

פרשיות ויקהל פקודי *Parashat Vayak'hel/Pekudei*

*Shemot / Exodus 35:1-40:38, Ezekiel 45:16-46:18
Mark 6:14-29/John 6:1-71*

The Bread of the Presence

In this week's Torah portion we read the following concerning the construction of the table of the presence in *Shemot / Exodus 37:10-16*,
ויעש את השלחן עצי שטים אמתים ארכו ואמה רחבו ואמה וחדצי קמתו:
37:10 He made the table of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high; ויצף אתו זהב טהור ויעש לו זר זהב:
37:11 he overlaid it with pure gold and made a gold molding around it. ויעש לו מסגרת טפח סביב ויעש זר זהב למסגרתו סביב:
37:12 He made a rim of a hand's breadth around it and made a gold molding for its rim round about. ויצק לו ארבע טבעות זהב ויתן את הטבעות על:
37:13 He cast four gold rings for it and attached the rings to the four corners at its four legs. לעמת המסגרת.
37:14 The rings were next to the rim, as holders for the poles to carry the table. ויעש את הברדים עצי:
37:15 He made the poles of acacia wood for carrying the table, and overlaid them with gold. ויעש את-
הכלים | אשר על השלחן את קערותיו ואת כפפתיו ואת מנקיותיו ואת הקשות
37:16 The utensils that were to be upon the table—its bowls, ladles, jugs, and jars with which to offer libations—he

made of pure gold. The bread of the Presence (לחם הפנים) was bread that was to be always present on a table in the tabernacle (and later in the temple). *Vayikra / Leviticus 24:5-7* describes this bread as follows, “*You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each loaf. And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold before the Lord. And you shall put pure frankincense on each pile, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion as a food offering to the Lord.*” In the Apostolic Writings, the author of the book of *Hebrews 9:1-2*, states the table of the bread of the Presence was one of the items in the first section of the tabernacle. Also included in that place was the Menorah which was to give light before the Lord. There were twelve loaves representing the twelve tribes of Israel. It is important to note the significance of the bread of the Presence and the Menorah together in the Tabernacle and the Ministry of Yeshua the Messiah. One observation that may be made during Yeshua’s ministry, he fed the multitudes of people, using 5 loaves and then later using 7 loaves, which sums to 12 loaves. Note in *Matthew 14*, the feeding of the 5,000, led to collecting 12 baskets of food left over. In addition, we read the Apostle John wrote in *John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 1:5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 1:6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 1:7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 1:8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. 1:9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. (NASB)* What is the significance of these observations?

Feeding 5,000 (loaves: “*They said to Him, “We have here only five loaves and two fish.” see also Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-15)*

Feeds 4,000 (loaves: “*And Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” And they said, “Seven, and a few small fish.” see also Matthew 15:32-39, Mark 8:1-10)*

If we consider the greater context, in *Matthew 4* we read of the deceiver

(Satan) wanting Yeshua to make bread for himself to eat in order to satisfy his hunger. In *Matthew 7* Yeshua states that a loving father does not give his children stones when they ask for bread. So we make the connection that Satan wants Yeshua to bypass the complete and total dependence upon the Father and usurp authority, rather than have it granted him. Yeshua would have bread, spiritually and physically, but not from his own exercise of the power that was given him, rather, he eats based upon what our Father in heaven has granted him. In *Matthew 9-12*, Yeshua has extended the metaphor of a grain harvest to his ministry. He then speaks of the parable of the sower and then of the parable of the leaven. Finally, in *Matthew 14*, we read of the feeding of the 5,000, with 12 baskets left over. In *Matthew 15*, we are given the feeding of the 4,000 with 7 baskets left over. Finally, in *Matthew 16* the disciples worried about not having bread to eat and Yeshua explains that the previous bread miracles are not really about bread and warns them against the “leaven” of the scribes and Pharisees, which is a reference to their teaching. The significance of these observations is for drawing us back into the Torah context and the way of life God has provided for His people. These examples on the use of bread draw us back to the Torah context in relation to the manna as well as to the Tabernacle that may be found in the table of the presence and the bread of the presence. What we are being taught here is in relation to leaven (sin), where the temptation is to circumvent what the Lord has for us in His Word. On a simple level the symbolism of the bread and the extra baskets of bread is that we are to seek the right / correct teaching, the teaching that corresponds to the word of God, regardless of the immediate circumstances. Having done so we will find an abundance left over because the Lord God is a gracious provider. The bread and the Menorah illustrate for us the messianic nature of the Menorah for light and the bread for life, that will guide those people who are walking in darkness to walk in the light of living upon the Word of God. Yeshua is the source of light having illustrated for us how to walk in God’s Ways where the Lord tells us through Paul that we are being conformed unto the likeness of the Messiah. Yeshua became the mediatory of the covenant so that those who believe and put what they believe into practice may receive the promised eternal inheritance. The question is, do you want the inheritance God wants for you and are you willing to accept

