

# Phases, Phrases, Stages and Sages

The Eight Phases and Stages of the Holy Temple

ArtScroll Mesorah Series

עולם האותיות

# THE WISDOM IN THE HEBREW ALPHABET

Rabbi Michael L. Munk

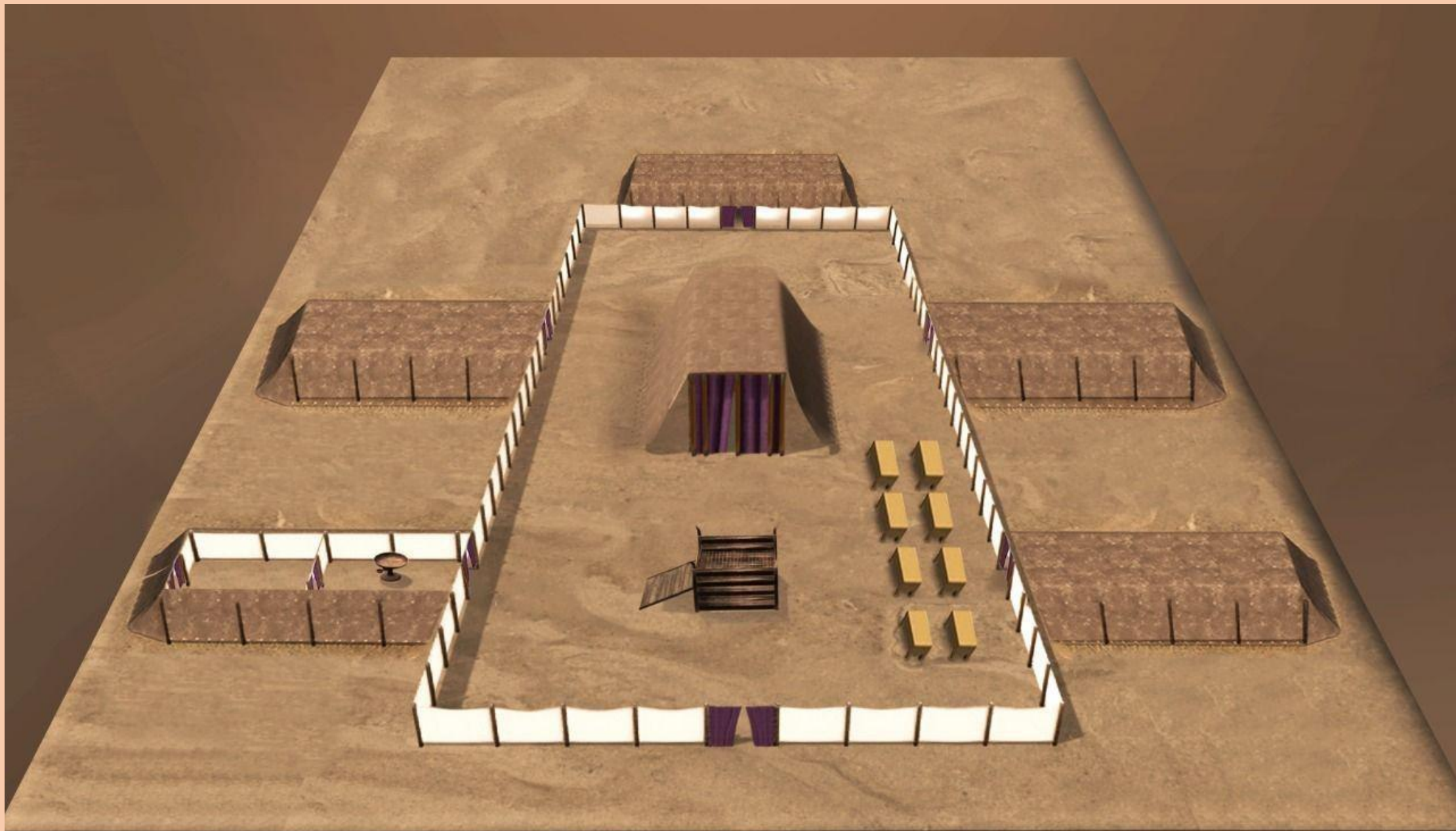


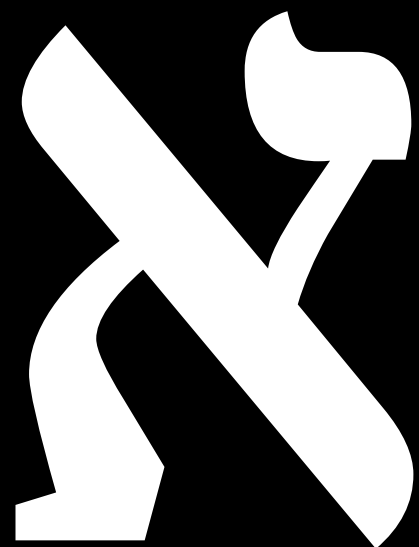
*The Sacred Letters  
as a Guide to Jewish Deed and Thought*

# The Mishkan in the Wilderness

“Hashem spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose head motivates him you shall take My portion. . . . They shall make a Sanctuary (Mikdash) for Me – so that I may dwell among them – like everything that I show you, the form of the Tabernacle (Mishkan) and the form of all its vessels; and so shall you do.”

Exodus 25.1-2,8-9





# It is Simple - Oneness

The *Zohar* teaches . . . The Holy One, Blessed is He, Torah, and Israel are one entity. Each is unique and, as it were indispensable to the others. The Torah is G-d's wisdom, and Israel translates it into real life. They are the foundation of the universe, for without the Law and the Nation that fulfills it, G-d's purpose of creation could not be realized. Hashem signified their distinction by linking them with His own Oneness.

*The Wisdom of the  
Hebrew Alphabet, p.  
46*



# Aleph stands for Adam - Man

“Mankind began with only one person, Adam, to teach us the importance of every individual. Each person is a miniature world, as our Sages, taught: Whoever destroys a single person, destroys an entire world; whoever sustains one person, sustains an entire world.  
(Sanhedrin 37a)



*The Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet, p. 48*



## A small Aleph

“The small א at the beginning of Leviticus (Vayikra) teaches humility. Leviticus begins . . . *He (Hashem) called to Moshe.*

*The Wisdom in  
the Hebrew Alphabet, p.51*



## A Small Aleph

In addition, a small א also calls us to Teshuvah (repentance).

The א also serves as a link between Heaven and Earth. It is a channel by which the Infinite Spiritual is brought to the finite physical, represented by the next letter of the Hebrew Alephbet.

P. 54



ב



Bet is the  
number 2

“The letter ב is related to *bayit*, house or home. A home is more than just a shelter from the elements; it is the place where one has the feeling of belonging, an enclosure in which to develop his personality and in which he defines himself emotionally and spiritually.”

*The Wisdom of  
the Hebrew Alphabet, p.66*



בית

---

The word, *Beit*, indicates the Temple also.

