**[Take Refuge – Parshat Pekudei](https://www.torahofawakening.com/weekly-torah/take-refuge-parshat-pekudei)**

יִשְׂמְחוּ כָל־ח֪וֹסֵי בָךְ
*Yism'khu Khol Khosei Vakh* – *All who take refuge in You will rejoice!*
(Psalm 5:12)

How do we “take refuge” in the Divine?

By seeing that all things are part of the Divine. That’s the paradox – if we want that sense of safety, of being protected, of taking refuge in something greater than whatever we feel threatened by, we need to shift our perspective to acknowledge that everything arising in our field of experience is part of Reality, part of the Divine, even whatever we fear and therefore resist:

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אַל תְּהִי בָז לְכָל אָדָם, וְאַל תְּהִי מַפְלִיג לְכָל דָּבָר, שֶׁאֵין לְךָ אָדָם שֶׁאֵין לוֹ שָׁעָה וְאֵין לְךָ דָבָר שֶׁאֵין לוֹ מָקוֹם:
*He used to say: do not be scornful of any person, and do not be disdainful of anything, for there is no person without their hour, and there is no thing without its place.*
(Pirkei Avot 4:3)

Our tendency, however, is to see the Divine as something separate, as “these” but not “those.” This was the sin of the golden calf; the Israelites pointed to what they had created from their gold jewelry and said:

אֵ֤לֶּה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל
*These are your gods, Israel!*
(Exodus 32:4)

*Eleh –* “these” but not “those.”

The Zohar explains that the ultimate identity of everything is Divine, and the Name that points to this ultimate identity is *Mi* which means, “Who.” The question word “Who” is a technique; it can be used to bring yourself to this realization. Simply ask yourself inwardly, *Mi? Who?*  – and let the question bring you into awareness of the One Mystery behind all being.

This is the remedy for the golden calf, and for our tendency toward "idolatry" in general, that is, our tendency to idolize “these” but not “those” – we must re-join the *Eleh* with the *Mi,* the “these” with the “Who,” which combine to form *Elohim –* the Name of God that describes the plurality of all Existence as a Single Unity.

There is a hint in the *parshah:*

אֵ֣לֶּה פְקוּדֵ֤י הַמִּשְׁכָּן֙ מִשְׁכַּ֣ן הָעֵדֻ֔ת
*These are the records of the Sanctuary, the Sanctuary of Witness…*
(Exodus 38:21)

*Mishkan,* “Sanctuary,” is written twice – the first one says *Eleh pekudei hamishkan –* all of these different things, *eleh pekudei,* are all the place where *Mi-Shokhein* – where the ultimate “Who” is dwelling.

The second tells us the key for how to have this consciousness: *Mishkan Ha’Eidut – the Dwelling of Witness.* In other words, we must dwell in the state of witnessing whatever is present. To accomplish this is fairly simple, because we don’t have to *change* what is present; we simply have to *witness it.* Just being as the *Mishkan Ha’Eidut,* dwelling in the witnessing – is enough.

Why?

Because That which witnesses, the awareness that perceives what is present, *is the Who That is Presence.* Recognizing your deepest self as the Divine frees you from fear, frees you from anxiety – and in that freedom we can truly rejoice in the refuge of this knowing:

יִשְׂמְחוּ כָל־ח֪וֹסֵי בָךְ
*Yism'khu Khol Khosei Vakh* – *All who take refuge in You will rejoice!*

***More on Parshat Pekudei...***

[**Light as an Eagle – Parshat Pekudei**](https://www.torahofawakening.com/weekly-torah/light-as-an-eagle-parshat-pekudei)

*“When I get the message that it’s time to let go, how do I get myself to listen?”*

When we are powerless to change something we don’t like, we can understand intellectually that we need to “let go” because the resistance we feel is painful. And yet, it’s hard to “let go” because the impulse to resist has already taken over. What to do?

יְהוּדָה בֶן תֵּימָא אוֹמֵר, הֱוֵי עַז כַּנָּמֵר, וְקַל כַּנֶּשֶׁר, וְרָץ כַּצְּבִי, וְגִבּוֹר כָּאֲרִי, לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן אָבִיךָ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמָיִם.
*Yehudah ven Tabai says, “Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to do the will of your Father in Heaven…*
*– Pirkei Avot 5:20*

הֱוֵי עַז כַּנָּמֵר – *Be bold as a leopard*

First, we must realize that we *can* get out of it; we must reject the belief that we can’t. So first of all, cultivate the awareness that there is no experience that can trap you; you are always bigger than any experience, because you are the field of awareness within which the experience is happening. This takes boldness – holy *hutzpah* as it’s sometimes called.

