

# Vayakhel-P'kudei

	V	P	V+P
Sedra among 54	22nd	23rd	-
Sedra of Sh'mot's 11 lines	10	11	-
rank (among the 54)	22nd	41st	(2nd)
Parshiyot	13	20	33
P'tuchot	7	6	13
S'tumot	6	14	20
P'sukim	122	92	214
rank (Torah/Shmot)	17/3	40/10	(2nd)
Words	1558	1182	2740
rank (Torah/Shmot)	24/6	42/9	(2nd)
Letters	6181	4432	10613
rank (Torah/Shmot)	21/5	44/10	(2nd)

Vayakhel-P'kudei is the 2nd longest of the double sedras, trailing behind Matot-Masei. Even the addition of the 22-pasuk Maftir of Para does not help it/them reach Matot-Mas'ei.

## MITZVOT

Vayakhel has a single mitzva counted among the 613. P'kudei has none.



[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

# Kohen - First Aliya

## 20+9 p'sukim - 35:1-29

[S> 35:1 (3)] Moshe gathers the People (according to Tradition, this took place on the "first" Yom Kippur or the day after, following 40 days and 40 nights on Har Sinai) to instruct them concerning the building of the Mishkan. He begins with a warning to keep Shabbat (even while being involved in the holy tasks of the Mishkan).

**Observation** Notice that when G-d speaks to Moshe, He instructs him concerning the Mishkan (236 p'sukim) and then warns him that Shabbat is supreme. When Moshe gathers the people to instruct them, he puts the Shabbat warning up front. Some commentaries say that with the change in "primary" emphasis on the Mikdash in the aftermath of the Golden Calf, there came a change in the messages of Shabbat and Mikdash which helps explain which is presented first, and when.

**SDT** In the opening 3-pasuk portion about Shabbat, there are 40 words - 39 plus the word HaShabbat. This can be taken as a symbolic reference to the 39 categories of prohibited Melacha, which define the nature of HASHABBAT. The Baal HaTurim says that the word LA'ASOT in the phrase, "These are the things that G-d commanded TO DO them", is spelled with a LAMED (30) and an anagram for TEISHA (9) - another remez to the Melachot of Shabbat. He adds that a VAV is "missing" from

LA'ASOT, representing the six weekdays when Melachot are permitted.

## MitzvaWatch

The "command" here of "Thou shall not kindle fire in all your dwellings on the Shabbat day" teaches us many things.

Lighting a fire is one of the 39 AVOT MELACHA (categories of creative activities forbidden on Shabbat). As such, we already have the prohibition from Commandment #4 - ...Thou shall not do any manner of MELACHA... Why is the Torah singling out FIRE here? The question is two-fold: Why single it out and why command it again.

Sefer haChinuch says that the prohibition here is directed to Sanhedrin, not the individual. [It is mitzva 114 according to the Chinuch, and Rambam's LAV (prohibition) 322.] We have already been told that we may not kindle fire. The courts, says the Chinuch, may not carry out the capital punishment of burning (S'reifa) on Shabbat. Nor, by Biblical extension, may any capital punishment be carried out on Shabbat, nor may any punishment by the courts be meted out on Shabbat. This allows Shabbat to be a day of respite and rest even for the convicted felon on "death row".

We can also look at the Shabbat reminder in a different way. You may not kindle fire in YOUR DWELLINGS, wherever they may be, but you may - nay, you must - kindle fire (and do certain other Melachot) in THE DWELLING, the Mikdash. (That is, when

specifically commanded to do so by G-d.) This can explain the specific placement of the "repeat" of the prohibition of kindling fire.

Tiferet Y'honatan suggests a novel reason for singling out FIRE. Since we are prohibited from doing Melacha on Shabbat because G-d rested from Creation on the first Shabbat, and since fire was not "in the picture" until the first Motza'ei Shabbat, perhaps kindling of fire is not an equal member of the family of prohibited Melachot. Comes the pasuk here to set the record straight. Fire is not only one of the 39 categories, it is the flagship of the LAMED-TET MELACHOT.

