

# P'KUDEI • HACHODESH

23rd of 54 sedras;  
11th of 11 in Sh'mot



Written on 158 lines in a Torah, 41st

20 Parshiyot; 6 open, 14 closed

92 p'sukim - ranks 40th (10th)

1182 words - ranks 42nd (9th)

4432 letters - ranks 44th (10th)

P'kudei is a short sedra with shorter than average p'sukim (does not usually go hand in hand; many short sedras have long p'sukim)

## MITZVOT

Contains no mitzvot of the 613

One of the 17 sedras in the Torah without mitzvot. There are two other mitzva-less sedras in Sh'mot (Sh'mot and Va'eira).

Total mitzvot for the Book of Sh'mot is 111 (thanks to Mishpatim's 53). The Book of Sh'mot averages 10 mitzvot per sedra, which is closest to the Torah's average of 11.35 mps. Compare to the other averages: Vayikra 24.7, D'varim 18, Bamidbar with just over 5 mps, B'reishit with .25 mps.

P'kudei is read separately in all Shana M'uberet (13 months) and combined with Vayakhel in Shana P'shuta -

except for the rarest of year-types, such as 5785, when it is also read separately. See CALnotes for more.

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[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 the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

### Kohen - First Aliya - 12 p'sukim - 38:21-39:1

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

**SOT:** 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.

We learn similarly from the episode of the two and a half tribes that one must behave in such a way that he will be "clean before G-d AND Israel".

The Talmud tells us that the family of Kohanim that was in charge of

compounding the Ketoret did not allow its women to use perfume, lest they be suspected of taking from the sacred ingredients of the Ketoret. Similarly, bakers of the Lechem HaPanim did not eat fine bread, so that no one should even get an idea that they were taking the special flour of the Mikdash for their own use.

**SDT:** In the opening pasuk of the sedra, we find the word Mishkan twice in a row - ...HaMishkan, Mishkan HaEidut. Rashi says that this is an allusion to the two Batei Mikdash. Chatam Sofer adds that the HEI of the first Mishkan is "missing" from the second. This alludes to the 5 special items missing in the second Beit HaMikdash - the ARON, the Holy Fire, the Divine Presence, the Holy Spirit, and the Urim v'Tumim.

Rashi teaches us that the description of the Mishkan as EIDUT, a Testimony, attests to the fact that G-d had forgiven us for the Sin of the Golden Calf. This is so because the SH'CHINA rested among us, in the Mishkan.

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, are Betzalel 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, red - the shades of color are debated - e.g. sky-blue - but at what time of day?) 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.

**SDT:** The Baal HaTurim notes that the Mishkan was supported on a foundation of 100 silver ADANIM. So too are our daily lives as Jews supported by 100 silver foundation blocks - the 100 Brachot which we strive to recite every day.

Remember, that the silver was from a required, fixed donation; the other materials were "open" - meaning that anyone could give whatever their hearts desired - of the other materials. Only silver had a fixed amount per person. From the Machatzit HaShekel, there was some silver left over, which was used for hooks and decorations of some of the pillars.

## Levi - Second 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.

How the names were divided is the subject of dispute among our various sources. Another opinion is that the emblems of the tribes were engraved on the stones along side the names. Rambam says that Yosef was written as Y'HOSEF (a spelling that appears in T'hilim), resulting in a symmetrical 25 letters on each stone.

[P> 39:8 (14)] On the Choshen, the 50 letters of the names were supplemented by 22 letters of the names of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and the words SHIVTEI Y'SHURUN. This brought the total number of letters to 72, corresponding to the letters of the SHEIM HAM'FORASH. The arrangement of names and letters resulted in 6 per stone. In addition to the fabric of these two garments, there were gold settings for the stones, gold rings and chains for attaching Choshen to the Eifod.

## Shlishi - Third Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 39:22-32

[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.

**Observation:** This is the second time that the Torah emphasizes the prohibition of tearing the ME'IL (or allowing it to be torn). None of the garments may be torn; precautions were taken to avoid tearing. Yet the Torah presents the rule specifically with the ME'IL.

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.

Ramban says that the bells were embedded within the RIMONIM. Most other commentaries say that the bells alternated with the RIMONIM.

The author of HaK'tav V'HaKabala offers a beautiful explanation of the bells of the ME'IL: "The precept to place bells... is similar to the mitzva of tzitzit on our garments. In the latter case, seeing the fringes... reminds us of all the precepts of the Torah, as per Bamidbar 15:39. In the former case, hearing the bells reminded the Kohein Gadol of all the precepts. Because of his elevated status, and the many obligations which he was

required to fulfill, he was granted an additional reminder - via his sense of hearing. In this way, the sound of the bells at the edge of his robe would arouse his mind and heart the awareness of before Whom he wore the special garments, and Who commanded him to wear them. Thus, his mind and thoughts would be fully occupied in the service of the Supreme King.”

[S> 39:27 (3)] The KUTONET, a long-sleeved, floor-length garment was woven of white linen. Some say that the sleeves were woven together with the body of the garment, rather than made separately and then sewn on.

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 (the MITZNEFET), to accommodate the straps of the TZITZ. Regular Kohanim wore their turban (MIGBA'AT) 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, around the lower chest.) The

winding produced a prominent bulge around his waist which a kohen 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 were the Choshen and Eifod.

There are different opinions as to whether the regular kohen wore an AVNEIT of pure linen or of the same mixed weave of the Kohein Gadol's AVNEIT.

[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 LASHEM. There are many 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.

