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8 Adar, 5781

SHABBAT SHALOM NEWSLETTER

SHABBAT ZACHOR, TERUMAH

תְּרוּמָה

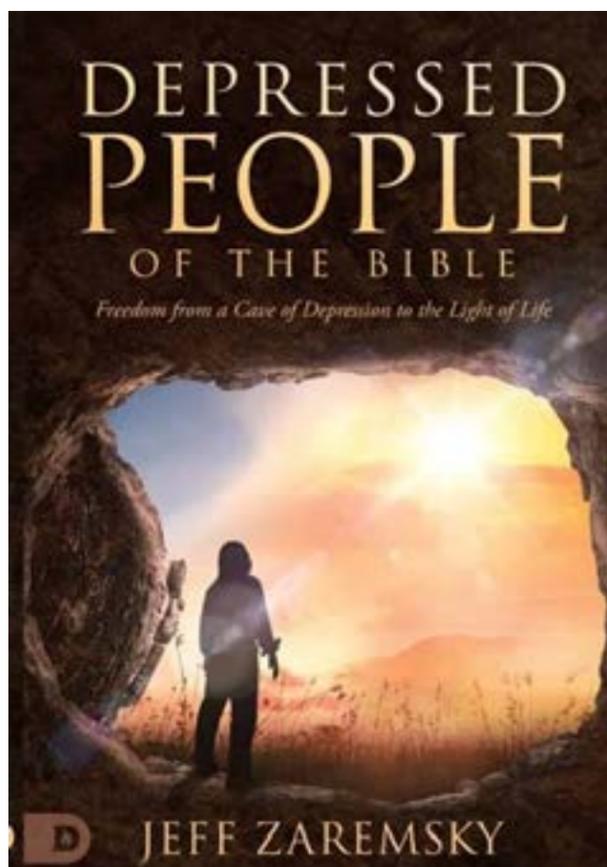
EXODUS 25:1 - 27:19

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

We pray every week for the Jewish Friendship Ministry and their partner. I suggest our friends to pray from February 21 through 27, for Anatoly Gurgiala, who is with team the leader of Jewish Adventist Friendship ministry in Glendale, CA (USA). As we know our ministry is not easy, especially in this time of pandemic, when travels are not allowed, that is why Anatoly needs more than ever before our prayers.

NEWS

A NEW BOOK PUBLISHED BY
JEFF ZAREMSKY



We have been informed by Jeff Zaremsky that he has published a new book about depressed people in the Bible. Since we don't have this book in our hands we will just copy and paste what is written at Jeff's website: <https://www.jewishheritage.net/catalog-judaica> Yes, many people in the Bible experienced depression just like we do today. Some were even suicidal, such as Moses, Elijah, Jonah, Jeremiah, Judas and King Saul. Others who experienced depression include David, Naomi, Martha and Mary, Ahab, and even one very surprising Individual. Some of the people successfully came out of the depression, others did not. In this very revealing book, you will learn lessons from their lives to help you come out of the dark cave of depression and into G-d's glorious Light.

According to Jeff, by reading this book you will be able to: See what leads to depression; Differentiate between normal "healthy" depression and dan-

gerous harmful depression; Learn about Dr. Neal Nedley's 10 depression "hits"; Identify which "hits" can be changed; Hear examples of what works to come out of depression; Experience freedom once again, permanently.

PURIM CELEBRATION

Let's remember that Purim will be celebrated this year on the 26th of February, starting on the evening of the 25th.

Jews will be reading the scroll of Esther or the Megillah on the 25th, and will again read this same scroll on the 26th.

Ideas for Celebrating Purim

Being in a Pandemic situation might cause many people to hesitate to attend a congregation in person for this celebration. That is why it is important to think about how we can translate each of these ideas into a virtual event online.