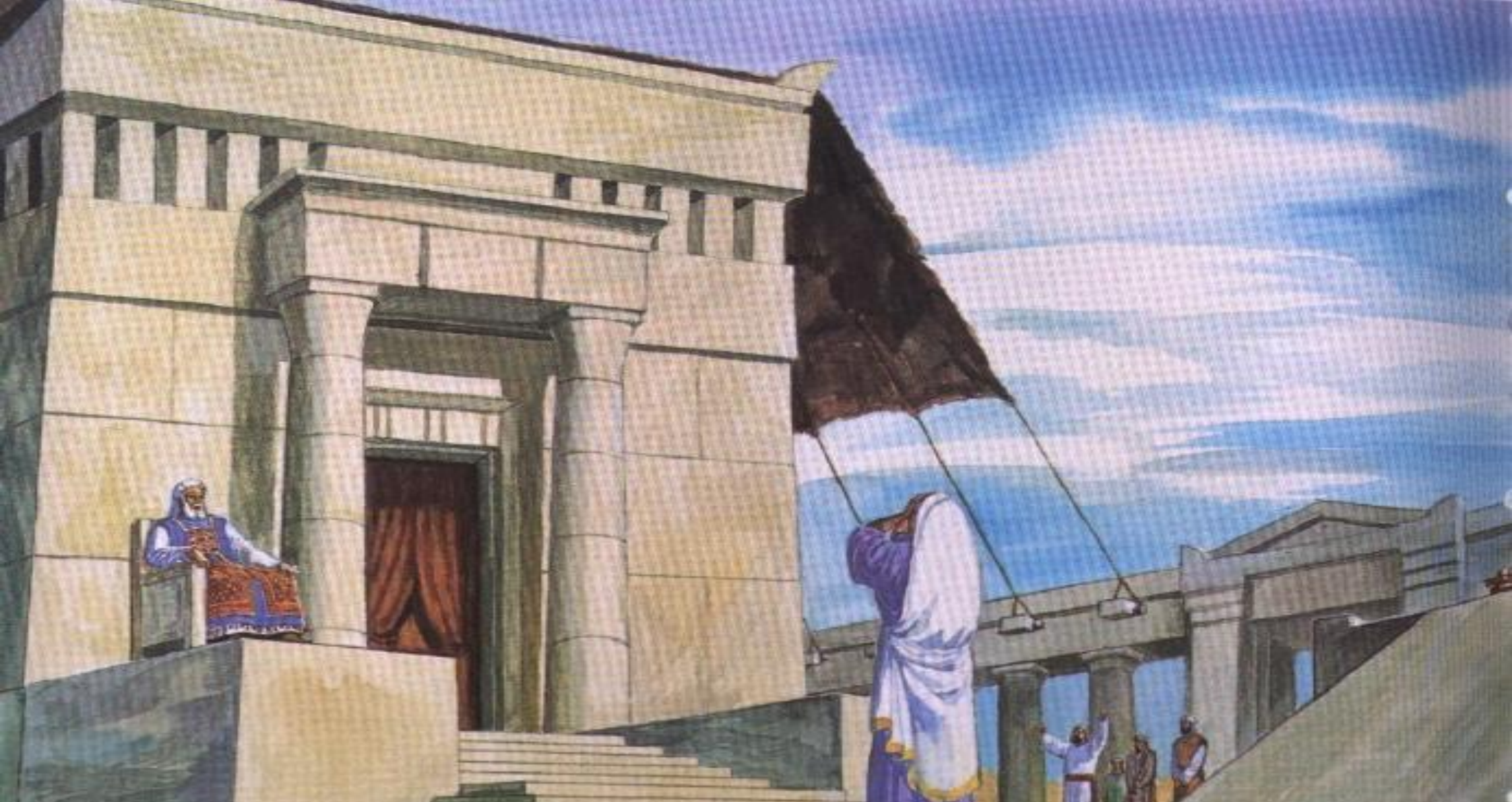
---

It serves for a root word for Wife, because it is the woman who is the foundation of the home.

---

It can also serve as a symbol of hospitality, because we invite all to share in the warmth and spiritual connection of our home and the Temple.

# The Second Phase of the Temple



## Another interesting note on Duality

The Mishkan across the Jordan existed in two different places:

- Shilo and Gibeon

During the reign of King David.

ג

# Three Pillars

א stands for Torah study

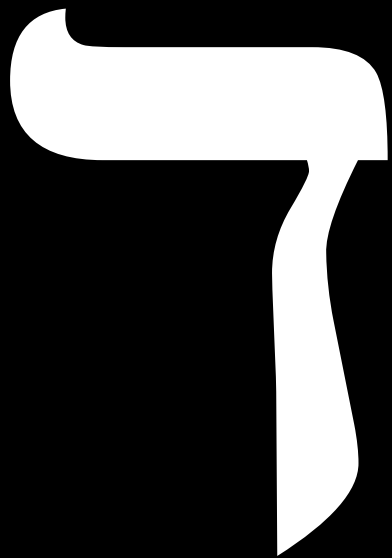
ב symbolizes the service of the Beit Hamikdash

ג represents acts of kindness which form the basis of human society.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

# The Third Phase – Solomon's Temple





# Dalet is seen as a symbol of Dimensions and Concern

In a quote from Malbim, Rabbi Munk explains that we often think of *Chessed* (kindness) pertaining to financial or other help to the poor. The Sages; however, expand this concept to include any deprived person, such as the physically weak, the sick, or those poor in wisdom, especially in Torah education. Additionally it applies even to someone who is poor only in comparison with others, or with his own previously higher standard of prosperity.

