

עץ חיים

ETZ HAYIM

TORAH AND COMMENTARY

THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY
THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



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Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary
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Moses then convoked the whole Israelite community and said to them:

These are the things that the LORD has commanded you to do: ²On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.

ויקהל
לה

ויקהל משה את־כָּל־עַדְת בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם
אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת
אַתֶּם: ²שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה
וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת
שַׁבְּתוֹן לַיהוָה כָּל־הָעֹשֶׂה בּוֹ מְלָאכָה

THE TABERNACLE, PART II: CONSTRUCTION (35:1–40:38)

See Comment prior to the start of Part I (25:1).

THE CONVENING OF THE PEOPLE (35:1–19)

The covenant between God and Israel has been renewed (Exod. 34), and the construction of the tabernacle proceeds. God's previous instructions about constructing the tabernacle concluded with

the law of *Shabbat* rest (31:12ff.). That narrative now continues with the same theme. See Comments to 31:12–17.

1. whole Israelite community The construction of the tabernacle is to be an enterprise that will involve all the Israelites.

2–3. The injunction is a repetition, with slight variations, of 31:15.

This relatively brief *parashah* is almost entirely a recapitulation of the instructions for fashioning the tabernacle and its furnishings. This is puzzling to commentators, who are accustomed to the Torah being sparing in its use of words. One commentator suggests that God so loved the idea of having a permanent home amid the Israelites that the details were repeated. Another suggests that the earlier version of the instructions represents God's commands, reflecting the enthusiasm descending from on high for this link with God, and that this version represents Israel's carrying out those commands, showing the corresponding enthusiasm welling up from below.

There is a tradition that the sin of the Golden Calf and God's forgiving the people happened on *Yom Kippur*, the great annual day of forgiveness and reconciliation. Based on that tradition, Rashi sees the events of *Va-yak-hel* taking place on the day after *Yom Kippur*. Moses urges the people to translate their sense of a renewed relationship with God, of having been cleansed and forgiven, into action by keeping *Shabbat* (vv. 2–3), and by contributing to the fashioning of the tabernacle (v. 5ff.).

CHAPTER 35

1. convoked The verb translated here as

“convoked” (*hak-hel*) is used only for assembling human beings. Other verbs are used for gathering herds of animals.

the whole Israelite community This is to restore the sense of unity and shared purpose that had existed at Mount Sinai, before the incident of the Golden Calf introduced divisiveness and disillusionment (*Eretz Hemdah*). Rabbinic tradition has it that the Second Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred of one Jew for another (*sin-at hinnam*). Moses gathers the people together for the enterprise of establishing the sanctuary so that it will rest on a base of Jewish unity. “Every Jew depends on . . . fellow Jews for the energy, resources, and courage wherewith to be a Jew” (M. Kaplan).

2. shall be put to death One commentator would not take these words literally. He understood them to mean that those who ignore *Shabbat* forfeit their souls. That is, they become dead to the spiritual dimension of life (J. Eybeschütz). According to Jewish lore, on *Shabbat* a person acquires an additional, deeper soul (*n'shamah y'terah*). At *Shabbat's* end, it is taken away, to be restored the following *Shabbat*. A person who makes no distinction between *Shabbat* and the weekday forfeits that gift.

³You shall kindle no fire throughout your settlements on the sabbath day.

⁴Moses said further to the whole community of Israelites:

This is what the LORD has commanded: ⁵Take from among you gifts to the LORD; everyone whose heart so moves him shall bring them—gifts for the LORD: gold, silver, and copper; ⁶blue, purple, and crimson yarns, fine linen, and goats' hair; ⁷tanned ram skins, dolphin skins, and acacia wood; ⁸oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense; ⁹lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and the breastpiece.

¹⁰And let all among you who are skilled come and make all that the LORD has commanded: ¹¹the Tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its clasps and its planks, its bars, its posts, and its sockets; ¹²the ark and its poles, the cover, and the curtain for the screen; ¹³the table, and its poles and all its utensils; and the bread of display; ¹⁴the lampstand for lighting, its furnish-

יִומָת: ³ לֹא־תִבְעֵרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: פ

⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־כָּל־עַדְת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר

זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ⁵ קְחוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה כֹּל נָדִיב לְבָבוֹ יְבִיאֶהָ אֵת תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנִחְשֵׁת: ⁶ וְתַכְלֵת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעֵצִים: ⁷ וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תְּחָשִׁים וְעֵצֵי שִׁטִּים: ⁸ וְשֶׁמֶן לְמָאֹר וּבְשָׂמִים לְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים: ⁹ וְאַבְנֵי־שֹהַם וְאַבְנֵי מְלֵאִים לְאַפֹּד וְלַחֹשֶׁן:

¹⁰ וְכָל־חֲכָם־לֵב בְּכֶם יָבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה: ¹¹ אֵת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֵת־אֹהֶלוֹ וְאֵת־מִכְסֵהוּ אֵת־קַרְסָיו וְאֵת־קַרְשָׁיו אֵת־בְּרִיחָיו אֵת־עַמֻּדָיו וְאֵת־אֲדָנָיו: ¹² אֵת־הָאֲרֹן וְאֵת־בְּדָיו אֵת־הַכַּפֹּרֶת וְאֵת פְּרֻכַת הַמִּסָּךְ: ¹³ אֵת־הַשְּׁלֶחֶן וְאֵת־בְּדָיו וְאֵת־כָּל־כְּלָיו וְאֵת־לֶחֶם הַפָּנִים: ¹⁴ וְאֵת־מְנֹרַת הַמָּאֹר וְאֵת־

throughout your settlements Abravanel suggests that the intent of this clause is to apply the prohibition universally, wherever Jews reside.

A CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS (vv. 4–19)

4–9. Moses issues a call for donations of

materials in accordance with 25:1–9. He specifies the various materials and explains how they are to be used.

12. curtain for the screen See 26:31–33.

3. You shall kindle no fire This is interpreted to include the fire of anger. Arguments and angry shouts are as much a disruption of *Shabbat* as working and spending money.

5. everyone whose heart so moves him shall

bring them The last words of this citation read literally, “shall bring it.” This prompted a comment that the people did not only bring material gifts, but brought their willing hearts (*S’fat Emet*).

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

35:3. kindle no fire Lighting, extinguishing, or transferring a fire on *Shabbat* is forbidden under Jewish law. Some scholars liken electricity to fire, therefore prohibiting turning on or off all electrical devices on *Shabbat*. Others in the Conservative movement maintain that electricity is not fire according to either science or Jewish law and that it does not violate the prohibition of building on *Shabbat* (*boneh*) either, for the electrician who installed the switch is the one who built it. They, therefore, permit switching on and off a light, likening it to the permitted action of tying a temporary knot. Nevertheless, activities prohibited on other grounds—such as shaving, cooking, or doing laundry—remain prohibited even if done electrically.

ings and its lamps, and the oil for lighting; ¹⁵the altar of incense and its poles; the anointing oil and the aromatic incense; and the entrance screen for the entrance of the Tabernacle; ¹⁶the altar of burnt offering, its copper grating, its poles, and all its furnishings; the laver and its stand; ¹⁷the hangings of the enclosure, its posts and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; ¹⁸the pegs for the Tabernacle, the pegs for the enclosure, and their cords; ¹⁹the service vestments for officiating in the sanctuary, the sacral vestments of Aaron the priest and the vestments of his sons for priestly service.

²⁰So the whole community of the Israelites left Moses' presence. ²¹And everyone who excelled in ability and everyone whose spirit moved him came, bringing to the LORD his offering for the work of the Tent of Meeting and for all its service and for the sacral vestments. ²²Men and women, all whose hearts moved them, all who would make an elevation offering of gold to the LORD, came bringing brooches, earrings, rings, and pendants—gold objects of all kinds. ²³And everyone who had in his possession blue, purple, and crimson yarns, fine linen, goats' hair, tanned ram skins, and dolphin skins, brought them; ²⁴everyone who would make gifts of silver or copper brought them as gifts for the LORD; and everyone who had in his possession acacia wood for any work of the service brought that. ²⁵And all the skilled women spun with their own hands, and brought what they had spun, in blue, purple,

כִּלְיָהּ וְאֶת־נִרְתִּיהָ וְאֶת שֶׁמֶן הַמָּאֹר׃
¹⁵ וְאֶת־מִזְבַּח הַקְּטֹרֶת וְאֶת־בְּדִיּוֹ וְאֶת־
 שֶׁמֶן הַמְּשֻׁחָה וְאֶת קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים וְאֶת־
 מָסַף הַפֶּתַח לַפֶּתַח הַמִּשְׁכָּן׃ ¹⁶ אֶת
 מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־מִכְבַּר הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־
 לוֹ אֶת־בְּדִיּוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־כְּלָיו אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר
 וְאֶת־כַּנּוֹ׃ ¹⁷ אֶת קַלְעֵי הַחֹצֵר אֶת־עַמֻּדָיו
 וְאֶת־אֲדָנֶיהָ וְאֶת מָסַף שַׁעַר הַחֹצֵר׃
¹⁸ אֶת־יִתְדֵת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־יִתְדֵת הַחֹצֵר
 וְאֶת־מִיתְרֵיהֶם׃ ¹⁹ אֶת־בִּגְדֵי הַשָּׂרָד
 לְשָׂרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ אֶת־בִּגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן
 הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת־בִּגְדֵי בָנָיו לְכַהֵן׃

²⁰ וַיֵּצְאוּ כָּל־עַדְת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלִּפְנֵי
 מֹשֶׁה׃ ²¹ וַיָּבֵאוּ כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁאָו לְבוֹ
 וְכָל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה רִוְחוֹ אֹתוֹ הֵבִיאוּ אֶת־
 תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה לְמַלְאכַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
 וּלְכָל־עֲבֹדָתוֹ וּלְבִגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ׃ ²² וַיָּבֵאוּ
 הָאֲנָשִׁים עַל־הַנָּשִׁים כָּל אֲנָשִׁים לֵב הֵבִיאוּ
 חָח וְנֹזֶם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל־כְּלֵי זָהָב
 וְכָל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֵנִיף תְּנוּפֶת זָהָב לַיהוָה׃
²³ וְכָל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נִמְצָא אֹתוֹ תְּכֵלֶת
 וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעֻזִּים וְעֹרֹת
 אֵילִם מְאָדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תַּחֲשִׁים הֵבִיאוּ׃
²⁴ כָּל־מְרִים תְּרוּמַת כֶּסֶף וְנֹחֶשֶׁת הֵבִיאוּ
 אֶת תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה וְכָל אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא אֹתוֹ
 עֵצֵי שֵׁטִים לְכָל־מַלְאכַת הָעֲבֹדָה הֵבִיאוּ׃
²⁵ וְכָל־אִשָּׁה חַכְמַת־לֵב בִּידֶיהָ טָווּ
 וַיָּבִיאוּ מַטְוֵה אֶת־הַתְּכֵלֶת וְאֶת־הָאַרְגָּמָן

15. entrance screen The curtain that partitions off the Holy Place (the outer sanctum) from the outer court (see 26:36–37).

17. screen for the gate of the court The curtain on the east side, at the entrance from the outer perimeter (see 27:9–19; especially v. 16).

THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE (vv. 20–29)

The people—men and women alike—respond with great generosity to Moses' call and freely contribute their most precious possessions as well as their skilled services.

25. skilled women Throughout our history, devoted Jewish women have contributed to *hiddur mitzvah*—the practice of giving the

mitzvot an esthetically pleasing context in their homes and synagogues—through the skilled and creative work of their hands.

and crimson yarns, and in fine linen. ²⁶And all the women who excelled in that skill spun the goats' hair. ²⁷And the chieftains brought lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece; ²⁸and spices and oil for lighting, for the anointing oil, and for the aromatic incense. ²⁹Thus the Israelites, all the men and women whose hearts moved them to bring anything for the work that the LORD, through Moses, had commanded to be done, brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD.

³⁰And Moses said to the Israelites: See, the LORD has singled out by name Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³¹He has endowed him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft ³²and has inspired him to make designs for work in gold, silver, and copper, ³³to cut stones for setting and to carve wood—to work in every kind of designer's craft—³⁴and to give directions. He and Oholiab son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan

אֶת־תּוֹלְעַת הַשָּׁנִי וְאֶת־הַשֵּׁשׁ: ²⁶ וְכָל־
הַנָּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂא לִבָּן אֶתְנָהּ בְּחֻמָּהּ
טָווּ אֶת־הָעֵזִים: ²⁷ וְהַנְּשָׂאִם הֵבִיאוּ
אֶת אֲבִנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם וְאֶת אֲבִנֵי הַמַּלְאִים
לְאִפּוֹד וְלַחֹשֶׁן: ²⁸ וְאֶת־הַבֹּשֶׂם וְאֶת־
הַשֶּׁמֶן לְמָאוֹר וְלַשֶּׁמֶן הַמְּשַׁחַה וְלַקְטֹרֶת
הַסַּמִּים: ²⁹ כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָדַב
לִבָּם אֹתָם לְהֵבִיא לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה הֵבִיאוּ
בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל נְדָבָה לַיהוָה: פ
³⁰ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ קָרָא
יְהוָה בְּשֵׁם בְּצִלְאֵל בֶּן־אוּרִי בֶן־חֹר
לְמֹטֶה יְהוּדָה: ³¹ וַיִּמְלֵא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים
בְּחֻמָּהּ בְּתַבּוּנָהּ וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל־מְלָאכָה:
³² וְלַחֲשֹׁב מַחְשְׁבֹת לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּזָהָב
וּבַכֶּסֶף וּבַנְּחֹשֶׁת: ³³ וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת אֲבָן
לְמַלְאֵת וּבַחֲרֹשֶׁת עֵץ לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּכָל־
מְלָאכֶת מַחְשְׁבֹת: ³⁴ וְלְהוֹרֹת נָתַן בְּלִבּוֹ
הוּא וְאַהֲלִיאֵב בֶּן־אָחִיסַמָּךְ לְמֹטֶה־דָן:

שלישי
[שני]

27. The chieftains of the tribes contributed the precious stones on which the names of the tribes are to be incised, in accordance with the instructions of 28:9–12,21,29.

MASTER CRAFTSMEN (35:30–36:1)

After the donation of materials had begun,

Moses informed the people of God's designation of Bezalel and Oholiab as the chief artisans and supervisors of the entire project (see 31:1–11).

34. and to give directions They are endowed with the ability to instruct others, which is a divinely bestowed gift.

30. singled out by name The name Bezalel is taken to mean *b'tzel el*, "in God's shadow" or "God seen in shadow." In the religious structure that he will build, people will be able to glimpse, in limited manner, the presence of God. Prompted by this verse, the Midrash speculates on the importance of having a good name, a good reputation. A person's first "name," we are told, is based on the reputation of his parents and family. But one can go only so far based on inherited merit. A person then acquires a second "name," based on his or her communal activity. But community-based reputation can be the result of superficial factors, so ultimately it is only our living a good life that establishes our name.

Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur Hur is de-

scribed in *midrash* as having sacrificed his life in an effort to prevent the sin of the Golden Calf. See Comment to 32:5. The selection of his grandson to build the Ark was Hur's ultimate vindication (Exod. R. 48:3).

