

B”H

PARTNERS IN CONSTRUCTION OF THE THIRD BEIS HA'MIKDASH

BEGIN WITH A GRIN

The mayor, who wanted to build a bridge in his city, advertised a public bid for the contract. An Arab contractor came and tendered a bid for a million dollars to do the work. The mayor asked him to itemize the expenses.

The contractor said: a third for materials, a third for workers and a third for the work.

An Asian contractor was next. He bid for two million and the mayor said, “That's a bit expensive. Please itemize your expenses.”

The contractor said: a third for materials, a third for workers and a third for the work.

Along came a Jewish contractor who bid for three million. The mayor was stunned and said, I don't know how you came up with that sum. Please itemize your expenses.

The Jewish contractor said: a million for you, a million for me, and a million for the Arab contractor to do the work!

HEAVENLY OR EARTHLY CONSTRUCTION?

Parshas Teruma begins with G-d's command to Moshe to build the Mishkan in the desert where the Shechina would reside. The command, “Make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell within them” is even listed in the count of 613 mitzvos. During the thousands of years since Mattan Torah and the construction of the Mishkan, the Jewish people have been involved in this fundamental mitzva in order to bring about the indwelling of the Shechina and holiness within them and the entire world.

First of all, in a practical way, the moving of the Mishkan from the desert to Gilgal, the building of the Mishkan in Shilo, its move to Nov and Givon, the construction of two Battei Mikdash (the first and the second), occupied the Jewish people for more than 1000 years. Second, on the creative thinking level, gedolei Yisrael since the destruction of the second Bayis were involved in the big question: How can we fulfill the building of the Mishkan/Mikdash during exile? And the question of all questions: Who, when, and how will the third and eternal Mikdash be built?

The topic is so ancient that the first mention of this question appears already in the Zohar. According to the Zohar, Shlomo HaMelech, while building the Beis Ha'Mikdash, knew that it would eventually be destroyed. He even alluded to this in a chapter of Tehillim (127), “A song of ascents about Solomon. If the Lord will not build a house, its builders have toiled at it in vain.” A house that wasn't built by G-d Himself, won't last; it will perforce be destroyed. The same was true for the second Mikdash, because whatever wasn't built by an eternal, infinite power cannot last for eternity!

That being the case, the third (eternal) Mikdash will be built by G-d Himself. Therefore, adds the Zohar, we find that at the end of Tehillim, 20 chapters after that chapter that prophesies about destruction, it says (147), “G-d is the Builder of Yerushalayim,” because the One who will build the city of Yerushalayim of the future, including the third Beis HaMikdash, is only G-d Himself.

Elsewhere, the Zohar describes G-d's building plan of the future. The Creator of the world is not an ordinary contractor or manager of a construction company that operates according to political or governmental dictates. The Creator is above all municipal laws of construction or accepted zoning practices that govern how cities are engineered. The usual way of things is that you first build the walls of a city, for the sake of security and protection. Then you build the houses and the buildings necessary for its functioning. When speaking of Yerushalayim of the

future though, G-d will defy all of the rules.

First, says the Zohar, G-d will build the Beis HaMikdash. He will bring it down from the heavens and only then will He start the construction of the walls of Yerushalayim, and not regular walls made of stone or bricks, wood and dirt, but (Zecharia 2:9) “a wall of fire around it.”

It's not only in Kabbalistic or spiritual sources that we find mentions of G-d's building the third Mikdash Himself and its coming down complete from heaven. Even the great commentators of the Talmud like Rashi (Succa 41a et al) and Tosafos mention that “future Mikdash that we anticipate is already built and developed, and will be revealed and come from heaven as it says (Shemos 15:17), 'The sanctuary of G-d that Your hands established.'” This is how they resolve the Gemara that maintains that it is possible that the third Mikdash will be built at night or on Yom Tov, which requires explanation since the construction of the Mikdash does not override Shabbos and Yom Tov and is forbidden to be built at night. If so, why does the Gemara offer unrealistic possibilities?

In light of what was explained before, it fits nicely. The limitations regarding the right time to build the Mikdash exist only if it is built by people. We cannot build it at night and we cannot build it on Shabbos or Yom Tov, but G-d? As we said before, He is not a clerk who works in the Department of Buildings or a member of the board of a construction company. G-d is not limited by our construction limitations and He can bring down the Mikdash when He wants!

On the other hand, the Rambam's view at the end of his sefer (Laws of Kings 11:1) is that Moshiach will build the third Mikdash and this is one of the main conditions and indications that tell us who Moshiach is.

The Talmud Yerushalmi has a similar view in its explanation of the verse in Shir HaShirim (4:16), “Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind.” We find an interesting explanation there that says that this is referring to “when the exiles awaken that are in the north, and they come and build the Beis HaMikdash which is in the south.” It seems that the Jewish people returning from exile will be the ones to build the future Mikdash.

The Rebbe addresses the seeming contradiction between the Rambam and the Yerushalmi about whether Moshiach will build the Mikdash or it will be built by the Jewish people and he explains that the source of what the Rambam says is the Tanna R' Eliezer in the Medrash (Vayikra Rabba 9, 6) who explains that same verse in Shir HaShirim and instead of “the Jewish people returning from exile” he explains that Moshiach is in the north and from there he will “awaken” and come and build the Mikdash which is in Yerushalayim, in the south.

Furthermore, one can also explain that Moshiach will serve as the leader of the Jewish people in building the Mikdash. After all, nobody expects King Moshiach himself to roll up his sleeves and drag construction materials and work with cement, especially since he is a king and a king is not allowed to do any work in public which would take away from his honor. Therefore, we must say that the Rambam means that Moshiach is the one who will “conduct the orchestra” and serve as the “director of the construction committee,” as the public representative of the Jewish people who helps them carry out the mitzva they are obligated to do. The above offers us some resolution regarding the differences between the Yerushalmi and the Rambam.

However, we still haven't answered the main question – what will actually happen? Who will build the future Mikdash? How can we reconcile these views?

JOINT CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

The Rebbe addressed this topic many times and over the years we find a number of different answers to this conundrum in his teachings. The Rebbe learns that the construction of the Mikdash will be “a collaboration” between G-d and the Jewish people and there are several possibilities of how this will play out:

1) The building plans for the third Bayis are written in detail at the end of Yechezkel (chapter 40 and on). It says everything there with a detailed description of the Bayis with all its parts. However, there is a problem as the Rambam himself (Beis Ha'Bechira 1:4) writes, “The future building that will be built, even though it's written in

Yechezkel is not explained and elucidated.” The detailed plan that describes the third Beis HaMikdash is written (as though) in code, in an obscure way that cannot be understood. Even the greatest of all commentators, the illustrious Rashi in the middle of his commentary to these chapters writes (Rashi Yechezkel 42:13), “I don't know how to understand it.” If Rashi doesn't, what can we say ... We don't sufficiently understand those chapters in Yechezkel, we have only partial knowledge of certain details of the construction, and therefore, Moshiach will build whatever we can understand based on the sources. Those parts that aren't clear will come down from heaven.

2) Another explanation (according to the *Aruch L'Ner* on Succa 41a) is that Moshiach will build the third Mikdash and then a spiritual Mikdash will descend from heaven and invest itself into the physical building (like the fire on the altar – the kohanim lit a fire and there was also a fire from heaven). In the words of the *Aruch L'Ner*, “Just as below there is no soul without a body, so too, the spiritual Mikdash will not be erected without a physical Mikdash.”

As to the question above, how will we know how to build the parts of the third Bayis that are shrouded in mystery and how will we understand the details if even Rashi didn't, the Rebbe answers that Moshiach “will be very wise, greater than Shlomo (both Shlomo HaMelech and Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, aka Rashi) and will know how to construct the building in its entirety since these details will be revealed to him in the Geula or through prophecy.

3) The Rebbe explains that the entire Mikdash will come down from heaven and then Moshiach will fulfill his part by erecting the gates which remained from the first Mikdash! In Eicha it says, “its gates sank into the earth” and our Sages say that the gates of the first Mikdash were not destroyed; they sank into the ground (reminiscent of Korach). In the Geula, those gates will sprout forth anew, complete, out of the ground, and then Moshiach will install them in the building. Installing doors or gates is considered, in halacha, as building the entire edifice since without doors and gates the building is not a protected place and is therefore not fit for its intended use as a place of residence.

We can learn a lesson from all this in connection with bringing the Geula. There is a contractual agreement of mutual cooperation between G-d and the Jewish people regarding the building of the third Mikdash. We are not permitted to sit back and wait; we need to take action, to build!

We have an agreement with G-d in which we do our part and He needs to do His part. We have been given the ability to fix and complete our personal Mikdash with our avodas Hashem and to create a sanctified space around us. Especially in our generation, in which every single action affects and hastens the building of the third Mikdash.

TO CONCLUDE WITH A STORY

We will end with a story about construction. R' Gimpel Orimland was living in Atlantic City in New Jersey and the Rebbe suggested that he move to Miami. Before the actual move, he went to the Rebbe for Shabbos Bereishis. The gabbaim held a public sale of “mitzvos” for the shul for the entire year. R' Gimpel, who didn't understand what it was about and only heard that they were raising money, said he was willing to donate \$1000 for the shul. The Rebbe said, “From you – I don't want it.”

Terrified, he asked, “Why?”

The Rebbe said, “I want you to give \$5000.” Without a penny to his name and with a sharp jab that he got from the person standing next to him, R' Avrohom Maiyor, he said, “I'll give it!” The Rebbe insisted that he would only take it if it was “with joy and gladness of heart.”

When he insisted that he was making the pledge with a happy heart, the Rebbe said, “In that case, I promise you that next year you will be able to give *keifel kiflayim* (double/double) that amount.”

He returned home, told his wife, and she said, “Although we are in debt, if the Lubavitcher Rebbe said to give than we need to give it right away. Go to the bank and ask for a loan of \$5000 and send it to 770 immediately.” That's what he did.

They moved to Miami where the Rebbe told him to build nursing homes. When meeting the Rebbe's shliach to Miami, Rabbi Korf, as the Rebbe had instructed him, the shliach introduced him to someone in the business and he proceeded to build a nursing home. The year passed, and R' Gimpel saw no financial growth on the horizon, nor did he feel comfortable about what awaited him. What would happen if this time too, the Rebbe enlarged his donation and would ask him for money he didn't have?

A few days before Rosh Hashana, R' Gimpel received an offer from the hospital that was adjacent to his seniors' home to buy his building. Although the days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur were the busiest time of the year and people almost never received answers from the Rebbe, he got an answer to sell the building and only to lease the land to the hospital. The hospital agreed and paid a \$50,000 dollar cash advance for the deal – as a one third partner, his share was more than three times his donation.

R' Gimpel saw “that it worked” and went to the Rebbe again for Simchas Torah and Shabbos Bereishis. This time, he expected the Rebbe to demand an even larger donation on account of the windfall that he had received during the year.

On Simchas Torah, R' Gimpel competed to buy the first verse of “Ata Horeisa” with which they honored the Rebbe. In the end, he gave in and bought the second verse not for a specific amount but for whatever amount the Rebbe would decide. He hoped that the amount would be even more than before.

After Shabbos Bereishis, R' Gimpel had yechidus. The Rebbe did not bring up the subject so R' Gimpel asked what amount to write on the check. The Rebbe said, “\$126.”

R' Gimpel was taken aback. The year before, when he didn't have what to give, the Rebbe had asked him for \$5000 and this year, just \$126?

The Rebbe said, “I don't need your money. I needed you to break through your limitations and give true charity from your heart. This is what I wanted from you, when you thought you didn't have and were unable to.”

Good Shabbos!