



Pekudei

Shmot (Exodus) 38:21 - 40:38

Pekudei, the final *Parshah* in the book of *Shmot*, begins with an account of the various materials used in the making of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). The weight of gold used totaled 29 talents and 730 *shekels*; of silver, 100 talents and 1,775 *shekels*; and of brass, 70 talents and 2,400 *shekels* (a “talent” - a *Kikar* in Hebrew, equaled 3,000 *shekels*). Betzalel and Oholiab then create the special robes for the *Kohanim*, and the special vestments for Aaron, including the ephod, the breastplate, the robe for the ephod, and the frontlet, according to the pattern and the command of G-d to Moses.

When The *Mishkan* is complete, the cloud of G-d covers it and the presence of G-d fills the Tabernacle. Whenever the cloud is lifted from the Tabernacle, the Israelites were to set out on their journey, but if the cloud did not lift, they would not set out. Throughout the journeys of the Israelites, a cloud of the Lord is present by day and a fire by night. Thus, on the first of *Nisan*, almost a year after the Exodus, G-d’s glory filled the *Mishkan*.

This Shabbat is also *Shabbat Shekalim*, the first of the four special Shabbats that precede the month of Nissan. *Shabbat Shekalim* reminds us how in earlier times, messengers would travel from Jerusalem to the various corners of the Jewish world, collecting the Machazit HaShekel, the half shekel which we read of in *Parshat Ki Tissa*, to help maintain the *Beit HaMikdash* (the Holy Temple). The special Torah reading for this Shabbat, plus the Torah reading for *Rosh Chodesh Adar* (which is also observed today), leads to a rarity in the Jewish calendar, as on this Shabbat we will read from three different Torahs.

When else during the year are three Torahs removed from the ark on Shabbat?



Jewish Community Center of Paramus
E. 304 Midland Ave., Paramus NJ 07652
Phone: (201) 262-7691 Fax: (201) 262-6516
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