31. skill, ability, and knowledge Rashi defines "skill" (*hokhmah*) as what a person learns from others, "ability" (*t'vunah*) as the result of one's own insight and experience, and "knowledge" (*da-at*) as divine inspiration, ideas that suddenly come to a person from an unknown source. In the *Amidah* prayer recited on weekdays, we pray to be blessed by God with these qualities, among others.

32. It takes great wisdom to be able to use gold and silver for worthy purposes (Y. Avida).

³⁵have been endowed with the skill to do any work—of the carver, the designer, the embroiderer in blue, purple, crimson yarns, and in fine linen, and of the weaver—as workers in all crafts and as makers of designs. ¹Let, then, **36** Bezalel and Oholiab and all the skilled persons whom the LORD has endowed with skill and ability to perform expertly all the tasks connected with the service of the sanctuary carry out all that the LORD has commanded.

²Moses then called Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skilled person whom the LORD had endowed with skill, everyone who excelled in ability, to undertake the task and carry it out. ³They took over from Moses all the gifts that the Israelites had brought, to carry out the tasks connected with the service of the sanctuary. But when these continued to bring freewill offerings to him morning after morning, ⁴all the artisans who were engaged in the tasks of the sanctuary came, each from the task upon which he was engaged, ⁵and said to Moses, “The people are bringing more than is needed for the tasks entailed in the work that the LORD has commanded to be done.” ⁶Moses thereupon had this proclamation made throughout the camp: “Let no man or woman make further effort toward gifts for the sanctuary!” So the people stopped bringing: ⁷their efforts had been more than enough for all the tasks to be done.

³⁵מֵלֵא אַתֶּם חֲכַמְת־לֵב לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּל־מְלֹאכֶת חָרָשׁ וְחָשֵׁב וְרָקֵם בַּתְּכֵלֶת וּבְאַרְגָּמָן בַּתּוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וּבִשְׁשׁ וְאַרְגָּ עֲשִׂי כָּל־מְלֹאכָה וְחָשְׁבֵי מַחְשְׁבוֹת: **לו** ¹וְעָשָׂה בְּצִלְאֵל וְאַהֲלִיאֵב וְכָל־אִישׁ חָכֵם־לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה חֲכֵמָה וְתוּבוּנָה בְּהִמָּה לְדַעַת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה:

²וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּצִלְאֵל וְאֶל־אַהֲלִיאֵב וְאֶל־כָּל־אִישׁ חָכֵם־לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה חֲכֵמָה בְּלִבּוֹ כָּל־אֲשֶׁר נָשְׂאוּ לְבָו לְקַרְבָּה אֶל־הַמְּלֹאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ: ³וַיִּקְחוּ מִלִּפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר הֵבִיאוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַמְּלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהֵם הֵבִיאוּ אֵלָיו עוֹד נְדָבָה בְּבִקְרָ בְּבִקְרָ: ⁴וַיָּבִיאוּ כָּל־הַחֲכָמִים הָעֹשִׂים אֶת־כָּל־מְלֹאכֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ אִישׁ־אִישׁ מִמְּלֹאכְתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־הִמָּה עֹשִׂים: ⁵וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר מְרִבִּים הָעָם לְהֵבִיא מִדֵּי הָעֲבֹדָה לַמְּלֹאכָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ: ⁶וַיֵּצֵאוּ מֹשֶׁה וַיַּעֲבִירוּ קוֹל בְּמַחֲנֶה לֵאמֹר אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֶל־יַעֲשׂוּ־עוֹד מְלֹאכָה לַתְּרוּמַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וַיִּכְלָא הָעָם מִהֵבִיא: ⁷וְהַמְּלֹאכָה הִיְתָה דַּיִם לְכָל־הַמְּלֹאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ

רביעי והותר: ט

OVERABUNDANCE OF DONATIONS
(vv. 2–7)

The outpouring of donations produced materi-

als far in excess of what was needed, and so the people had to be persuaded to discontinue their contributions.

CHAPTER 36

2. The Hebrew translated as “skilled” (*hakham lev*) literally means “wise-hearted.” A Hasidic master comments, “Wisdom of the mind alone, without wisdom of the heart, is worthless” (Aaron of Karlin).

3. morning after morning The repetition of the word “morning” (*boker*) is interpreted to mean that the people brought their gifts at dawn’s first light, when no one could see them, to emphasize that they were contributing out of love for God, with no wish to be recognized for it (David Shoham).

⁸Then all the skilled among those engaged in the work made the Tabernacle of ten strips of cloth, which they made of fine twisted linen, blue, purple, and crimson yarns; into these they worked a design of cherubim. ⁹The length of each cloth was twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each cloth was four cubits, all cloths having the same measurements. ¹⁰They joined five of the cloths to one another, and they joined the other five cloths to one another. ¹¹They made loops of blue wool on the edge of the outermost cloth of the one set, and did the same on the edge of the outermost cloth of the other set: ¹²they made fifty loops on the one cloth, and they made fifty loops on the edge of the end cloth of the other set, the loops being opposite one another. ¹³And they made fifty gold clasps and coupled the units to one another with the clasps, so that the Tabernacle became one whole.

¹⁴They made cloths of goats' hair for a tent over the Tabernacle; they made the cloths eleven in number. ¹⁵The length of each cloth was thirty cubits, and the width of each cloth was four cubits, the eleven cloths having the same measurements. ¹⁶They joined five of the cloths by themselves, and the other six cloths by themselves. ¹⁷They made fifty loops on the edge of the outermost cloth of the one set, and they made fifty loops on the edge of the end cloth of the other set. ¹⁸They made fifty copper clasps to couple the Tent together so that it might become one whole. ¹⁹And they made a covering of tanned ram skins for the tent, and a covering of dolphin skins above.

THE WORK OF CONSTRUCTION (36:8–38:20)

This lengthy and detailed account of the work repeats the instructions already given. The account here differs from the account in Exod. 26 in that

רביעי ⁸ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כָל-חֹכְמֵי לֵב בְּעֵשִׂי הַמְּלָאכָה אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן עֶשֶׂר יְרִיעֹת שֵׁשׁ מִשׁוֹר וְתַכְלֵת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי כְּרֻבִים מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב עָשָׂה אֹתָם: ⁹ אַרְבֵּי הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת שְׁמֹנֶה וְעֶשְׂרִים בְּאַמָּה וְרֹחַב אַרְבַּע בְּאַמָּה הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת מִדֶּה אֶחָת לְכָל-הַיְרִיעֹת: ¹⁰ וַיַּחֲבֵר אֶת-חֲמֵשׁ הַיְרִיעֹת אֶחָת אֶל-אֶחָת וְחֲמֵשׁ יְרִיעֹת חִבֵּר אֶחָת אֶל-אֶחָת: ¹¹ וַיַּעַשׂ לְלֹאֲת תַּכְלֵת עַל שַׁפַּת הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת מִקְצֵה בְּמַחְבֵּרַת בֵּן עָשָׂה בְּשַׁפַּת הַיְרִיעָה הַקִּיצוֹנָה בְּמַחְבֵּרַת הַשְּׁנִית: ¹² חֲמֵשִׁים לְלֹאֲת עָשָׂה בַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת וְחֲמֵשִׁים לְלֹאֲת עָשָׂה בַקְצֵה הַיְרִיעָה אֲשֶׁר בְּמַחְבֵּרַת הַשְּׁנִית מִקְבִּילֹת הַלְּלֹאֲת אֶחָת אֶל-אֶחָת: ¹³ וַיַּעַשׂ חֲמֵשִׁים קְרָסֵי זָהָב וַיַּחֲבֵר אֶת-הַיְרִיעֹת אֶחָת אֶל-אֶחָת בְּקְרָסִים וַיְהִי הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶחָד: ¹⁴ וַיַּעַשׂ יְרִיעֹת עֲזִים לְאֹהֶל עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן עֲשָׂתֵי-עֶשְׂרֵה יְרִיעֹת עָשָׂה אֹתָם: ¹⁵ אַרְבֵּי הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת שְׁלֹשִׁים בְּאַמָּה וְאַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת רֹחַב הַיְרִיעָה הָאֶחָת מִדֶּה אֶחָת לְעֲשָׂתֵי עֶשְׂרֵה יְרִיעֹת: ¹⁶ וַיַּחֲבֵר אֶת-חֲמֵשׁ הַיְרִיעֹת לְבָד וְאֶת-שֵׁשׁ הַיְרִיעֹת לְבָד: ¹⁷ וַיַּעַשׂ לְלֹאֲת חֲמֵשִׁים עַל שַׁפַּת הַיְרִיעָה הַקִּיצוֹנָה בְּמַחְבֵּרַת וְחֲמֵשִׁים לְלֹאֲת עָשָׂה עַל-שַׁפַּת הַיְרִיעָה הַחֹבֶרֶת הַשְּׁנִית: ¹⁸ וַיַּעַשׂ קְרָסֵי נַחֲשֵׁת חֲמֵשִׁים לְחִבֵּר אֶת-הָאֹהֶל לַהֲיֹת אֶחָד: ¹⁹ וַיַּעַשׂ מִכְסֵּה לְאֹהֶל עֶרְת אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים וּמְכֻסָּה עֶרְת תְּחָשִׁים מִלְּמַעְלָה: ^ס

the verbs used here indicate completed action. Furthermore, the various items listed are presented in a different sequence. The earlier instructions began with the furnishings and ended with the structure of the tabernacle; here the order is reversed.

²⁰They made the planks for the Tabernacle of acacia wood, upright. ²¹The length of each plank was ten cubits, the width of each plank a cubit and a half. ²²Each plank had two tenons, parallel to each other; they did the same with all the planks of the Tabernacle. ²³Of the planks of the Tabernacle, they made twenty planks for the south side, ²⁴making forty silver sockets under the twenty planks, two sockets under one plank for its two tenons and two sockets under each following plank for its two tenons; ²⁵and for the other side wall of the Tabernacle, the north side, twenty planks, ²⁶with their forty silver sockets, two sockets under one plank and two sockets under each following plank. ²⁷And for the rear of the Tabernacle, to the west, they made six planks; ²⁸and they made two planks for the corners of the Tabernacle at the rear. ²⁹They matched at the bottom, but terminated as one at the top into one ring; they did so with both of them at the two corners. ³⁰Thus there were eight planks with their sockets of silver: sixteen sockets, two under each plank.

³¹They made bars of acacia wood, five for the planks of the one side wall of the Tabernacle, ³²five bars for the planks of the other side wall of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the planks of the wall of the Tabernacle at the rear, to the west; ³³they made the center bar to run, halfway up the planks, from end to end. ³⁴They overlaid the planks with gold, and made their rings of gold, as holders for the bars; and they overlaid the bars with gold.

חמישי ²⁰ וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַקְּרָשִׁים לַמִּשְׁכָּן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים עֹמְדִים: ²¹ עָשָׂר אַמּוֹת אַרְבֵּי הַקְּרָשׁ וְאַמְהָ וְחֲצֵי הָאַמְהָ רֹחַב הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד: ²² שְׁתֵּי יָדָי לַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד מִשְׁלֹבֵת אַחַת אַחַת בֵּן עֶשֶׂה לְכֹל קְרָשֵׁי הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ²³ וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַקְּרָשִׁים לַמִּשְׁכָּן עֶשְׂרִים קְרָשִׁים לַפָּאֵת נֹגַב תִּימָנָה: ²⁴ וְאַרְבָּעִים אֲדָנֵי־כֶסֶף עֶשֶׂה תַּחַת עֶשְׂרִים הַקְּרָשִׁים שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת־הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשְׁתֵּי יָדָיו וְשְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת־הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשְׁתֵּי יָדָיו: ²⁵ וּלְצֹלַע הַמִּשְׁכָּן הַשְּׁנִית לַפָּאֵת צָפוֹן עֶשֶׂה עֶשְׂרִים קְרָשִׁים: ²⁶ וְאַרְבָּעִים אֲדָנֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד וְשְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד: ²⁷ וּלְיָרְכָתַי הַמִּשְׁכָּן יָמָה עֶשֶׂה שְׁשֶׁה קְרָשִׁים: ²⁸ וְשְׁנֵי קְרָשִׁים עֶשֶׂה לַמִּקְצַעַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן בִּירְכָתַיִם: ²⁹ וְהָיוּ תוֹאֲמִם מִלְמֻטָּה וְיִחָדּוּ יִהְיוּ תַמִּים אֶל־רֵאשׁוֹ אֶל־הַטְּבַעַת הָאֶחָת בֵּן עֶשֶׂה לְשְׁנֵיהֶם לְשְׁנֵי הַמִּקְצַעַת: ³⁰ וְהָיוּ שְׁמֹנֶה קְרָשִׁים וְאַדְנֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף שְׁשֶׁה עֶשֶׂר אֲדָנִים שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים שְׁנֵי אֲדָנִים תַּחַת הַקְּרָשׁ הָאֶחָד: ³¹ וַיַּעַשׂ בְּרִיחֵי עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים חֲמֵשֶׁה לְקְרָשֵׁי צֹלַע־הַמִּשְׁכָּן הָאֶחָת: ³² וְחֲמֵשֶׁה בְּרִיחֵם לְקְרָשֵׁי צֹלַע־הַמִּשְׁכָּן הַשְּׁנִית וְחֲמֵשֶׁה בְּרִיחֵם לְקְרָשֵׁי הַמִּשְׁכָּן לְיָרְכָתַיִם יָמָה: ³³ וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַבָּרִיחַ הַתֵּיכֵן לְבָרִיחַ בְּתוֹךְ הַקְּרָשִׁים מִן־הַקְּצָה אֶל־הַקְּצָה: ³⁴ וְאֶת־הַקְּרָשִׁים צִפָּה זָהָב וְאֶת־טְבַעְתֶּם עֶשֶׂה זָהָב בְּתִים לְבְּרִיחֵם וַיִּצַף אֶת־הַבְּרִיחֵם זָהָב:

26. The word for “sockets” (*adanim*) is like the name of God (*Adonai*). This similarity hints to us that just as those sockets served to hold the upper and the lower sections of the

tabernacle together, the divine Presence holds the upper (i.e., spiritual) and the lower (i.e., material) worlds together (Menaḥem Naḥum of Chernobyl).

³⁵They made the curtain of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, working into it a design of cherubim. ³⁶They made for it four posts of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, with their hooks of gold; and they cast for them four silver sockets.

³⁷They made the screen for the entrance of the Tent, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, done in embroidery; ³⁸and five posts for it with their hooks. They overlaid their tops and their bands with gold; but the five sockets were of copper.

37 Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. ²He overlaid it with pure gold, inside and out; and he made a gold molding for it round about. ³He cast four gold rings for it, for its four feet: two rings on one of its side walls and two rings on the other. ⁴He made poles of acacia wood, overlaid them with gold, ⁵and inserted the poles into the rings on the side walls of the ark for carrying the ark.

