

# *Introduction to Parshot Vayakhel<sup>1</sup> and Pekudei*

READINGS:	<b><i>Torah Vayakhel:</i></b>	<b>Exodus 35:1 - 38:20</b>
	<b><i>Haftarah:</i></b>	<b>I Kings 7:13-26</b>
	<b><i>B'rit Chadasha:</i></b>	<b>II Corinthians 9:6-11</b>
	and	
	<b><i>Torah Pekudei:</i></b>	<b>Exodus 38:21 - 40:38</b>
	<b><i>Haftarah:</i></b>	<b>I Kings 7:51-8:21</b>
	<b><i>B'rit Chadasha:</i></b>	<b>II Corinthians 2:14 – 3:23</b>



*These are the accounts of the Tabernacle.*

[Exodus 38:21]

The Amidah Prayer Focus This Week is Part I of the *G'verot* [*The Prayer of His Powers*]

***Vayakhel Moshe et-kol-adat b'nei Yisra'el*** – i.e. *And Moshe called unto him/gathered the entire witness throng of B'nei Yisrael ....* **Exodus 35:1a.**

In this, the final week of our journey through the Season of Exodus, we will study two parshot – first *Vayakhel*, then *Pekudei*. Before we get to that, however, let's take a moment to think about where we are, and how far we have come since the 'Great Nation Building' known by most of the world as 'Exodus' began.

## ***Recapping the Greatest Lessons of Torah's Second Sefer***

The Exodus narrative opened with our forefathers languishing in a state of *galut*<sup>2</sup>. Usually translated into English as *exile*, *galut* is a word used to describe life in [a] a *foreign land*, [b] immersed in *foreign culture*; [c] which constantly bombards you and your children with a toxic flood of:

- i. *ungodly counsel* [i.e. *pseudo-intellect*];

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<sup>2</sup> *Galut* is a noun derived from the Hebrew root *galah, gimel, lamed, hey, meaning 'to wander', or 'to be exiled'*. The Talmud offers the following explanation for the phenomenon of *galut*: "*The people of Israel were exiled amongst the nations only so that converts might be added to them.*" **Pesachim 87b.**

- ii. *uncleanness in all its forms and levels [i.e. corruption]*
- iii. *promotion of anti-Torah patterns of thought, speech, and behavior;*
- iv. *obsession with sexuality, gender, ethnicity, political theory, ideology, philosophy, and perversion;*
- v. *profanity, vulgarity, and blasphemy;*
- vi. *seat-of-the-scornful-based slander, incitement, sarcasm, and cynicism;*
- vii. *thought-manipulation [i.e. foreign virtue-signaling];*
- viii. *idea-censorship [i.e. foreign conformity indoctrination];*
- ix. *ethnicity-shaming and religion-blaming rhetoric falsely labeled as ‘wokeness’, and mis-characterized as ‘tolerance’, and ‘diversity’ [i.e. foreign cancellation of counterculture];*
- x. *ideological brainwashing falsely labeled ‘news’ [i.e. foreign thought-policing];*
- xi. *false-narratives of the dominant hate-groups pridefully mis-labeled as ‘education’;*
- xii. *soul-numbing sensory stimulation falsely labeled as ‘entertainment’ [i.e. foreign-culture seduction];*
- xiii. *new-world order philosophy falsely labeled as ‘science’, and*
- xiv. *blatant social engineering/mass conformity strategies falsely labeled ‘medicine’ [i.e. foreign pharmakeia sorcery].*

Galut is life in the ‘belly of the beast’. When in *galut* a person lives *apart from his natural environment, in a foreign world* – among people who do not understand *his way of life*, do not understand or agree with *the basic approach to life by which he lives*, do not share *his values*, and neither accept *his spiritual identity* nor appreciate *his Divinely-ordained Mission on earth*. It involves being treated as a second-class citizen at best, and as a target for state-approved persecution – or annihilation - at worst.

How, asked the Psalmist, can we sing the songs of the Holy One in a foreign land? How can we sing the joyful songs of Tziyon among those who despise, mock, dehumanize, and demonize us? But then again, knowing what we know, and having seen the glory and goodness of our God, how can we *not* sing the songs of our Glorious Covenant Partner wherever we are, to whomever will listen, and in whatever corner of Creation we find ourselves scattered. This is the paradox of *galut*.

### ***If I Forget Thee, O Jerusalem!***

Of course, *galut* is not the ultimate destiny of the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov. This too shall pass. It is all part of the Holy One’s Grand Plan to redeem mankind as a species, *bloodline-by-bloodline*, and *household-by-*

household, and to restore Creation to its intended state of beauty, fruitfulness, and shalom, continent-by-continent, nation by nation, watershed-by-watershed, and centimeter-by-centimeter. If He is to have a harvest – and He is - the seed must be scattered all across the field, and incorporated into every clod of terra firma. Hence the Book of Exodus introduced us to [1] a series of new, deeper Names for and revelatory descriptions of our Covenant Partner in Heaven [see Exodus 3:14-15, 6:2-3, and 34:5-7], and to [2] a very real, very human, yet Divinely inspired and empowered Kinsman-Redeemer who would act on the Holy One's behalf to bring us forth from *galut* at the appointed time [Exodus 2:1-10]. Most of the world knows the prophetic Kinsman-Redeemer character by the name 'Moses'. His mother and the Creator, however, called him by the name *Moshe*. *Moshe* is, of course, just a shadowbox figure. A far greater Kinsman-Redeemer is destined to come forth in time. First the spark; then the fire. First the sprinkle; then the rain.

The Book of Exodus has shown us how the Kinsman-Redeemer that has been appointed for us operates in *two realms* – the realm of *bringing about redemption* and the realm of *shepherding the redeemed*. Everything the narrative of Torah shows *Moshe the Prophetic Kinsman-Redeemer* doing in these two realms establishes a pattern and precedent for the work of the *Messiah the Ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer* in those same realms.

### ***The Holy One's Agent of Geulah***

The first realm in which we saw *Moshe the Kinsman-Redeemer* operating in *Sefer Sh'mot* was as *the Holy One's agent of geulah*. *Geulah* is a Hebrew noun used in the terminology of covenant relationships. This noun is derived from the verb root *ga'al*, which means *to fulfill a covenant-based responsibility to intervene in a situation or dispute on an at-risk covenant partner's behalf*. It thus means *purposeful intervention* by someone who has the power to do *whatever the weaker covenant partner's situation calls for*.

*Geulah can*, and often does, involve aspects of *redemption and deliverance* [as when a *kinsman redeemer* redeems his blood-kin from debt or slavery]. But *geulah* can also involve an element of *exacting vengeance* [as when a blood-relative avenges a wrong done to his kinsman]. Whatever character the *geulah* takes in a given situation, however, it always involves a *strong* covenant partner *acting on behalf of a weak covenant partner in whatever way is appropriate to the situation that the weaker partner finds himself*, in order to turn the weak person's difficult circumstances into good.

