

PARASHAH: P'kudei (Accounts)
ADDRESS: Sh'mot (Exodus) 38:21-40:38
READING DATE: Shabbat
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(Note: all quotations are taken from the Complete Jewish Bible, translation by David H. Stern, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., unless otherwise noted)

Let's begin with the opening blessing for the Torah:

***“Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-‘Olam,
asher bachar banu m’kol ha-amim,
v’natan lanu eht Torah-to.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn.”***

(Blessed are you, O' LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have selected us from among all the peoples,
and have given us your Torah.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.
Ameyn.)

With **Parashat P'kudei** (say “P-koo-day”) we have reached our final parashah of the book of Sh'mot (Exodus). Remember that I've explained to you that the word “sh'mot” is the plural form of the Hebrew word “shem,” which means, “name.” We've discussed some pretty significant **names** in the book of **Sh'mot**. The parashah is relatively short, like it's previous portion, and is read with **Parashat Vayak'hel** in regular years.

It is interesting that the name of our final portion is translated “**accounts**.” Although the portion centers on the **accounts** of the building of the Mishkan, I want to make a play on words, and conduct an **account** of the entire book of Exodus, a sort of final summary if you will. I shall use selected statements from each of the ten previous portions to accomplish this. However, prior to this, I want to reexamine a feature of the Mishkan that I centered on in a portion from the book of B'resheet. Because like me, you might sometimes need reminders of important, spiritual truths, I feel that both of these formats will be highly beneficial to our readers, both old and new.

The completion of the Mishkan signified that the Sh'khinah of HaShem was ready to come and dwell among his people. To be sure, we read in 40:34 of our current parashah:

**“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of
ADONAI filled the tabernacle. Moshe was unable to enter the tent of**

meeting, because the cloud remained on it, and the glory of ADONAI filled the tabernacle.”

What an awe-inspiring sight that must have been! What a terrible reality it must have invoked! Within the Mishkan was the room called the Holy Place. Just beyond that was the chamber known as the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies). The “kapporet” (known as the Mercy Seat) was kept in this Holiest Place. This is where the blood of the Yom Kippur offering was presented once a year, a word picture designed to teach us that Yeshua would have to die only once during the entire span of human history. A very thick cloth curtain separated these two chambers from each other. The Cohen Gadol (High Priest) was the only person permitted to make this entrance during this time. In fact, according to our account here, his robe was fitted with golden bells and pomegranates all along the lower hem (see 39:22-26). Many historians believe these were alternately spaced so as to create chimes with his movement when ministering in the Holy Place, although he was instructed to remove this blue robe before entering the Most Holy Place. According to Jewish legend as recorded in the Zohar at Acharei Mot 67a and Emor 102a—but without basis in fact or Torah record—there was a “golden chain” (viz, a cord) tied about his ankle as he entered into the presence of ADONAI on that fearful day. This cord spanned his steps as he went from one chamber to the next. Should the assistant priests on the Holy side of the curtain cease to hear the bells chiming, they were then instructed to pull the dead cohen back from the Holiest side. They would not enter after him. They understood that the offering was not accepted rather, it was rejected. Again, the popular “rope story” is all conjecture without any textual evidence to support it. Nevertheless, what a wonderfully fearful and absolutely holy God we serve!

By now you’re probably saying, “Thank God for Yeshua!” And your thoughts would not be inappropriate. For had it not been for our Great Cohen Gadol, the entrance to the Holiest Place would forever remain accessible only to the high priest. The thick curtain separating us from the Mercy Seat would forever hang there to keep un-holiness out. Let’s center on that curtain. Allow me to reminisce a bit.

A Father’s Grief

In the book of Genesis, when the report got back to Yosef’s father that his son had “suffered harm,” Ya’akov rent his garments, that is, he ripped his clothing in two, and he went into intense mourning for his favored son. Likewise, in the New Covenant we read of a rather odd occurrence surrounding the death of Yeshua. Matthew records for us that the Temple curtain, separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, was ripped in two, from the top to the bottom (27:50). You’ve heard it taught that this symbolized the access that we as believers in Yeshua now have to the “Throne of God,” which the Mercy Seat, kept in the Most Holy Place, represented. This is true spiritually, but I want to make a “drash” (homily) and a “remez” (hint) from this occurrence as well.