⁶He made a cover of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. ⁷He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered work, at the two ends of the cover: ⁸one cherub at one end and the other cherub at the other end; he made the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at its two ends. ⁹The cherubim had their wings spread out above, shielding the cover with their wings. They faced each

³⁵וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַפָּרֹכֶת תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשׂוּר מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב עָשָׂה אֹתָהּ כְּרִבִּים: ³⁶וַיַּעַשׂ לָהּ אַרְבָּעָה עַמּוּדֵי שֹׁטִים וַיְצַפֵּם זָהָב וַיְוִיחֵם זָהָב וַיִּצַק לָהֶם אַרְבָּעָה אֲדָנֵי־כֶסֶף:

³⁷וַיַּעַשׂ מִסָּךְ לַפֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשׂוּר מַעֲשֵׂה רִקְמָה: ³⁸וְאֶת־עַמּוּדָיו חֲמֵשָׁה וְאֶת־וַיְוִיחֵם וַיְצַפֵּהוּ רָאשֵׁיהֶם וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם זָהָב וְאֲדָנֵיהֶם חֲמֵשָׁה נְחֹשֶׁת: פ

לו וַיַּעַשׂ בְּצִלְאֵל אֶת־הָאָרֶן עֲצֵי שֹׁטִים אֲמָתַיִם וְחֻצֵי אַרְכּוֹ וְאִמָּה וְחֻצֵי רִחְבּוֹ וְאִמָּה וְחֻצֵי קִמְתּוֹ: ²וַיְצַפֶּהוּ זָהָב טְהוֹר מִבַּיִת וּמְחוּץ וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ זָר זָהָב סָבִיב: ³וַיִּצַק לוֹ אַרְבַּע טַבְּעוֹת זָהָב עַל אַרְבַּע פַּעֲמֹתָיו וּשְׁתֵּי טַבְּעוֹת עַל־צִלְעוֹ הָאֶחָת וּשְׁתֵּי טַבְּעוֹת עַל־צִלְעוֹ הַשְּׁנִיָּת: ⁴וַיַּעַשׂ בְּדֵי עֲצֵי שֹׁטִים וַיְצַף אֹתָם זָהָב: ⁵וַיָּבֵא אֶת־הַבָּדִים בְּטַבְּעוֹת עַל צִלְעוֹת הָאָרֶן לְשֵׂאת אֶת־הָאָרֶן:

⁶וַיַּעַשׂ כַּפֹּרֶת זָהָב טְהוֹר אֲמָתַיִם וְחֻצֵי אַרְפָּה וְאִמָּה וְחֻצֵי רִחְבָּהּ: ⁷וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁנֵי כְּרִבִּים זָהָב מְקֻשָּׁה עָשָׂה אֹתָם מִשְׁנֵי קִצּוֹת הַכַּפֹּרֶת: ⁸כְּרוֹב־אֶחָד מְקַצֵּה מִזֶּה וְכְרוֹב־אֶחָד מְקַצֵּה מִזֶּה מִן־הַכַּפֹּרֶת עָשָׂה אֶת־הַכְּרִבִּים מִשְׁנֵי קִצּוֹתָיו: ⁹וַיְהִיּוּ הַכְּרִבִּים פְּרָשֵׁי כְּנָפִים לְמַעַלָּה סֹכְכִים בְּכִנְפֵיהֶם עַל־הַכַּפֹּרֶת וּפְנֵיהֶם

THE MANUFACTURE OF THE FURNITURE
AND ACCESSORIES (37:1–38:20)

The order of narration reflects descending gradations of holiness. The Ark, to be located in the Holy of Holies, comes first, followed by the three items that belong in the Holy Place—the table, the *m'norah*, and the altar of incense. Next are the

anointing oil and aromatic incense, because both are needed in the Holy Place. And last are the altar of burnt offering and the laver, both of which are placed in the outer court.

1–9. Construction of the ark, which corresponds to 25:10–21, where the instruction reads, “They shall make an ark.”

other; the faces of the cherubim were turned toward the cover.

¹⁰He made the table of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high; ¹¹he overlaid it with pure gold and made a gold molding around it. ¹²He made a rim of a hand's breadth around it and made a gold molding for its rim round about. ¹³He cast four gold rings for it and attached the rings to the four corners at its four legs. ¹⁴The rings were next to the rim, as holders for the poles to carry the table. ¹⁵He made the poles of acacia wood for carrying the table, and overlaid them with gold. ¹⁶The utensils that were to be upon the table—its bowls, ladles, jugs, and jars with which to offer libations—he made of pure gold.

¹⁷He made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand—its base and its shaft—of hammered work; its cups, calyxes, and petals were of one piece with it. ¹⁸Six branches issued from its sides: three branches from one side of the lampstand, and three branches from the other side of the lampstand. ¹⁹There were three cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals, on one branch; and there were three cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals, on the next branch; so for all six branches issuing from the lampstand. ²⁰On the lampstand itself there were four cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals: ²¹a calyx, of one piece with it, under a pair of branches; and a calyx, of one piece with it, under the second pair of branches; and a calyx, of one piece with it, under the last pair of branches; so for all six branches issuing from it. ²²Their calyxes and their stems were of one piece with it, the whole of it a single hammered piece of pure gold. ²³He made its seven lamps,

אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו אֶל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת הָיוּ פְּנֵי
הַכְּרֻבִּים: פ

¹⁰וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הַשֻּׁלְחָן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים אַמְתֵּימִם
אַרְבּוֹ וְאַמְהָ רֹחְבוֹ וְאַמְהָ וְחֻצֵי קַמְתּוֹ:
¹¹וַיִּצַף אֹתוֹ זָהָב טָהוֹר וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ זֶרֶזָהָב
סָבִיב: ¹²וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ מִסְגֶּרֶת טַפַּח סָבִיב
וַיַּעַשׂ זֶרֶזָהָב לְמִסְגֶּרֶתוֹ סָבִיב: ¹³וַיִּצַק
לוֹ אַרְבַּע טַבַּעֲתֵי זָהָב וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-הַטַּבַּעֲתֵי
עַל אַרְבַּע הַפְּאֵת אֲשֶׁר לְאַרְבַּע רַגְלָיו:
¹⁴לְעַמֹּת הַמִּסְגֶּרֶת הָיוּ הַטַּבַּעֲתֵי בְּתֵימִם
לְבַדִּים לְשֵׂאת אֶת-הַשֻּׁלְחָן: ¹⁵וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-
הַבְּדִים עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וַיִּצַף אֹתָם זָהָב לְשֵׂאת
אֶת-הַשֻּׁלְחָן: ¹⁶וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הַבְּלִים אֲשֶׁר
עַל-הַשֻּׁלְחָן אֶת-קְעֻרָתוֹ וְאֶת-כַּפְתָּיו
וְאֵת מִנְקִיָּתוֹ וְאֶת-הַקְּשׁוֹת אֲשֶׁר יִסֹּף
בָּהֶן זָהָב טָהוֹר: פ

¹⁷וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הַמְּנֹרָה זָהָב טָהוֹר מִקְשָׁה
עֲשָׂה אֶת-הַמְּנֹרָה יִרְכָה וְקִנָּה גְּבִיעֶיהָ
כַּפְתָּרֶיהָ וּפְרָחֶיהָ מִמְּנָה הָיוּ: ¹⁸וְשֵׁשֶׁה
קָנִים יִצְאִים מִצְדֵּיהָ שְׁלֹשָׁה אֶל קִנֵּי מְנֹרָה
מִצְדֵּיהָ הָאֶחָד וְשֵׁשֶׁה קִנֵּי מְנֹרָה מִצְדֵּיהָ
הַשֵּׁנִי: ¹⁹שְׁלֹשָׁה גְּבַעִים מְשֻׁקָּיִם בְּקִנָּה
הָאֶחָד כַּפְתָּר וּפְרָח וְשֵׁשֶׁה גְּבַעִים
מְשֻׁקָּיִם בְּקִנָּה אֶחָד כַּפְתָּר וּפְרָח בֵּין
לְשֵׁשֶׁת הַקָּנִים הַיִּצְאִים מִן-הַמְּנֹרָה:
²⁰וּבַמְּנֹרָה אַרְבַּעָה גְּבַעִים מְשֻׁקָּיִם
כַּפְתָּרֶיהָ וּפְרָחֶיהָ: ²¹וְכַפְתָּר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי
הַקָּנִים מִמְּנָה וְכַפְתָּר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי
הַקָּנִים מִמְּנָה וְכַפְתָּר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים
מִמְּנָה לְשֵׁשֶׁת הַקָּנִים הַיִּצְאִים מִמְּנָה:
²²כַּפְתָּרֶיהֶם וְקִנְתָּם מִמְּנָה הָיוּ כְּלָה
מִקְשָׁה אֶחָד זָהָב טָהוֹר: ²³וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-
רִתְּיָהּ שִׁבְעָה וּמִלְקָחֶיהָ וּמַחְתָּתֶיהָ זָהָב

ששי
[שלישי]

10–16. Construction of the table, which corresponds to 25:23–30.

17–24. Construction of the *m'norah*, which corresponds to 25:31–40.

its tongs, and its fire pans of pure gold. ²⁴He made it and all its furnishings out of a talent of pure gold.

²⁵He made the incense altar of acacia wood, a cubit long and a cubit wide—square—and two cubits high; its horns were of one piece with it. ²⁶He overlaid it with pure gold: its top, its sides round about, and its horns; and he made a gold molding for it round about. ²⁷He made two gold rings for it under its molding, on its two walls—on opposite sides—as holders for the poles with which to carry it. ²⁸He made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. ²⁹He prepared the sacred anointing oil and the pure aromatic incense, expertly blended.

38 He made the altar for burnt offering of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—square—and three cubits high. ²He made horns for it on its four corners, the horns being of one piece with it; and he overlaid it with copper. ³He made all the utensils of the altar—the pails, the scrapers, the basins, the flesh hooks, and the fire pans; he made all these utensils of copper. ⁴He made for the altar a grating of meshwork in copper, extending below, under its ledge, to its middle. ⁵He cast four rings, at the four corners of the copper grating, as holders for the poles. ⁶He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with copper; ⁷and he inserted the poles into the rings on the side walls of the altar, to carry it by them. He made it hollow, of boards.

טְהוֹר: ²⁴כָּפַר זָהָב טְהוֹר עָשָׂה אֹתָהּ וְאֵת כָּל־כְּלֵיהֶּ: פ

²⁵וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־מִזְבַּח הַקְטֹרֶת עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים אֲמָה אֶרְכוֹ וְאֲמָה רְחִבּוֹ רְבֹועַ וְאֲמָתַיִם קָמְתּוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ הָיוּ קַרְנֹתָיו: ²⁶וַיִּצַּף אֹתוֹ זָהָב טְהוֹר אֶת־גָּגוֹ וְאֶת־קִירָתוֹ סָבִיב וְאֶת־קַרְנֹתָיו וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ זָר זָהָב סָבִיב: ²⁷וּשְׁתֵּי טַבָּעֹת זָהָב עָשָׂה־לוֹ | מִתַּחַת לְזָרוֹ עַל שְׁתֵּי צַלְעֹתָיו עַל שְׁנֵי צַדָּיו לְבָתַיִם לְבָדִים לְשֵׂאת אֹתוֹ בָּהֶם: ²⁸וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַבָּדִים עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וַיִּצַּף אֹתָם זָהָב: ²⁹וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה לְקֹדֶשׁ וְאֶת־קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים טְהוֹר מֵעֵשֶׂה רִקְחָ: פ

לח ^{שביעי רביעי} וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים חֲמֵשׁ אַמּוֹת אֶרְכוֹ וְחֲמֵשׁ־אַמּוֹת רְחִבּוֹ רְבֹועַ וּשְׁלֹשׁ אַמּוֹת קָמְתּוֹ: ²וַיַּעַשׂ קַרְנֹתָיו עַל אַרְבַּע פְּנֵתָיו מִמֶּנּוּ הָיוּ קַרְנֹתָיו וַיִּצַּף אֹתוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת: ³וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת־הַסִּירֹת וְאֶת־הַיָּעִים וְאֶת־הַמְזֻרְקֹת אֶת־הַמְזֻלְגֹת וְאֶת־הַמְּחַתֹּת כָּל־כְּלָיו עָשָׂה נְחֹשֶׁת: ⁴וַיַּעַשׂ לְמִזְבֵּחַ מִכָּפָר מֵעֵשֶׂה רֶשֶׁת נְחֹשֶׁת תַּחַת כַּרְכָּבוֹ מִלְמַטָּה עַד־חֻצּוֹ: ⁵וַיִּצַּק אַרְבַּע טַבָּעֹת בְּאַרְבַּע הַקְּצוֹת לְמִכָּפָר הַנְּחֹשֶׁת בָּתַיִם לְבָדִים: ⁶וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַבָּדִים עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וַיִּצַּף אֹתָם נְחֹשֶׁת: ⁷וַיָּבֵא אֶת־הַבָּדִים בַּטַּבָּעֹת עַל צַלְעֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְשֵׂאת אֹתוֹ בָּהֶם נְבוּב לַחַת עָשָׂה אֹתוֹ: ס

25–28. Construction of the altar of incense, which corresponds to 30:1–10. **29.** Preparation of the anointing oil and the incense; this verse summarizes 30:22–33,34–37.

38:1–7. Construction of the altar of burnt offering, which corresponds to 27:1–8.

⁸He made the laver of copper and its stand of copper, from the mirrors of the women who performed tasks at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

⁹He made the enclosure:

On the south side, a hundred cubits of hangings of fine twisted linen for the enclosure—¹⁰with their twenty posts and their twenty sockets of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts being silver.

¹¹On the north side, a hundred cubits—with their twenty posts and their twenty sockets of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts being silver.

¹²On the west side, fifty cubits of hangings—with their ten posts and their ten sockets, the hooks and bands of the posts being silver.

¹³And on the front side, to the east, fifty cubits: ¹⁴fifteen cubits of hangings on the one flank, with their three posts and their three sockets, ¹⁵and fifteen cubits of hangings on the other flank—on each side of the gate of the enclosure—with their three posts and their three sockets.

