

14 MARCH 2026 | 25 ADAR 5786

VOLUME 39 | #27

DAF HASHAVUA

ויקהל פקודי | VAYAKHEL PEKUDEI

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 6.50pm
 Birmingham: 6.57pm
 Bournemouth: 6.59pm
 Cardiff: 7.05pm
 Dublin: 7.15pm
 Edinburgh: 7.05pm
 Glasgow: 7.10pm
 Hull: 6.56pm
 Leeds: 6.57pm
 Liverpool: 7.05pm
 Manchester: 7.00pm
 Nottingham: 6.58pm
 Sheffield: 7.00pm
 Southend: 6.46pm
 Southport: 7.07pm
 Jerusalem: 6.23pm

Shabbat HaChodesh

Shabbat Mevarechim

Rosh Chodesh Nisan is on Thursday

"Betzael made the Ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits its length; a cubit and a half its width; and a cubit and a half its height"
(Shemot 37:1)



15-17 MARCH 2026

THE CHIEF RABBI'S
CHESED APPEAL
 TRANSFORMING LIVES

ויקהל פקודי
VAYAKHEL
PEKUDEI

10th / 11th Sidrot in:
שמות
SHEMOT

By Numbers:
214 VERSES
2,740 WORDS
10,613 LETTERS

Headlines:
THE MISHKAN AND
THE KOHANIM

VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI
Artsroll p.516
Hertz p.373
Koren Sacks p.611
Soncino p.573

MAFTIR (HACHODESH):
Artsroll p.348
Hertz p.253
Koren Sacks p.435
Soncino p.386

HAFTARAH
(HACHODESH):
Artsroll p.1218
Hertz p.1001
Koren Sacks p.1667
Soncino p.1195

SIDRA SUMMARY

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – SHEMOT 35:1-29
Moshe (Moses) gathers the nation. He instructs them to keep Shabbat and asks them to volunteer the materials needed for the construction of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) and the priestly garments.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 35:30-37:16
Moshe announces the appointment of the wise-hearted Betzalel and Aholiav to oversee the construction, assisted by able craftsmen. When they collect the materials volunteered, they find there is a surplus. Moshe tells the Israelites not to bring any more materials.

The work starts with the ten *Yeriyot* (curtains) and the golden hooks joining them together. This is followed by the *Ohel* (tent), draped over the *Mishkan*, with a further double *Michse* (cover) on top. Next they make the *parochet* (partition) to cordon off the Holy of Holies area. Betzalel makes the *Aron* (ark) from acacia wood, plated with gold and with a gold *Zer* (crown). The *Kaporet* (cover) of the *Aron* is made from pure gold, with two cherubs moulded on top. The *Shulchan* (table) is made from gold-plated acacia wood, with a gold *Zer* (crown) on its *Misgeret* (rim).

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 37:17-29
The *Menorah* is hammered from one piece of pure gold, with seven lamps. The gold-plated small wooden *Mizbeach* (altar) is constructed for the twice-daily incense offering. The special anointing oil and the incense spices are prepared.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 38:1-39:1
The workers then construct a copper *Kiyor* (washstand) for the Kohanim, followed by the *Chatzer* (courtyard) which surrounds the *Mishkan*, making its outer 'fence' of linen *Yeriyot* (curtains), attached to wooden pillars. The Torah lists the overall weight of gold, silver and copper used in building the *Mishkan*.

Point to Consider: *Who contributed the mirrors for the base of the washstand? (see Rashi to 38:8)*

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 39:2-21
The priestly garments are made, starting with the *Ephod*, worn over Aharon's tunic and robe. It has two *Ketefot* (shoulder straps) and a *Cheshev* (belt) attached. A precious *Shoham* stone is placed on each shoulder strap. The next item made is the *Choshen* (breastplate), containing 12 different types of *Avnei Miluim* (precious stone).

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 39:22-43
The turquoise robe (*Me'il*) is made. Golden bells (*Pa'amonim*) are placed between multi-coloured woollen 'pomegranates' (*Rimonim*) shapes hanging from the bottom hem. A knitted tunic (*Ketonet*) with a grid-like pattern, a linen turban (*Mitznefet*), linen trousers (*Michnasayim*) and an embroidered sash (*Avnet*) are made, for every Kohen to wear. The pure gold band (*Tzitz*) is made, to be placed on Aharon's forehead. After the work is finished, Moshe inspects it and blesses the workers.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 40:1-38
God tells Moshe to erect the *Mishkan* on Rosh Chodesh Nisan and to anoint its vessels with oil and to inaugurate Aharon and his sons. A heavenly cloud covers the *Mishkan*. When it lifts, the people are allowed to journey on.

