

The Rebbe's Discourses

Summaries of points of the Rebbe's Chassidic Discourses בלי אחריות כלל וכלל

ד"ה ועשו לי מקדש פרשת תרומה תשמ"ג בלתי מוגה

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THE ETERNAL TEMPLE

THE SEDRA STATES 'AND THEY SHALL MAKE FOR ME A SANCTUARY AND I WILL DWELL IN THEM'². The Midrash comments on this: "Whenever it says 'for Me' it means it is permanent"³. But what does this mean? The Sanctuary is no more, and the First and Second Temples were both destroyed. How should we understand the Midrash?

The Tzemach Tzedek explains in *Or HaTorah*⁴ that what is permanent is the heavenly Temple, which is joined to the earthly Temple, as we see in the verse 'Jerusalem... the city joined together' (Ps.122:3), which the Sages explain as the heavenly Jerusalem being joined to the earthly Jerusalem⁵. Thus too with the Temple. Although the lower Temple is destroyed, the heavenly Temple is permanent.

But one can ask: surely the verse 'they should make for Me a Sanctuary' is speaking of an earthly Sanctuary, not something in Heaven? This might explain why the Tzemach Tzedek gives another explanation as well. As well as the main Temple in Jerusalem, there is the concept of the 'small Sanctuary'. This term is first found in a prophecy of Ezekiel who inspired the Jewish people in Babylon during the First Exile after the destruction of the First Temple. G-d instructed him to tell the people that the Divine Presence will be with them in

¹ Maamar Ve-Asu Li Mikdash 5743 (1983). Printed in Dvar Malchut of Sedra Terumah 5775. It was not edited by the Rebbe.

² Exodus 25:8

³ Midrash Shmuel ch.19, Vayikra Rabba 2:2.

⁴ Or Hatorah, Section Terumah, p.1424 ff., 1435, 1442 ff.

⁵ See Taanit 5a.

the ‘small Sanctuary’, which the Sages explain as the Synagogue⁶. Thus, although the Temple is in ruins, the ‘small Sanctuaries’ of synagogues and study houses round the world continue. In them is the indwelling of the Divine Presence.

But what do we mean by saying that the Divine Presence ‘dwells’ anywhere, whether in a Synagogue, Study House or indeed in the Temple itself? Isn’t G-d everywhere? “Do I not fill heaven and earth?”⁷ says G-d. The immanent aspect of G-d, hinted at in the word ‘fill’, thus ‘filling the worlds’, and also the transcendent aspect of G-d, hinted at in the word ‘I’, beyond the worlds, are omnipresent, everywhere. So what do we mean when we say the Divine Presence is in the Temple?

This question is discussed in the last three chapters of the first part of Tanya. It answers this question by giving the example of a human body. The life-force of the body, the Nefesh, is everywhere, in every limb of the body. But it is most particularly concentrated in the brain. In the same way, the Temple is the ‘brain’ of existence, where the Divine is most clearly manifest.

This idea can now be applied to another aspect of the concept of the Sanctuary. The verse in our Sedra ‘they should make for Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell in them’ is discussed in the Bati LeGani discourses⁸. There the question is asked: why does the verse say ‘in them’? One would expect it to say ‘in it’? The answer is that the Divine Presence dwells in each individual.

Hence when we speak of the eternal Sanctuary, we are also speaking of the Sanctuary inside each man and woman. The Tzemach Tzedek writes about this, in his book *Derech Mitzvotcha* (The Path of Your Mitzvot)⁹, that the Sanctuary was composed of curtains and wooden beams, and also the vessels inside the Sanctuary. The curtains represent the surrounding radiance, the beams and vessels the inner radiance. The surrounding radiance is expressed by Mitzvot, which are described as garments, while Torah is described as ‘food’ and represents the inner radiance¹⁰.

Chassidic teachings explain that there are different levels of ‘surrounding radiance’, and so too, correspondingly, there are different kinds of Mitzvot. There are Mitzvot which seemingly can be understood, the Mishpatim

⁶ Ezek. 11:16, see Rashi’s comment.

⁷ Jer. 23:24.

⁸ The discourse Bati LeGani (I have come into My Garden) by Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn, the Previous Rebbe, was printed in order to be studied on 10 Shevat 1950. On this day Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak passed away. Two volumes of discussions of this discourse were taught by his successor, the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, over the following forty years.

⁹ See ‘The Mitzvah of Building the Sanctuary’, 85a.

¹⁰ See Tanya ch.4.

(‘Judgements’), such as not to murder or steal, and those which are beyond ordinary rational understanding, the Chukim (‘Statutes’) such as Kashrut and Shatnez¹¹.

There are also different levels of inner radiance, corresponding to differing aspects of Torah: the revealed Torah, such as Talmud, and the inner dimension, expressed in Chassidic teachings.

By each person manifesting their own indwelling of the Divine in their personal Sanctuary, through study of Torah and observance of Mitzvot, we help express the eternity of the Temple and also bring closer the building of the Third Temple which will literally be permanent, which is ready, and can descend at any moment to be here below, swiftly in our days.

Torah teachings are holy – please treat these pages with care

¹¹ The prohibition on wearing a mixture of wool and linen, see Kedoshim, Lev. 19:19 and Ki Tetze, Deut. 22:11.