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SHABBAT SHALOM NEWSLETTER

SHABBAT HACHODESH,

VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI

ויקהל-פקודי

EXODUS 35:1 - 40:38

## LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

*We pray every week for the Jewish Friendship Ministry and their partner. Since this newsletter is the last one, I suggest our friends to pray from March 14 through 20, for these newsletters' translators, their full name is written in the news for this week: Carlos, Alexandra, Claudia, Hubert, Yaw Heiser, Sabine and Joseph. And Please, don't forget to pray all the year for the leaders of this ministry and for the Jewish people living in your area.*

## NEWS

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

#### THIS NEWSLETTER IS THE LAST ISSUE PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD JEWISH ADVENTIST FRIENDSHIP CENTER

We have informed our readers that this *Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudey*, which completes the book of Exodus/*Shemot* is the last newsletter produced and sent by the World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center.

This issue is the 916th, which means we have published a newsletter every week for the last 18 years. Without the support and subscription of every one of you, we would certainly not have persevered so many years in this production. That is why we would like to thank everyone for their support, advice and help. It has been a pleasure to write and prepare this newsletter. Even though not everyone opens and reads this newsletter, it is interesting to know that we have about 1,500 subscribers, approximately 1,200 for the English version and 300 for all other languages combined.

We also acknowledge that without Divine support this newsletter could not be produced. Our gratefulness and gratitude are overwhelmingly addressed to the Sustainer of everything in the universe, our G-d, His *Mashiach* Yeshua, and His Spirit, the *Ruach Hakodesh*.

I would like to thank all the translators who have worked so hard to be sure this newsletter would be published on time. Even though I know that behind each translation there is team of faithful members, I would like to thank each leader for his personal involvement in this work: Carlos Muniz (Portuguese), Alexandra Obrevko (Russian/Ukrainian), Claudia Masiero (Spanish and Italian), Hubert Paulleta, (Dutch), Yaw Heiser (German), Sabine Roy and Joseph du Mesnil d'Engente (French). I ask everyone to pray for them this coming week.

Thanks also to Connie my new assistant who started to edit the newsletter a few months ago.

We have already received many words of appreciation from people who said that they will be missing this newsletter which they looked forward to every week.

While not giving the names of the writers, here

are some emails I received:

— "I'm sorry to hear the Newsletter will be discontinued. It has supplied a current weekly "connection" to the WJAFc for many people. I think this will be a large loss to many people."

— "I am sorry to hear about your future retirement but I want to personally say a big Thank You to your ministry in my life as you share your love and wisdom to me and others. Once again thank you for everything."

— "May G-d continue to richly bless you and your family in your new adventures post retirement in August. I am going to miss you terribly but I understand that there is a time for everything including retirement. All the best in advance!"

— "I want you to know, how very much I have appreciated your ministry, support and service for the last almost seven years. It's been an exciting, enlightening and highly valued journey of learning, discovery and orientation since May 2014. Today, the synagogue is a welcoming place of familiarity and love with almost 'pseudo-ownership' of the liturgy, Siddur, festivals and services, for which I thank you so much. Your people have become our people – Friends. I look forward to reading all of the books."

— "On behalf of this team, I would personally like to thank you, pastor Richard, for giving us the privilege and opportunity to be deeply involved in our ministry, which we embrace."

— "My wife Peggy and I are grateful to have been a part of this extremely important end time prophecy ministry WJAFc. On behalf of our team, we are truly grateful to say that our faith in Yeshua has been strengthened to a great extent, in breadth, and length, and depth, and height."

— "It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to translate the newsletter. It has been a great honor and a huge learning experience, which has provided me with great growth."

— "The book of Genesis is a great blessing. Just as Rabbi Shaul's work was a landmark from Jews to Gentiles, I am sure your work is and will be a landmark to Jews who do not yet know Yeshua as The Messiah, and for that I am very grateful to have been a part of this project."

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**English Edition:**  
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**Portuguese Edition:**  
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**Russian Edition:**  
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## SHABBAT SHALOM

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## PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

### VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI

ויקהל-פקודי

## PARASHA OVERVIEW:

EXODUS 35:1 - 40:38

### Vayakhel

Moshe Rabbeinu exhorts Bnei Yisrael (children of Israel) to keep Shabbat, and requests donations for the materials for making the Mishkan. He collects gold, silver, precious stones, skins and yarn, as well as incense and olive oil for the menorah and for anointing.