Furthermore, from the singling out of one of the melachot, we are taught that each category of melacha is often treated distinctly. This means that cooking and baking would be considered two violations of the same Av Melacha, as would watering and pruning a rosebush. In contrast, pruning a tree and picking its fruit would be violations of two different melachot - Planting and Reaping. There are ramifications to this distinction.

[P> 35:4 (26)] Aside from the first three p'sukim, the rest of the sedra deals with the building of the Mishkan. Parshat T'ruma gave us the command and instructions, Vayakheil tells us of the carrying out of the instructions.

One senses an impatient excitement concerning the job at hand. Moshe speaks to the people and tells them that which G-d has commanded.

(Note the similar terminology the Torah uses when Moshe tells about Shabbat and about the Mikdash.)

The different types of materials are named. It is made clear that donations are encouraged, but completely voluntary. (Except for silver.)

Then each part of the Mishkan and its furnishings is mentioned in detail. After the people heard what Moshe had to say, they left the meeting (apparently enthused and anxious to get busy).

One can speculate, based on the sequence we are presented with in the Torah, that there was a fair amount of guilt from the Golden Calf that was motivating the People.

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION:** The phrase SHABBAT SHABBATON appears 6 times in the Torah. Twice it refers to Yom Kippur, once to the Shmita year. One other time it might be talking about Shabbat, but possibly about Yom Kippur. The first two times the phrase appears are in Ki Tisa and Vayakhel. Both times it refers to Shabbat, specifically in the context of building the Mikdash. One of the commentaries suggests that when one does “regular” work during his week, then Shabbat is Shabbat. But when we spend our six work-days in “holy work”, such as building the Mikdash (but not just that), then our Shabbat is further elevated, and is described as Shabbat Shabbaton.

Many people are moved to give generously in response to Moshe’s

appeal. Men and women all give (there are different interpretations as to what the wording in the pasuk indicates). In addition to donations, men, and more so women, donated their talents in weaving, dyeing, woodwork, metal-work, etc.

Repeated reference is made to the hearts of the people being in what they were doing. This was a genuine positive response to G-d’s and Moshe’s call to build the Mishkan.

The leaders of the Tribes supplied the precious stones for the shoulder-pieces of the Eifod and for the Choshen of the Kohen Gadol, and spices and oil for the Incense and the Anointing oil.

## Levi - Second Aliya 13+12+35 p'sukim - 35:30-37:16

[P> 35:30 (13)] Moshe tells the people that G-d has designated Betzalel (from Shevet Yehuda) and Aholiav (from Dan) as the chief artisans of the Mishkan. They have been Divinely inspired with intelligence, insight, and the skills necessary for the various intricate tasks ahead. They and those working with them supervised the collection of materials and informed Moshe that they received more than enough material. Moshe “gives out the word” that the people should cease their donations.

[S> 36:8 (6)] When G-d commanded Moshe about the Mishkan, He first commanded the making of the Aron, Shulchan, and Menora. Then, the roofing layers - the Mishkan, the Ohel, and the Orot. Only then were the wall boards and foundation sockets brought into the picture. In the carrying out of the commands, a more "practical" plan was followed. The structure and then the furnishings. But how can Moshe and Betzalel deviate from the commands of G-d? You can't just do whatever you want in this kind of thing.

Commentaries say that Moshe and Betzalel requested and received permission from G-d to take the more human, practical approach.

In this portion, the three layers of ceiling are presented. Note that the first layer was a beautiful, multi-colored weave and the fasteners were gold.

[P> 36:14 (6)] Over that came the more practical, less attractive, less complicated, but weather-resistant Ohel of goat hair. This layer was not seen from inside the Mishkan, and might not have been seen from the outside either, according to the opinion that the Tachash and Red-dyed sheep skin covering (which was also attractive) was not just on top, but down the sides of the Mishkan as well.

