



## **TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 3-18-23 VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI**

### ***Ministry News***

***IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU WOULD LIKE PEOPLE ON THE LIST TO PRAY FOR YOU CAN SEND THEM TO US AT [TOLMM@ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG](mailto:TOLMM@ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG) OR BY TEXT MESSAGE TO 575 644-7706 AND I WILL SEND THEM BY EMAIL ONLY.***

Remember that you can support the work of Tree of Life Messianic Ministries with a donation made via PayPal or by check to PO Box 467, Organ, NM 88052. Your donation helps our continued outreach to inmates and the time it takes to put this Newsletter together.

**Donate**



**Tree of Life Messianic Ministries is an approved Giving Charity by PayPal. To donate go to [etz-chayim.org](http://etz-chayim.org) and click on the PayPal Link.**

**Tree of Life Messianic Ministries primarily focuses on its Prison Ministry and helping form groups in the prisons. TOLMM also seeks to help Home Groups and offers a covering for Home Groups and the combined experience of leadership from Rabbi Philip Hammond and Rabbi Mordecai Silver. Group leaders can receive recognition as Elders under TOLMM, which will help in an advisory role.**

Your support is needed for the Prison Ministry due to continuing rising costs.  
We now have an Affiliate in Australia.

## ***HOME GROUPS, CONGREGATIONS AND PEOPLE SEEKING FELLOWSHIP...***

Shawn Warren lives in Arizona. If you know of someone who is looking for a group in that area, please let me know and I will send the information to Shawn.

Marcia Hedrick would like to host a group on the west side of El Paso in her home. She also needs someone to lead the group while she will be the host. If you are interested let me know and I will send her the information.

Gabriel Martinez has a home group in El Paso (different area). If interested let me know and I will send him the information. Gabriel is an Elder affiliated with TOLMM as is his Home Group, Ohr Ha'Brit Messianic Assembly.

There is a new Home Group in Las Cruces. For more information email [tolmm@etz-chayim.org](mailto:tolmm@etz-chayim.org).

Rabbi Phillip Hammond has a Zoom Bible Study and a Erev Shabbat and Shabbat Service on Zoom Friday evening and Saturday morning at 11:00am. Rabbi Hammond is in Australia and the time difference would be 5:00pm Friday Mountain Time. Rabbi Hammond is looking into starting a men's group focused in the United States. You can contact Rabbi Hammond at [Philip@etz-chayim.org](mailto:Philip@etz-chayim.org). Rabbi Hammond is now affiliated with Rabbi Mordecai Silver and his ministry, Tree of Life Messianic Ministries. Check out Rabbi Hammond at <https://www.etz-chayim.org/australia-affiliate/>.

Elder Shawn Warren is an Elder affiliated with TOLMM and helps with one-on-one correspondence with inmates in our Prison Ministry Outreach. He also encourages people to contact us about affiliating with TOLMM through Home Groups and our help to group leaders.

Michael and Gayle Michelucci are forming a new Home Group in Idaho.

We thank you for your support. Blessings in Messiah Yeshua,

Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph. D., and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D. and our team

## ***General News***

TO SEARCH FOR MY BOOKS ON AMAZON ENTER “**BOOKS BY RAV MORDECAI SILVER**”. MINE ARE AVAILABLE IN PRINT FORMAT ONLY. I HAVE TWO NEW BOOKS ON AMAZON: RAV SHA’UL AND REFLECTIONS ON TORAH. TO SEE MORDECAI’S BOOKS GO TO: [HTTPS://WWW.ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG/SHOP-OUR-STORE/PRINT-AND-KINDLE-BOOKS/](https://www.etz-chayim.org/shop-our-store/print-and-kindle-books/)

FOR RABBI HAMMOND’S BOOK GO TO AMAZON.COM AS WELL.

CHECK OUT RABBI MORDECAI SILVERS 3 YEARS OF VIDEO TEACHINGS ON THE TORAH PORTIONS AND FESTIVALS ON YOUTUBE.

# **MESSIANIC TEACHING ON THE WEEKLY TORAH, HAFTARAH, AND APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURE PORTIONS...**



## **MESSAGE FOR 3-18-23 VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI**

*Message originally shared 3/13/99*

***VaYakhel - And he assembled / P'kudei - Accountings of***

***Exodus 35:1-38:20 / Exodus 38:21-40:38***

***1 Kings 7:13-26; 40-50 / 1 Kings 7:51-8:21***

***2 Corinthians 9:6-11 / Hebrews 1:1-3, 9:11-12 / Rev. 15:5-8***

This week we read the final two Parashiot from the Book of Exodus-Shemot. The first Sidra or Parashah is VaYakhel-And He Assembled. This section deals with the sanctuary that they are going to build. But before they begin the work they receive once again the teaching about the Sabbath.