¹⁶All the hangings around the enclosure were of fine twisted linen. ¹⁷The sockets for the posts were of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts were of silver, the overlay of their tops was of silver; all the posts of the enclosure were banded with silver.—¹⁸The screen of the gate of the en-

8 וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת הַכִּיּוֹר נְחֹשֶׁת וְאֶת בְּנוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת 8
בְּמִרְאֹת הַצַּבָּאוֹת אֲשֶׁר צָבְאוּ פֶתַח אֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד: ט

9 וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־הַחֲצֵר
לְפָאֵת א | נִגְבַּב תִּימְנָה קְלָעֵי הַחֲצֵר שֵׁשׁ
מְשׁוֹר מֵאָה בְּאַמָּה: 10 עֲמוּדֵיהֶם עֲשָׂרִים
וְאֲדָנֵיהֶם עֲשָׂרִים נְחֹשֶׁת וְוֵי הָעַמּוּדִים
וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף:

11 וְלְפָאֵת צְפוֹן מֵאָה בְּאַמָּה עֲמוּדֵיהֶם
עֲשָׂרִים וְאֲדָנֵיהֶם עֲשָׂרִים נְחֹשֶׁת וְוֵי
הָעַמּוּדִים וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף:

12 וְלְפָאֵת־יָם קְלָעִים חֲמִשִּׁים בְּאַמָּה
עֲמוּדֵיהֶם עֲשָׂרָה וְאֲדָנֵיהֶם עֲשָׂרָה וְוֵי
הָעַמּוּדִים וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף:

13 וְלְפָאֵת קִדְמָה מִזְרָחָה חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה:
14 קְלָעִים חֲמִשֶׁ־עֲשָׂרָה אַמָּה אֶל־הַכֶּתֶף
עֲמוּדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה וְאֲדָנֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה:

15 וְלַכֶּתֶף הַשְּׂנִית מִזָּה וּמִזָּה לְשַׁעַר הַחֲצֵר
קְלָעִים חֲמִשׁ עֲשָׂרָה אַמָּה עַמּוּדֵיהֶם
שְׁלֹשָׁה וְאֲדָנֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה:

16 כָּל־קְלָעֵי הַחֲצֵר סָבִיב שֵׁשׁ מְשׁוֹר:
17 וְהָאֲדָנִים לְעַמּוּדִים נְחֹשֶׁת וְוֵי הָעַמּוּדִים
וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם כֶּסֶף וְצְפוּי רְאִשֵׁיהֶם כֶּסֶף:

וְהֵם מְחֻשְׁקִים כֶּסֶף כָּל עַמּוּדֵי הַחֲצֵר:
18 וּמִטָּף שַׁעַר הַחֲצֵר מַעֲשֶׂה רִקָּם וְתִכְלֹת

8. This verse summarizes 30:17–21 and provides additional information about the material of which the laver was made as well as the source of the donation.

copper Better: bronze. See Comment to 25:3.
mirrors In the ancient world, mirrors were mainly hand-held, highly polished disks of metal (copper or bronze), fitted with handles made of metal, wood, faience, or ivory. Egypt was the center of their manufacture for the entire Near East. Because of the high cost of metal in Egypt, metal objects were not discarded but were melted down and reused, as is done here.

women who performed tasks Nothing is known about this class of women, who are men-

tioned again only in 1 Sam. 2:22. It is likely that they performed a range of duties, including menial labor. Even women at the bottom of the occupational and social scale displayed unselfish generosity and devotion in donating their valuable mirrors for the tabernacle.

entrance of the Tent of Meeting At this stage, however, the tent had not yet been erected. Ramban understood this as referring to Moses' private tent (described in 33:7), which was situated outside the camp.

9–20. Construction of the enclosure, which corresponds to 27:9–19. These verses mark the completion of the report about construction of the edifice, furniture, and appurtenances.

closure, done in embroidery, was of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen. It was twenty cubits long. Its height—or width—was five cubits, like that of the hangings of the enclosure. ¹⁹The posts were four; their four sockets were of copper, their hooks of silver; and the overlay of their tops was of silver, as were also their bands.—²⁰All the pegs of the Tabernacle and of the enclosure round about were of copper.

וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשּׁוֹר
וְעִשָּׂרִים אַמָּה אָרְךָ וְקוֹמָה בְּרֹחַב חֲמִישׁ
אַמּוֹת לְעֵמֹת קִלְעֵי הַחֹצֵר׃ ¹⁹ וְעַמּוּדֵיהֶם
אַרְבָּעָה וְאַדְנֵיהֶם אַרְבָּעָה נְחֹשֶׁת וְוֵיהֶם
כָּסֶף וְצִפּוּי רִאשֵׁיהֶם וְחֻשְׁקֵיהֶם כָּסֶף׃
²⁰ וְכָל-הַיְתִדּוֹת לְמִשְׁכָּן וְלַחֹצֵר סָבִיב
נְחֹשֶׁת׃ * ס

* For the haftarah for this Torah portion, see selections starting on p. 573.

²¹These are the records of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Pact, which were drawn up at Moses' bidding—the work of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. ²²Now Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, had made all that the LORD had commanded Moses; ²³at his side was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, carver and designer, and embroiderer in blue, purple, and crimson yarns and in fine linen.

²⁴All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary—the elevation offering of gold—came to 29 talents and 730 shekels by the sanctuary weight. ²⁵The silver of

אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר
פָּקַד עַל־פִּי מֹשֶׁה עֲבַדְתָּ הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד
אִיתָמָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן: ²² וּבְצִלְאֵל בֶּן־
אוּרִי בֶן־חֹר לְמִטֵּה יְהוּדָה עָשָׂה אֶת
כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ²³ וְאוֹתוֹ
אֶהֱלִיאָב בֶּן־אַחִיסַמָּךְ לְמִטֵּה־דָן חָרָשׁ
וְחָשֵׁב וְרִקֵּם בַּתְּכֵלֶת וּבְאַרְגָּמָן וּבְתוֹלַעַת
הַשָּׁנִי וּבְשֵׁשׁ: ^ס

כָּל־הַזָּהָב הָעָשׂוּי לְמִלְאכָה בְּכָל
מִלְאכַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וַיְהִי זֶהב הַתְּנוּפָה תִּשְׁעַ
וְעֶשְׂרִים כֶּכָר וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שֶׁקֶל
בַּשֶּׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ: ²⁵ וּבְכֹסֶף פְּקוּדֵי הָעֵדוּת

THE TABERNACLE, PART II: CONSTRUCTION (continued)

A TALLY OF THE METALS (38:21–31)

Moses orders an inventory of the metals, to be undertaken by the Levites under the direction of Aaron's son Ithamar. The tally is prefaced by a restatement of the roles of the two master craftsmen Bezalel and Oholiab. The inventory described here is similar to that found among the Egyptians, whose art depicts scenes of metalworking in which a master is weighing the metals on scales, with the scribes recording the results in their ledgers, before the materials are given to the artisans.

21. Tabernacle of the Pact This once again emphasizes that the symbol of the covenant with God is the focal point of the entire tabernacle.

Ithamar His birth was recorded in Exod. 6:23, and his nomination to be installed as a

priest, in 28:1. Throughout the wilderness wanderings he directed the work of the levitical clans in connection with the tabernacle.

23. These qualifications of Oholiab repeat 35:35 and include some additional material.

24–30. The metals are listed in descending order of value.

shekel See Comment to Gen. 23:9.

half-shekel Hebrew: *beka*, mentioned as a weight in Gen. 24:22. The stem means “to split”—here, in half. Several weights from the time of the First Temple have been found inscribed in the old-Hebrew script with the word *beka* or its abbreviation, “*b.*” Their average weight is 0.210 ounces (6.019 grams).

a bead The reference is to the census that was ordered in 30:11–16.

In this *parashah*, Moses gives a detailed accounting of the expenditures for fashioning the tabernacle and its furnishings. Why did Moses feel obliged to give this detailed account? Some Israelites knew that they would have taken advantage of handling all that gold and silver for their own enrichment. They suspected Moses of being no better than they were. Thus the Midrash emphasizes that leaders of the community must be above any suspicion of personal aggrandizement. The family

that prepared the incense for the Temple services would never let their relatives wear perfume, lest some people suspect them of using Temple incense for their personal benefit. The official who supervised the shekel offering would wear a special garment with no pockets and no long sleeves when he did so, so that no one could suspect him of pocketing public funds (Song R. 3:7). “A person should strive to please people as strenuously as one strives to please God” (Exod. R. 51:2).

those of the community who were recorded came to 100 talents and 1,775 shekels by the sanctuary weight: ^{26a} half-shekel a head, half a shekel by the sanctuary weight, for each one who was entered in the records, from the age of twenty years up, 603,550 men. ²⁷The 100 talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets for the curtain, 100 sockets to the 100 talents, a talent a socket. ²⁸And of the 1,775 shekels he made hooks for the posts, overlay for their tops, and bands around them.

²⁹The copper from the elevation offering came to 70 talents and 2,400 shekels. ³⁰Of it he made the sockets for the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; the copper altar and its copper grating and all the utensils of the altar; ³¹the sockets of the enclosure round about and the sockets of the gate of the enclosure; and all the pegs of the Tabernacle and all the pegs of the enclosure round about.

39 Of the blue, purple, and crimson yarns they also made the service vestments for officiating in the sanctuary; they made Aaron's sacral vestments—as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²The ephod was made of gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen. ³They hammered out sheets of gold and cut threads to be worked into designs among the blue, the purple, and the crimson yarns, and the fine linen. ⁴They made for it attaching shoulder-

THE MAKING OF THE
PRIESTLY VESTMENTS (39:1–31)

This section corresponds to Exod. 28. It contains some additional information and affirms—seven times in all—that each item was made in accordance with God's instructions.

1. The omission of the fine linen from the

מֵאֵת כֶּכֶר וְאֶלָּף וְשִׁבְעַת מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשָּׁה וְשִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ: ²⁶ בְּקַע לְגִלְגָּלֹת מַחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכָל הָעֹבֵר עַל-הַפְּקוּדִים מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְמֵעַלָּה לְשֵׁשׁ-מֵאוֹת אֶלָּף וְשִׁלְשֵׁת אֲלָפִים וַחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים: ²⁷ וַיְהִי מֵאֵת כֶּכֶר הַכֶּסֶף לְצִקַּת אֶת אֲדָנֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת אֲדָנֵי הַפְּרָכֶת מֵאֵת אֲדָנִים לְמֵאֵת הַכֶּכֶר כֶּכֶר לְאֶדָן: ²⁸ וְאֶת-הָאֶלָּף וְשִׁבְעַת הַמֵּאוֹת וַחֲמִשָּׁה וְשִׁבְעִים עֶשֶׂה וָוִים לְעִמּוּדִים וְצִפָּה רֵאשִׁיָּהֶם וַחֲשֵׁק אֲתָם: ²⁹ וַנְּחַשֵׁת הַתְּנוּפָה שִׁבְעִים כֶּכֶר וְאֲלָפִים וְאַרְבַּע-מֵאוֹת שֶׁקֶל: ³⁰ וַיַּעַשׂ בָּהּ אֶת-אֲדָנֵי פֶתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֵת מִזְבַּח הַנְּחֹשֶׁת וְאֶת-מִכְבַּר הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ וְאֵת כָּל-כְּלֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ³¹ וְאֶת-אֲדָנֵי הַחֲצֵר סָבִיב וְאֶת-אֲדָנֵי שַׁעַר הַחֲצֵר וְאֵת כָּל-יִתְדֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת-כָּל-יִתְדֹת הַחֲצֵר סָבִיב:

לט וּמִן-הַתְּכֵלֶת וְהָאֲרָגְמָן וְתוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי עָשׂוּ בְגָדֵי-שָׂרָד לְשָׂרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת-בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לְאַהֲרֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: **פ** ² וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הָאֶפֶד זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁוֹר: ³ וַיִּרְקְעוּ אֶת-פָּתֵי הַזָּהָב וְקִצְצוּ פְתִילִם לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּתוֹךְ הַתְּכֵלֶת וּבְתוֹךְ הָאֲרָגְמָן וּבְתוֹךְ תוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וּבְתוֹךְ הַשֵּׁשׁ מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב: ⁴ כְּתַפְּת

שני
[חמישי]

list is especially puzzling because it is included in verses 2, 3, and 5.

3. The process described here is typically Egyptian. The highly malleable gold was hammered over a stone into a thin sheet from which very narrow strips were cut to make fine gold wire. Gold thread was created by cutting the sheet in spiral form.

pieces; they were attached at its two ends. ⁵The decorated band that was upon it was made like it, of one piece with it; of gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen—as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁶They bordered the lazuli stones with frames of gold, engraved with seal engravings of the names of the sons of Israel. ⁷They were set on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the Israelites—as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁸The breastpiece was made in the style of the ephod: of gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen. ⁹It was square; they made the breastpiece doubled—a span in length and a span in width, doubled. ¹⁰They set in it four rows of stones. The first row was a row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald; ¹¹the second row: a turquoise, a sapphire, and an amethyst; ¹²the third row: a jacinth, an agate, and a crystal; ¹³and the fourth row: a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper. They were encircled in their mountings with frames of gold. ¹⁴The stones corresponded [in number] to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, corresponding to their names; engraved like seals, each with its name, for the twelve tribes.

¹⁵On the breastpiece they made braided chains of corded work in pure gold. ¹⁶They made two frames of gold and two rings of gold, and fastened the two rings at the two ends of the breastpiece, ¹⁷attaching the two golden cords to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece. ¹⁸They then fastened the two ends of the cords to the two frames, attaching them to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, at the front. ¹⁹They made two rings of gold and attached them to the two ends of the breastpiece, at its inner edge, which faced the ephod. ²⁰They made two other rings of gold and fastened them on the front of the ephod, low on the two

עָשׂוּ-לוֹ חֲבֵרֹת עַל-שְׁנֵי קְצוֹתָיו קְצוֹתָיו חֵבֵר: ⁵וְחָשָׁב אֶפְדָּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו מִמֶּנּוּ הוּא בְּמַעֲשָׂהּ זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשׁוֹר כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה:

⁶וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת-אֲבְנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם מְסֻבֹּת מִשִּׁבְצַת זָהָב מִפְתָּחַת פְּתוּחֵי חוּתֶם עַל-שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ⁷וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתָם עַל כְּתֻפֹת הָאֶפֶד אֲבְנֵי זָכָרוֹן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: פ

⁸וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת-הַחֹשֶׁן מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב בְּמַעֲשֵׂה אֶפֶד זָהָב תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מְשׁוֹר: ⁹רְבֹעַ הָיָה כְּפּוֹל עָשׂוּ אֶת-הַחֹשֶׁן זֶרֶת אֲרָכּוֹ וְזֶרֶת רְחִבּוֹ כְּפּוֹל: ¹⁰וַיִּמְלְאוּ-בּוֹ אַרְבַּעַת טוּרֵי אֲבָן טוּר אֶדָם פְּטָדָה וּבִרְקַת הַטּוּר הָאֶחָד: ¹¹וְהַטּוּר הַשֵּׁנִי נִפְךָ סַפִּיר וַיְהִלֵּם: ¹²וְהַטּוּר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְשֵׁם שָׁבוּ וְאַחַלְמָה: ¹³וְהַטּוּר הָרְבִיעִי תְּרַשִׁישׁ שֹׁהַם וַיִּשְׂפֶּה מוֹסְבֹּת מִשִּׁבְצוֹת זָהָב בְּמִלְאָתָם: ¹⁴וְהָאֲבָנִים עַל-שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵנָּה שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה עַל-שְׁמוֹתָם פְּתוּחֵי חוּתֶם אִישׁ עַל-שְׁמוֹ לְשָׁנִים עָשָׂר שָׁבֵט:

¹⁵וַיַּעֲשׂוּ עַל-הַחֹשֶׁן שְׁרָשְׁרוֹת גְּבֻלַת מַעֲשֵׂה עֲבֹת זָהָב טְהוֹר: ¹⁶וַיַּעֲשׂוּ שְׁתֵּי מִשְׁבְּצַת זָהָב וּשְׁתֵּי טְבַעֲת זָהָב וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת-שְׁתֵּי הַטְּבַעֲת עַל-שְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן: ¹⁷וַיִּתְּנוּ שְׁתֵּי הָעֲבֹתוֹת הַזֹּהָב עַל-שְׁתֵּי הַטְּבַעֲת עַל-קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן: ¹⁸וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי קְצוֹת שְׁתֵּי הָעֲבֹתוֹת נָתְנוּ עַל-שְׁתֵּי הַמְּשִׁבְצַת וַיִּתְּנֵם עַל-כְּתֻפֹת הָאֶפֶד אֶל-מוֹל פְּנָיו: ¹⁹וַיַּעֲשׂוּ שְׁתֵּי טְבַעֲת זָהָב וַיִּשְׂימוּ עַל-שְׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַחֹשֶׁן עַל-שְׁפָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר אֶל-עֵבֶר הָאֶפֶד בֵּיתָה: ²⁰וַיַּעֲשׂוּ שְׁתֵּי טְבַעֲת זָהָב וַיִּתְּנֵם עַל-שְׁתֵּי כְּתֻפֹת

shoulder-pieces, close to its seam above the decorated band. ²¹The breastpiece was held in place by a cord of blue from its rings to the rings of the ephod, so that the breastpiece rested on the decorated band and did not come loose from the ephod—as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²²The robe for the ephod was made of woven work, of pure blue. ²³The opening of the robe, in the middle of it, was like the opening of a coat of mail, with a binding around the opening, so that it would not tear. ²⁴On the hem of the robe they made pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, twisted. ²⁵They also made bells of pure gold, and attached the bells between the pomegranates, all around the hem of the robe, between the pomegranates: ^{26a}a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe for officiating in—as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²⁷They made the tunics of fine linen, of woven work, for Aaron and his sons; ²⁸and the head-dress of fine linen, and the decorated turbans of fine linen, and the linen breeches of fine twisted linen; ²⁹and sashes of fine twisted linen, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, done in embroidery—as the LORD had commanded Moses.