[S> 36:20 (19)] Next, the Torah describes the construction of the wall-planks of the Mishkan from acacia wood. There were 48 planks -

20 each on the north and south walls, and 8 on the west wall. Each plank was covered with gold. (According to Rav Aryeh Kaplan z"l, the gold covering was extremely thin - he calculated it at 1/100 of an inch thick.) Each plank was inserted into two foundation blocks of silver. The Torah describes in detail the rods, bolts, rings that held the wall planks together.

The Parochet to hang between the Kodesh and the Kodesh Kodashim, the Masach for the front of the Mishkan, and the Masach for the front of the courtyard were similar in style and material to the first ceiling layer.

With the structure completed, next came the Aron and the Shulchan.

[P> 37:1 (9)] The Aron is described in the same detail as when it was first commanded back in Parshat T'ruma. This is so for all parts of the Mishkan, not just the Aron.

The Aron consisted of an open-top box of wood, plated with gold inside and out. (Some describe it as three nested boxes - the outer and inner of thin gold and the middle one of wood, which gave support to the Aron and the lid - Kaporet and K'ruvim). Even the thickness of the wood was covered with gold, so that none of the wood was visible.

[P> 37:10 (7)] This parsha contains the details of the Shulchan. In T'ruma, the command to build the Shulchan and its utensils was followed by the command

to put the Lechem HaPanim onto the shelves of the Shulchan. Here in Vayakheil, the mention of Lechem HaPanim is still to come.

## Shlishi - Third Aliya 13 p'sukim - 37:17-29

[P> 37:17 (8)] Next comes the Golden Menora. With the exception of the oil cups, everything else - the branches, the decorative orbs, cups, flowers - was hammered from one piece of gold.

**Did you know...** that even though the Torah commands that the Menora be made of gold, it may be made of other precious metals, if gold is not available. Furthermore, the requirement of MIKSHA ACHAT, one solid piece, only applies to the Menora when it is made of gold. And furthermore, a non-gold Menora, which is just as “kosher” for the Beit HaMikdash as a gold one, does not need the decorative orbs, cups, and flowers. Without these restrictions, it is much easier to make a Menora for use in the next Beit HaMikdash, until we get the gold and full details of the Menora’s form. In fact, there is a silver Menora in the Temple Institute in the Old City, that is waiting to function in the Third Beit HaMikdash until we will be able to make a proper gold one. May we see it put to use in our time - and subsequently replaced by the Golden Menora.

[P> 37:25 (5)] Next, the Golden Altar (a.k.a. Incense Altar, a.k.a. Inner Altar) is described.

After this Mizbei’ach was made, the Anointing Oil and Incense were compounded.

**Just an observation...** In the first presentation of the Mishkan, the Golden Altar is found in Parshat T’tzaveh. The Mizbei’ach for the korbanot, which was outside the Mishkan, which is the next topic here in Vayakheil, was presented in T’ruma.

## R’vi’i - Fourth Aliya 20+12 p'sukim - 38:21-39:1

The fourth Aliya is always the bridge Aliya between two combine sedras

[S> 38:1 (7)] The External Altar, Copper Altar, Earth Altar (because it was filled with earth when the camp rested and the Mishkan was erected) is described. Almost all korbanot were brought on this Mizbei’ach. It was much bigger than the Golden Altar.

[S> 38:8 (1)] The final vessel described is the Washing Basin and its Stand. It was made of copper. Tradition tells us that the copper came from the mirrors of the Israelite women. At first, Moshe did not want to accept them because of the vanity associated with mirrors. G-d, however, told Moshe how very precious this gift was in His eyes, because they reminded Him (so to speak) of the role Jewish women played in the redemption of the people from Egypt.

[S> 38:9 (12)] Finally, the courtyard is described.

[S> 38:21 (3)] The sedra of P'kudei begins with an accounting of the materials collected for use in the construction of the Mishkan, its furnishings, and the garments of the Kohanim.

