


CHABAD

RESEARCH UNIT

שבת..... *for Friday nights* קדש

Friday 21 February 2014 - 21 Adar 1 5774
Sedra Vayakhel

THE TEMPLE IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

WHEN JEWISH PEOPLE PRAY, TRADITIONALLY THEY FACE towards the Temple in Jerusalem. In Britain one faces east (or south east). In other countries one faces north, south or west. The Jews at prayer form a pattern of lines of force round the globe, focusing on the Temple.

The construction of the prototype of the Temple, called the Sanctuary, is described in the Sedra¹. It was built by Moses and the Jewish people at the foot of Mount Sinai during the first year after leaving Egypt. It had an open courtyard and also a beautiful enclosed structure with walls made of wood overlaid with gold, and a roof of tapestries. The Sanctuary was portable, and was folded up and carried in wagons during the journeys of the Jewish people throughout their forty years in the Wilderness.

The significance of the Sanctuary is emphasized by the repeated descriptions of it in the Torah. G-d communicated the details of its structure to Moses during his forty days and nights alone on the mountain. These instructions formed two of the Torah readings in recent weeks².



In Loving Memory of Mrs Jeanne Gewolb-Sostrin
 (Yenta bas Devora) ע"ה - 15 Tevet 5772
 Dedicated by her Son Dr Roger Gewolb שי'

In the Torah reading this Shabbat we again hear all the details concerning the Sanctuary. However, now we are hearing about them in a more practical way. Moses is here in the daily world, telling the Jewish people how to build the Sanctuary, and the Torah then describes how they actually achieved this.

We thus see that the Torah contains two different descriptions of the Sanctuary. The first was ethereal, taught by G-d on the rarefied heights of Mount Sinai. The second, in our Sedra, was transmitted to the Jewish people with the goal of creating a physical structure in the daily world.

The Midrash³ comments that these two descriptions correspond to two different aspects of the Sanctuary. One is the heavenly sanctuary: this is the purely spiritual revelation of the Divine Glory, reserved for prophets like Moses who ascend Mount Sinai or achieve some kind of comparable prophetic vision. The second is the revelation of the Divine presence in the real Temple in the physical world: a domain of men, women and children.

Which is more important? The earthly Temple. The heavenly Temple is surely very exalted and wonderful, yet the Sages tell us that the earthly Temple is more significant. The Divine purpose in creating the world is that there should be a “dwelling” for G-d *in* the world. This means in the real practical world, involving everyone⁴.

Thus it is the physical Temple in Jerusalem which is the focus of Jewish prayer and of Jewish history. The teachings of the Torah also guide us in recreating this holiness in our personal lives. It is there in a Jewish home, even if we do not always see it clearly. At the Shabbat table with the candles burning and the family sitting together, perhaps we catch a glimpse of the Divine Presence in this world....

1. Exodus chs.35:1-38:20 .2.Terumah and Tetzaveh. 3.Bemidbar Rabbah 12:12.

4.Based freely on the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 1, pp.96-8.

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SEDRA VAYAKHEL

SHABBAT FREEDOM

Sammy was watching his cousin Michael, who was staying with them for the weekend since it was their Grandfather's eightieth birthday. They would be having a big party right after Shabbat.

Michael was twenty two, and was studying economics at university. He also had his own website business, which he ran with a friend, selling computer accessories.

It was just a few minutes before Shabbat, and Michael was busy at his laptop, as he had been since he had arrived. Sammy's mother walked into the kitchen, carrying some candlesticks.

"Sammy and Michael, Shabbat is right now, please make sure you're ready." As she went out, Michael grimaced at his cousin.

"Oh no! I have so much I need to do, and I can't because it's Shabbat. I'll probably lose lots of money because of this interruption. Oh, Shabbat can be so...!"

"Yes, but just think of what would be if we didn't have Shabbat," Sammy said. "You would just never get a break. Besides, I was just learning about Shabbat in school - you know, because it's in this week's Sedra.

It says: 'Six days work shall be done, and the seventh day shall be holy for you'.

"Our teacher explained that it says 'work shall be done' instead of 'you shall work' to let us know that although it's a commandment to work, we shouldn't lose ourselves in our work and forget everything else. In a sense, the work gets done by itself."

"What do you mean?" asked Michael. "How can it be done by itself? And why shouldn't you lose yourself in your work? That's how you make money."

"Well," continued Sammy, "our teacher said we should realise that our livelihood comes from G-d anyway and He decides how much someone earns. We have to do our best - but in fact it's not up to us. "So we work very hard - but we should never forget our service to G-d by keeping Torah and Mitzvot, including Shabbat and other aspects of our lives, like caring for others. If we take care of that, we trust that G-d will take care of us."

Michael looked at his cousin. "Hmm, that's an interesting idea - that the amount we earn is decided by G-d.... "So in that case, I shouldn't be worrying that I'm losing money by not working on Shabbat, because it's all decided by G-d anyway. I suppose that's a good way to chill out about the whole thing, not to be so...."

He was looking for the right word.

"Enslaved?" suggested Sammy.

"Yes, that's it, not so enslaved. Shabbat brings freedom, right? You know something - that's great! I'm off to get changed and to go to the synagogue. Coming?"

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