MAFTIR (SHEMOT 12:1-20)
The special reading for Shabbat HaChodesh is taken from parashat Bo, declaring Nisan as the first of the months and introducing the Jewish calendar and the laws of Pesach.

HAFTARAH (YECHZEKEL 45:16-46:18)
The haftarah for Shabbat HaChodesh is from Yechezkel (Ezekiel), detailing the different weekly, monthly and festival offerings that the prince (*Nasi*) will be obligated to bring in the Third Temple.



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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HOW ARE YOU?

BY: **RABBI MOSHE CHAIM LISTER**

Barnet Synagogue

As we recount the donations to the Tabernacle in *Parashat Vayakhel*, a keen eye will note a fascinating discrepancy in the donations. The verses tell us that "every man who found with him" (*Shemot* 35:23) raw materials, donated them to the Tabernacle. One begins to imagine the scene unfolding along the lines of a man rushing into his tent, rooting around for the required materials, immediately "found with him", before charging out to deliver them to the Tabernacle.

Contrast this with the description of the donations of the Jewish women a few verses later: "and all the women whose hearts stirred them in wisdom spun goats' hair" (*Shemot* 35:25). Fascinatingly, while wool was required the women did not reach for the nearest fleece and rush it off to the Tabernacle. Their contribution was to be more than that, and while they donated wool, woven into their donation was their time, skill and devotion. More than raw materials, they gave the lovingly-made finished product.

This beautiful touch gave me a new perspective on a phone call that I had several years ago. It was a difficult call to someone who had just lost their brother in a tragic accident. Thankfully the phone call was going smoothly but as the conversation concluded I said,

"If there's anything I can do, please let me know". In a biting tone this person retorted, "Well, can you bring my brother back?" Bewildered, I stammered out an apology and the call finished, leaving me stunned. For a long time, I was pained by the way that conversation had ended. I felt I had been painted as hollow and insincere, but knowing this person as good-natured, I attributed their cynicism to the grief and moved on. But the sting lingered.

However, this depiction of how the women donated to the Tabernacle reframed that conversation for me. Looking back, I've asked myself, as a 'donor' to this person in their time of grief, was I giving what the men or the women gave to the Tabernacle? Was I offering something genuine and authentic? Or was I defaulting to the easy expression, readily at hand but devoid of sincerity? I've started to think it was the latter. While both the men and the women both genuinely gave, there was the glow of love and devotion that was missing from the heaps of raw materials.

Perhaps that's what this person needed during that call: less unrefined, uniform clichés and more of that love and care that the women gave to the Tabernacle.

An American teacher of mine pointed out that in England, the response to "How are you?" is "How are you?" He's not far wrong - whatever small variance is inserted to this, what should be an expression of care has become relegated to an empty formality used to signal the beginning of a conversation. As we are presented with the love and warmth of the Jewish women's contributions, I think it a good opportunity to re-examine what we offer to the world around us. Perhaps we could stop for a moment and ask ourselves if we can switch from easy, empty sentiments to genuine expressions of care. If you want an idea of where to start, here's a small one worth trying. Next time you ask how someone's doing, don't simply say "How are you?" Try instead, "How are you - and give me the long answer". It makes all the difference in the world.



CHESED – THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF OUR COMMUNITY

BY: **SHARON DANIELS**

Head of Chesed and Volunteering, US

The book of *Shemot* is in three parts. Initially, the Israelites are slaves in Egypt. Redemption comes through God's might and miracles – speaking to Moshe (Moses) through the Burning Bush, the Ten Plagues and the parting of the Reed Sea. The second part outlines the giving of the Ten Commandments, again with God very much present and powerful.

The third part, including this week's *parashiot*, *Vayakhel–Pekudei*, brings not miracles, nor revelation, but a task for the people. Moshe gathers them together to build a *Mishkan*, a physical space to create a holy community. Everyone contributes to the *Mishkan*: gold, silver and many other materials; their skills and their time. No one does everything, but everyone does something.