**SDT** We are taught from the fact that Moshe Rabeinu gave a voluntary accounting of the materials, that a person in the position of collecting monies for the community must conduct himself in such a way that he will always be above suspicion. Even if the individual is completely trustworthy, he should take measures to avoid the possibility of appearing improper.

The work of assembling and dismantling the Mishkan throughout the years of wandering in the Wilderness was the domain of the tribe of Levi, under the supervision and leadership of Itamar b. Aharon HaKohen.

The chief artisans of the Mishkan, the Torah reminds us, were Bezalel of Yehuda and Aholiav of Dan.

[S> 38:24 (9)] The Torah next details the amounts of gold, silver, and copper which were collected for the Mishkan and its vessels. The Torah also lists the uses of the different metals. Then the Torah mentions the different dyed wools (sky-blue, purple, crimson - the shades of color are debated - e.g. sky-blue - at what time of day?

Different shades of blue - which is the "correct" T'cheilet color?) that were used in the making of the sacred garments of the Kohen Gadol, and for the cloths that covered (and protected) the sacred items of the Mishkan during the traveling from place to place in the Midbar.

## Chamishi 5th Aliya 20 p'sukim - 39:2-21

[P> 39:2 (4)] This Aliya contains a detailed description of the Eifod and the Choshen of the Kohen Gadol. Both were woven from the same kind of weave and the two were attached firmly to each other when worn.

[S> 39:6 (2)] Two onyx stones (Avnei Shoham) were attached to the shoulder straps of the Eifod. The names of the 12 tribes (actually, it was the 12 sons of Yaakov) were engraved on the stones, six on each stone.

[P> 39:8 (14)] This parsha contains the detailed description of the CHOSHEN. In addition to the fabric of these two garments, there were gold settings for the stones, gold rings and chains for attaching Choshen & Eifod.

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya 11+11 p'sukim - 39:22-43

[P> 39:22 (5)] The ME'IL (different opinions - cloak, cape, poncho-like garment) was woven completely of

T'CHEILET wool. Its neck-hole was reinforced to prevent tearing.

The hem of the ME'IL was fringed with alternating bells of gold and pompoms of colored wools. According to Rambam, there were 72 bells in all, 36 in the front and 36 in the back.

**[S> 39:27 (3)]** The KUTONET, a long-sleeved, floor-length garment was woven of white linen. All Kohanim wore a KUTONET. Each had it custom-fitted, since it is forbidden to do AVODA in the Mikdash if the garment was either too long or too short, (or frayed or soiled).

A turban of linen was worn by the Kohen Gadol in one style, to accommodate the TZITZ. Regular Kohanim wore their turban in a different style.

The belt or sash, AVNEIT, was woven from the three colors of wool and from linen. It was unusually long (32 AMOT, approx. 15 meters, about 50 feet) and therefore needed to be wound around the kohein's waist many times. (Some say that the AVNEIT was worn above the waist.) The winding produced a prominent bulge around his waist which the kohein felt whenever his hands were at his sides. This served as a constant reminder to the Kohein of the seriousness of the service in the Beit HaMikdash. The AVNEIT was Shaatnez, as was the Choshen and Eifod.

**[S> 39:30 (2)]** Next comes the TZITZ, a.k.a. NEZER HAKODESH, made of pure gold and fastened around the KG's head with ribbons of T'cheilet wool. The TZITZ was embossed with the words KODESH TO HASHEM. There are different opinions as to how the words were formed from the gold of the Tzitz, and in what order and orientation relative to each other. The TZITZ was like a royal crown for the Kohein Gadol, yet it was also meant to humble him greatly. It is difficult for an exalted person to be humble - but that is the challenge for the Kohein Gadol and for kings of Israel.

**[S> 39:32 (1)]** Thus, all the work of the parts of the Mishkan and garments of the Kohanim came to an end. (All that remained was to put everything together and in its right place.)

**SDT** Talmud Yerushalmi notes that the phrase, "as G-d had commanded Moshe" appears 18 times in P'kudei. Correspondingly, we have 18 brachot in our weekday Amida (the connection between Service in the Mikdash and Davening is obvious).