³⁰They made the frontlet for the holy diadem of pure gold, and incised upon it the seal inscription: “Holy to the LORD.” ³¹They attached to it a cord of blue to fix it upon the headdress above—as the LORD had commanded Moses.

³²Thus was completed all the work of the Tab-

הָאֶפֶד מִלְמַטָּה מִמּוֹל פָּנָיו לְעִמַּת
מִחִבְרָתוֹ מִמַּעַל לְחֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד: ²¹ וַיִּרְכָּסוּ
אֶת־הַחֹשֶׁן מִטְּבַעְתָּיו אֶל־טְבַעַת הָאֶפֶד
בְּפִתְיֵל תְּכֵלֶת לְהִיָּת עַל־חֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד
וְלֹא־יִנָּח הַחֹשֶׁן מֵעַל הָאֶפֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה
יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה:

²² וַיַּעַשׂ אֶת־מְעִיל הָאֶפֶד מַעֲשֵׂה אֲרָג
כָּלִיל תְּכֵלֶת: ²³ וּפִי־הַמְּעִיל בְּתוֹכוֹ כַּפִּי
תַּחְרָא שָׁפָה לְפָיו סָבִיב לֹא יִקְרַע:
²⁴ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ עַל־שׁוּלֵי הַמְּעִיל רְמוֹנֵי תְּכֵלֶת
וְאֲרָגְמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי מְשׁוֹר: ²⁵ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ
פַעֲמֹנֵי זָהָב טָהוֹר וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־הַפַּעֲמֹנִים
בְּתוֹף הָרְמוֹנִים עַל־שׁוּלֵי הַמְּעִיל סָבִיב
בְּתוֹף הָרְמוֹנִים: ²⁶ פַּעֲמָן וְרִמּוֹן פַּעֲמָן וְרִמּוֹן
עַל־שׁוּלֵי הַמְּעִיל סָבִיב לְשָׂרֵת כַּאֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ס

²⁷ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַפְּתִילֵי שֵׁשׁ מַעֲשֵׂה אֲרָג
לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו: ²⁸ וְאֵת הַמְּצַנֶּפֶת שֵׁשׁ
וְאֶת־פְּאָרֵי הַמְּגַבְעַת שֵׁשׁ וְאֶת־מִכְנָסֵי
הַבָּד שֵׁשׁ מְשׁוֹר: ²⁹ וְאֵת־הָאֲבָיִט שֵׁשׁ
מְשׁוֹר וְתְּכֵלֶת וְאֲרָגְמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי
מַעֲשֵׂה רָקַם כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־
מֹשֶׁה: ס

³⁰ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־צִיץ נֹזֵר־הַקֹּדֶשׁ זָהָב טָהוֹר
וַיִּכְתְּבוּ עָלָיו מִכְתָּב פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם קֹדֶשׁ
לַיהוָה: ³¹ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלָיו פִּתְיֵל תְּכֵלֶת לְתֵת
עַל־הַמְּצַנֶּפֶת מִלְמַעְלָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה
אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ס

³² וַתֵּכֵל כָּל־עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁכַּן אֱהֵל מוֹעֵד

CHAPTER 39

21. the breastpiece . . . did not come loose from the ephod The breastpiece was the symbol of justice (thus it is referred to as “the breastpiece of judgment” in Exod. 28:15), of

proper relations between people and their neighbors. The ephod was the symbol of worship, i.e., of a proper relationship between people and God. When religion is properly understood, justice and worship can never be separated from each other (N. Bloch).

ernacle of the Tent of Meeting. The Israelites did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so they did.

³³Then they brought the Tabernacle to Moses, with the Tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its planks, its bars, its posts, and its sockets; ³⁴the covering of tanned ram skins, the covering of dolphin skins, and the curtain for the screen; ³⁵the Ark of the Pact and its poles, and the cover; ³⁶the table and all its utensils, and the bread of display; ³⁷the pure lampstand, its lamps—lamps in due order—and all its fittings, and the oil for lighting; ³⁸the altar of gold, the oil for anointing, the aromatic incense, and the screen for the entrance of the Tent; ³⁹the copper altar with its copper grating, its poles and all its utensils, and the laver and its stand; ⁴⁰the hangings of the enclosure, its posts and its sockets, the screen for the gate of the enclosure, its cords and its pegs—all the furnishings for the service of the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting; ⁴¹the service vestments for officiating in the sanctuary, the sacral vestments of Aaron the priest, and the vestments of his sons for priestly service. ⁴²Just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so the Israelites had done all the work. ⁴³And when Moses saw that they had performed all the

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה בְּן עֲשׂוֹ: פ
 רביעי³³ וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָאֵהָל וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו קְרָסָיו קְרָשָׁיו בְּרִיחוֹ בְּרִיחָיו וְעַמֻּדָיו וְאֲדָנָיו: ³⁴וְאֶת־מִכְסֵּה עוֹרֹת הָאֵילִם הַמְּאֻדָּמִים וְאֶת־מִכְסֵּה עֹרֹת הַתְּחָשִׁים וְאֶת פְּרָכֹת הַמָּסָף: ³⁵אֶת־אֲרוֹן הָעֵדֻת וְאֶת־בְּדָיו וְאֶת הַכַּפֹּרֶת: ³⁶אֶת־הַשְּׁלֶחָן אֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְאֶת לֶחֶם הַפָּנִים: ³⁷אֶת־הַמְּנֹרָה הַטְּהֻרָה אֶת־נִרְתִּיהָ גֵרֹת הַמְּעֻרְכָה וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלֶיהָ וְאֶת שֶׁמֶן הַמָּאֹר: ³⁸וְאֶת מִזְבַּח הַזֹּהָב וְאֶת שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְאֶת קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים וְאֶת מָסַף פֶּתַח הָאֵהָל: ³⁹אֶת | מִזְבַּח הַנְּחֹשֶׁת וְאֶת־מִכְבַּר הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֶת־בְּדָיו וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר וְאֶת־כַּנּוֹ: ⁴⁰אֶת קַלְעֵי הַחִיצֵר אֶת־עַמֻּדֶיהָ וְאֶת־אֲדָנֶיהָ וְאֶת־הַמָּסָף לְשַׁעַר הַחִיצֵר אֶת־מִיתְרָיו וִיתְדֹתֶיהָ וְאֶת כָּל־כֵּלֵי עֲבֹדַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן לְאֵהָל מוֹעֵד: ⁴¹אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַשָּׂרָד לְשָׂרֵת לְקֹדֶשׁ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְאֶהָרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת־בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו לְכַהֵן: ⁴²כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה בְּן עֲשׂוֹ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל־הָעֲבֹדָה: ⁴³וַיִּרְא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־הַמְּלָאכָה וַהֲנִיחַ

COMPLETION AND INSPECTION
 (vv. 32–43)

The tabernacle in all its several parts and with all its appurtenances is completed and brought to Moses for inspection. The text does not record how long the work took or the dates involved.

32. Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting A combination of the two distinct terms for the sanctuary. Together they express its dual function

as the symbol of the indwelling of the divine Presence in the camp of the Israelites and as the site of communication between God and Moses.

42. the Israelites The entire project is presented as an enterprise of all the Israelites (cf. v. 32).

43. This finale is patterned after the Creation narrative of Genesis, in which the completion of the work evoked divine approval followed by a blessing.

43. The Midrash supplies the words with which Moses blessed the people: “May it be God’s will that the divine Presence rest upon the work of your hands” (Tanḥ.).

tasks—as the LORD had commanded, so they had done—Moses blessed them.

עָשׂוּ אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה בְּן עֲשׂוֹ
וַיְבָרַךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה: פ

40 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

²On the first day of the first month you shall set up the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting. ³Place there the Ark of the Pact, and screen off the ark with the curtain. ⁴Bring in the table and lay out its due setting; bring in the lampstand and light its lamps; ⁵and place the gold altar of incense before the Ark of the Pact. Then put up the screen for the entrance of the Tabernacle.

⁶You shall place the altar of burnt offering before the entrance of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting. ⁷Place the laver between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it. ⁸Set up the enclosure round about, and put in place the screen for the gate of the enclosure.

⁹You shall take the anointing oil and anoint the Tabernacle and all that is in it to consecrate it and all its furnishings, so that it shall be holy. ¹⁰Then anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils to consecrate the altar, so that the altar shall be most holy. ¹¹And anoint the laver and its stand to consecrate it.

¹²You shall bring Aaron and his sons forward to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and wash them with the water. ¹³Put the sacral vestments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him,

מ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: חמישי
[שביעי]

² בַּיּוֹם־הַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ
תָּקִים אֶת־מִשְׁכַּן אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ³ וְשַׂמְתָּ
שָׁם אֶת אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת וְסַכַּת עַל־הָאָרֶץ
אֶת־הַפָּרֹכֶת: ⁴ וְהֵבֵאתָ אֶת־הַשְּׁלֵחָן
וְעִרְכָתָּ אֶת־עַרְבּוֹ וְהֵבֵאתָ אֶת־הַמִּנְחָה
וְהַעֲלִיתָ אֶת־נִרְתִּיהָ: ⁵ וְנִתְּתָה אֶת־מִזְבַּח
הַזֶּהָב לְקַטְרֶת לְפָנַי אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת וְשַׂמְתָּ
אֶת־מָסַךְ הַפֶּתַח לַמִּשְׁכָּן:

⁶ וְנִתְּתָה אֶת מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה לְפָנַי פֶּתַח
מִשְׁכַּן אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד: ⁷ וְנִתְּתָה אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר בֵּין־
אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּבֵין הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְנִתְּתָה שָׁם מַיִם:
⁸ וְשַׂמְתָּ אֶת־הַחֹצֵר סָבִיב וְנִתְּתָה אֶת־מָסַךְ
שַׁעַר הַחֹצֵר:

⁹ וּלְקַחְתָּ אֶת־שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וּמִשַּׁחְתָּ
אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ וּקְדַשְׁתָּ
אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְהָיָה קֹדֶשׁ:
¹⁰ וּמִשַּׁחְתָּ אֶת־מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־כָּל־
כֵּלָיו וּקְדַשְׁתָּ אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהָיָה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים: ¹¹ וּמִשַּׁחְתָּ אֶת־הַכִּיֹּר וְאֶת־
כַּנּוֹ וּקְדַשְׁתָּ אֹתוֹ:

¹² וְהִקְרַבְתָּ אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אֶל־
פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּרְחַצְתָּ אֹתָם בַּמַּיִם:
וְהִלְבַּשְׁתָּ אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן אֶת בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ

ASSEMBLY AND DEDICATION (40:1–15)

1–8. Moses is instructed by God to set up the tabernacle and put each item in its assigned place. The order of emplacement of the furnishings is from the interior outward, from the most sacred to the less sacred. The tabernacle is to be erected just two weeks short of the first anniversary of the Exodus from Egypt, and exactly nine months since the arrival at Sinai. This is New Year's day,

a date that forges another link with the Creation narrative.

3. curtain See Comments to 26:31–35.

4. lay out its due setting The 12 loaves of the bread of display set out in two rows. See Comment to 25:30.

9–11. During the next stage every item is anointed with the sacred aromatic anointing oil. See Comments to 30:22–33.

12–15. The priests are installed. See Comments to 29:1–9.

that he may serve Me as priest. ¹⁴Then bring his sons forward, put tunics on them, ¹⁵and anoint them as you have anointed their father, that they may serve Me as priests. This their anointing shall serve them for everlasting priesthood throughout the ages.

¹⁶This Moses did; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

¹⁷In the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, the Tabernacle was set up. ¹⁸Moses set up the Tabernacle, placing its sockets, setting up its planks, inserting its bars, and erecting its posts. ¹⁹He spread the tent over the Tabernacle, placing the covering of the tent on top of it—just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²⁰He took the Pact and placed it in the ark; he fixed the poles to the ark, placed the cover on top of the ark, ²¹and brought the ark inside the Tabernacle. Then he put up the curtain for screening, and screened off the Ark of the Pact—just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

וּמִשְׁחָתָּ אֹתוֹ וְקִדְשָׁתָּ אֹתוֹ וְכָהֵן לִי: ¹⁴ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו תִּקְרִיב וְהִלַּבְשָׁתָּ אֹתָם כְּתִנַּת: ¹⁵ וּמִשְׁחָתָּ אֹתָם כַּאֲשֶׁר מִשְׁחָתָּ אֶת־אָבִיהֶם וְכָהֵנוּ לִי וְהִיְתָה לְהֵיטֵב לָהֶם מִשְׁחָתָּם לְכַהֲנַת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתָם: ¹⁶ וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ בֶּן עָשָׂה: ס

וַיְהִי בַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִייתָ ¹⁷ שְׁשִׁי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַיּוֹקֵם הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ¹⁸ וַיִּקֶּם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־אֲדָנָיו וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־קַרְשָׁיו וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־בְּרִיחָיו וַיִּקֶּם אֶת־עַמּוּדָיו: ¹⁹ וַיִּפְרֹשׂ אֶת־הָאֹהֶל עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־מַכְסֵה הָאֹהֶל עָלָיו מִלְמַעְלָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ס ²⁰ וַיִּקָּח וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הָעֵדוּת אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַבְּדִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הַפְּפֹרֶת עַל־הָאָרֶץ מִלְמַעְלָה: ²¹ וַיָּבֵא אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת פְּרֻכַת הַמִּטָּה וַיִּסְּךָ עַל אַרְוֹן הָעֵדוּת כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ס

FULFILLING THE INSTRUCTIONS
(vv. 16–33)

16. This Moses did This affirmation applies

to all the foregoing instructions. The details are spelled out, item by item, as though to emphasize the point.

CHAPTER 40

15. as you have anointed their father When Moses anointed Aaron as High Priest, he had no reason to be jealous of Aaron. Moses' role was at least as prominent as Aaron's. When Moses was called on to anoint Aaron's sons to follow him as priests, however, God was concerned that Moses might be jealous. He would

never see his sons succeed him in his role as leader. Therefore, God commands Moses to show his greatness of character and his love for his brother by anointing Aaron's sons in the same wholehearted fashion as he had anointed their father. We show true love when we can rejoice in the good fortune of another even though it is an experience that we ourselves will never know.

