

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

We pray every week for the Jewish Friendship Ministry and their partner. I suggest our friends to pray from February 28 through March 6, for Ruslan Drumi, and Sergiu Caraus, who are, with their team, the leaders of Jewish Adventist Friendship ministry in Chicago, Il (USA). As we know our ministry is not easy, especially in this time of pandemic, when travels are not allowed, that is why Ruslan Drumi, and Sergiu Caraus need more than ever before our prayers.

NEWS

SHUSHAN PURIM

Looking at a Jewish calendar, we see that *Purim* is on the 14th of *Adar*, which falls on the 26th of February this year. It always comes one month before *Pesach*, which is an easy way to remember the date. On the years when the Jewish people add a thirteen month, *Adar II* (*VeAdar* in Hebrew), *Purim* is celebrated on the last month of the year, not on *Adar*, but on the 14th of *Adar II*.

This year, the Jewish calendar lists *Shabbat*, the 27th of February, as a regular *Shabbat* with the reading of *Parashat Tetsaveh*, but on the following day, Sunday, February 28th, it is written: *Shushan Purim*. What is the meaning of *Shushan Purim*?

Shushan is a city located in modern-day southwestern Iran. We read on Chabad.org: "The battles fought between the Jews and their enemies throughout the Persian empire took place on 13 *Adar*. Around the world, the Jews rested and celebrated on the following day—14 *Adar*. In the capital city of Shushan, however, where there were a greater number of Jew-haters, the fighting continued for two days, 13 and 14 *Adar*. The victory celebrations in Shushan were thus held on the 15th."

Thus, to remember what happened in the city of Shushan, a special celebration was declared for the 15th of *Adar*. However, *Purim* can never fall on *Shabbat*, that is why when a *Shabbat* interrupts the three days of the feast, the celebration of the 15th is scheduled for the following day, which means Sunday, the 16th of *Adar*. That is why *Shushan Purim* is celebrated this year on Sunday, the 28th of February, which correspond to the 16th of *Adar*.

On that day, Sunday, *Adar* 16, in addition to prayers of thanksgiving, Jews will be sending gifts of food to poor Jewish people to be sure that everyone will have enough food to celebrate and rejoice in the L-rd for His deliverance and victory in the city of Shushan.

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 Haman) 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, Achashverosh, 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 ourselves from Covid-19, why not teach how to decorate and paint our masks with *Purim* symbols.

LAST ISSUE OF THIS NEWSLETTER

We inform our readers that *Parashat Vayakhel-Pikudey*, which completes the book of Exodus/*Shemot* On March 13, will be the last newsletter produced and sent by the World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center.

We understand the frustration of our readers, particularly of the leaders of Jewish Adventist Congregations, however, 8 years of former issues of the newsletter can be found on our website:

<https://wjafc.globalmissioncenters.org/>

Just remember that to have access to the material published on this website you have to register and get permission to access it.

We are producing a set of books on the *Parashoth*, *Haftaroth* and Apostolic Writings, in order to replace the newsletter. *Genesis* and *Exodus* are already published, and we are working to publish *Leviticus*, *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy* as soon as possible.

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SHABBAT

SHALOM

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PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

TETSAVEH

תצַוֶּה

PARASHA OVERVIEW:

EXODUS 27:20 - 30:10

G-d tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to supply pure olive oil for the *menorah* of the *Mishkan* (Tent of Meeting).

He also tells Moshe to organize the making of the *bigdei kehuna* (priestly garments): A breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate, and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons.

This includes offering sacrifices, dressing

Aharon and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil. G-d commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the altar in the *Mishkan*. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering and libations of wine and oil.

G-d commands that an altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this altar every day.

TETSAVEH-YOU ARE TO COMMAND

T*tsaveh* תצַוֶּה is the Hebrew word for, “You are to command,” or “You shall command.” Those familiar with these texts recognize within this word the frequently used word, *Mitsvah*, which means “commandment.” Both words, *Tetsaveh* and *Mitsvah* have the same root; *Tetsaveh* is in fact the verb form of *Mitsvah*. This expression would be understood as: “You received the Torah at Sinai in order to transmit it to Yisrael. The study and knowledge of the Torah must be considered as a *mitsvah* of the highest order.”

