

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT TERUMA

Building A Temple For Hashem Today

In this week's Parsha, Teruma, we are given the mitzvah of making a holy place for Hashem. Hashem says, "And you should make (Li) for Me a Temple, and I will dwell in them." In general, this refers to the different Mishkans that we had, and then the great Temples that stood on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

However, this brings up several questions.

In the Sifri, it says, "Every place it says Li (for Me), it will last forever." The Sifri continues, "About the Temple He says, 'And you should make (Li) for Me a Temple.'" The Midrash says, "Every place it says Li (for Me), it will never move, not in this world, and not in the world to come." The Midrash then lists the Temple as one of these everlasting things, as it says: "And you should make (Li) for Me a Temple." But the Mishkans are gone, and the Temples were destroyed. How could they say that it will last forever?

The verse also seems to be grammatically incorrect. First, it says, "And you should make for Me a Temple," and then it says, "And I will dwell in them." Shouldn't it say, "And I will dwell in it?" What is the meaning of dwelling in them? And how can we do this mitzvah today in exile when we don't have the Temple?

There are different explanations as to what the everlasting component of this mitzvah is.

Some say it refers to the holiness of the Temple. That the place where the Temple stood retains its holiness forever. According to the Rambam, even though the walls of the Temple no longer stand, we could still bring offerings there. Because the holiness is still there.

YOUR HEART IS A SACRED TEMPLE BUILT BY G-D, WHERE HIS WISDOM AND KINDNESS RESIDE.

Others say that parts of the Temple are hidden in the ground of the Temple Mount, so it is actually there.

The difficulty with these answers is that they only explain how the Temples still exist; but they don't explain how the Mishkans still exist.

Another difficulty with these answers is that the simple meaning of the Sifri and the Midrash is that it is referring to the physical Temple, not the spiritual holiness, and if it is buried, then we don't experience the physical Temple. So what are the Sifri and the Midrash referring to?

The Rambam learns the mitzvah of building the Temple from the words, "And you should make for Me a Temple," even though the actual verse was said about the Mishkan in the desert. The Kesef Mishneh explains that when the Rambam mentions this mitzvah, he is referring to all the Mishkans and Temples. And

being that the Mishkan of the desert is included, that means that this mitzvah applies even out of the land of Israel. In his book of mitzvahs, the Rambam refers back to the Sifri and writes, "And they said, every time it says Li, it means that it exists always." In other words, this mitzvah is a constant mitzvah for all time. And because it says Li by the mitzvah of building a Temple, it means that this mitzvah is an obligation at all times and in all places where Jews find themselves, even outside of Israel.

This is also the implication of the Midrash on the book of Yechezkel. Hashem said to Yechezkel, "Just because my children are placed in exile, should the building of My house be interrupted? Tell them to occupy themselves with reading about the construct of the house in Torah and in the merit of reading about it... I will consider it as if they occupy themselves with the building of the house." So learning about the Temple is as if you are building it.

However, with all that was mentioned above, it would seem that we should be able to do this mitzvah physically. How can one physically do this mitzvah today?

What is this mitzvah about? The Rambam says, "It is a positive commandment to build a house for Hashem that is ready to be used to bring offerings in it..." In the times of the Temple, our service to Hashem was done by bringing offerings on the altar. Today it is done through Torah study, prayer, and doing acts of kindness. But the mitzvah remains the same: to build a place to serve Hashem.

How is this done? Allow me to share two possible ways.

In the book of Yechezkel it says, "I have become for them as a minor Temple." The Talmud says, "These are the houses of gathering (synagogues) and houses of study."

The Zohar says about the verse, "And you should make for Me a Temple," that every synagogue is called a Temple. Some use the words of the Zohar as proof that building a synagogue is included in the mitzvah of, "And you should make for Me a Temple."

The Maharik says, "It is proper to compare the donations to a synagogue to the donations for the construction of the Mishkan because in every place, our rabbis of blessed memory compared the synagogue to the Temple..."

Although the Zohar and the Maharik speak of the synagogue, it clearly means houses of study (Beis Medrash) as well. As the Talmud clumps them together, the minor Temples "are the houses of gathering and houses of study."

So the first way is to build or donate towards the construction or improvement of a synagogue or house of study.