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

40:16. as the LORD had commanded him, so he did As Conservative Jews, we are motivated in our commitment to Jewish observance as an expression of our allegiance to God as the divine commander with whom we live in covenant.

²²He placed the table in the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain, on the north side of the Tabernacle. ²³Upon it he laid out the setting of bread before the LORD—as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁴He placed the lampstand in the Tent of Meeting opposite the table, on the south side of the Tabernacle. ²⁵And he lit the lamps before the LORD—as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁶He placed the altar of gold in the Tent of Meeting, before the curtain. ²⁷On it he burned aromatic incense—as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²⁸Then he put up the screen for the entrance of the Tabernacle. ²⁹At the entrance of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting he placed the altar of burnt offering. On it he offered up the burnt offering and the grain offering—as the LORD had commanded Moses. ³⁰He placed the laver between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing. ³¹From it Moses and Aaron and his sons would wash their hands and feet; ³²they washed when they entered the Tent of Meeting and when they approached the altar—as the LORD had commanded Moses. ³³And he set up the enclosure around the Tabernacle and the altar, and put up the screen for the gate of the enclosure.

When Moses had finished the work, ³⁴the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Presence of the LORD filled the Tabernacle. ³⁵Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting,

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הַשְּׁלֶחֶן בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד עַל יַרְךָ הַמִּשְׁכָּן צִפְנָהּ מִחוּץ לַפְּרֹכֶת: ²³ וַיַּעֲרֹךְ עָלָיו עֵרֶךְ לֶחֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ²⁴ וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַמִּנְרָה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד נֹכַח הַשְּׁלֶחֶן עַל יַרְךָ הַמִּשְׁכָּן נֹגְבָה: ²⁵ וַיַּעַל הַנֵּרֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ²⁶ וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־מִזְבַּח הַזָּהָב בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי הַפְּרֹכֶת: ²⁷ וַיִּקְטֹרַע עָלָיו קֹטֶרֶת סַמִּים כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ^פ

וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־מִסְכַּת הַפֶּתַח לַמִּשְׁכָּן: ²⁹ וְאֵת מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה שָׁם פָּתַח מִשְׁכַּן אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד וַיַּעַל עָלָיו אֶת־הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־הַמִּנְחָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ^ס וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַלַּיִר בֵּין־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּבֵין הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּתֵּן שָׁמָּה מַיִם לְרִחְצָה: ³¹ וְרַחֲצוּ מִמֶּנּוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן וּבָנָיו אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם וְאֶת־רַגְלֵיהֶם: ³² בְּבֹאֵם אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּבִקְרִבְתֶּם אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ יְרַחֲצוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ^ס וַיִּקֶּם אֶת־הַחֲצֵר סָבִיב לַמִּשְׁכָּן וְלַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־מִסְכַּת שַׁעַר הַחֲצֵר וַיְכַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמְּלָאכָה: ^פ ³⁴ וַיִּכְסֵה הָעָנָן אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה מָלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ³⁵ וְלֹא־יָכֹל מֹשֶׁה לָּבוֹא

29. he offered up The subject is either Moses or Aaron and his sons.

33. When Moses had finished the work The Hebrew word for “finished” (*va-y'khal*) echoes the same word in a different form (*va-y'khillu*) at the close of the story of Creation (Gen. 2:1). This is significant, because the link between shrines and Creation was traditional in the ancient world. It is echoed both in the structure of the tabernacle and in the procedure entailed in its construction.

APPEARANCE OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE
(vv. 34–38)

34. cloud . . . Presence The tabernacle was to function as a portable Sinai, a means by which a continued channel of communication with God could be maintained. As the people move away from the mountain of Revelation, they need a visible, tangible symbol of God’s abiding presence in their midst. Thus the phenomenon that oc-

35. At this point, there are two embodiments of holiness in the Israelite camp: the

Tent of Meeting (*Ohel Mo-ed*) and the tabernacle (*mishkan*). We can think of them as rep-

because the cloud had settled upon it and the Presence of the LORD filled the Tabernacle. ³⁶When the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, the Israelites would set out, on their various journeys; ³⁷but if the cloud did not lift, they would not set out until such time as it did lift. ³⁸For over the Tabernacle a cloud of the LORD rested by day, and fire would appear in [the cloud] by night, in the view of all the house of Israel throughout their journeys.

אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד פִּי-שָׁכַן עָלָיו הָעֲנַן וּכְבוֹד
יְהוָה מָלֵא אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ³⁶ וּבִהְעֹלֹת
הָעֲנַן מֵעַל הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִסְעוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכֹל
מִסְעֵיהֶם: ³⁷ וְאִם-לֹא יַעֲלֶה הָעֲנַן וְלֹא
יִסְעוּ עַד-יוֹם הָעֹלֹתוֹ: ³⁸ פִּי עֲנַן יְהוָה
עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹמָם וְאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה לַיְלָה בּוֹ
לְעֵינֵי כָל-בֵּית-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל-מִסְעֵיהֶם: *

v. 38. למערבאי סכום הפסוקים של הספר 1,209 וחציו 22:27

חֹזֶק חֹזֶק וְנִתְחַזַּק

curred at Mount Sinai (see 24:15–17) now repeats itself.

35. It is unclear whether entry is literally blocked or is not permissible or that Moses simply dared not enter.

36–38. Henceforth, Israel's wanderings and encampments in the wilderness on the way to the

Promised Land are determined by the movements of the luminous cloud.

The Book of Exodus, which opened with a narrative of misery and oppression, closes on a note of confidence and hope. Israel is assured that, day and night, the divine spirit hovers over it, guiding and controlling its destiny (see Num. 9:15–23).

resenting a theology of encounter and a theology of presence. There are moments (a wedding, the birth of a child, an escape from danger) when God erupts into our lives with a special intensity that transforms us but that is too intense to be lived constantly. Then there are times when God is a constant presence in our lives (marriage, parenthood, years of good health) in an equally real but less intense manner. The challenge is to recognize

God's constant presence in our lives without its becoming so ordinary that we take it for granted. After all of this dedicated effort—taking up four-and-a-half *parashiyot* of the Book of Exodus—God comes down and approves of the work. The Book of Exodus ends on that note. "Our book which began in darkness concludes in the brilliant illumination of God's glory before the eyes of the entire House of Israel" (B. Jacob).

of Pharaoh so that he would not let the Israelites go from his land.

יְהוָה אֶת-לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא-שָׁלַח אֶת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרְצוֹ: פ

12 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ²This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you. ³Speak to the whole community of Israel and say that on the tenth of this month each of them shall take a lamb to a family, a lamb to a household.

יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר: ² הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשִׁית חֳדָשִׁים רְאשׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה: ³ דַּבְּרוּ אֶל-כָּל-עַדְתּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם

THE LAST ACT (12:1–51)

This chapter, a composite of several strands of tradition, contains a number of literary units. Each unit centers on an aspect of the Exodus events. Some of these units deal with immediate concerns, such as the last-minute preparations for the departure from Egypt; others relate to the enduring effect of the events in shaping the future course of Israel’s life as a people.

REFORM OF THE CALENDAR (v. 2)

The impending Exodus is visualized as the start of a new order of life that will be dominated by the consciousness of God’s active presence in history. The religious calendar of Israel is henceforth to reflect this reality by numbering the months of the year from the month of the Exodus.

This month Elsewhere it is called “the month of Abib,” meaning literally “when the ears of barley ripen,” referring to the spring (March and April). The month of Abib is nowadays known as Nisan.

first of the months The Hebrew months, like the days of the week in Hebrew, are called by

numbers. The absence of names may be due to the desire to avoid any connection with the ancient calendars that associated days and months with heavenly bodies or pagan deities and rituals. There is evidence that at least some Israelite months once had Canaanite-Phoenician names, because the Bible refers to the months of Ziv (1 Kings 6:1), Ethanim (1 Kings 8:2), and Bul (1 Kings 6:38). The names of months now used by Jews were borrowed from the Babylonian calendar during the first exile.

THE PASCHAL OFFERING (vv. 3–13)

The laws relating to the sacrificial meal that is to take place immediately before the Exodus are now set forth in detail.

3. community of Israel The word translated as “community” (*edah*, from a root meaning “to come together”) was the term used to designate the people Israel acting as a covenant community, in relation to worship.

tenth of this month The completion of the first 10 days of the lunar month apparently held

CHAPTER 12

2. This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months One of the first steps in the process of liberation was for the Israelites to have their own calendar, their own way of keeping track of time and recalling the most important days of their people’s history. A slave does not control his or her own time; it belongs to someone else. Hirsch wrote that “the Jewish calendar is the Jewish catechism,” for it is the most concise summary of what we remember and what we stand for. Why does Israel count by the moon, with each month start-

ing when the new moon emerges? Because the moon, unlike the sun, waxes and wanes, nearly disappears and then grows bright again. So the Jewish people go through cycles of prosperity and suffering, knowing that even in darkness there are brighter days ahead (*S’fat Emet*). “Just as God showed Noah the rainbow as a sign of the covenant, God shows Moses the sliver of the new moon as a symbol of Israel’s capacity for constant renewal” (Hirsch).

3. The next step toward liberation was to slaughter a lamb publicly, something no Egyptian would do, and mark the doorpost with its blood. In this way, they would proclaim their

⁴But if the household is too small for a lamb, let him share one with a neighbor who dwells nearby, in proportion to the number of persons: you shall contribute for the lamb according to what each household will eat. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a yearling male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶You shall keep watch over it until the fourteenth day

אִישׁ שֶׁהָ לְבֵית-אָבֹתָ שֶׁהָ לְבֵיתָ: ⁴ וְאִם-יִמְעַט הַבֵּית מֵהֵיט מִשֶּׁהָ וְלֶקַח הוּא וּשְׁכֵנּוֹ הַקָּרֹב אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ בְּמִכְסֵת נַפְשֹׁת אִישׁ לְפִי אֲכָלוֹ תִכְסּוּ עַל-הַשֶּׁהָ: ⁵ שֶׁהָ תָמִים זָכָר בֶּן-שָׁנָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם מִן-הַבְּבָשִׁים וּמִן-הָעִזִּים תִּקְחוּ: ⁶ וְהִיָּה לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמַרְתָּ עַד אַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ

some sort of special significance now lost to us. Yom Kippur, the most sacred day in the religious calendar, falls on the 10th of the seventh month, and in ancient times this same date ushered in the jubilee year. Joshua chose the 10th of the first month to cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan.

a lamb See verse 5 and Deut. 14:4. The Hebrew word *seh* can mean both “a lamb” and “a kid of the goats.” In light of the fear expressed in Exod. 8:22, this act broke the sense of dread felt by the enslaved Israelites and removed the psychological barrier to liberation.

a family The Hebrew phrase *beit avot* literally means “a house of fathers” and is a subunit of a clan (the biblical *mishpahah*). It is made up of a husband, his wife or wives, his unmarried daughters and sons, and his married sons with their wives and unmarried children.

a household Originally, the paschal celebration was a domestic experience. Later it became a pilgrimage festival.

4. too small In Second Temple times, a minimum quorum of 10 participants was required for this ritual. The actual slaughtering of the animal was performed in the presence of no fewer than 30.

will eat The eating of the animal is an essential part of the ritual. By means of this sacrificial meal, kinship ties are strengthened, family and neighborly solidarity is promoted, and communion with God is established.

5. without blemish A defective gift is an insult to the recipient; hence the harmony between the one who brings the gift and God would be impaired by such a gift.

6. keep watch The animal, selected on the 10th of the month, is to be carefully protected

psychological liberation from fear of Egyptian opinion and from an eagerness to imitate Egyptian customs, a necessary prerequisite to physical liberation. The Sages see the lamb as a symbol of idol worship, and its public slaughter as a repudiation of idolatry. It has also been noted that in times of drastic change people need specific, action-oriented advice. This gives them a sense of control over a chaotic situation, as we see with mourning customs in the wake of a death.

The shared meal, with *matzah* and bitter herbs (v. 8), will become the prototype of the *Pesah Seider*, when we not only remember but strive to re-enact our ancestors' deliverance from Egypt. Members of some communities come to the *Seider* table with sandals on their feet and a staff in their hand (v. 11), as if they were setting out on a journey to freedom.

Although we celebrate *Rosh ha-Shanah*, beginning a new year, in the fall, the Hebrew calendar actually begins in the spring with *Nisan*, the month of *Pesah*, as the first month. *Tishrei*, the month of *Rosh ha-Shanah* and *Yom Kippur*, is the seventh month (see Lev.

23:23ff.). Some scholars see this as a compromise among ancient cultures, those who celebrated the beginning of the new year in the spring when the harsh winter rains were over and the plants and flowers re-emerged, versus those who celebrated the new year in the fall when the rains returned to replenish the land after summer's harsh drought. We can see it as analogous to our beginning a new calendar year in January but marking our personal age on our birthday. Thus *Rosh ha-Shanah* is seen as the anniversary of the creation of the world, marking our shared humanity with other peoples; *Pesah* is the birthday of the people Israel, symbolizing our special destiny as Jews.

4. Like so much of Judaism, *Pesah*, although a family celebration, is not to be observed in isolation. It is an occasion for families to join with other families and create a community. More than the poor need the rich, the rich need the poor. Let those whose households are too small to absorb all the blessings that God has given them seek out their neighbors and share the bounty with them (Hirsch).

of this month; and all the assembled congregation of the Israelites shall slaughter it at twilight. ⁷They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they are to eat it. ⁸They shall eat the flesh that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw, or cooked in any way with water, but roasted—head, legs, and entrails—over the fire. ¹⁰You shall not leave any of it over until morning; if any of it is left until morning, you shall burn it.

¹¹This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff

הַזֶּה וְשָׁחֲטוּ אֹתוֹ כָּל קֵהַל עֲדַת-יִשְׂרָאֵל
בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים: ⁷ וְלָקְחוּ מִן-הַדָּם וְנָתְנוּ
עַל-שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת וְעַל-הַמַּשְׁקוּף עַל
הַבְּתָיִם אֲשֶׁר-יֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ בָּהֶם: ⁸ וְאָכְלוּ
אֶת-הַבָּשָׂר בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה צְלִי-אֵשׁ וּמִצּוֹת
עַל-מֵרְרִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ: ⁹ אַל-תֹּאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ
זָא וּבָשָׂל מִבָּשָׂל בַּמַּיִם כִּי אִם-צְלִי-אֵשׁ
רֹאשׁוֹ עַל-כַּרְעָיו וְעַל-קִרְבּוֹ: ¹⁰ וְלֹא-
תוֹתִירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד-בֹּקֶר וְהִנְתַּר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד-
בֹּקֶר בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרְפוּ:
¹¹ וְכַכֵּה תֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ מִתְּנִיכֶם חֲגָרִים
נְעִלְיֶכֶם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם וּמִקְלָכֶם בְּיַדְכֶם

from blemish for four days until it is slaughtered. No reason for the interval is given.

7. According to verses 13 and 23, the daubing at the entrances served to identify the houses of the Israelites, for the blood is designated “a sign.” Blood was a readily available coloring substance; it also possessed symbolic significance because it was looked on as the life essence. The lintel and doorposts form the demarcation between the sacred Israelite interior and the profane world outside.