It is well to remember that the command to rest in this section is preceded by the command to work. In fact, how can you rest if you have not worked?

In the Sidra or Parashah P'kudei-Accountings Of we read that the sanctuary has been built and the people are ready to go on their journey through the wilderness, toward the Promised Land. This journey was destined to take the people through different adventures, some up some down. Throughout this journey one thing was constant, unchanging:

***"God's presence as a guiding force. A cloud symbolizes the Divine Presence: For the cloud of HASHEM would be on the Tabernacle by day, and fire would be on it at night before the eyes of all the House of Israel throughout their journeys."***

**Exodus-Shemot 36:2-7**

***2: Moses summoned Bezalel, Oholiab, and every wise-hearted man whose heart HASHEM endowed with wisdom, everyone whose heart inspired him, to approach the work, to do it. 3: From Moses' presence they took the entire gift that the Children of Israel had brought for the work for the labor of the Sanctuary, to do it. But they continued to bring him free-willed gifts morning after morning. 4: All the wise people came - those performing all the sacred work, each of them from his work that they were doing - 5: And they said to Moses, as follows, "The people are bringing more than enough for the labor of the work that HASHEM has commanded to perform." 6: Moses commanded that they proclaim throughout the camp, saying, "Man and woman shall not do more work toward the gift for the sanctuary!" And the people were restrained from bringing. 7: But the work had been enough for all the work, to do it - and there was extra.***

**2 Corinthians 9:6-11**

***6: Here's the point: he who plants sparingly also harvests sparingly. 7: Each should give according to what he has decided in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver [Proverbs 22:8-Septuagint]. 8: Moreover, God has the power to provide you with every gracious gift in abundance, so that always in every way you will have all you need yourselves and be able to provide abundantly for every good cause - 9: As the Tanakh says, He gave generously to the poor; his tzedakah lasts forever [Psalm 112:9]." 10: He who provides both seed for the planter and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your tzedakah. 11: You will be enriched in every way, so that you can be generous in everything. And through us your generosity will cause people to thank God.***

**Exodus-Shemot 40:12-16**

***12: "You shall bring Aaron and his sons near to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and immerse them in water. 13: You shall dress Aaron in the sacred vestments and anoint him; you shall sanctify him, and***

***he shall minister to Me. 14: And his sons you shall bring near and dress them in tunics. 15: You shall anoint them as you had anointed their father and they shall minister to Me, and so it shall be that their anointment shall be for eternal priesthood for their generations. 16: Moses did according to everything that HASHEM commanded him, so he did.***

**Exodus-Shemot 40:34-35**

***34: The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of HASHEM filled the Tabernacle. 35: Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting, for the cloud rested upon it, and the glory of HASHEM filled the Tabernacle.***

**1 Kings-Melakhim 8:10-11**

***10: And it was as the Kohanim left the Sanctuary, that the cloud filled the Temple of HASHEM. 11: The Kohanim could not stand and minister because of the cloud, for the glory of HASHEM filled the Temple of HASHEM.***

**Hebrews-Messianic Jews 1:1-3**

***1: In days gone by, God spoke in many and varied ways to the Fathers through the prophets. 2: But now, in the acharit-hayamim (End Times), he has spoken to us through His Son, to whom He has given ownership of everything and through whom He created the universe. 3: This Son is the radiance of the Sh'khinah (God's manifest glory), the very expression of God's essence, upholding all that exists by His powerful word; and after He had, through Himself, made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of HaG'dulah BaM'romim (the Power above) [Psalm 110:1].***

**Hebrews-Messianic Jews 9:11-12**

***11: But when the Messiah appeared as cohen gadol (high priest) of the good things that are happening already, then, through the greater and more perfect Tent which is not man-made (that is, it is not of this created world), 12: He entered the Holiest Place once and for all. And He entered not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of His own blood, thus setting people free forever.***

**Revelation 15:5-8**

***5: After this I looked, and the Sanctuary (that is, the Tent of Witness in heaven) was opened, 6: And out of the Sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean bright linen and had gold belts around their chests. 7: One of the four living beings gave to the seven angels seven gold bowls filled with the fury of God, who lives forever and ever. 8: Then the Sanctuary was filled with smoke from God's Sh'khinah, that is, from His power; and no one could enter the Sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels had accomplished their purpose.***

The Sanctuary was a symbol. The danger with any symbol is that in time people tend to worship the symbol, forgetting that it is meant only to be a reminder of our ongoing process of spiritual growth. Think about that. Isn't it easier to go to a synagogue or church, feeling that one's religious obligation has been fulfilled, than to relate to those symbols as aids in one's spiritual journey?

