; you just might surprise yourself...

"Don't make Purim so same'ach
that it's not kosher, and don't make
Pesach so kosher that it's not
same'ach." (Bostoner Rebbetzin)

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Rahamim Ben Shifra Frida Bat Yaffa Miriam Bat Bakol
Yitzchak Ben Naama Chana Bat Malka Chaim Avraham Ben Shifra Zisel
Noach Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffa Esther Bat Frida Bakol Bat Zilpa
Shalom Ben Roza Mazal Meir Tzvi Ben Sara Zohar Shimon Ben Ruchama

Clouds of Glory

"Moshe could not enter the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud had settled upon it and the presence of Hashem had filled the Mishkan" (Shemot 40:35).

It is interesting to contrast this with the *ananei kavod* – the Clouds of Glory – that were at Har Sinai, which didn't prevent Moshe from entering and communicating. Why were these Clouds of Glory, by the Mishkan, so great that even Moshe couldn't pass through, whereas those by Har Sinai enabled Moshe to come in?

R' Yosef Palacci shared an amazing answer. The clouds that were present at Har Sinai came solely from G-d. It was Hashem Who did everything. The clouds mentioned in this week's Parsha, however, were brought down after Bnei Yisrael constructed the Mishkan with loads of energy, excitement, and passion to bring the *Shechinah* into their midst. Here, it wasn't just Hashem bringing down His *Shechinah*; it was *Am Yisrael*, in a unified and loving team effort, who brought it down. This level of *Shechinah* is much more magnified and powerful than the former, so much so that it disabled Moshe from entering – because *Am Yisrael* got involved.

We often underestimate our own powers and potentials. People commonly downplay their words and actions, because "what difference does it make, anyway?" We learn from here that it's just the opposite: whenever you make a move that strengthens Hashem's glory in this world, the *Shechinah* is beaming down, and it's even stronger than it would be were Hashem to just bring it down Himself...