

In this week's Parashah of Tzav, we read of the Mishkan and of the different sacrifices which were offered from within the Mishkan. This week's NLI resource features a map of Israel from 1640, printed in Holland. It offers – amongst other things – a plan of the Mishkan together with detailed illustrations of the structures used within the Mishkan.

תַּזַּב



This incredibly detailed map of Israel and the surrounding areas appeared in a Christian Bible, printed in Holland around the year 1650. The map would have been printed and then hand painted.

It is slightly unusual as it has been drawn from a different angle than usual, with the Mediterranean Sea being at the top of the map rather than to the left. The land is shown divided between the twelve tribes, as described in Sefer Bamidbar.

Within the map, the illustrator has included a number of mini pictures of various Biblical events.

The bottom right corner of the map (enlarged below) shows the layout of the camp of Bnei Yisrael, surrounding the Mishkan itself. Within the Mishkan can be seen a variety of the Mishkan vessels, drawn in detail alongside it. These include the Aron (Ark), Shulchan (table), cherubim, copper sink, Menorah and incense altar.

THE MISHKAN

After the Children of Israel had received the Torah at Sinai, HaShem asked Moshe to build Him a home so that He could 'live' amongst His people. That home was the Mishkan. The Mishkan was a portable Temple, used by Bnei Yisrael whilst in the desert. It could easily be dismantled or rebuilt (think early-day Ikea) and it travelled together with Bnei Yisrael throughout the desert-years and beyond. It was the place where HaShem would speak to Moshe and Bnei Yisrael would offer their sacrifices.

The Mishkan included a wooden courtyard which was 100 cubits by 50 cubits (approx. 50m by 25m). Within the courtyard was the large copper altar (mizbe'ach) complete with ramp, which was used for animal sacrifices. Next could be found the copper basin (kior) where the priests would wash their hands and feet. Then came the large tent-like structure, the Mishkan itself, covered with curtains of goat hair and a roof made from ram skins. Beyond these curtains, the room was divided into two sections by a tapestry. In the first section, called the Kodesh (Holy) could be found the Menorah, the table (Shulchan) which containing the showbreads and the incense altar.

Finally came the Kodesh Kodashim – Holy of Holies. Within this area could be found the Aron containing the Luchot (Ten Commandments), a golden urn containing a sample of manna and Aharon's rod which had sprouted almond blossom. This area was considered so holy that it was only the Kohen Gadol who was permitted to enter, and he was only allowed to do so on Yom Kippur.

The Mishkan travelled with the Bnei Yisrael for 40 years in the desert and entered the Land of Israel with them. For fourteen years it then stood in Gilgal whilst Bnei Yisrael conquered and divided the land. From here they created a house of stone in Shiloh and spread the curtains of the Mishkan over it. This remained in Shiloh for 369 years. After this time, the Mishkan was moved to Nov and then to Givon.

When Shlomo built the Beit Hamikdash (Temple) in Jerusalem, the remnants of the Mishkan were stored deep in the earth below it where, according to tradition, they still remain until this very day, waiting for HaShem to rest there once again.

Activities:

Why do you think that the map has been drawn from this different angle? How accurate do you think it is?

How many of the Mishkan vessels can you spot within the picture of the Mishkan?

Try making your own paper Aron. See here for template and instructions:
<https://tinyurl.com/PaperAron>



Or even an edible one:
<https://tinyurl.com/EdibleAron>



Design your own map, displaying the journey of the Mishkan over the years, from the time in the desert until its vessels were brought to Jerusalem.

To watch a really detailed animation of the building of the Mishkan and its vessels, see here:



Something to discuss

To see the map close-up, click <https://tinyurl.com/Map-Mishkan>
Look at it closely; which events in Jewish history can you find on the map?
Which Biblical towns/cities can you find there?
Which modern-day towns/cities do you recognise?

What would your perfect home be like: a) on the inside and b) on the outside? Try designing it on paper.

The Mishkan was HaShem's 'perfect home'. Why do you think He designed it this way? Why might He have chosen to have each of the different items within it?