8–9. Unlike other offerings, this one (called *pesah* in v.11) is roasted. Roasting may have been required here because it is the quickest means of preparation when time is short, or because it is the most effective way of extracting the blood. Deut. 16:7 instructs that this passover offering is to be boiled like a normal sacrifice.

8. **unleavened bread** The Hebrew for “unleavened bread” (*matzot*, singular *matzah*) is introduced without definition or explanation, implying that it is already well known and, hence, independent of the Exodus events. The contexts suggest a kind of flat cake that can be prepared

quickly for unexpected guests (see Gen. 19:3). This verse witnesses the integration of the originally separate *matzot* festival with the Passover celebration. See Comments to Exod. 12:14–20.

bitter herbs The Hebrew word *m'rorim* (singular *maror*) probably referred originally to the kind of pungent condiment with which pastoral nomads habitually season their meals of roasted flesh. In rabbinic tradition, the plant referred to five different species of herbs, including lettuce (*hassah*), a vegetable known to have been cultivated in ancient Egypt.

10. A sacrificial animal is devoted in its entirety to a sacred purpose. This is so even when the offering is eaten by the worshipers and not wholly burned on the altar. The intentional act of eating at the designated time is an indispensable part of the ritual. Any leftovers retain their sacred status but may no longer be consumed and must be burned.

11. **loins girded** The standard dress consisted of a flowing shirtlike garment that was tightened by a sash wrapped around the waist when greater maneuverability was called for. The

7. Was the blood on the doorpost a sign that this family had the courage to defy their Egyptian neighbors and demonstrate an inner liberation? Was it perhaps a sign that this family has already suffered and should be spared? Or was it simply that this family had complied with

God's command? Could God not distinguish between Israelite and Egyptian homes? The Talmud says that once a plague has begun, it does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked (BT BK 60a). Some means was needed to mark the homes that merited being spared.

in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly: it is a passover offering to the LORD. ¹²For that night I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down every first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and I will mete out punishments to all the gods of Egypt, I the LORD. ¹³And the blood on the houses where you are staying shall be a sign for you: when I see the blood I will pass over you, so that no plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴This day shall be to you one of remembrance: you shall celebrate it as a festival to the

וְאֶכְלֹתֶם אֹתוֹ בְּחֶפְזוֹן פֶּסַח הוּא לַיהוָה :
 וְעִבְרָתִי בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם בְּלַיְלָה הַזֹּה ¹²
 וְהַפִּיתִי כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאָדָם
 וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה
 שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי יְהוָה : ¹³וְהָיָה הַדָּם לָכֶם
 לְאֵת עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם שָׂם וְרָאִיתִי
 אֶת־הַדָּם וּפָסַחְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם וְלֹא־יְהִיֶּה בְכֶם
 נֹגֵף לְמִשְׁחִית בְּהַפְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם :
 וְהָיָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לָכֶם לְזִכְרוֹן וְחֻגְתֶּם ¹⁴
 אֹתוֹ חֹג לַיהוָה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם

climactic moment of liberation is imminent, and the Israelites must be prepared for immediate departure.

a passover offering The Hebrew noun “*pesah*” has given rise to the English adjective “paschal,” used to designate the Passover lamb, the Passover holiday, and Easter. Like the word “*matzah*,” *pesah* is assumed in this narrative to be an immediately understandable term, so it too must have a history that predates the Exodus. The etymology of the word is uncertain, although it may be related to an Akkadian root meaning “to appease.” Three traditions about the meaning of the stem פסח have survived: “to have compassion,” “to protect,” and “to skip over” (see 12:13). Strictly speaking, as noted in the Comments to verses 14–20, only the 14th day of the month can be called *Pesah*; but in the course of time, this term was extended to cover the entire week of the festival.

12. I will go through An example of anthropomorphism, attributing a human activity to God. Here it may be used to make His active presence in history more vividly and dramatically perceived. Despite this emphatic statement, however, tradition frequently speaks of the Angel of Death, not God, as “the destroyer.”

to all the gods of Egypt God’s power to take Israel out of Egypt manifests His own exclusivity, mocks the professed divinity of Pharaoh, and exposes the deities of Egypt as non-gods.

13. The first section of the chapter concludes with an assurance that no harm will befall the

Israelites. This is necessary because fulfillment of the preceding instructions is fraught with peril, and the coming period of inaction will allow anxiety to surface.

THE FESTIVAL OF MATZOT (vv. 14–20)

The previous rites deal with a specific time and situation—the Passover of Egypt. The Exodus now becomes an experience stamped for all time on Israel’s memory and imagination, shaping forever its religious consciousness and traditions. Verse 14 establishes an annual festival of remembrance; the subsequent verses explain how it is to be observed.

The focus is on the festival of *matzot*, “unleavened bread.” Without doubt, throughout the biblical period this celebration remained distinct from the one-day paschal rite. Indeed, the next chapter (13:6–8) establishes the laws of *matzot* and makes no mention of the paschal sacrifice. Lev. 23:5–6 similarly differentiates the one from the other: “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering to the LORD, and on the fifteenth day of that month the LORD’s Feast of Unleavened Bread.” Special Passovers were celebrated in the reigns of Kings Hezekiah and Josiah of Judah, both of whom were associated with major reformations (see 2 Chron. 30, 35). We are told in Ezra 6:19–22 that when the exiles returned from Babylon they “celebrated the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month,” and then “joyfully celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days.”

14. The topic and tone of the Torah narrative now shifts seamlessly but significantly from instructions to Moses’ contemporaries to

listing *mitzvot* to be followed by Jews in later generations—not so as to effect the Exodus but in order to remember it.

LORD throughout the ages; you shall celebrate it as an institution for all time. ¹⁵Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the very first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

¹⁶You shall celebrate a sacred occasion on the first day, and a sacred occasion on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them; only what every person is to eat, that alone may be

תִּחְגְּלוּ: ¹⁵שִׁבְעַת יָמִים מִצּוֹת תֹּאכְלוּ
אֶף בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן תִּשְׁבִּיתוּ שָׂאֵר
מִבֵּיתְכֶם כִּי אֶל-אֲכָל חֵמֶץ וְנִכְרַתְהָ
הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל מִיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן
עַד-יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי:

¹⁶וּבַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ וּבַיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל-
מְלָאכָה לֹא-יַעֲשֶׂה בָהֶם אֶף אֲשֶׁר
יֹאכַל לְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ הוּא לְבָדוֹ יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם:

14. throughout the ages That is, for future annual celebration.

15. The characteristics of the newly ordained festival are now stated: one week's duration, the eating of *matzot*, and the removal of leaven. It is a new season of the year and a new era for the people Israel. One should not enter it with yeast collected from a previous time.

unleavened bread Stringent regulations govern the manufacture of *matzot*. The only ingredients are flour and water. The flour may be made only from grains that are susceptible to fermentation: wheat, barley, emmer, rye, and oats.

on the very first day Because festivals begin in the evening, this injunction traditionally has been taken to mean that the leaven must have been removed on the previous evening, before the time for the paschal offering on the 14th of the month.

remove leaven The positive command to eat *matzah* is supplemented by the strict prohibition against retaining or eating leaven or leavened food throughout the entire festival. This rule is repeated below in verses 19–20 and again in 13:7. Leaven (*s'or*) is the leavening agent known as sourdough; "leavened food" (*hametz*) is food to which sourdough has been added to accelerate the rising of the dough.

shall be cut off This punishment, known as *karet*, is largely confined to those who transgress in certain matters of religious worship and sexual behavior. Its nature is uncertain. Various biblical passages lead to the conclusion that *karet* is not a penalty enforced by the courts but a punishment left to divine execution.

16. The first and the last days of the festival possess special sanctity, but not to the same degree

15. shall be cut off *Pesah* is a fundamental statement of Jewish identity and the meaning and purpose of Jewish existence—so much so

that those who choose not to observe it can be seen as cutting themselves off from the Jewish people.

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

12:15. remove leaven On the night before the *Seider*, there is a ritual search of the home (*B'dikat Hametz*) by candlelight. A feather and a spoon are used to collect pieces of bread or other leaven that had been hidden to stimulate the search. The next morning, any leavened product not otherwise stored and sold is disposed of, traditionally by burning (*Bi-ur Hametz*) (see Lev. 2:11; Deut. 16:3).

12:16. the seventh day This last day is considered to be as holy as the first; all restrictions apply equally to both. Outside Israel, two days are traditionally observed for each day defined as a *mikra kodesh* (sacred occasion) in the Torah, except for *Yom Kippur* (because the Sages judged that fasting for two days would be too burdensome). Before the calendar was established, news of the *Sanhedrin's* announcement of the new moon would not necessarily reach diaspora communities in time before a holiday, and so diaspora Jews observed a second day to be sure not to violate holy day prohibitions. Despite the subsequent creation of the Jewish calendar, adding a second day for each day the Torah designates as a sacred occasion remains the most widespread practice (MT Festivals 1:21). Therefore, the first and last days of *Pesah* are each observed for two days (for a total of eight days); the first day of *Sukkot* and *Sh'mini Atzeret* are each observed for two days (for a total of nine days); and *Shavuot* is observed for two days. The intermediate days of *Pesah* and *Sukkot* have some of the aspects of the festival's first and last days and some aspects of a weekday; hence the name *hol ha-mo'ed*, "the ordinary part of the festival." *Rosh ha-Shanah* is observed for two days even in Israel, because it occurs at the very beginning of the month and even the Jews of Jerusalem could not determine when the new moon would be sighted and the holiday would begin.

prepared for you. ¹⁷You shall observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day throughout the ages as an institution for all time. ¹⁸In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days. For whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a citizen of the country. ²⁰You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.

²¹Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go, pick out lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover offering. ²²Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the

17 וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַמִּצְוֹת־זֶה בְּעֶצְמָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־עַבְדְּכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם: 18 בְּרֵאשִׁית חֹדֶשׁ בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּעָרֶב תֹּאכְלוּ מִצֵּת עַד יוֹם הָאֶחָד וְעֶשְׂרִים לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּעָרֶב: 19 שִׁבְעַת יָמִים שָׂאֵר לֹא יִמָּצֵא בְּבֵיתְכֶם כִּי כָל־אֶכָּל מִחֻמֶּצֶת וְנִכְרַתְהָ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מֵעַד־תֵּת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגֵר וּבְאִזְרַח הָאָרֶץ: 20 כָּל־מִחֻמֶּצֶת לֹא תֹאכְלוּ בְּכָל־מוֹשְׁבֵיתְכֶם תֹּאכְלוּ מִצֵּת: פ
21 וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מִשְׁפַּחְתֵיכֶם וְשַׁחֲטוּ הַפֶּסַח: 22 וְלָקַחְתֶּם אֶגְדַּת אֵזוֹב וַיִּטְבַּלְתֶּם בָּדָם אֲשֶׁר־בַּסֶּף

חמישי

as do *Shabbat* and the Day of Atonement. Hence the preparation of food on those festival days is permitted, exempted from the prohibition against labor.

17. The rationale for this springtime festival is now given.

You shall observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread Understanding the phrase “*u-sh’martem et ha-matzot*” (literally, “guard the *matzot*”) in this way is based on the next phrase—“on this very day”—which takes the word “*matzot*” to mean the festival (*Hag ha-Matzot*). (For a parallel passage, see 23:15.)

I brought Better: “I am bringing.”

18. As specified in Lev. 23:32, the duration of all festivals is from evening to evening.

19. a stranger The Hebrew word *ger* is a foreigner who has taken up permanent residence

among the people Israel. Like his Israelite neighbor, he is required to abstain from possessing leaven for this one week, because its presence within the closely knit community interferes with the ability of others to fulfill their religious obligation. Only the Israelite, however, has the duty to eat *matzah*.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PESAH ARE RELAYED (vv. 21–28)

Moses conveys to the people the divinely given instructions and supplements them with some clarifications.

21. Go, pick out Either select a lamb from your flock or purchase one.

22. a bunch of hyssop A brushlike plant. This explains how the directive of verse 7 is to be carried out. Three of the hyssop’s thin, woody

17. observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread Literally, “guard the *matzot*” (pl. of *matzah*). Traditional postbiblical Jewish interpretation

takes this to mean that one should supervise the process of making *matzot* to ensure that no fermentation occurs at any stage.

HALAKHAH L’MA’ASEH

12:19. No leaven shall be found Because disposing of foods prohibited on *Pesah* could impose financial hardship, Jewish law permits food to be stored away in the home of the owner provided that for the duration of *Pesah* it is neither seen nor used and its ownership is transferred to a non-Jew. This sale of *hametz* (*M’khirat Hametz*) can be arranged through a rabbi. All foods prohibited during *Pesah* that are not sold in this manner must be disposed of before the holiday; otherwise they may not be used after *Pesah* (*hametz she-avar alav ha-Pesah*).

הַפְּטָרָה פְּרִשְׁת הַחֹדֶשׁ

HAFTARAH FOR PARASHAT HA-HODESH

EZEKIEL 45:16–46:18 (*Ashk'nazim*)

EZEKIEL 45:18–46:15 (*S'fardim*)

This *haftarah* presents regulations that pertain largely to worship in a rebuilt Temple, with a major emphasis on offerings to make expiation for the House of Israel. For *Ashk'nazim*, the reading opens with the requirement of regular contributions for the Temple service to be brought by the “entire population” and prepared by the prince (45:16–17, per the interpretation that best suits the passage when excerpted as a *haftarah*). Their reading ends with matters of gifts to be distributed by the prince to his heirs (46:16–18). A long passage in between focuses on details of Temple purification and sacrificial offering. Among *S'fardim*, the reading consists solely of that passage, which also includes regulations governing entry to the inner court for the common people and for the prince, as well as offerings for fixed occasions.

A series of purification rites are to be performed in the first and the seventh months of the year (45:18–25). The rites of purification in the first month are given in special detail, together with the command that the people offer the *pesah* sacrifice on the 14th day of the month (of *Nisan*) and eat unleavened bread during the next 7 days. Correspondingly, detailed rules for the *pesah* sacrifice and unleavened bread are included in the special Torah reading for this *Shabbat* (Exod. 12:1–20). Moses delineates requirements for the inaugural *pesah* ceremony in Egypt, and anticipates subsequent celebrations of the festival. Ezekiel’s proclamation envisions rituals and practices in the rebuilt Temple of the future. These occasionally are at variance with the older laws.

Particularly problematic is the account of purifying the Temple in the first and the seventh months. Nothing of the sort is mentioned in the Torah. Perplexed, some rabbinic commentators have associated this purification with the altar con-

secration mentioned in Ezek. 43:18–26 (Rashi, Radak). They consider this rite to be a one-time event, like the tabernacle purification of old, which also occurred on the first day of the first month (see Exod. 40:2). In this way, they tried to resolve any possible conflict between this ceremony and the great day of Temple purification on *Yom Kippur*, 10 days after the New Year in the seventh month (Lev. 16:29). Notably, there is no reference to *Yom Kippur* in Ezekiel’s teaching. Also absent is any reference to the festival of *Sukkot*, which begins on the 15th day of the seventh month. The cultic traditions found in this *haftarah* also contradict specific sacrificial regulations found in the Torah (see the *haftarah* for *Emor*).