all of God's Word for that purpose?

This week is a double portion, Parshiyot Vayakhel and Pekudei, where we read of the construction of the Tabernacle and the priestly garments. While reading through this section of Scripture, it is interesting to note how the priestly garments were constructed using “*mixed threads.*” When we hear the phrase “*mixed threads*” we are generally reminded of two places in the Torah, *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:19* *You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together. (NASB)* and *Devarim / Deuteronomy 22:11* *You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together. (NASB)* When we read these Scriptures using modern eyes, it is difficult to understand why the Lord made such an odd prohibition? The point of this commandment however is very practical in its application. Within the cultural and ancient context, this mitzvah had a perfectly logical reasoning. In order to understand this, it is important to pay close attention to the construction of the Tabernacle and the priestly garments. Both the priestly garments and the tabernacle weaving were a combination of wool and linen (see *Shemot / Exodus 39:2*). The priest's white undergarment was linen, and the brightly colored vestment was wool. Taking this into consideration, why do you think the Lord gave the prohibition to not wear cloths with mixed threads? The interpretation may follow in parallel fashion as to the fragrant incense as we spoke of last week in Parashat Ki Tisa. This mitzvah against wearing cloths containing mixed threads was for the laypersons, where the prohibition was to prevent the common person from dressing in the same way as the priests. A similar prohibition for mixtures was from the same rationale, with the blending of aromatic spices for the use in the anointing oil (*Shemot / Exodus 30:33*). The distinctive fragrance would mark whatever it anointed as holy, set apart for God's special purposes. In addition, this incense was only burned at the Tabernacle and when one would present himself before God, having smelled the fragrant incense, he would have been led to repentance. The incense effected the heart, and the heart would be purified of all the evil thoughts and from the defilement of the evil urge which is described by the rabbis as the “*base animalistic drive of man.*” Because of the incense, the heart would come to a state of Teshuvah before God,

and as a result, the incense is said to be able to “*break the power of the other side*” so as to cause the one bringing the offering to make his heart right before God. In the case of the wearing of mixed threads, we are instructed to be careful what we wear, what we put on for others to see. We are also to be careful not to put on a show for others and especially before God *Rashbam on Shemot / Exodus 20:8 Part 1* states the following, “זכור את יום השבת, *remembering something always refers to past events. Deuteronomy 32:7-8 “remember past history, etc.” Exodus 13:3 as well as Deuteronomy 9:7-8 plus numerous other verses exhort the Jewish people to remember events in the past. In the Ten Commandments, the expressions zachor here and shamor in the parallel legislation in Deuteronomy are in the infinitive mode. Seeing that both are followed immediately by the command לקדשו “to sanctify it,” (the Sabbath) this makes an imperative of the whole paragraph. The Torah, in a way, commands us to “commemorate” something which G’d had done long before there was a legislation to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest.*” Rashbam speaks of the Shabbat, but makes a very important observation that the legislation of the command is meant to be a reminder for our lives. This was the point of the layperson being given the command to wear tzitzit (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 15:38 and Devarim / Deuteronomy 22:12*) This was also the point and the purpose of these commands which lead us to understand that our hearts and our lives are not for general use, but are sacred, holy, and righteous. Parshiot Vayak’hel speaks of the construction of the Tabernacle and the priestly garments. We are told the priestly garments were not just a combination of wool and linen, but also included threads of gold. The priestly garments weaved in threads of gold which is described as tahor (clean and pure). This has a direct relation to our lives and the Torah as God’s instruction should lead us to repentance on a daily basis, and consequentially to the Messiah Yeshua. These Scriptures speak of a clear and practical teaching on how to be led by the Spirit and to recognize and respond to the spirit’s leading in our lives. Let’s discuss this further in this week’s Torah portion.