- Celebrate Purim With Traditional Jewish Recipes
 - Sephardic or Ashkenazic Cookies
 - A cooking segment that teaches how to make Hamantaschen (Ear of Aman) cookies, showing how to fold them.
 - Scroll cookies (a kind of tube).
 - Rosemary Garlic Challah Bread.
 - Delicious Purim cocktails without alcohol.
 - Online cooking segments that walk through the preparation of a full festive meal.
- Create a Coloring book with characters from the book of Esther (Esther, Mordechai, Achasverush, Haman, a gate keeper, a regular Jew, Esther praying...).
- Hosting a Purim baking party.
- Tell the story of Esther according to the Bible, enriched by many Jewish traditional ideas about Esther and Mordechai. Wear an appropriate costume and use interesting props. This could involve several "actors," each telling a segment of the story.
- Since we are wearing masks to protect us from Covid-19, why not teach how to decorate and paint our masks with Purim symbols.

Dutch Edition:
Hubert Paulleta
English Edition:
Richard-Amram Elofer
German Edition:
Yaw Heiser
Portuguese Edition:
Carlos Muniz
Russian Edition:
Alexandra Obrevko
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SHABBAT

SHALOM

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PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

TERUMAH

תְּרוּמָה

PARASHA OVERVIEW:

EXODUS 25:1 - 27:19

G-d commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Children of Israel are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices.

Description of the Mishkan

1. in the Mishkan's outer courtyard are an altar for the burnt offerings and a laver for washing.

2. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers.

- The outer chamber is accessible only to the kohanim (priests), the

descendants of Aharon. This contains the table of showbreads, the menorah, and the golden altar for incense.

- The innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, may be entered only by the kohen gadol (high priest), and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone that G-d gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the construction of the Mishkan (sanctuary), are described in great detail.

AN OFFERING FOR ME

The Parashah starts saying: "ADONAI spoke to Moses saying, 'Tell Bnei Yisrael to take up an offering for Me.'" (Exodus 25:1-2) this text *Hashem* told Moshe to inform the people of Yisrael that the first thing each believer should do is *w'yiqchu li*—"Take from their earnings a portion for Me" and set it aside as *r'umâ* "offering" to be used for *tzedakâ* (charity). After doing this, it is certain that when the time came to give an offering for the *Mishkan* (sanctuary, or house of prayer), they gave their offerings graciously. Because *tiqchu et r'umâti*—"they will not feel that you are taking their money, but instead they are giving an offering from that which was already designated as 'My offering'"—the literal meaning of *r'umâti*.

OFFERINGS FOR THE COMMUNITY

The biggest lesson here is that donations are not given directly to *Hashem*, but to the community for *Hashem's* purposes. The divine objective of these donations was not for the benefit of individual donors, but for the community as a whole. The Hebrew word is from *RoM* "to be exalted." Rabbi Hirsch translates verse 2: "Speak to the Children of Yisrael, that they accept for Me an uplifted donation." It is a donation set apart for a higher purpose. How do we consider therefore our donations and tithes? Are we aware of the high purpose of our donations? Being aware of the exalted and uplifted purpose of our tithes, offerings and donations, we will use them carefully for the advancement of the cause of *Hashem* and His glory.

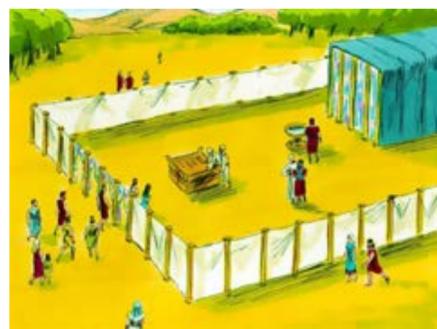
OFFERING ELEVATED ABOVE ORDINARY MATERIALS

Rabbi Schneerson explains that the meaning of the word *r'umâ* is "lifting up" or "separation," and then he comments: "The double interpretation of the name *Terumah* reflects two factors necessary in creating a dwelling for God. First, a person must designate his gift, separating it from his other worldly property. And then through its consecration, its nature becomes elevated above the ordinary material plane." Schneerson also notes that, according to the *halachah*: "Once an object is consecrated, it can no longer be used for mundane purposes."

Are we ready to give as the people of Yisrael gave? As we read the Torah, we discover the people of Yisrael brought offerings to *Hashem* over a period of time. It is written: "They brought freewill offerings to him morning after morning" (Exodus 36:3b). But eventually we have a wonderful statement: "The people are bringing much more than enough for the work of this construction that *HASHEM* has commanded to be done.' So, Moshe gave an order, and they proclaimed it throughout the camp saying: 'Let neither man nor woman make anything else as an offering for the Sanctuary'" (Exodus 36:5-6). What a wonderful statement! The people of Yisrael were so generous that Moshe had to stop them from bringing more offerings!

