

פְּקוּדֵי

P'kudeh

Exodus 38:21-end of the Book: end of the building of the *Mishkan*
Haftarah: Ezekiel 45:16-46:18; 45:18-46:15 Sephardic rite: Sacrifices in the
future Temple

These are the accounts *p'kudeh* פְּקוּדֵי of the **tabernacle**, the **tabernacle** of the testimony, recorded, as *Moshe* ordered, by the *L'vi'im* under the direction of Itamar the son of Aharon, the cohen. Exodus 38:21

The book of Exodus concludes with this Parasha on the end of the building of the *Mishkan* and its dedication. Beginning with the first verse, the accounts are made both physically and prophetically with the word *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), mentioned twice. This is an allusion to the Two Temples.

The word *Mishkan*, מִשְׁכָּן comes from the word *mashach* מָשַׁח which means to draw, and reveals that the Tabernacle was meant to draw G-d's presence on earth and men to G-d. The Tradition tells us that the word *p'kudeh*, פְּקוּדֵי is similar to the word *pakod pakadeti*, I have visited you פָּקַדְתִּי in Exodus 3:16:

Go, gather the leaders of Israel together, and say to them, Adonai, the God of your fathers, the God of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak* and *Yaakov*, has appeared to me and said, "I have been paying close attention, *pakod pakadeti* פָּקַדְתִּי to you and have seen what is being done to you in Egypt. Exodus 3:16

The Book of Exodus ends with this promise G-d made to the sons of Israel: the promise of deliverance and the visitation. The *Mishkan* will now be dedicated as a testimony of the Covenant between G-d and His people.

The accounts are given exactly, as proof of *Moshe's* integrity and full obedience in every aspect, as suggested by the eighteen repetitions of the phrase: "as Adonai had ordered *Moshe...*"

The numerical value of *Chai*--Life is 18! To obey brings forth life (the 18 repetitive phrases are found in our Parasha Tetzaveh and this one – see Exodus 40:16-32).

The faithfulness of the Jewish people has been expressed, for centuries, through the careful copying of the Torah in every detail; still today, we can read in its original version, the sacred text that was given to Moshe on Mount Sinai more than 3500 years ago...

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city and trained at the feet of Gamli'el in every detail of the Torah of our forefathers. I was a zealot for God, as all of you are today. Acts 22:3

Now we stand on the first day of the first month, that of Nissan. The word Nissan comes from the word *ness* (miracle), and means "maker of miracles."

In the Talmud¹, we read that this special day was crowned with ten crowns:

- This first of Nissan of the second year of the coming out of Egypt was a Sunday, the first day of Creation.
- The first day when the princes started to bring their offerings for the dedication (Numbers 7:12)
- The Cohanim started the service
- The daily sacrifices started that day
- The fire came down from heaven to consume the sacrifices
- The eating of the sacred portions started inside the Sanctuary
- The *Shechina* came to dwell inside the Tabernacle
- The Cohanim started to bless the people
- The high places were forbidden
- The counting of the months started

Nissan, the month of deliverance and salvation; a new spring and a new birth to become the holy people worshipping the G-d of eternity!

¹ Shabbat 87b, La voix de la Thora Munk

This first day was also the date chosen for the purification of the Temple under King *Hezekiah*.

They began consecrating on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they reached the vestibule of Adonai. Then they consecrated the house of Adonai in eight more days; so that on the sixteenth day of the first month, they had finished. 2 Chronicles 29:17

It was the chosen date for the return from exile of the Jewish people and Ezra and the purification of the forbidden unions:

He began going up to *Yerushalayim* from *Bavel* on the first day of the first month and arrived on the first day of the fifth month, since the good hand of his God was on him. Ezra 7:9

They finished dealing with all the men who had married foreign women by the first day of the first month. Ezra 10:17

It will be the chosen date for the purification of the future Temple: ADONAI ELOHIM says this: 'On the first day of the first month you are to take a young bull without defect and purify the sanctuary.

Ezekiel 45:18

In that year, for the dedication of the *Mishkan*, the first day fell on a Sunday, an eighth day, a day of the circumcision and day when *Yeshua* was seen resurrected!

When *Yeshua* rose early on Sunday, he appeared first to *Miryam* of Magdala, from whom he had expelled seven demons. Mark 16:9

The similarity is even more obvious from the lecture of Jewish sources, mentioning that this first day of Nissan was also the day of birth of the Patriarch *Yitzhak* who is the incarnation of the sacrifice and the model of obedience and consecration for the Jewish people.

The dedication of the *Mishkan* takes all its prophetic meaning in the Messiah, Who gave Himself for our transgressions, was the perfect sacrifice and Who showed us the way of obedience through the things He suffered until death:

The next day, *Yochanan* saw *Yeshua* coming toward him and said, Look! God's lamb! The one who is taking away the sin of the world! John 1:29

This Parasha is also called Parashat *shekalim* because it is read for the new month of Adar. Each year every Israelite was to bring a half

shekel to the Temple. Public sacrifices were paid with those funds. This money was brought before the month of Nissan to start the New year. An announcement was made the first day of the previous month (Adar), to warn the people to bring it. In remembrance of this time, we still read the part of the Torah where the commandment of the half shekel is mentioned, Parashat KiTissa, on the Shabbat before the new month of Adar.

The word *shekel*, שקל which means “weight” in Hebrew, has the same numerical value of *nefesh*, נפש “soul”: 430.