This week we are looking at *Shemot / Exodus 39:1-26*:

Shemot / Exodus 39:1-26

39:1 From the blue, purple and scarlet yarn they made

woven garments for ministering in the sanctuary. They also made sacred garments for Aaron, as the LORD commanded Moses. 39:2 They made the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen. 39:3 They hammered out thin sheets of gold and cut strands to be worked into the blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen--the work of a skilled craftsman. 39:4 They made shoulder pieces for the ephod, which were attached to two of its corners, so it could be fastened. 39:5 Its skillfully woven waistband was like it--of one piece with the ephod and made with gold, and with blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and with finely twisted linen, as the LORD commanded Moses. 39:6 They mounted the onyx stones in gold filigree settings and engraved them like a seal with the names of the sons of Israel. 39:7 Then they fastened them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel, as the LORD commanded Moses. 39:8 They fashioned the breastpiece--the work of a skilled craftsman. They made it like the ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen. 39:9 It was square--a span long and a span wide--and folded double. 39:10 Then they mounted four rows of precious stones on it. In the first row there was a ruby, a topaz and a beryl; 39:11 in the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and an emerald; 39:12 in the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst; 39:13 in the fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper. They were mounted in gold filigree settings. 39:14 There were twelve stones, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes. 39:15 For the breastpiece they made braided chains of pure gold, like a rope. 39:16 They made two gold filigree settings and two gold rings, and fastened the rings to two of the corners of the breastpiece. 39:17 They fastened the two gold chains to the rings at the corners of the breastpiece, 39:18 and the other ends

of the chains to the two settings, attaching them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front. 39:19 They made two gold rings and attached them to the other two corners of the breastpiece on the inside edge next to the ephod. 39:20 Then they made two more gold rings and attached them to the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the seam just above the waistband of the ephod. 39:21 They tied the rings of the breastpiece to the rings of the ephod with blue cord, connecting it to the waistband so that the breastpiece would not swing out from the ephod--as the LORD commanded Moses. 39:22 They made the robe of the ephod entirely of blue cloth--the work of a weaver-- 39:23 with an opening in the center of the robe like the opening of a collar, and a band around this opening, so that it would not tear. 39:24 They made pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen around the hem of the robe. 39:25 And they made bells of pure gold and attached them around the hem between the pomegranates. 39:26 The bells and pomegranates alternated around the hem of the robe to be worn for ministering, as the LORD commanded Moses. (NIV)

According to the Torah, we are given a description of the construction of the priestly garments, **א** וּמִן־הַתְּכֵלֶת וְהָאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי עָשׂוּ, בְּגָדֵי־שָׂרָד לְשָׂרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לְאַהֲרֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: **ב** [שני] [חמישי כשהן מחוברין] **ב** וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הָאֶפֶד זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשֻׂזָּר: **ג** וַיִּרְקְעוּ אֶת־פָּחִי הַזָּהָב וְקִצְצוּ פָתִי־לָם לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּתוֹךְ הַתְּכֵלֶת וּבְתוֹךְ הָאַרְגָּמָן וּבְתוֹךְ תוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וּבְתוֹךְ הַשֵּׁשׁ: *39:1 From the blue, purple and scarlet yarn they made woven garments for ministering in the sanctuary. They also made sacred garments for Aaron, as the LORD commanded Moses. 39:2 They made the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen. 39:3 They hammered out thin sheets of gold and cut strands to be worked into the blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen--the work of a skilled craftsman. (NASB)* These verses are directly