RELATION OF THE HAFTARAH TO THE CALENDAR

Parashat ha-Hodesh (Exod. 12:1–20) is the last of four special Torah passages added to the regular *Shabbat* portion in the weeks before *Pesah*. (Specifically, it is recited on the last *Shabbat* of Adar—unless the forthcoming New Moon of *Nisan* falls on a *Shabbat*, in which case this *haftarah* is recited rather than the *haftarah* otherwise read whenever a New Moon falls on *Shabbat*.) The passage gets its designation from the opening proclamation: “This month [*ha-hodesh ha-zeh*] shall mark for you the beginning of the months”; it contains the laws concerning a paschal offering and thus anticipates the ritual of the 14th of *Nisan* (see Rashi on BT Meg. 29a).

That special Torah reading and this *haftarah* are clearly linked. Both passages stress the *pesah* ceremony and the festival of unleavened bread. The Torah describes the inaugural *pesah* ceremony in Egypt as well as provisions for subsequent enactments; the *haftarah* describes the festival for the envisioned new Temple period,

stressing the formal purifications that will take place at that time (Ezek. 45:21–24). These two descriptions reflect two historical poles. The *Pesah* of Egypt recalls that ancient time when Israel experienced liberation from bondage and was called by God to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod. 19:6). The *Pesah* of the future anticipates a time when Israel will be restored to its homeland and its sacred duties. In the first ceremony, blood was smeared on the doorpost of each clan dwelling for the people’s protection (Exod. 12:13). In the complex ritual detailed by Ezekiel, blood is to be smeared on the doorpost of the Temple, among other places, for the purification of the Temple itself (Ezek. 45:19).

These thematic connections suggest some theological correlations. Daubing the entrances to the

home and to the Temple with blood marks them off as two types of space. The first embodies the family, whose bonds are biologic. The family, the nuclear core of personal history and religious rite, preserves a parochial character by virtue of its intimacy and common name. The space within the Temple is communal; its rites have an official, public status. The Temple as the sanctuary of God opens its doors for collective worship, thus transcending the private histories of its worshipers. The conjunction of the two readings sharpens the distinctions between the two dwellings. How one may live in both homes—standing firm in loyalty to hearth and blood but open to the enlargement of commitments that a divine Temple dwelling symbolizes—is a question each individual must answer repeatedly.

45 ¹⁶The entire population shall give this offering to the prince in Israel. ¹⁷And the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the libations on festivals, new moons, sabbaths—all fixed occasions—of the House of Israel shall be the obligation of the prince; he shall prepare the purification offerings, the grain offerings, the burnt offerings, and the offerings of well-being, to make expiation for the House of Israel.

¹⁸Thus said the Lord GOD: On the first day of the first month, you shall take a bull of the herd without blemish, and you shall purify the Sanctuary. ¹⁹The priest shall take some of the blood of the purification offering and apply it to the doorposts of the Temple, to the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and to the doorposts of the gate of the inner court. ²⁰You shall do the same on the seventh day of the month to purge the Temple from impurity caused by unwitting or ignorant persons.

Ezekiel 45:17. prince Hebrew: *nasi*. An ancient tribal title (Gen. 23:6), frequently used by Ezekiel to refer to Israelite kings (Ezek. 22:6) and

מה ¹⁶בַּל הָעַם הָאָרֶץ יִהְיוּ אֶל-
הַתְּרוּמָה הַזֹּאת לְנָשִׂיא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: ¹⁷וְעַל-
הַנָּשִׂיא יִהְיֶה הָעוֹלוֹת וְהַמִּנְחָה וְהַנֶּסֶךְ
בַּחֲגִים וּבַחֲדָשִׁים וּבַשַּׁבָּתוֹת בְּכָל-מוֹעֲדֵי
בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת-הַחֻטָּאת
וְאֶת-הַמִּנְחָה וְאֶת-הָעוֹלָה וְאֶת-
הַשְּׁלָמִים לְכַפֵּר בְּעֵד בַּיִת-יִשְׂרָאֵל: ¹⁸
כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה בְּרֹאשׁוֹן בְּאֶחָד
לְחֹדֶשׁ תִּקַּח פָּרִי-בֶן-בָּקָר תָּמִים וְחֻטָּאת
אֶת-הַמִּקְדָּשׁ: ¹⁹וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּם
הַחֻטָּאת וְנָתַן אֶל-מִזְבֹּחַת הַבַּיִת וְאֶל-
אַרְבַּע פְּנוֹת הָעֶזְרָה לְמִזְבֵּחַ וְעַל-מִזְבֹּחַת
שַׁעַר הַחֹצֵר הַפְּנִימִית: ²⁰וְכֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה
בַּשַּׁבָּע בַּחֹדֶשׁ מֵאִישׁ שְׂגָה וּמִפְּתֵי
וּכְפַרְתֶּם אֶת-הַבַּיִת:

the future scion of David (34:24, 37:25). In Ezek. 44:3, 45–46, and 48, the prince is the future leader. This leader has a special role in the new

²¹On the fourteenth day of the first month you shall have the passover sacrifice; and during a festival of seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten. ²²On that day, the prince shall provide a bull of purification offering on behalf of himself and of the entire population; ²³and during the seven days of the festival, he shall provide daily—for seven days—seven bulls and seven rams, without blemish, for a burnt offering to the LORD, and one goat daily for a purification offering. ²⁴He shall provide a grain offering of an *ephah* for each bull and an *ephah* for each ram, with a *hin* of oil to every *ephah*. ²⁵So, too, during the festival of the seventh month, for seven days from the fifteenth day on, he shall provide the same purification offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings, and oil.

21 בְּרֵאשׁוֹן בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם הַפֶּסַח חֹג שִׁבְעוֹת יָמִים מִצּוֹת יֹאכְלוּ: 22 וְעָשָׂה הַנָּשִׂיא בַיּוֹם הַהוּא בַעֲדוֹ וּבַעֲד כָּל-עַם הָאָרֶץ פֶּר חֲטָאֹת: 23 וּשְׁבַעֲת יְמֵי-הַחֹג יַעֲשֶׂה עוֹלָה לַיהוָה שִׁבְעַת פָּרִים וּשְׁבַעֲת אֵילִים תְּמִימִם לַיּוֹם שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים וְחֲטָאֹת שְׁעִיר עֲזִים לַיּוֹם: 24 וּמִנְחָה אֵיפָה לַפָּר וְאֵיפָה לְאֵיל יַעֲשֶׂה וְשֶׁמֶן הַיֵּין לְאֵיפָה: 25 בְּשִׁבְעֵי בַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹג יַעֲשֶׂה כָאֵלֶּה שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים בַּחֲטָאֹת כְּעֹלָה וּכְמִנְחָה וּכְשֶׁמֶן: ס

46 Thus said the Lord God: The gate of the inner court which faces east shall be closed on the six working days; it shall be opened on the sabbath day and it shall be opened on the day of the new moon. ²The prince shall enter by way of the vestibule outside the gate, and shall attend at the gatepost while the priests sacrifice his burnt offering and his offering of well-being; he shall then bow low at the threshold of the gate and depart. The gate, however, shall not be closed until evening. ³The common people shall worship before the LORD on sabbaths and new moons at the entrance of the same gate.

מו כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה שְׁעַר הַחֲצַר הַפְּנִימִית הַפְּנִיָה קָדִים יִהְיֶה סָגוּר שֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה וּבַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת יִפְתָּח וּבַיּוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ יִפְתָּח: 2 וּבָא הַנָּשִׂיא דְרָךְ אֹלָם הַשְּׁעַר מִחוּץ וְעָמַד עַל-מְזוֹזֹת הַשְּׁעַר וְעָשָׂה הַפְּהָנִים אֶת-עוֹלָתוֹ וְאֶת-שְׁלָמָיו וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוָה עַל-מִפְתָּן הַשְּׁעַר וַיֵּצֵא וְהִשְׁעַר לֹא-יִסָּגַר עַד-הָעֶרֶב: 3 וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ עַם-הָאָרֶץ פֶּתַח הַשְּׁעַר הַהוּא בַשַּׁבָּתוֹת וּבַחֲדָשִׁים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: 4 וְהָעֹלָה אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרַב הַנָּשִׂיא לַיהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שֵׁשֶׁה כִּבְשִׂים תְּמִימִם וְאֵיל תְּמִים: 5 וּמִנְחָה אֵיפָה לְאֵיל וּלְכִבְשִׂים מִנְחָה מִתַּת יָדוֹ וְשֶׁמֶן הַיֵּין לְאֵיפָה:

⁴The burnt offering which the prince presents to the LORD on the sabbath day shall consist of six lambs without blemish and one ram without blemish—⁵with a grain offering of an *ephah* for the ram, a grain offering of as much as he wishes

Temple service, which may explain the choice of this term (see Lev. 4:22).

21. festival of seven days Hebrew: *ḥag sh'vu-ot yamim* (unusual formulation); literally, “a festival of weeks of days.”

Ezekiel 46:1. six working days Hebrew: *sheisbet y'mei ha-ma-aseh*. This unique biblical expression is a well-known phrase in Jewish liturgy. It is used in the concluding benediction of the final *Shabbat* ceremony, the *Havdalah* service.

for the lambs, and a *hin* of oil with every *ephah*.
 6And on the day of the new moon, it shall consist of a bull of the herd without blemish, and six lambs and a ram—they shall be without blemish. 7And he shall provide a grain offering of an *ephah* for the bull, an *ephah* for the ram, and as much as he can afford for the lambs, with a *hin* of oil to every *ephah*.

8When the prince enters, he shall come in by way of the vestibule of the gate, and he shall go out the same way.

9But on the fixed occasions, when the common people come before the LORD, whoever enters by the north gate to bow low shall leave by the south gate; and whoever enters by the south gate shall leave by the north gate. They shall not go back through the gate by which they came in, but shall go out by the opposite one. 10And as for the prince, he shall enter with them when they enter and leave when they leave.

11On festivals and fixed occasions, the grain offering shall be an *ephah* for each bull, an *ephah* for each ram, and as much as he wishes for the lambs, with a *hin* of oil for every *ephah*.

12The gate that faces east shall also be opened for the prince whenever he offers a freewill offering—be it burnt offering or offering of well-being—freely offered to the LORD, so that he may offer his burnt offering or his offering of well-being just as he does on the sabbath day. Then he shall leave, and the gate shall be closed after he leaves.

13Each day you shall offer a lamb of the first year without blemish, as a daily burnt offering to the LORD; you shall offer one every morning.

14And every morning regularly you shall offer a grain offering with it: a sixth of an *ephah*, with a third of a *hin* of oil to moisten the choice flour, as a grain offering to the LORD—a law for all time. 15The lamb, the grain offering, and oil shall be presented every morning as a regular burnt offering.

6 וּבַיּוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ פֶּר בֶּן־בֶּקָר תְּמִימִם וְשֵׁשׁ כִּבְשִׁים וְאֵיל תְּמִימִם יְהִיוּ: 7 וְאֵיפָה לֶפֶר וְאֵיפָה לְאֵיל יַעֲשֶׂה מִנְחָה וּלְכִבְשִׁים כַּאֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁיג יָדוֹ וְשֶׁמֶן הָיִן לְאֵיפָה:

8 וּבָבֹא הַנְּשִׂיא דֶרֶךְ אֹמְלֵם הַשַּׁעַר יָבֹא וּבְדַרְכּוֹ יֵצֵא:

9 וּבָבֹא עִם־הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּמוֹעֲדִים הֵבֵא דֶרֶךְ־שַׁעַר צְפוֹן לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת יֵצֵא דֶרֶךְ־שַׁעַר נֹגֵב וְהֵבֵא דֶרֶךְ־שַׁעַר נֹגֵב יֵצֵא דֶרֶךְ־שַׁעַר צְפוֹנָה לֹא יָשׁוּב דֶּרֶךְ הַשַּׁעַר אֲשֶׁר־בָּא בּוֹ כִּי נִכְחוּ יֵצְאוּ יֵצֵא: 10 וְהַנְּשִׂיא בְּתוֹכֶם בְּבֹאֵם יָבֹא וּבִצְאֹתֶם יֵצְאוּ:

11 וּבְחַגִּים וּבְמוֹעֲדִים תַּהֲיֶה הַמִּנְחָה אֵיפָה לֶפֶר וְאֵיפָה לְאֵיל וּלְכִבְשִׁים מִתַּת יָדוֹ וְשֶׁמֶן הָיִן לְאֵיפָה: 12

וְכִי־יַעֲשֶׂה הַנְּשִׂיא נִדְבָה עוֹלָה אֹו־שְׁלָמִים נִדְבָה לַיהוָה וּפְתַח לוֹ אֶת־הַשַּׁעַר הַפְּנִי קִדִּים וַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־עֲלֹתוֹ וְאֶת־שְׁלָמָיו כַּאֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה בַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיֵּצֵא וְסָגַר אֶת־הַשַּׁעַר אַחֲרֵי צֵאתוֹ:

13 וּכְבָשׁ בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ תְּמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה עוֹלָה לַיּוֹם לַיהוָה בֶּבֶקָר בֶּבֶקָר תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ: 14 וּמִנְחָה תַעֲשֶׂה עָלָיו בֶּבֶקָר בֶּבֶקָר שְׁשִׁית הָאֵיפָה וְשֶׁמֶן שְׁלִישִׁית הַהֵינן לָרֶס אֶת־הַסֶּלֶת מִנְחָה לַיהוָה חֲקוֹת עוֹלָם תִּמְיֵד: 15 וְעָשׂוּ יַעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַכֶּבֶשׁ וְאֶת־הַמִּנְחָה וְאֶת־הַשֶּׁמֶן בֶּבֶקָר בֶּבֶקָר עוֹלָת תִּמְיֵד: 16

¹⁶Thus said the Lord God: If the prince makes a gift to any of his sons, it shall become the latter's inheritance; it shall pass on to his sons; it is their holding by inheritance. ¹⁷But if he makes a gift from his inheritance to any of his subjects, it shall only belong to the latter until the year of release. Then it shall revert to the prince; his inheritance must by all means pass on to his sons.

¹⁸But the prince shall not take property away from any of the people and rob them of their holdings. Only out of his own holdings shall he endow his sons, in order that My people may not be dispossessed of their holdings.

18. the prince shall not take property away are feared in 1 Sam. 8:11–18 and documented in A regulation to curb such monarchic outrages as 1 Kings 21.

16 כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה כִּי־יִתֵּן הַנָּשִׂיאַ
מִתְּנָה לְאִישׁ מִבְּנָיו נַחֲלָתוֹ הִיא לְבְנָיו
תִּהְיֶה אַחְזָתָם הִיא בְּנַחֲלָה: 17 וְכִי־יִתֵּן
מִתְּנָה מִנַּחֲלָתוֹ לְאֶחָד מֵעַבְדָּיו וְהִיְתָה
לוֹ עַד־שְׁנַת הַדְּרוֹר וְשָׁבַת לְנָשִׂיא אֶף
נַחֲלָתוֹ בְּנָיו לָהֶם תִּהְיֶה:
18 וְלֹא־יִקַּח הַנָּשִׂיא מִנַּחֲלַת הָעָם
לְהוֹנֵתָם מֵאַחְזָתָם מֵאַחְזָתוֹ יִנְחַל אֶת־
בְּנָיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִפְצֹו עַמִּי אִישׁ
מֵאַחְזָתוֹ: