

*Unsolved Mysteries:  
Where are the Luchos Hidden Today?*



*Rabbi Efrem Goldberg  
Boca Raton Synagogue  
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1. Shemos 25:16

צִלְעוּ הַשְּׁנִיָּתָה: וַעֲשִׂיתֶם כְּרֵי עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְצִפִּיתֶם אֹתָם זָהָב: וְהִבַּאתֶם אֶת־  
הַבָּרִים בְּטַבְעֹת עַל צִלְעֹת הָאָרֹן לְשֵׂאת אֶת־הָאָרֹן בָּהֶם: בְּטַבְעֹת  
הָאָרֹן יִהְיוּ הַבָּרִים לֹא יִסְרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ: וְנָתַתְּ אֶל־הָאָרֹן אֶת־הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר  
אֶתֶּן אֵלַי: וַעֲשִׂיתָ כַּפֶּתֶר זָהָב טָהוֹר אֲמָתִים נְחָצִי אֲרָפֶה וְאִמָּה נְחָצִי

second side. <sup>13</sup> You shall make staves of acacia wood and cover them with gold;  
<sup>14</sup> and insert the staves in the rings on the sides of the Ark, with which to carry  
the Ark. <sup>15</sup> The staves shall remain in the rings of the Ark; they may not be  
removed from it. <sup>16</sup> You shall place in the Ark the Testimonial-tablets\* that I shall  
give you.

2. Devarim 10:2

בָּעֵת הַהוּא אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי פָּסֹל־לִי שְׁנֵי־לִוְחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרָאשׁוֹנִים וְעַל־הֶ  
אֵלַי הִקְרָה וַעֲשִׂיתָ לָּךְ אָרֹן עֹץ: וְאָכַתְבָּ עַל־הַלְּחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר  
הָיוּ עַל־הַלְּחֹת הַרְאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ וְשִׁמַּתָּם בָּאָרֹן: וְאָעַשׂ אָרֹן עֹץ

<sup>1</sup> At that time HASHEM said to me, "Carve for yourself two stone Tablets like  
the first ones, and ascend to Me to the mountain, and make a wooden Ark  
for yourself." <sup>2</sup> And I shall inscribe on the Tablets the words that were on the first  
Tablets that you smashed, and you shall place them in the Ark."

A similar teaching, regarding the Tablets of the Law that Moses  
broke.<sup>[25]</sup>

"אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ וְשִׁמַּתָּם בָּאָרֹן" – The verse states: *the first Tablets  
that you broke, and you shall place them in the Ark.*<sup>[26]</sup> תְּנִי רַב  
מִלְמַד שֶׁהַלְּוִחֹת וְשִׁבְרֵי לִוְחֹת – Rav Yosef taught a Baraisa: – יוֹסֵף  
– מוֹנְחִין בָּאָרֹן – THIS TEACHES THAT both THE second TABLETS AND  
THE BROKEN PIECES OF THE first TABLETS ARE PLACED INTO THE  
ARK.<sup>[27]</sup>

3. Menachos 99

Rav Yosef infers:  
– מִכָּאן לְתַלְמִיד חֶכֶם שֶׁשָּׂכַח תַּלְמוּדוֹ מִזְמַת אוֹנֶסוֹ – From here we learn  
regarding a Torah scholar who involuntarily forgot his  
learning,<sup>[28]</sup> – שְׂאִין נוֹהֲגִין בּוֹ מְנוּהַג בִּנְיִין – that we should not act  
toward him in a demeaning manner.<sup>[29]</sup>

4. Devarim 31:24

לָהֶם וְאָנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ: וַיְהִי אֶבְרָהָם מֹשֶׁה לְכַתֵּב אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־  
הַזֹּאת עַל־סֵפֶר עֹד תָּמִים: וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַלּוֹיִם וְשָׂאִי אָרֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה  
לְאֹמַר: לָקַח אֶת־סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה וְשִׁמַּתָּם אֹתוֹ מִצַּד אָרֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְהָיָה שָׁם בְּךָ לְעֵד: כִּי אֲנֹכִי יָדַעְתִּי אֶת־מְרִירָךְ וְאֶת־עֲרֻפָּךְ

<sup>24</sup> So it was that when Moses finished writing the words of this Torah onto a  
book, until their conclusion: <sup>25</sup> Moses commanded the Levites, the bearers of the  
Ark of the Covenant of HASHEM, saying, <sup>26</sup> "Take this book of the Torah and  
place it at the side of the Ark of the Covenant of HASHEM, your God, and it shall  
be there for you as a witness. <sup>27</sup> For I know your rebelliousness and your stiff

### 5. Yehoshua 3:3

<sup>1</sup> Joshua arose early in the morning, and they journeyed from Shittim and arrived at the Jordan, he and all the Children of Israel, and they lodged there before they crossed.

<sup>2</sup> It was at the end of three days that the marshals circulated in the midst of the camp. <sup>3</sup> They commanded the people, saying, "When you see the Ark of the Covenant of HASHEM, \* your God, and the Kohanim, the Levites, carrying it, then you shall move from your place and follow it. <sup>4</sup> But there shall be a distance between yourselves and it — a measure of two thousand cubits — do not approach [closer to] it, so that you may know the way in which you should go, \* for you have not passed this way yesterday or before yesterday."

<sup>5</sup> Joshua said to the people, "Prepare yourselves, for tomorrow HASHEM will do wonders in your midst." <sup>6</sup> Joshua then spoke to the Kohanim, saying, "Carry the Ark of the Covenant and pass before the people"; so they carried the Ark of the Covenant and went before the people.

כל־הָאָרֶץ וגם־נִמְגּוּ כָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵינוּ: יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בִּבְקָר נִסְעוּ מִשֹּׁשְׁטִים וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־הַיַּרְדֵּן הוּא וְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּלְנֻ שָׁם טָרָם יַעֲבְרוּ: וַיְהִי מִקְצֵה שְׁלֹשָׁת יָמִים וַיַּעֲבְרוּ הַשֹּׁטְרִים בְּקֶרֶב הַמַּחֲנֶה: וַיִּצְוֶה אֶת־הָעָם לֵאמֹר כִּרְאוֹתְכֶם אֶת אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם נֹשְׂאִים אוֹתוֹ וְאַתֶּם תִּסָּעוּ מִמְּקוֹמְכֶם וְהִלַּכְתֶּם אַחֲרָיו: אֲךָ יֶחֱזֹק יְהוָה בְּיָנֵיכֶם וּבִינוּ [וַיִּבְנִיו] בְּאַלְפִים אַמָּה בַּמִּדֶּה אֶל־תִּקְרְבוּ אֵלָיו לַמְעַן אֲשֶׁר־תֵּדְעוּ אֶת־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר תִּלְכוּ־בָהּ כִּי לֹא עֲבַרְתֶּם בַּדֶּרֶךְ מִתְּמוֹל שְׁלֹשׁ: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־הָעָם הַתִּקְדְּשׁוּ כִּי מוֹרֵר יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה בְּקֶרְבְּכֶם וּנְפִלְאוֹת: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים לֵאמֹר שֹׂאוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן הַבְּרִית וְעֲבְרוּ לִפְנֵי הָעָם וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן הַבְּרִית וַיִּלְכוּ לִפְנֵי הָעָם: וַיֹּאמֶר