Do you have that Hebraic picture securely in your mind? Good. Now apply that *geulah* picture to the *galut* which was being experienced by the descendants of

Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov at the beginning of the book of Exodus. The Holy One, as covenant partner to the multitudes in *galut*, chose at a pre-determined time - specifically, at the *appointed time He had mentioned in His covenantal negotiations with Avraham*<sup>3</sup> - to intervene on their behalf and end the *galut*. He chose, for this covenant act of intervention, a *human agent of geulah*. With regard to the *galut* in Egypt, *Moshe* was the chosen agent.

### ***Moshe as Mediator and Announcer/Teacher of a Renewal of The Ancient Covenant***

The second realm in which we see *Moshe* operating in the Exodus is as *the mediator* and *the announcer/teacher* of a *renewal of the covenant* relationship between the Holy One and the 'seed' of Avraham. Back in the book of Genesis the Holy One made a covenant with Avraham *and with his seed*. In the eyes of the Holy One, this covenant remains firm forever. He stands ready, willing, and able to perform His covenant commitments at all times. But covenants are multi-party arrangements. What remains firm with the Holy One, as 'party of the first part' under the covenant, does not necessarily or automatically remain firm with the human parties to the covenant. The Holy One is eternal and immortal – the human beings with whom He covenants, however, are mortal, and their lives on earth are temporal. When Avraham grew old someone from among his seed had to rise up and assume Avraham's covenant role in his stead. The person chosen from among the seed of Avraham was, of course, *Yitzchak* [Isaac]. The Holy One renewed with Yitzchak the same covenant He had made with Avraham. Yitzchak accepted the role of covenant partner of the Creator of the Universe, and walked in it. Similarly, when Yitzchak grew old someone from his seed had to rise up and assume the covenant role once occupied by Avraham and Yitzchak. The person chosen this time was Ya'akov [Jacob]. The Holy One renewed with Ya'akov the same covenant He had made with Avraham and Yitzchak. Ya'akov accepted the role, and walked in it. And so it went, through the generation of Yosef and Y'hudah, the generation of Efrayim and Menashe, and on and on, up to the 'appointed time' of the Holy One. Many generations later, the appointed time came just as the Holy One had promised Avraham it would. Now Avraham's seed was as the stars in the heavens and as the sand of the earth. Now in order for the covenant to move into its next and promised phase - like a time-release capsule - it was essential that a *collection of someones* from among the seed of Avraham be chosen by the Holy One as a successor to the covenant role of Avraham, and also step forward from among their brethren and accept/renew the Avrahamic side of the covenant relationship. This time, the Holy One had decreed, the successor to the Avrahamic rights and responsibilities under the ancient covenant would not be any one individual, acting alone. This time, the covenant partner of the Creator of the Universe was to be a

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<sup>3</sup> See Genesis 15:12-16.

*k'hal* – a *called gathering* of the scattered seed of Avraham. And for the inauguration of this momentous ‘second phase’ of the covenant relationship, the Holy One determined in His wisdom – and in order to establish a pattern that would apply many generations later when the ‘third phase’ of the same covenant relationship would be inaugurated – that the phase change should be mediated, announced, and explained by a *specialty chosen and empowered human agent*.

Moshe was the human agent chosen by the Holy One to inaugurate the second phase of the Avrahamic Covenant. Since the descendants of the Holy One were then living under oppression, in *galut*, Moshe’s first ‘job’, as aforesaid, had to be to serve as their human *agent of geulah*<sup>4</sup>. But Moshe’s ‘job’ as an agent of intervention did not by any means stop with *geulah*. Indeed, the *geulah*-function was merely preparatory. The ultimate reason for which Moshe was called was not to redeem the descendants of Avraham from slavery in Egypt – but was to inaugurate the *second phase* of the Avrahamic covenant. As soon as the Egyptian army was buried in the depths of the Sea of Reeds, therefore, Moshe’s role quickly changed from that of *an agent of geulah* to that of *an agent of mediation, announcement, and instructor of covenant renewal*. It is in different facets of *that role* that we have seen Moshe acting since the miracle at the Sea of Reeds.

### ***More Specifics on The ‘Two Comings’ Pattern***

Please note that in each prophetic capacity in which he has served Moshe’s ministry has manifested in two ‘comings’.

#### ***A. The Two Comings of Moshe - Phase I***

In his first ‘coming’ in the *agent of geulah* capacity after stepping into his true identity as a Hebrew Moshe appeared to *fail miserably*. He saw a Hebrew being beaten by an Egyptian, allowed his emotions to run completely amuck, and rushed into the fray as a vigilante, beating the Egyptian to death with his bare hands. What happened as a result? First he wound up being *rejected by his countrymen*; then he was *banished from the country under a sentence of death*. But then Moshe had a ‘second coming’ as an agent of *geulah*. After a personal experience of transformation at Horeb [the infamous ‘*burning bush*’ experience of Exodus 2 and 3], in the course of which he was mightily empowered by the Holy One, he was used by the Holy One to bring forth *yetziat Mitzrayim* [*i.e.* deliverance from Egypt].

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<sup>4</sup> *Geulah* is a noun derived from the Hebrew verb root *ga'al*, *gimel*, *alef*, *lamed*, Strong’s Hebrew word #1350, pronounced *gaw-awl*. The first usage of this verb family is in Genesis 48:6, where Ya’akov is blessing Efrayim and Menashe, and refers to the Holy One as the Angel who *redeemed* [Hebrew, *ga'al*] *him from all evil* [*i.e.* who *intervened on behalf of him in every bad circumstance in which he found himself, and turned the bad circumstance to good*].

## ***B. The Two Comings of Moshe – Phase II***

Once Moshe returned to Egypt, however, we saw the ‘two coming’ theme repeated again. In Moshe’s first ‘coming’ in his new empowerment he again appeared to be a miserable failure. The first time he went to Pharaoh on behalf of the people Pharaoh just increased the people’s workload. Indeed, *the people perceived that what he had done actually made things worse and more burdensome for them instead of better*. As a result they rejected him a second time. When he tried to describe to the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov the type of renewed and expanded covenant the Holy One desired to cut with them<sup>5</sup>, Torah tells us ‘... *they did not sh’ma Moshe because of their bitter disappointment and the oppressiveness of their hard labor*. Exodus 6:9<sup>6</sup>. But then Moshe had another second ‘coming’ experience like unto the first. The second time Moshe came in this capacity he came not with words only, but clothed in *an unmistakable mantle of power and authority* that everyone could see. This time, he had authority on earth to loose a series of strategic supernatural strikes against the enemies of the Holy One’s people [then centered in Egypt]. At Moshe’s word we saw plagues strike crippling blows to every facet of Egypt’s economic, military, religious and political structure. We saw Pharaoh humbled repeatedly. With this ‘coming’ our ancestors began to trust in his prophetic message, then followed him out of Egyptian bondage, and even walked dry shod through a sea.