OFFERINGS FOR CHARITY

Our previous Parashah was *Mishpatim*, and Rabbi Packouz makes a connection between these



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texts, saying *Mishpatim* "teaches that a person's money must be his own according to the dictates of justice and the letter of the law" (aish.com). And Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik says, "*Terumah* deals with donations for charity. Before a person gives money to charity, he must be very careful that his money was not acquired by cheating anyone else. If a person gives charity by stealing from others, his charity is not considered charity" (Ibid.). The lesson is: "a *mitsvah* that someone would fulfill by means of violating other commandments is not considered a good deed. When it comes to doing good deeds, the ends do not justify the means. Both the ends and the means must be in accordance with the indication of the Torah" (Ibid.). That is why, in the Besorah of Mattityahu, Yeshua was against those who make a pretext of fulfilling a *mitsvah*, but in the process they violate the 5th commandment: "For *Hashem* said, 'Honor your father and mother' . . . But you say, 'Whoever tells his father or mother, 'Whatever you might have gained from me is a gift to *Hashem*,' he need not honor his father.'" On account of your tradition, you made void the word of God. Hypocrites! Rightly did Isaiah prophesy about you" (Matthew 15:4, 5-7). It is good to give gifts to *Hashem*, but not at the expense of the 5th commandment. We cannot fulfill one *mitsvah* while violating another one as a result.

SANCTUARY'S PURPOSE

The Torah affirms that G-d said to Moshe "And they shall make Me a sanctuary so that I shall dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8). A legitimate question can be asked: Why build a Sanctuary? The purpose of the Sanctuary is very important, as it is an in-depth revelation of *Hashem's* plan. From Creation (*Bereishit*) *Hashem* wanted to dwell with His people. Grammatically, in Exodus 25:8 Moshe should have used the expression *betochô* (singular): "in it" (in the *Mishkan*).

The first command to build the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) is in chapter 25 of *Shemot* (Exodus), with the instructions given until chapter 31. The actual construction of the *Mishkan* and its furnishings begins in Chapter 36 and continues to the end of the book, with the beginning of the dedication of the sanctuary recorded in the last chapter, Exodus chapter 40. Then we find that the dedication of the Sanctuary is completed in *Torat-Ha-Cohanim*, the book *Vayikra* (Leviticus 8-9). The time covered by the entire book of Leviticus is one month, from "the first day of the first month" (Exodus 40:1) when the tabernacle was erected, to "the first day of the second month" (Numbers 1:1). To understand the symbolism of the sanctuary and its services, it is therefore very important to read the entire description from Exodus 25 to 29, then from Exodus 36 to the end of Leviticus.

They shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them. (Exodus 25:8)

The book of Leviticus (*Vayikra*) gives the laws that address the sanctity of the Temple and the sanctification of life. Sanctification means, "to set apart for holy purpose." At the end of the book of Leviticus we read: "If you walk in My statutes and keep My *mitsvot* and carry them out . . . I will set up My Tabernacle among you, and My soul will not abhor you. I will walk among you and will be your God, and you will be My people. I am *HASHEM* your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, so that you would not be their slaves, and I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk upright" (Leviticus 26:3, 11-13). The meaning of the sentence, "I will set up My Tabernacle among you," extends far beyond the presence of *Hashem* in the *Mishkan* or later in the Temple. Its true meaning is the proximity of *Hashem* in our midst, the fulfillment of the covenant between *Hashem* and His people—as we obey His will in our lives, we then experience His protection and blessing.