### 6. Yehoshua 6:4

<sup>1</sup> no one entered. <sup>2</sup> HASHEM said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered into your hand Jericho and its king, the mighty warriors. <sup>3</sup> You shall go around the city, all the men of war, encircling the city one time; thus shall you do for a period of six days. <sup>4</sup> And seven Kohanim shall carry seven ram-shofars before the Ark; on the seventh day you shall go around the city seven times, and the Kohanim shall blow with the shofars. <sup>5</sup> It shall be that upon an extended blast with the ram's

יִרְיָחוֹ סָגְרָת וּמִסְגֶּרֶת מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין יוֹצֵא נָאִין בָּא: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ רְאֵה נָתַתִּי בְיָדְךָ אֶת־יִרְיָחוֹ וְאֶת־מַלְכָּהּ גְּבוּרֵי הַחֵיל: וְסִבְתֶּם אֹתָהּ הָעִיר בַּל אֲנָשִׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה תִּקְיף אֶת־הָעִיר פַּעַם אֶחָת בַּח תַּעֲשֶׂה שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים: וְשִׁבְעָה כֹהֲנִים יִשְׂאוּ שִׁבְעָה שׁוֹפָרוֹת הַיּוֹבֵלִים לִפְנֵי הָאֲרוֹן וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִסָּבּוּ אֶת־הָעִיר שִׁבְעַת פְּעָמִים וְהַכֹּהֲנִים יִתְקַעוּ בַּשּׁוֹפָרוֹת: וְהָיָה בַּמָּשָׁךְ א בְּקֶרֶן הַיּוֹבֵל בְּשִׁמְעֶכֶם [בְּשִׁמְעֶכֶם] אֶת־

### 7. Shmuel 1:3:3

<sup>1</sup> David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. <sup>2</sup> David and all the people that were with him arose and went forth from Baale-judah \* to bring up from there the Ark of God, which is called by [its] name: "The Name of HASHEM, Master of Legions, Who is enthroned upon the Cherubim, is upon it." <sup>3</sup> They placed the Ark of God upon a new wagon and carried it from the house of Abinadab which was in Gibeah. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abi-

גִּדְרִי: וַיִּסָּף עוֹד דָּוִד אֶת־כָּל־בְּחֹר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלֹשִׁים אֲלָף: וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ דָּוִד וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ מִבְּעָלֵי יְהוּדָה לְהַעֲלֹת מִשָּׁם אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שֵׁם שָׁם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִּים עָלָיו: וַיִּרְכְּבוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־עֲגֹלָה חֲדָשָׁה וַיִּשְׂאֻהוּ מִבֵּית אֲבִינָדָב אֲשֶׁר בְּגִבְעָה וַעֲזָא וַאֲחִיו וַיִּבְנוּ אֲבִינָדָב נְהִיגִים אֶת־הָעֲגֹלָה חֲדָשָׁה:

### 8. Melachim 1:6:19

<sup>19</sup> He prepared an Inner Sanctum in the Temple towards the inside, there to place the Ark of the Covenant of HASHEM. <sup>20</sup> Behind the Partition [was an area] twenty cubits in length and twenty cubits in width and twenty cubits its height. \* He overlaid [the Partition] with fine gold; he also overlaid an altar with cedar wood. <sup>21</sup> Solomon [then] overlaid the inner section of the Temple with

גִּרְאָה: וַיִּבְרֵר בְּתוֹךְ־הַבַּיִת מִפְּנִימָה הַכֵּין לְתֵתָן שָׁם אֶת־אֲרוֹן בְּרִית יְהוָה: וְלִפְנֵי הַדְּבִיר עֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה אָרְךָ וְעֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה רָחֹב וְעֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה קוֹמָתוֹ וַיִּצְפּוּהוּ וַיָּבֶה סֹגֵר וַיִּצָּף מִזָּבַח אָרְזוֹ: וַיִּצָּף שְׁלֹמֹה אֶת־

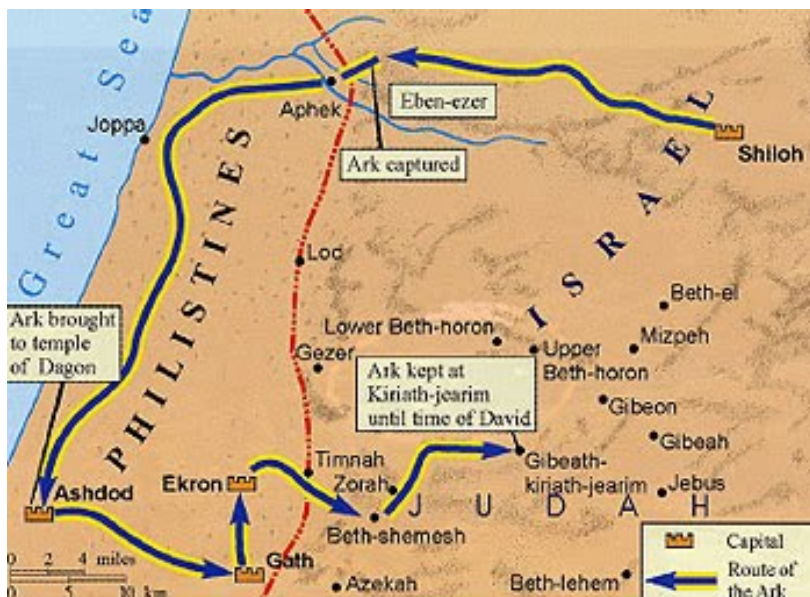
9. Divrei Ha'Yamim 2:35:3

<sup>1</sup> Josiah made the pesach-offering to HASHEM. They slaughtered the pesach-offering on the fourteenth day of the first month.

<sup>2</sup> He set up the Kohanim according to their divisions, and he encouraged them in the service of the Temple of HASHEM. <sup>3</sup> He then said to the Levites, who taught all of Israel, who were consecrated to HASHEM, "Place the Holy Ark in the Temple\* that Solomon son of David, the king of Israel, built. Then you will no longer have any carrying on your shoulder; so now serve HASHEM your God and His people Israel. <sup>4</sup> Organize yourselves by your fathers' families, according to your divisions,

אֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּלְיָמָיו לֹא סָרוּ מֵאֲחֵרֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם: וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוֹשִׁיָּהוּ בִירוּשָׁלַם פֶּסַח לַיהוָה וַיִּשְׁחֲטוּ הַפֶּסַח בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן: וַיַּעֲמֵד הַכֹּהֲנִים עַל־מִשְׁמֹרֹתָם וַיַּחֲזִקֵם לַעֲבוֹדַת בֵּית יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר לְלֵוִיִּם הַמְבוּתִים [הַמְבִינִים] לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַקְדוֹשִׁים לַיהוָה הִנֵּנו אֶת־אֲרוֹן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּבַיִת אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה שְׁלֹמֹה בֶן־דָּוִיד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִין־לָכֶם מִשָּׂא בְכַתֶּף עִתָּה עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְאֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

10. Map of Aron's Journey



(Illustration from the book *From Sinai to Jerusalem* by Leen Ritmeyer.)

