

Parashat Terumah 5782, 2022:

“V’asu Li Mikdash”

Rabbi David Etengoff

Dedicated to the sacred memories of my mother, Miriam Tovah bat Aharon Hakohen, father-in-law, Levi ben Yitzhak, sister, Shulamit bat Menachem, sister-in-law, Ruchama Rivka Sondra bat Yecheil, Chana bat Shmuel, Yehonatan Binyamin ben Mordechai Meir Halevi, Shoshana Elka bat Avraham, Tikvah bat Rivka Perel, Peretz ben Chaim, Chaya Sarah bat Reb Yechezkel Shraga, Shmuel Yosef ben Reuven, Shayndel bat Mordechai Yehudah, the *Kedoshim* of Har Nof, Pittsburgh, and Jersey City, and the *refuah shlaimah* of Mordechai HaLevi ben Miriam Tovah, Yocheved Dafneh bat Dinah Zehavah, and the health and safety of our brothers and sisters in Israel and around the world.

“And they shall make Me a sanctuary (*v’asu li mikdash*) and I will dwell amongst them (*v’shachanti b’tochom*),” is one of the best-known verses in our *parasha*. (*Sefer Shemot* 25:8, this, and all Bible translations, *The Judaica Press Complete Tanach*) The very next *pasuk*, however, employs the word, “*mishkan*,” in place of *mikdash* : “According to all that I show you, the pattern of the *Mishkan* and the pattern of all its vessels; and so shall you do.” Rabbi Chaim Ben Attar *zatzal* (1696-1743), known as the Or HaChaim Hakadosh after the name of his commentary on the Torah, addresses this change in terminology:

... It appears to me that when the Torah says, “*v’asu li mikdash*,” it is referring to the general positive commandment that incorporates all times, whether [the Jewish people were in] the desert or when they entered the land [of Israel], as well as the entire period the Jewish people would dwell therein throughout the generations. [Moreover,] the Jewish people were obligated to create a *mikdash*, even in the Diaspora (*galut*), [but were prevented from so doing, since] we find that Hashem forbade all other places [outside of Israel] from the point in time of the construction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, as it says in the Torah: “For you have not yet come to the resting place or to the inheritance, which the L-rd, your G-d, is giving you.” (*Sefer Devarim* 12:9) This, then, is why the Torah does not declare, “*v’asu mishkan*,” in order that we may understand that the creation of the *mishkan* was a *mitzvah* solely at that time. [This is the reason the Torah at first] commands the general *mitzvah* [to construct the *mikdash*] followed by the specific [obligation of what was needed] to be built in the desert, which was not the place to create a building of stones... (*Or HaChaim*, *Sefer Shemot* 25:8, translation, brackets and paratheses my own)

According to the Or HaChaim, the Torah first utilizes the term, *mikdash*, and then *mishkan*, to teach us a crucial lesson: the *mitzvah* of the *mikdash* is obligatory at all times in *Eretz Yisrael*; in

contrast, the *mitzvah* of the *mishkan* was time-bound, namely, its construction was a commandment to the *Dor HaMidbar* (Generation of the Desert) as a temporary stand-in for the yet-to-be-built *Beit HaMikdash*. As such, the Torah commands us, “*v’asu li mikdash*,” rather than “*v’asu li mishkan*.” The Or HaChaim includes a citation from the Rambam (Maimonides, 1135-1204) that strongly supports his position:

It is a positive commandment to construct a House for G-d, prepared for sacrifices to be offered within. We [must] celebrate there three times a year, as the Torah states: “*v’asu li mikdash*,” The sanctuary constructed by Moshe is already described in the Torah. It was only temporary, as the Torah states: “For you have not yet come to the resting place or to the inheritance, which the L-rd, your G-d, is giving you.” (*Hilchot Beit HaBechirah*, 1:1, translation, Rabbi Eliyahu Touger)

According to the Rambam, the essential purpose of the *Beit HaMikdash* was to provide a place to offer *korbanot* and to “celebrate there three times a year.” My rebbe and mentor, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik *zatzal* (1903-1993), known as the “Rav” by his followers and disciples, builds upon this idea, focusing on the intrinsic purpose of the *korbanot* to strengthen our connection with the Almighty:

God created the world to reside in it, rather than to reside in transcendence. Man could have continually experienced Him instead of trying to infer His Presence through examining nature. But in the wake of the original sin of Adam and Eve, He retreated. *And they heard the voice of the Lord God going in the garden to the direction of the sun, and the man and his wife hid from the Lord God in the midst of the trees of the garden (Gen. 3:8).* These “footsteps” were those of God leaving the garden and departing into infinity. Had they not sinned, God would always have been close. As a result of Adam’s hiding and fear of communicating with God in the wake of his sin, God removed His Divine Presence. The purpose of the tabernacle was to restore the relationship between man and God. (Public lecture, Boston, 1979, cited in *Chumash Mesoras HaRav, Sefer Shemot*: with Commentary Based Upon the Teachings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Dr. Arnold Lustiger, editor, page 226, underlining my own)

May the time come soon and, in our days, when the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people is fully restored, and His Divine Presence is once again manifest to us all in the newly rebuilt *Beit HaMikdash*. *V’chane yihi ratzon.*

Shabbat Shalom

Past *drashot* may be found at my blog-website: <http://reparashathashavuah.org>

The email list, *b'chasdei Hashem*, has expanded to hundreds of people. I am always happy to add more members to the list. If you have family or friends you would like to have added, please do not hesitate to contact me via email rdbe718@gmail.com.

*** My audio *shiurim* on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at:
<http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpyd>

*** I have posted 164 of Rabbi Soloveitchik's English language audio *shiurim* (MP3 format) spanning the years 1958-1984. Please click on the highlighted link: [The Rav](#)