Some so-called religious people make a great show of their weekend religious observance, yet at the same time, they hurt their families, cheat on their taxes, and act ruthlessly in their business dealings with the very strangers they are commanded to love. They forget that we are supposed to seek God within the Sanctuary so that we may be more fully aware of Him within us throughout the week. This is not to say that all symbols are bad. If a symbol allows your spirit to connect with God and it is a reminder to you of who God is, then the symbol has helped in a positive way.

Christians see the cross as the vertical relationship between man on earth and God in heaven, and the horizontal relationships that people have with one another. These two types of relationships must intersect.

For Jews, the Star of David often serves as a source of comfort. The star is made of two intersecting triangles, one pointing upward to heaven, the other downward. The triangle pointing upward symbolizes the good inclination of man and the triangle pointing down symbolizes the evil inclination. Man exists where they intersect.

A symbol can be a powerful thing. It can remind us of our connection to God and raise us to higher levels of connecting with Him. We somehow feel better by looking at it or touching it.

But in the end, we must be careful that the symbol does not replace God. In all things God must take priority.

***The genius of God resides...in raising the secular to the sacred, the material to the spiritual. Just as God raised the seventh day to the Sabbath, so He seeks to raise everyday to the Sabbath. That will come with the eighth day...***

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We include a Traditional Torah Commentary and my Messianic Commentary. The reason for this is so you can see a Messianic Perspective and a Traditional Jewish one. Remember to use discernment in approaching Traditional Jewish teachings as they do not recognize Yeshua as the Messiah. There are various ideas in traditional Jewish circles about the Messiah and even that there is no Messiah, the thinking in Reform Judaism. So, please be careful to balance the teachings.

We do not agree with the Jewish position on Yeshua, but Believers need to know the Jewish thinking on Yeshua and not buy into this thinking and forsake faith in our Messiah. For those who say they would never do this, we must beg to differ, because we have seen it over our lives as Jewish Believer's in Yeshua. We have been Believer's in Messiah Yeshua for decades. We have seen a lot and had many discussions with our fellow Jews and non-Jews who ultimately turned away from Yeshua because they steeped themselves in Jewish teachings. One does not come out of either traditional Judaism or Christianity and come into the Messianic walk, and then going back, or into, traditional Judaism. *There are many good things in Judaism but denying Yeshua as Messiah is not one of them.* Berachot (Blessings), Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph.D., and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D.

## ***A TRADITIONAL JEWISH PARASHAH AND HAFTARAH COMMENTARY***





# Parashat Vayakhel: Summary

## Exodus 35:1-38:20

***The Israelites bring so many materials for the construction of the Tabernacle that Moses tells them to stop; Bezalel and Oholiab, gifted craftspeople, construct the elements of the Tabernacle.***

Moses gathers the Israelite community to share all that the Lord commanded on Mount Sinai. Moses says to the people: “These are the objects which God commanded to be made. On six days work may be done, but the seventh day, they should observe a Sabbath for God by refraining from work; whoever does work on the Sabbath shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your settlements on the Sabbath day.

“Everyone whose heart so moves him shall bring gifts for the Lord—gold, or silver, wool or linen, wood or oil, spices or stones, anything to make the Sanctuary more glorious for God,” said Moses.

“And let all among you who are skilled come and make all that the Lord has commanded for the Sanctuary: the Tabernacle, its tent and its covering, the Ark and its poles and utensils, the lamp stand and the oil for lighting, the oils for anointing, the altar for burnt offerings, and the sacred garments for Aaron the High Priest and his sons who are to officiate in the Sanctuary.”

### Finding Gifts for God

The whole community of Israelites left Moses’ presence to find gifts for the Lord. Everyone whose spirit was moved brought offerings for the Dwelling Place of the Lord. Men and women, moved by their hearts, brought all kinds of golden objects, colorful wools, silver, copper, and acacia wood for the Lord. Men and women worked together using their skills to make the sacred Sanctuary for God.

Moses then says to the Israelites, “See the Lord has called Bezalel. God has filled Bezalel and Oholiab with the spirit of God, with wisdom, insight, knowledge and talent for all manner of craftsmanship and the ability to teach.” Moses then gives to Bezalel and Oholiab the gifts of the Israelites so they could begin to lovingly craft the holy Sanctuary.

Still, the Israelites continued to bring more offerings. Finally, Moses proclaims, “Bring no more gifts for the Sanctuary.” But the gifts had been enough for all the work, and there was extra.

Then, with precise instructions given to Moses by God, the Tabernacle was built. Bezalel made the Ark of acacia wood and overlaid it with pure gold, inside and out. He made a cover for the Ark of pure gold. He made two cherubim of gold with wings spread out above the Ark, shielding the cover with their wings. The faces of the cherubim faced each other and turned toward the cover.

