

# MAKE A HOME FOR G-D

*by Shlomo Katz*

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**Terumah: Make a Home for G-d**

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Today's Learning:

Makkot 2:4-5

Orach Chaim 586:11-13

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Bava Metzia 86

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Terumot 23

This week's parashah is the first of several that discusses the construction of the Mishkan / Tabernacle. Rambam writes (in Hilchot Bet Ha'bechirah 1:1): "It is an affirmative commandment to build a house for Hashem, a ready place to offer sacrifices and to celebrate three times a year, as it is written [in our parashah]: 'They shall make a Tabernacle'."

R' Shimshon David Pinkus z"l (rabbi of Ofakim, Israel; died 2001) wonders: Why does Rambam offer two reasons for building a Temple - that it is a place to offer sacrifices and to gather on the holidays - when the verse that he quotes already provides a reason? That verse says, "They shall make a Tabernacle so that I may dwell among them"!

R' Pinkus answers: The Rambam is merely elaborating on the Torah's reason. How can we cause G-d to dwell among us? The Shechinah is, in a sense, the soul of the Jewish people. To have the Shechinah among us requires two things: that we have a healthy body and that we attract the soul to

the body.

The first part of this task is achieved by congregating in the Bet Hamikdash on the holidays. This unites us as one body, as we read (Shoftim 20:11), "Then all the people of Israel gathered together at the city, as one man, as comrades." We also find that Yerushalayim is referred to (in Tehilim 122:3) as "a city that is united together."

The second part of the task of bringing the Shechinah to dwell among us is achieved by offering sacrifices. The Hebrew word "korbanot" / sacrifices is derived from the root which means "close," and thus alludes to this idea. [Ramban writes expressly that this is the purpose of offering sacrifices, though Rambam appears to disagree.] (Tiferet Torah)

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*"Viyikchu / let them take for Me a portion . . ." (25:1)*

Why does the verse say "Let them take" rather than "Let them give"? R' Shlomo Ephraim of Lunschitz z"l (see page 4) answers as follows:

The Midrash comments about this verse: Thus it is written (Mishlei 4:2), "For I have given you a good lekach; do not forsake My Torah." [The word "lekach" is used here to mean "teaching." However, the root of the word is the same as the verb "to take" and the same as "viyikchu" in our verse.] Rabbi Berechiah Hakohen said, "It is the way of the world that when a person sells something valuable out of his house, he is sad and the buyer is happy. In contrast, when G-d gave the Torah to Yisrael, He was happy."

What does this Midrash have to do with our verse? R' Shlomo Ephraim explains that the Midrash was bothered by our question - why does the verse say "Let them take" rather than "Let them give"? In answer to this question, the Midrash teaches that giving charity (which is the subject of our verse) is similar to teaching Torah. Why is a person who is forced to sell his home furnishings sad? Because he is giving up something which is valuable to him. This is not true, however, when someone gives charity or teaches Torah. Such a person loses nothing; to the contrary, one gains by giving charity and teaching Torah. One gains from these acts because of the reward that he earns; moreover, one who teaches Torah gains because his interaction with students sharpens his own understanding.

We read in Mishlei (3:14), "For [the Torah's] commerce is better than the commerce of silver . . ." King Shlomo compares Torah study to commerce because unlike a person who sells his personal belongings, a merchant engaged in commerce is happy when he makes a sale. However, observes R' Shlomo Ephraim, teaching Torah is better than engaging in commerce. Once a merchant sells an item, it is lost to him, and he can never sell it again. A merchant can have his merchandise or his silver (money), but not both. Not so one who teaches Torah. He can "sell" his merchandise and still have it. (Amudai Shaish: Amud Ha'Torah)

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*"You shall make two keruvim of gold - hammered out shall you make them - from both ends of the cover." (25:18)*

What did the cherubs that were placed on top of the aron kodesh represent? R' Shmuel Yehuda Katzenellenbogen-Mintz z"l (Italy; 1521-1597) explains that placing the forms of angels above the Ark, with their wings spread upwards but with their feet attached to the Ark, shows that angels are "tied" to, and subject to, those who study the Torah which lay inside the Ark. This is why the Torah instructs (verse 20), "Towards the Cover [of the Ark] shall be the faces of the keruvim." We read similarly (Tehilim 91:11-12), "He will charge His angels for you, to protect you in all your ways. On their palms they will carry you, lest you strike your foot against a stone." The midrash asks rhetorically: "Who is greater - the guard or the one who is guarded? The one who carries or the one who is carried?" Clearly, the righteous and those who study Torah, who are guarded and carried by the angels, are greater than the angels themselves.

