

Parashat Vayakhel
Exodus 35:30 - 36:7

555 EXODUS 35:26 VA-YAK-HEL

שמות לה ויקהל

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 אֶתְנָה בְּחָכְמָה
טוּוּ אֶת־הָעֵינִים: ²⁷ וְהַנְּשֹׂאִם הֵבִיאוּ
אֶת אַבְנֵי הַשֹּׁהַם וְאֶת אַבְנֵי הַמַּלְאִים
לְאֶפֶוד וְלַחֹשֶׁן: ²⁸ וְאֶת־הַבִּשָּׁם וְאֶת־
הַשָּׁמֶן לְמָאֹר וְלַשָּׁמֶן 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

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ קָרָא
יְהוָה בְּשֵׁם בְּצַלְאֵל בֶּן־אוּרִי בֶן־חֹר
לְמֹטֶה יְהוּדָה: ³¹ וַיִּמְלֵא אֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים
בְּחָכְמָה בְּתַבּוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל־מְלָאכָה:
³² וְלַחֲשֹׁב מַחֲשָׁבֹת לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּזָהָב
וּבַכֶּסֶף וּבַחֹשֶׁן: ³³ וּבְחָרְשֵׁת אֶבֶן
לְמַלְאֵת וּבְחָרְשֵׁת עֵץ לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּכָל־
מְלָאכֶת מַחֲשָׁבֹת: ³⁴ וּלְהוֹרֹת נֹתֵן בְּלִבּוֹ
הוּא וְאַהֲלִיאֵב בֶּן־אֲחִיסָמָךְ לְמִטֵּה־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

36 and as makers of designs. ¹Let, then, 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־
מְלֵאכֶת חָרָשׁ וְחֹשֶׁב וְרָקֵם בְּתַכְכֶּלֶת
וּבְאַרְגָּמָן בְּתוֹלְעַת הַשָּׁנִי וּבִשְׂשׁוּ וְאַרְגָּ
עֲשִׂי כָל־מְלֵאכָה וְחֹשְׁבֵי מַחְשָׁבֹת:
לו וְעֹשֵׂה בְּצִלְאֵל וְאַהֲלִיאֵב וְכָל
אִישׁ חֲכַם־לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה
חֲכָמָה וְתְבוּנָה בְּהִמָּה לַדַּעַת לַעֲשׂוֹת
אֶת־כָּל־מְלֵאכֶת עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְכָל
אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה:

²וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּצִלְאֵל וְאֶל־אֶהֲלִיאֵב
וְאֶל כָּל־אִישׁ חֲכַם־לֵב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה
חֲכָמָה בְּלִבּוֹ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַוּ לִבּוֹ לְקַרְבָּה
אֶל־הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ: ³וַיִּקְחוּ
מִלִּפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל־הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר
הֵבִיאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמְלָאכֶת עֲבֹדַת
הַקֹּדֶשׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ וְהֵם הֵבִיאוּ אֵלָיו
עוֹד נְדָבָה בַּבֶּקֶר בַּבֶּקֶר: ⁴וַיִּבְאוּ כָּל־
הַחֲכָמִים הָעֹשִׂים אֶת כָּל־מְלָאכֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ
אִישׁ־אִישׁ מִמְּלָאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־הִמָּה עֹשִׂים:
⁵וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר מֵרַבִּים הָעַם
לְהֵבִיא מִדֵּי הָעֲבֹדָה לְמְלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה
יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ: ⁶וַיִּצְוּ מֹשֶׁה וַיַּעֲבִירוּ
קוֹל בְּמַחְנֵה לֵאמֹר אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֶל־
יַעֲשׂוּ־עוֹד מְלָאכָה לְתְרוּמַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ
וַיִּפְּלֵא הָעַם מִהֵבִיא: ⁷וְהַמְּלָאכָה הֵיטָה
דַּיִם לְכָל־הַמְּלָאכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ

רביעי והותר: ס

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” (*hakhham 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).

Parashat P'kudei
Exodus 40:34-38

571 EXODUS 40:22 P'KUDEI

שמות מ פקודי

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 יָרֵךְ הַמִּשְׁכָּן צִפְּנָהּ מִחוּץ לַפְּרֹכֶת: ²³וַיַּעֲרֹף עָלָיו עֶרְבֵי לֶחֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ²⁴וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַמְּנֹרֶה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד נֹכַח הַשְּׁלֶחֶן עַל יָרֵךְ הַמִּשְׁכָּן נֹגֵבָה: ²⁵וַיַּעַל הַנֵּרוֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ²⁶וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ הַזָּהָב בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי הַפְּרֹכֶת: ²⁷וַיִּקְטֹר עָלָיו קֹטֶרֶת סַמִּים כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: פ