THE INCENSE FOR THE ALTAR

The incense and the light of the candelabra represented something which goes up from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place, to the Holy of Holies, which represented the throne of *Hashem*. This refers to something that goes up from the earth to heaven, into the presence of *Hashem*—the incense therefore represents our prayers. As they arise to *Hashem*, our prayers are a pleasant fragrance to Him, Who receives them with pleasure. Yochanan confirms this interpretation in the book of *Hitgalut* (Revelation) as the twenty-four elders were shown to him: “the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense—which are the prayers of the *kedoshim*” (Revelation 5:8b). The incense in the bowls represents the prayers of the *kedoshim* or saints, referring to all the believers.

The lamp, the *Menorah*, was to burn, “In the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain which is before the Testimony” (Exodus 27:21). The most common name of the Tabernacle, as it is translated by Rabbi Hirsch, is “Tent of Appointed Meeting” or *Ohel Mo'ed* אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד. *Ohel* means “the tent,” and *Mo'ed* is the appointed time, or—as here—the place for such a meeting. *Ohel Mo'ed* is the place designated especially for the revelation of *Hashem's* presence in Yisrael, through their acceptance of the Torah and total commitment to it. The “Tent of Appointed Meeting” was the place where *Hashem* revealed Himself to Moshe, spoke to him and gave him all the instructions that were for the sake of Yisrael. In addition, it was the place where each day Yisrael renewed her covenant with *Hashem*, a place for Yisrael to meet together with *Hashem*.

According to Rabbi Hirsch, the Sanctuary is the place of the Word and the source of the light: the *Ohel Mo'ed* is the Tent of Meeting with *Hashem* and is constantly receiving the nurture of the light of the “tree of life” for the nation’s spiritual growth.

THE GOLDEN BELLS

Another question is asked about the golden bells which were on the robe of the *Cohen Gadol*. The text says: “It must be worn by Aharon whenever he ministers. The sound will be heard when he goes into the holy place before *HASHEM*” (Exodus 28:35). A popular understanding is that this robe carrying these bells was worn during the service of the *Cohen Gadol* on *Yom Kippur* in the *Kodesh Hakodashim* (Holy of Holies). Is this correct or not? It is a legitimate question, and perhaps the answer to this question should wait until the book on *Vayikra* (Leviticus). According to the *Torah*, the *Cohen Gadol's* clothes for *Yom Kippur* were: “He is to put on the holy linen garment, have the linen undergarments on his body, put on the linen sash, and wear the linen turban—they are the holy garments. He



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shall bathe his body in water, and put them on” (Leviticus 16:4). When the *Cohen Gadol* was in the *Kodesh Hakodashim* (the Holy of Holies) on *Yom Kippur*, he did not wear his robe with the pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet, and the golden bells, but only the holy white linen robe, the white linen undergarment, the white linen sash tied at his waist and a white linen turban. The special robe described in Exodus 28:33-35 was worn by the *Cohen Gadol* to perform his daily service of offering the incense on the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place, as it is written in Exodus 28:35: “It must be worn by Aharon whenever he ministers. The sound will be heard when he goes into the Holy Place before *HASHEM* and when he comes out, so that he does not die.” While performing his service in the Holy Place, the High Priest is to be alone; that is why before entering the tabernacle, the bells announced that he was coming, and all other priests must leave the Holy Place—that was the condition so that the other priests would not die.

THE COHANIM

The first verse of Exodus 28 begins the instructions directly pertaining to the *Cohen Gadol* and his family, the *cohanim*: “Bring your brother Aharon near with his sons from among *Bnei-Yisrael*, so that they may minister to Me as *cohanim*—Aharon and his sons Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Itamar” (Exodus 28:1). Everyone whose name is Cohen, Kohen, Khan, etc., is a descendant of Aharon the first *cohen*, and the *Cohen Gadol*. *Cohen* is a Hebrew word which means “priest,” thus potentially everyone who bears this name is a priest in Yisrael, even though the temple does not exist anymore.

The responsibilities, the services the high priest performed, and even his clothes were all designed in a particular manner to represent *Mashiach*, who was to become a High Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord’s direction was, “Aharon will bear the names of *Bnei Yisrael* in the breastplate of judgment on his heart, whenever he enters the Holy Place, as a continual memorial before *HASHEM*” (Exodus 28:29). So *Mashiach*, our great High Priest, pleads His blood before the Father in the sinner’s behalf, bearing upon His heart the name of every repentant believer, offering him forgiveness and atonement. According to our rabbis, the clothes of the *Cohen Gadol* not only brought forgiveness; they also brought *kapparah*, the special level of forgiveness that wipes out the very memory of sin. Even so, *Hashem* clothes us with “garments of salvation,” and covers us with “a robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10).