## ***C. The Two Comings of Moshe – Phase III***

More recently we have seen the ‘two coming’ pattern repeat itself a third time at Mount Sinai. At the *first coming* of Moshe on this mountain [Exodus 19-20], our new creation souls were initially awakened by the blast of the Great *shofar* of Heaven, but we recoiled in fear – and refused to press into the destiny the Holy One had ordained for us [i.e. to walk in our collective destiny as a community of persons who stand together in the covenant position of Avraham].

Following Moshe’s directions we were Divinely enabled to hear with our own ears beautiful words of betrothal spoken over us by the Holy One in His own Voice. And yet, we drew back in fear from the Divine Bridegroom. His mission again appeared to fail. We cried out for *him to be our mediator*. And then, when he left the camp to do on our behalf just what we asked him to do, we *sinned with the*

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<sup>5</sup> Moshe repeated to the people, in Exodus 6:6-8, the following words from the Holy One: ***'I am the Holy One. I will bring you forth from your forced labor in Egypt and I will free you from their slavery. I will liberate you with a demonstration of My power, and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to Myself as a nation, and I will be to you as a God. You will know that I am God your Lord, the One who is bringing you out from under the Egyptian subjugation. I will bring you to the land regarding which I raised My hand, [swearing] that I would give it to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov. I will give it to you as an inheritance.***

*golden calf*. Then came Moshe's third 'second coming'. Even though we sinned grievously with the golden calf, through his mediation we have experienced forgiveness beyond our wildest dreams – and we are now ready to assume the role the Holy One has ordained for us. We are now ready both for the *renewal of the covenant* the Holy One made with our forefathers AND for the inauguration of that covenant's prophetic 'next phase'.

Do you see the establishment of the 'two comings' pattern? Now do you understand why Avraham had to appear in the land of promise twice – once in very abortive and unproductive fashion in Genesis 12, and then permanently and with great success beginning in Genesis 13? Can you now see the same pattern repeated with Yitzchak, with Ya'akov, and with Yosef? Can you now understand that the pattern is well established in Torah, and therefore *should have been expected to repeat itself in relation to Messiah*.

### ***Remember the Mish'kan?***

At the end of last week's study Moshe's second 40-day audience with the Holy One on Mount Sinai concluded and the prophet returned to camp absolutely *awash in the Holy One's glory*. The 'Friend of the Bridegroom' was now ready to dramatically redirect our attention and our energies - away from the trauma of the golden calf incident ... but to WHAT? The answer is "to the building of the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle]". In the aftermath of the devastation that flowed from *chet ha-egel* the Holy One wants us to turn our focus from our grief to the construction on earth of a miniature replica of the Heavenly Throne Room. He wants us to *lift our heads* and to *look higher*. He wants us to build in the center of our camp a special stage on which He can script for us a great passion play of Divine love and eternal Truth. The Divine Bridegroom wants us, His Betrothed Bride-People, to *work together in perfect unity* to put in place the special parlor He has designed to conduct betrothal-period interactions with us.

What the Holy One does *not* want us to build - and has never told anyone to build – is a religious shrine dreamt up in the mind of man. We are not to make up a design intended either to please ourselves or to impress other men. We are to tell His Grand and Joyous Story of Redemption, not any of our self-serving myths of religion. This was made clear in Exodus 25:8-9 when the Holy One told Moshe:

***K'chol asher ani mar'eh otcha et tavnit ha-Mish'kan***

*According to all I teach you, you are to make the tabernacle*

***v'et tavnit kol-kelay v'chen ta'asu***

*and all its furnishings according to the pattern that I am showing you.*

Well, *here we are*, two full *parshot* and nine whole chapters of Torah later, and we *still haven't taken the first step toward building anything like that*. Indeed the only

things we as the Holy One's chosen people have built so far are a *golden calf*, an *altar for making idolatrous animal sacrifices of our own design*, and a graveyard for the 3,000 men brutally massacred by the tribesmen of Levi presuming to act in the 'name of God.' We have *breached our betrothal covenant with the Bridegroom King* very grievously. But the two million or so of us who are alive and remain have learned some stunning and wonderful things about the *personality* and the *nature* of the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov which people who have not sinned grievously and been forgiven much could never comprehend, much less appreciate.

We have learned that the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak and of Ya'akov is a *Compassionate* and *Loving* and *Covenant-Faithful* and *Sin-Cleansing* and *Life-Restoring God*. We have learned that although we were caught red-handed in the most despicable of sins He nevertheless looks upon us with *compassion*, and with *love*, and with a depth of unshakeable *covenant-faithfulness* which we cannot even fathom, much less ever hope to reciprocate.

How have we have learned these amazing and wonderful things about the Holy One? We have learned these things by *experiencing them first-hand*. We are aware of these things because over the past two *parshot* we have experienced very personally and very deeply exactly what it feels like to be magnanimously *forgiven*, to be majestically *redeemed*, and to be gloriously *restored* by the very Betrothed Bridegroom we so cavalierly abandoned in favor of a false god wrought by our own hand.

We now know how to *love much* because we now understand that we have been *forgiven much*. Oh the wisdom of the Bridegroom-King's Ways. *Selah!* [Pause, and meditate quietly and reverently concerning that great revelation].

### ***The Time Has Come for the Regathering of Scattered Sparks***

The first parsha from which our revelation downloads will come this week is called *Vayakhel*. It means '*and he called together a witness throng*'. As *Vayakhel* begins we – the traumatized survivors of the Golden Calf Debacle - are mere *scattered sparks of Divine Fire*. We have *fractured, fragmented, and tormented souls*. We have not been a PEOPLE – much less a nation - since Moshe came down the mountain a few weeks ago, caught us in the act of self-serving idolatrous worship, and declared holy war. We now know we have been gloriously *forgiven by the Bridegroom-King*, but we are still nursing the deep wounds inflicted on us during our epic fail at establishing our own faith community. We are secure again in our relationship with the Holy One, but we are by no means capable of *playing well with others*. We are by no means *whole* enough to love - much less serve – human beings. We don't want to get hurt by 'community' again. We don't want to let



down our guard. We don't want the vulnerability. We don't have the energy – or the self-confidence - to pick through the vast mounds of garbage 'community' represents to us in hope of finding a crust or two of stale bread. We don't have the time for the pain.