This may answer another troublesome question, writes R' Katzenellenbogen. Doesn't the commandment to make cherubs contradict the commandment (Shmot 20:4), "You shall not make for yourself a carved image nor any likeness of that which is in the heavens above or on the earth below . . ." ? Some have answered that real angels do not look like the keruvim, so the prohibition on making likenesses is not violated. However, a better answer [according to R' Katzenellenbogen] is that the prohibition is not violated when one makes a likeness that cannot be served as an idol. For example, when King Shlomo built the Bet Hamikdash, he made a kiyor / laver that was supported by twelve golden oxen. Why did this not violate the prohibition of "You shall not make for yourself a carved image . . . of that which is . . . on the earth below"? Because these golden oxen were being made to "work" supporting the kiyor. Obviously, one could not attribute divinity to them.

Here, too, because the keruvim are made in a way that shows that we are greater than they, one could not attribute divinity to them and the prohibition would not be violated, concludes R' Katzenellenbogen. (Shteim Esrei Derashot No. VII)

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*"Mikshah / hammered out shall you make them . . ." (25:18)*

R' Shimon Shalom Kalish z"l (1883-1954; the "Amshinover Rebbe") observes: This verse may be translated: "If it is kasheh / difficult, you shall do it." Do not shy away from a task because it is difficult. The more difficult it is to do G-d's Will, the greater the reward. (Quoted in B'yishishim Chochmah p. 378)

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*"You shall make curtains of goat hair for a tent over the Tabernacle." (26:7)*

R' Menachem Mendel of Premishlan z"l (early chassidic leader in Eretz Yisrael; died 1793) observes:

There are two kinds of tzaddikim: On the one hand, there is a tzaddik who is the same on the outside as on the inside. When you look at him, you know he is a tzaddik. On the other hand, there is a tzaddik whose righteousness is hidden. To the casual observer, this tzaddik is a "regular" person.

Which way is preferable? Our verse teaches that the latter is, for it instructs that "you shall make a curtain to cover your inner Tabernacle" - your inner holiness.

R' Menachem Mendel writes that this is also the meaning of the verse (Bemidbar 24:5), "How goodly are your tents, Yaakov, your tabernacles, Yisrael." The name "Yaakov" always denotes those Jewish people who are on a relatively lower spiritual level, while the name "Yisrael" denotes those on a higher level. "How good it is," says the verse, "when the tabernacle of a 'Yisrael' is hidden under the tent, the covering, of a 'Yaakov'." (Quoted in Torat Ha'chassidim Ha'rishonim: Darchei Yescharim p. 273)

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### **R' Shlomo Ephraim of Lunschitz z"l**

R' Shlomo Ephraim was born in Lunschitz (possibly Leczica), Poland in the mid-1500's. His father's name was Aharon, and his primary teacher was R' Shlomo Luria (the "Maharshal"). (Our subject was actually named Ephraim at birth. The name Shlomo was added during an illness in 1601.)

R' Ephraim's first position was as a rosh yeshiva in Lvov (Lemberg). After 1604, he headed a yeshiva in Prague and sat on the rabbinical court of that city with R' Yeshayah Horowitz (the "Shelah Ha'kadosh"). Among R' Ephraim's prominent students were R' Yom Tov Lipman Heller, author of the Mishnah commentary Tosfot Yom Tov, and R' Shabtai Horowitz, son of the Shelah.

Despite heading a yeshiva, R' Ephraim's primary legacy is as a darshan / preacher. Besides delivering sermons in Lvov and Prague, R' Ephraim was a regular preacher at the fairs in Lublin and at meetings of the Va'ad Arbah Aratzot / the Council of the Four Lands, the semi-autonomous governing body of Polish Jewry. Among R' Ephraim's works, which are still popular today, are the Torah commentary Kli Yakar and the homiletic compositions Ir Gibborim, Olelot Ephraim, Amudai Shaish, Sifte Da'at, and Orach Le'chaim. He also composed selichot / penitential prayers to be recited on the second day of Adar, the anniversary of a pogrom which occurred in Prague on that day in 1611. (R' Ephraim records that the work Olelot Ephraim was written when he lived in Jaroslaw and had no library. All of the numerous citations and quotations to the Talmud, midrashim, and commentaries that are in that work were written down from memory.)

Legend recalls that when the Maharal of Prague lay on his deathbed (in 1609), he told his followers, "Go to Lvov and find a man by the name of Ephraim Olelot. He will be your rabbi in my place." A delegation from Prague traveled to Lvov and were surprised, as was their host in Lvov, to find that the Maharal had appointed a simple laborer to be his successor. (It is not clear how this legend can be reconciled with the report that R' Ephraim headed a yeshiva in Lvov.)

*Sponsored by Rochelle Dimont and family, in memory of father-in-law and grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel*

*Elchanan Dimont a"h*

The Katz family, on the yahrzeits of uncle, Avraham Abba ben Avigdor Moshe Hakohen a"h, and aunt, Etia (Etush) bat Avigdor Moshe Hakohen a"h

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