We find the association between clothing, sin and forgiveness much earlier in the Torah. Following the sin of Adam *Harishon* and Chavah in *Gan Eden*, when they both partook of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, it is written: “Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made for themselves loin-coverings” (Genesis 3:7). This was an attempt to cover up their

You, [Moses], must command the Israelites to bring you clear illuminating oil, made from hand crushed olives, to keep the lamp constantly burning. (Exodus 27:20)

sin (symbolized by nakedness) by their own works. However, later in that same chapter, after *Hashem* finished His exposition concerning the various consequences of their sin, it is written: “*HASHEM Elohim* made Adam and his wife tunics of skin and He clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). *Hashem* is the One who successfully covered their sin. Forgiveness is an action of *Hashem*.

“Put these on your brother Aharon and on his sons as well; anoint them, and ordain them [literally “and fill their hands” *umille?u et-yadam* וַיִּמְלֵא אֶת יְדֵיהֶם] and consecrate them to serve Me as priests” (Exodus 28:41 JPS).

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig says Rashi explains in *Tanchuma Teruma* that the expression “fill their hands” refers to the act of ordination. Rashi adds that in medieval times, a newly inaugurated official had a gauntlet placed in his hand to symbolize his new position of authority. Similarly, explains Rashi, the Torah uses the expression “filling the hands” to indicate the conferring of a new authority. However, the Ramban questions the fact that Rashi associates a medieval custom with the usage of the expression in the Torah. What bearing should this medieval practice have on the definition of a Torah expression? A person’s hands reflect his state of mind. If a person moves in an agitated manner, he is revealing that he is nervous and insecure—traits which are usually present in an unfulfilled individual. Placing something in a person’s hand for him to grasp, stabilizes his hand. Placing the gauntlet in the official’s hand indicated a desire for him to be fulfilled. In the vernacular, we use the expression “having a grip on things” to indicate competency. Rashi is not mentioning a historical custom to explain the definition of the word. Rather, Rashi is explaining that the psychological and emotional reason behind this medieval custom offers an insight into the human condition. This insight can be used to explain why the Torah refers to the inauguration process as ‘filling the hands.’ We are expressing our confidence that the newly appointed individual will perform his responsibilities competently and will find his fulfillment through this service. (torah.org)

Now the text turns to the instructions for the ordination of the priests: “Now this is what you are to do to consecrate them, so that they may minister as *cohanim*” (Exodus 29:1). Immediately after clothing them with all these holy garments, the first act to ordain the *cohanim* was to offer a bull for their sins:

“Make a decision breastplate. It shall be a patterned brocade like the ephod. Make it out of gold [thread], sky-blue, dark red and crimson wool and twined linen.” (Exodus 28:15)

“You are to bring the bull before the Tent of Meeting, and Aharon and his sons are to lay their hands on its head. You are to slaughter the bull before *HASHEM* at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting” (Exodus 29:10-11).

Rabbi Inimi bar Sason asks: “Why did the Torah list the instructions regarding the offering of sacrifices immediately adjacent to the instructions that relate to the garments of the *kohanim* (priests)?” His answer: “To teach us that just as sacrifices are offered to atone for sins, the clothes of the *kohanim* teach us also about forgiveness and atonement” (Rabbi Noson Weisz, aish.com).