In the days of the **TaNakH**, whenever a father lost a beloved son, he would rip his garment to signify his intense loss. His rending of his garment visually testified of the agony and “ripping” of his soul, as he would never experience earthly fellowship with this beloved son again (see 2 Samuel 13:30, 31 for Melekh Dah-vid’s reaction at the news of the death of his son Avshalom). Today, in modern Judaism, at the loss of a beloved family member, the immediate family (father) is known to cut a small portion of their lapel, symbolic of ripping the entire garment. I believe that the Temple curtain represented the “garment” of HaShem. When his beloved Son died, he wanted to send a clear and unmistakable signal to all that witnessed that this was indeed his beloved Son! So, like Ya’akov in **Parashat Vayeshev**, HaShem also “ripped” his garment to show his intense suffering at the loss of this Son of his. I imagine when Ya’akov’s brothers witnessed the display of sorrow in their father, they must have felt some guilt and shame in their (hidden) dishonesty and lack of family justice. Moreover, when Yeshua’s tormentors witnessed the Temple curtain rent into two pieces, they must’ve also felt shame and remorse because of their recent dishonest activities. Someone of that first century community must’ve seen the correlation between these two familiar acts of mourning; I trust that today, you now see it as well.

Journey with me now as we go back and look at some highlighted **accounts** of Sefer Sh’mot (the Book of Exodus):

Parashat Sh’mot - In Hebrew thought, a name implies a reputation. The name is the embodiment of the character of an individual, based upon who they are, or what they have done. In B’resheet 3:14-16 HaShem reveals his nature to Moshe in a way that has never been done before in the Torah, up till this point. I believe that, according to a literal understanding of these verses, HaShem was instructing Moshe to teach the Children of Isra’el to forever remember that “YHVH,” the God of their fathers, not only “IS” (I AM), but, that he “WILL BE” the God who delivers them from the bondage of sin, characterized by Egypt! And that forever, they were to remember (rather than forget) that there is NO other god besides “YHVH!” In remembering (as opposed to shrouding it in obscurity) the Eternal, unchanging “Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh,” they would be ever mindful of the nature and character that their One, True God displayed in his mighty works! In other words, they were to forever remember his reputation and his name (i.e. his “shem”)!

Parashat Va’era - HaShem revealed an aspect of his character that would later play a very important role in the identity of the Jewish People as a Nation. The title “Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh” [YHVH or ADONAI] would also serve as a reminder to the surrounding nations that “with a great out-stretched arm, ADONAI mightily delivered his beloved people!” To be sure, the reference of HaShem as the “God who delivered [them] from the bondage of Egypt” would become a “household” title of sorts. Fast-forward in the book of Sh’mot to the “Ten Commandments” (Sh’mot 20:1, 2) and see if you can find this phrase used to identify HaShem.

Thumb through the rest of your **TaNAKH** (Old Testament) and you will find that this phrase is used numerous times. As believers in Messiah Yeshua, we know that this is one of the primary character traits of HaShem, which unifies the Messiah and the Godhead as an “echad,” that is as “one.” The name of the Messiah comes from the Hebrew name “Y’hoshua,” which itself stems from the Hebrew name “Hoshea.” Both of these names are composites of the two Hebrew words for “God” and “will save,” respectively. When we combine this knowledge with the fact that it is “YHVH” who offers us salvation from sin THROUGH Yeshua the Messiah, then we can begin to understand the significance of the type and shadow that the Exodus from Egypt plays in our lives as new creations.

Parashat Bo - When the People of Isra'el were instructed to participate in the first Pesach (Passover), the LORD promised that whoever was obedient to this mitzvah would be spared the “Death Angel” as he passed throughout the land of Egypt that night. This was an act of faith on the part of the participants! Logically, blood on a house served no rational function, in that day, or our present day. Why would anyone expect to receive protection from “death” by placing lambs blood on his or her house? But to HaShem, this act of obedience signified a placing of one’s trust in his Word. In this case, it was the Word of HaShem through his servants Moshe and Aharon. Sh’mot 12:29-33 testifies that this is precisely what happened that awful night. This monumental deliverance should have caused that people, both Isra'el and Egyptian, to understand that faith in HaShem alone is what brings about the freedom so desperately desired in the midst of slavery! I must state it plainly one more time for my brothers according to the flesh, the majority of which are seeking to be justified by their Jewish heritage and by obediently keeping the “Torah” of Moshe, while remaining (seemingly) ignorant of the “Torah” of Avraham: our ancestors were delivered (a symbol of genuine faith in the Holy One) BEFORE they received the Torah on Mount Sinai! The sequence of the covenants is crucial for a proper understanding of the righteousness of HaShem!