As we read the history of this world as revealed in the Bible, we discover *Hashem* expressed His desire to dwell among His people at three particular times: in *Gan Eden* with Adam and Chavah (Eve); in the wilderness, among the people of Yisrael; and at the time of His incarnation as *Yeshua HaMashiach*.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATION

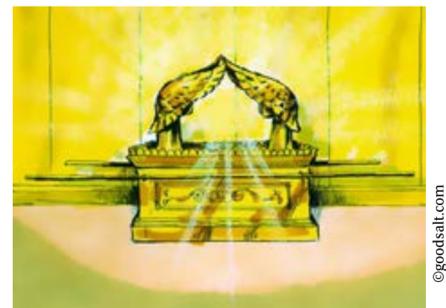
For the Jewish scholars, one of the purposes of God in the Creation was to dwell within the creation. When they ask: Why the Creation? the *chachamim* explain: *Hashem's* motive in creating the universe was "a desire for a dwelling in the lower realms." A dwelling means a home, a place where one's essence is manifest. The term "lower realms" refers to our material universe, in which godliness cannot ordinarily be perceived. "God wants His dwelling to be part and parcel of these lower realms. His intent is not to nullify the limitations of our material existence, but rather to manifest Himself within those limitations" (*Midrash Tanchuma*).

In the *Gan Eden* there was no separation between *Hashem* and His creation. He was able to speak with Adam and Chavah, just as a father and his children talk together. "How great the love of God is! God made

Make an ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high. (...) Make two golden cherubs, hammering them out from the two ends of the cover. (Exodus 25:10,18)

the world to enlarge heaven. He desired a larger family" (White 1908, 5). However, by their sin and disobedience Adam and Chavah broke this relationship. The consequences were that mankind could no longer live in the *Gan Eden* and could not have this direct relationship with their Creator. But *Hashem* did not abandon His goal: He still wanted to dwell among His people. However, this purpose could not now be achieved without providing a way to save men and women from the curse of sin that results in death. How could He save mankind from sin and death, so that He could restore the relationship between *Hashem* and humanity? *Hashem's* Plan of Salvation is illustrated in the *Mishkan* (Sanctuary). It is an illustration of the alternative plan *Hashem* established so that He could dwell among His people. *Hashem* established this plan and used this illustration because of the sinful nature that humanity acquired when Adam and Chavah sinned in the *Gan Eden* (Genesis 3). Because of this sinful nature, we can no longer look upon the face of *Hashem* like Adam and Chavah could see Him in the *Gan Eden*, for sinful human beings would be destroyed in the presence of the holiness of *Hashem*. Moshe sincerely wanted to see *Hashem* and experience His presence. He begged *Hashem*, "Please, show me Your glory!" (Exodus. 33:18). But *Hashem* said to Moshe: "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live" (Exodus 33:20). The mystery of the *Mishkan* (Sanctuary) is that it illustrates *Hashem's* plan to dwell among His people, and to address humanity's quest to "see" *Hashem* and understand how our relationship with our Creator can be re-established. The very manner in which the sanctuary was organized, the materials used, the furniture constructed, the daily and annual services, the biblical feasts, the individual sacrifices, all symbolically represent *Hashem's* love and His Plan of Salvation.

The third time *Hashem* acted to dwell among His people was at the incarnation of Yeshua on this earth. This is one more concept to consider within the order to build the sanctuary: "Have them make Me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them [בְּתוֹכָם *b'tôkhâm*]" (Exodus 25:8 Jewish translation). *Hashem* wants to dwell among His people. To "dwell" means to come on the earth and to live with us. We have noticed that the *Mishkan* is an illustration of the work of the Messiah. According to the teaching of Yeshua, *HaMashiach* is the one who came from heaven to dwell among us: "And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. We looked upon His glory, the glory of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).



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APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