He made the table of acacia wood with rings of gold and poles of wood, overlaid with gold, to carry the table. The utensils to be upon the table—its bowls, ladles, jugs, and jars with which to offer libation—he made of pure gold.

He made the lamp stand of pure gold with seven lamps also of pure gold. He made the incense altar and its poles of acacia wood and overlaid it with pure gold. Bezalel then expertly prepared the sacred anointing oil and the pure aromatic incense.

Bezalel made the altar for burnt offerings of acacia wood with horns for the four corners and overlaid the altar and the wooden poles with copper. He made all the utensils of the burnt offering altar—the pails, basins, flesh hooks and fire pans—also of copper. Bezalel made the basins of copper from the mirrors of the women who had gathered at the entrance of the Tent of Appointed Meeting.

Bezalel made an enclosure for the Tent of Appointed Meeting with specific hangings on each side of fine, twisted linen of blue and purple and crimson, with silver hooks and copper posts.

### Parashat Vayakhel Discussion Questions

**1) At the beginning of this portion, Moses specifically says that working on the Sanctuary for God may not be done on the Sabbath. If this work is done on the Sabbath, it is punishable by death. Do you think death is a just or unjust punishment? Why?**

**2) The Israelite people brought so many gifts for the making of God’s Sanctuary that they had to be restrained from bringing more. As a giver of gifts to God, what do you do: give extra, give the exact amount, give just enough, or try to get away with giving a little less?**

**3) “God has filled Bezalel and Oholiab with the spirit of God, with wisdom, insight, knowledge and talent for all manner of craftsmanship and the ability to teach.” What has God filled you with? How do you use it?**

## Haftarah for Vayakhel

*Details of the Temple's construction.*

**Ashkenazic Custom: I Kings 7:40-50**

**Sephardic Custom: I Kings 7:13-26**

This Haftarah is also read on the second Shabbat of Hanukkah.

Parashat Vayakhel describes the construction of the Mishkan—the temporary Temple that the Israelites used for worship in the desert. The laws for the Mishkan’s construction were outlined previously, in Parashat Terumah. Now, three portions later, we read about their implementation by the artisans Bezalel and Oholiab.

The Haftarah for Parashat Vayakhel continues in the construction theme. The Ashkenazic custom is to read verses that list all the pieces that Hiram King of Tyre, a talented bronze

worker, created for the Temple. This list includes two columns with two globes, 400 pomegranates, pails, scrapers, and sprinkling bowls. We learn that Hiram's bronze contributions were so heavy that King Solomon could not weigh them. Following the list of bronze pieces from Hiram, we read about the gold furnishings that Solomon made for the Temple: altar, candelabra, basins, ladles, and doors.

The Sephardic haftarah for Vayakhel begins earlier in the same chapter and offers an explanation of who Hiram was: "His father had been a Tyrian, a coppersmith. He was endowed with skill, ability, and talent for executing all work in bronze" (7:14). The verses that follow detail the large pieces of the Temple which Hiram cast in bronze: two tall columns and two capitals to be placed on top of these columns—all decorated with rows of pomegranates and lily designs. These columns, which were set up at the Great Hall of the Temple, were named Jachin and Boaz.

The meaning of these names is unclear, and their symbolism has been a point of exploration for mystics. A prominent 19th century Mishnah commentary, Tifereth Yisrael by Rabbi Israel Lipschutz, is subdivided into two parts, one more general and the other more analytical, titled Jachin and Boaz respectively.

## Parashat Pekudei: Summary

### Exodus 38:21-40:38

***The work of constructing the Tabernacle is completed; Moses receives the command to anoint its vessels and to anoint Aaron and the priests.***

All that the Lord commanded Moses was created for the sanctuary under the direction of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest, Bezalel of the tribe of Judah, and Oholiab of the tribe of Dan.

They made garments of distinction for those officiating in the Sanctuary and sacral vestments for Aaron, the High Priest. Aaron's breastplate had 12 stones corresponding to the names of the sons of Israel. His robe was woven with the color of pure blue and had bells of pure gold.

They made tunics and headdresses and decorated turbans of embroidered fine linen for Aaron and his sons. They made the head-plate of pure gold and inscribed upon it: "Holy to God."

#### The Completion of the Tabernacle

Thus, all the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting was completed. Then the Israelites brought the Tabernacle and all that was within it to Moses. When Moses saw that they had performed all the tasks as the Lord had commanded, Moses blessed them.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: On the first day of the month, you shall set up the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting, and all that is within it. You shall take the anointing oil and anoint the Tabernacle and all its contents so that it shall be holy.

