

פרשת ויקהל-פקודי / Parshiot Vayakhel-Pikudei

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32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d

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Symbolism of the Pomegranate

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 35:1-40:38
הפטרה: 1 Kings 7:40-7:50, 7:51-8:21
הברית: 1 Corinthians 3:11-18, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11,
החדשה: Hebrews 1:1-14

10 This week's parsha, Parashat Pekudei ("accounting of") is read with
Parashat Vayekhel. In these parshiot, Moshe is making an accounting of the
materials used in the construction of the Mishkhan (Tabernacle) including the
priestly garments. The priestly garments were made by Betzalel and Oholiab
15 consisting of (i) the ephod, (ii) the choshen (breastplate), (iii) the ketonic (cloak),
(iv) the crown, (v) the hat, (vi) the tunic, and (vii) the sash and breeches. After all
of the materials for the Mishkhan are constructed, Moshe assembles them, anoints
them with oil and commissions Aaron and his sons into the priestly service.
While reading this week's parsha, have you ever wondered why G-d chose to use
20 of the first temple with sculpted pomegranates. What is the symbolic significance
of the pomegranate?

שמות 39:22-30

22 וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־מְעִיל הָאֶפֶד מְעֵשָׂה אֲרָג כָּלִיל תְּכֵלֶת: וּפִי-
23 הַמְעִיל בְּתוֹכּוֹ כַּפֵּי תַחְרָא שְׁפָה לְפָנָיו סָבִיב לֹא יִקְרַע:
24 וַיַּעֲשׂוּ עַל־שׁוּלֵי הַמְעִיל רִמּוֹנִי תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת
25 שָׁנִי מְשֻׁר: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ פַעֲמָנֵי זָהָב טְהוֹר וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־הַפַּעֲמָנִים
26 בְּתוֹךְ הָרִמָּנִים עַל־שׁוּלֵי הַמְעִיל סָבִיב בְּתוֹךְ הָרִמָּנִים:
27 פַּעֲמָן וְרִמָּן פַּעֲמָן וְרִמָּן עַל־שׁוּלֵי הַמְעִיל סָבִיב לְשֵׁרֶת
28 כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ
29 אֶת־הַכֹּתֶנֶת שֵׁשׁ מְעֵשָׂה אֲרָג לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו: וְאֵת
30 הַמְצַנֵּפֶת שֵׁשׁ וְאֶת־פָּאָרֵי הַמִּנְבֵּעֶת שֵׁשׁ וְאֶת־מִכְנָסֵי
31 הַבֶּדֶד שֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁר: וְאֶת־הָאֲבִנֹת שֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁר וְתְּכֵלֶת
וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי מְעֵשָׂה רֶקֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה
אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־צִיץ נֹזֵר-
הַקֹּדֶשׁ זָהָב טְהוֹר וַיִּכְתְּבוּ עָלָיו מִכְתָּב פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם
קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה: וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלָיו פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת לְתֵת עַל־

Shmot / Exodus 39:22-30

39:22 Then he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue; 39:23 and the opening of the robe was at the top in the center, as the opening of a coat of mail, with a binding all around its opening, so that it would not be torn. 39:24 They made pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet material and twisted linen on the hem of the robe. 39:25 They also made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates all around on the hem of the robe, 39:26 alternating a bell and a pomegranate all around on the hem of the robe for the service, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. 39:27 They made the tunics of finely woven linen for Aaron and his sons, 39:28 and the turban of fine linen, and the decorated caps of fine linen, and the linen breeches of fine twisted linen, 39:29 and the sash of fine twisted linen, and blue and purple and scarlet material, the work of the weaver, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. 39:30 They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and inscribed it like the engravings of a signet, 'Holy to the Lord.' (NASB)

25 The Hebrew word in the Tanach for pomegranate is “rimmon” (רִימון),
scholars and historians agree that the translation for רִימון is the pomegranate.
The pomegranate is a spherical fruit with a tough orangish skin. The inside of the
fruit contains many individual segments (seeds) of sweet red fleshy pulp. To
begin our study on the symbolism of the pomegranate let’s start by looking at the
various occurrences and usage of the pomegranate in the Tanach (Torah, Neviim
and Ketuvim).
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Scriptural Literature Review

Exodus 28:33-34

28:33 ‘You shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet material, all around on its hem, and bells of gold between them all around:
28:34 a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, all around on the hem of the robe. (NASB)

Exodus 39:24-26

39:24 They made pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet material and twisted linen on the hem of the robe. 39:25 They also made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates all around on the hem of the robe, 39:26 alternating a bell and a pomegranate all around on the hem of the robe for the service, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. (NASB)

