

## *Introduction to Parsha Vayakhel<sup>1</sup>*

READINGS:    *Torah Vayakhel:*            Exodus 35:1 - 38:20  
                  *Haftarah:*                                I Kings 7:13-26  
                  *B'rit Chadasha:*                II Corinthians 9:6-11



*Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked on the tabernacle made ten curtains woven of fine linen.*

[Exodus 36:8]

**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* – And Moshe called the entire witness throng of B'nei Yisrael to assemble .... Exodus 35:1a.

At the end of last week's study Moshe returned to camp and finally completed the 'Ketubah Transmission' assignment the Holy One had given him. This time he did not let his flesh, his pseudo-intellect, or his inclination toward self-righteous judgmentalism get in the way. The first time the Holy One had assigned Moshe this task [see Exodus 24:12 and 31:18] Moshe had unilaterally chosen to abort the mission because of what he saw taking place in the camp when he arrived to deliver the *Ketubah*. What he saw, of course, was the disgusting dalliance of B'nei Yisrael with a graven image that Aharon had made in the form of a calf. Instead of having faith in the power of the Holy One's Ketubah-presentation to awaken the *nish'mat chayim* in the people and trusting the Divine energy pulsing in and from the words that the Holy One had inscribed on the tablets to inspire teshuvah and kickstart a radical transformation, Moshe reacted in raw, unrestrained human anger – that destructive aversion-reaction folly which Ya'akov [KJV 'James'] will later explain '*cannot produce/bring forth the righteousness of God*'. James 1:19. So, instead of delivering the most precious gift that humanity as a species had received from its Maker since the *Na'aseh Adam* – i.e. *Let us make/build/form 'man'* – announcement of Creation Week, Moshe threw down the 'tablets of testimony'

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upon which the Holy One had personally inscribed His vision of what He and willing, humble humans could accomplish if they worked together. Alas, in the aftermath, we can see that Moshe's 'inglorious abortion' of mission due to what he wrongly presumed to be 'righteous anger at sin' had not worked out well for anyone – not for Moshe, not for B'nei Yisrael, not for the species of mankind, and not for the Creation ecosystem.

### ***NEXT TIME! NEXT TIME ... WE'LL GET IT RIGHT!***

This time Moshe was going to do the job 'the Holy One's way'. This time – having been in the Cleft of the Rock, covered by the Holy One's Hand, as all the Holy One's goodness was revealed to Moshe and the Holy One's *midot* [*i.e.* His essential, overriding attributes, characteristics, starting with *mercy, slowness to anger, and covenant faithfulness/lovingkindness*] were made manifest to him, Moshe was ready to navigate the transition from *being seated with the Holy One and His Throne Room Courtiers in the Beauty Realm* to *being surrounded by fallen mortals oozing uncleanness and spreading profanity on earth* without losing it. Awash in the Holy One's glory, with his understanding of the Holy One and His ways now at a much higher level, he now saw himself for what he was – just the 'Friend of the Bridegroom', not a judge or executioner. Now he was ready to trust the Holy One's words not to return to Him void. Now he was ready to deliver the Ketubah – and in so doing to inspire us to *lift our heads* and to *look higher* – unto the One Whose Words have the power to change everything, to fix everything, and to achieve everything necessary for His Will to be done, and for His Kingdom to come, *on earth as it is in Heaven*.

When delivery of the Ketubah was finally effectuated, the atmosphere in the camp immediately changed. Moshe's face was glowing, but that was not what made the difference. As soon as we received the tablets, our hearts began to burn. It now seemed the most natural thing in the world for us to turn all our attention and our energies to building the Holy One a *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle] – *i.e.* the miniature replica of the Heavenly Throne Room the Holy One had called us to build to establish a point of connection and interface between God and man, Heaven and earth. We could not wait to have the honor of hosting Divinity in our camp – and participating in a great *passion play* that would testify to all families of earth of the depths of Divine love for our species and the beauty of Divine vision for Creation. At His instigation, we put aside our differences, rise above our aversion-reactions, and stand up as one to do the *work to which we have been called*. We will not make up a design intended either to please ourselves or to impress other men. We will do it His Way. We will not tell our story of trauma and tragedy – we will tell His Grand and Joyous Story of Redemption. The assignment 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-kelav 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 firsthand*. 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 the men, women, and children encamped at Sinai are mere *scattered sparks of Divine Fire*. In the aftermath of the golden calf debacle they have reverted to a loose gaggle of traumatized refugees. They have *fractured, fragmented souls*. They