**[P> 39:33 (11)]** All the components of the Mishkan, its vessels, and the sacred garments were brought to Moshe following the completion of the work by the many men and women who voluntarily contributed their talents to the Mishkan. Moshe inspected all of the work and found it to be consistent with what G-d had commanded to be done.

Moshe blessed the people: "May it be G-d's will that He will cause His Presence to settle upon your handiwork." (Rashi)

The Torah once again enumerates all of the components of the Mishkan. And repeats over and over again that the People did everything that G-d had commanded Moshe.

**Here's a thought...** The emphasis upon the people doing as commanded stands in harsh contrast to the Golden Calf, which was not at all what G-d had commanded. We can see a rebuke every time the point is made that, "this time we listened, but what happened a couple of months earlier..." (It is complimentary, that we did as commanded, but we can also see an implied rebuke.)

## Sh'VII Seventh Aliya 16+11+11 p'sukim - 40:1-38

[P> 40:1 (16)] G-d instructs Moshe to erect the Mishkan on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. After the structure of the Mishkan is in place, Moshe is to bring in the ARON and hang the PAROCHET which is to separate the Holy of Holies from the main part of the Mishkan.

Then the Shulchan and Menora were put in their places, followed by the Golden Mizbei'ach.

The MASACH was then hung from the posts at the entrance to the Mishkan.

The Copper Mizbei'ach was then place

in front of the Mishkan, opposite its entrance.

The KIYOR and its base were then placed between the Mishkan and the Mizbei'ach, slightly to the side. The courtyard curtains were then hung from their posts.

Following all this, Moshe was to anoint all the components of the Mishkan and sanctify them. Then the Mizbei'ach and its vessels were anointed, and the Laver as well.

Then the Kohanim were brought forward. After proper ablutions, they were clothed in their sacred garments and anointed.

[S> 40:17 (3)] And it came to pass that on the first day of Nissan, in the second year out of Egypt (almost), the Mishkan was completed. In this portion, the Torah spells out the step-by-step procedures of finally carrying out the commands of T'ruma, T'tzaveh, and the beginning of Ki Tisa.

ADANIM, wall boards, braces for the walls, pillars for the curtains. Coverings.

[S> 40:20 (2)] Then the LUCHOT go into the ARON, the carrying poles are inserted into their rings (never to be removed), the lid (KAPORET) is placed on the ARON and the complete ARON is placed into the Mishkan. When in position, the PAROCHET is hung between what now becomes the Holy of Holies (with the ARON) and the rest of the Mishkan.

[S> 40:22 (2)] Then the SHULCHAN is set in place (north wall of the Mishkan) and the LECHEM HAPANIM is placed on the shelves of the SHULCHAN.

[S> 40:24 (2)] The MENORA goes in place next, opposite the SHULCHAN (on the south wall). Then the oil cups are placed on the tops of the seven branches of the Menora.

[S> 40:26 (2)] The Golden Mizbei'ach is then set in the middle of the KODESH, and KETORET is offered on it.

[S> 40:28 (2)] With that, the MASACH was hung across the entrance of the MISHKAN. Then the external Mizbei'ach was put in place, opposite the entrance to the Mishkan, and an OLAH was offered on it.

[S> 40:30 (3)] The LAVER (KIYOR) was set between the Mishkan and Mizbei'ach, and it was filled with water. Kohanim were required to wash hands and feet before approaching the Mizbei'ach or the Mishkan.

[S> 40:33 (1)] Finally came the poles and curtains of the courtyard and the curtain at its entrance. And the whole task was completed.

[P> 40:34 (5)] In the final 5 p'sukim of Sh'mot, the Torah tells us that Moshe was not able to approach the Mishkan because it was "covered by a Cloud". Only when the cloud lifted was Moshe able to approach. The Cloud was also

that which signaled the people to travel or to remain encamped. The Cloud was there by day and the Pillar of Fire by night.

Thus ends the Book of Sh'mot, with the stage set, so to speak, for the Book of Vayikra, Torat Kohanim.