related to *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:19* *You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together. (NASB)* and *Devarim / Deuteronomy 22:11* *You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together. (NASB)* It is interesting when considering these verses, we actually have similar laws today. For example, in the law of the land “*it is illegal to dress up in a badge and a uniform to impersonate a police officer!*” Based upon the police officer analogy, according to the law, the police are given a certain amount of authority over the people that is related to crimes (sin) to take a person into custody (hand cuff them) and put them into prison, etc. It is in this very same way, the Lord God of Israel had given priests the authority to lead in the service in his Holy Presence, and to having authority to judge and convict. Just as the police today, the priests in ancient times were noticeably different from everyone else. The difference was in the way they dressed, which was constructed in a manner that was to be unique and set apart from others. The tzitzit according to *Bamidbar / Numbers 15:38* speaks of a special mark in the clothing that sets one apart and is a reminder of who we are as God’s people, holy, righteous, and to live in truth and justice.

Note how according to the Torah, the Lord calls all the people a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (*Shemot / Exodus 19:6* “*you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...*”) Everyone is supposed to be a priest, and yet some were set apart from all the rest. To the people of Israel in the wilderness, this did not seem very fair. As a result, this led to the incident of Parashat Korach where Korach led a rebellion against Moshe under the idea that Israel being a “*nation of priests*” was meant that they too could be priests in the sacrificial services. This is why Korach said in *Bamidbar / Numbers 16:3*:

Bamidbar / Numbers 16:3

16:3 They assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, ‘You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?’ (NASB)

They believed the meaning of being a nation of priests meant that they all had the same status in God's eyes in regards to the sacrificial service. This attitude also seems prevalent today where *"Aren't we all special in his eyes?"* Equality is fundamental to the way we see the world today, and based upon the story of Korach, it sounds a lot like he lived in modern America having the spirit of this age. It is hard to imagine that God would disagree with our love of democracy but yet, the Lord God set up a system where people had to live with the tension that every person was to see himself as representative for God, and yet must also yield to the authority of a priestly leadership. This is what it means to walk in the spirit, to submit to the Spirit of God according to the Commandments.

In Midrash Tehillim 112, Part 2 we read, *"For Abraham kept the commandments not under compulsion, but with delight, as is said, That delights greatly in His commandments."* What does it mean to delight greatly in His commands? The Apostle Paul wrote to the *Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! (NASB)* Is this what it means to be joyful in all that we do? To rejoice in the Lord always is not primarily a matter of feeling, but of obedience. Paul speaks in *Philippians 4:4* a commandment, which is repeated twice for emphasis, so that we will not shrug it off. The motivations of our hearts is to deliberately be happy and to deliberately choose to obey, especially when we are in difficult circumstances. The delighting greatly in the mitzvot (commandments) has to do with our attitudes which are directly related to our mental attitudes in our choices. Many times, the choice to rejoice often goes directly against how we feel. Considering Job and what had happened to him going through trials, when we are treated unfairly, when we are disappointed by people or circumstances, even when disasters or great calamity occurs, we are faced with a decision. Will we continue to obey this commands and to rejoice in the Lord or will we allow ourselves to be swept along by our feelings?

The rabbis speak of the delight in the commands in relation to Abraham who was not under compulsion to obey. Note how this is the same in our case, obedience to the commands are because of our great love for the Lord! The example given of Abraham was *"When the Holy One blessed be He said to him he that is born in your house must be circumcised (Bereshit / Genesis 17:13), he circumcised himself forthwith."*

This is quite the example, since it is related to the cutting of the flesh, painful, and not something that one just does on a whim. This demonstrates his love for the Lord and his desire to be connected to the most high taking a form of physical separation from the world. Note that circumcision is not something of public display. This is related to something that is very “*private*” which illustrates for us the significance of the intimate nature of the commands in our lives, that are related to our relationship with God. Note what the author of the book of Hebrews writes, *4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (NASB)* The word of God creates a dividing line between the soul and the spirit, and reveals the intentions of the heart. Can you see the intimacy that is created in our understanding of who we are and our nature when we seek to live our lives according to God’s Word? This is the process of maturing and growing up in God’s Word to live for Him by examining the intentions of our hearts. This is how delighting in the mitzvot (commandments) is related to our attitudes which are directly related to our mental attitudes in our choices. The choice to obey and to rejoice in doing so goes directly against how we feel, note the connection to the Midrash and the example of Abraham, circumcising himself which would go contrary to how he would have felt. The act of circumcision at the age of 70 years old is not a pleasant thing to do.