You shall bring Aaron and his sons forward to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and wash them with the water. Put the sacral vestments on Aaron and anoint him so that he may serve Me as priest. Then anoint his sons so that they may serve Me as priests. This anointing shall serve them in their everlasting priesthood throughout the generations. This Moses did, just as the Lord had commanded him.

When Moses finished, the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Presence of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it and the Presence of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.

When the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on their journeys. If the cloud did not lift, they would not set out. For over the Tabernacle a cloud of the Lord rested by day and fire would appear in it by night before the eyes of all the House of Israel throughout their journeys.

Parashat Pekudei Discussion Questions

**1) The Israelites perform all the work for building the Sanctuary as the Lord commanded Moses. What kind of work does the Lord command of you in building today's Sanctuaries?**

**2) A cloud covers the Tent of Appointed Meeting, and the Presence of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. How do you know when the Presence of the Lord fills a Sanctuary?**

**3) When you look at clouds does it remind you of God? Why or why not?**

## Haftarah for Pekudei

### Ezekiel 45:16-46:18

*The Temple construction is completed.*

Parashat Pekudei marks the end of the cluster of Torah portions pertaining to the construction of the Mishkan—the temporary Temple the Israelites used for worship in the desert. After all the pieces of the Mishkan are in place, and Moses' work is completed, we read about God's powerful presence taking over the space: "Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it and the Presence of the Lord filled the Tabernacle" (Exodus 40:35).

The Haftarah for Pekudei, according to the Ashkenazic custom, describes the completion of construction for the first Temple, under Solomon's rule. Having brought in all the treasures and donations for the Temple, Solomon gathers the elders of Israel to install the Ark in the Temple.

The Ark contained the two tablets Moses had received from God, and it was shielded by two cherubim—statues of winged creatures. After the priests placed the Ark in the Holy of Holies, the Temple was complete.

Here too, God's presence is described in physical, overwhelming terms: "A cloud filled the House of the Lord, and the priests were not able to remain and perform the service because of the cloud, for the Presence of the Lord filled the House" (8:10-11).

### Solomon's Speech

Solomon delivers a speech to consecrate the Temple. First, he addresses God: "I have now built for You a stately House, a place where You may dwell forever" (8:13). Then he addresses the people of Israel and recounts the history that led up to the Temple's construction.

His father David, Solomon says, had intended to build the Temple. But God denied David this right and told him that instead his son would build it.

Solomon declares that now God's promise has been fulfilled: "I have succeeded my father David and have ascended the throne of Israel. I have built the House for the Lord and I have set a place there for the Ark, containing the covenant which the Lord made with our fathers when He brought them out from the land of Egypt" (8:20-21).

### The Sephardic Custom

The Sephardic custom is to read a selection that lists all the pieces that Hiram King of Tyre, a talented bronze worker, created for the Temple. This includes two columns with two globes, 400 pomegranates, pails, scrapers, and sprinkling bowls. This selection is also the Ashkenazic reading for Parashat Vayakhel, and more information about it can be found [here](#).



***From the Desk of  
Rabbi Philip Hammond***

## **WORDS OF WISDOM CHAPTER 27**

No matter whom we are or even where we are, we can face difficult times on occasions. No doubt there are great degrees of difference in those

difficult times. None the less each person sees their own difficulties in their own "light".

Many people put the blame on HaShem or "God" during these times. The question asked down through the ages is; "If God is all powerful and all knowing, full of grace and mercy, how come so many people are starving and dying each and every day"? The Jewish way is always answering a question with a question. So, we ask, "Do you think it is God's fault that many are in such conditions?" This is a very interesting question, especially considering most who ask the first question, claim not to even believe in God. Well, if there is no God, then He certainly cannot be held accountable, end of question and discussion. However, despite what the world would have us believe, HaShem, the Holy One of Israel does exist, and He is all powerful, all knowing, and holds the whole world in His Hand. HaShem is indeed our only hope! May I suggest that you seek HaShem with all your heart, mind and soul, He will certainly answer a broken and contrite heart. Make no mistake HaShem is well aware of those who seek Him and those who scoff and reject Him. This will result in serious action being taken by Him.