11. Yuma 216

This is an allusion to five things in which there was a difference between the First Temple and the Second Temple.<sup>[18]</sup> – וְאֵלֵינוּ – And these are [the five things] in which the Second Temple was lacking: – אֲרוֹן וּכְפֹרֶת וְכְרוּבִים – The Ark, Ark-cover and Cherubim;<sup>[19]</sup> – אֵש – the fire from heaven; – וּשְׁכִינָה – the Divine Presence;<sup>[20]</sup> – וְאוֹרִים וְתוֹמִים – the Holy Spirit of prophecy;<sup>[21]</sup> – וְהַיְוִם – and the Urim VeTumim.<sup>[22]</sup> Thus, fire from heaven was not present in the Second Temple. – ? –

12. Ezra 6:5

<sup>3</sup> In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree [concerning] the Temple of God in Jerusalem: The Temple shall be built, a place for the offering of sacrifices, with its walls strongly founded, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits. <sup>4</sup> [There shall be] three rows of marble and one row of new wood, with the expenses provided for by the royal palace. <sup>5</sup> Also, the golden and silver vessels of the Temple of God, which Nebuchadnezzar removed from the Sanctuary in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, shall be returned and shall go to the Sanctuary that is in Jerusalem, to their place, and they shall be placed in the Temple of God.

בְּשָׁנָה חֲדָה לְכוּרֶשׁ מֶלֶכָא בּוֹרֶשׁ מֶלֶכָא שָׁם סָעֵם בֵּית־אֱלֹהָא בִירוּשָׁלַם בֵּיתָא יִתְבָּנָא אַתְרֵי דִי־דִבְחִין דִּבְחִין וְאֲשׁוּרֵי מְסוּבָלִין רֹמָה אֲמִין שְׁתֵּין פְּתִיחָא אֲמִין שְׁתֵּין: נְדָבְכוֹן דִּי־אָבֹן גִּלְלָא תִלְחָא וְנִדְבָךְ דִּי־אֵע חֲדָת וְנִפְקֵתָא מִן־בֵּית מֶלֶכָא תַּחְתִּיבָּ: וְאַף מֵאֲנִי בֵית־אֱלֹהָא דִּי־הִבֵּה וְכִסְפָּא דִּי נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר הִנְפֵּק מִן־הִיכְלָא דִּי־בִירוּשָׁלַם וְהִיכְלָא דִּי־בִירוּשָׁלַם לְכָבֵל וְהִתִּיבֹן וְיִהְיֶה לְהִיכְלָא דִּי־בִירוּשָׁלַם לְאַתְרָהּ וְתַחַת בְּבֵית אֱלֹהָא: כְּעֵן תִּתְּנִי פִתְחָא עֲבַר־נִהְרָה שְׁתֵּין בּוֹרִין:



### 13. Arch of Titus



14. II Maccabees 2:4-8

The records show that it was the prophet Jeremiah who ... prompted by a divine message ... gave orders that the Tent of Meeting and the ark should go with him. Then he went away to the mountain from the top of which Moses saw God's promised land. When he reached the mountain, Jeremiah found a cave-dwelling; he carried the tent, the ark, and the incense-altar into it, then blocked up the entrance. Some of his companions came to mark out the way, but were unable to find it. When Jeremiah learnt of this he reprimanded them. "The place shall remain unknown", he said, "until God finally gathers his people together and shows mercy to them. The Lord will bring these things to light again, and the glory of the Lord will appear with the cloud, as it was seen both in the time of Moses and when Solomon prayed that the shrine might be worthily consecrated."

## 15. Har Nevo



16. Devarím 34:1-3

<sup>1</sup> Moses ascended from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of the cliff that faces Jericho, and HASHEM showed him the entire Land: the Gilead as far as Dan; <sup>2</sup> all of Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh;

וַיִּבְחֹשׁוּ אִי־בִירָהּ לָךְ וְאַתָּה עַל־בְּמוֹתֵימוֹ תִּדְרֹךְ: וַיַּעַל  
מֹשֶׁה מִמִּעֲרֵבֹת מוֹאָב אֶל־הָרֹבֹב רֹאשׁ הַפְּסָגָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי יְרֵחוֹ  
וַיִּרְאוּהוּ יִיְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַגִּלְעָד עַד־דָּן: וְאֵת כָּל־נַפְתָּלִי וְאֵת־

## Holy Ark to be Revealed? - Travel - News - Arutz Sheva

[israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/132067](http://israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/132067)

17. Arutz  
Sheva  
June, 2009

An Ethiopian church leader says Friday, June 26, marks the right time to unveil the Biblical Ark of the Covenant, which he says has been hidden in his church for centuries.

Abuna Paulos, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, was in Rome this week to meet with Pope Benedict XVI. While there, he told reporters that the time had come to reveal before the world the Holy Ark. He said that the holy container has been in the custody of his church for hundreds of years.



Paulos said he would make the full announcement this Friday, June 26, 2 PM local time (3 PM Israel time, 8 AM New York time) at a press conference in Rome.

The claim that the Biblical Holy Ark has been kept at the Church, in the city of Axum, is an old one, but this is the first time that the Church plans to actually reveal the actual container, or news of it. It is not known whether the Church claims that the actual Tablets of the Law are inside it.

Copies of the alleged Ark are kept in many other churches in Ethiopia.

The news of the impending announcement was first reported by the Italian news agency *Adnkronos*. Paulos told the news outlet, "Soon the world will be able to admire the Ark of the Covenant described in the Bible as the container of the tablets of the law that G-d delivered to Moses, and the center of searches and studies for centuries."

Paulos said "The Ark of the Covenant has been in Ethiopia for many centuries. As Patriarch, I have seen it with my own eyes, and only a few, highly-qualified persons could do the same - until now."

### Back to Earth

Stuart Munro-Hay, author of "Quest for the Ark of the Covenant: The True History of the Tablets of Moses," concluded that the object in question is definitely not the original Holy Ark.

The building of the Ark of the Covenant – also known as the Ark of Testimony and the Ark of G-d's Covenant – in accordance with Divine instructions is recounted in the Book of Exodus. The Ark held the Tablets of the Law, and traveled with the People of Israel, leading the way into the Promised Land. It was placed first in the Tabernacle in Shilo, and centuries later in the Holy Temple built by King Solomon. Since then, its whereabouts have been unknown, though one popular legend says it was brought to Ethiopia. Alternatively, it could be under the Temple Mount, in a cave at Mt. Nevo in Jordan, in the Vatican, a hideaway in Utah, or elsewhere.

