

IT WILL BE BUILT AGAIN

by Rabbi Label Lam

Hashem spoke to Moses saying: "Speak to the Children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart moves him you shall take My portion." (Shemos 25:1-2)

Rabbi Shimon says: Anybody who seeks to exert effort in the performance of Mitzvos and in the service of The Holy One Blessed Be He, it is vital that he not strive in vain. All that is required of him is to work at it to the extent of his abilities. (Zohar on the verse above.)

Make for Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell amongst them. (Shemos 25:8)

How does one go about constructing a Sanctuary for The A-lmighty? It's hard just to compose a few lines on a blank page before approaching The Western Wall, how much more so to construct the building atop that wall? It's "only" the structure that would house our most sacred relationship and be the centerpiece of our existence for more than a thousand years. How is it to be built? How is it to be rebuilt?

Eleven years ago, as the (first) Gulf War was warming up, I had the special honor to serve as the escort / guardian for a close friend for the 24 hours prior to his wedding (a traditional Jewish custom). The night before the event, we went to the home of Rabbi Mordachai Schwabb zt'l for a blessing. We stood outside for a few moments late at night and waited for the signal to come in and greet the Rabbi.

When the prior visitor exited we entered. It was clear that we were the last ones after a long day and ours would be a brief encounter there in the doorway. We informed him of the purpose of our visit and he promptly showered the groom (and me too) with a wonderful bouquet of blessings.

Already, in the salutation part of the encounter, my friend let loose a question straight from his heart. There was an ominous feeling at that time that something big was about to happen. Would it be a tragic or a triumphant result? We know the feeling all too well. "Rebbe," he asked, "what do we do to get ready for Mashiach?" Without missing a beat to think and wonder he immediately starting beckoning us to come in and sit down as he repeated and excitedly, "Three things! The Chofetz Chaim says three things!"

He then quoted and paraphrased a short essay by the Chofetz Chaim, in chapter 18 of one of the smaller booklets he authored called, "Zachor L'Miriam." The three things listed there are as follows:

1) Everyone should set aside time to learn and do whatever he can according his abilities. If one can

learn Mishne then learn Mishne. If Talmud then Talmud. If Chumash then Chumash. Nobody is being asked to do more than what he is able. The Torah doesn't come to make our lives difficult. He quotes the verse from Koheles, "Everything that you find it within your capability to do, do it." Emphasizing the words, "your capability."

2) Teshuva - Repentance. Especially with an emphasis on committing to change in the future. He gives a simple parable of a honored personality who frequented a certain home. When he came to town again he went to a different host. The first host asked why he was being overlooked. The honored gentleman informed him that he had been treated disrespectfully the last time he was there. The host offered many excuses and apologies. The important person told him to promise that it would never happen again, and he would be happy to return. Hashem dwelled among us during the 1st and 2nd Temple Periods, and "went away." If appropriate respect could be promised and delivered. He would return.

3) Lastly, he writes that we need to have respect for our smaller sanctuaries. How can we expect to merit the big mirror if we fail to appreciate the smaller sliver we have in our hands? If my child doesn't practice and take care of his beginner's guitar, then why should I buy him an expensive electric one? Will that help to make him a better musician?

Here are three practical suggestions that rolled right off the Rabbi's lips without hesitation. It obviously wasn't the first time he had contemplated the subject. It was real and relevant to him like oxygen. That's also how Moses started the original Sanctuary with a sincere request that everyone simply live up to the best of their ability and it seems that that's how it will be built again.

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