***"There is no God above us, is the fond thought of reckless hearts; warped natures everywhere and hateful lives! There is not an innocent one among them. HaShem looks down from heaven at the race of Adam, to find one soul that reflects, and makes God its aim; but no, all have missed the mark and rebelled against Him; an innocent one is nowhere to be found. What, can they learn nothing, all these traffickers in iniquity, who feed themselves fat on this people of mine, as if it were bread for their eating, and never invoke HaShem's name. What wonder if fear unmans them, when HaShem takes the part of the innocent? Easily you thought to outwit the friendless; see, HaShem is their refuge! Oh, that it might dawn over Zion, Israel's deliverance! Day of gladness for Jacob, day of Israel's triumph, when HaShem restores the fortunes of His own people."*** Psalm 13 [14]: 1-7 [ K T ]

There is fast approaching a time when HaShem will answer the question regarding His very existence, through the return of HaMoshiach Yeshua the Master. It shall be that **every knee shall bend before the Holy One of Israel.**

***“Therefore, God raised him to the highest place and gave him the name above every name; that in honor of the name given Yeshua, every knee shall bow, in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall acknowledge that Yeshua the Messiah is ADONAI to the glory of God the Father.”*** Php 2:9-11 [CJB]

***“Speak up, present your case, let them put their heads together! Who fortold this in the past, who revealed it long ago? Was is not I Yahweh? There is no other god except me, no saving God, no Saviour except me! Turn to me and you will be saved, all you ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is no other. By my own self I swear it; what comes from my mouth is saving justice, it is an irrevocable word: All shall bend the knee to me, by me every tongue shall swear, saying, ‘In Yahweh alone are saving justice and strength, until all those who used to rage at him come to him in shame. In Yahweh the whole race of Israel finds justice and glory.’”*** Isaiah 45:21-25 [NJB]

I pray you didn't skip through the above scriptures because you are familiar with them. If you did, be encouraged to read them again slowly and with purpose, seeking a deeper understanding of HaShem, Yeshua HaMoshiach and the Torah. Allow the Ruach HaKodesh to gently point out the far-reaching message within.

Whether people believe or not believe “something” doesn't make that “something” true or false. Not so long ago many people believed the world to be flat. Smoking was promoted as being good for you. Millions of children believe in the tooth fairy and **Santa** Clause. People are fore ever believing lies and falsehoods! Unfortunately, there is one who is a specialist in presenting lies as truth – Satan. Even more depressing is that people actually choose to believe Satan over HaShem. Yeshua has this to say regarding this fact.

***“You belong to your father, Satan, and you want to carry out your father's desires. From the start he was a murderer, and he has never stood by the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is speaking in character; because he is a liar- indeed the inventor of the lie!”*** John 8:44

It is not HaShem that is the cause of poverty, starvation, war, corruption, greed, depression, abuse, murder, stealing, bullying, thuggery, injustice, rebellion, deceit, jealousies, etc., etc. These things come from Satan, and they have infected the world, and this infection can only be removed by HaShem Himself.

Until He chooses the time to carry out this act, we Children of Israel MUST continue to shelter under the wings of our Moshiach. Not only does this entail having trust in Him, but it also requires a level of faithfulness to His Torah. Constant prayer, along with living a Torah based lifestyle keeps us well protected from the lies of the enemy.

***“We know that everyone who has God as his Father does not go on sinning; on the contrary, the Son born of God protects him and the Evil One does not touch him. We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us discernment, so that we may know who is genuine; moreover, we are united with the One who is genuine, united with his Son Yeshua the Messiah. He is the genuine God and eternal life. Children, guard yourselves against false gods!” 1John 5:18-21 [CJB]***

One of our greatest challenges, if not our major challenge, is to guard against the onslaught of “false gods”. It is when we are facing those difficult times that we are vulnerable. It is during these times that we are often focused on self, thereby we expose ourselves to the onslaught of false gods in an attempt to put “things” right. A reason we open ourselves up to the lies of false gods is because we are in a hurry to change the position, we have found ourselves in. Never mind about the children of this world, the Children of Israel often reject the cleansing power of HaShem. We are subject to avoiding the Torah of HaShem because it challenges our very souls. It can be a long and arduous journey learning and embracing the Torah. Yet until we accept that we should be living a Torah based lifestyle, we will struggle to change our circumstances and become prosperous in our spiritual walk with HaShem. Those of “the world” will find no rest for their souls and will continue to follow the false lights of false gods.

The world is continually looking for another god to fill a void. Is there any peace in the hearts of people who do not know HaShem? History proves



there is not. The present proves there is not, and the future will prove there is not. Those of us who know HaShem, have faith in Him, and try to be faithful to Him, struggle to have peace. What hope do others have? Let us not underestimate the difficulty we have living in this “fallen” world. It is a difficult pilgrimage finding your way through the maze of life. To help guide us through this pilgrimage, with the promise of a blessed hope, we have the prayers of the Master -Yeshua HaMoshiach.

***<sup>14</sup> I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.***

***<sup>20</sup> “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. <sup>24</sup> Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup> I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:14-26 [ESV]***

***“During Yeshua’s life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions, crying aloud and shedding tears, to the One who had the power to deliver him from death; and he was heard because of his godliness.”***

Yeshua was heard because of His righteousness. He was righteous because He followed Torah and was in constant prayer to the Father.