Parashat B’shallach - Yes, even though our God demonstrated mightily through the death of Pharaoh and his armies at the “wall” of the Sea of Reeds that “there is none like him among the “gods” (mighty), and that there is no other like him in sublime holiness, praises, and wonders (15:11), he is in fact a loving God that desires genuine fellowship and a living relationship with each and every one of his created sons and daughters. We need to keep this in perspective as we study the Torah, especially the portion that we call the “Old Testament.” For we in the Church today tend to reduce the God of the “old” to a “holy terror” and a merciless manslayer, while at the same time, we pit him against the God (his Son) of the “new” who is much more gentle, loving, and forgiving. In reality, the Father and the Son share the exact same purpose, divine will, and character. We have been given a glimpse of the judgment of God in the TaNaKH; we have been given a glimpse of his mercy in the B’rit Chadashah. To be sure, the “stones” of the “brick wall” of Sh’mot chapter 15, protected the people as they

made their way to safety, but came crashing down upon those wicked men. So the Stone who is Yeshua—the Living Torah—shall protect and save those who believe in HaShem unto righteousness! But this same Stone shall fall upon all the wicked men of humanity and grind them to powder!

Parashat Yitro - The themes surrounding the giving of the Torah, embodied in the Ten Words, is one of the most—if not the most—significant events in the history of the offspring of Avraham. Surely, it carries the most impact, even for Jewish folks today. Our sin nature, however, makes us prone to disobedience. The Torah of HaShem serves to remind us of how short we fall, when we try to measure up to God's righteousness. While it is true that no one alive could have ever kept all of the commandments of God, it is also true that HaShem never expected anyone to be able to! The Torah doesn't demand perfection, else, there would be no need of the upcoming details concerning sacrifices for sin. What the Torah expects from its followers is genuine trusting faithfulness to the giver of the Torah, who is the Holy One of Isra'el! Today, that implies placing one's complete trust in his Only, Unique Son Yeshua! The Torah is a document of grace, not "Law." We need to begin to understand that this is the true nature and function of the Torah. Translator David H. Stern, in his Complete Jewish Bible stated it succinctly when he explained, "For the goal at which the *Torah* aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts." (Romans 10:4)

Parashat Mishpatim - The change from **Yitro** to **Mishpatim** is dramatic, for we go from simple, somewhat general instructions, to very specific guidelines that are meant to shape the people into a nation. In a way, this marks the beginning of the Torah as a "National Constitution." Truly, these next few chapters could be called "Law." Before I delve into each chapter, I want to briefly restate one of the primary functions and purposes of the giving of the Torah to 'Am Yisra'el: **It is crucial for us to understand theologically, that the primary purpose in HaShem's giving of the Torah, as a way of making someone righteous, only achieves its goal when the person, by faith, accepts that Yeshua is the promised Messiah spoken about therein. Until the individual reaches this conclusion, his familiarity of the Torah is only so much intellectual nutrition. Only by believing in Yeshua will the person be able to properly understand HaShem, and consequently, his Word.**

Parashat T'rumah - "ADONAI said to Moshe, "Tell the people of Isra'el to take up a collection for me—accept a contribution from anyone who wholeheartedly wants to give." This reflects the heart of our LORD's relationship with his people: willingness to give. He did not want his Mishkan constructed with gifts given in coercion. He did not instruct Moshe to make the people give. HaShem wanted his bride to WANT their Husband to have a dwelling place. Our LORD delights in our free will, especially when we choose him! If you'll remember from a couple of parash'ot ago, when the offspring of Avraham left Egypt, HaShem put it in the Egyptians hearts to give large amounts

of gold, silver, articles of clothing, and precious stones to them as they made their escape. Now we can understand why this event took place. HaShem, knowing the future, would give his people the opportunity to see whether or not they would hoard this fortune, or give it back freely to the one that provided it in the first place. Herein lies a lesson for us today. Many times, our natural resources have been given to us to grant us an opportunity to freely contribute them back to HaShem, for the building up of his Kingdom. The Torah teaches, "To whom much is given, much is required." The reward comes to us when we make the wise choice to freely, and wholeheartedly, give as 'Am Isra'el did in these opening few verses.