The second way is to set up a designated place in your home to



serve Hashem. It should have a bookshelf with Torah books, a table to study at, and a tzedaka (charity) box, and that becomes the place you go to study Torah, pray, and give charity in your home.

Children can also get involved by making their room or their part of their room into a place to serve Hashem. Having their own Torah books, siddur (prayer book), and tzedaka box.

Why specifically these three things, Torah, prayer, and doing kindness? Because these three happened regularly at the Temple.

Aside from the fact that the tablets of the Ten Commandments and a Torah being in the Ark in the Holy of Holies, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court, which was the foremost Torah academy in the world, was by the Temple.

The sacrifices being brought up on the altar were the main service in the Temple, and our daily prayers are in place of the sacrifices. Also, aside from it being the central place to pray, it is the place where all of our prayers travel through on the way up to Hashem.

The Temple had a special table called the Shulchan; it was the item that brought Hashem's blessing of sustenance to the world. But the Temple also had a special room where people could secretly give tzedaka, and the poor could come and take for their needs in secret.

There is another way to make a Temple for Hashem. Please allow me to take you to a deeper place.

In Kabbalistic texts it is taught, that "And you should make for Me a Temple, and I will dwell in them," means in every single Jewish person. That every Jewish person has in them, spiritually, everything that was in the Mishkan. Just as the Mishkan had panels and coverings, so does every Jew. Just as the Mishkan had vessels in it, so does every Jew.

To make a Temple for Hashem, we have to mirror what is found above. Above, there are two types of lights. There is the surrounding light, which is infinite, and there is the inner light that fills the realms according to their respective nature. The panels and coverings represent and draw down the surrounding light, while the vessels represent and draw down the inner light.

We can be a Temple for Hashem and draw these lights as well. We can do it in two ways.

There are two ways of serving Hashem. The first is above our understanding, meaning that you do it just because it is Hashem's will. Since it is above your understanding, it draws the infinite surrounding light. And then there is serving Hashem through understanding. Since it is according to your understanding, it draws the inner light, which is limited/ It is limited to your ability to comprehend.

The Talmud tells us that when Moshe transmitted the commandment of making the Mishkan, he first taught about the vessels, the Ark, Menorah, and Shulchan, and then he taught about the coverings and the panels. Betzalel, who was in charge of building the Mishkan, said to Moshe, "It is the custom of man to first build a house and then put furniture in it. Perhaps Hashem told you (to build) the Mishkan (the coverings and the panels and then) the Ark and the vessels." Moshe responded in the affirmative, "You were in the shadow of G-d, and you know."

Just as with the Mishkan, first the panels and coverings were made, and then the vessels, first one should employ the service which is above understanding, and only after, serve Hashem through understanding.

Another way of understanding this is that doing mitzvahs that are done outside of you, draws the surrounding light, while learning Torah, which you internalize, and is limited to your ability to comprehend, draws the inner light.

Being that we are all Hashem's Temple, the Temple is everlasting. The everlasting component of the person as a Temple is not only in time but also in the quality of our service to Hashem. We should serve Hashem with such intensity that it stays forever strong.

According to the Rambam, the mitzvah of building the Temple is an obligation for both men and women. And in Avos D'rav Nassan, it says that children also brought donations to build the Mishkan. So this is a mitzvah for men, women, and children.

Being that I celebrate my birthday this week*, I will connect this teaching to the idea of a birthday.

Hashem wants every one of us to be a Temple. That means that Hashem wants to live in every single one of us. In other words, the moment we were born, we were already chosen to be a home for Hashem. And this is one of the things we celebrate on our birthday.

May we all, men, women, and children, make a Temple for Hashem. This will surely bring the third and everlasting Temple, that is already built and will come down from above, with the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

**Written in 2018. Being that this year is a leap year, Rabbi Yitzi will be celebrating his birthday on 2 Adar II (March 12)*

"Dear Rabbi Yitzi,

I just started to get your weekly publication (this was my second time). I must tell you how much I enjoy what you write. You write in such a clear inspiring way that relates to our lives today! May HaShem fill your life with endless bracha, and may you have a complete refuasheleima bekorov!

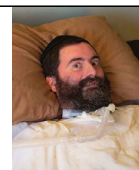
It is people like you that will bring Moshiach!!! May it be today!

Thank you so much!"

- Shoshana M, Israel

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Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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