

Igbo Torah Thoughts

Parashah # 19: Terumah “Contributions/Heave Offering”

Shemot/Exodus 25:1-27:19

Isa. 66:1-24

Rabbi Yehudah “Tochukwu” ben Shomeyr

And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. – Exd. 25:10-22

In the time before the white man, Igbo warriors would take into battle something resembling and an Ark of the Covenant. It was a Sacred Chest and or Basket with Sacred Items in it and it was believed that if the Chest/Basket was present in battle that they were sure to win. The same was thought of Israel and the Ark of the Covenant in battle.

Exodus 26 talks about the Tabernacle which is like unto Igbo shrines:

In 2010 I entered the Shrine at Obu-Gad in Aguleri which contains the stone throne with paleo-Hebrew inscription at the foot of it in cowry shells that reveals that the throne is dedicated to Eri's father Gad. I had to remove my shoes before entering. There are many other places in Igboland such as this.

Exodus 27 deals with the Altar of the Tabernacle, but before the construction of this altar, Israel used earthen altars. The Igbos used earthen altars as well.

In the Torah we read of the Patriarchs building altars of earth and natural stone to sacrifice unto YHWH. Such altars in Igboland are common and are called "Okwu Ani." They are maintained by hand and not tool is permitted to be used on them. Most other altars in pagan religious use hew stone where as Jews and Igbos use natural uncut earth and stone to construct their altars.

A 12 stone altar exists in the middle of the Niger River in Aguleri where Eri, son of Gad is said to have crossed and it can be seen during the dry season when the water levels are lowest. Recall in Joshua 4 where a 12 stone memorial altar was erected in the middle of the Jordan.

Leviticus goes into great detail regarding various offerings, drink offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, all of which are practiced to some degree among the Igbo.

As In Israel, so in Igboland.

Leviticus 6:4

Though this deals with the responsibilities of the Levitical priesthood, Israel was considered a nation of priests and so common Israelites voluntarily took upon themselves priestly rituals in daily living. This is an example of but one of them that the Igbo practices as well.

Igbo's consider it an obligation, mandatory to remove ashes from the previous days fire before one kindles a new one. If not, the holiness or purity of whatever is cooked on the old ashes is thrown into question.

As In Israel, so in Igboland.

And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. – Isa. 66:20-24

One day Messiah will gather the lost tribes of Israel and Ndi Igbo will be among them as Gadites and Levites.

SHABBAT SHALOM! IGBO KWENU!

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