The princes of each tribe bring the precious stones for the Kohen Gadol's breastplate and ephod.

G-d appoints Betzalel and Oholiav as the master craftsmen.

Bnei Yisrael contribute so much that Moshe begins to refuse donations.

Special curtains with two different covers were designed for the Mishkan's roof and door.

Gold-covered boards in silver bases were connected, forming the Mishkan's walls.

Betzalel made the Holy Ark (which contained the Tablets) from wood covered with gold.

On the Ark's cover were two figures facing each other.

The menorah and the table with the showbreads were also of gold.

Two altars were made: a small incense altar of wood overlaid with gold, and a larger altar for sacrifices made of wood covered with copper.

### Pekudey

The Book of Shemot concludes with this Parasha. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the Mishkan, Moshe gives a complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels which had been fashioned. Bnei Yisrael bring everything to Moshe.

He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to G-d's specifications.

Moshe blesses the people. G-d speaks to Moshe and tells him that the Mishkan should be set up on the first day of the first month, (Nissan). He also tells Moshe the order of assembly for the Mishkan and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner.

When the Mishkan is finally complete with every vessel in its place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that G-d's glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the Mishkan, Bnei Yisrael would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

## SANCTITY OF SHABBAT

Just before calling for donations to build the sanctuary, this Parashah repeats the *mitsvah* of *Shabbat*: "Work is to be done for six days, but the seventh day is a holy day for you, a *Shabbat* of complete rest to *HASHEM*. Whoever does any work then will die. Do not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on *Yom Shabbat*" (Exodus 35:2-3). This is the second time, in Exodus 31 and now in Exodus 35, that *Hashem* introduces the commandment of observing *Shabbat* within the larger section that is in connection with the building of the *Mishkan*. In this chapter, the command of *Shabbat* begins with the sentence: "These are the words which *HASHEM* has commanded you to do" (35:1), אלה הדברים אשר צוה יהוה לעשות, (35:1), *ellē hadd'vārim* אשר-*tsivwā yhw* la-*ōsōt* *ōtām* and ends with the sentence: "This is the word which *HASHEM* commanded" (Exodus 35:4), זה הדבר אשר צוה יהוה לעשות, *zē haddāvār* אשר-*tsivwā yhw* lē-*mōr*. The way verses 1 to 4 are written expresses the teaching that *Shabbat* supersedes everything, even the building of the Sanctuary. In this section, the commandment of *Shabbat* is juxtaposed with the construction of the *Mishkan*. That is why the Jewish tradition has made a connection between the building of the Sanctuary and *Shabbat*. From this section, the Jewish people infer that the activities required for carrying out the construction of the *Mishkan* constitute the concept of the "work" that is prohibited on *Shabbat*. This passage also demonstrates that even though the construction of a Temple for *Hashem* is important, the *Shabbat* is even more important.

In verse 1, the plural form of "word" (*devarim*) is used, and then this plural form is especially stressed by a repetition with the last word *otam* (them). In verse 4, the singular form of "word" is used. The plural of verse 1, "words," refers to the work of the sanctuary, that is to say, every one of these activities may be performed only during the six weekdays, but not on *Shabbat*. Every activity required for the construction of the Sanctuary is considered as a "work" forbidden on *Shabbat*. The Jewish people have made a list of the work done in the construction of the Sanctuary, to say that there are 39 kinds of work forbidden on *Shabbat* (*Shabbat* 49b). These kinds of work are listed by Maimonides, the *Rambam*: sowing, plowing, cutting, gathering, threshing, winnowing, selecting, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing, washing, combing, dyeing, spinning, setting up the warp, making two loops, weaving, splitting thread, tying a knot, untying a knot, sewing, tearing in order to sew, trapping, slaughtering, skinning, salting, tracing of lines, scraping and smoothing the hide, cutting the hide, writing, erasing in order to write, building, demolishing in order to build, extinguishing in order to rekindle, kindling, hitting with a hammer and carrying from one domain to another (*Mishneh Torah, Shabbat* Chapter 7).