HEBREWS 8:1 - 9:12

The text of the Parashah is about the dwelling of God among His people: "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" (Ex 25:8 ESV). This is the second initiative of *Hashem* to be with His creation, His people. To be among His people was His first intention, expressed at creation—God created humanity to be with them, to love them, to be loved by them and to take care of all their needs (Gen. 2:15; 3:8 ESV), but we know the outcome of this initiative: it was a failure and *Hashem* had to withdraw Himself from the earth. However, He did not give up—He continued to care for them from afar. He protected them, and spoke to some of them, including Kayin, Hevel, Chanoch, Noah, Avraham, Yitschak, Yaakov and Moshe. The experience of Moshe with Yisrael in the wilderness was another crucial time for *Hashem* to once again attempt to live with them, among them and in them. That is why He asked Moshe to speak to Yisrael and to invite them to make a sanctuary for Him (Ex 25:8). The meaning of the sanctuary had much more significance than simply a place for *Hashem* to show His presence among them. The sanctuary built by Yisrael was a copy or a reflection of the true sanctuary or tent which is in heaven. To understand this Jewish concept, let's read what Rabbi Mosh Alshich wrote on the Chabbar.org website: "Who can imagine that God's Presence can be contained on earth, much less in a man-made structure! When Solomon beheld that the presence of God filled the Temple he had built, he was awed. ... Our sages express this by stating that the sanctuary on earth is a reflection God's sanctuary in Heaven."

Reading the narration of Creation, we don't see any mention of a temple or sanctuary in heaven or in the *Gan Eden*. However, in the *Midrash* it is written: "when Yisrael erected the Tabernacle, God told the angels to erect a celestial counterpart" (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:12). This "celestial counterpart" or heavenly sanctuary is the one described in a letter written by a Rabbi to Hebrews, found in the Apostolic Writings (an old tradition assigns this letter to Rabbi Shaul). His discussion of the parallels between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries takes up several chapters, and here is his conclusion based on what he already wrote: "Now here is the main point being said. We do have such a *Cohen Gadol*, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. He is a priestly attendant of the Holies and the true Tent—which *HASHEM* set up, not man" (Heb 8:1-2). The sanctuary or *Mishkan* in the wilderness was a copy of the heavenly sanctuary. That is why the heavenly sanctuary is called: "the true tent which *HASHEM* set up, not man." This tent was built in Heaven and served as a model: "Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it" (Ex 25:9). In the book of Exodus, it is also called the "tent of

meeting" *Ohel Mo'ed*. It was a portable structure that could be transported by Yisrael during their travel in the wilderness. *Hashem* instructed Moshe to copy the exact pattern shown, because every detail of the sanctuary had a meaning and a lesson for His people. These lessons were outlined in this letter to the Hebrews about 1950 years ago. The old age of this letter is important, because it demonstrates that these lessons reflect a Jewish understanding of the Sanctuary and its meaning long before the Jewish-Christian polemic and conflicts of the second and third centuries. Rabbi Shaul was thinking about Yeshua when he wrote: "We do have such a *Cohen Gadol*," knowing that even though Yeshua had some relatives who were descendants of the first *Cohen Gadol*, Aharon, he was not fully a *Cohen*. In all of the texts, he is presented as a descendant of King David, which means from the tribe of Judah. That is why the Rabbi wrote in his letter: "For every *Cohen Gadol* is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, so it is necessary for this One also to have something to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a *Cohen* at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Torah" (Heb 8:3-4). Yeshua is not a usurper—he did not try to take a place which was not his. That is why, in chapter 6, the writer of Hebrews introduces another, older, order of priesthood: "Yeshua has entered there as a forerunner on our behalf, having become *Cohen Gadol* forever, according to the order of Melchitsedek" (Heb 6:20). This is a direct quotation of a Messianic Psalm: "*HASHEM* has sworn, and will not His mind: 'You are a *Cohen* forever according to the order of Melchitsedek'" (Ps 110:4). Here, it is *Hashem* who is speaking to *Mashiach*, affirming that there are two orders of priesthood: a temporary one connected to the wilderness sanctuary with Aharon as the *Cohen Gadol*; and a permanent one connected to the heavenly sanctuary with Yeshua *HaMashiach* as the *Cohen Gadol*.

Rabbi Shaul was a Pharisee, a Doctor of the Torah, and here he is writing about the Sanctuary services in the wilderness: "They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moshe was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, 'See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain'" (Heb 8:5 ESV). Why was the sanctuary and its furnishings a shadow of the heavenly things? Because "now Yeshua has obtained a more excellent ministry, insofar as He is the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises" (Heb 8:6). A sentence like this might be difficult for Jewish ears to hear, but we want to understand the reasoning of the Rabbi-author, without prejudice and presuppositions. With the coming of *Mashiach*, the old things cannot continue in the same way. This is why the Rabbi-author refers to the *Brit Chadasha* (New Covenant) announced by the prophet Jeremiah: "For if that first one had

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

10,000€ was a large amount, the wealthy man approved the loan.