Hebrew has three different words to express the idea of forgiveness: *slichah*, *mechilah* and *kapparah*. The Gaon of Vilna explains that these words are not synonyms; each of them expresses a different idea. 1) When we fail to live up to the standards *Hashem* has set for us—even though our failure is caused by sloppiness and lack of attention rather than by active rebellion against *Hashem's* edicts—we sin against God our Father. According to the Jewish tradition, this type of sin is expressed in Hebrew as *chet*, a word whose precise meaning is ‘a wrongful deed committed without thought’ (missing the target), and the type of forgiveness required is called *slichah* in Hebrew. *Slichah* means that God our Father will retain His optimism concerning our ultimate success and will continue to invest in us despite our disappointing performance to date. 2) As *Hashem's* subjects, our sins of rebellion are particularly damaging. Sins of rebellion are known as *p’shaim* and the type of forgiveness required for them is known as *mechilah*; this type of forgiveness represents the King’s consent to continue to accept His wayward subjects and to continue to grant them the privileges of citizenship despite their rejection of His authority. 3) The third level of forgiveness is “atonement” or *kapparah*. With *Hashem* we have the opportunity to entirely overcome the past through a process known as *kapparah*. This atonement, called *kapparah*, is a level of forgiveness that leaves no trace or blemish of sin and allows the sinner to appear in *Hashem's* eyes as spiritually fresh and clean as the day he was born. Jews do not ask for *kapparah* in their daily prayers at all. This level of forgiveness is only attainable on special occasions such as *Yom Kippur* (aish.com).

All these descriptions of the *Cohen Gadol*, his garments, the breastplate, the *ephod* and the precious stones on it are given to describe the preciousness of *Hashem's* people in the eyes of *Mashiach* and *Hashem*. We know that the *Cohen Gadol* symbolically represents the *Mashiach*; the breastplate and the *ephod* represent His love for His people that He knows personally by name, just as each name of the children of Yaakov were engraved on the stones of the *ephod* and breastplate. Let’s praise the Lord for His great love!



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APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8

In the Parashah, Moshe continues to give his instructions about the building of the sanctuary and its furnishing. Among the most important elements are the garments of the High Priest. Through his garments and the breastplate, the *Kohen Gadol* kept God's people on his heart. The high priest was the representative of God on earth, that is why the breastplate and its twelve precious stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel, on the heart of the high priest was a demonstration of God's love for his people.

All the services of the sanctuary were given by God to his people in order to teach them his love and his plan of salvation for them. To implement this plan of salvation God has designated a Savior, which is called by others "The Messiah." However, it is clear in the *Tanach* that God is the Savior, "For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." (Isaiah 43:3), And there is no other Savior than God, "You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no God was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior." (Isaiah 43:10-11), that is why the High Priest carrying on his heart the breastplate, is the representative of God. Since there is no other Savior than God, the Character called in the Bible the Messiah is in fact God. And since the *Mishkan* was an illustration of the Plan of salvation it is a description of the role of the Messiah/God in this plan. In the comments of last week we have discovered that the early sanctuary was a copy of the real sanctuary which is in heaven. That means the high priest and his ministry in the Sanctuary are the reflection of the ministry of the Messiah/God in heaven.

The Messiah/God came on earth, in the person of Yeshua, to fulfill the first phase of his ministry. It is difficult to understand it, but Yeshua was not a man who has been made God by his people, but yeshua is God who came on the earth: "Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Messiah Yeshua, Who, though existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be grasped. But He emptied Himself— taking on the form of a slave, becoming the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man. He humbled Himself— becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:5-8), after his ministry on the earth he went back to heaven, "as they [the disciples] were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9), that is why the letter to Hebrews affirms "Now the point in what we are saying is this:

we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man." (Hebrews 8:1-2), Yeshua is in heaven, he is officiating in the heavenly tabernacle. The Torah says that the priesthood did not start with Aaron and the *Levites*. Jethro was a priest, and before him, in the time of Abraham, the priest was Melchizedek. Melchizedek was recognized as Priest of the most high by Abraham himself (Genesis 14), and king David said about Melchizedek "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.'" (Psalms 110:4), Melchizedek's order is not the order of Leviticus, and it is forever, it will never cease. Why this order is forever? Because it has been established by God (not the man Moses). The whole Psalm 110 is a messianic text, "your mighty scepter" of the verse 2, is the scepter mentioned by Yaakov in his prophecy about Judah and the Shiloh (Messiah) of Genesis 49:10. Melchizedek I understood as the Messiah because also what the text of Hebrews says about him in chapter 7, verses 2 and 3 "He is: 1) King of righteousness; 2) King of Salem —Jerusalem; 3) King of peace; 4) He is without father; 5) mother or genealogy; 6) neither beginning of days; 7) nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God; 8) he continues a priest forever." Here are all the characteristics of the Messiah, Jeremiah calls him "God our righteousness" (23:5), he is successor of King David in Jerusalem, According to the Bible Righteousness and Peace are going together (Psalm 85:10), and the Messiah is without father or mother or genealogy, neither beginning of days nor end of life (Micah 5:1). Melchizedek is called "king of peace" the Messiah is "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:5)

