



Life in the Details: Torah Reflections on *Vayak-hel/Pekudei*

Exodus 35:1 – 40:38

25 Adar 5780

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Vayak-hel and *Pekudei*, this week's double Torah portion, focuses on details. These six chapters are filled with the details of building and furnishing the Tabernacle. At first glance, the reading of details can become numbing; our eyes turning to soft focus just like the times we may feign attention to a conversation that loses our interest. But, isn't it true that in a hospital -- or nursing home, or other new circumstance that alters our daily routine -- what we actually miss are the details of our life? Suddenly, we can't pick up our watch from the place we put it the night before and just go to work. We can't make our own coffee or tea in our own mug. We can't greet a familiar face or simply wash our hands in the normal way. We can't shuffle around our home taking in the typical morning or evening details of our surroundings. Suddenly, we are bereft of the details that allow us to be in our familiar world. And in their place are typically new details: the pills, the tests, the doctors, nurses, social worker, chaplain; and people keeping their distance. And then there may be the detail of all the day-to-day conversation with loved ones who want to know how our day was! And we may long to once again have all those at-home or pre-pandemic details back; to say good-bye to the self-isolation or hospital details.

Vayak-hel/Pekudei is filled with all the external details of building the Tabernacle, and at the same time the Tabernacle is meant to be a sanctuary within the Israelite camp that travels with us as we move through the wilderness. While we may take comfort in the external details of our own lives, being in transition, in quarantine, or in the hospital, for example, is also a time that lends itself to reflection upon the internal details of our bodies, hearts and souls. It is natural to move into some kind of reflection about our past, our current situation, and our hopes for the future. In the detail of today, what are some of the simple details of your own life that you miss? Are there details you

would like to heal or rebuild from your past? Are there celebratory details that are important to acknowledge?

The list of details can go on and on. But, certainly if life is in the details, then details give us life. And so, then, does saying “I love you” to someone important. Or “thank you” to a nurse. Or giving yourself the gentle breath of living life as best you can.

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This Torah Reflection was written by Rabbi Eric Weiss, President and CEO of the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center. Gracious support is provided by the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund. A variety of other resources for comfort and healing can be found on our website, www.jewishhealingcenter.org.

The Bay Area Jewish Healing Center provides Jewish spiritual care for people coping with illness, loss and dying, regardless of affiliation or ability to pay.

Our services include:

- Rabbinic care, chaplaincy, and counseling—at home or in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes or other care facilities
- Spiritual support groups for patients, caregivers, and the bereaved
- Healing and memorial services, and specialized rituals

Whether through prayer, study materials, or simply a listening presence, the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center is here to support you during difficult times.