In *To Heal a Fractured World*, Rabbi Sacks teaches that God does not ask us to fix the entire world, but to take responsibility for doing what we can. We encounter God not only in revelation or prayer, but in deeds of *chesed* – acts of lovingkindness that heal and bring people together. The *Mishkan* is a powerful model of this idea. God does not descend from heaven with a finished

sanctuary. Instead, God says: "*V'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'tocham*" – "Make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them." Not **in it**, but **among them** – it is the community which makes the space holy, not the building.

US Chesed is founded on these values. We are responsible for one another – not only materially, but socially, emotionally and spiritually. We work to help build spaces where people feel seen, supported and valued. Working closely with care coordinators and volunteers in communities, our work spans from food parcels to Singing for Memory, bereavement support to befriending, lifts to appointments and honey cakes for Rosh Hashanah.

Rabbi Sacks insists that Jewish responsibility does not end there, and that Jewish particularism leads to universal concern, to care for Jews and non-Jews alike. *Chesed* is not limited to the Jewish community, and we partner with charities to give festive gifts and back-to-school stationery. We host a monthly Drop-in for families seeking asylum – as Jews we know what it means to start over in a new country. Jews should not withdraw from the world but become a blessing

within it. The skills used to build the *Mishkan* – compassion, generosity, cooperation – are the same skills needed to heal a fractured society.

Finally, we focus on the physical environment. *Tikkun Olam*, to heal the world, is our responsibility for the future, hence the name '*Dorot*', meaning generations. Reducing the use of disposables, repurposing *Arba Minim* (the 4 species shaken on Succot), rewilding and installing solar panels at our burial sites and shuls, are all proactive steps taken by the United Synagogue towards longer-term environmental protection and regeneration.

Every act of kindness builds sacred space. When we care for our own community and extend that care outward, we participate in healing the world.

Just as the *Mishkan* required everyone to do their bit, so does US Chesed. Many of you volunteer your time, giving invaluable support. This week we are asking people to support the Chief Rabbi's Chesed Appeal, to enable us to raise vital funds to maintain our work. Your donations will be used locally and centrally to ensure we can reach more people in the coming year. Thank you for your support.



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HAGGADAH INSIGHTS - PART 2

FROM DISGRACE TO GLORY

BY: **DAVID FREI**

US Director of External and Legal Services and Registrar of the London Beth Din

An ancient source, a Mishna in the 10th chapter of *Pesachim*, directs us - while conducting the Seder - to begin by recalling the degradation of our Nation and to conclude with the glorious outcome (literally, 'the praise').

There is a dispute in the Talmud, (*Pesachim* 116a) between two early 3rd-Century sages, Rav and Shmuel, as to which aspect of Israel's disgrace should form the commencement of our narration of the Exodus, spiritual or physical.

Rav suggests that we begin with the passage 'At first our forefathers were idolaters' (a reference to Avraham's father having been a pagan), whereas Shmuel says that we should start with 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt - *Avadim Hayinu*.'

Rabbi Yitzchak Alfasi (1013-1103) observes that we follow both opinions and cite both concepts. This is indeed the universal practice.

The aforementioned Talmudic passage quotes Rav Nachman, the 3rd-4th-Century sage, having asked a slave what he should say to a person who has both freed him and given him a donation of gold and silver. He responded that the newly-freed slave should give thanks and praise. Rav Nachman commented that he had answered the question as to why this night is different from other nights, insofar as he had stressed the main function of Seder night, namely

thanksgiving and praise to the Almighty Who had set us free.

It appears that the juxtaposition of Rav Nachman's conversation with a slave to the preceding debate about starting with disgrace and terminating with a positive ending was designed to emphasise the role of the Seder participant. As is noted in the Haggadah, all present should try and imagine that they themselves went out of Egypt. This difficult exercise is achieved by putting oneself into the headspace of a newly-freed slave who looks forward to a life of freedom.

On occasion, it may be a benevolent someone else who brought about his liberation from a cruel master. That slave will recall his life as a minion in his master's household and the humiliating tasks and cruel punishments for perceived misdemeanours. Only when remembering this history can he properly concentrate on the appropriate degree of gratitude to show his benefactor.

Returning to the dispute between Rav and Shmuel, Shmuel's view that we start the Seder recitation with our having been slaves makes sense on an evening dedicated to commemorating the Exodus. However, how do we understand Rav's opinion that we must also mention our nation's pagan origins?

Rabbi David Abudarham (14th

“ As is noted in the Haggadah, all present should try and imagine that they themselves went out of Egypt.

