



Shabbat Table Talk Page

Overview

- **Parashah: Pekudei** (פְּקוּדֵי, “accounting of”)
- **Reading: Exodus 38:21-40:38**



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוּק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה

– Torah Study Blessing –

Note: Vayakhel is always combined with parashat Pekudei during non-leap years (i.e., in years when there is no additional month of Adar inserted into the calendar).

Synopsis

Parashat Pekudei is the final portion of the Book of Exodus. It begins with Moses’ accounting of all the materials that were donated for the construction of the Mishkan (i.e., Tabernacle). Moses first recorded the inventory of the building materials and furnishings, and then he carefully checked the special priestly garments. After all the work was confirmed to be in complete accordance with the LORD’s instructions, Moses blessed the people.

The LORD then commanded Moses to assemble the Mishkan on “the first month in the second year [from the date of the Exodus], on the first day of the month” (i.e., on Nisan 1, or Rosh Chodashim). Since Moses gave the commandment to begin building the Tabernacle on the day after Yom Kippur (i.e., Tishri 11), this implies that it took less than six months for Betzalel and his team to create the Tabernacle and all its furnishings.

After the Mishkan was complete and all its components were accounted for and inspected, Moses assembled it and anointed all its components with the holy anointing oil. He then formally initiated Aaron and his four sons into the priesthood. The Divine Presence - manifest as a Cloud of Glory – then filled the Holy of Holies in the Tent of Meeting.

The Book of Exodus ends: “And Moses was not able to enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the Glory of the LORD filled the Mishkan. Throughout all their journeys, whenever the Cloud was taken up from over the Mishkan, the people of Israel would set out. But if the Cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. For the Cloud of the LORD was on the Mishkan by day, and Fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys” (Exod. 30:35-38).



Basic Questions

1. When did God's Presence fill the Mishkan? ¹
2. Who was responsible for the financial accounts of the Mishkan? ²
3. Which two people were responsible for the building of the Mishkan and all its furnishings? ³
4. What does the name Betzalel mean? ⁴
5. How many stones were on the High Priest's breastplate (*choshen*)? ⁵
6. According to the sages, roughly how many people were present when God's Presence filled the Mishkan? ⁶
7. Was there more gold or silver in the sanctuary of the Mishkan? ⁷
8. How did Moses consecrate the furnishings of the Mishkan? ⁸
9. How is the Shekhinah Presence described regarding the Mishkan? ⁹
10. What are the two great themes of the Book of Exodus? ¹⁰
11. What are the names of the eleven Torah portions in the Book of Exodus? ¹¹
12. What do we say when the last verse of a Book of the Bible is recited? ¹²

¹ On Nisan 1 (the start of the New Year after the Exodus). According to midrash, the Mishkan was completed on Kislev 25, but God waited until Nisan 1 to manifest His Presence there (in commemoration of Isaac's birth and also to mark the new year). The Mishkan was *consecrated* for seven days, beginning on Adar 23. During each of the seven days of consecration Moses set up the Mishkan and offered sacrifices every morning and then pulled it down. On the eighth day (i.e., Nisan 1) he put it up but did not dismantle it again.

² Ithamar, the son of Aaron, was in charge of the Tabernacle and its accounts (Exod. 38:21).

³ Bezalel ben Uri of the tribe of Judah, and Oholiav ben Ahismach of the tribe of Dan (Exod. 38:22-23).

⁴ In the shadow (*betzel*) of God (*El*).

⁵ Twelve, one each stone was written the name of a tribe of Israel.

⁶ Over two million. They determine this number by the account of the weight of the silver used for the sockets (*adonim*) of the Mishkan. A half-shekel tax was imposed on all males from the age of 20 years and up (Exod. 30:13-16). Moses recorded the weight of the silver to be "a hundred talents [kikars] plus 1,175 shekels. If one kikar equals 3,000 shekels and there were 100 kikars, this amounts to 300,000 shekels. We then add 1,775 to yield 301,775 and multiply by 2 to result in 603,550 men aged 20 or more (Exod. 38:26). Assuming these were married men with 2 or more children, the total number of people represented by the shekalim reaches two million.

⁷ Silver. There were over 100 kikars of silver used and 29 kikars of gold (Exod. 38:24-25).

⁸ He smeared each with *shemen ha-mishchah*, holy anointing oil. Note that the word "mishchah" is related to the word Mashiach, "Messiah." Every part of the Mishkan would foreshadow God's plan of redemption given in Yeshua.

⁹ As a Cloud over the Mishkan by day and a column of fire by night. When the cloud lifted, the children of Israel were to pack up the tent of meeting and continue their journey. The cloud was said to be the same cloud as Sinai's.

¹⁰ Deliverance from bondage and the revelation at Sinai (i.e., the Mishkan).

¹¹ Shemot, Vaera, Bo, Beshalach, Yitro, Mishpatim, Terumah, Tetzaveh, Ki Tisa, Vayakhel, and Pekudei.

¹² *Chazak, chazak, venitchazek*: "Be strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened!"



Discussion Topics

1. According to Jewish tradition, the Mishkan is called the “Mishkan of Testimony” in order to testify that God forgave the people of the Sin of the Golden Calf. Do you agree with this idea?
2. The sages say that “God provides the remedy before He brings the plague.” For instance, God gave the promise of the Seed of the Woman before the curse was pronounced to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In what ways do you see God providing the “remedy before the plague” in the case of the Mishkan?
3. Jewish tradition tends to regard the giving of the law at Sinai to be the goal of the entire redemptive process, a sort of “return from Exile” to the full stature of God’s chosen people. The written Torah, however, indicates that the climax of the revelation at Sinai was to impart the pattern of the Mishkan to Moses. In other words, the goal of revelation was not primarily to impart a set of moral or social laws, but rather to accommodate the Divine Presence in the midst of the people. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
4. Jewish tradition claims that “prayer, repentance, and good deeds” *replace* the requirement of sacrifices, and therefore it must *allegorize* the role of the Mishkan/Temple – along with all of the various laws for sacrifice revealed in the Book of Leviticus. How does Rabbinical Judaism differ from the religion revealed in the written Torah of Moses?
5. There is a temptation to read the Book of Exodus as if it were a story about other people. The narratives of the Book of Exodus, like other narratives of the Torah, can function as *parables* for us. “The deeds of the fathers are signs for the children.” Each Jew is responsible to personally view Passover as a time to commemorate their own personal deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh, just as each Jew is to consider himself as having personally received revelation at Sinai. The Mishkan itself was a metaphor of God’s plan of redemption given in Yeshua. For example, the Mercy Seat (*kapporet*) represented the Throne of God (Heb. 4:16; 2 Ki. 19:15) where propitiation for our sins was made (Rom. 3:25). In what ways do you identify with the narratives given in the Book of Exodus? How do you regard the Cross of Yeshua in light of the revelation of the Mishkan?
6. As a follow up question, discuss how the great themes of the Book of Exodus (slavery, deliverance, revelation, the altar) may be applied in your own relationship to Yeshua.

חֲזַק חֲזַק וְנִתְחַזַּק!

For Next Week:

- Read parashat **Vayikra** (i.e., Leviticus 1:1-6:7)
- Read the Haftarah (Isaiah 43:21-44:23)
- Read the New Testament (Hebrews 10:1-18; 13:10-15)