

Shabbat Vayakel-Pekudei **Shabbat HaChodesh**

A Shabbat like no other, and yet a Shabbat that is most likely representative of our temporary new normal. In the last week, there has been a tremendous amount of conversation and planning. The world has changed since last Shabbat when we gathered together at Olam Tikvah, the world has even changed again since yesterday morning, since this morning, since an hour ago. We are separated, its frustrating, scary, uncertain and disruptive. Yet, despite all the challenges that being distant from one another present, it has also forced us to find new ways to connect, to interact with one another, most of all it has given us the opportunity to spend this time being with and reaching out to those we love and hold dear. We are resilient. You will hear us say this over and over again in the coming days and weeks, as Americans and most of all as Jews. We are resilient and we will rise to the challenge of finding ways to be together, of supporting those in need, of comforting those who need comfort and celebrating with those who are joyous.

This Shabbat we celebrate a number of different things. In the calendar it is Shabbat HaChodesh, the Shabbat before the month of Nissan. In the Torah, Nissan is the first month of the year, not Tishrei. It is HaChodesh, *The month*. It is a month that represents Joy, freedom, resiliency, growth and change. It is in this month that our ancestors began their journey to freedom, when they entered into the wilderness relying on each other and God for support and survival. Because it is the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh, we also bless the new month. We recite *Birkat HaChodesh* asking that God bless us with life and peace, joy and gladness, deliverance and consolation. It is interesting to note that in Israel, this last request is different, in place of deliverance and consolation the liturgy asks for complete healing and imminent redemption. As this new month begins, we feel all these needs, these values have become something we seek each day of this ongoing global situation, and we pray form them in a more serious and pressing way than we have in the past.

This Shabbat we also read the double parsha of Vayakel-Pekudei, the final portions of *Sefer Shemot*, the Book of Exodus. As the *sefer* is completed we, a community, say the words *Chazak, Chazak Ve-Nitchazek*, from strength to strength may we be strengthened. As we enter into this new month of Nissan, redefine our social norms and daily lives, we will pull on the strengths of our relationships, our religion, our God, so that we go from each moment to the next, from each day to the next, with strength and strengthened as individuals and as a community. *Chazak Chazak VeNitchazek Lechaim u'li'shalom, from strength to strength may we be strengthened with life and peace.* Amen.

Shabbat Morning- March 21st, 2020

While we cannot gather together this Shabbat, it is still possible to pray as individuals at home. We have included the essential prayers in this email, along with a PDF attachment of Siddur Sim Shalom, you can add more prayers to your *davening*, read in English or Hebrew and best of all you can create your own personal prayer. We have included some audio files, see the links in the email, please listen to them before Shabbat in order to incorporate them into your *tefillah*. Shabbat Shalom!

- Birkot haShachar- Page 65
- *Blessing After Barchu*: Yotzer Or- page 107, 3rd paragraph
- *Ahavah Rabbah*- page 111- don't forget to gather your tzitzit if you are wearing a tallit!
- Shema and the 3 paragraphs- pages 112-113
- Amidah-Shacharit- 115-120, when davening alone we do not say the Kedusha on page 116.
- Oh-seh shalom- page 120 and [video/audio file](#)
- Prayer for congregation/community/Israel- pages 148-149
- Mishebeirach for healing- [video/audio file](#)
- Birkat Hachodesh- page 150 and [audio file](#)
- Amidah for Musaf- page 156-161. Skipping the Kedusha on 157.
- Aleinu- page 183
- Psalm 23 for mourners
- Adon Olam- Pick your favorite tune and sing it loud!

Shabbat Shalom!

Parsha Summary (adapted from torah.org)

The Parsha begins by outlining the laws of Shabbat. Moshe asked Bnei Yisrael to donate the time, talents, and materials for the construction of the Mishkan, the portable tabernacle. The Israelites responded with unbridled enthusiasm.

Talents and materials were donated and Betzallel and Oholiav were appointed as chief architects and artists. The response to Moshe's appeal was so great that Moshe had to command the people to stop their donations! The outer coverings of the Mishkan and the inner tapestries are detailed. The beams of the Mishkan, the Aron Hakodesh, and the Shulchan – Table are described.

The Menorah and the inner Golden Altar are described. The outer ramped Altar, the Washstand, and the Mishkan's surrounding enclosure are detailed. Parshat Pekudei (because this week is a double parsha) begins with an accounting of the materials used in the construction of the Mishkan. (a rough estimate: gold = 4,386.5 lb./ silver = 15,088.75 lb./ copper = 10,620 lb.) The Kohein Gadol's breastplate and vest are described. The remaining garments of the Kohein Gadol and the other Kohanim are detailed, and Moshe inspects the completed Mishkan and certifies that the entire project followed the exact details of God's instructions. Moshe blesses the workers.

On the 1st day of Nissan the Mishkan was assembled. After every vessel was properly in place, the presence of God, the Shechina, descended in a cloud and filled the Mishkan.

Chazak Chazak v'Nitchazek!

Questions

- Nearly the entire 2nd half of Sefer Shemot was dedicated to the details of the *Mishkan*. Why is this space so important in the Torah?
- How do we sanctify our prayer spaces today?
- Look around you, especially given our current reality, how can you make your space more holy?
- What do/can others contribute to the household, or do for the household, that make it a space that is a home and more holy?

For Kids

Check out these fun parsha experiences for [Vayakel](#) and [Pekudei](#)!