Numbers 13:23

13:23 Then they came to the valley of Eshcol and from there cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two men, with some of the pomegranates and the figs. (NASB)

Shmot 28:33-34

ועשית על שוליו רמני תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני על שוליו סביב
28:34 ופעמני זהב בתוכם סביב:
פעמן זהב ורמון פעמן זהב ורמון על
שולי המעיל סביב:

Shmot 39:24-26

ויעשו על שולי המעיל רמוני תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני משזר:
39:25 ויעשו פעמני זהב טהור ויתנו את הפעמנים בתוך הרמנים על שולי
39:26 המעיל סביב בתוך הרמנים:
פעמן ורמן פעמן ורמן על שולי
המעיל סביב לשרת כאשר צוה יהוה את משה:

Bamidbar 13:23

ויבאו עד נחל אשכול וכרתו משם זמורה ואשכול ענבים אחד וישאהו במוט בשנים ומן הרמנים ומן התאנים:

Numbers 20:5

20:5 'Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink.' (NASB)

Deuteronomy 8:8

8:8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; (NASB)

1 Samuel 14:2

14:2 Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron. And the people who were with him were about six hundred men, (NASB)

1 Kings 7:18

7:18 So he made the pillars, and two rows around on the one network to cover the capitals which were on the top of the pomegranates; and so he did for the other capital. (NASB)

1 Kings 7:20

7:20 There were capitals on the two pillars, even above and close to the rounded projection which was beside the network; and the pomegranates numbered two hundred in rows around both capitals. (NASB)

1 Kings 7:42

7:42 and the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, two rows of pomegranates for each network to cover the two bowls of the capitals which were on the tops

Bamidbar 20:5

20:5 ולמה העליתנו ממצרים להביא אתנו אל המקום הרע הזה לא מקום זרע ותאנה וגפן ורמון ומים אין לשתות:

Devarim 8:8

8:8 ארץ חטה ושערה וגפן ותאנה ורמון ארץ זית שמן ודבש:

1 Shemuel 14:2

Sam14:2 ושאול יושב בקצה הגבעה תחת הרמון אשר במגרון והעם אשר עמו כשש מאות איש:

1 Melachim 7:18

7:18 ויעש את העמודים ושני טורים סביב על השבכה האחת לכסות את הכתרת אשר על ראש הרמנים וכן עשה לכתרת השנית:

1 Melachim 7:20

7:20 וכתרת על שני העמודים גם ממעל מלעמת הבטן אשר לעבר שבכה והרמונים מאתיים טורים סביב על הכתרת השנית:

1 Melachim 7:42

7:42 ואת הרמנים ארבע מאות לשתי השבכות שני טורים רמנים לשבכה האחת לכסות את שתי גלת הכתרת אשר על פני העמודים:

of the pillars; (NASB)

2 Kings 25:17

25:17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and a bronze capital was on it; the height of the capital was three cubits, with a network and pomegranates on the capital all around, all of bronze. And the second pillar was like these with network. (NASB)

Jeremiah 52:22-23

52:22 Now a capital of bronze was on it; and the height of each capital was five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the capital all around, all of bronze. And the second pillar was like these, including pomegranates.
52:23 There were ninety-six exposed pomegranates; all the pomegranates numbered a hundred on the network all around. (NASB)

Joel 1:12

1:12 The vine dries up And the fig tree fails; The pomegranate, the palm also, and the apple tree, All the trees of the field dry up. Indeed, rejoicing dries up From the sons of men. (NASB)

Haggai 2:19

2:19 'Is the seed still in the barn? Even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree, it has not borne fruit. Yet from this day on I will bless you. ' (NASB)

2 Melachim 25:17

25:17 שמנה עשרה אמה קומת העמוד האחד וכתרת עליו נחשת וקומת הכתרת שלש אמה ושבכה ורמונים על הכתרת סביב הכל נחשת וכאלה לעמוד השני על השבכה:

Yeremiyahu 52:22-23

52:22 וכתרת עליו נחשת וקומת הכתרת האחת חמש אמות ושבכה ורמונים על הכותרת סביב הכל נחשת
52:23 וכאלה לעמוד השני ורמונים: ויהיו הרמונים תשעים וששה רוחה כל הרמונים מאה על השבכה סביב:

Yoel 1:12

1:12 הגפן הובישה והתאנה אמללה רמון גם תמר ותפוח כל עצי השדה יבשו כי הביש ששון מן בני אדם:

