

Vayakhel-Pekudei

"These are the records of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Pact, which were drawn up at Moshe's bidding—the work of the Levites under the direction of Itamar son of Aharon the priest." Exodus 38:21

The Hebrew noun pekudei, here translated as "records," is an extremely versatile word. It can be understood to mean "count" or "orders," among a few other potential translations. Like with all words used in the Torah, the alternative translations can be seen as shades of meaning which lie behind the simple translation of the verse.

R. Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev (1740-1809) points out another, less-known use of this word: the root pkd can also refer to loss or lacking. An example of this is in the verse in Numbers 31:49: "...no man was lacking (nifkad)." This seems puzzling. What about the Mishkan--Hashem's House, as it were--represented loss?

R. Levi Yitzchak explains that in an ideal world, there would be no one place in the universe which was "Hashem's House." Every particle of reality should stand as a thunderous testament to Hashem's majesty. The Mishkan was a reaction to the sin of the Golden Calf, which revealed that Israel--and by extension, the world--was not yet ready for this level of awareness. Hashem's Presence would have to be focused in one location, in the Mishkan. While on the one hand this was a great gift, on the other hand it was tragic.

May we all merit to see Hashem's Glory throughout the world He created.

Shabbat Shalom
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