

Parshat Vayakel – Pekuday
Melton at Shearith Israel, March 12, 2012
JSI at Akiba Academy, March 13, 2012
The Spiritual Meaning of the Tabernacle

- A) Overview of the Torah portions dealing with the construction of the Tabernacle
 - 1) Parshat Terumah, Exodus chapters 25 to 27
 - a) Moshe is on high, as was reported in chapter 24
 - b) He is told by God to have a Tabernacle built and is given exact instructions on how to do so
 - (I) Collect contributions
 - (II) Build specified furniture
 - (III) Construct the building
 - 2) Parshat Tetzave, Exodus 27:20 to chapter 30
 - a) Continuation of previous parsha
 - b) He is told how to fashion the vestments of the priests
 - c) He is told the exact form of the eight day consecration ceremony for the Tabernacle and the priests
 - 3) Parshat Kee Tisa
 - a) The Golden Calf and its aftermath
 - 4) Parshat Vayakel, chapters 35 to 38
 - a) Moshe instructs the people concerning the construction of the Tabernacle
 - (I) The people contribute
 - (II) The craftsman go to work
 - 5) Parshat Pekuday, 38:21 to the end of Exodus
 - a) The craftsman fashion the vestments for the priests
 - b) Everything – the furniture, the structure, and the vestments - are brought to Moshe
 - c) The Tabernacle is erected and the furniture put in place
 - d) The Divine Glory fills the Tabernacle
- B) Details that are necessary to understand the words of Rebbi Mordechai Leiner
 - 1) The measurements of the furniture
 - a) The ark - 25:10
 - b) The table – 25:23
 - c) The sacrificial altar – 27:1
 - d) The incense altar – 30:1 – 2
 - e) All of this is repeated in Parshat Vayakel
 - 2) “As the Lord had commanded Moshe”
 - a) 39:32
 - b) 39:42 – 43
 - c) 40:16
 - d) 40:19
 - e) 40:21
 - f) 40:23
 - g) 40:27
 - h) 40:29
 - i) 40:32
 - j) 40:33!!!!

Rabbi Mordechai Leiner of Izbitch
Mei haShiloach on the Weekly Torah Portion, volume II
Parshat Terumah

All of the measurements of the Ark were broken figures, because in order to attain Torah, one must know that he is lacking and that he stands in the middle, and that without the words of Torah he is not complete. For God does not pour words of Torah upon anyone unless that person realizes that he is lacking them, and that he is in need of them in order to fill his lack. But if he merely covets them and desires them as one might feel concerning another type of wisdom, just like the angels coveted the Torah ...

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“And he set up the enclosure around the Tabernacle etc.” (Exodus 40:33)

The explanation is that it is stated throughout all of the final steps of building the Tabernacle “as the Lord had commanded Moshe”, whereas when Moshe set up the enclosure it is not stated. This is because the meaning of the expression “as the Lord commanded Moshe” is that the matter was as clear and explicit to Moshe at the time of all of the final steps of building the Tabernacle, as it was at the time when God may He be blessed first spoke to him, as our sages have stated (In Midrash Torat Kohanim, Parshat Tzav, one): “Every place where it says ‘command’ it means alacrity at that time as well as henceforth”. And that is why with each of the final steps of building the Tabernacle it says “as the Lord had commanded Moshe”. And behold we find it written (Midrash B’Midbar Raba, one, three): “Before the Tabernacle was erected the whole of the desert was suitable for the Divine speech, whereas once the Tabernacle was erected the desert was no longer suitable”. Therefore when the enclosure was put in place and the building of the Tabernacle was finally completed, it was no longer fitting to write “as the Lord had commanded”, because the meaning of the expression “as the Lord had commanded” is that the (Divine) speech was as clear and explicit as it was at the time of the original command from the mouth of God may He be blessed. At the time of the setting up of the enclosure this could no longer be so, since at this point the desert was disqualified from (Divine) speech, such that the (Divine) speech was no longer explicit at this point. Therefore with the setting up of the enclosure it does not say “as the Lord had commanded Moshe”.

See Exodus 25:8, 22; Exodus 40:33 – 34 and Leviticus 1:1 - 2