The text of the letter to the Philippians is first a call to humility: "Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Messiah Yeshua, Who, though existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be grasped." However, the text reveals a very deep truth, this truth can be understood only with humility, prayer and the help of the *Ruach HaKodesh*, "Messiah Yeshua, Who, though existing in the form of God" Yeshua, who is presented as the Machiach in the Apostolic Writings, "existed" before his coming to the earth, before his incarnation, before being the baby boy of Myriam, he "existed in the form of God" that means he was God, that is exactly what Yochanan (John) said at the beginning of his Besorah, "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1), at the "beginning was the word" we already estab-

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

shall become leaders of the community.

Next, they came to a city where everyone was most hospitable. Everyone wanted them to be their guest. Before they left, Elijah said to the people, "May it be the will of G-d that you have only one leader!"

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi was puzzled. He asked Elijah, "Why, in the first city where the people were rude, you blessed them

lished in our first volume of this series on *Bereishit* (Genesis) that Mashiach was present at the creation and as the Jewish people affirm it, the world was created by the Word of God (Elofer 2001, 61). Yochanan and Rabbi Shaul agree together to say that Mashiach was at the beginning, if Rabbi Shaul said he "existed in the form of God" Yochanan says: "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." The most important point to understand here is that Yeshua was not a man who has been made god by his followers, no, Yeshua was already God, before his incarnation, who has been made man by a great miracle. As it is written in Philippians 2: "He emptied Himself— taking on the form of a slave, becoming the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man" it is God who took the "appearance of a man," and in order of "becoming the likeness of men," he did not just appear as a man as we see appearance of angels in the Tanach, no, he emptied himself, took the place of a small germ in the womb of Myriam, and went through all the process of become a man, that is why the Messiah is called a "sprout" of a "germ" in Isaiah it is written: "In that day the bud of the Lord shall be in magnificence and glory," (Isaiah 4:2 DOUAY) בְּיוֹם הַהוּא יִצְמַח צֶמְחָה בְּיָהוּהוּ *bayyôm hahû? yihyê semah* the word *semah* or *tsemah* is clearly a "germ" or a "sprout" which was translated by "the branch" that is why we prefer this translation "Douay" which is closest to the original by translating "the bud." This idea is present in many prophecies about Mashiach: "Behold, days are coming" —it is a declaration of ADONAI— "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch [*semah*], and He will reign as king wisely, and execute justice and righteousness in the land." (Jeremiah 23:5) "In those days and at that time, I will cause a Branch [*semah*] of Righteousness to spring up [*asimah*] for David, and He will execute justice and righteousness in the land." (Jeremiah 33:15, cf. Zechariah. 3:8; 6:12). Yeshua existed in form of God, he was God before coming on earth, and knowing what was his mission, he "did not consider being equal to God a thing to be grasped" that means even though he was equal to God, he accepted to come and to fulfill his mission. He emptied himself of the divinity, he did not try to catch it up or to hold it strongly, but he decided by himself to come on earth in order to save humanity from an eternal death and loss. "He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:8), that was the price to pay for our salvation. Thus, as the Apostle invites us: "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16).

that they should all be leaders. Yet in this city, where the people were nice, you said that they should have only one leader?"

Elijah answered, "My wish that they all be leaders wasn't a blessing at all. A community with many leaders is going to have trouble. On the other hand, blessed is the community that has only one leader!"

HAFTARAH

EZEKIEL 43:10-27

Earlier in the book of Ezekiel we have seen that God has left Jerusalem and the Temple, that is why the Temple could be destroyed by the king of Babylon. But now in this chapter 43 we see that God is coming back to his new temple. God has never abandoned His people. The Temple will be rebuilt, and God will come back into it in exactly the same manner as He had left it. His glory will once again fill the temple. At the beginning of the chapter 43, we see that the glory of God is coming to the Temple: "Then he led me to the gate, the gate looking east, and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters. The earth was radiant with His glory." (Ezekiel 43:1-2). In the time of Moses, this glory was called the *Shekhinah*, the presence of God among his people. God is willing to dwell again with his people in their new Temple. However, this presence of God in the new Temple does not mean that God will not be accessible at the other part of the world or by other nations. God is the creator of the universe and cannot be kept in only one place, God is everywhere in the same time, but it is written that the Glory of God will be in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

