



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Ben First on the birth of a daughter, Avigail Esther.

### Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush this week sponsored by Mr & Mrs Ari Scherer on the occasion of the forthcoming Yahrtzeit of their late son - Chaim Aruchim.

### Ovos uBonim Melave Malka

The annual Ovos uBonim Melave Malka takes place this Motzei Shabbos at 7.45 in the Shul hall.

## A House By Any Other Name

Dani Epstein

When it comes to sheer opulence, there is little to beat the Palace of Versailles, if anything at all. Even Donald Trump's \$100 million Manhattan apartment, dripping in gold, is but a shadow of the French Palace's excess. At one point there was a silver balustrade surrounding the king's bed that weighed more than one ton. Of solid silver. Just the sort of thing everyone wants in their bedroom, because there is so much space one can hang clothes over.

No doubt most of us react quite unfavourably when reading of such excess and gross vanity. In even the wider society, such opulence is regarded in a very poor light indeed.

This then begs the question, why on earth did Hashem command the Bnei Yisroel to gather a vast horde of treasure to build a "home" for Him? Furthermore, building a physical residence for Hashem flatly contradicts what the Torah tells us, that Hashem is beyond the realms of the physical. What exactly did He need a house for?

I would imagine that most of us have not had any direct contact with cults of various natures. Exactly what defines a cult is difficult to pinpoint; Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb was once approached by the Israeli government to advise them as to the definition of what constitutes a cult, and concluded that a fundamental requirement would be the denial of freedom. A group that requires its members to give up all their worldly possessions and total freedom of movement is a cult.

Bearing all this in mind, how then can we understand the call to donate gold, silver, copper and precious cloths to the Mishkon? Surely this could not have been a forerunner to the excesses of the Papal regime and kings the like of Louis VIX?

The Abravanel amongst many meforshim discusses this and related topics in great detail, however we can cover a simplistic overview here that should provide sufficient material to understand superficially the purpose of the mishkon and its relevance to us today.

How exactly was the vast horde of precious materials gathered? Was there some kind of system in place to ensure the requirements would be met?

Well, when it come to zedokoh, the norm was (until relatively recently) to appoint gabboim to perform a regular collection and they would assess every individual in order to determine the appropriate donation. Likewise, when it came to constructing protective walls

## תענית אסתר

Taanis Starts	4.54am
Shacharis	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	5.40pm
Sof Ta'anis	6.45pm

and other communal necessities, the sum an individual was required to contribute was not at their discretion.

When it came to the Mishkon, a pivotal construction within the camp of the Bnei Yisroel, surely one would expect a tax or levy of some kind? After all, this was to become the "house" of Hashem, something everyone would benefit from directly?

The reality was quite different, though. Of course the posuk does say "וְיִקְחֶינִי תְרוּמָה" - take an offering for Me", however their is caveat to that: "מֵאֵת כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנֵנוּ לְבוֹ" - from every man whose heart inspires him to generosity".

There was no tax imposed, no levy or even anyone going around to encourage people to donate. If someone was inspired, they donated; if not, not - and that was that.

This was important for several reasons. First of all, the funding of the Mishkon was one of the events and systems that dictated the balance of power within Klal Yisroel, just as the financial position of the people who would staff it was another.

Unlike the priests, prelates, bishops and their ilk, the Kohanim had the least stable financial status of any Jew. In the days immediately preceding Shmuel hanovi, for example, the kohanim were so short on meat that they imposed a tax on every korban. That in itself was fine and quite a reasonable thing to do. They depended on Klal Yisroel for their income, and since few people made the pilgrimage to Shiloh the Kohanim were suffering as a result.

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת תרומה

Candle Lighting	5.35pm
Mincha	5.40pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.35am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur on Hilchos Purim	4.52pm
2nd Mincha	5.22pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	6.42pm
Ovos uBonim Melava Malka	7.45pm
Sun	7.10am / 8.20am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
<b>תענית אסתר</b>	<b>See Above</b>
Mincha & Maariv	5.45pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Where they went wrong was in the implementation of this levy. Without so much as an as-you-please, they would strike a three-pronged fork into the cauldron that contained the meat of the korban and take whatever came up, a sort of pot-luck tax. No matter what the size of the pot was, they did the same thing with the same sized fork. This was hardly reasonable. If someone brought a large bull as a korban, a fork-full is hardly going to make a difference. But if someone brought a small lamb, that could result in half or more of their meat being taken. So that was the first issue. If you are forced to impose some kind of levy, be reasonable. Secondly, don't demand; ask nicely. They failed on both counts and were brought to task for that.

This concept was brought out very clearly when it came to the Mishkon. No donations were solicited, and whatever anyone brought, whether it was something small or insignificant or an extravagant donation, everything was accepted.

This accomplished yet another important balance of power. If only Moshe and the Nesiim were the donors to the Mishkon, they effectively would have been the arbiters, managers and controllers of the edifice, which was not what Hashem intended. Every member of Klal Yisroel was to be a shareholder in the Mishkon, and therefore a potential power base of major donors was avoided in this way.

A further reinforcement of this concept was the extent of donations that were received. It would be quite understandable if someone in their enthusiasm and zeal for the mitzvoh would hand over every last penny they had. This was not what Hashem wanted, however.

Chazal are quoted in Kesubos 67b as saying: "באושא התקינו המבזבו - באושא התקינו המבזבו" - in Usha they decreed that someone who distributes [their money] should not distribute more than a fifth [of their money]." In much the same way when it came to the Mishkon, only reasonable donations were accepted; no-one was allowed to over-extend themselves.