18. Melachim 1:10:1

<sup>1</sup> The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, that it was for the Name of HASHEM, \* and she came to test him with riddles. <sup>2</sup> She arrived in Jerusalem with a very large entourage, with camels bearing very large amounts of spices and gold, and precious stones. She came before Solomon, and she spoke to him about all that was in her heart. <sup>3</sup> Solomon told her [the solutions to] all her questions; there was not a thing hidden from the king that he could not tell her. <sup>4</sup> The queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon: the palace that he had erected; <sup>5</sup> the

וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה: וּמִלֶּכֶת-שָׁבָא שָׁמְעַת אֶת-שִׁמְעַת שְׁלֹמֹה לְשֵׁם יְהוָה וַתָּבֹא לְנִסְתּוֹ בְּחִידוֹת: וַתָּבֹא יְרוּשָׁלַּיִם בְּחִיל כָּבֹד מְאֹד גְּמָלִים נִשְׂאִים בְּשָׁמִים וְהָיָה רַב-מְאֹד וְאִבָּן יִקְרָה וַתָּבֹא אֶל-שְׁלֹמֹה וַתְּדַבֵּר אֵלָיו אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר הָיָה עִם-לִבָּהּ: וַיַּגֵּד-לָהּ שְׁלֹמֹה אֶת-כָּל-

19. Smithsonian  
Magazine  
December, 2007

## Keepers of the Lost Ark?

### Christians in Ethiopia have long claimed to have the ark of the covenant. Our reporter investigated

By Paul Raffaele  
Smithsonian Magazine | Subscribe  
December 2007

"They shall make an ark of acacia wood," God commanded Moses in the Book of Exodus, after delivering the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. And so the Israelites built an ark, or chest, gilding it inside and out. And into this chest Moses placed stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments, as given to him on Mount Sinai.

Thus the ark "was worshipped by the Israelites as the embodiment of God Himself," writes Graham Hancock in *The Sign and the Seal*. "Biblical and other archaic sources speak of the Ark blazing with fire and light...stopping rivers, blasting whole armies." (Steven Spielberg's 1981 film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* provides a special-effects approximation.) According to the First Book of Kings, King Solomon built the First Temple in Jerusalem to house the ark. It was venerated there during Solomon's reign (c. 970-930 B.C.) and beyond.

Then it vanished. Much of Jewish tradition holds that it disappeared before or while the Babylonians sacked the temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

But through the centuries, Ethiopian Christians have claimed that the ark rests in a chapel in the small town of Aksum, in their country's northern highlands. It arrived nearly 3,000 years ago, they say, and has been guarded by a succession of virgin monks who, once anointed, are forbidden to set foot outside the chapel grounds until they die.

One of the first things that caught my eye in Addis Ababa, the country's capital, was an enormous concrete pillar topped by a giant red star—the sort of monument to communism still visible in Pyongyang. The North Koreans built this one as a gift for the Derg, the Marxist regime that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991 (the country is now governed by an elected parliament and prime minister). In a campaign that Derg officials named the Red Terror, they slaughtered their political enemies—estimates range from several thousand to more than a million people. The most prominent of their victims was Emperor Haile Selassie, whose death, under circumstances that remain contested, was announced in 1975.

He was the last emperor of Ethiopia—and, he claimed, the 225th monarch, descended from Menelik, the ruler believed responsible for Ethiopia's possession of the ark of the covenant in the tenth century B.C.

The story is told in the *Kebra Negast* (Glory of the Kings), Ethiopia's chronicle of its royal line: the Queen of Sheba, one of its first rulers, traveled to Jerusalem to partake of King Solomon's wisdom; on her way home, she bore Solomon's son, Menelik. Later Menelik went to visit his father, and on his return journey was accompanied by the firstborn sons of some Israelite nobles—who, unbeknown to Menelik, stole the ark and carried it with them to Ethiopia. When Menelik learned of the theft, he reasoned that since the ark's frightful powers hadn't destroyed his retinue, it must be God's will that it remain with him.

Many historians—including Richard Pankhurst, a British-born scholar who has lived in Ethiopia for almost 50 years—date the *Kebra Negast* manuscript to the 14th century A.D. It was written, they say, to validate the claim by Menelik's descendants that their right to rule was God-given, based on an unbroken succession from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. But the Ethiopian faithful say the chronicles were copied from a fourth-century Coptic manuscript that was, in turn, based on a far earlier account. This lineage remained so important to them that it was written into Selassie's two imperial constitutions, in 1931 and 1955.

TIME

Thursday, Feb. 21, 2008

## A Lead on the Ark of the Covenant

By David Van Biema


20. Time

When last we saw the lost Ark of the Covenant in action, it had been dug up by Indiana Jones in Egypt and ark-napped by Nazis, whom the Ark proceeded to incinerate amidst a tempest of terrifying apparitions. But according to Tudor Parfitt, a real-life scholar-adventurer, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* had it wrong, and the Ark is actually nowhere near Egypt. In fact, Parfitt claims he has traced it (or a replacement container for the original Ark), to a dusty bottom shelf in a museum in Harare, Zimbabwe.

As Indiana Jones's creators understood, the Ark is one of the Bible's holiest objects, and also one of its most maddening McGuffins. A wooden box, roughly 4 ft. x 2 ft. x 2.5 ft., perhaps gold-plated and carried on poles inserted into rings, it appears in the Good Book variously as the container for the Ten Commandments (Exodus 25:16: "and thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee"); the very locus of God's earthly presence; and as a divine flamethrower that burns obstacles and also crisps some careless Israelites. It is too holy to be placed on the ground or touched by any but the elect. It circles Jericho behind the trumpets to bring the walls tumbling down. The Bible last places the Ark in Solomon's temple, which Babylonians destroyed in 586 BC. Scholars debate its current locale (if any): under the Sphinx? Beneath Jerusalem's Temple Mount (or, to Muslims, the Noble Sanctuary)? In France? Near London's Temple tube station?

Parfitt, 63, is a professor at the University of London's prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies. His new book, *The Lost Ark of the Covenant: Solving the 2,500 Year Mystery of the Fabled Biblical Ark* (HarperOne) along with a History Channel special scheduled for March 2 would appear to risk a fine academic reputation on what might be called a shaggy Ark story. But the professor has been right before, and his Ark fixation stems from his greatest coup. In the 1980s Parfitt lived with a Southern African clan called the Lemba, who claimed to be a lost tribe of Israel. Colleagues laughed at him for backing the claim; in 1999, a genetic marker specific to descendants of Judaism's Temple priests (cohenim) was found to appear as frequently among the Lemba's priestly cast as in Jews named Cohen. The Lemba — and Parfitt — made global news.

Parfitt started wondering about another aspect of the Lemba's now-credible oral history: a drumlike object called the *ngoma lungundu*. The *ngoma*, according to the Lemba, was near-divine, used to store ritual objects, and borne on poles inserted into rings. It was too holy to touch the ground or to be touched by non-priests, and it emitted a "Fire of God" that killed enemies and, occasionally, Lemba. A Lemba elder told Parfitt, "[It] came from the temple in Jerusalem. We carried it down here through Africa."