Each of us has therefore picked up our toys and gone home. We have each retreated to the safe cocoon of our own tent. Each man has found his own way to worship the Holy One in private, but we have an 'edge' to us publicly. We are highly suspicious of others. We hate hype. We recoil at high-sounding rhetoric. We bristle at their 'bring me your gold' pleas for money, at their 'which-way-is-the-wind-blowing' approach to spiritual truth, and their 'do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do' approach to a faith-walk. We have followed one-too-many smooth-talking priests down the dark road of idolatry. So, we are not by any means ready to re-engage with other heads of households – much less a bunch of men claiming titles they awarded to themselves - in the Grand Redemptive Plan. We are not capable of trusting others – or perhaps even ourselves - enough to step back into the 'great nation' part of the grand prophetic destiny to which the Holy One has called us. Have you ever felt like that, Dear Reader? Do you perhaps feel like that right now? Think about it. Once we as a community cried out with one heart and one voice concerning the Torah of the Holy One '*Na'aseh v'nish'ma*'. But our dreams of a *utopian community experience* have since been shattered into two million pieces. In the aftermath of the calf-sin our dreams of building a perfect 'community' of faith have been scattered to the wind. After the humiliation, the guilt, and the bloodshed we have seen come forth from within redeemed souls – and even those we considered our leaders – the whole concept of "community" life petrifies and repulses us.

After the dust of the golden calf incident settled, gathering together for any reason was absolutely the last thing on our priority list. Torah tells us:

*... whenever Moshe went out to the tent of meeting all the people rose, and stood **ish petach aholo** [i.e. each man at the entrance of his own tent] and watched Moshe until he had gone into the tabernacle*

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*... all the people rose and worshiped **ish petach aholo** [i.e. each man at the entrance of his own tent].*

[Exodus 33:8,10]

The downward motion of the calf sin spiral had, after all, started with the words *vayikahel ha-am* [i.e. *and the people gathered together ...*] Exodus 32:1. When men decide amongst themselves when and where to gather, and how to engage in religious activities, well ... let's just say *disaster is seldom far behind*.

Notice if you will the similarity of the opening word of the whole golden calf incident – *i.e.* ‘*vayikahel*’ to the opening word of this week’s parsha – *i.e.* *vayakhel*. Both contain the same verb root – *kahal*, meaning to *gather together*. In *Ki Tisa* the people gathered together of their own accord, for their own purposes, according to their own notions – not as a *sh’ma* response to the Holy One’s Voice or in a manner set forth by the Torah. The result was *disastrous*. After the gathering/assembling of the people bore its natural and inevitable fruit – *misrepresentation of the essence of the Holy One, false altar building, idolatrous worship practices, and the plague of death* - the refugee camp at Sinai was reduced to a *jumbled hodge-podge of individual tents*. Man’s idea of association, assembly, and community produced for us – as it produces for all people who walk in it - only a *golden calf, a civil war, and a fragmentation of their hearts, their minds and, most crucially, their souls*.

We now recoil in horror at the disaster our failed attempts at establishing community have wrought. So in this context what *ish petach aholo* meant was that each and every family had *disentangled* from the dysfunctional community that had produced the calf-god worship system, had *withdrawn* into its own tent, and had *established its own individualized worship modality*. For the sake of restoration we entered a phase of *ish petach aholo* – every man at the entrance to his own tent. And lo it was good – *for an appointed time*.

### ***To Everything There is A Season***

*Ish petach aholo* was the logical and proper response of the redeemed of the Holy One to what had just happened in their midst. A season of *ish petach aholo* represented a necessary phase in the Divine Bridegroom’s plan for cleansing His people of their corporate sin and their distrust of authority and community. A season of *ish petach aholo* was essential to their recovery and rehabilitation. Such a season required them to refocus upon their true identity, their real calling, their true purpose, and their real destiny as not only the *am segulah*, but also the *mamlaket kohanim* [kingdom of priests],<sup>7</sup> and *goy k’dosh* [holy nation]<sup>8</sup> of the Creator of the Universe.

Participating in ‘community’ *for the sake of community* is, you see, *every bit as idolatrous a practice as dancing before a golden calf*. As a matter of fact, here is a

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<sup>7</sup> The phrase *mamlaket kohanim* literally means *kingdom ambassadors/emissaries*. The Holy One’s plan is that we will as we *sh’ma* His voice and *sh’mar* His covenant serves Him by establishing a *kingdom on earth like unto His kingdom in Heaven* and thereby function as *an intermediary between the Holy One and the rest of the nations and peoples of the earth*.

<sup>8</sup> The phrase *goy k’dosh* literally means *a nation set apart* – *i.e.* a nation unlike and which remains physically and spiritually distinct from the other nations and peoples of the world. A *goy k’dosh* is a nation that does not – cannot – assimilate into any other nation – culturally, philosophically, or otherwise.

nugget of truth every person redeemed by the Divine Bridegroom would always be well advised to keep in mind - the former [i.e. engaging in community *for the sake of community*] always leads to some form or another of the latter [golden calf worship], divorced from the Torah of the Holy One. It is inevitable. It is an *immutable spiritual law*. And so when one of the Holy One's redeemed recognizes that a community or organization of other redeemed persons in which he or she has taken part is either *participating in* or *is on the road toward* a golden calf type of worship, divorced from the Torah of the Holy One, and therefore *misrepresenting the Holy One to the world*, it is incumbent upon and is an essential part of the Holy One's plan for that person to do as the redeemed of the Holy One did.

First, it is incumbent upon him or her to withdraw from participation in the *community-for-the-sake-of-community* and all its idolatrous practices. Second, it is essential that - temporarily at least - he or she goes back to the approach of *ish petach aholo* [every man at the entrance to his own tent]. And thirdly, it is necessary that while in this *ish petach aholo* status he or she lead one's family in *deprogramming*, in *refocusing*, and making *shuv* [i.e. return] to the *sh'ma*-lifestyle, to a Bridal orientation to relationship with the Holy One and to *the application of a Torah-based approach to the sanctification of time, space, and human endeavor and experience*.

### ***Sharing a Glorious Calling***

The fact that such a phase of existence as *ish petach aholo* is a part of the Holy One's plan for the people He has redeemed does not in any way deny the reality that *those who withdraw to their own tents still share a calling, a purpose, a destiny, and a covenant with every other person and family the Holy One has redeemed*. Just as there is a *season of dormancy* for every kind of seed in the Holy One's Creation so is there *a time and a season of dormancy* for the shared callings, purposes, destinies and covenant of the seed of Avraham. So what Moshe finds when he descends Mount Sinai with his face awash in glory and his hands filled with the *luchot* of Torah inscribed by the finger of the Holy One is a multitude of individual tents, side-by-side, all experiencing *ish petach aholo*. But *healing is coming to our fractured and fragmented souls*.