Century), in his explanation of the Haggadah, points out that, since we are admitting to God having saved us from our former degrading position as slaves, we should also mention our even more lowly status as pagans, from which God also redeemed us, starting with Avraham, raised in the pagan world of Ur Kasdim, but freed by God (see *Bereishit* 15:7). The Egyptian exile was, during the years of slavery, a spiritual descent from which we also achieved liberation on Pesach. It is therefore appropriate to stress this aspect as well.

It is this massive and sudden physical and spiritual transformation which is our focus on Pesach.





SEFER YESHAYAHU (ISAIAH) – PART 8

SPLIT IN TWO?

PART 1

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and US Educator

There is a sudden change in style, tone and focus in the later part of *Sefer Yeshayahu* (Book of Isaiah). In contrast to the active narrative of the first 39 chapters, from chapter 40 onwards, narrative is absent. There is no mention of Jewish kings, Assyria or even Yeshayahu himself. This follows the first 39 chapters in which Yeshayahu's name appears 15 times.

The focus now moves to descriptions of Jerusalem as a destroyed city. Whilst many prophets discuss this event in the future tense, predicting the punishment, it is different here, because it is written in the past tense. As pointed out by the former Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz nearly a century ago, this leads to a fundamental difference of theme: part one focuses on *warning* to avoid punishment for their sins while part two focuses on *comfort* following the punishment.¹

In this later section of the book, Babylonia rather than Assyria is the enemy. This alludes to a different historical period. Babylonia defeated the Assyrian empire and rose to be the new superpower, which would ultimately destroy Jerusalem and

the *Beit HaMikdash* (Temple). Additionally, the name Koresh (Cyrus) is mentioned twice. This was the Persian leader who defeated the Babylonians and allowed the Jewish people to return to their homeland. Rabbi Hertz summarises this concisely: "thus there is a span of some 150 years between the political and social conditions reflected in the two parts of the book".²

Many commentators grapple with how to understand the clear differences between these two sections. Modern bible critics, who disregard the Divinely-inspired nature of the books of the prophets of the *Tanach*, conclude that there are two different authors of the book living in radically different time periods. We do not accept such an approach. We will now consider the topic with respect and nuance. There are several approaches to dealing with this question in a traditional way.

Firstly, it is important to remember that Yeshayahu could easily speak about future events, given his position as a prophet with Divine communication. Thus, the first traditional approach is that Yeshayahu simply prophesies events that will take place two

“ From chapter 40 onwards, narrative is absent... the focus now moves to descriptions of Jerusalem as a destroyed city.

hundred years later. The main question on this approach is that it does not explain why Yeshayahu describes those later events in the past tense, when normally prophets will predict events yet to happen in future tense.

A second approach often discussed is that Yeshayahu did not write the entire book alone. The Talmud tells us that the book of Yeshayahu was written by "Chizkiyahu and his helpers".³ The medieval commentator Rashi explains that Yeshayahu was killed before he had a chance to compile all his prophecies into a book. Therefore, someone else took the separate works of the prophet and edited them into one book. The ambiguous term, "his helpers", allows for the possibility of later prophets adding in sections.

This idea will be explored in more detail in our next article.

¹ Hertz Chumash, (London 1938), p.942.

² Ibid., p.941.

³ Babylonian Talmud Tractate *Bava Batra* 15a. The Ibn Ezra also hints to the idea that a later author wrote the second half of Yeshayahu. See Amnon Bazak, *To This Very Day*, p.153-155 for a discussion of this.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI

13-14 MARCH | 25 ADAR

ALL RISE



BY: **NAFTALI ARDEN**

Tribe gap year student

In a *parasha shiur* I attend in Yeshiva, we have talked much about how the layout of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) described in *Shemot* is similar to the way we design our shuls today.

An example of this is the *Aron* (Ark) mentioned this week in *Parashat Pekudei*, where Moshe (Moses) lays down the *Luchot* (Tablets of stone containing the commandments). This is imitated in shuls with *Sifrei Torah* (Torah scrolls) kept in Arks today.

I find it interesting, however, that Moshe lays the *Luchot* in a prone position, lying down, and we keep our *Sifrei Torah* standing upright today. Should we not follow tradition and lay down our *Sifrei Torah* in the *Aron Kodesh*?