have not been a PEOPLE since Moshe came down the mountain a few weeks ago and caught them in the act of self-serving idolatrous worship. They now know they have been gloriously *forgiven by the Bridegroom-King*, but they are by no means healed of the deep wounds of human community. They are secure again in their relationship with the Holy One as His *am segulah*, but they are by no means comfortable in their new creation identity as a kingdom of *kohanim*. They are not yet ready to *play well with others*. They are by no means *whole* enough to love - much less serve - human beings. Each man can worship the Holy One at the entrance to his own tent, but they are not by any means ready to re-engage in any meaningful way in the Grand Redemptive Plan to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth in the context of real time interactions between real people. They are not yet capable of trusting each other - or even themselves - enough to step back into the grand prophetic destiny to which the Holy One has called them. Have you ever felt like that, Dear Reader? Do you perhaps feel like that right now?

Think about it. Once we as a community had 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 - *vayik'hel* - to the opening word of this week's parsha. 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>2</sup> and *goy k'dosh* [holy nation]<sup>3</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 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

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<sup>2</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 serve 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>3</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.

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 Holy One's Presence, 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>4</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 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

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<sup>4</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.*



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 YHVH 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 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>5</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 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
8. Letting the Bridegroom-King be the Focus of Everything.

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<sup>5</sup> Acts 1:8.



**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-d'varim***

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

***asher-tzivah YHVH 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 k'dosh* 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. 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 multimillion 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* 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 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. They 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 Brief Look at the Haftarah for the Week***

#### **I Kings 7:13-26**

This week's two associated haftarah readings describe the building, dedication and inauguration of the Temple *Sh'lomo* built for the Holy One<sup>6</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 beauty was of a brilliant, 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.

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<sup>6</sup> The Biblical narrative relative to this transaction is found in I Chronicles chapter 21.

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;  
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.

Y'shua'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 Maimonides [*i.e. 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>7</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>8</sup>. In fact the

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<sup>7</sup> Maimonides, ‘*Laws of the Chosen House*’, chapter 1, law number 1.

<sup>8</sup> The lengthy description by *Yechezkiel* of the Temple to come begins in chapter 40 of his book.

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 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 Y’shua 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 Court’s 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*.

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>9</sup> and the *Mish’kan* ceased its operation. Even with the employment of over 180,000 men of Israel in the enterprise<sup>10</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.

### ***A Note Concerning the Week’s B’rit Chadasha Readings*** **II Corinthians 9:6-11**

The B’rit Chadasha reading I have selected to correspond with parsha *Vayakhel* is found in the second letter sent by Shaul of Tarsus to the Corinthians. Shaul was a man who grew to understand the touch of the Shepherd’s rod and the intimate gaze of the Shepherd’s keen eye. By the time he wrote II Corinthians he understood that he was *nothing* and that the Holy One was *everything*. He focused on this theme in

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<sup>9</sup> This catastrophic event is chronicled in I Samuel chapter 4.

<sup>10</sup> This is chronicled in I Kings 5:13-18.

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 ....*

Shaul learned that the manifestation of the glory of the Holy One, which is essential to the fulfillment of the Divine Plan, never comes through human planning or effort. It comes only through the working of wonders by the Holy One in the lives of very ordinary people who will bend their knee under His Shepherd's rod – people who will surrender every aspect of their lives to His intimate gaze.

*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*