True to his word, the businessman returned the 10,000€ exactly a year later. But the wealthy man noticed that the bills were the very same ones he lent! In fact, they were even in the same order and wrapped with the same string! The wealthy man became very upset.

"Why are you upset?" asked the borrower. "Didn't I give you back the entire amount exactly to the day?"

"Yes, you did. But you didn't make use of it,

been faultless, there would not have been discourse seeking a second. For finding fault with them, He says, Behold, days are coming, says *HASHEM*, when I will inaugurate a new covenant with the house of Yisrael and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not remain in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says *HASHEM*. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Yisrael after those days, says *HASHEM*. I will put My Torah into their mind, and upon their hearts I will write it. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And no more will they teach, each one his fellow citizen and each one his brother, saying, 'Know *HASHEM*,' because all will know Me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more (Heb 8:7-12).

The New Covenant is not an invention of the Christian church—it is a necessity announced by the prophets of Yisrael.

The Christian failure has been their refusal to keep the Torah when the text said explicitly, "I will put My Torah [*Torati*] into their mind, and upon their hearts I will write it" (Heb 8:10). The Torah contains the terms of the covenant with Yisrael, and these same terms apply to the covenant with the followers of Yeshua or the church. Their failure, however, is not an excuse to reject the *Mashiach*. We must focus on what is written in the Tanach and to try to do better than they have done.

We must also correctly understand the last verse of chapter 8: "In saying 'new,' He has treated the first as old; but what is being made old and aging is close to vanishing" (Heb 8:13). What was vanishing was not the Torah or the Ten Commandments, but the old priesthood according to Aharon, with its animal sacrifices at the earthly Temple. This was being replaced by the priesthood according to Melchitsedek in the heavenly Sanctuary. To understand more about this topic, in another chapter we will continue our study of this letter to the Hebrews. It is in chapter 9 where this Rabbi-author specifically talks about the meaning and function of the heavenly tent or sanctuary: "But when *Mashiach* appeared as a *Cohen Gadol* (High Priest) of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect *Ohel* (tent)—not made with hands, that is, not of this creation—he entered once for all [forever *tamid*] into the holy places [*Kodesh*], not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus, securing an eternal redemption [*olamim Geulah*]" (Heb 9:11-12). It was to secure this *Geulah*, according to the Rebbe, that is "the purpose for which *Hashem* created the world." Let's continue to study the purpose of the *Ohel*, *Mishkan* or Sanctuary through chapter 9 of this letter to the Hebrews, along with other texts of the Bible.

you just let it sit there. I could have used this money for my own business. I could have helped many people improve their businesses with this money. Keeping such a large amount in your drawer doing nothing was a real waste!"

The same is with our life, and talents. If we don't use them, they are lost. G-d gave us time, money, talents, everything belong to him and only if we use them for the progress of his cause, they will grow and will be for the benefice of the community and the society.

HAFTARAH

1 KINGS 5:26 - 6:13

Our Haftarah is found in the First book of Kings, beginning with verse 9 in most translations and with verse 26 in Hebrew. The verses preceding our Haftarah portion speak about the relationship between Hiram and Solomon. Hiram was king of the city-states of Tyre and Sidon on the Mediterranean coast, in present-day Lebanon. Hiram was a faithful friend of King David, and sent a large shipment of cedar wood and some carpenters to build David's palace (cf. 2 Samuel 5:11). Then in this chapter, Hiram offers to assist Solomon with any help he might need; Solomon accepts his offer and asks him to help with building the Temple in Jerusalem.

In verse 9 (26), the text repeats that Solomon was blessed with the spiritual gift of wisdom: "God gave Solomon wisdom and discernment in great measure, and a breadth of understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore" (1 Kings 5:9). His wisdom was so great that the text says: "Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men ... and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He also composed 3,000 proverbs and his songs were 1,005. He also spoke about trees, from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall, and he spoke about beasts, birds, creeping things and fish. People came from everywhere to hear the wisdom of Solomon—from all kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom" (1 Kings 5:10-14). Solomon was a great poet and singer. It is clear, however, that not all of the proverbs and songs he wrote have been preserved—in the Bible we have only the book of Proverbs which includes 892 verses, along with the books Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes.

