



The M.A.P.S Page

Empowerment Through Personal Guidance

BS"D
Parshas Pekudei – Parah
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לע"נ אבי מורי משה אהרן בן יהודה ואמי מורתי פערל לאה בת יצחק הכהן סטאלאו

Integrity and Transparency

In Parshas Pekudei, Moshe presents a detailed report of the contributions made by the Jewish people for the construction of the Mishkan. The Medrash Tanchuma explores the reasons behind this transparency. Moshe was aware of the derisive comments from the scoffers of the nation, who insinuated that he had gained wealth from the Mishkan's construction. In response, he provided an accounting of the materials utilized in the Mishkan's building to demonstrate his integrity and reassure the people that the donated resources were appropriately allocated.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines integrity as a steadfast commitment to moral principles. Integrity encompasses two primary categories: personal integrity and financial integrity. Individuals with sound mental and emotional health commonly reflect a strong sense of integrity. This correlation may stem from the idea that those with integrity lead lives free from significant regrets, as they consistently uphold their ethical standards and remain resolute in their beliefs.

Integrity

In discussions about integrity, it is essential to highlight that it relates not only to a person's self-perception but also to the impressions formed by others about that person. If a person is confident in their integrity and actions, what significance does the perception of others hold? Why should they be worried about the evaluations of those around them?

The passuk in Bamidbar emphasizes the importance of maintaining an impeccable reputation. Even Moshe, the preeminent prophet of Hashem, who was recognized by Hashem as reliable in all His affairs, felt it necessary to provide an account of all the contributions received for the construction of the Mishkan. Despite his awareness that he had diligently allocated every donation appropriately, Moshe felt compelled to demonstrate transparency to the people, to assure the Nation that he had not utilized any donations for personal gain.

Guilt or Growth

Acknowledging that individuals are not without flaws and may not consistently fulfill their obligations can lead to a pivotal moment in decision-making. To illustrate, consider the following scenario: a man experiences a challenging day and returns home, where he reacts sharply to his wife and children over trivial matters. This interaction leaves a trail of hurt feelings. Upon waking the next day, he reflects on his actions from the previous night and recognizes their inadequacy. He is now confronted with two possible reactions: one driven by guilt and one oriented towards personal growth.

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A person's level of integrity greatly affects their reaction to various circumstances. In instances of guilt, an individual might either retreat inwardly due to shame or adopt a defensive stance, shifting blame onto others. Conversely, an individual with a strong sense of integrity will seize this opportunity to acknowledge their error and seek to rectify it, recognizing that this moment does not define their overall character.

Integrity Can Be Caught

Peer pressure exerts a significant influence on an individual's behavior and mindset. It is often viewed and discussed as harming their behaviors and attitudes. The truth is that peer pressure is neither negative nor positive. A person who surrounds themselves with others who display unsuitable behavior is liable to feel encouraged and pressured to adopt similar inappropriate actions. A person certainly needs to be cautious of such associations.

Likewise, when individuals surround themselves with those who exhibit positive behaviors and attitudes, they often find themselves motivated and inspired to adopt similar paths. Those who value integrity tend to gravitate towards others who embody the same principles, as encapsulated by the saying, "a person is judged by the company they keep." Being in the presence of individuals with strong moral and ethical values can deepen one's appreciation for integrity. Such relationships create a foundation for individuals to contemplate their integrity and recognize any biases that might impede their ability to make ethical decisions.

A Lesson for the Ages

When Moshe reported to the people regarding the materials that were contributed to the Mishkan's construction, he imparted several enduring lessons. He highlighted the critical nature of financial integrity by ensuring that every donation was meticulously recorded. Additionally, he illustrated the importance of transparency, even for those whose integrity is unquestionable. Despite his trustworthy conduct, Moshe opted to publicly disclose the distribution of the donations to address the concerns of his detractors.

Let us internalize Moshe's lesson and commit to living with profound integrity, ensuring that every action we take can endure the examination of transparency.

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

Binyomin Stolov



In Loving Memory of Moshe Aharon & Perel Leah Stolov ob"m

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