

PROVE IT

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

The final chapters of the book of Shemot outline the completion of the construction of the Tabernacle. Moshe called for a detailed audit of all the materials collected for the project and the specific amounts and use thereof. Our leader wanted teach that leaders must be above reproach and must keep accounts of all public monies that pass through their hands.

The Tabernacle is referred to as one of "testimony" i.e. a demonstration that Hashem had forgiven the people for their trespasses with the Golden Calf. Another reason why the Mishkan was called a testimony is because it was the resting place of the Tablets of Testimony that Moshe carried down from Har Sinai. The Midrash, However, gives another surprising reason for the nomenclature.

"It is a testimony to all peoples of the World that Hashem commanded its construction." The commentators explain that the intent here is to say that Moshe did not decide on his own to build a Mishkan -- rather it was at the behest of G-d. The question is: If Hashem wanted to clarify this fact, why wait until the final stages of construction to hint at this principle? Wouldn't it make more sense to clarify this point before the collection of all the valuable materials needed to do the job?

Rabenu Yosef Hayim of Baghdad, zt'l, The Ben Ish Hai, explains with a parable. A King married a woman and treated her royally, showering her with precious gifts and honor. He became infuriated over an act of unfaithfulness and angrily separated from her. The members of the royal court predicted that he would never allow her to return. However, after time had passed, he sent a message to his former love. "Clean your palace and set your domain for a royal visit. I am planning to come to see you." Not long after the King arrived and entered the Queen's home. He ate and drank and chatted with her --much to the disbelief of the members of the court. When the fragrance of perfumes and oils came from the Queen's residence the people understood that the King had been appeased and that she was back in his majesty's favor.

Such was the case with Hashem and the people of Israel. He brought them to Mount Sinai and gave them His most precious possession -- the Torah -- and he dubbed them royalty -- a Kingdom of Kohanim. After only 40 days they sinned and He left them and the nations of the world predicted that He would never take them back. But, as soon as Moshe prayed on their behalf He did forgive His beloved. Moshe then said: "I know that you have forgiven them but please demonstrate beyond a doubt to all the peoples of the Earth that indeed you have accepted my prayers"

Hashem replied: "By your life, I swear that I have taken them back. Build for Me a Mishkan and I will

come and dwell amongst them for the entire world to see. This Tabernacle will serve as a TESTIMONY that I have forgiven the Jewish people." In these hard times of brutal exile we should all take this message to heart. May Hashem return His presence to a New Temple in Yerushalayim and again demonstrate His love for us, His People, with the coming of Mashiah speedily and in our days. Amen.

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