*The Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet, p. 79*



# Giving and Receiving

While the acts of giving and receiving are attached to one another, much like the Gimel (the benefactor) and the Dalet (the recipient), it is important to note the giving should be done without seeking recognition in order to preserve the dignity of the recipient.



# During the Morning Blessings

These are the things whose fruits we eat in this world but whose full reward awaits us in the World to Come:

honoring parents; acts of kindness,

arriving early at the house of study morning and evening;

hospitality to strangers; visiting the sick;

helping the needy bride; attending to the dead;

devotion in prayer; and bringing peace between people -

but the study of Torah is equal to them all.

*Shabbat 127a*



Rich and Poor  
benefit equally

“The Torah regards the benefactor and beneficiary as playing equally important roles. Their mutual assistance brings about lasting material moral and spiritual benefits for each of them. Thus the donor becomes also a recipient, and the recipient also a donor.”

*The Wisdom of the  
Hebrew Alphabet, p. 83*

# Important things about #4

---

4 is the number for the directions: North, South, East, and West

---

4 is the number for the 'corners' of the earth

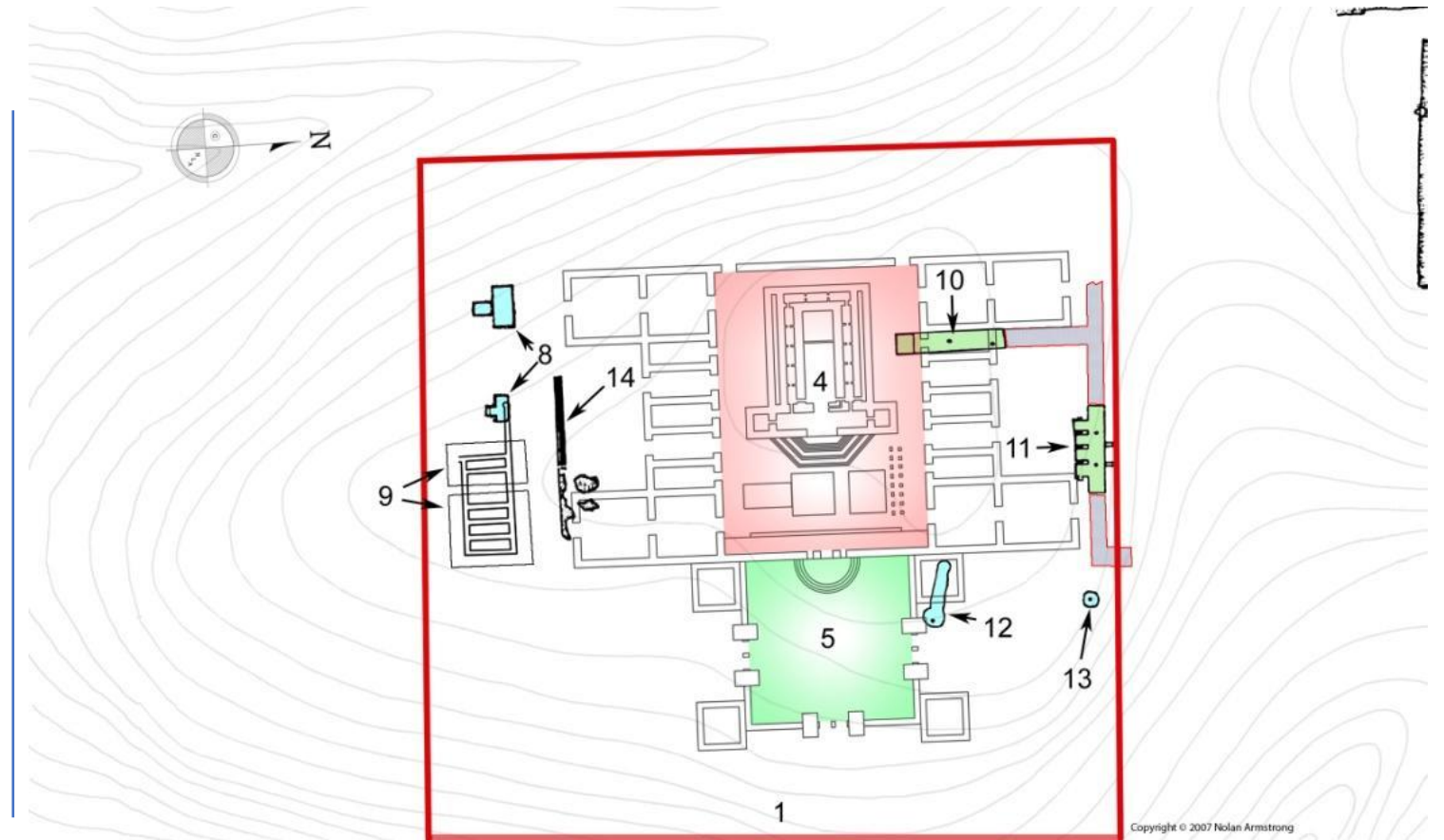
---

4 is the number for the Tzit-tzit on a 4-cornered garment

---

4 represents gathering the dispersed, the exiles

# Phase 4 – Ezra's Temple, the Beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple



ה

א

denotes  
Divinity,  
Gentility,  
and  
Specifics

It is part of the Divine  
Name

Abram became Avraham

Sarai became Sarah


Rabbi Munk presents that the *Hey* symbolized Hashem's readiness to forgive penitents. G-d created the opportunity for a sinner to return to Him through *Teshuvah*, repentance. "That is why the left leg of the *Hey* is not attached to the letter's roof. A small opening is left near the top, symbolizing that space always remains through which a repentant sinner can return and be drawn into Hashem again.

*The Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet, p. 87*

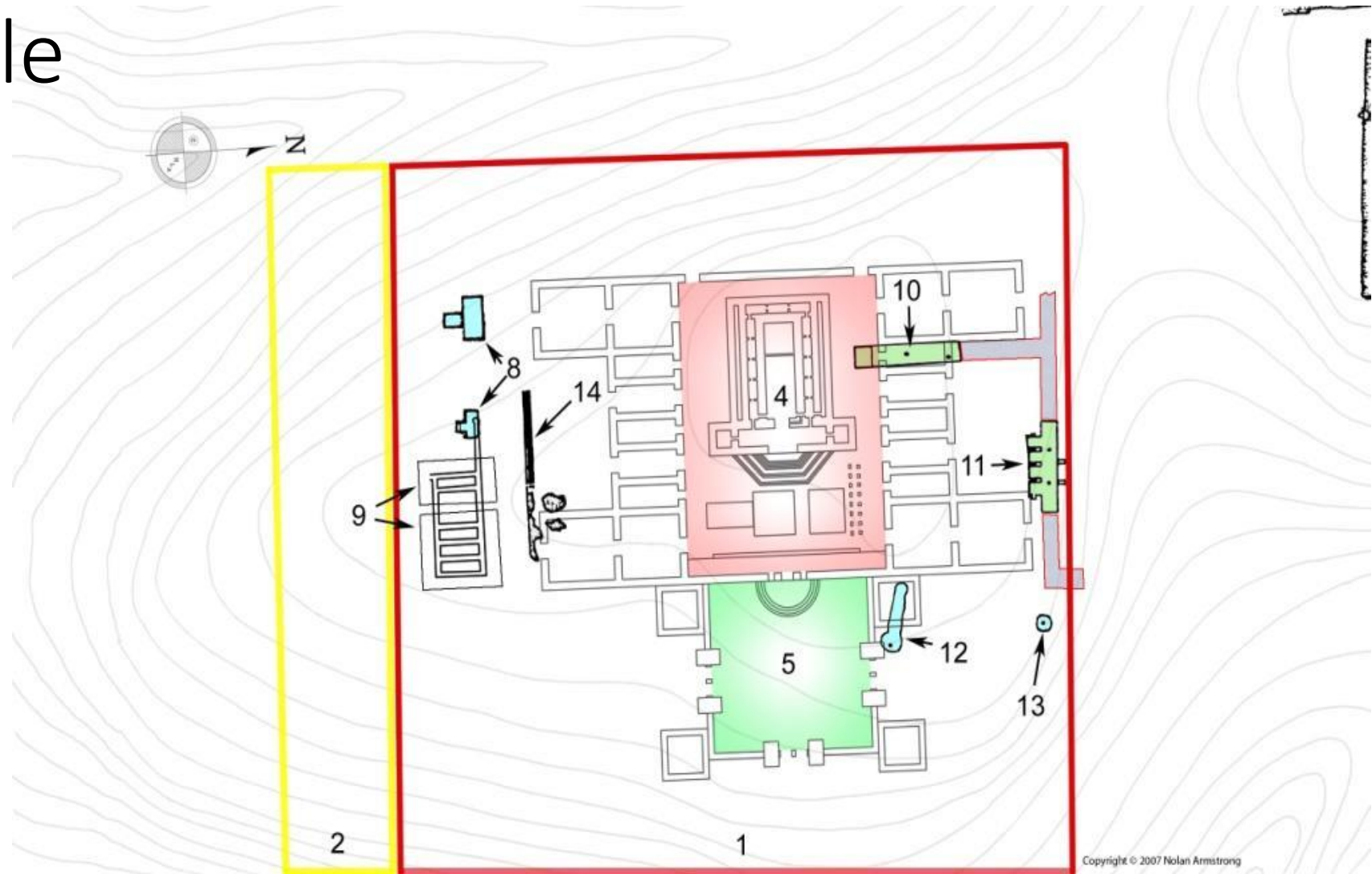


It denotes  
someone or  
something  
specific

The **ἁ** placed before a noun becomes a definite article, 'the'. Therefore, it denotes a specific person, place, or thing. Kept in the context of Divinity, Gentility, and Specificity, it makes the noun stand apart, as a more definite or special item.



# 5<sup>th</sup> Phase – the Hasmonean Extension to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple



## The Hasmonean Period

During Hasmonean rule the Temple Complex was cleaned, dedicated and enlarged. It was also fortified and beautified. Their efforts and the dedication of the Temple began a period of revival and religious fervor.

ر

the physical world was completed – man was completed. It can also represent the 6 dimensions.

According to Rabbi Munk, in the Wilderness at Mount Sinai, the census of the nation was 600,000, corresponding to the 600,000 letters in the Torah.

The **ו** is a prefix of conjunction that unites manifold and sometimes even opposing concepts. It is seen as a link between heaven and earth. It looks like (and even its name denotes) a hook.

As a conjunction it links words and phrases, but can also be seen to link tenses, lending a form of continuity. In this use it often changes the tense from past to future or vice versa.

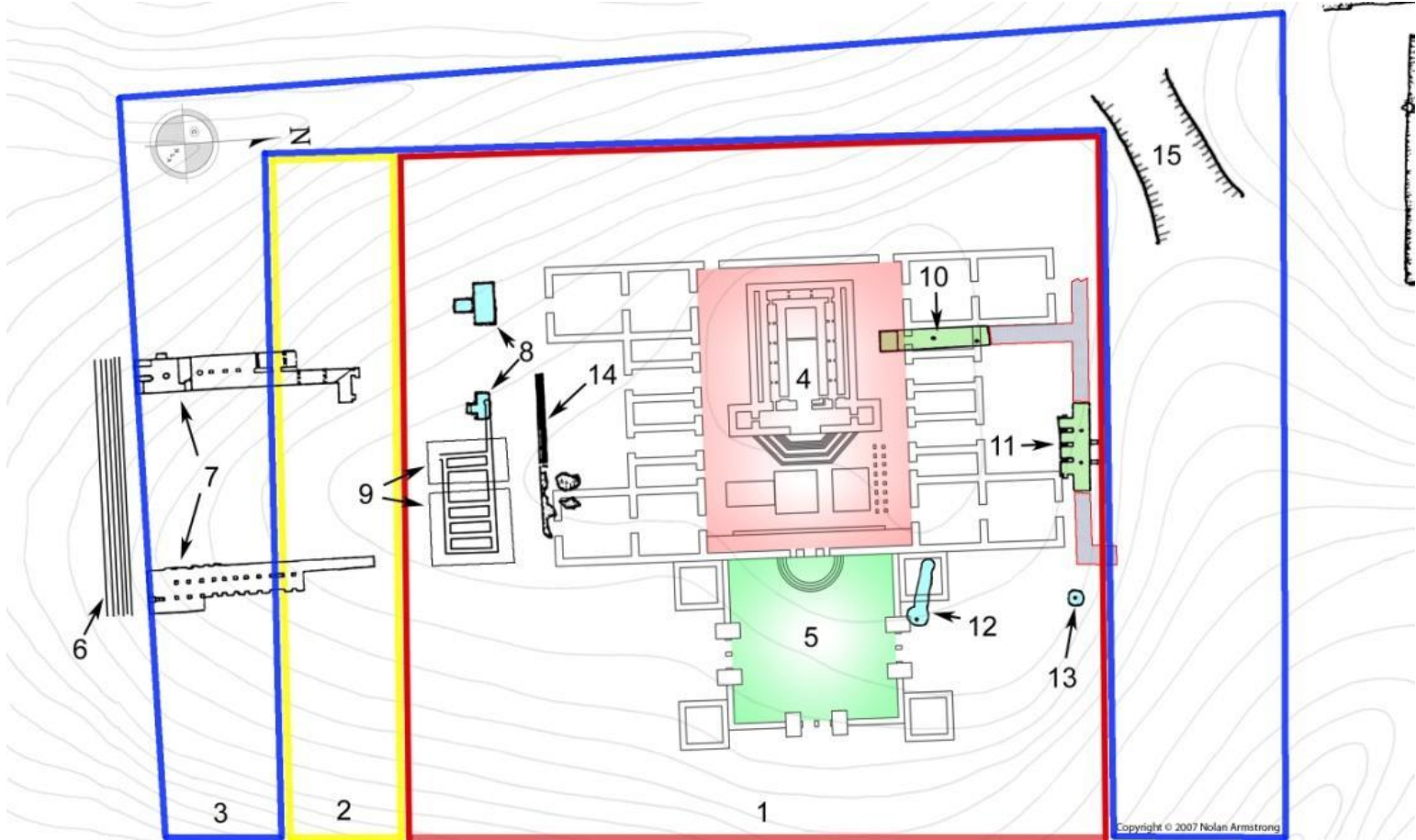
# Complete and Defective Spellings

“In many words, the presence or absence of a **ו** has no effect on pronunciation, but Biblical exegesis often finds a special meaning implied by the *vav*’s presence or absence. Spelling a word in its complete or full form signifies totality and integrity; spelling it in its incomplete or defective form indicates deficiency or imperfection.”

*The Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet, p. 100*

Corner Joe on his teaching on *Toledot!!!!*

# The 6<sup>th</sup> Phase – Herod's Expansions





ד

The Symbolic  
S  
System  
and Structure



7 is 7. This  
on in a way;  
r physical  
completion of  
abbat. The  
rest from the  
piritual union

"Then speak to him, saying, `Thus says the L-RD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the L-RD; Yes, He shall build the temple of the L-RD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.'" "Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the L-RD for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. "Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the L-RD. Then you shall know that the L-RD of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the L-RD your G-d."

