

HAFTORAH OF SIDRA : ויקהל

This Haftorah is taken from the first Book of Kings, Chapter 7.

*Sefaradim read from verse 12 till verse 26,
Ashkenazzim read from verse 40 till verse 50.*

1. The Sidra speaks of the making of the Mishkan and the Haftorah speaks of the building of the Beis HaMikdash by King Shlomo. Each of the Haftoras focuses on a different aspect of the work of building the Beis HaMikdash. The Sefaradi Haftorah describes in some detail the two great columns which were at the entrance of the Beis HaMikdash, while the Ashkenazi Haftorah describes how Chirom, a talented coppersmith, was engaged by Shlomo to make all the sacred copper items for the Beis HaMikdash.

2. When HaShem told Mosheh Rabbeinu to make a Mishkan to show that He had taken us back again and that He would dwell amongst us, He told Mosheh exactly how he was to make it. In fact, more than four Sidras out of the Chumosh Shemos are devoted almost exclusively to the description of the design of the Mishkan with its appurtenances and how it was made. This is surprising indeed. Seldom do we find in the Torah so much lengthy detail about any Mitzvah. Even more remarkable is that we had been in Egypt for hundreds of years. Egypt was a land famous for its great and imposing buildings and temples. (We built quite a number of them.) HaShem could so easily have commanded simply, "Make for Me a Sanctuary" and left the rest to us. We would have been able to take some really great ideas from the temples that we knew so well in Egypt, properly disinfected from all idolatry, of course, and utilized them in the pure service of HaShem. Yet HaShem goes to great lengths and into fine details and tells us exactly how He wants His Mikdash to look and even how it is to be made.

3. It would seem that HaShem does not want us to invent from our own minds, even in the slightest degree, how He is to be served. If there is to be a physical, focal point in our devotions to HaShem, a Sanctuary devoted to the service and worship of HaShem, that focal point is to be free from any human ideas about how that Sanctuary is to look and indeed even in which way it is to be made. The Mishkan is not to be an expression of Man's ideas about serving G-d. On the contrary. The sacred structure that is the Mishkan, together with the worship of HaShem in that Mishkan as commanded by HaShem Himself in all its details, these together are the thoughts of HaShem about how Man is to serve Him. It is for that reason that we are to earnestly investigate all the details of the Mikdash and its holy service, to learn what it is that HaShem wants from us as His loyal servants and how that service in the Mikdash is to permeate everything else that we do.

4. Having said that, there is another aspect of the Beis HaMikdash that should be borne in mind, as follows. Leaving aside for a moment the holiness of the edifice that Shlomo built, we can only wonder at the skilled craftsmanship and extraordinary expertise and genius that were involved in carrying out the Divine instructions to build the Mikdash. What we today can learn from all this is how it is our duty and privilege to utilize all our G-d-given talents and skills in the service of HaShem, so that everything we do can be said to serve HaShem and to make all our endeavours worthy of HaShem's blessing.