



## 5785 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Reuven Schreier Parashat Vayakhel / פרשת ויקהל

### Do Not Revere the Mikdash, but He Who Commanded It

Before describing the collection process for the *Mishkan's* construction, *Moshe* strangely interjects with a repetition of the *mitzvah* of *Shabbat*. He gathers the entire nation together and reminds them, without mentioning a single word about the *Mishkan*, that it is strictly prohibited to perform *melacha* on the holy seventh day, 'שבת שבתון לה' (*Shemot* 35:1-3).

As *Rashi* quotes from the *Mechilta*, *Moshe* was emphasizing to *Klal Yisrael* that despite the enormous importance of building the *Mishkan*, no work or contributions should be performed on *Shabbat*. This *derasha* is parallel to the *Gemara Yevamot* (6a-6b) that quotes the verse in *Parshat Kedoshim* (*Vayikra* 19:30), "You shall observe My Sabbaths and revere My Sanctuary. I am *Hashem*." The *Gemara* explains why the verse juxtaposes *Shabbat* and *Mikdash*: "You do not revere *Shabbat* itself, but rather He Who commanded about *Shabbat*, so too...with regard to the *Mikdash*: You do not revere the *Mikdash* itself but He Who commanded about the *Mikdash*."

The *Gemara's* need for such a derivation reveals an essential point. *Klal Yisrael* is rightfully obsessed (or should be obsessed) with the rebuilding of *Yerushalayim*. Our prayers are permeated with constant references to *binyan Yerushalayim*, *geulah*, and the return of the *avodah* to the *Beit HaMikdash*. The *Gemara Shabbat* (31a) provides a list of questions that will first be asked of a Jew when arriving for Divine judgment; "Did you yearn for salvation?" is prominently featured on that short list.

However, this passion for redemption can become a preoccupation and fixation. The whole purpose of Jerusalem and the *Beit HaMikdash* is to serve as the foundation for *Hashem's* Divine will in this world. The *Mikdash's* purpose is for us to palpably feel love and fear for "He who commanded about the *Mikdash*." All too often, our voracious desire for *geulah* can become a goal onto itself, *r'l* causing us to undermine the very values upon which the sanctity of *Yerushalayim* is built in the first place.

It is specifically before *Klal Yisrael* undertakes the most sacred task of building a Sanctuary for *Hashem* that they must be reminded Who and what this is all about. *Shabbat* serves as the eternal reminder that our spiritual creativity and ingenuity belong to our Creator alone.

Perhaps this can shed light on a fascinating chapter in Jewish history. Thousands of years ago, during this time of the calendar, King *Chizkiyahu* ascended to the throne and called for a revolutionary celebration of *Pesach* (see *Divrei HaYamim* 2, chapter 30). He invited all of *Bnei Yisrael* to join him in Jerusalem, including the remnants of the Ten Tribes in the Northern Kingdom (see commentaries to 30:6). But there was insufficient time for everyone to gather and purify themselves prior to *Pesach*. So the new righteous king was *me'aber hashanah*, adding a month to the year to push off *Pesach* another thirty days. With sufficient time to gather *Klal Yisrael* to Jerusalem, this *Pesach* celebration became one of the most glorious in history. In



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unprecedented unity, the Jewish people brought the *korban Pesach* together, yearning for repentance and atonement. Jerusalem's spiritual power for *achdut* shone through. "There was great joy in Jerusalem, for such a thing had not taken place in Jerusalem since the days of *Shlomo* son of *David*. (30:26)"

But there was a problem; the king performed the *ibur* when it was already *Nissan*. The Sages were perturbed by this halachically unsanctioned addition of a month (*Pesachim* 56a). Once *Nissan* has begun, it is inappropriate to add another month to the year that has already passed.

Despite all the magnificence and glory accompanying that unique *Pesach* celebration, the Sages repudiation sends a clear and powerful message. No matter how spiritually ecstatic we are, and how spiritually beneficial our ingenuity may be, *nothing* can trump the will of He who commanded the *Mikdash*. The true redemption can only come through championing the *ratzon* of *Hashem* and expressing undying loyalty to His Torah.