Do not waste the opportunity of having Yeshua plead your case before the Father. Follow in Yeshua's footsteps and employ prayer and Torah into your life. It is under these conditions [employing prayer and Torah] that the difficulties you face will be attended too by HaShem. All may not unfold as you would hope, but do not fall for the guile and deceit of the enemy if this happens. Satan is ever ready to take advantage of any situation, and any gap in your faith and faithfulness will be taken advantage of. The reason the world is in such bad shape is because of its rejection of HaShem. The only solution to this problem is embracing the beauty of all HaShem has on offer for His Children. Make sure you know what is on offer, both the good and the bad, then make a wise decision, as you are responsible for that or those decisions.

May the grace, love, and wisdom of HaShem and Yeshua HaMoshiach be with you!

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## ***This, that and the other ...***



### **Zionism 101**

#### ***The Jews as a nation in the land of Israel***

The roots of Zionism lay in Eastern Europe, notably within the confines of the Russian Empire. It was there, towards the end of the 19th century, that the largest and, in many ways, the most dynamic of Jewish communities was located — though it was also the most troubled. Conceived by czarist autocracy as a major obstacle to its drive to transform the population into a uniform and malleable society, Russian Jewry was subjected to extremely severe pressure to change its customs, culture and religion.

The Jews, for the most part, tended to bear with the laws that regulated their daily lives and cumulatively humiliated and impoverished them. But when wholesale expulsions from certain areas and successive waves of physical attack were added to the long-familiar misery, life under Russian rule in the 1880s began to be judged intolerable.

The Jewish predicament precipitated several reactions, all with a view to finding a lasting solution: a vast movement of emigration, chiefly to the West; the radicalization and politicization of great numbers of young Jewish people, many bending their energies to the overthrow of autocracy; and, among the increasingly secular intelligentsia, a rise in modern nationalist consciousness. It was the latter tendency — Zionism — that bore the most radical implications and was to have the most remarkable results.

The Zionist analysis of the nation's afflictions and its prescription for relief consisted of four interconnected theses. First, the fundamental vulnerability of the Jews to persecution and humiliation required total, drastic, and collective treatment. Second, reform and rehabilitation — cultural, no less than social and political — must be the work of the Jews themselves, i.e., they had to engineer their own emancipation. Third, only a territorial solution would serve; in other words, that establishing themselves as the majority population in a given territory was the only way to normalize their status and their relations with other peoples and polities. Fourth, only in a land of their own would they accomplish the full, essentially secular, revival of Jewish culture and of the Hebrew language.

These exceedingly radical theses brought the Zionists into endless conflict with an array of hostile forces, both Jewish and non-Jewish. On the one hand, Zionism implied a disbelief in the promise of civil emancipation and a certain contempt for Jews whose fervent wish was assimilation into their immediate environment. On the other hand, by offering a secular alternative to tradition, Zionism challenged religious orthodoxy as well — although, given the orthodox view of Jewry as a nation, the two had something in common after all. The Zionists were thus condemned from the outset to being a minority among the Jews and lacking the support that national movements normally receive from the people to whose liberation their efforts are directed.

The other struggle that the Zionists had to face resulted from their political and territorial aims. They had to fight for international recognition and for acceptance as a factor of consequence, however small, by the relevant powers. In the course of time, they have had to contend with the political and, eventually, armed hostility of the inhabitants and neighbors of the particular territory where virtually all Zionists desired to re-establish the Jewish people as a free nation: Palestine, or in Hebrew, *Eretz Yisrael*, the Land of Israel.

They were more successful in the broader international arena than on the local front. Ottoman opposition hobbled the movement almost totally in its early years, and the violent opposition mounted by Arab states and peoples has to this day shaped the physical and political landscape in which Zionism has implemented its ideals. In the final analysis, it is nonetheless the reluctance of the majority of Jews worldwide to subscribe to its program in practice that has

presented the strongest challenge to Zionism and has proved the greatest obstacle to its ultimate triumph.

## ***PRAYER & SPIRITUALITY***



### **Spirituality Never Stops**

***The connections between building the Tabernacle and Yom Kippur reminds us that all aspects of our spirituality are connected.***

Parashat Vayakhel tells the story of the actual building of the Mishkan [Tabernacle]; before this, we've only read the instructions for building it. Upon Moses' instructions, the people bring all the materials necessary: skins, wool, special woods, precious metals and stones. Master craftsmen do the specialized tasks.