The Tanach also documents the peace treaty signed between Solomon and Hiram: "*HASHEM* gave Solomon wisdom as He promised him, so there was *shalom* between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them cut a covenant" (1 Kings 5:26). The next verse informs us that Solomon raised an army of workers to build the Temple: "King Solomon also imposed forced laborers from all Yisrael—the levy was 30,000 men" (27). Jewish tradition (Rashi) has seen here that Solomon raised enough funds to pay the wages of the workers described in this verse; however, Radak says the verse has to be understood literally, which means Solomon conscripted an army of 30,000 workers to prepare the building of the Temple.

The *Mishkan* (Sanctuary) prepared at Mount Sinai was used by Yisrael for about four hundred eighty years before Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem: "Now it came to pass, 480 years after the children of Yisrael came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of

Solomon's reign over Yisrael, in the month Ziv (which is the second month), that he began to build *HASHEM*'s House" (1 Kings 6:1). Let's construct a brief chronology of Yisrael between the Exodus and the building of the Temple. We believe that the Exodus was in the fifteenth century B.C.E., about 1445 B.C.E. Four hundred and eighty years later, the 4th year of Solomon's reign, brings us to about 965 B.C.E. The reign of David began around the year 1011 B.C.E. and he reigned 40 years. The death of Solomon is generally accepted to be in the year 931/930 B.C.E. after he had reigned 40 years. The month of *Ziv* mentioned in this verse is the current month of *Iyar* or May: the first month is *Nisan*, the month of Passover; the second month is *Iyar*. It was a good month to start building the Temple, because the rainy season had ended and the dry season had begun, thus the mortar would dry quickly.

Let's remember that what Solomon built was planned by King David, who gave to his son all the specifications and plans for the temple, its rooms and furniture (1 Chronicles 28:11-19) which were given to David by the *Ruach Hakodesh*. During the construction, a very interesting precision is revealed: "For the House, while being constructed, was built of stone finished at the quarry; with neither hammer, axe nor any iron tool heard in the House during its construction" (1 Kings 6:7).

It is written that when this building was finished, *Hashem* was satisfied and blessed Solomon. "Then the word of *HASHEM* came to Solomon saying: 'As for this House which you are building, if you will walk in My statutes, execute My ordinances and keep all My *mitsvoth* by walking in them, then I will establish My word with you, which I spoke to your father David, I will dwell among the children of Yisrael, and will not forsake My people Yisrael'" (11-13).

Today, the temple of *Hashem* is within each one of us, and the worship of *Hashem* is no longer connected to a Temple in Jerusalem. Since *Hashem* sends His *Ruach* to all believers, we can meet *Hashem* every day in the privacy of our room. But humans are social beings, that is why we cannot live without others. Thus, since the creation of the world, *Hashem* has asked His people to meet in special places called a Sanctuary, Temple, Synagogue, Church, House of Prayer, congregation, or *kehilah* in Hebrew. Today, just as in ancient times, we need to meet with our brothers and sisters who share the same beliefs. That is why, as did Rabbi Shaul, we encourage each believer to find an appropriate congregation or *kehilah* where they can worship *Hashem* with other people who share their beliefs (Hebrews 10:25).

Speak to the Israelites and have them bring Me an offering. Take My offering from everyone whose heart impels him to give. (Exodus 25:2)

INSPIRATIONAL CORNER

The spot on which the temple was built had long been regarded as a consecrated place. It was here that Abraham, the father of the faithful, had revealed his willingness to sacrifice his only son in obedience to the command of Hashem. Here God had renewed with Abraham the covenant of blessing, which included the glorious Messianic promise to the human race of deliverance through the sacrifice of the Son of the Most High. See Genesis 22:9, 16-18. Here it was that when David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to stay the avenging sword of the destroying angel, God had answered him by fire from heaven. See 1 Chronicles 21. And now once more the worshipers of Hashem were here to meet their God and renew their vows of allegiance to Him.

(PK, 37)