All of this speaks of Redemption, the month of Nisan, the month of deliverance, the money for redeeming, in order to draw the *Shechina* among us.

As we studied in the Parashat Trumah, it has always been G-d’s intent to dwell among His people and in the *Mishkan* of our hearts purified by the blood of the sacrifice:

You should be aware that the ransom paid to free you from the worthless way of life which your fathers passed on to you did not consist of anything perishable like silver or gold; on the contrary, it was the costly bloody sacrificial death of the Messiah, as of a lamb without defect or spot. God knew him before the founding of the universe, but revealed him in the *acharit-hayamim* for your sakes. Through him you trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory; so that your trust and hope are in God. 1 Peter 1:18-21

Here, I’m standing at the door, knocking. If someone hears my voice (*teruah*, as for the *shofar*) and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him (I will share the bread with him), and he will eat with me.

Revelation 3:20

The *Shechina* then came down as a cloud (*anan* in Hebrew) ענן on the Tabernacle, enhancing His desire to dwell in the midst of His people. The Israelites knew that the Covenant was not broken despite the sin of the Golden Calf; His Presence was back. They were familiar with this Presence from Mount Sinai:

You approached and stood at the foot of the mountain; and the mountain blazed with fire to the heart of heaven, with darkness, **clouds**,

ענן and thick mist. Deuteronomy 4:11

This same cloud led them for 40 years in their journeying; its significance at the end of the Book of Exodus is important, being the condition for their departure and resting; they wouldn't move until the cloud moved.

We find it back in Shlomo's Temple. The divine Presence was back in the midst of His people:

-then, when the trumpeters and singers were playing in concord, to be heard harmoniously praising and thanking Adonai, and they lifted their voices together with the trumpets, cymbals and other musical instruments to praise Adonai: "for he is good, for his grace continues forever" --then, the house, the house of Adonai, was filled with a **cloud**

עָנָן 2 Chronicles 5:13

The sons of Israel were frightened by the darkness surrounding this Presence and they refused to draw close:

On the morning of the third day, there was thunder, lightning and a thick **cloud עָנָן** on the mountain. Then a *shofar* blast sounded so loudly that all the people in the camp trembled. Exodus 19:16
They said to *Moshe*, "You speak with us; and we will listen. But don't let God speak with us, or we will die." Exodus 20:19

The Book of Exodus ends with the relating of the cloud covering the Tabernacle. We will pause here, until the Book of Leviticus, where we will find *Moshe* being called inside the Tabernacle.

On Mount Sinai, the cloud and the darkness were there when *Moshe* was called and he could only approach on the seventh day:

So the people stood at a distance, but *Moshe* approached the thick darkness where God was. Exodus 20:21

Moshe went up onto the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of ADONAI stayed on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the **seventh day** he called to *Moshe* out of the cloud.

Exodus 24:15 -16

But at this time, despite the achievement of the Tabernacle, its erection, and the Presence of the *Shechina*, *Moshe* is not allowed in, as he usually was in the preceding chapters!

The Book of Exodus, the “book” of the deliverance from Egypt and of the redeeming of the sons of Israel won’t tell of the coming of *Moshe* under the cloud. There is a break here:

Moshe was unable to enter the tent of meeting, because the **cloud עָנָן** remained on it, and the glory of Adonai filled the tabernacle.
Exodus 40:35

The entering is set for a later time...

The cloud came on Mount Sinai, then on the Tabernacle preventing *Moshe* to come in, then on the first Temple, preventing the Levites to come in. This Glory of Adonai, assimilated to the “Light” of the first day of Creation, Who appeared then was hidden to us and replaced by the light of the sun and the moon on the fourth day, and Who will reign forever in the Messianic times, will be revealed later.

Moshe will then be invited to enter freely and to contemplate, at full light, the One Who was hidden from him in darkness, and this first Nissan, this first day of the week, this **eighth day**, will unveil the Glory of Israel:

About a week after *Yeshua* said these things, he took *Kefa* (*Peter*), *Yochanan* and *Yaakov* with him and went up to the hill country to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed; and his clothing became gleaming white. Suddenly there were two men talking with him--*Moshe* and *Eliyahu*! They appeared in glorious splendor and spoke of his exodus, which he was soon to accomplish in *Yerushalayim*. *Kefa* and those with him had been sound asleep; but on becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving *Yeshua*, *Kefa* said to him, not knowing what he was saying, “It’s good that we’re here, Rabbi! Let’s put up three shelters--one for you, one for *Moshe* and one for *Eliyahu*.” As he spoke, a **cloud** came and enveloped them. They were frightened as they entered the **cloud**; and a voice came out of the **cloud**, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to him!” When the voice spoke, *Yeshua* was alone once more. They kept quiet--at that time they told no one anything of what they had seen. Luke 9:28-36

This cloud will protect the sons of Israel all along their journeys and a wall of fire will also protect them during the long night of exile until He brings them back.

In that day, they won't be afraid any more of the smoking mountain and they will approach without fear, the throne of Grace....
Just as a shepherd looks after his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so I will look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered when it was cloudy, *anan*, עָנָן and dark. Ezekiel 34:12

The Book of Exodus ends on this longing: May the darkness be expelled and the Light of the Messiah shine on *Yisra-El*, the Prince of G-d!

חזק ! חזק ! ונתחזק !

Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!



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