The Abravanel even ventures to suggest that the word תרומה hints to this as being a conjunction of the two words "תרי ממאה" - two from a hundred".

So we can conclude from all of this that the very nature of the Mishkon was quite a different proposition than the edifices that were built for false gods. There was no intention to extort or subjugate the Bnei Yisroel in some way; far from it.

The initial message was: "Do whatever you do for Hashem in a pleasant manner; don't coerce or pressure anyone. Watch everyone's money and make sure they don't get carried away." An altogether simple but fundamental concept.

It's a very nice sentiment, but why bother with a house for Hashem altogether? In what possible way can Hashem need a physical abode here on earth?

All this and more serves to highlight the purpose of the Mishkon, which was this: at the time it was constructed, and even until today, the idolaters were all convinced that Hashem might have created the world, but He then abandoned it. He lost interest in His creation, and other forces muscled into the vacuum formed by His absence.

Hashem had revealed Himself to the Bnei Yisroel at Mount Sinai, but did not want them to forget this unique experience and eventually abandon Him.

So Hashem ordered the Bnei Yisroel to construct the Mishkon in order to provide them with a tangible structure, a locus of Hashem's presence in this physical world from where they would see the continued interest of Hashem in their personal lives - this was the meaning of "וּשְׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם" - and I will live amongst the Bnei Yisroel and walk amongst them".

There the kohanim served in purity, the kiyor was placed before them as a warning: purify yourselves and distance yourselves from evil. There the mizbeach represented the desire to burn away the evil desires and lusts of the Bnei Yisroel. Within the Ohel Moed was a candelabra, a mizbeach for the ketores and the table for the Ponim bread, all in order to reinforce that this was somewhere the king lived and was served.

Ultimately, all the complex hints that surrounded the Mishkon's construction, fabrication and continued use was not there to serve any purpose for Hashem - He certainly requires nothing of these things in any way, shape or form. It was purely for Klal Yisroel, a visual and visceral aid in maintaining their relationship with Hashem.

Today we still have an ongoing mitzvoh to build the Beis Hamikdosh. The opening statement of the Rambam in Hilchos Beis Habechiroh is: "מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה לְעִשׂוֹת בֵּית לַה' מוֹפֵן לְהַיּוֹת מִקְרִיבִים בּוֹ הַתְּקַבְּלוֹת" - there is a practical mitzvoh to make a house for Hashem ready to offer up korbanos."

Now, one might quote the famous Rashi in Rosh Hashono (last one on 30b) in which he states that the third Beis Hamikdosh will be built בידי שמים. Much has been said about this, however the Rambam writes quite clearly in Hilchos Melochim: "הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ עֲתִיד לַעֲמֹד וְלְהַחְזִיר מַלְכוּת דָּוִד לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַמְשָׁלָהּ הָרְאשׁוֹנָה. וּבִנְיָה הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וּמִקְבֵּץ נְדָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - the anointed King will restore and return the monarchy of Dovid to it's former glory and previous dominion. And he will build the Beis Hamikdosh and gather in the exiles." Clearly this mitzvoh is something we have to undertake at some point.

We still need a physical representative of Hashem's presence here on earth. True, we are currently not in the position of being able to build one, but certainly this is a mitzvoh we should yearn to fulfil, since it will give us a far closer connection to Hashem than we presently have. This too is the message of the Mishkon, that even today when we have such widespread Torah learning, so many mitzvos are easy to keep and we discover so much depth and beauty within the Torah in ways we could never have imagined before, we are still lacking something central in our lives, something that can pull us all together and bring us so much closer to Hashem.

## The End In Deed Was The First In Thought

Shlomo Katz (Torah.org)

"They shall make an Aron / Ark of acacia wood . . ." (25:10) "You shall make a Shulchan / Table of acacia wood . . ." (25:23) "You shall make a Menorah of pure gold . . ." (25:31) "You shall make the Mishkan of ten curtains . . ." (26:1)

As the order of these verses indicates, Moshe was commanded to make the major kelim / vessels before he was commanded to make the components of the Mishkan itself. However, the Gemara relates that when Moshe told Betzalel— the chief craftsman of the Mishkan and its kelim—to make the kelim first and then the Mishkan, Betzalel challenged him, "Does one make furniture before building a house?" Moshe responded that Betzalel had divined G-d's intention. "Were you standing b'tzel e-l / in the shadow of G-d?" Moshe asked, making a play on the craftsman's name.

What did Moshe's response mean? After all, G-d did give the command to make kelim before He gave the command to make the parts of the Mishkan! R' Aharon Kotler z"l (Lakewood rosh yeshiva; died 1962) explains:

The first of the kelim listed in the Torah is the Aron, which housed the Luchot and also the Torah scroll that Moshe wrote. Our Sages teach that Hashem created the Torah before He created the world. Likewise, the Aron is listed before any other item from the Mishkan. But Hashem did not create the physical Torah before He created the world. To the contrary, the Torah was not given until the world was more than two thousand years old. Only conceptually did the Torah precede the world, but not physically. To paraphrase the expression with which our Sages describe the Sabbath day (another "later" creation), "Sof ma'aseh b'machshavah techilah" / "The end in deed was the first in thought."

Betzalel understood that, although the concept of an Aron preceded the rest of the Mishkan and its contents, the physical Aron was not to come first. It was mentioned first only to emphasize the preeminence of Torah. Because Betzalel divined this, Moshe said to him, "Were you standing in G-d's shadow that you came to understand these secrets?" (Mishnat Rabbi Aharon III p.124)