### ***The Specifics of the Shared Calling***

Remember that the Redeemed Community survived the golden calf incident solely by the Holy One's mercy. As this week's parsha begins Moshe, his face awash in a supernatural glow, calls our generation of misfits to assemble on the mountain. This will be the first such assembly since the golden calf debacle. The call to which Moshe's throat gave voice in the first line of our parsha was not a call to *get together for a religious service*. It was instead a prophetic calling forth of a PEOPLE – the *sh'ma* people of the Holy One - to arise *from the smoldering ashes*

of *chet ha-egel* and *reclaim their destiny*. Moshe was calling forth not only a *k'hal*, as wonderful as that is; he was at the same time calling all souls within the Redeemed Community to work together toward becoming something even more significant – a *collective force for co-laboring with the Holy One and synergizing with each other for no other goal but the redemption of the world*. This collective force is referred to in the Hebrew text as an *edat*. Let us pause and *consider what that might mean*.

### ***A Great Cloud of Witnesses***

Most of our English translations of Torah interpret the word Hebrew word *edat* as ‘assembly’ or ‘congregation’. Those two English words have connotations today however that tend to confuse and color the message rather than interpret it. Literally, you see, to call an *edat* does not mean - as English translations tend to imply - to convene an *assembly* or *congregation* for the purpose of holding a religious service. Hebraically the word *edat* [*ayin, dalet tav*] means something *very, very different*. Hebraically we begin the process of unwrapping the word ‘*edat*’ by looking back at its *verb root* – i.e. *eyd* - in its purest form. The Hebrew verb *eyd* means ‘*he testified*’ or ‘*he bore witness*’. The first usage of this verb in Torah is found in Genesis 31 where we are told that *a heap of rocks piled up at Gilead by Ya'akov and Lavan would forever testify/bear witness between them*. **Genesis 31:44**.

Obviously in the Genesis 31 instance we can see that congregating or assembling together for *religious services* or activities is not the point of this verb at all. The verb root *edah* is transformed into noun form by adding a suffix. If the suffix added is the Hebrew consonant ‘hey’ [more or less the English “h” sound], it references a person [generally] who testifies or witnesses. If, as here, the suffix added is not a *hey* but is instead a *tav*, it references *multiple* [i.e. plural] testifiers/witnesses. So for Moshe to call the redeemed community together *as an edat meant that he was*, on the Holy One’s behalf, and in His power, calling the many diverse, fragmented souls there at Sinai together to form a unified WITNESS THROG – i.e. the Holy One’s *great throng of witnesses*<sup>9</sup>.

Please note carefully the identity of the *great throng of witnesses* called by Moshe to act on the Holy One’s behalf. The great throng of witnesses Moshe called was not the group of men he had, in response to the suggestion of Yitro prior to *Matan Torah*, appointed as leaders of *leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens*. **Exodus 18:19-26**. The great throng was not the 70 tribal elders who had ascended the mountain with Moshe and dined in the presence of the Holy One a short while after *Matan Torah*. **Exodus 24: 9-11**. The great throng

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<sup>9</sup> The verb root of *edat* is *eyd, ayin, yod, dalet*, Strong’s Hebrew word #5749, meaning *to bear witness, to give formal testimony or make formal declaration as an official witness of something of which one has knowledge*.

was not the Levites who had in the aftermath of *chet ha-egel* rallied behind Moshe, strapped sword to thigh at his command, and run forth through the camp slaying 3,000 brothers, friends, and neighbors. **Exodus 32:25-29**. The great throng was not the sons of Aharon who had been chosen by the Holy One as the *kohanim* who would oversee the operation of the earthly *Mish'kan*. **Exodus 27:22 – 28:1**.

Hmmmmn. Isn't that strange? If not these people, then *who*? Who could it be? Who exactly was – who *is* – who *will be* – the great throng of witnesses who are going to be called to testify in the Courts of Heaven as well as in all the continents, nations, cities and neighborhoods of earth? Here is the surprising answer. The people who are called to be the Holy One's great throng of witnesses were – are – and will be – the very same men, women, and children who personally experienced *Matan Torah*. The ones called to be salt and light to the earth will be the same ones who upon receiving the words of the Holy One as a *shitre eyrusin* [betrothal covenant] cried out with one voice ***kol asher-diber Adonai na'aseh v'nishma*** - i.e. *all that the Holy One has declared we will asah and we will sh'ma*.

Do you now see the Torah pattern that the resurrected Yeshua followed when he declared shortly before the day of Pentecost: “***You are to be my witnesses/testifiers ... in Y'rushalayim and in all Y'hudi, and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth***”?<sup>10</sup>

### ***A Process of Re-Connection Is About to Be Instituted***

The Holy One is about to regather the scattered sparks. He is about to heal the wounds of ‘community’. He is about to reconnect His People with each other – and re-introduce them to their grand prophetic destiny as a kingdom of *kohanim* who will both love and serve their fellow man. The process will consist of several stages:

1. A Dramatic Calling of Families Forth from the season of *Ish Petach Oholo*;
2. Downloading a Prophetic Vision Grand Enough to Inspire Everyone Who Hears It to Dream a Common Dream That is Bigger than the Differences and Distrust that exist between them;
3. An Invitation to Invest in the Vision;
4. A Radical Empowerment by the Ruach HaQodesh [Holy Spirit];
5. An Intense Season of Co-laboring Driven by the Shared Divine Vision and Fueled Supernaturally by the *Ruach*'s Empowerment;
6. Leaders in the Community Voluntarily Embracing and Demonstrating Accessibility and Accountability;
7. Leaders in the Community Getting Their Hands Dirty With the Actual Work of Bringing the Vision into Real Time Reality; and

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<sup>10</sup> Acts 1:8.

8. Letting the Bridegroom-King be the Focus of Everything.

***Phase I: The Dramatic Calling Forth of Families  
from Ish Petach Oholo***

The Friend of the Bridegroom has been with the Bridegroom for 40 days and nights, and has heard the glorious things that are strongest on the Bridegroom's heart concerning His Beloved. Moshe was anxious to reveal to the Bride the things that the Holy One had imparted to him on the mountain. Here is how the prophetic download began:

***Vayomer aleihem Eleh ha-devarim***

*and He said to them: "These are the words/declarations*

***asher-tzivah Adonai l'asot otam***

*which the Holy One has instructed you to build/cause to take physical shape".*

Please note that I have used the verb *build* in my translation. To build means to form by skillfully combining materials or parts according to a pre-ordained design. That is our calling as the Bride of the Holy One – to build an earthly dwelling for His Kingdom. This week's *parshot* and *haftarot* are going to be *all about the kind of building* plan upon which our Divine Bridegroom wants us to focus all our *creative energies*, all our *material possessions*, all our *passion*, and all our *time*. First we will build an *ark* to house the tablets of stone on which the very words of our Creator are inscribed. We will not build it according to our own image of how we would like it to look. We will build it exactly like the pattern the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain. Next we will build a 'mercy seat' for the ark, upon which blood will be shed, and the Manifest Presence of our Divine Bridegroom will reside. We will build it after the pattern the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain. Then, together as our Divine Bridegroom's *mamlaket kohanim* we will make beautiful tapestries and coverings and furnishings and implements. These also will be built in complete conformance with the pattern the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain. Soon thereafter, working together as the *goy kadosh* of the Creator of Heaven and earth, we will mix and blend the holy oil and will grind and measure the precious incense spices - each according to the precise formula the Holy One revealed to Moshe on the mountain.