וְקַל כַּנֶּשֶׁר – *light as an eagle*

Being “bold” or “brazen” *(az)*doesn’t mean being aggressive, controlling or imposing. Simply be bold in knowing that you cannot be controlled by feelings of resistance. This means, don’t resist your resistance! Simply accept its presence, being the open space within which it arises. This is being *kal –* “light as an eagle.”

וְרָץ כַּצְּבִי – *swift as a deer*

But, to do any of this, you have to be faster than your impulses. Ordinarily, when an impulse is triggered, it happens very quickly and we tend to get taken over very quickly. Our awareness must be *ratz –*we must be even faster. This takes practice, and we may fail many times. But the key is to articulate your intention to yourself over and over, so that when the moment comes, you will be ready. This is the point of prayer – to articulate to ourselves our highest *kavanah*– our highest intention – every day, many times per day.

But then we must also practice carrying out the intention, and that’s meditation:

וְגִבּוֹר כָּאֲרִי – *strong as a lion*

Meditation is a workout for consciousness. Through daily practice, we become *gibor –*we strengthen our ability to consciously relate with whatever experience arises. Like any strengthening exercise, it can take time to bear fruit; that’s why it’s so important to have faith in the process and practice every day, even if you don’t notice much difference at first. The fruit will ripen!

There is a hint of this in the symbolism of the decorative fruits that were placed on the hems of the priestly robes:

וַֽיַּעֲשׂוּ֙ עַל־שׁוּלֵ֣י הַמְּעִ֔יל רִמּוֹנֵ֕י תְּכֵ֥לֶת וְאַרְגָּמָ֖ן וְתוֹלַ֣עַת שָׁנִ֑י מָשְׁזָֽר
*And they made, on the hem of the robe, pomegranates of turquoise, purple, and crimson wool, twisted…*
*– Exodus 39:24*
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Turquoise, *tekheilet,* is the color of the *tzitzit*– the traditional ritual fringes that are worn to serve as a reminder to be constantly and vigilantly conscious – *swift as a deer.*

Purple is the color of royalty, representing our sovereignty over experience – *bold as a leopard.*

Crimson is the color of blood, the strength of the body – *strong as a lion.*

וַיַּעֲשׂ֥וּ פַעֲמֹנֵ֖י זָהָ֣ב טָה֑וֹר
*And they made bells of pure gold…*

The bell is a symbol of awareness itself, as the sound of the bell awakens us into a higher alertness. This is *light as an eagle –*just as the eagle hovers and soars through the open air, so too when we awaken to the full potential of who we are beyond our thoughts and feelings, we find that we *are* the open air, we *are*the miracle of consciousness, the effortless dwelling with just how this moment is unfolding, right now…

[**The Carver, The Weaver and The Embroiderer- Parshat Pekudei**](https://www.torahofawakening.com/weekly-torah/the-carver-the-weaver-and-the-embroiderer-parshat-pekudei)

 This week’s reading recounts the building of the Sanctuary-

*“Eleh p’kudei HaMishkan…*
*“These are the remembrances of the Sanctuary…”*(Ex. 38:21)

Remember- right now- make yourself into a sanctuary!

How do you do that? It goes on to say:

*“Mishkan HaEidut…*
*“The Sanctuary of Witnessing…”*

The moment you become the witness to what’s happening, seeing without judgment or resistance, your inner space becomes a Sanctuary of Presence.

The *parsha*then goes on to describe the builders and artisans, including one named *Oholiav,* who is described as a “carver, weaver and embroiderer.”

A Carver:

To become a *Mishkan HaEidut,*a Sanctuary of Witnessing, first let your inner space be “carved” by the content of this moment. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? Don’t resist, let your inner space take the form of this moment.

A Weaver:

Then, let the fullness of everything in this moment be “woven” into a whole within the space of your awareness. Don’t tear the moment apart with judgments and resistance- it’s already one whole tapestry, when you allow it to be.

An Embroiderer:

Let your own thoughts/words/actions “embroider” the sacred. Give your thoughts a form with a Divine Name or sacred phrase, letting it vibrate repeatedly in your mind.

Try this phrase, which means, *“The Glory of the Divine Presence Fills”-*

*Kavod Hashem Malei! Kavod Hashem Malei!*

This phrase is from the following verse which describes how the Sanctuary was so full of Presence, Moses could not enter-

*“Moses could not enter the Sanctuary… for the Glory of the Divine Presence filled the Sanctuary.”*(Ex. 40:35)

When your presence completely fills this moment, there's no more room for the separate “me”- there’s just the Presence, not separate from anything…

On this *Shabbat Pekudei,* the Sabbath of Remembrance, may we remember this most fundamental sacred task, clearing the way for joy and celebration in this new month of *Adar II,*the month of *Purim...*

*Hodesh Tov!*
Good Month to you!
*Mishei Nikhnas Adar Marbim Simkha!*
When the month of Adar enters, joy increases!