



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS
RCA ISRAEL REGION

PARSHAT VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI

This double parsha is the implementation of the building of the Mishkan. We have had 3 parshiot of commands to build the Mishkan. This is the actual construction and assembly.



1ST ALIYA (SHMOT 35:1-29)

Moshe gathers the people, instructing them not to work on Shabbat. He appeals to the people to supply all that will be needed: metals, textiles, oil, spices, jewels. Skilled workers shall make all that G-d has commanded: the Mishkan, its covers, the Aron, the Shulchan, the Menorah listing all the vessels, the structure of the Mishkan and the kohen's garments. In response to Moshe's appeal, the people bring generously: the metals, the textiles, the jewels, the spices and oil.

The parsha begins with a repetition of the mitzvah of Shabbat. I say repetition because we have heard the mitzvah of Shabbat numerous times already, including last week at the conclusion of the instructions for the Mishkan.

The repetition here of Shabbat cannot be for the content of the mitzvah, to not work on Shabbat. We know that. We aren't that thick that we need so many reminders.

Rather, it could be the intro to the parsha, the framing of the parsha. Addressing the obvious difficulty of the parsha; why so much repetition of the Mishkan?

We have had the instructions to Moshe as to *how* to build each item in the Mishkan. Ok,

that makes sense. Then, in our parsha we have the *manufacture* of all the things for the Mishkan. But rather than say "the curtains were made according to Moshe's instructions", the Torah says "the curtains were made and they were this long and this wide ...".

And then after all the vessels and walls and curtains are made, the building has to be *assembled*. Again, rather than saying, "and Moshe assembled the Mishkan", the Torah says "and the people brought the walls, the covers, the aron...." Repeating the entire list of items yet again.

We must view all this as intentional. There is a reason the Torah is taking 5 parshiot to give the instructions, then the construction and finally the assembly, each time with precise details of all the items. Why such a detailed description? Why no shortcuts, like, "they built the Mishkan as Moshe said", or "they assembled the Mishkan with all its parts"?

The creation of the Mishkan is a parallel to the creation of the world. G-d created a world for us. We are creating a place for Him.

When our world was created by G-d, He created man in His image. A partner. I, said G-d, am making a world for you. You are in My Image. Noble, majestic, creative. You have choice as I Do.

But we have to calibrate this image of G-d. You are like Me. But only like Me. You aren't Me. I don't want you to underestimate yourself. And I don't want you to overstep.

We need to build you up so you will appreciate your majesty. But, at the same time, don't overstep it. The beginning of the Torah

is that very story. Figuring out how we are like Him. But not Him. Creative, but not the Creator. Free choice, but not for evil. Spiritual, but yet unable to see His Face and survive.

The building of the Mishkan is a parallel to the building of the world. Except who is building for whom? G-d built this world for us to dwell in. We are building the Mishkan for Him to Dwell in. Our creation is like His? No. Not at all.

When He creates the world for us, He says “let there be light. And there was light.” He Says. And it is. Snap of the fingers and it’s done. Not so for us lowly mortals.

When we create the Mishkan for Him, it ain’t so easy. We don’t say. And it is. It is a big job. We are told what to build. How to build. Who to build. Gather materials. Build the parts. Then assemble the building.

And perhaps the mitzvah of Shabbat that begins our parsha actually frames this entire enterprise of the Mishkan.

The theme of Shabbat is: G-d made the world in 6 days, resting on the 7th.

You are not Him. Oh, He wants to be in your world. That is uplifting. But when He made your world, it was with a snap of the fingers. When you make His World for Him to dwell in down here on earth, it takes months and months.

We are not Him. Image of G-d, yes. Communing with Him in the Mishkan, yes. But don’t let that go to your head. You are mortals, taking months and months to do what He does in an instant. He Creates in 6 days.

Shabbat frames this theme: He Creates in 6 days. Now you go create and finish this job of 6 months.



2ND ALIYA (35:30-37:16)

Moshe introduces Betzalel, called by G-d, filled with the spirit of G-d,

to be the head craftsman. Moshe called Betzalel and Oholiav and all craftsmen to come to do all that G-d has commanded. They took the materials to begin the work. More donations came the next day. Moshe announced that no more donations were needed. The work was done: the **curtain drapes** over the Mishkan, the **goat skin drapes**, and the **colored skin drape** on top. The **planks for the walls**, the **Parochet** to hang in front of the Holy of Holies and the **Curtain** at the entrance to the Mishkan. Betzalel made the **Aron** and the **Shulchan**.

Betzalel is described as having Ruach Elokim – G-d’s spirit. He is a master craftsman. But that mastery is G-d given.

This is a powerful philosophy of the Torah; that man’s greatness is a gift. We are blessed, endowed with skills. Many and varied are man’s skills: Betzalel has artistry, some have music, some have eloquence, others insight into people, some mathematical ability, others wonderful nurturers. We can be proud of our skills; while humbled that He chose us to house those skills. True humility does not require us to deny our talents; merely to ascribe their source properly. G-d given.



3RD ALIYA (37:17-29)

And he made the **Menorah** and the **Incense Altar**.

This is a short aliya. This double parsha has 190 verses. That is very long. Each aliya is close to 30 verses. Yet this is 13. Why such a short aliya?

It could be to pair these two items, the Menorah and the Incense altar. They are sister mitzvot.

Light is a universal symbol of wisdom, insight. The incense creates a scent. These two things are the unique, sublime aspects of humanity; wisdom and our soul. Endowed by

G-d.

