

# Torah Weekly

## PARSHAT VAYAKHEL PEKUDEI

8-14 March 2026  
19-25 Adar 5786

Vayak'hel-Pekudei: Exodus 35:1 - 40:38  
Parshat Hachodesh: Exodus 12:1-20  
Hachodesh: Ezekiel 45:18 - 46:15

### Calendars

We have Jewish calendars and applications. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

### Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

### Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzah for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

Sacred document please do not destroy

### Our Contributions Matter

Why does the Torah devote so much space to the construction of the Mishkan (Tabernacle)? Why so many details, why the lengthy narrative?

These are all good questions, and the answers are perennially relevant.

Moses assembles the nation to hear G-d's commandments in this week's Torah portion.

Previously, they had assembled for the construction of the Golden Calf—the greatest communal transgression in Jewish history. A tikun ("repair") was needed; time to press the reset button. By building the Tabernacle, a dwelling place for G-d's Divine presence, they'd strengthen their relationship with the Almighty.

Moses succeeded in imbuing the people with a unity of purpose. He transformed them into a united workforce of willing individuals. How was this achieved? By respecting and valuing each person's contribution, Moses demonstrated that everyone mattered. He impressed upon the people the greatness of their collective mission; within their diversity was a greater cause that melded them together into a like-minded community.

Diverse personalities can pool their energies and resources for the common good. Dignity and a sense of belonging come from such lofty endeavors.

We are told that G-d selected Betzalel and Oholiav, two men of very different lineages, to imbue with Divine inspiration and the artistic ability to perform all kinds of highly skilled work, including weaving, woodworking and the crafting of gold, silver and copper vessels. Recently freed slaves would not have developed such refined skills without Divine inspiration.

Even more noteworthy is that while Betzalel was of esteemed lineage and Oholiav was from the lowest of the tribes, the Torah equates their talents. This sent a message to the nation that neither family background nor social status influence G-d. Every individual's contribution is equally meaningful, as long as it is sincere.

I frequently meet Jews who proudly state that their grandparents were observant or that their great-grandfather was a rabbi. It's all very nice, but what matters much more than who your parents or grandparents were is who you are. What are you doing to perpetuate Jewish life? Who will your grandchildren be? Today, Jewish education is available to everyone. With some effort, each of us can become knowledgeable in any area we choose. We can even give ourselves the knowledge that our parents may not have received.

The Tabernacle was a portable sanctuary built to accompany the Children of Israel on their journey to the Promised Land. It was the sanctified space in which G-d's presence was manifest among His people.

The Tabernacle reminds us of an enduring lesson. Throughout our history, we have been dispersed across the world, frequently having to travel from place to place. Yet no matter where we settle, it is only a temporary resting place, not a permanent home.

Regardless of how comfortable we've been in any host country, at some point, we've had to move on. But as long as G-d's presence is in our midst, Judaism and the Torah accompany us wherever we may go.

### Making It Relevant

Try to make every gathering a place where G-d's presence can dwell. Stress unity, dignity and mutual respect when combining diverse individuals and groups.

View every talent and skill as being bestowed by G-d. What we do with our abilities is how we express appreciation for what we've been given.

Contemplate the unifying effects of building community through a common purpose.

By Katia Bolotin

### Vayakhel-Pekudei in a Nutshell

Exodus 35:1-40:38

The name of the first Parshah, "Vayakhel," means "And he gathered" and it is found in Exodus 35:1. The name of the Parshah, "Pekudei," means "Amounts of" and is found in Exodus 38:21.

Moses assembles the people of Israel and reiterates to them the commandment to observe the Shabbat. He then conveys G-d's instructions regarding the making of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). The people donate the required materials in abundance, bringing gold, silver and copper; blue-, purple- and red-dyed wool; goat hair, spun linen, animal skins, wood, olive oil, herbs and precious stones. Moses has to tell them to stop giving.

A team of wise-hearted artisans make the Mishkan and its furnishings (as detailed in the previous Torah readings of Terumah, Tetzaveh and Ki Tisa): three layers of roof coverings; 48 gold-plated wall panels, and 100 silver foundation sockets; the parochet (veil) that separates between the Sanctuary's two chambers, and the masach (screen) that fronts it; the ark, and its cover with the cherubim; the table and its showbread; the seven-branched menorah with its specially prepared oil; the golden altar and the incense burned on it; the anointing oil; the outdoor altar for burnt offerings and all its implements; the hangings, posts and foundation sockets for the courtyard; and the basin and its pedestal, made out

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An accounting is made of the gold, silver and copper donated by the people for the making of the Mishkan. Betzalel, Aholiav and their assistants make the eight priestly garments—the apron, breastplate, cloak, crown, hat, tunic, sash and breeches—according to the specifications communicated to Moses in the Parshah of Tetzaveh.

The Mishkan is completed and all its components are brought to Moses, who erects it and anoints it with the holy anointing oil, and initiates Aaron and his four sons into the priesthood. A cloud appears over the Mishkan, signifying the Divine Presence that has come to dwell within it.

## Vayakhel-Pekudei Haftorah in a Nutshell

I Kings 7:51-8:21.

This week's haftorah describes the dedication of Solomon's Temple, following the theme of this week's Torah reading: the dedication of the desert Tabernacle.

The construction of the Holy Temple was completed. King Solomon assembled the leaders and elders of the tribes to Jerusalem, and amidst great fanfare the priests transported the Ark from its temporary location in the City of David and installed it in the Holy of Holies chamber in the Holy Temple. Immediately, G-d's presence appeared in the Temple, in the form of a smoky cloud.