## A DAY OF PEACE

As we have already said, the Ten Commandments are a summary of all the commandments we have in the Torah. Thus we read the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment, which says: "Remember [*Zachor*] *Yom Shabbat*, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8-11). And the second version: "Observe [*Shamor*] *Yom Shabbat* to keep it holy" (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). Neither of these versions of the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment say very much about "how" to keep *Shabbat*. It is through reading other texts in the Bible that we discover many instructions about *Shabbat*. In our chapter 35, verse 3, we learn one of these instructions: "Do not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on *Yom Shabbat*" (Exodus 35:3). The Jewish people have seen two applications to this prohibition of "kindling a fire on *Shabbat*." The first is a literal prohibition of using fire on *Shabbat*. To help Jews fulfill this commandment they have extended this prohibition, erecting a barrier around everything which could be connected to fire, such as starting an engine, or using electricity. Secondly, they have also seen this prohibition as a metaphor about "fire in relationship"—be careful not to kindle the "fire of dispute." *Shabbat* is a day of *Shalom* or "peace." That is why Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky has noticed that the three Hebrew words אֵשׁ בְּכֹל מוֹשְׁבֵי־בְיָמֵיךְ *ēs b'khōl mōšbōtēkhem* "fire in all your dwellings" end with the letters *Shin, Lamed* and *Mem*, the three letters that form the word *Shalom* in Hebrew. This call for peace was also the concern of Yeshua when he said, "You have heard it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever commits murder shall be subject to judgment'" (Matthew 5:21). Yeshua was a Jew, thinking in a Jewish way, and he wanted to help his followers not to break this law. That is why he extended it, saying: "But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be subject to judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca' shall be subject to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be subject to fiery Gehenna" (Matthew 5:22). What a strong statement from Yeshua! In fact, if we kindle a fire of dispute, being angry with our brother or insulting him, we will receive the consequence of this fire you have kindled.

## ZACHOR AND SHAMOR

Regarding the two versions of the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment (Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) the *Midrash* (*Yalkut Shimoni*) explains, "Remember" the *Shabbat* beforehand, and "Guard it" afterwards..."—meaning that *Shabbat* is

The men accompanied the women, and those who wanted to make a donation brought bracelets, earrings, finger rings, and body ornaments, all made of gold. There were also all the ones who donated a wave offering of gold to G-d. (Exodus 35:22)

so special and important that we should begin it early and finish it late. We find the same idea in this Parashah: "But the seventh day is a holy day for you, a *Shabbat* of complete rest to *HASHEM*..." (Exodus 35:2). In this verse, the word "holy," *kodesh*, precedes the word *Shabbat*; however, in *Parashat Beshallah* (Exodus 16:23) in a virtually identical expression, the word *Shabbat* precedes *kodesh*. In other words, in this Parashah the Torah says the word *kodesh* should come before the word *Shabbat*—the holiness of *Shabbat* should begin early, whereas in *Parashat Beshallah* the word *kodesh* comes after *Shabbat*, meaning that we should extend our *Shabbat* well into Saturday night. Today, Jews start the *Shabbat* when they kindle the *Shabbat* candles, 18 to 30 minutes before sundown on Friday evening, and they finish it with the *Havdalah* service that begins once they see 3 stars in the sky or about one hour after sunset. At the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment in Exodus 20, the word *Zachor*, "Remember," invites us to look at the past, and we find this version of the commandment refers to Creation. The *Shabbat* was given to mankind at Creation (Genesis 2:1-3) and is therefore a gift to all humanity. Here we find that one reason for the *Shabbat* is to remember Creation and to celebrate the Creator. In Deuteronomy 5, the beginning of the fourth commandment is the word *Shamor*, which means "guard." This word is much more about the present and the future, to remember in all generations to keep the *Shabbat* as a holy day, dedicated to the liberator God, the one who gave to Yisrael freedom from Egypt, and therefore the One who is always ready to free us from our sins and bondage. *Zachor* and *Shamor* are symbolically represented by the two *Shabbat* candles, often referred to as *Zachor* and *Shamor*.

