



אור בישראל

A LIGHT FROM WITHIN ISRAEL

פרשת פקודי

כ"ט אדר תשפ"ה 29.3.2025

1 The weekly Torah portion is Pekudei, the last parsha of the Book of Exodus. We are completing the second book of the Torah, and next week we will begin the third book - Leviticus. The book that began in a difficult and painful state, with our enslavement in Egypt, ends in a festive and joyful manner - with the establishment of the Mishkan, the spiritual center of the People of Israel during their journey in the desert.

There is an important message here: It is not enough to physically take the people out of Egypt, it is not enough to cross the Red Sea, it is important to change the content of our lives. The true exodus from slavery to freedom transforms the people from the idolatry of the Egyptians, through receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, to a spiritual and holy world managed by Aaron the Kohen, in the Mishkan. Now they are truly free. The parsha details all the important commandments in setting up the Mishkan, and our story this week deals with the importance of small details in life.



At the end of the reading, during the morning prayer, there are communities where they declare at the end of the book "Chazak, Chazak, V'Nitchazek" (Be strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened). This is a call for encouragement to continue learning, to continue the story.



This Shabbat is also called "Shabbat Mevarchim" (Shabbat of Blessing). This is the name given to the Shabbat before the new month, when the upcoming month is blessed. This time, we are blessing the month of Nissan, which will begin on Sunday.



A STORY FOR SHABBAT

What's the point?

Noa sat at the keyboard typing a letter to her saba (grandfather) in America: "Dear Saba (Grandpa), Why does Judaism have so many mitzvot and laws? Why are all these details necessary? Why does it matter how you wash your hands when you first wake up in the morning and how you put on Tefillin? Why do we need all these instructions- isn't it enough to just believe in your heart? Why can't we just 'go with the flow' and be more spontaneous?" Noa finished typing, attached her letter to a longer email from her parents, and waited for an answer from her grandfather. A week went by and her saba still hadn't responded to her letter. She knew he was fine because he had spoken to her parents-but she never received an answer to her question. A week later, Noa composed a second letter to her grandfather: "Dear Saba, You haven't sent an answer to my question. Is this because you agree with me that Judaism focuses on too many insignificant details?" A few minutes later, her grandfather sent her a reply: "My dear granddaughter, Noa. It's wonderful that you are asking questions. Here is the answer to your question: Every mitzvah and good deed has a tremendous impact on the world. Some of the mitzvot we understand and others we don't, but every detail is still significant. I've explained this at length in my previous email and I included examples and stories from Jewish history that demonstrate the importance of even "the small things." But I decided to erase the dot between the words *gmail* and *.com* in your email address. I don't understand the purpose of this small dot, and it just gets in the way." "But Saba," Noa responded in a new email to her grandfather. "Without that small dot, the email can't reach its destination. Your first email was lost because you

didn't include that small dot!" "Well, that's exactly my point," answered her grandfather, "The point of my argument, not the point (or dot) in the email address. My entire letter was lost, and no computer will be able to recover it because I forgot to include a dot in the email address. Of course, I'm not trying to compare an email address to mitzvot, but I hope you will now understand the significance of even a small dot-every detail is important. You see, even in the spiritual world there are "codes" which must be learned in great detail. (From the 'Ligdo!' book series)

Food for Thought

Do you ever find small details to be a burden? How can you look at these details in a more positive way?





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פרשת כקודי

FROM THE DIARY OF A CHEMED STUDENT

Finding Home: My Journey to Israel

Hi, my name is Eitan. It has been 9 years since I made Aliya together with my family. It's hard to believe. I experienced so many things, some good and some not so pleasant. My first months in Israel were bittersweet. It was one of the hardest periods of my life. I was alone, in a school I didn't know and had a very limited vocabulary. I was used to being surrounded by people I knew, so feeling totally alone was a very hard experience for me. But not everything was bad. For

the first time in my life I didn't have to check whether the food in the store was kosher or not. I was going to a Jewish school, where being Jewish wasn't seen as weird or strange. I felt that I was finally where I needed to be. And of course, that bittersweet feeling didn't last forever. Eventually I adapted to my new life. I learned the language, I made new friends, and before I knew it, I wasn't alone anymore. All the hard



times remained in the past. And even though I miss my old life, I am sure that coming here wasn't a mistake. Here, in Israel, is where I always needed to be.

Antolinez Eitan 11th Grade, Yeshivat Amit Be'er Sheva



FROM THE DIARY OF A SHLICHA

This time, the column is written by Michal and Michal.

The first - Michal Efrati, who was a shlicha in Milan and returned to Israel, and the second, Michal Kremer - who is currently on shlichut at the Educational Center in Milan. Together, they established the "Inter-Continental Beit Midrash", a project where 10th-grade girls from the local schools and from 'Ulpanat Noga' in Beit Shemesh meet for online joint learning, once every three weeks. The learning is conducted entirely in Hebrew, and within this framework, the girls have the opportunity to study Torah, get a glimpse into parts of the Jewish people they are less familiar with, and of course, make new friends. This week, there was a particularly exciting event where the two groups met face-to-face in Jerusalem, during a school trip to Israel from Milan. "The girls were on cloud nine," the shlichim shared. "It was hard to drag them back to the bus even though it was late. They were so happy to meet each other in 'real life' and when we left, they had already created a joint WhatsApp group for both groups." Now, the girls from Milan are looking forward to a return visit...

Around the Shabbat Table

- How do you think meetings between youth from the Diaspora and youth from Israel can influence the worldview of Jewish youth? Would you want to participate in a similar project?
- Why do you think Eitan felt "bittersweet" about his first months in Israel? Have you ever had a similar experience of starting something new?
- Eitan says, "Here, in Israel, is where I always needed to be." What do you think makes a place feel like home? Is it the people, the culture, or something else?



דף הפרשה מוקדש לעילוי
נשמת הח"לים הקדושים
מיכאל בן חמו ואייל טויטו הי"ד



Translators: Janine Muller Sherr and Yehoshua Siskin
Send responses to: office@sivanrahavmeir.com
To contact the National Chemed Counselor: maazarishif@gmail.com
To contact the education department: Morim@wzo.org.il