Rabbi David ben Zimra (known as the Radbaz, 1479-1573) responds to this question bringing

three ideas to the table:

The first explains that the *Luchot* were meant as a testimony, as symbols of God's commandments. People did not come to the Ark to study them. The Torah, however, is a guide. It is kept in an upright position for immediate use. The Torah is more than just a symbol; it is a code that we consult for practical use and it standing upright symbolises this. It is like a movie poster you have on your wall vs the film you actually watch. You don't study the poster, but it reminds you that you like the film. Watching the film is the practical experience that you can enjoy and take from.

The second point suggests that the *Luchot* could be read from either side when first presented to *Bnei Yisrael* (the Children of Israel). Therefore, they could be placed lying down and still be read. The *Sefer Torah* has writing only on one side and so stands so we can read the written side. The Radbaz uses this analogy to demonstrate that, at the time they were given, Judaism could be approached

from any point of view. *Bnei Yisrael* were living in a totally Jewish environment. Now we live in secularised communities, and it is much more difficult to learn and understand Torah. Its standing up therefore symbolises its accessibility and calls us to read and learn from it.

The final idea portrays a sense of mutual respect. Just as we stand when the Ark is opened, the Torah stands as a sign of respect to us, a mutualistic relationship. If we fall, so does the Torah.

Rabbi Norman Lamm (1927-2020) comments: 'The Jew must never sink low; he must soar even higher...for if we will not strive to be more than merely respectful Jews, we will become less than respectful Jews. The times we live in... call us to stand and live as upright Jews, so we keep our Torah in the Ark upright as well.'

It is vital we understand the respect the Torah is due. We must work hard to ensure we uphold its values and *halachot* (laws) to stand strong as *Am Yisrael*. Shabbat Shalom.

Parasha Anagrams

Unjumble the letters to uncover words or phrases from the article above!

1. BATS LET
2. A HORSE FRET
3. A DEK HONORS
4. HUT GRIP
5. HOMES
6. MOM NAN ALARM
7. I PEEKD I PUT A PHRASE





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VAYAKHEL PEKUDEI: GOING FORWARD!

AT THE END OF THIS WEEK'S **PARASHOT**, THE **TORAH** DESCRIBES HOW **GOD** USED A CLOUD TO TELL THE **JEWISH PEOPLE** WHEN TO STOP AND CAMP, AND WHEN TO MOVE ON.

THE **TORAH** IS DRAWING OUR ATTENTION TO SOMETHING VERY INTERESTING. SOMETIMES MOVING FORWARD HAPPENS ON THE OUTSIDE (WALKING), AND SOMETIMES IT HAPPENS ON THE INSIDE (GROWING). BOTH COUNT!

EVEN AS THE **JEWISH PEOPLE** ARE CAMPED, HAVING SET UP THE **MISHKAN** (TABERNACLE), THE **TORAH** DESCRIBES HOW THEY WOULD JOURNEY.

OR HOW ABOUT WHEN IT'S NOT YOUR TURN IN CHESS? YOU'RE NOT MOVING A PIECE, BUT YOU'RE LEARNING PATIENCE, SELF-CONTROL AND GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP. NOT TO MENTION PLENTY OF THINKING TIME FOR YOUR NEXT MOVE! STILL DOESN'T MEAN STUCK!

WHEN WE FIRST STARTED LEARNING TO READ **HEBREW**, IT FELT LIKE WE WERE GETTING NOWHERE! I ALWAYS MIXED UP MY **VAVS** AND **VETS**! BUT WE PRACTISED, PERSISTED AND GOT TO PRO LEVEL IN THE END!

REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE TRYING TO LEARN A PIANO PIECE FOR THE CONCERT? YOU PLAYED THE SAME NOTES AGAIN AND AGAIN - IT FELT LIKE YOU WEREN'T GETTING ANYWHERE! IN FACT, EACH TIME YOU WERE COMING CLOSER TO PERFECTION.

RABBI LORD SACKS ZT"L EXPLAINED THAT **JEWISH** LIFE IS ALL ABOUT BEING ON A JOURNEY, NOT JUST REACHING A FINISH LINE.

A 'STOPPING PLACE' IS STILL PART OF THE ADVENTURE. EVERY STAGE OF LIFE IS A CHANCE TO LEARN, GROW AND LEVEL UP.

EVEN WHEN IT LOOKS QUIET ON THE OUTSIDE, SOMETHING IMPORTANT IS GROWING ON THE INSIDE. EVERY STAGE COUNTS! WALKING, STOPPING, THINKING AND PRACTISING ARE ALL CENTRAL PARTS OF THE JOURNEY. HAPPY TRAVELS!



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Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.