Man's intelligence, the power of our minds is the primary thing that distinguishes us from animals. Oh, sure, there are smart animals. But none who have built cities, planted fields, created literature and who live the sophisticated lives our minds have created.

And the soul of man, the neshama, that too is unique to man, distinctive in man. Man's soul was breathed into his nostrils in the garden of Eden. Scent becomes a symbol of that soul. Scent is detected by the nose; the soul breathed in through the nose.

These two items of the Mishkan symbolize G-d's Wisdom and His Presence, both of which He endowed to man, unique to man. The Menorah and the Incense are paired together conceptually as symbolizing that which is unique to man, and paired together in this short aliya.



4TH ALIYA (38:1-39:1)

He made the **altar for the offerings**, the **copper wash basin**, the **lace curtains** to hang around the entire perimeter of the Courtyard and the **screen** to cover the entrance. An accounting was made of all the raw materials used: the gold, silver, copper – and what they were used for. The fine textiles were used for the kohen's garments, just as G-d commanded Moshe.

The 4th aliya finishes parshat Vayakhel and begins Pekudei. All the commodities are used, not pocketed. The people are all in and sincere in this project.



5TH ALIYA (39:2-21)

The Efod (skirt) was made from colored materials as G-d commanded Moshe. The fine jewels with the names of Israel chiseled were placed on the Efod shoulders, as G-d commanded Moshe. The Choshen (Breastplate), of the material of the Efod, was made with the 12 jewels mounted on it,

hanging from the shoulder pieces of the Efod, as G-d commanded Moshe.

The regal garments of the Kohen Gadol are fashioned as commanded. Don't think we ascribe royalty to ourselves; no, no, our regal nature is commanded. G-d sees us as regal. We may be small in our eyes but not in His.



6TH ALIYA (39:22-43)

The Meil (robe) was made of Techelet, with pomegranates and bells on the hem as G-d commanded Moshe. The K'tonet (linen robe) was made for all the kohanim, as was the Turban and belt as G-d commanded Moshe. The golden Tzitz (on the forehead) was made and fastened as G-d commanded Moshe. All the work was completed as G-d commanded Moshe. All of the completed work was brought to Moshe: the building of the Mishkan, the vessels, the outer courtyard, the kohen's garments. Moshe saw that it was all done as G-d had commanded Him. Moshe blessed the people.

With the completion of the work Moshe blesses the people: "May the Shechina rest on the work of your hands". For that is what we seek: the immanence of the Shechina. Moshe blesses: may your reach to Him receive His reach for you. Or more accurately, the Shechina, Her embrace of you.



7TH ALIYA (40:1-38)

G-d commands Moshe: On the first day of the first month, assemble the Mishkan. Moshe is instructed in the exact order to place the vessels and the building. He is to clothe the kohanim and anoint them. Moshe did all that G-d commanded him. On the first day of the first month of the second year, the Mishkan was assembled, in the exact order Moshe was instructed by G-d. Moshe completed the work. A cloud covered the Ohel Moed; the glory of G-d filled the

Mishkan. Moshe could not enter due to the cloud and the glory of G-d. The lifting of the cloud was a signal to travel. The cloud of G-d was on the Mishkan daily, fire at night, visible to all the Jewish people.

The culmination of the building is the descent of the cloud, indicating G-d's presence. That is the true culmination of the Mishkan. A place on earth for the rendezvous of man and G-d. Our reach for Him receives His embrace. The Jewish people have become a people with whom the Shechina resides. And that is the culmination of not only this building but the entire book of Exodus. His Dwelling as our partner in this world. Haftorah Shabbat HaChodesh

**Second Sefer Torah reading
for Maftir: Shemot 12: 1-20**

HAFTORAH: YEchezkel 45:16-46:18

This Shabbat the reading of the *haftorah* relates to the Pesach offering that will be brought during the time of Mashiach. This theme is an extension of the *HaChodesh* Torah reading in which Moshe commands the children of Israel to make arrangements to bring the Paschal lamb.

The haftorah describes the remarkable vision of Yechezkel in which he sees the third Holy Temple. The passage opens with a description of the various *karbanot* that will be offered in the inauguration and then it mentions the special Pesach offering.

This haftorah is meant to help prepare and inspire us as we move closer to the holiday of Pesach. But even more so, the haftorah reminds us to set our vision on a celebration of Pesach that will include the Pesach offering and in a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

May that day come soon! ■

STATS

	Vayakhel	Pekudei	Total
of 54 Sedras	22nd	23rd	-
of 10 in Bamidbar	10th	11th	-
Lines in a Torah	211.2	158.7	369.8
Rank	22nd	41st	(2nd)
Parshiyot	13	20	33
Ptuchot	7	6	13
Stumot	6	14	20
Pesukim	122	92	214
Rank (Torah/Shemot)	17/3	40/10	(2nd)
Words	1558	1182	2740
Rank	24/6	42/9	(2nd)
Letters	6181	4432	10613
Rank	21/5	44/10	(2nd)

MITZVOT

Vayakhel has a single mitzvah counted among the 613. Pekudei has none.

In loving memory of
our beloved dear Mother,
Savta and Savta Rabba

JEWEL DEROVAN a"h

יהודית בת אריה ע"ה

On her 30th yearzeit, Adar 27

A pioneering force of
the Jewish Community
of Los Angeles

Loved by all, especially her family
David & Linda Derovan and family
Daniel z"l & Michal Dvir and family
Norman & Wendy Derovan
and family