#### **In Focus**

"Moses assembled the entire Israelite community and said to them, 'These are the words that God has commanded for [you] to do...'" (Exodus 35:1)

#### **Pshat**

In the previous three Torah portions, Moses has received from God the instructions for the Mishkan, or portable Sanctuary. Moses now gathers the people together to give them the instructions he has received — the word *Vayekhel* literally means "gather together." Moses could not build the Mishkan on his own but needed the participation of the entire people.

#### **Drash**

Rashi makes a cryptic comment on the building of the Mishkan which may raise more questions than it answers: "Moses assembled the entire Israelite community — on the day after Yom Kippur, after he came down the mountain."

What Rashi seems to be doing here is linking the previous story to the building of the Mishkan. In chapter 34, after the Golden Calf, Moses goes back up the mountain, and asks to see God's "face." Instead, he receives a revelation of God's merciful and forgiving aspects. He then brings

two new tablets down the mountain; rabbinic tradition has him returning to the people, with the symbol of God's forgiveness and a renewed covenant, on the day that would eventually be Yom Kippur.

OK, so far, so good, at least in the world of midrash. Rashi, then, wants to make a midrash that Moses gathered the people immediately (well, the next day) after coming back to them with the new tablets of the covenant. Aside from solving certain rather academic chronological problems, what could Rashi be trying to teach here?

One possibility that occurs to me is that Rashi is subtly comparing building the Mishkan to building a *sukkah*, the "booth" that many Jews build during the harvest holiday, which begins several days after Yom Kippur. To show that the "work" of religious observance and spirituality never ceases, even after a peak experience like Yom Kippur, many people symbolically begin to build their *sukkah* right after breaking their Yom Kippur fast — maybe they just put in a nail or two, but they want to demonstrate that spirituality doesn't stop, even for a day.

Another possibility is raised by the Hasidic teacher R. Moshe of Kobrin:

Moses wanted to hint to the Israelites that not only on Yom Kippur must people be filled with remorse and contrition, love of one's fellow-person, and friendship, but also on the day after Yom Kippur one must continue in the same fashion. (Source: *Itturei Torah*)

A third possibility is that this midrash isn't about the people's experience, but Moses'. It was Moses who had the "peak experience" (literally, up on a mountaintop!) in our story and it may have been Moses himself who needed to channel his revitalized spiritual energy into a constructive project.

How many times have you or somebody you know gotten a tremendous boost from a conference or a lecture or a religious service, and then just let that energy dissipate without being utilized for constructive purposes? People often get excited at new beginnings, but then the excitement fades once it becomes a daily discipline.

OK, now it's YOUR turn: what do YOU think Rashi meant to teach by connecting "gathering the people" with the day after Yom Kippur?

**עֵבְרִי - Hebrew**

**Word (s) of the Week**

נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה

**Nefesh Hah-yah**

**Breath of Life**



***A Taste of Jewish Humor***

Schwartz, an elderly man, is resting peacefully on the porch of his small hotel outside Boca when he sees a cloud of dust up the road. He walks out to see who could be approaching: It is a Southern farmer with a wagon.

“Good afternoon,” says Schwartz.

“Afternoon,” says the farmer.

“Where you headed?” asks Schwartz.

“Town.”

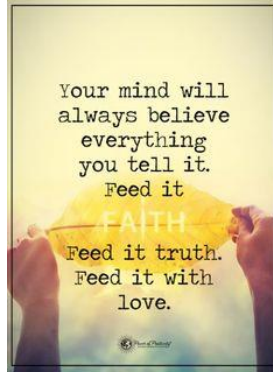
“What do you have in the wagon?”

“Manure.”

“Manure, eh? What do you do with it?”

“I spread it over the fruit.”

“Well,” says Bernstein, “you should come over here for lunch someday. We use sour cream.”



## ***This is not your Bubbie's Chicken Soup***

### **THE BEST CROCKPOT CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP**

**NOTE:** In the comments, you will see that a few people have reported their noodle disintegrating after adding them to the crockpot. I have no idea why this is happening and have NEVER had that happen any of the times we have made this soup. BUT I have only used No Yoke brand noodles. Other people have also reported success with No Yoke Noodles and Walmart Generic brand noodles. If you do not have access to those brands of noodles and are concerned, you can also just boil your noodle separately.

#### ***Directions***

1. In a 6-quart crockpot place whole chicken breasts on the bottom and top with, carrots, onion, celery, garlic, olive oil, thyme and bay leaf.
2. Next add in chicken broth, water, and season with salt and pepper to taste. I used 1/2 teaspoon salt & 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Cover and cook on low heat 6 – 7 hours.
3. Remove cooked chicken breasts and cut into bite sized pieces. Place chicken back into the crockpot. Now add in egg noodles and parsley. Cover and cook just until noodles are tender, 5-10 minutes. **Enjoy with your favorite crackers!**



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# SPACE FOR NOTES