The rabbis continue saying the following: *When God said to him Take now your son and offer him for a burnt offering (Bereshit / Genesis 22:2), straight away, Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and took Isaac his son (Bereshit / Genesis 22:3), for Abraham delighted to do God’s commandment speedily. And after Isaac was born and was eight days old, Abraham presented Isaac for circumcision, as is said, And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old (Bereshit / Genesis 21:4), and in presenting him thus as an offering upon the altar, he prepared a joyous feast.* The idea is that when the Lord told Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice, that he obeyed right away. This was paralleled to when Isaac was born, he

was circumcised on the eighth day, which is synonymous to Abraham presenting him as a sacrifice, and an offering unto the Lord. The midrash states that this Abraham prepared a joyous feast. To rejoice in the Lord always is an attitude of contentment and hope that transcends our circumstances. This joy in the Lord which we must aim for is not a superficial happiness based on circumstances or on the absence of trials, but rather is a solid contentment and hope that is as steady and certain as our faithful God who has given us His promises in His Word. Yeshua demonstrated this attitude as He faced death on the cross (*John 15:11, 17:13*). The apostles knew what this meant when they were flogged for preaching the gospel, and we are told that they went on their way “*rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name*” (*Acts 5:41*). Paul and Silas knew that joy when they were unjustly thrown in the Philippian jail, note how they sang hymns of praise to God (*Acts 16:25*) regardless of their circumstance. Also note how many martyrs died singing praises in the flames as their enemies gloated. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings are filled with men who obeyed God’s commands regardless of the circumstance (see *Tehillim / Psalms 5:11, 33:1, and 64:10*). Therefore the commands are a matter of obedience and not a matter of temperament.

King Solomon wrote according to *Mishley / Proverbs 31:26* referring to the law of kindness. This reminds us of Paul’s words to the Ephesians according to *Ephesians 4:21-5:2*. The Torah speaks of these things for the life of the children of God. The mercy of God leads us to having mercy on others and everything Paul is teaching to the Ephesians. Paul speaks of all of these things within the context of the sanctuary incense saying, *5:2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (NASB)* These things are in fact related to this week’s Torah portion.

Rashi states the following in His commentary on *Shemot / Exodus 39:3*.

Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 39:3

וירקעו *AND THEY DID EXTEND* — וירקעו *is of the same root and meaning as, (Psalms 136:6) “To Him that*

stretcheth out (לרקע) the earth". Render וִירְקְעוּ as the Targum does: וּרְדִידוּ, they extended by beating. Plates did they beat out of the gold; in old French estendre — to extend into thin plates. Here it informs you how they wove the gold together with the woolen threads. They beat out the thin plates and from them they cut threads along the length of the plates to make of these threads a mixture (to mix them) with each of the different kind of woolen threads in the ephod and the breast-plate in regard to which gold is mentioned in this connection. One thread of gold they intertwined with six threads of blue purple, and so with each kind of wool. For all the materials had their threads six-fold, and the gold formed the seventh with each of them (cf. Yoma 72a).

The concept that is provided here in relation to the mixing of threads in the priestly garments are related to the Lord calling us a nation of kings and priests. The reason for the prohibition on the mixing of threads is that we are not to impersonate the priesthood, even though we are called to be a nation of priests. The reason being, we are called to serve the Lord and to walk in His ways, and in the manner He chooses. We are not to take it upon ourselves to do as we please and call it a service to the Lord. This is in fact related to the attitudes of our hearts and to living a daily repentant life before God. The Lord God set up this system where God's people live with the tension in their lives. Every person is to see himself as a representative for God, and yet must also yield to the authority of God's Spirit. This is what it means to walk in the spirit, to submit to the will of God according to the Scriptures. This speaks of the necessity of sanctifying our hearts for the service of God. The Lord calls us to draw near to *"The Place"* (הַמִּקְוֶה), that sacred place, to seek His ways, where His Word leads us to understand that our hearts and our lives are not for general use, but are sacred, and holy, and righteous.