## BLESSINGS OF SHABBAT

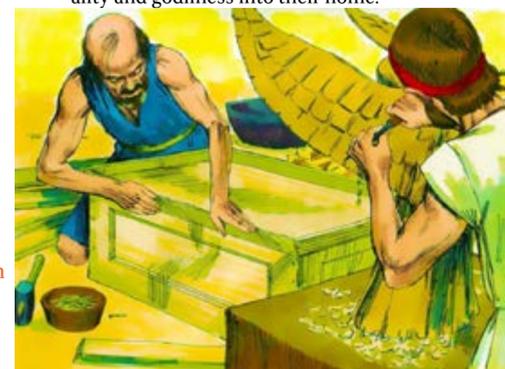
The Jewish tradition has insisted there are *brachot* or "blessings" for keeping *Shabbat* properly, and they note that in these verses the expression for the work "done" is in the pas-

Moses said to the Israelites: G-d has selected Betzalel son of Uri son of Chur, of the tribe of Judah, and has filled him with a divine spirit of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and [a talent for] all types of craftsmanship (...) '[G-d] also gave to him and Oholiav son of Achisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach [others]. (Exodus 35:30,31,34)

sive form—"work shall be done"—instead of using an active form, "You shall do work." (*Or HaChaim* on Ex. 31:15) This is interpreted as meaning that *Hashem* gives His *brachot* (blessings) upon work done during the week, and the success experienced is much more than anticipated: the success is disproportionate to the efforts (Chabad.org). Perhaps this is the secret of the success of Jews in their work. The Torah implies that if the work is done properly during the six work-days of the week, and the sanctity of the seventh-day *Shabbat* is honored, then the work that is done during the week will be blessed also, in addition to the blessings received by the man or woman who keeps the *Shabbat*.

There is another aspect of *Shabbat* to be considered: the *Shabbat* is the antidote or vaccine against idolatry. As long as the people of Yisrael, and more generally the people of *Hashem*, are faithful to *Shabbat*, they also avoid idolatry. This has been proven true by the history of Yisrael and also the history of the church. The Bible is clear that the times Yisrael neglected to celebrate *Hashem* the Creator on *Shabbat*, they worshiped Baal, Molech and other idols. The history of the church is also clear: the Early Church of the first century was faithful to the *Shabbat*, and the believers were not tempted by idolatry; but as soon as the church started to imitate the Roman and Greek world, who worshiped the Sun on Sunday, she gave up the *Shabbat*, built "Christian" cathedrals and churches on the foundations of the pagan temples and introduced idols and objects of idolatry, such as the cross, into Christianity. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, after Constantine the Roman Emperor pretended he had converted to Christianity (qualified today by many historians as a political conversion), the change among Christians from keeping the *Shabbat* to the honoring of Sunday was complete. We therefore understand why the words of Moshe were so harsh: "Whoever does any work then will die." To not keep the seventh-day *Shabbat* is to enter upon the path of idolatry, for rejecting *Hashem's Shabbat* is the expression of one's choice to reject *Hashem* and no longer recognize Him as the Creator of the universe. Anyone who makes this choice is also making a choice about his eternal destiny, which will be eternal death.

Today, Jews and non-Jews who celebrate *Shabbat* in their home consider their home a sanctuary and dwelling place for *Hashem*, bringing an emphasis on spirituality and godliness into their home.



## APOSTOLIC WRITINGS JOHN 14:15-26

The Jewish tradition (Rashi on Gen. 1:1,2) has made a parallel between Creation, with the Holy Spirit hovering over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2), and the cloud covering the Tent of the Meeting or the Sanctuary (Exodus 40:34a). Even more, the Sages of Yisrael (Nachmanides) have also made a parallel between “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34b NIV), and the creation of light on the first day of Creation: “God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Gen. 1:3 NIV). The presence of the *Shechinah* or the “Glory of the Lord” is the presence of *Hashem*. Rabbi Ari Kahn tells us: “Nachmanides writes that the sublime secret of the Tabernacle is that the presence of God which hovered about Mount Sinai, now will be placed on ‘permanent display’ in the Tabernacle” (aish.com). He used exactly the same word *מְרַחֵף* *m’rachefet* (hovering) the Bible used when speaking about “the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2).

