

# BRING G-D OUT OF THE "HOUSE OF WORSHIP"

*by Rabbi Yaakov Menken*

*"They should build a Tabernacle for Me, and I will dwell among them." [25:8]*

The Ohr HaChaim notes that the verse does not conclude "and I will dwell within it," but "within them." The goal, the reason to build the Temple, is not merely to create a House for G-d, but to sanctify a place for Him within the people.

In Western societies, it is easy to be influenced by the notion that religion is something we leave in the "House of Worship." We go, we pray, and then we leave to go deal with other aspects of our lives. This may be a common view, but it is contrary to the Torah's outlook on the relationship between G-d and human beings.

"They should build a Tabernacle for Me, and I will dwell among them." If someone goes next door to borrow a cup of flour, G-d goes along. A man enters a store - and G-d observes the transaction. He goes home to talk with his wife over dinner, and HaShem hears the conversation. In all of these cases, Mitzvos of proper conduct and honesty must guide us, and they are just as much a part of our religious obligations as saying the Shema and blowing Shofar.

We have this sort of relationship with HaShem, because we asked. The Medrash says that HaShem offered his Torah to every nation of the world - and we are the ones who responded "na'aseh v'nishma," we will do and we will listen. We said we would do, immediately, even while we listened and tried to understand, because we wanted HaShem in our lives. And we still want His influence.

How do we bring him into our homes and our communities? By demonstrating that we desire His presence. In order to build the Tabernacle, materials were needed. How were they acquired? "And HaShem spoke to Moshe, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and take offerings for me, from every man whose heart moves him shall you take my offerings.'" [25:1-2]

We bring HaShem into our lives by doing more than required, by going beyond the "letter of the law." The Tabernacle was built by gifts from those who wanted to go beyond their minimum requirements. Not only must we avoid behavior which would reject His influence, we must also go over and above that which we are commanded to do, in order to express our interest in bringing Him closer.

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