

The Lost Ark is Located

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1. You shall make for me a sanctuary. (*Exodus 25:8*)

2. Tell the people of Israel of the House... and measure the design." (*Ezekiel 43:10*)
 Our Sages relate: Yechezkel replied to Him: "Master of the Earth, why are You telling me to go and tell Israel the form of the House... They are now in exile in the land of our enemies. Is there anything they can do [about it]? Let them be until they return from the exile. Then, I will go and inform them." G-d answered: "Should the construction of My House be ignored because My children are in exile?" G-d declared: "The study of the Torah's [design of the *Beit HaMikdash*] can be equated to its [actual] construction. Go, tell them to study the form of the *Beit HaMikdash*. As a reward for their study and their occupation with it, I will consider it as if they actually built the *Beit HaMikdash*." (*Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav:4*)

3. There was a stone in the western portion of the Holy of Holies on which the ark was placed. Before it, [were placed] the vial of *manna* and Aharon's staff. When Shlomo constructed the *Beit [HaMikdash]*, knowing that it would ultimately be destroyed, he constructed a place for the ark to be entombed below [the Holy of Holies] in deep mazelike vaults. King Yoshiyahu commanded that the ark be entombed in the chamber which Shlomo had built; as it is written: "And he told the Levites who were granted understanding above all of Israel and who were consecrated unto G-d; 'Place the holy ark in the chamber built by Solomon, son of David, King of Israel. You will no [longer] carry it upon your shoulders. Now, go and serve G-d, your L-rd....' "Together with [the ark], were entombed Aharon's staff, the vial [of *manna*], and the anointing oil. All of these [sacred articles] did not return in the Second *Beit [HaMikdash]*. Similarly, the *urim vetumim* which were present in the Second *Beit [HaMikdash]* did not reply with Divine inspiration, and questions were not addressed to them... (*Rambam, Laws of the Beit Habechirah Chapter 4*)

4. Why do I say that the original consecration sanctified the [*Beit Ha*]Mikdash and Jerusalem until the future era, while in relation to the consecration of the remainder of *Eretz Yisrael*, as regards the Sabbatical year, the tithes, and other similar [agricultural] laws, [the original consecration] did not sanctify it for eternity? Because the sanctity of the [*Beit Ha*]Mikdash and of Jerusalem stems from the Divine Presence, and the Divine Presence can never be nullified. (*Rambam, Laws of the Beit Habechirah Chapter 6*)

5. King Yoshiyahu commanded that the ark be entombed in the chamber which Shlomo had built; as it is written: "And he told the Levites who were granted understanding above all of Israel and who were consecrated unto G-d; 'Place the holy ark in the chamber built by Solomon, son of David, King of Israel. You will no [longer] carry it upon your shoulders. Now, go and serve G-d, your L-rd....' (*Chronicles II 35:3*)