²⁸וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־מִסְכֵּי הַפֶּתַח לַמִּשְׁכָּן: ²⁹וְאֵת־מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה שָׁם פֶּתַח מִשְׁכַּן אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד וַיַּעַל עָלָיו אֶת־הָעֹלָה וְאֶת־הַמְּנֹחָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ³⁰וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַכִּיּוֹר בֵּין־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּבֵין הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּתֵּן שָׁמָּה מַיִם לְרִחֻצָּה: ³¹וְרָחֲצוּ מִמֶּנּוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן וּבְנֵיהֶם אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם וְאֶת־רַגְלֵיהֶם: ³²בְּבֹאֵם אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּבִקְרִבְתֶּם אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ יְרַחֲצוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ³³וַיִּקֶּם אֶת־הַחֲצֵר סָבִיב לַמִּשְׁכָּן וְלַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־מִסְכֵּי שַׁעַר הַחֲצֵר

וַיִּכַּל מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמְּלָאכָה: ³⁴פ וַיִּכַּס הָעֲנַן אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה מָלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ³⁵וְלֹא־יָכַל מֹשֶׁה לְבוֹא

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'khullu*) 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 כִּי־שָׁכַן עָלָיו הָעֲנַן וּכְבוֹד
יְהוָה מָלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ³⁶ וּבִהֲעֹלֹת
הָעֲנַן מֵעַל הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִסְעוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכֹל
מִסְעֵיהֶם: ³⁷ וְאִם־לֹא יֵעָלֶה הָעֲנַן וְלֹא
יִסְעוּ עַד־יוֹם הָעֹלֹתוֹ: ³⁸ כִּי עֲנַן יִהְיֶה
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).

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: ²הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לְכֶם רֵאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים רִאשׁוֹן הוּא לְכֶם לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה: ³דַּבְּרוּ אֶל-כָּל-עַדַת 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 לְבַיְת־אָבֹת שָׁה לְבַיְת: ⁴ וְאִם־ יִמְעַט הַבַּיִת מִהֵיִת מִשָּׂה וְלָקַח הוּא וְשִׁכְנוֹ הַקָּרֵב אֶל־בַּיְתוֹ בְּמִכְסֵת נִפְשָׁת אִישׁ לְפִי אֲכָלוֹ תִכְסּוּ עַל־הַשָּׂה: ⁵ שָׁה תָמִים לְפִי זָכָר בֶּן־שָׁנָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם מִן־ הַכֹּבְשִׁים וּמִן־הָעִזִּים תִּקְחוּ: ⁶ וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת 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).

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.

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.

מה ¹⁶ בל העם הארץ יהיו אל-
התרומה הזאת לנשיא בִּישְׂרָאֵל: ¹⁷ ועל-
הנְשִׂיא יהיה העולות והמנחה והנסך
בחגים ובחדשים ובשבתות בכל-מועדי
בית ישראל הוא יעשה את-החטאת
ואת-המנחה ואת-העולה ואת-
השלמים לכפר בעד בית-ישראל: ¹⁸
כֹּה-אמר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה בְּרֵאשׁוֹן בְּאֶחָד
לְחֹדֶשׁ תִּקַּח פֶּרֶךְ בֶּן-בָּקָר תָּמִים וְחֹטֵאת
אֶת-הַמִּקְדָּשׁ: ¹⁹ וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּם
הַחֹטֵאת וְנָתַן אֶל-מִזְבְּחַת הַבַּיִת וְאֶל-
אַרְבַּע פְּנוֹת הָעֶזְרָה לְמִזְבְּחָהּ וְעַל-מִזְבְּחוֹת
שַׁעַר הַחִיצוֹן הַפְּנִימִית: ²⁰ וְכֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה
בְּשַׁבְּעָה בְּחֹדֶשׁ מֵאִישׁ שִׁגְיָהּ וּמִפְּתֵי
וּכְפֹרְתָם אֶת-הַבַּיִת:

²¹ בְּרֵאשׁוֹן בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לְחֹדֶשׁ
יְהִי לָכֶם הַפֶּסַח חֹג שִׁבְעוֹת יָמִים מִצּוֹת
יֹאכְל: ²² וְעָשָׂה הַנְּשִׂיא בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
בַּעֲדוֹ וּבְעַד כָּל-עַם הָאָרֶץ פֶּר חֹטֵאת:
²³ וְשִׁבַּעַת יְמֵי-הַחֹג יַעֲשֶׂה עוֹלָה לַיהוָה
שִׁבַּעַת פָּרִים וְשִׁבַּעַת אֵילִים תָּמִימִם
לְיוֹם שִׁבַּעַת הַיָּמִים וְחֹטֵאת שְׁעִיר עֲזִים
לְיוֹם: ²⁴ וּמִנְחָה אֵיפָה לֶפֶר וְאֵיפָה לְאֵיל
יַעֲשֶׂה וְשֶׁמֶן הַיֵּין לְאֵיפָה: ²⁵ בְּשַׁבְּעֵי
בְּחֹמֶשֶׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לְחֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹג יַעֲשֶׂה
כָּאֵלֶּה שִׁבַּעַת הַיָּמִים בְּחֹטֵאת כְּעֹלָה
וּכְמִנְחָה וּכְשֶׁמֶן: ^ס