We know that God wanted to dwell among man—that was the purpose of the creation of human beings, as seen by the Lord walking with Adam and Eve in the *Gan Eden*. This same “dwelling” among His people was also His purpose for building the Sanctuary among *Bnei Yisrael* (Exodus 25:8). Dwelling visibly among His people was not possible after the sin of Adam and Chavah (Eve); and so, after the Exodus, *Hashem* gave new instructions to Yisrael to make a dwelling place for Him. He was teaching His people that He wanted to dwell among them through the Sanctuary.

In fact, this sanctuary was a messianic prophecy, announcing that one day God would dwell personally among His people. This prophecy was realized when the Word, the *Mashiach*, who was God in human flesh, came to dwell among humanity: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The coming of Yeshua on this earth was the realization of the prophetic intention of *Hashem* through the Sanctuary.

However, after his resurrection Yeshua ascended back to heaven, and the legitimate question we have is: How can God dwell among His people after the ascension of the *Mashiach*? Yeshua answered this question when he said: “If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:15-17 NIV). The presence of God today is through the *Ruach Elohim*, the Holy Spirit, which was symbolized by the *Shechinah* in the time of Moshe and the physical Sanctuary. The Holy Spirit living in us today is the realization of the prophetic *Shechinah*,

which came upon the Sanctuary in Exodus 40.

The Jewish tradition has also seen a parallel between the *Shechinah* and the Holy Spirit. Rabbi Ari Khan says: “The Holy Spirit had thus sole sway over the world, as Scripture says: Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting” (Ibid.). The purpose of the *Shechinah* during this time of the renewed covenant is to teach us and to remind us what Yeshua taught to his *talmidim*: “But the Helper, the *Ruach HaKodesh* whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and remind you of everything that I said to you” (John 14:26). Even more, Yeshua taught: “... He will testify about me” (John 15:26). The Sanctuary was filled with the *Shechinah* to tell us there will be a day when *Hashem* will fill His people with His Spirit—it is today that we are to be filled with the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit).

The presence of the *Ruach HaKodesh* is a holy mystery, because Yeshua also said: “I will not abandon you as orphans; I will come to you. In a little while, the world will no longer behold Me, but you will behold Me. Because I live, you also will live!” (John 14:18-19). Yeshua promised “another Counselor” but affirmed, “I will come to you” through this other Counselor: it is Yeshua who is coming to us, but under another form. He declares: “In a little while, the world will no longer behold Me, but you will behold Me” (14:17b)—He is living today in us through the *Ruach HaKodesh*. What a good news!

The promise of Yeshua joins the promise of the prophets of Yisrael: “Behold, days are coming—it is a declaration of *HASHEM*—‘when I will make a new covenant *בְּרִית הַדְּבָרִים* *berith chadashah*’ with the house of Yisrael and with the house of Judah... But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Yisrael after those days—it is a declaration of *HASHEM*—‘I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people’” (Jeremiah 31:30, 32). The main feature of this “*berith chadashah*” is that God “will put [His] law within them” He “will write it on their hearts.” How? By the *Ruach Hashem*, the Holy Spirit, or the *Shechinah* in the hearts of His people. As a result, *Hashem* “will be their God, and they shall be My people,” and also much more: “No longer will each teach his neighbor or each his brother, saying: ‘Know *HASHEM*,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest.” It is a declaration of *HASHEM*” (Jeremiah 31:33). Let’s remember this covenant is a covenant “with the house of Yisrael and the house of Judah”—with Yisrael, not a foreign people. That is why it is written: “For I will forgive their iniquity, their sin I will remember no more” (Jeremiah 31:33b). Yisrael is a sinner, full of iniquity, but God is a loving Father, who does not abandon His people, but calls them back to Him and forgives their sins and iniquities.

## STORIES AND TRADITIONS

ing and building the palace. One day the queen approached him and said, “You are so happy and involved with your palace that you totally forgot that I exist!” Immediately the king took his mind off the palace and spent the next 24 hours attending to his queen.

The same was with the building of the *Mishkan*. Shabbat, which is called “the queen”, complained that “Jews will be so immersed in building the *Mishkan* that they will total-

ly forget about me.” Thus, before telling the Jewish people about building the *Mishkan*, Moshe, began with the *mitzvah* of Shabbat. For the observance of Shabbat is one of the greatest and most important mitzvot which G-d gave to the people of Israel. “Remember Yom Shabbat, to keep it holy. You are to work six days, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Shabbat to *HASHEM* your God” (Exodus 20:8-11).

The conclusion of this chapter is wonderful: “Thus says *HASHEM*, who gives the sun as a light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars as a light by night, who stirs up the sea so its waves roar, *HASHEM*-Tzva’ot is His Name: ‘Only if this fixed order departs from before Me—it is a declaration of *HASHEM*—then also might Yisrael’s offspring cease from being a nation before Me—for all time.’ Thus says *HASHEM*: ‘Only if heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then also I will cast off the offspring of Yisrael—for all they have done.’ It is a declaration of *HASHEM*” (Jeremiah 31:34-36). Yisrael will never be rejected, and will never be replaced by another people. The heart of God is big enough to encompass all the peoples of the earth, that is why, even though the members of the renewed covenant are people from all nations, His firstborn people is Yisrael who is still among us. As Rabbi Shaul said in Romans 11: “So in the same way [as the time of *Eliyahu Hanavi*] also at this present time there has come to be a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace” (Romans 11:5-6). So let’s not put Yisrael under salvation by works. Yisrael as part of the remnant is a pure work of grace from God.

Being clear on the renewed covenant by Yeshua, let’s come back to his words in the Besorah of John: In the time of the renewed covenant, a great discovery will be made about Yeshua: “In that day, you will know that I am in My Father, you are in Me, and I am in you” (John 14:20). It is certainly very difficult for Jews to understand these words of Yeshua—they can be understood only by divine inspiration. But that is why Yeshua promised the *Ruach Hashem*, and then using a future tense, he said: “... you will know that I am in My Father, you are in Me, and I am in you.”

This revelation will be effective only to those who obey him, and who are faithful to the Torah: “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him” (John 14:21). As we notice here, everything is about love: “Yeshua answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words. And the word you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me’” (John 14:23-24). An understanding of these concepts is necessary to go deeper in the knowledge of Yeshua’s teaching. And so we are promised: “... the Helper, the *Ruach HaKodesh* whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and remind you of everything that I said to you” (John 14:26).

## HAFTARAH 1 KINGS 7:13-51

The temple was completed in the eighth month: “In the eleventh year, in the month of *Bul* (which is the eighth month), the House was completed in all its parts and according to all its details. So he was seven years building it” (1 Kings 6:38—compare 1 Kings 6:1). That means it took seven years and seven months to build the Temple: “The building of the temple was finished on the eighth month.” The calendar begins with the month of *Nisan*, thus the eighth month is the month that follows the month of *Tishrei* with *Yom Kippur* and *Succoth*. This eighth month is the month of *Cheshvan* (Babylonian name) or *Bul* (Hebrew name).

The next step was the dedication of the Temple, but it takes time to prepare a dedication such as Solomon had in mind. This is confirmed by Abarbanel, who comments that the delay was caused by the need to prepare adequately for the huge celebration that was to be held in honor of the dedication.

We find the dedication was celebrated during the seventh month of the next year, at the time of the Autumn feasts, during the month called in the Bible the month of *Ethanim* (*Tishrei* in September/October): “Then Solomon assembled the elders of Yisrael—all the heads of the tribes and the ancestral chieftains of the children of Yisrael—to King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring the Ark of the Covenant of *HASHEM* up from the city of David, which is Zion. All the men of Yisrael assembled themselves to King Solomon at the Feast in the month of *Ethanim*, which is the seventh month” (1 Kings 8:1-2). The *Midrash* explains that Solomon wanted the dedication to take place on the birth month of the Patriarchs (*Ethanim* translates as “mighty ones”) to emphasize *Hashem*’s acceptance of Solomon and His approval of the Temple. The month of *Ethanim* (or *Tishrei*) is the month of the feasts of *Yom Teruah* (later called *Rosh Hashanah*), *Yom Kippur* (the *Day of Atonement*) and *Succoth* (the Feast of Tabernacles). The dedication began seven days prior to the feast of *Succoth*, and the rejoicing extended through the Feast of Tabernacles. The people then departed for their homes on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the seventh month, having spent 15 days in celebration: 7 days dedicating the Temple and 7 days celebrating *Succoth*, plus *Shemini Atzeret* (compare 1 Kings 8:65 and 2 Chronicles 7:9-10).