King Solomon then blessed G-d. He recalled the history of the sanctuary, how his father, King David, had wanted to build it—but was told by G-d that it would be his son who would accomplish this feat. "And the L-rd has established His word that He spoke, and I have risen up in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the L-rd spoke, and have built a house for the name of the L-rd, the G-d of Israel. And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein (is) the covenant of the Lord, which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."

## Hachodesh in a Nutshell

In connection with the holidays of Purim and Passover, our sages instituted that four special readings be read from the Torah on four different Shabbatot in addition to the regular Torah portions. When the special Parshat Hachodesh is read, as is the case this week, we read a special haftorah instead of the above one.

Ezekiel 45:18-46:15.

This special haftorah is a prophecy regarding the Paschal Offering that will be brought during the Messianic Era, reflecting the theme of the Hachodesh Torah reading—Moses' command to the Israelites in Egypt to prepare and bring the Paschal lamb.

This haftorah is part of Ezekiel's prophecy regarding the third Holy Temple—its structure, inauguration and some of the practices that will be observed therein.

The haftorah begins with a description of the various sacrifices that will be offered during the Temple's seven-day inauguration ceremony, and then mentions that on the 14th of Nissan we shall bring the Paschal offering.

Much of the rest of the haftorah is devoted to the sacrifices that will be brought by the "leader," and prescribes his entry and exit from the Temple.

## Nebuchadnezzar died (397 BCE)

Death of King Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian emperor who conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the first Holy Temple 26 years earlier, died on the 25th of Adar of the year 3364 from creation. (Jeremiah 52:31)

## Rebbetzin's Birthday (1901)

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushkah Schneerson (1901-1988) of righteous memory, wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe of righteous memory, was born on Shabbat, the 25th of Adar, in Babinovich, a town near the Russian city of Lubavitch, in the year 5661 from creation (1901). In an address delivered on the 25 of Adar of 1988 (the Rebbetzin's 87th birthday, and about a month after her passing), the Rebbe initiated an international birthday campaign, urging people to celebrate their birthdays and utilize the day as a time of introspection and making resolutions involving an increase in good deeds. R. Moshe Cordovero (1570)

## First Property Purchase (1677)

In 1658, fifteen Jewish families emigrated from South America to (what was to become) the United States. These families were of Sephardic lineage and settled together in Newport, Rhode Island, where they established a Jewish congregation. For many years they held weekly prayer services in private homes.

When the need arose for a Jewish cemetery, the community purchased a piece of land on Wednesday, February 28, 1677. This was the very first piece of land in the colonies which was owned by a Jewish congregation. In this cemetery are buried many of the early members of this congregation, and it is still maintained by the Jewish community.

## Passing of Sarah Schenirer (1935)

Viewing the dire lack of formal Jewish education provided to Jewish girls in her native Poland, Sarah Schenirer founded the first Bais Yaakov girls' school in Krakow in 1917. Despite some initial opposition, the Bais Yaakov school network quickly expanded throughout Poland and beyond. Today, there are hundreds of Bais Yaakov schools worldwide, attended by tens of thousands of students.

## Passing of Zedekiah (397 BCE)

Zedekiah was the last king of the royal house of David to reign in the Holy Land. He ascended the throne in 434 BCE, after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia (to whom the kingdom of Judah was then subject) exiled King Jeconiah (Zedekiah's nephew) to Babylonia. In 425 BCE Zedekiah rebelled against Babylonian rule, and Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem (in Tevet 10 of that year); in the summer of 423 BCE the walls of Jerusalem were penetrated, the city conquered, the (first) Holy Temple destroyed, and the people of Judah exiled to Babylonia. Zedekiah tried escaping through a tunnel leading out of the city, but was captured; his sons were killed before his eyes, and then he was blinded. Zedekiah languished in the royal dungeon in Babylonia until Nebuchadnezzar's death in 397 BCE; Evil Meroduch -- Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor -- freed him (and his nephew Jeconiah) on the 27th of Adar, but Zedekiah died that same day.

## Rebbe Falls Ill (1992)

On the 27th of Adar I, 5752 (Monday, March 2, 1992), the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, suffered a disabling stroke while praying at the gravesite of the previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch. On the same date two years later, the Rebbe lost consciousness following another stroke; three months later, on the 3rd of Tammuz 5754 (June 12, 1994), the Rebbe's soul ascended on high, orphaning a generation.

## Purim Cairo (1524)

Ahmed Pasha was the governor of Egypt under Selim II "The Magnificent," the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Ahmed plotted to cede from the Ottoman Empire and declare himself Sultan of Egypt. He requested of his Jewish minter Abraham de Castro to mint new Egyptian currency stamped with his image. Instead, De Castro went to Constantinople, and informed Selim II of Ahmed's plot.

Ahmed decided to exact revenge against Cairo's Jewish community. He imprisoned many of their leaders and threatened to execute them unless he was paid an outrageously large ransom. The Jews of Cairo fasted and prayed to G-d. A large sum of money was collected but it did not approach the amount of money Ahmed demanded. Before the planned executions, Ahmed visited his bathhouse. As he was leaving the bathhouse he was attacked and severely wounded by a group of his own advisors and governors. Ahmed escaped but was later captured and beheaded.

From then on, the Jews of Cairo observed the 28th of Adar as a day of celebration. A special megillah (scroll) written to commemorate the miracle was read in Cairo every year on this day.