Then Ezekiel is transported in spirit inside of the temple, and there he hear the voice of God speaking, giving a wonderful promise to the prophet about his people, the voice said: "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name." (Ezekiel 43:7)

Then start the text of the Haftarah for this parasha, "As for you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and they shall measure the plan." (Ezekiel 43:10). God is always a God of love, a God who forgives His people, that is why at the beginning of this chapter he described to Ezekiel how His glory will dwell again in the temple, and how he will forgive Israel for what they have done. God would like to see Israel to be ashamed about their sins. After promising His presence in the Temple, God continue to give instruction to Ezekiel "make known to them the design of the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, that is, its whole design;" (Ezekiel 43:11). Ezekiel cannot keep for himself the description of the Temple, but he is invited to share this vision with the house of Israel. And not only the building of the Temple, but also all the laws about the work and services in the temple "make known to them as well all its statutes and its whole design and all its laws, and write it down in their sight, so that

they may observe all its laws and all its statutes and carry them out." (Ezekiel 43:11)

The altar is built in three stages on a wide base. It is ten cubits high (43:13,14). In modern measurements, this is about seventeen feet, or five meters, high. Its top stage called the hearth in the text because it is where the fires were to be lighted, was twelve cubits square (about twenty-and-a-half feet or just over six meters). This impressive structure was built to essentially the same dimensions as the altar of the temple built by Solomon (2 Chronicles 4:1) As it is so high it was reached by means of steps on its east side (Ezekiel 43:17). As the priest mounted the steps, he would be facing the doors of the temple within which was the glory of God.

It is clear that this Temple is not a heavenly temple or even a future temple after the second coming of Yeshua, because in this Temple should be offered again sacrifice: "And he said to me, 'Son of man, thus says the Lord GOD: These are the ordinances for the altar: On the day when it is erected for offering burnt offerings upon it and for throwing blood against it,' (Ezekiel 43:18). Yeshua has fulfilled all this bloodshed by his own sacrifice, after the coming of the Messiah God does not need anymore any sacrifice, they were given to Israel to teach them about the supreme sacrifice of Mashiach. That means this description is the description of the new temple after the coming back of the people of Israel to their promise land after the deportation of Babylon. Does the Temple built by Esdras, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, Joshua and their companions is this temple of the Book of Ezekiel? We don't know, maybe they have followed some specifications and maybe they have not follow some other specifications, but what is sure is that this temple will not be built in the future. Not as the will of God in order to forgive Israel, because the purpose of the Sanctuary in the wilderness and then the Temple in Jerusalem was to announce the coming of the Messiah.

This vision of Ezekiel is here again to remind us how the plan of salvation set by Hashem from before the creation of the universe is important. All the visions of Hashem are demonstrations of His love. Considering the universe and its beauty, his continuous extension, we can guess how beautiful and great is our God, but this great God did not hesitate to invest on us, humanity, sinners with a so bad heart. For the last 6000 years all the attention of Hashem has been towards this very small planet, the earth. Thus, we can be sure that God will lead this planet to its achievement, that means eternal salvation.

INSPIRATIONAL CORNER

On the south was the seven-branched candlestick, with its seven lamps.

Its branches were ornamented with exquisitely wrought flowers, resembling lilies, and the whole was made from one solid piece of gold. There being

no windows in the tabernacle, the lamps were never all extinguished at one time, but shed their light by day and by night.

Just before the veil separating the holy place from the most holy and the immediate presence of God, stood the golden

altar of incense. Upon this altar the priest was to burn incense every

morning and evening; its horns were touched with the blood of the sin offering, and it was sprinkled

with blood upon the great Day of Atonement. The

fire upon this altar was kindled by God Himself

and was sacredly cherished. Day and night the holy incense diffused its fragrance throughout the

sacred apartments, and without, far around the tabernacle. (PP 348)

Make sacred vestments that are both dignified and beautiful for your brother Aaron. (Exodus 28:2)



HOW MANY LEADERS?

Talmudic sage Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi once traveled with Elijah the Prophet. They came to a city where they intended to stay over night. The people were very rude and no one invited them into their homes. The next day, before departing, Elijah said to them, "May it be the will of G-d that all of you