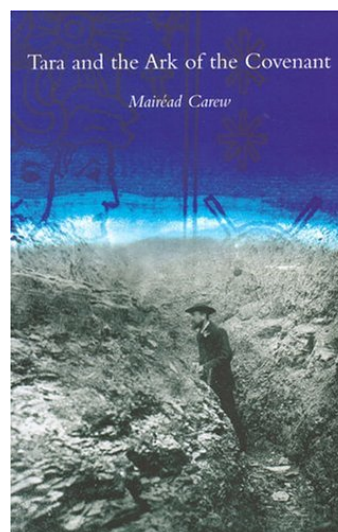
So, had he found the Ark? Yes and no, he concluded. A splinter has carbon-dated the drum to 1350 AD — ancient for an African wood artifact, but 2,500 years after Moses. Undaunted, Parfitt asserts that "this is the Ark referred to in Lemba tradition" — Lemba legend has it that the original *ngoma* destroyed itself some 400 years ago and had to be rebuilt on its own "ruins" — "constructed by priests to replace the previous Ark. There can be little doubt that what I found is the last thing on earth in direct descent from the Ark of Moses."

Well, perhaps a little doubt. "It seems highly unlikely to me," says Shimon Gibson, a noted biblical archaeologist to whom Parfitt has described his project. "You have to make tremendous leaps." Those who hope to find the original biblical item, moreover, will likely reject Parfitt's claim that the best we can do is an understudy. Animating all searches for the Ark is the hope — and fear — that it will retain the unbridled divine power the Old Testament describes. What would such a wonder look like in our postmodern world? What might it *do*? Parfitt's passionately crafted new theory, like his first, could eventually be proven right. But if so, unlike the fiction in the movies, it would deny us an explosive resolution.



## 21. Hill of Tara Wikipedia

During the turn of the 20th century British Israelites carried out some excavations of the Hill of Tara in Ireland looking for the Ark of the Covenant—the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland campaigned successfully to have them stopped before they destroyed the hill.



## 22. Yuma 536

**Mishnah** The previous Mishnah made reference to the Ark in regard to the Kohen Gadol's service. The following Mishnah notes how the service was performed when the Ark was no longer there:  
 אָבֵן הָיְתָה שָׁם מִימֵי מֹשֶׁה וְרַאשֵׁי הָאֲדָמָה – a stone was there from the days of the early prophets,<sup>[26]</sup> וְשֵׁתִייה הָיְתָה נִקְרָאת – and it was called “Shessiyah” (foundation).<sup>[28]</sup> גְּבוּלָה מִן – and upon it [the Kohen Gadol] would place the shovel full of burning coals.<sup>[29]</sup>  
 אַחֲרָיו – After the Ark was taken away,<sup>[26]</sup> מִשְׁנִיטֵל אֶרֶץ – It was three fingerbreadths higher than the ground,<sup>[27]</sup> הָאֶרֶץ שֶׁל אֲבָבָעוֹת – and upon it [the Kohen Gadol] would place the shovel full of burning coals.<sup>[29]</sup>

**Gemara** The Gemara examines the first phrase of our Mishnah:

מִשְׁנִיטֵל לֹא קָמְנִי – The Mishnah does not teach, “After [the Ark] was hidden,” – אֲלָא מִשְׁנִיטֵל – but rather, “AFTER [THE ARK] WAS TAKEN AWAY.”<sup>[49]</sup> אֶרֶץ גְּבוּלָה לְבָבֵל – We have learned in our Mishnah a confirmation of the view that the Ark went into exile in Babylonia, – דְּהִנְנָא – for [the following dispute] has been taught in a Baraisa: רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר – R' ELIEZER SAYS: אֶרֶץ גְּבוּלָה לְבָבֵל – THE ARK WENT INTO EXILE IN BABYLONIA, AS IT SAYS:<sup>[50]</sup> שְׁנֵי אֲמָרִים – AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR, KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR SENT AND HAD HIM [King Yehoyachin] BROUGHT TO BABYLONIA, TOGETHER WITH THE PRECIOUS ARTICLES OF THE TEMPLE OF HASHEM.<sup>[51]</sup> רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן אֶרֶץ גְּבוּלָה לְבָבֵל – R' SHIMON BEN YOCHAI SAYS: אֶרֶץ גְּבוּלָה לְבָבֵל – THE ARK WENT INTO EXILE IN BABYLONIA, AS IT SAYS:<sup>[52]</sup> Behold the days are coming when everything in your house, and whatever your forefathers have accumulated until this day, will be carried off to Babylonia. “ – לֹא יִהְיֶה דָבָר אֲמֵר ה' – NOT A THING WILL BE LEFT, SAID HASHEM. – אֵלֵינוּ עֲשֵׂרֶת הַדִּבְרוֹת שֶׁבָּנוּ – THESE ARE THE TABLETS CONTAINING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WITHIN [THE ARK].<sup>[53]</sup>

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בֶּן לָקִישׁ אוֹמֵר – R' YEHUDAH BEN LAKISH SAYS: אֶרֶץ גְּבוּלָה לְבָבֵל – THE ARK WAS HIDDEN IN ITS PLACE, AS IT SAYS: וְיָרְאוּ הַכּוֹהֵנִים מִן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ עַל־פְּנֵי הַדְּבִיר וְלֹא יֵרָאוּ הַחוּצָה – They extended the poles so that the tips of the poles were noticeable upon the face of the inner sanctum from the sanctuary, yet they were not showing on the outside; and they remained there to this very day.<sup>[54]</sup>

In any case, our Mishnah, which states that the Ark was “taken away” not “hidden,” reflects the opinion of R' Eliezer and R' Shimon bar Yochai.

The Gemara notes that the preceding Baraisa runs counter to an Amoraic tradition:

וּפְלִיגָא דְּעוּלָא – And [this Baraisa] disputes the tradition of Ulla regarding R' Shimon's view.<sup>[55]</sup> רַבִּי מַסְיָא בֶּן חַרָּשׁ שָׁאַל רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָי בְּרֹמָי – R' Masya ben Charash asked R' Shimon ben Yochai in Rome:<sup>[56]</sup> וְכִי מֵאַחַר – Inasmuch as R' Eliezer has taught us once and twice<sup>[57]</sup> that the Ark went into exile in Babylonia –

The Gemara presents another view as to the disposition of the Ark:

אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן – Rav Nachman said: תָּנָא – A Baraisa taught: אֲרוֹן בְּלִשְׁכַּת דִּיר הָעֵצִים הָיָה – AND THE SAGES SAY: וְהַכֹּהֲנִים אֹמְרִים גָּנוּז – THE ARK WAS HIDDEN IN THE CHAMBER OF THE WOOD.<sup>[14]</sup>

The Gemara corroborates this view:

