

## Pekudei

This Parsha of Pekudei is a continuation of last weeks Parsha because most of the time the two are read as a double portion. This week, we will read about the setting up of the Mishkan structure, placing the Ark behind the curtain and the design of the Priestly clothes. Why would we need to know all these details now, and how are they relevant to us today? Here is my take.

Look around the synagogue; this is the closest thing to symbolize the Tabernacle of that time. We have a visual right here. The first part of the Pekudei talks of the “inventory” of the metals. The materials were “donated” by the congregation to build the structure. It lists the people that were “experts or designated to” do a particular job. Looking at our own sanctuary, each thing that was placed into this building, this space in particular, required someone with an expertise in that field. The pews, the windows, the carpet etc. were brought in by different “people” to fill that space. With the donations of the congregation, it was possible to complete the job. Every one of you is an important component in this sanctuary. Without one of the items, the whole would not be complete. Without one of you, our congregation diminishes. Then you have the Priestly clothing. Can you imagine if the clergy of this synagogue, or any synagogue for that matter came in clothing that was not appropriate for the job? Giving formality to the position instantly elevates the aura.

The building of the Sanctuary is about how to bring Gd from heaven to earth, making it a presence of Gd, opposed to a Gd somewhere so far in heaven that it becomes too over-imaginative to even think about. The entire book of Shemot focus on this concept, bring Gd closer, either Gd came down, comes down or gives us the tools to “elevate” to Him. But why does the Torah have to describe to us, in such detail the building of the Mishkan? There are many wonderful thoughts on this subject; The Zohar deals with it, Rabbi Jonathan Saks gives an exact formula, and of course there is the Mishna and the Gemora that talk about it as well. Simply put, it is about an absolutely fundamental feature of religious life, namely the relationship between the sacred and the secular. Kodesh and hol. Hol is the space Gd make for us; kodesh is the space we make for Gd. And please Gd, when the next Temple is built and we witness peace on earth, we can take all the instructions from our Torah and be ready to continue the ritual as it will be in its unique form.