Zec 6:12-15

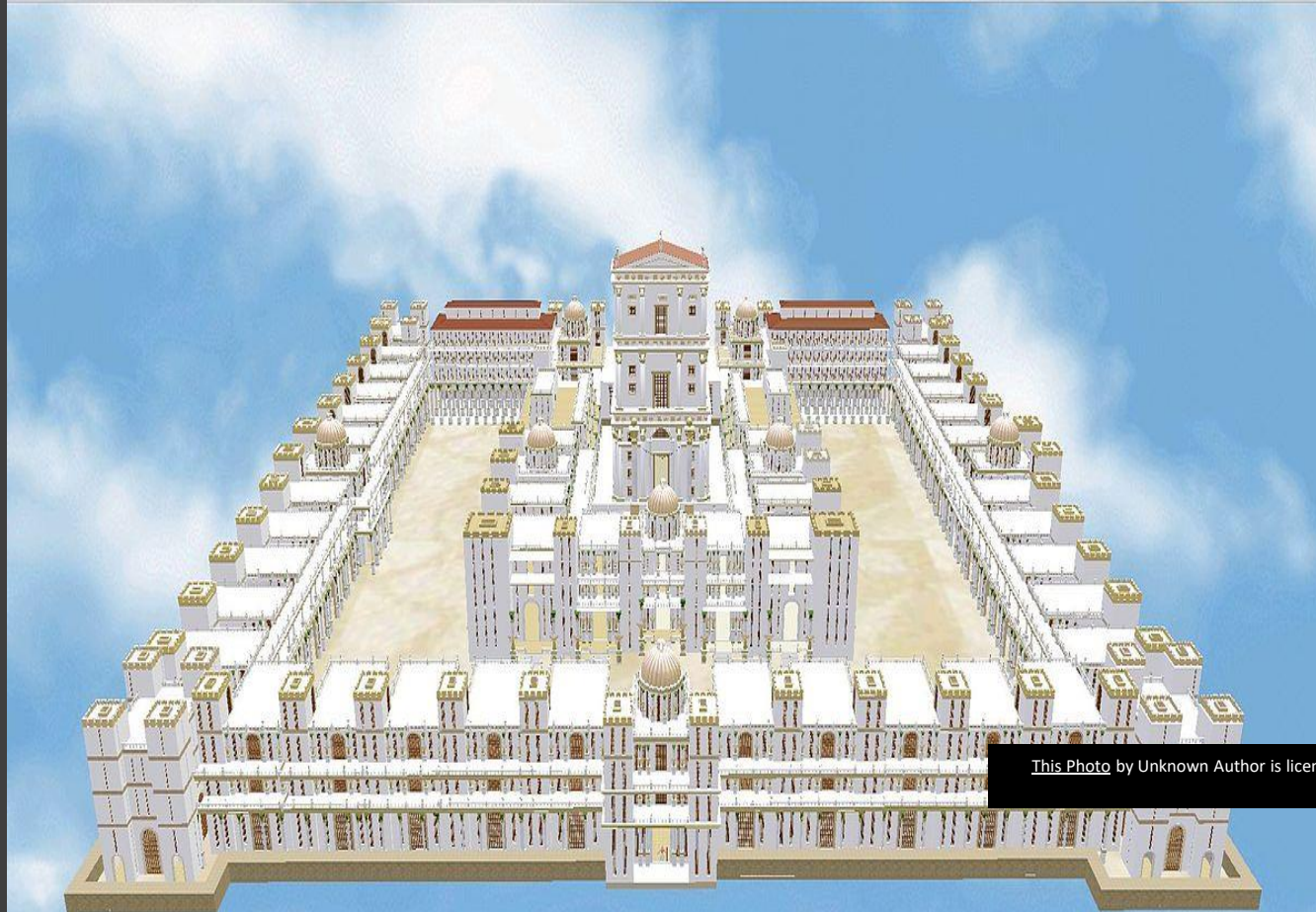
# Phase 7 – The 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple, or Messiah's Temple



ה

∏ - The symbol  
of  
Transcendence,  
Divine Grace  
and Life

It is thought that ∏ with a numeric value of 8, means we ascend to a higher plane or level.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

# The 8<sup>th</sup> Phase – Yechezkel's Temple

# The Eight Phases of the Temple

1. The Mishkan in the Wilderness א
2. The Mishkan Across the Jordan ב
3. First or Solomon's Temple ג
4. Second or Ezra's Temple ד
5. Second Temple – Hasmonean Extensions ה
6. Second Temple – Herodian Extensions ו
7. Third or Messiah's Temple ז
8. Yechezkel's Temple ח