אָף אָנָּן – R' Nachman bar Yitzchak said: אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן בֶּר יִצְחָק – We have also learned this view in a Mishnah:<sup>[15]</sup> מַעֲשֵׂה בְּהֵן אֶחָד שְׂדֵנָה מִתְעַסֵּק – THERE WAS ONCE AN INCIDENT WITH A CERTAIN KOHEN WHO WAS BUSYING HIMSELF<sup>[16]</sup> in the Chamber of the Wood,<sup>[17]</sup> וְרָאָה רִצְפָּה מְשֻׁנָּה מִחֲבֵרוֹתֶיהָ – AND HE NOTICED THAT one of the stones of the FLOOR WAS DIFFERENT FROM ITS COUNTERPARTS.<sup>[18]</sup> וְכָאן הִזְדִּיעַ אֶת חֲבִירוֹ – SO HE CAME TO INFORM HIS COLLEAGUE,<sup>[19]</sup> וְלֹא הִסְפִּיק לְגַמֹּר אֶת הַדָּבָר עַד שֶׁנִּצְתָּה – BUT HE DID NOT MANAGE TO CONCLUDE THE MATTER BEFORE HIS SOUL DEPARTED him.<sup>[20]</sup> וְיָדְעוּ בַּיָּדוּד שֶׁשָּׁם אֲרוֹן גָּנוּז – THEY THUS KNEW WITH CERTAINTY THAT IT WAS THERE THE ARK WAS HIDDEN.<sup>[21]</sup>

The Mishnah cited from *Shekalim* states that the Kohen had been occupying himself with something. The Gemara asks:

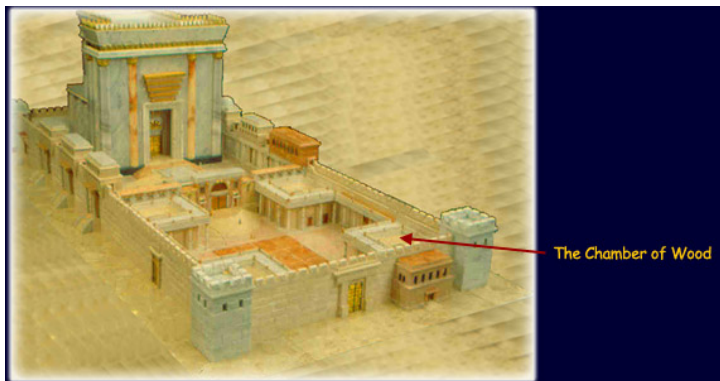
מָאי הָיָה עוֹבֵד – What was he doing?

The Gemara answers:

אָמַר רַבִּי חֵלְבּוֹ – R' Chelbo said: מִתְעַסֵּק בְּקִרְדּוֹמוֹ הָיָה – He was busying himself with his hatchet, i.e. he was playing with it.<sup>[22]</sup>

A Baraisa offers additional details:

תָּנָא רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל – A Baraisa was taught in the academy of R' Yishmael: שְׁנֵי כֹהֲנִים בְּעָלֵי מוּמִין הָיוּ מְתַלְעִין בְּעֵצִים – THERE WERE TWO KOHANIM WITH DISQUALIFYING BLEMISHES WHO WERE REMOVING THE WORMY PIECES FROM THE WOOD that would be used on the Altar. וְנִשְׁמָטָה קִרְדָּמוֹ שֶׁל אֶחָד מֵהֶם וְנִפְלָה שָׁם – AND THE HATCHET BELONGING TO ONE OF THEM SLIPPED AND FELL THERE, וְנִצְתָּה אֵשׁ וְאָכְלָתוּ – AND A FIRE EMERGED AND CONSUMED IT.<sup>[23]</sup>



## 23. Ha'aretz

HAARETZ.com

### Raiders of the Lost Ark

The firemen manning the two fire trucks dispatched to the Western Wall on July 28, 1981 were still wondering what they were supposed to do there when they were suddenly told to return to the station.

By Nadav Shragai | Apr. 25, 2003 | 12:00 AM

The firemen manning the two fire trucks dispatched to the Western Wall on July 28, 1981 were still wondering what they were supposed to do there when they were suddenly told to return to the station. Yehuda Meir Getz, the rabbi of the Western Wall, had ordered the fire trucks and was also the one that hastily canceled the order after he discovered that all the firemen on the way to the Western Wall were Arabs. He feared that his plans - to dig under the foundations of the Dome of the Rock in order to find the site of the Holy of Holies, and the place where the Temple artifacts had been concealed - would be discovered too soon.

The firemen had been assigned a secondary role in the project: to pump out hundreds of cubic meters of muddy water from the huge tunnel, chiseled eastward. Getz, along with workers from the Religious Affairs Ministry, had cleared the opening secretly during work aimed at uncovering the full length of the Western Wall.

Rabbi Getz managed to keep the secret for only a few weeks. A violent confrontation broke out in the tunnel, which according to the Western Wall rabbi's calculations, led to Ein Itam: the spring through which impure priests went to immerse themselves on their way from Beit Hamoked on the Temple Mount outside the walls. The Muslims discovered the breach and dozens of them slid down through openings in the Temple Mount area to the tunnel located near the Western Wall plaza. Getz and the yeshiva students who were alerted to the site rushed to block the way of members of the Waqf (Muslim trust) with their bodies. At the end of a turbulent day, with the Temple Mount at the epicenter of international attention, then prime minister Menachem Begin, minister of police Yosef Burg and police commissioner Shlomo Ivstan ordered that the opening that had been made in the wall on the eastern side be resealed.

That was the only time since 1967 that governmental officials had tried to tunnel eastward underneath the Temple Mount. At the time, it was officially announced that the huge tunnel under the structure of the Dome of the Rock had been discovered by chance during preparation of a niche for a holy ark at the Western Wall. Only years later did two members of the committee appointed by the government to investigate the affair disclose that the story about the niche for a holy ark was merely a cover-up for the real story.


Archaeologist Meir Ben Dov and the coordinator of the ministerial committee for Jerusalem affairs, Ephraim Shilo, discovered that the tunnel had been opened deliberately, but in order to prevent public relations damage to the state, this essential finding was left out of the final conclusions of the report they authored. Years later, Rabbi Getz explained that he had been motivated by an intense desire to find the lost Temple artifacts, first and foremost the Ark of the Covenant.

### **Warning from the Rebbe**

A new book about Rabbi Getz makes new revelations about the affair. The author, Hila Volberstein, reveals that he was not alone in his plan to tunnel from the Western Wall eastward under the Temple Mount. He had a partner - Rafi Eitan, advisor on terrorism and security to three prime ministers (Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres), who later gained fame as the man who recruited and handled Jonathan Pollard.

The book about Getz, who was involved extensively in kabbala and for whom the Western Wall tunnels were a second home, is being published almost eight years after his death. In the volume, which was commissioned by the family, Getz is described as he was: an enterprising man of many talents, a philanthropist (who gave charity in secret), a man with a spiritual approach to life, an army officer and a mystic both in action and dress - with a black robe and white headdress, a prayer book and Bible in his pocket and pistol on his hip. He was among the first to settle in the renewed Jewish Quarter after the Six-Day War. Of his 11 children, most live in Judea and Samaria. One son, Yair, was killed in Samaria in the mid-1980s when the car he was driving was hit by a truck driven by an Arab. Getz was convinced that he had been murdered for nationalistic reasons. Another son, Avner, was killed in the battle for the Old City in the Six-Day War.