***Gathering Together the Outcasts of Israel***

This week the covenant partners of the Creator of the Universe will engage in our first communal project involving both *sh'ma-ing the Bridegroom's Voice* and *doing what we see the Father doing*. The Holy One will begin to heal our fractured and fragmented souls. And He will begin the process the moment we summon the courage to *leave our individual tents* and the insulation and isolation of the season of *ish petach oholo* and *join together with our brothers to, as one new man, build on earth a replica of the Throne Room of Heaven*. In this very special place we as

a badly sullied but wonderfully forgiven Bride-to-Be will be called *to learn to interact and commune again, through intermediaries, with the Betrothed Bridegroom* at whose Voice she trembled just a few months previously.

The completed structure that we build in this new season of humility and cooperation will serve as the grandest stage the world has ever known. It will be the stage upon which the greatest passion play of all time will be played out. Morning by morning, evening by evening, Sabbath by Sabbath, festival by festival, year by year, and jubilee by jubilee all the world will be given the opportunity to share in the courts of this place the *wonder* and the *beauty* and the *majesty* and the *glory* of the Bridegroom King. In the humble courts of this Tabernacle the *supreme goodness* of the God Who redeems, Who forgives, Who cleanses of sin, Who restores to fellowship, and Who dwells in and among those Who call upon His Name and seek His Face will be put on full display.

We will build exactly what the Holy One instructs us to build. We will build it where He instructs us to build it, when He instructs us to build it, how He instructs us to build it. We will follow the Divine Blueprint the Holy One gave us in every detail. We will build it – and He will come and fill it with His Manifest Presence. It will all be done both *in His Name* and *for His Glory*. Alas, this will not be the case with construction projects commenced by the Holy One’s people in subsequent generations.

### ***Why Do We Keep Building Everything Except What He Instructed us to Build?***

In the years since the *k’hal* [assembly] called by Moshe in today’s aliyah men have, instead of *asah*-ing what the Holy One called and prophetically empowered us to build, *asah-ed just about everything else*. In the Name of the Holy One men have over the centuries that have elapsed since Sinai designed and built ... well, you can look around anywhere and see what we have built, can’t you?

We have *asah*-ed every imaginable kind of institution and ministry. We have unfortunately built these things *not* after that pattern the Holy One showed Moshe on the mountain *but after the pattern of the prevailing political and sociologic institutions of secular society around us*. We have to our shame built in the Holy One’s name successful business ventures with multi-million-dollar budgets, administrative boards, employees, and retirement plans. And yet that which He has *told us to build* remains for the most part confined to words on a dusty Torah scroll. Generation after generation has counted the cost of building what the Holy One showed Moshe ‘on the mountain’, nothing more and nothing less, and has, much like the ‘rich young ruler’ ‘*gone away sorrowful, for [we] had much riches*’.

But *sometime*, and *somewhere*, a people will yet arise. It will be a people whose strength is their humility. It will be a people who love much. It will be a people who joyously embrace their Bridegroom-King's 'easy yoke'. It will be a people who, like our forefathers at Sinai, know beyond a shadow of a doubt that neither they – nor the world – has any *hope of redemption from any source but to cut and keep covenant with the Holy One*. It will be a people who will neither *seek* nor *claim* nor *accept* for themselves one iota of the glory that belongs to the Holy One. I believe this people will arise and return to the mountain of the Holy One and will have no other agenda but to *asah* His Words – to build their lives upon His Torah, and let the Torah, and the Messiah Who is Its Embodiment (not their “ministry” or “anointing”) draw all men who will come.

### *A Travelogue For Parsha Vayakhel*

Throughout *Vayakhel*<sup>11</sup> the Writer of Torah will keep our primary focus on *the preparations made by the Redeemed Community for, and on the actual process and order of constructing, the various component parts of the Mish'kan* [Tabernacle]. On the tenth day of Seventh Biblical month – the day that will later become known as *Yom Kippur* - Moshe will descend Mount Sinai with his face awash in the glory of the Holy One. In his hands he will hold the second set of *luchot* – tablets which carry the weight of the prophetic, creative Words with which our God betrothed us to Him. The day following his descent Moshe issued a call to everyone who remained alive after the debacle of *chet ha-egel* to assemble and to give ear. He wanted them to receive from his lips the truths that the Holy One had revealed to him during his most recent adventure in the realm beyond.

#### *The Critical Importance of the Sabbath to Everything We Are Called to Do*

The first subject Moshe will cover in this very special meeting will be the sanctity of the Sabbath. Moshe will reiterate and expand upon the Divine empowerment, as His kingdom of priests, to ‘***Commemorate the Sabbath, and esteem and treasure its essential holiness***’. We are to take this sign of our covenant as seriously as a married person takes his or her wedding ring. We are to treasure and consecrate it, and set it aside as His Day - hence, naturally, the last thing we will think about doing on His special day is following our regular work agenda. His delight will become our overarching priority.

#### *The Gifts of the Willing Heart*

Next Moshe will call forth from us and our private storehouses of treasure all the precious metals and raw materials from which the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle] and all its

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<sup>11</sup> In Hebrew this is written לִיקְהָל. [Note: the foregoing is in a BST Hebrew font which can be downloaded to your computer by accessing the following URL: <http://bible.crosswalk.com/InterlinearBible/>.



furnishings are to be built. Hundreds of thousands of grateful men and women in the camp will respond to this call from Moshe's with emotion and enthusiasm, and will veritably inundate Moshe with vast quantities of gold, silver, and copper, material dyed blue, purple, and scarlet, precious stones, exotic spices, and pure olive oil. These would represent the last remaining remnants of the things we had left over from our stay in Egypt. We would now part ecstatically with what we had once seen as treasure. Since leaving Egypt we had received unto ourselves and our children *something far more precious and lasting than any of things we ever could have obtained in any pagan land or from any earthly culture*. We were finally ready to bask in and receive the benefits of *an eternal covenant with the Maker of Heaven and Earth*.

### *The Appointment of the Anointed Craftsmen*

Moshe will then formally call forth and commission Betzalel of the tribe of Y'hudah and Oholiav of the tribe of Dan, the two ordinary men who had been chosen by the Holy One chose to oversee the work of the *mish'kan*.