## Maftir - 2nd Torah 22 p'sukim; Bamidbar 19

Parshat Para is read on the Shabbat before Parshat HaChodesh which presents us with the mitzvot of Korban Pesach, because the most common and important time for ritual purification on the part of most of the people was around the beginning of Nissan, as part of one's preparation to be in Jerusalem for Pesach and to bring and eat KP. Parshat Para from Parshat Chukat, contains the mitzvot of Para Aduma - that is, the preparing of the potion from the ashes of the Red Heifer, the general mitzva of the concept of ritual impurity from contact with a corpse, and the mitzva of purifying oneself with Para Aduma potion.

## Haftara 33 p'sukim Yechezkeil 36:16-38

S'faradim end 2 p'sukim earlier

The Haftara takes the concept (from the Maftir) of an individual becoming TAMEI and requiring purification with special water as an analogy for the

people of Israel who defiled themselves with the sin of idolatry and other sins, and their (our) need for a purification process with "G-d's spiritual waters of the Torah".

There is a "hard" message in this haftara, among others.

G-d expresses His great disappointment with the people of Israel. And He punished them (us) very harshly. But then He says that His name was being desecrated among the nations of our dispersion, because the nations mockingly asked about the great nation of G-d and how low it had sunk.

So G-d decides, so to speak, and announces that He will redeem the people of Israel, even if they (we) don't deserve it, for His own sake.

This is hard reproach, indeed. But rather than discourage us, it should spur us on to put the lie to this prophecy - so to speak - by being worthy of redemption on our own merit.

The last p'sukim refer to a multitude of sheep - for sacrifices... This is a reminder of the large number of sheep brought to Yerushalayim for Korban Pesach.

## **PROBING the PROPHETS**

With the approach of the Pesach holiday and, during the era of the Beit HaMikdash, the additional obligation to offer the Korban Pesach, Chazal used this special Maftir, a reading that details the process of purification, as a reminder to the nation some three weeks before the holiday, to retain a state of purity so that they could partake in the mitzva of Korban Pesach.

The message of the navi Yechezkel in this week's haftara goes beyond the personal challenge of avoiding the state of impurity (tum'ah) and the process of purification (tahara) explained in the Torah. Instead, the prophet focuses on the concept of "national" tum'ah, linking sinfulness with impurity. The transgressions of the people, Yechezkel declares, have polluted and defiled the pure and holy land.

The navi goes on to condemn the people for continuing their sinful ways in the Diaspora as well for, by doing so, they desecrate Hashem's holy name. The commentaries attempt to explain how, exactly, Israel defiled Hashem's name in the exile as well. The Malbim suggests that the nations saw G-d's failure to return Israel to her land as a result of the fact that He did not have the power to do so and not because Israel did not deserve to be redeemed. Others explain that the poverty and oppression that G-d's nation suffered in the Galut was the source of the desecration of His name. But I found

the approach of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch to be most illuminating and so timely for us today.

Rav Hirsch suggests that the Chilul Hashem of which Yechezkel speaks was not a sin of the entire nation but rather the result of the moral shortcomings of individual Jews. Nonetheless, the entire people was blamed for that desecration because the surrounding nations regarded every individual Jew as a representative of the whole nation. If one Jew steals - then "Jews are thieves". If one Jew cheats - then "all Jews are cheats". And if one Jew speaks improperly - then, in their eyes, all Jews do.

Unfair as it seems, every Jew carries upon his or her shoulders a responsibility to the entire nation. History has proven that, all too often, we are all judged by the deeds of one. It is for that reason that we must be so careful in our dealings with the gentile world and with the not-yet-religious world as well.

Chazal tell us that there is no atonement for the sin of Chilul Hashem in this world. Yechezkel teaches us that we all may suffer if only one carelessly ignores how his deeds are perceived by others. It can also desecrate the Holy Land and the Holy Nation.

*Probing the Prophets, written by Rabbi Neil Winkler*