Volberstein reveals extensive excerpts from Getz's diaries, just a small proportion of which had been made public before. She presents numerous testimonies, such as that of Naftali Kidron, formerly an engineer in the Religious Affairs Ministry, according to which the source of the rabbi's almost total devotion to the project to uncover the Western Wall was his intense desire to find the Temple artifacts.



Getz, who served for many years as rabbi of the Western Wall on behalf of the Religious Affairs Ministry, clung ardently to his plans to find the Temple artifacts, refusing to relinquish his program even after the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, advised him to stop. The Lubavitcher Rebbe warned Getz that anyone who found the Temple artifacts was placing his life in danger, although he did make it clear that finding the artifacts used in the Temple would bring Jewish redemption closer. Rabbi Getz, writes Volberstein, "decided to be the atonement for the Jewish people, to search for the Temple artifacts and to do whatever he could to speed up the redemption. However, he was waiting for the right moment to open the tunnels in the easterly direction."

### **Eitan's testimony**

One of the most fascinating testimonies in the book is that of Eitan. "As the excavation of the tunnels progressed," says Eitan, "I met with Rabbi Getz almost daily. Together with him, I studied the structure of the Holy Temple and its dimensions. We drew conclusions as to the location of the Holy Temple and the Holy of Holies. When we arrived at the spot that according to our studies was supposed to be the gate through which the priests set out in order to immerse themselves, we assumed that if we made an opening in the wall to the east, we could move forward and eventually reach the Holy of Holies. But we waited for the right time to make the opening. We told no one about it because we preferred to keep the secret to ourselves, so that if - heaven forbid - it were discovered, the responsibility would not fall on the government or its leaders. That is why Begin, who knew about the excavations along the Western Wall, did not know about our plans to make the opening to the east."


Eitan reveals that the opening was planned at first for the floor under the level where the excavation to uncover the Western Wall was being carried out at the time, "and in this way, it was not supposed to be discovered at all. We planned to go in, see the tunnels and move ahead in the direction in which we estimated that the foundations of the Holy of Holies would be found. We were of the view that without heavy tools, using a delicate chisel, we could chip away at the soft limestone walls. We thought that in that way, we could advance quietly and secretly to discover the hiding place where the priests had concealed the Temple artifacts and arrive at the spot just under the Holy of Holies, the place where the Ark of the Covenant was hidden."

Eitan was not the only one privy to Getz's secret. A number of Religious Affairs Ministry officials and students of the rabbi were also aware of his plan. He consulted with Avraham Hanan, described in the book as a man "with supernatural powers" of insight. Many years ago, before the

archaeologists had drawn their maps, Hanan marked on a map the route of a tunnel from the direction of the southern wall area, northwest to Solomon's Stables inside the Temple Mount. The excavators indeed discovered a tunnel along the route that Hanan had marked, but refrained from entering the Temple Mount. When Getz began to serve as rabbi of the Western Wall and the project reached a more advanced stage, Hanan designated the spot where in his view the Temple artifacts were buried. Getz was convinced that the Ark of the Covenant was buried in the same spot.

### **Catalyst for the Messiah**

The Ark of the Covenant, which has not been seen since the destruction of the First Temple, was perhaps the most important of artifacts in the Temple, defined as the principal seat of the divine spirit. Some believe that it is still hidden in the tunnels excavated by King Solomon under the Holy of Holies. The tractate Shekalim of the Mishna states: "There once was a priest (in the time of the Second Temple) who while working in the Temple noticed that the part of the floor was different from other parts (and realized that at that spot there must be an entrance to a subterranean passage). He told another priest, but barely had he finished speaking before his soul expired, and it was clearly known that that was where the Ark was hidden."



Jewish sources say that the Ark will be discovered a short time before the coming of the Messiah. Nachmanides wrote that the Ark would be discovered "during the construction of the Temple or in future wars before the coming of the Messiah king." Rabbi Getz also believed that finding the Ark and/or Temple artifacts would serve as a catalyst for the coming of the Messiah. At first, he sought only to find the place at which the altar had stood, thousands of years ago.

The rabbi had two signs for the location of the site of the altar. The first was that the altar had been placed on level ground. However, the Temple Mount is made up of numerous tunnels, one atop another. If level ground, different from the rest of the surrounding ground, could be found, it would serve as proof of the site of the altar. The second sign was that under the place of the altar, where the sacrifices were brought in the time of the Temple, the floor was made of a mixture of zinc and plaster.

"If even a speck of zinc is found," stated the rabbi, "we will know where the altar stood and that will advance us considerably."

In July of 1981, that small niche for a Holy Ark was carved into the wall in the extension of the Western Wall, opposite the spot where Rabbi Getz believed the Holy of Holies was located. Immediately after the excavations began, an opening was created and the huge eastward tunnel carved into the rock under the Temple Mount was discovered. Its dimensions were impressive - 28 meters long and six meters wide. The floor of the tunnel was covered with a great deal of water and mud. "I immediately approached the place and I was seized by an enormous excitement. For a long time I sat, unable to move, with burning tears pouring down my cheeks. I finally gathered up strength and entered. I sat on the steps and said Tikun Hatzot [midnight prayers] as is our custom."

The first people brought in on the secret were the then director-general of the Religious Affairs Ministry, Gedalia Schreiber, and the two chief rabbis, Shlomo Goren and Ovadia Yosef. Goren was excited by the discovery as was Getz. He viewed the huge tunnels as a primary means to locate the precise location of the Holy of Holies, the area of the Holy Temple to which all but the High Priest on the Day of Atonement were forbidden entry, on pain of death.

Agreement on the matter would decide once and for all in the dispute among the rabbinical authorities concerning this major issue. It would also make it possible to define for the general public the boundaries of the area where one could be permitted to enter the Temple Mount, thus abolishing the sweeping prohibition imposed by most authorities on halakha (Jewish religious law) on Jews entering any part of the Temple Mount. Relaxing the prohibition might create yet another and perhaps even more complex problem in the relations between religion and state: All Israeli governments have prohibited Jews from praying on the Temple Mount (as opposed to visiting it). Relaxing the halakhic prohibition on entry to the Temple Mount would considerably widen the circle of those seeking to pray there.



## Mortal danger

The floor of the tunnel was covered with mud and water, which were removed by hand. The circle of those privy to the secret grew. Among them was Israel Radio reporter Moti Eden who, says Volberstein, participated in the work of uncovering the tunnel. "At night, after my work at the radio station, I came to the tunnel and using hoes and wheelbarrows, helped with the difficult work of cleaning out the tunnel," recalls Eden, today Channel One's reporter in the north.

Seven weeks after the discovery of the tunnel, news about it was broadcast on Israel Radio. Reporters from all over the world streamed to the site. In late August, on a Friday night, Arabs brought water hoses and very powerful lighting into the tunnel through one of the openings in the floor of the Temple Mount. Getz, who feared the entry of Arabs into the tunnel and the Western Wall plaza, ordered the opening that had been made be boarded up. But just a few hours later, Muslims reentered the tunnel.

Getz was immediately alerted to come to the site from his home in the Jewish Quarter. His wife called students from the Ateret Cohanim yeshiva to come and ran after him. Seeing her husband standing almost all alone facing a group of Arabs holding tools, sticks and hoes, she ran back to the plaza where the worshipers were praying and cried, "Hurry! The rabbi is in mortal danger!"

The story ends with the political echelons ordering the opening to the tunnel sealed with reinforced concrete. Rabbi Getz wrote in his diary: "I will now retire from the project with a bitter taste in my mouth. I have never felt the humiliation of Judaism that I felt today in our own sovereign country. I pray that this is the end of the exile ... The media is going wild and self-hatred is rife. However, I must refrain from revealing secrets even to this diary and therefore I will not react or respond to those that condemn us."

On the evening of September 3, 1981, Getz added in his diary, "I felt during the Tikkun Hatzot prayers closer to the prayers of my forefathers when they saw the flames arising from the house of our Lord at the time of its destruction with their own eyes. The sound of the blows, of the Arabs inside the tunnel. Their every shout pierces my wounded heart. With all intensity, the cry left my mouth, 'Gentiles have entered your sanctuary, defiled your Holy Temple, but I must remain strong and must not break down, for I must continue even if I am all alone.'"

In September 1995, three days after completing the construction of the Beit El yeshiva for the study of kabbala, Rabbi Getz passed away. In the Western Wall tunnels, there remains to this day the synagogue that he built, just opposite the spot where the Holy of Holies is assumed to be. Torah classes and prayers are still held there.

Getz was a personal friend of numerous public figures, among them Brigadier General (res.) Yossi Ben Hanan and Ma'aleh Adumim Mayor Benny Kashriel. He was careful not to go up on the Temple Mount, but his formal title, "rabbi of the Western Wall and the Temple Mount," testified to his heart's burning quest.

## 24. Rambam Hilchos Beis Ha'Bechira

### Halacha 1

The Ark was placed on a stone<sup>1</sup> in the western portion of the Holy of Holies.<sup>2</sup> The vial of manna<sup>3</sup> and Aharon's staff<sup>4</sup> were placed before it.

When Solomon built the Temple, he was aware that it would ultimately be destroyed. [Therefore,]<sup>5</sup> he constructed a chamber, in which the ark could be entombed below [the Temple building] in deep, maze-like vaults.

King Josiah<sup>6</sup> commanded that [the Ark] be entombed in the chamber built by Solomon, as it is said (II Chronicles 35:3): "And he said to the Levites who would teach wisdom to all of Israel: 'Place the Holy Ark in the chamber built by Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel. You will no [longer] carry it on your shoulders. Now, serve the Lord, your God.'<sup>7</sup>

When it was entombed, Aharon's staff, the vial of manna, and the oil used for anointing were entombed with it. All these [sacred articles] did not return in the Second Temple.

Similarly, the *Urim V'Tumim* that existed in the Second Temple did not answer with *Ruach HaKodesh* (Divine inspiration)<sup>8</sup> and questions were not asked of them, as stated [in Ezra 2:63]: "until a priest will arise with the *Urim V'Tumim*."<sup>9</sup> [In the Second Temple,] they only made them to fulfill the requirement of eight garments for the High Priest.<sup>10</sup> Thus,

## פרק רביעי

א אבן חיה בקדש הקדשים במערבו שעליה היה הארון מונח. ולפניו צנצנת המן ומטה אהרן. ובעת שבנה שלמה את הבית וידע שסופו ליהרס בנה בו מקום לגנוז בו הארון למטה במטמוניות עמוקות ועקלקלות ויאשיהו המלך צוה וגנוז במקום שבנה שלמה שנאמר ויאמר ללויים חמבנים לכל ישראל הקדושים לוי תנו את ארון הקדש בבית אשר בנה שלמה בן דוד מלך ישראל אין לכם משא בכתף עתה עבדו את יי אלהיכם וגו'. וגנוז עמו מטה אהרן וצנצנת ושמן המשחה וכל אלו לא חזרו בבית שני. ואף אורים ותומים שהיו בבית שני \*לא היו נשאלין ברוח הקדש. ולא היו נשאלין בהן שנאמר עד עמוד כהן לאורים ותומים, ולא היו עושין אותן אלא להשלים שמנה בגדים לכהן גדול כדי שלא יהא מחוסר בגדים: ב בבית ראשון היה כותל

השנת הראב"ד  
א"ל פין משיבין. א"ל וטלה  
לאורים ותומים וזה פקדש שני  
דברים הם פן דחמסס שהסוד  
בבית שני ולכיוון זה לא  
חזרו ואיכסר בגדים שחמסר לו  
כלום עשיו מחמסר סגרים:

## 25. Rav Herschel Schachter Eretz Ha'Tzvi



והיות שביה"כ נגדר קדושתו בבחינת מקדש מעט, אף בביה"כ נבעין שיהא שמה ארון עם ס"ת, וכמש"כ הרמב"ם להדיא רפי"א מהל' תפלה, ובזוה"כ בו היכל שמימין בו ס"ת. וביה"כ שאין בו ארון עם ס"ת, א"א שיהיה לו קדושת ביה"כ. עכ"ד.

יומא (כא:), מכ"מ עיי"ש בגמ' (נג:), פלוגתא דתנאי אם ארון גלה לבלל, או שנגנו במקומו, וברמב"ם רפ"ד מבית הבחירה כתב, שבעת שבנה שלמה את הבית וידע שסופו ליהרס, בנה בו מקום לגנוז בו הארון למטה במטמוניות עמוקות ועקלקלות, ויאשיהו המלך צוה וגנוז במקום שבנה שלמה וגו'. וביאר בזה רבנו בכוננת הרמב"ם, דבאמת אף בבית שני היה שמה ארון עם לוחות [דבלא"ה הרי חסר העיקר, ולא היה על הבנין דין ביהמ"ק כלל], אלא דבעד שבבית ראשון היה הארון במקומו הראוי — בקה"ק, בבית שני היה הארון שלא במקומו — למטה במטמוניות עמוקות, אבל עכ"פ הי' שמה הארון עם הלוחות.

### ה. יסוד קדושת המקדש — הלוחות

ושמעתי מכבוד מו"ר הגריד"ס, שליט"א, דעיקרו של המשכן היה הארון עם הלוחות, אשר על כן נקרא משכן העדות, ע"ש לוחות העדות, ועי' רמב"ן עה"ת (ריש פרשת תרומה) שתכלית עשיית המשכן הי' להמשיך ענין השראת השכינה שהיתה בשעת מעמד ה"ס בקרב ישראל. ועיקר מעה"ס הי' מתן התורה, ועל כן עיקרו של ביהמ"ק צריך שיהי' הארון עם הלוחות, וביהמ"ק בלי לוחות אינו ביהמ"ק. ואף דבבית שני הי' חסר הארון עם הלוחות, כמבואר בגמ'