### *On Earth as it is in Heaven*

Construction of the scale model of the Throne Room of Heaven will then commence in earnest. Precious metals, the rarest of wood, and the finest of linen will be incorporated into a structure whose design came straight from Heaven. The work will start simply, with the preparation of curtains and clasps for the enclosure of the inner chamber. It will then proceed to the framework of the structure. Only after the outer framework is constructed will we turn our attention to fashioning of the *six essential furnishings* of the *Mish'kan*, and the *tent pegs* with which the whole structure is going to be secured to the earth.

The season of '*on earth as it is in Heaven*' is rapidly approaching. Our mission is clear: we are called to *establish a beachhead for the invasion of earth by the Manifest Presence of the Holy One*. We are commissioned and empowered to *prepare the way for the King, and make a place of honor for the earthly Throne upon which He will sit and rule - in real time, in the lives of real people on the real planet Earth*. May His Reign come to earth soon, in our day!

### ***A Travelogue For Parsha Pikudei***

*Pekudei*<sup>12</sup>, the final parsha of *Sefer Sh'mot*, begins with the record made by Itamar, Aharon's youngest son, of the quantities the gold, silver, and brass that the Redeemed Community brought in for the Tabernacle's use. Also recorded is Itamar's description of how those precious materials, along with the other

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<sup>12</sup> In Hebrew this is written פְּקֻדֵי. [Note: the foregoing is in a BST Hebrew font which can be downloaded on your computer by accessing the following URL: <http://bible.crosswalk.com/InterlinearBible/>.

materials the Redeemed Community supplied in anticipation of the project, were employed by those who did the actual building work.

### *The Making of the Precious Garments of Beauty and Honor*

We will then read about the making of the garments to be worn in the *Mish'kan* by Aharon and his sons. The priestly garments will be crafted meticulously, one by one, from fine linen, exotic dyes, finely hammered gold and precious stones.

### *The Inspection and Approval of the Essential Furnishings and Their Implements*

Our next topic of study will be the sequence and manner in which the individual components and furnishings of the *Mish'kan* were brought to, inspected by, and approved by Moshe.

### *The Events of the Day of Consecration*

Then we will read about how on the *appointed day* of the first day of Nisan Moshe assembled all the component parts according to the pattern he saw on the mountain, brought Aharon and his sons forth, washed and anointed them, and dressed them in the priestly garments for the first time. We will tremble together as we read Torah's account of the aging prophet lovingly placing the stone tablets he received from the Holy One in the ark for the first time - and how he then covered the words on those tablets with the prophetically designed and intricately crafted 'mercy seat'. We will then see Moshe place the bread of the presence on the *shulchan* [table] in the holy place, prepare the menorah for lighting, and burn incense for the first time on the golden altar of incense.

Next, in full view of all the people in the camp, we will see Moshe lay on the brazen altar the meat and grain of the 'offerings' the Holy One told him to make. Then we will see Moshe fill the bronze laver with water for his brother Aharon and his nephews, Nadav, Avihu, Elazar and Itamar to use to wash their hands and feet before and after performing their service. We will then see Moshe set up and seal off the courtyard of the *Mish'kan*. From this point forward none will see what is going on inside the *Mish'kan* except they go through the curtain of entrance called 'the Way'.

### *The Glorious Indwelling*

After Moshe completes his assembly of the *Mish'kan* we will marvel as Torah describes to our incredulous minds two strange and wonderful events which will make us want to laugh and weep, dance and fall on our faces, all at the same time. First, the *Radiant Cloud of the Bridegroom-King's Presence* will totally engulf the structure we have just built. We could not go to be with the Holy One at the top of the Mountain - so He comes down the mountain to be with us! Then, the Glory of

the Holy One fills the structure to the extent that no one - not even Moshe - can enter it.

### Epilogue

*Sefer Sh'mot* - the book of Exodus – will then conclude with a short *segue* passage designed by the Writer of Torah to set the stage for both the book of Leviticus and the book of Numbers. The final verse will tell us that from the date of the *Mish'kan's* dedication forward all travels of B'nei Yisrael were to be inaugurated by the lifting of the *Radiant Cloud of the Presence* from the *Mish'kan* and concluded by the resettling of the Cloud thereupon.

The last words of the *sefer* will advise us that each night throughout all the wanderings that we will read about in the remainder of Torah:

*... the Cloud of the Holy One was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.*

[Exodus 40:38]

The season of '*on earth as it is in Heaven*' is almost upon us. Our mission in this prophetic season is clear: we are called to *establish a beachhead for the invasion of earth by the Manifest Presence of the Holy One*. We are commissioned and empowered to *prepare the way for the King, and make a place of honor for the earthly Throne upon which He will sit and rule - in real time, in the lives of real people on the real planet Earth*. May His Reign come to earth soon, in our day!

### ***A Brief Look at the Haftarah for the Week***

**I Kings 7:13-26 & I Kings 7:51-8:21**

This week's two associated haftarah readings describe the building, dedication and inauguration of the Temple *Sh'lomo* built for the Holy One<sup>13</sup>. The glorious Temple that Sh'lomo built – which in Hebrew tradition is called *Beit Ha-Mikdash* (i.e. the house of holiness) – was truly both a *physically imposing* and *aesthetically impressive structure*. Its brilliance and beauty were of a transcendent quality which has captivated and tantalized the Hebraic mind ever since. As long this magnificent structure stood hundreds of thousands of pilgrims flocked from all over the world each year to gaze upon its splendor and to observe and/or participate in its stunning services. And yet Sh'lomo himself recognized the inadequacy of the glorious structure he had built to reflect – much less hold within its boundaries - the majesty of the Creator of Heaven and Earth in whose name it was built. Sh'lomo had this to say concerning his Temple:

*... will God indeed dwell on the earth?  
Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You;*

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<sup>13</sup> The Biblical narrative relative to this transaction is found in I Chronicles chapter 21.

*how much less this house which I have built!"*

[I Kings 8:27]

And thus was introduced into the Hebrew psyche a most uncomfortable paradox – the realization that although our Covenant Partner wants very much to dwell in our midst [see I Kings 6:11-13], and though we want that almost as much as He does, *there is simply no way any human king can create an environment holy or grand enough to even be worthy of His Greatness, much less contain Him.* Indeed our sages recognize that only the Messiah Himself – the ‘*scepter which shall arise out of Israel*’ prophesied by Bila’am in Numbers 24:17 - can build the True Temple which will last forever. And yet we like David and Sh’lomo find ourselves stirred over and over again with a deep, internal, primeval longing to build a ‘house of holiness’ for our Great King in our own day, in our own world, and with the blood, sweat, tears and treasures of our own lives.

Yeshua’s beloved talmid *Stefanos* [later called *Stephen*] picked up on this troublesome paradox in Acts 7 on the day he was stoned to death. That day he reminded the Jewish leaders before whom he had been brought for trial:

*... Sh’lomo built the Holy One a house.*

*However the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands,  
as the prophet says: "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is my footstool.*

*What house will you build for Me? says the Holy One.*

*... or what is the place of My rest? Has not My hand made all these things?"*

[Acts 7:47-50, quoting Isaiah 66:1-2].