Parashat Tetzaveh - The whole thrust of the instructions given in **Parashat Tetzaveh** is a teaching on holiness. The phrase "tetzaveh" shares the exact same root word as "mitzvah." The root word is a verbal imperative used to express the desire for a definitive action on the part of the hearer. In other words, the Torah uses this word as a call to action. God the invisible Creator of the Universe has chosen to reveal his Glory in such a way as to be visible in the Mishkan. He informs us that he will "take up residence" in the Most Holy Place, between the wings of the k'ruvim, which forms the lid of the Aron Kodesh (Ark of the Covenant). Now he is "commanding" his people to become holy, that is, set apart for the specific service of conveying his Holiness to the surrounding peoples. This begins with a personal consecration (28:2-3, 36, 41; 29:1, 9, 20-22, 26-37, and 43). HaShem's holiness would not always be confined to Isra'el. However, for now, Isra'el was the primary focus of his Glory. HaShem has always, since the promise given to Avraham in B'resheet 12:1-3, been interested in blessing all of the families of the earth. This he would accomplish through Isra'el. He started with one man (Avraham), and now he is establishing the priestly line within the offspring of that one man. Ironically, the ultimate focal point of HaShem's glory would culminate in One Man (Yeshua).

Parashat Ki Tissa – This is the portion containing the ugly "golden calf" incident. In this portion I wanted to emphasize the fact that although 'Am Yisra'el sinned grievously, their possibility for escaping that awful temptation was as great as is available to us today. In other words, they could have chosen not to sin. As the Torah demonstrated then and still teaches us today, HaShem's loving-mercy is made available in abundance, despite our spiritual depravity! They did not deserve his forgiveness, any more than we deserve it today. The admonition of Sha'ul to his Corinthian readers says it all. Speaking of the golden calf incident, he assures them in 1 Corinthians 10:11-13, "**These things happened to them as prefigurative historical events, and they were written down as a warning to us who are living in the *acharit-hayamim*. Therefore, let anyone who thinks he is standing up be careful not to fall! No temptation has seized you beyond what people normally experience, and God can be trusted not to allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. On the contrary, along with the temptation he will also provide the way out, so that you will be able to endure.**"

Parashat Vayak'hel - The sacrifices, performed with a genuine heart of repentance, afforded real-life forgiveness, but only to the purification of the flesh! However, the temporal blood of the animals in and of themselves—and by themselves—could not even take away sin; only the eternal blood of the Perfect Sacrifice—to which the animals pointed—could purify both flesh and soul. Thus, the blood of the animals “washed, wiped clean” the Holy Place where God “manifestly dwelt.” The objective faith of the individual still remained dependent upon God’s Promised Word to Come, namely Yeshua himself, yet his obedience was demonstrated by adherence to explicit Torah commands where sacrifices were concerned. What is more, the salvation of the eternal soul of an individual was always dependent upon a circumcised heart, exactly as it is today.

I hope that you have enjoyed our little “trip down memory lane.” Our current and final portion of Sh'mot ends with the assurance that the Spirit of the Holy One led them every day and night during their time in the wilderness:

“For the cloud of ADONAI was above the tabernacle during the day, and fire was in [the cloud] at night, so that all the house of Isra’el could see it throughout all their travels.” (40:38)

Every single incident and detail mentioned above has been under the divine care and leading of our Unmatchable Heavenly Abba! Even our gross (surely upsetting) sin doesn’t escape the plans of God. If we place our genuine, trusting faithfulness in his Loving Hand, then our journeys, like that of ‘Am Yisra’el, will not be arbitrary. On the contrary, the B’rit Chadashah promises us that our relationship with HaShem through Messiah Yeshua is indeed on a well-planned out course (read Romans 8:28-30)! This road of “faith in Messiah” is none other than a course of righteousness and glorification! **“Halleluyah!”** That is something to get excited about!

It is customary after the completion of a book of the Torah to say,

“Chazak, chazak, v’nit’chazek!”
(Be strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened!)

The closing blessing is as follows:

***“Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-‘Olam,
asher natan lanu Torah-emet,
v’chay-yeh o’lam nata-b’tochenu.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn.”***

(Blessed are you O’ LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have given us your Torah of truth,
and have planted everlasting life within our midst.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.

Ameyn.)

“Shabbat Shalom!”

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