Chaggai 2:19

2:19 העוד הזרע במגורה ועד הגפן והתאנה והרמון ועץ הזית לא נשא מן היום הזה אברך:

35 The pomegranate plays a historically prominent role in Jewish artwork
according to the Tanach decorating pottery, lamps, and sides of buildings, burial
40 fixtures and even adorning important religious items such as the priestly
garments. The pomegranate also appears on scrolls as well as on the Table of the
presence where the loaves of bread rested. According to the Scriptures, the
pomegranate simply appears to be a decorative item on the priestly garments and
the temple of Solomon. Archeologists have found shekels (coins) with the
45 inscription of branches with three pomegranates. The broad use of the image of
the pomegranate suggests that this symbol has a special meaning. What exactly is
the meaning of the pomegranate? The rabbinic literature provides us with an
interesting perspective. The Mishnah mentions three pomegranates in reference
to the uncleanness of utensils in *Kelim 17:1*.

Mishnah Kelim 17:1

50 *“All utensils [of wood] belonging to private persons [and which are
broken by reason of having contracted uncleanness, recover the status of
cleanness if their breaches are of] such a size that pomegranates [can
pass through them]. The pomegranates of which [the sages] have spoken
are three clinging to one another.”*

55 According to the Mishnah the branches were used as a measure of the
spatial requirement for determining ceremonial cleanness. Rabbinic tradition also
asserts that each pomegranate holds 613 seeds drawing a parallel with the 613
60 mitzvot (commandments) of the Torah. Jewish scholars also believe that the
pomegranate was the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden. (see *"A Pomegranate
for All Religions" by Nancy Haught, Religious News Service*) The pomegranate is
one of the Seven Species (שבעת המינים) the types of fruits and grains enumerated
in the Tanach in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:8* as being the special produce of the
Promised Land (Yisrael). As noted by rabbinic tradition, the pomegranates
65 contain many seeds (613) and their roots take easily to the soil and tend to grow
rapidly thus many ancient cultures (not just Judaism) viewed them as a symbol of
fertility. This fruit was popular as a fertility symbol because of its many seeds
suggesting incomparable fruitfulness.

As mentioned earlier, the priestly garment also contained the image of the
pomegranate. The robe of the ephod (me'il) is a coat of wool, with golden bells
70 and decorative pomegranates on its hem. The robe of the Ephod, according to the
Torah, (*Shmot / Exodus 28:31-34*) is the first piece of linen to be placed on the
robe of the priest. According to its description, the robe was sleeveless with a
large blue mantel and a hole for the priests head. A closely woven binding
bordered the edge of the head opening to prevent tearing. The skirts of the robe
75 were fringed with alternating woolen pomegranates and golden bells. As we have
seen, according to the scriptures, pomegranates were used for decorative purposes
(i.e. *1 Melachim / 1 Kings 7:20, 7:42*). The pomegranates (רִמּוֹן) embroidered on
the hem were interspaced with tinkling golden bells which sounded as the priest
80 moved. The bells speak of listening to G-d while in His service and the music of
them is supposed to bring joy. The pomegranates speak of fruitfulness, abundant

seeds or abundant blessing, and are a symbol of the Word of G-d as sweet and pleasant spiritual food.

85 So, what can we conclude from the use of the pomegranate in Jewish artwork? Based upon the rabbinic tradition, the pomegranate was thought to represent righteousness because of the parallel drawn between the 613 seeds that correspond to the mitzvot (commandments) of the Torah. The symbolism of fruitfulness, righteousness, and cleanliness, coupled with its inscription on coins, the priestly garments, the temple, and rabbinic tradition suggests that the pomegranate is not only a decorative item but also a symbol which reminds us of
90 G-d's righteousness and also the punishment Adam received as a result of his having eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*Bereshit / Genesis 2:17*). Death came as a result of the first man Adam's sin. The life that we have being descendents of Adam ultimately comes from G-d. G-d sustains our lives and it is He we should follow instead of sin. The symbol of the pomegranate reminds us of our need to draw near to G-d according to His righteous way.
95 Because of the sin of Adam and Chavah (Eve) the human race needs redemption, the payment for sin. The symbolism of the pomegranate reminds us of the history and relationship of mankind with G-d and how Yeshua the Messiah (the last Adam) has taken our punishment for sin upon himself to help us to return in
100 righteousness to G-d by faith. The symbol of the pomegranate carries through the consistent theme on sin and redemption that is found throughout the Scriptures. What a wonderful G-d we serve. G-d, the Author, Sustainer, and Redeemer of life is truly the One to be praised.

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever