

# Temple in Your Midst

PARSHA INSIGHTS - BEHAR BECHUKOSAI (5758)

## THE PRE-ASSEMBLED THIRD BAIS HAMIKDOSH - A GIFT FROM G-D

Among Hashem's promises of good fortune for observing His *mitzvos* [commandments], He foretells that we will be privileged to see an exceptionally holy dwelling for His presence. "I will place My Sanctuary (*Mishkani*) in your midst" (26:11). The *Gemara Eruvin* 2A, near the end of the page, points out that the word "*Mishkan*", used in this *pasuk* [verse], refers to the *Bais Hamikdosh* [Temple]. In fact, the *Gemara* proves that the words "*Mishkan*" [Tabernacle] and "*Mikdash*" are interchangeable.

Which *Bais Hamikdosh* does Hashem promise to *Bnai Yisroel* [the Children of Israel] in our *pasuk*? The *Or Hachaim*, in the end of his comments on 26:11, maintains that it is the **third** one. We know that in the future, Hashem will present us with the splendid *Bayis Shlishi* [the third Temple], which will represent eternal sanctity and spiritual bliss. *Or Hachaim* cites the *Zohar* that this sanctuary will be lowered from heaven to earth. This idea is restated in the *rishonim* [early commentators]. *Rashi* on the very bottom of *Succah* 41A states: "The future *Bais Hamikdosh* which we are awaiting - it is built and decorated; it will be revealed and will come from heaven, as it says (*Shmos* [Exodus] 15:17), '...the sanctuary, Hashem, WHICH YOUR HANDS ESTABLISHED.'" *Tosfos* on the same *Gemara* and in *Shavuos* 15B agree.

The *Or Hachaim* then quotes the *Gemara Bava Basra* 75A regarding the makeup of the future walls of Yerushalayim. One opinion states that they will be constructed of "*shoham*" or onyx, a precious stone containing bands of black, white, and red. The other view is that they will be of "*yoshfar*" or jasper, another multi-colored stone. To reconcile the dispute, the *Gemara* declares that Hashem will tolerate the TWO opinions, creating magnificent walls of onyx AND jasper. Although *Rashi* on this *Gemara* explains that the topic is the walls of the CITY OF JERUSALEM, the *Or Hachaim* on our *pasuk* in *Bechukosai* applies this entire discussion to the *BAIS HAMIKDOSH* walls which Hashem will send down in the future. Remember, the *rishonim* cite the *pasuk* in *Oz Yashir* (*Shmos* 15:17), "The sanctuary, Hashem, which Your hands established", to show that the *Bayis Shlishi* is fashioned by the Master Builder Himself. **The *Or Hachaim* puts that *pasuk* together with today's.** "I will place My sanctuary in your midst (26:11)". They are both expressing the same concept! The building which is molded by Hashem will be brought down and planted in the midst of *Klal Yisroel* [the Jewish people]. It will stand forever, as indicated by the words in the end of our *pasuk* (26:11): "My spirit will not despise you".

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin explains: The first and second *Bais Hamikdosh* were quite different from this third one. They were created by human hands. Even their glorious predecessor, the *Mishkan* in the wilderness, was the work of people. What inspiring message is Hashem sending in today's *parsha* by saying "I will place **My** sanctuary in your midst"? If *Bnai Yisroel* will fulfill the *mitzvos* of the Torah properly, a unique *Bais Hamikdosh* will descend, one erected by Hashem Himself. WE will not be the ones to construct it for Hashem to dwell in. It is shown in many places that absolute *teshuva* [repentance] on the part of the Jewish people, will rectify the first sin committed, that of Adam *Harishon* [Adam the first man] eating from the *aitz hada'as* [tree of knowledge]. Humankind has within it the ability to return to that spiritual, utopian existence of "Adam and Chava before their sin". Such complete *teshuva* will prompt *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* [the Holy One, Blessed is He] to present us with the *Bayis Shlishi*.

The *Oznaim L'Torah* reminds us that *Bnai Yisroel* were already given a gift directly from heaven at their acceptance of the Torah. After reaching the lofty goal of unity in thought and purpose, the Jewish people declared "*na'aseh v'nishama* [we will do and obey]" (*Mishpatim* 24:7). It is expressed by our sages that this state of being was comparable to Adam and Chava before the sin of the *aitz hada'as*. At that point, we were also handed something straight from heaven. Moshe received the *luchos* [tablets] of stone which are described in the following manner: "And the tablets were the work of G-d, and the writing was the writing of G-d, engraved upon the tablets" (*Ki Sisa* 32:16). I would like to add that the *Targum Yonasan* on *Ki Sisa* 31:18 describes these precious objects as tablets of sapphire stone from the *Kisai HaKavod* [Throne of Glory]. About these *luchos*, *Chazal* [our Sages] declare that they were created during twilight of *erev Shabbos* [the eve of the Sabbath - Friday] in the beginning of the world's formation (*Avos* 5:6). Clearly, they were constructed for the specific purpose of containing the words of Torah handed over to Moshe *Rabainu* [Moses our teacher].

However, this was true only BEFORE the sin of worshipping the Golden Calf. At that point, *Bnai Yisroel* were still similar to Adam *Harishon* before his transgression. After this *avaira* [sin], when Hashem agreed to grant us a new set of tablets, He told **Moshe** to carve them out of sapphire (*Ki Sisa* 34:1). Moshe did so, taking the precious stone from a quarry in his tent, shown to him by Hashem (*Rashi* 34:1 from *Midrash Tanchuma*). Still, the **writing** on these second *luchos* was that of Hashem Himself (34:1).

In short, there are at least two time periods that *Bnai Yisroel* emulate Adam and Chava before their wrongdoing. At *Matan Torah* [the giving of the Torah] we reached this level, and we will also accomplish this in the future. Each time this occurs, Hashem presents us with a precious gift fashioned by His very hands. At the receiving of the Torah, the *luchos* of heavenly sapphire, taken from the Throne of Glory, were handed to Moshe to transmit to us. In the future, a magnificent *Bais Hamikdosh* will descend, also formed by G-d.

Incidentally, the statement of *Rashi* and *Tosfos*, brought also in the above mentioned *Or Hachaim* from the *Zohar*, that the future *Bais Hamikdosh* will be created by G-d and not by humans, does not necessarily disagree with the *Rambam*. The *Rambam* in *Hilchos Melachim* 11:4 explains that if a king arises from the house of Dovid, and he successfully **builds the Bais Hamikdosh** in its place, plus other remarkable feats, he is definitely *Moshiach* [Messiah]. It sounds like the third *Bais Hamikdosh* will be built by people! But this does not have to be true. The connotation could very well be that he will **bring about** the presence of this *Bais Hamikdosh*, as if he had built it. However, Harav Eliyahu Touger, on page 233 of his commentary on the *Rambam*, suggests that these *rishonim* are arguing, the *Rambam* maintaining that *Moshiach* will actually initiate human construction of the holy edifice. One source for this is the *Midrash Rabba Naso* 13:2. There, on page 51 of the Vilna edition, *Chazal* state that *Moshiach* will “come and BUILD” the *Bais Hamikdosh*. This is one reason to say that the *Rambam* means it literally. Rav Touger brings a reconciliation between the *rishonim* which we will not explore. Whichever approach we focus on, one thing is certain. Today’s *pasuk* predicts that “I will place My sanctuary in your midst” (26:11).

As the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos* [Holiday of Weeks (receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai)] draws near, may we be *zocheh* [meritorious] to our own *Kabolas Hatorah* [receiving the Torah], similar to *Bnai Yisroel* in the year 2448, when heaven-made *luchos* were given to them. Even more, a heaven-made *Bais Hamikdosh*, a genuine present from Hashem, would truly make things perfect.

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