

# PARASHAT VAYAKHEL-PEKUDE

## *Exodus 35:1–40:38*

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*Vayakhel-Pekude* is one of seven designated Torah portions that, depending upon the number of Sabbaths in a year, is either read as two separate portions or combined to assure the reading of the entire Torah. While this volume will combine them, it will present an interpretation on each of their most important themes.

*Parashat Vayakhel* repeats the commandment to observe the Sabbath, emphasizing that no work is to be done on that day. It continues with Moses asking the Israelites to donate gifts of gold, silver, copper, precious stones, fine linen, wood, oil, or spices to be used for building the *mishkan*, or “sanctuary.” Moses appoints Bezalel and Oholiab, skilled craftsmen, to oversee the construction of the sanctuary, and they report to Moses that the people are giving more gifts than are needed. So Moses tells the people to stop bringing their donations. Under the direction of Bezalel and Oholiab, skilled craftsmen work on the cloths, planks, bars, curtains, screens, lampstands, altars, and priestly garments of the sanctuary.

*Parashat Pekude* describes the records kept of all the work and materials used in the construction of the *mishkan*, as well as of all the donations given by the Israelites. When the *mishkan* is completed, Moses and the Israelites celebrate by anointing it. God’s Presence fills the sanctuary and leads the people throughout their journeys.

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