According to the Maimonides [i.e. the sage known as *the Rambam*] it is the assigned task of the Hebrew people in every generation to construct on earth a House for the Holy One to dwell in<sup>14</sup>. According to the *Rambam* this is an eternal mitzvah relevant and obligatory on Jewish people in any generation in which the Temple is not standing. He derives this from Exodus 25:8, which states: ***And they are to make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among [or in the midst of ] them.*** According to the *Rambam* the Hebrew people are under Divine injunction to build the Third Temple any way they can at any time they can. And yet even the *Rambam* acknowledges that only the Messiah – at a time when he is serving as an earthly Jewish king - can build the ultimate Temple described by the prophet *Yechezkiel* [later called *Ezekiel*]<sup>15</sup>. In fact the *Rambam* states that *the only conclusive proof* of the identity of the Messiah is that *he will be the one to build the Temple.* In the *Midrash Rabba* therefore it is declared that no man or king will build the Third Temple but that it will instead descend out of the fire from Heaven onto its appointed place on earth – i.e. Temple Mount. The verse of Torah from which Jewish sages like Rashi come to this conclusion is Exodus 15:17, the prophetic

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<sup>14</sup> Maimonides, ‘*Laws of the Chosen House*’, chapter 1, law number 1.

<sup>15</sup> The lengthy description by *Yechezkiel* of the Temple to come begins in chapter 40 of his book.

climax of the Song of the Sea. It was there declared concerning the Covenant Community:

*You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the establishment of Your residence which You have made, O Eternal, the Sanctuary. O Holy One, which Your hands have established."*

Please note the similarity of this Talmudic view with the imagery of the descending 'Bride City' of the New Jerusalem revealed to talmidim of Yeshua through the prophecy of Yochanan in the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of his Revelation. As you can see from these sources it has been *Divinely programmed into the Hebraic heart* to desire the ultimate Temple – the time, place, and experience of fully dwelling in the Holy Courts of the Bridegroom of Heaven. And therein is the great paradox – we know our hearts and souls will never be satisfied and fulfilled until *the Holy One's ultimate dwelling in our midst is a reality*; and yet we know at the same time that *there is absolutely nothing we can do to cause it to happen*.

### **Temple Experiment #1: The Construction of Sh'lomo's Temple**

Sh'lomo's construction of the first Temple began in the second month of the fourth year of his reign - approximately 970 BCE. This was the 480<sup>th</sup> year after the Exodus. **I Kings 6:1**. According to Hebrew legend his also just happened to coincide with the 40<sup>th</sup> year after the ark was captured by the Philistines<sup>16</sup> and the *Mish'kan* ceased its operation. Even with the employment of over 180,000 men of Israel in the enterprise<sup>17</sup>, the construction of this magnificent edifice still took seven years to complete. The structure was completed and placed into use in approximately 964 BCE. For 378 years after its completion the Temple stood as a marvel of architecture, its brilliant gold and bronze highlights glistening in the sun atop Mount Moriyah until the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar burned it to the ground in 586 BCE.

### **Temple Experiment #2: The Dedication of Sh'lomo's Temple**

As we learn in our Torah readings for the week, the dedication of the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle] occurred in the first month of the Biblical year, in *Nisan*, the month of the Passover. Sh'lomo did not follow this pattern. He chose to dedicate the Temple he had built in the seventh month of the Biblical calendar, at the time of *Chag Ha-Sukkot* [*i.e.* the *Feast of Tabernacles*].

As you might expect, the dedication ceremony that Sh'lomo arranged for his Temple was *quite a show*. It was, alas, all designed by – and to impress – men. It therefore began with an eye-catching – though very bloody - procession. In front of all the elders and people gathered at Y'rushalayim for the Festival of *Sukkot*

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<sup>16</sup> This catastrophic event is chronicled in I Samuel chapter 4.

<sup>17</sup> This is chronicled in I Kings 5:13-18.

Sh'lomo had the *aron* [ark] transferred from the 'Tabernacle of David' on nearby Mount *Tziyon* into the new Temple. Quite without any Biblical mandate Sh'lomo provided for slaughter-sacrifices to be made at virtually every step of the march.

After the ark was deposited by the priests in the inner chamber of supreme holiness, however, something akin to what happened in parsha *Pekudei*, with the descent of the *Radiant Cloud* on the *Mish'kan* in the days of Moshe occurred. The writer of I Kings describes this event as follows:

***V'he-anan male et-beit Adonai***

*Then the Cloud filled the house of the Holy One*

***V'lo-yachlu ha-kohanim l'amod l'sharet mipenei he-anan***

*The priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud;*

***ki-male ch'vod-Adonai et-beit Adonai***

*for the Holy One's glory filled His house.*

The haftarah *ha-shavua* concludes with Sh'lomo's dedicatory remarks. Alas, those remarks turn out to be more self-congratulatory and self-serving than honoring of the Holy One. And even this is a lesson for us.

### ***A Note Concerning the Week's B'rit Chadasha Readings***

**II Corinthians 9:6-11 & II Corinthians 2:14 – 3:18**

The B'rit Chadasha readings I have selected for this week are found in the second and third chapters of the second letter sent by Shaul of Tarsus to the troublesome talmidim of the Greek city of Corinth. Shaul was a man who understood both the *touch of the Shepherd's rod* and the *intimate gaze of the Shepherd's eye*. By the time he wrote II Corinthians he understood that he was *nothing* and that the Holy One was *everything*. Shaul had, by this stage in his discipleship, learned really some hard lessons about human efforts to establish 'faith communities'. He had learned that the manifestation of the glory of the Holy One, which is absolutely essential to the fulfillment of the Divine Plan, never comes through human planning or effort – but only through the working of wonders by the Holy One in the lives of ordinary people who will bend their knee under His Shepherd's rod and surrender everything aspect of their lives to His intimate gaze. He focuses on this theme in II Corinthians 3:5, saying:

*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves,  
but our sufficiency is from the Holy One ... .*

**[II Corinthians 3:8]**

Shaul seems to have learned far better than most that the *Mish'kan* is not designed to be built by clergymen claiming titles, but by ordinary men humbly consenting to co-labor with the Master Craftsman Himself.

*May we all come to know and trust the rod of the Master Shepherd,  
yield to his tender hand and intimate gaze, and experience His shalom.*

***The Rabbi's son***

***Amidah Prayer Focus for the Week***  
**The Gevurot, Part I**

***Atah gibor l'olam Adonai***  
*You are incomparably mighty, O Holy One!*

***m'chai'ai maysim atah***  
*You bring the dead back to life.*