During the eleven months of preparation, plans were made for moving the Ark of the Covenant to the Temple, as well as everything that was to be done during the dedication itself. The Ark at that time was located in Jerusalem, where it had been brought by King David. Also, each of the leaders to be involved in the dedication of the Temple needed to

prepare himself to participate in the dedication services. Solomon gathered the “elders of Yisrael,” that is the Sanhedrin, the high court of justice of Yisrael, as confirmed by the Talmud which specifies that the High Court was present at the dedication of the Temple (*Shavuot* 15a). Once everything was prepared and the men of Yisrael had gathered at Jerusalem, the first step was to move the Ark of the Covenant to the Temple: “Then all the elders of Yisrael came and the *cohanim* brought up the Ark. They brought up the Ark of *HASHEM*, the Tent of Meeting and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent; the *cohanim* and the Levites brought them up” (1 Kings 8:3-4). According to Numbers 7:9, only one family among the Levites was assigned to carry the Ark of the Covenant, and that was the family of Kohath, the Kohathites: “But to the sons of Kohath he did not give any [carts and oxen] because their responsibility was carrying the holy items on their shoulders” (Numbers 7:9). However, there is a discussion among the Jewish scholars about whether the Ark was carried by *cohanim* (priests—descendants of Aharon) or Levites (Kohathites), and this conversation is because the first book of Kings mentions the *cohanim*, but the second book of Chronicles says the Levites (2 Chronicles 5:4).

If the Levites brought the Ark from its place on Mount Zion to the Temple on Mount Moriah, it is still clear it was the *cohanim* who placed the Ark in the Most Holy Place, since only the *cohanim* (priests) were allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies: “The *cohanim* brought the Ark of the Covenant of *HASHEM* to its place, into the inner Sanctuary of the House, to the Holy of Holies, under the wings of the *keruvim*” (1 Kings 8:6). At long last, the Ark had found its ultimate sanctum—the Ark that was built in the time of Moshe and which still had in it the tables of the Ten Commandments. It had been stationed in Gilgal, Shiloh and Nob, then after the destruction of Nob in the time of King Shaul, the Ark was carried to Gibeon (1 Chronicles 21:29), then King David brought it to Jerusalem.

The Ark of the Covenant was the most important piece of furniture in the Temple, just as it was in the *Mishkan* or Tabernacle. It was where the Ten Commandments were kept, and was therefore the symbolic representation of the heart of every believer who is invited to study Torah all his life and to cherish the Ten Commandments as the summary of all the commandments *Hashem* gave to His people, the summary of all the great moral laws, the keeping of which was fully exemplified by Yeshua. As Rabbi Shaul says: “For Messiah is the goal [telos—goal, culmination, epitome] of the Torah” (Romans 10:4).

## INSPIRATIONAL CORNER

And I saw that if God had changed the Sabbath, from the seventh to the first day, He would have changed the writing of the Sabbath commandment, written on the tables of stone, which are now in the ark, in the Most Holy Place of the Temple in heaven; [Revelation 11:19] and it would read thus: the first day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. But I saw that it read the same as when written on the tables of stone by the finger of God, and delivered to Moses in Sinai, “But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” [Exodus 20:10.] I saw that the holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers; and that the Sabbath is the great question, to unite the hearts of God’s dear waiting saints. (WLF 18).

The men accompanied the women, and those who wanted to make a donation brought bracelets, earrings, finger rings, and body ornaments, all made of gold. There were also all the ones who donated a wave offering of gold to G-d. (Exodus 35:22)



## SHABBAT, THE QUEEN

Rabbi Zalmen Marozov asks this question: “Why did Moshe preface the *mitzvah* of building the *Mishkan* with the *mitzvah* of observing the Shabbat?”

The *Midrash* explains this with the following parable: A king instructed the best architects in his land to build for him a beautiful palace. The king was totally involved in the architectural plans and all stages of prepar-