[S> 39:32 (1)] Thus, all the work of the parts of the Mishkan and the 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, or should be). Thus says Sh'muel b. Nachmani in the name of Rabbi Yochanan. This does not include the first time the phrase is used: And Betzalel... did all the G-d had commanded Moshe. There are differences between the context of the phrase with Betzalel and contexts of all the other uses of the phrase that justify its not being counted together with the rest. On the other hand, our weekday Amida does have a 19th bracha, so the "extra" phrase is covered. It is interesting to note that for each of the different things that the brachot of the Amida are associated with, there are 18 items AND a 19th one that can be counted but is a little different from the rest. This matches our continued reference to Sh'moneh Esrei even though there are now 19 brachot in the weekday Amida.

## **R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 39:33-43**

[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 ago..." (To be sure, it is complimentary, that we did as commanded, but we can also see an implied rebuke.)

## **Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 16 p'sukim - 40:1-16**

[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 section 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 placed 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.

**NOTE** that Aharon's sons were also anointed. Regular kohanim are not; they were the exceptions. It gave them a status of Kohen Gadol. That's why Elazar and Itamar were not able to tend to the bodies of their brothers Nadav and Avihu, and cousins were called in to take care of things. Aharon's sons needed to be anointed, because they weren't kohanim by birth, as opposed to all other kohanim throughout all generations. (Pinchas is the one exception, and he was given the status of kohein by G-d.)

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 40:17-27

[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 Parshiyot T'ruma, T'tzaveh, beginning of Ki Tisa, all of Vayakhel and P'kudei.

**Observation:** There are many comments made about the fact that the order of parts and furnishings of the Mishkan are different between the commands of Parshat T'ruma and the construction in Vayakhel. Look at the order in the end of P'kudei, which describes the actual assembly of the Mishkan. It differs from either previous order. And it is a reasonable order that does not require miracles. (This does not mean that there were none.)

ADANIM (foundation blocks), 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, 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 and the LECHEM HAPANIM are placed on the Shulchan's shelves.

[S> 40:24 (2)] The MENORA goes in place next, opposite the SHULCHAN. 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.

## Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya - 11 p'sukim - 40:28-38

[S> 40:28 (2)] With that, the MASACH was hung across the entrance of the Mishkan. Then the external (copper, earth, sacrificial) 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.

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

[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 Vayikra, Torat Kohanim.

In the course of the Book of Sh'mot, we started out as a family that was in Egypt, enslaved and oppressed there. We grew into a nation, were redeemed from Egypt, accompanied by great wonders and miracles. We received the Torah, and set up the two main aspects of our nationhood - the day-to-day rules of a Torah way of life and the building of the Mishkan to be the focus of our spiritual energies.

G-d's plan for us is well underway. Everything is there except for THE venue for Jewish Life at its richest - Eretz Yisrael. But three books of the Chumash are still to come.



**CHAZAK, CHAZAK, V'NITCHAZEIK** after Sh'vi'i (or Acharon).

(Some say the person with the CHAZAK Aliya should not say ChCh"V.)

Chatzi Kaddish, then Maftir in the second Torah for Parshat HaChodesh.

*Although standing for the Aseret HaDibrot is problematic, there does not seem to be an objection for standing for CHAZAK at the end of each Sefer of the Torah. With the Aseret HaDibrot, Chazal feared people*

*saying that standing for them while sitting for the rest of the reading indicates that the Aseret HaDibrot were commanded by G-d and the rest of the Torah by Moshe Rabeinu. To debunk that mistaken notion, it is best to either sit for all reading or stand for all reading. No such fear with Az Yashir or Chazak.*

## **Maftir - 2nd Torah - 20 p'sukim - Sh'mot 12:1-20**

**This Maftir adds to the Sedra Stats:  
1 parsha (S), 20 p'sukim, 313 words,  
1208 letters, 9 mitzvot**

This is the fourth of the Four Parshiyot. Parshat HaChodesh is the Shabbat of or the Shabbat right before Rosh Chodesh Nissan. We read of the mitzva to establish the Jewish Calendar (the first two p'sukim), followed by the commands concerning Pesach, including Korban Pesach, Matza, Chametz, and more (the rest of the 20-pasuk maftir). The main theme of the Maftir is Korban Pesach. KP is different from all other korbanot. All korbanot were brought in the Beit HaMikdash between the two daily T'midim; KP was brought after the afternoon Tamid. KP can be brought and eaten in a state of ritual impurity (in certain circumstances). This can be seen as a "compromise" by G-d to facilitate our performance of this mitzva. (An individual is postponed until Pesach Sheni because of TUM'A, but the community brings and eats KP

while TAMEI, rather than wait the month.)

The Maftir contains several mitzvot -- the making of the Jewish Calendar [4], to slaughter the KP [5], to eat it [6], not to eat it rare or cooked [7], not to leave over any of KP to the morning [8], to destroy Chametz from one's possession [9], to eat matza on Seder night [10], not to possess Chametz on Pesach [11], not to eat any foods that contain Chametz [12]. We also find the source of SHMURA MATZA and the source of the permitted M'LACHOT on Yom Tov. Other mitzvot related to KP and chametz are found elsewhere in Parshat Bo and elsewhere in the Torah. This maftir is a perfect preview of what's coming soon.

## **Haftara - 28 p'sukim - Yechezkeil 45:16-46:18**

*S'faradim start 2 p'sukim later and end  
3 p'sukim earlier than Ashkenazim*

The Haftara contains the prophecy of the building of the Beit HaMikdash and the restoration of Korban Pesach - hence the connection to the Maftir. Both the Torah and Haftara announce the holiday of Pesach, in very similar words, and both speak of putting blood on the doorpost. Not only do both readings talk about Pesach, but both focus on Rosh Chodesh Nissan.



From A Candle by Day by **Rabbi Shraga Silverstein z"l**

**We must learn to distinguish  
where "well-done" ends and  
"overdone" begins.**

**Experience is the best teacher,  
but it does not necessarily teach  
us the best things.**