



Parashat Tetzaveh - #271

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On the Haftarah... The Third Temple

[Yechezkel 43:10-27]

"You, Son of Man, tell the House of Israel about the Temple, and let them be ashamed of their transgressions, and figure out its (The Temple's) outline. And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the shape of the Temple and its design, its exits and entrances..." (Yechezkel 43:10-11). How is the building of the Temple connected to the Nation of Israel's shame for their sins? Isn't knowledge of art and architecture enough to succeed in building such a structure?

The Temple was not built to express architectural beauty, but rather to express the beauty of our souls, which is, in turn, expressed through the beauty of the structure. Therefore, when the souls are stained, the Temple crumbles. For this reason, only serious repentance is able to bring about the building of the Temple. The solution to the problem of rebuilding the Temple is not a technical one.

There is a major difference, by the way, between building the Temple and building the Land of Israel. At the beginning of the Zionist awakening, some Rabbis immediately invalidated the movement because of the low religious and ethical level of the Nation. In their opinion, the return to Zion is not merely a population transfer, but a messianic, prophetic fulfillment and the establishment of a "Kingdom of priests and a holy Nation" (Shemot 19:6) in our Land. And if the Nation has not reached this required level, then it is better to remain in the Exile until we reach spiritual heights. Only after the Nation fully and truly repents will it be time to return to the Holy Land, to become a Holy Nation and establish a holy State.

The majority of our Rabbis do not agree with this opinion. They hold that we should make aliyah immediately in order to establish a State, even if we have yet to reach this spiritual level. Just as it is impossible to expect a new-born baby to have sterling behavior, so too is it unrealistic to demand immediate perfection from a young state. Our Rabbis therefore took into account the need to climb from the profane to the holy. Furthermore, there was pressure to save the Nation of Israel, which was constantly exposed to the threat of assimilation – something which, to our great distress, still exists in our time. There was therefore an obligation to begin the process of the return to Zion and the building of our Land immediately, before the repentance, which would come sooner or later.

With regard to building the Temple, however, the exact opposite is true. The prophet Yechezkel describes at length that the people, faced with the holiness of the Temple, should be ashamed of their transgressions. If the Nation of Israel shows signs of regret, then the prophet can continue his speech. If not, he has nothing to add, as Nation is not ready. It is still entrenched in the idea that the Temple is a sort of amulet that protects it from its enemies and shields its eyes from the corruption. This outlook is a very mistaken one.

It is nonetheless quite surprising that the prophet's message was delivered in the Exile, where he spent the majority of his life. Wouldn't it have been more useful to dedicate his efforts to admonishing the Nation about its behavior than providing a lengthy description – four chapters in all! - of the future Temple?

But the prophecy of Hashem which reached Yechezkel was essentially concerned with the long-term elevation of the Nation of Israel in its Land, and not its past or present behavior. His book ends with an incomparable climax: the Divine promise of the future return of the Nation of Israel to our Land, the renewed sovereignty within our borders and the Third Temple in Jerusalem as the center of the State.

We must learn to look at the far-off horizon, which is full of Divine promises, even if it seems blurry at first glance. This sight can fill our daily lives with the spirituality and courage necessary for us to develop in the proper direction. It helps us to elevate us above our concern about our personal existence, and magnifies our concern for the communal well-being, which is immeasurably greater.

The Temple described by Yechezkel is not the Second Temple, which could be rebuilt in a short time, but the Third Temple. He does not provide us with the detailed blueprint of the Second Temple, which, when it was built during the time of Ezra – as the Rambam says – was similar to King Shlomo's Temple and influenced by Yechezkel's Temple (Hilchot Beit Ha-Bechirah 1:4). The Second Temple is a stage between the First and Third Temple. So why provide the plan for the Third Temple and not the Second?

In one of his books dedicated to the uniqueness of the Temple, "Mishkinei Elyon," the Ramchal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto, explained that the Third Temple is the ideal, the final Temple. It is a "Temple of Above," not just a "Temple of Below." This is the Temple we are waiting for. It is not enough to build a "Temple of Below" with the aid of building material. It also requires the highest form of spirituality. The first two Temples were destroyed; the same fate will not mark the Third. Unlike the two earlier ones, which were spiritually incomplete, the future Temple will not be lacking anything. The spiritual state of the Nation did not allow the Divine Presence to continue dwelling in the Temple. The Third Temple, however, is an eternal and indestructible structure, built upon the integrated spirituality of the Nation of Israel.

It is for this reason that Rabbi Akiva began to laugh when he saw a fox run out on the spot of the Holy of Holies. The Sages were puzzled by his strange pleasure. He explained that because we have seen the prophecy of the Temple's destruction realized in all of its details, including the verse "foxes prowl over it" (Eichah 5:18), we can now be sure that the Third Temple will be built. All of the prophecies of the revival of the Nation will be brought about in all of its details (Makot 24a).

The Third Temple is not a grandiose version of the Second Temple. During the time of Ezra, it was known that the Second Temple would be destroyed to make room for the Third (Ra'avad, Hilchot Beit Ha-Bechirah 6:14), which will be built on the level in which we "Make His (Hashem's) will, your will" (Pirkei Avot 2:4). Man's desires will be identical to that of Hashem's. Not only will man perform goodness, he will become the essence of goodness.

On the one hand, the Third Temple will descend with fire from the Heavens (Tosafot on Rosh Hashanah 30a). On the other hand, we are commanded to build the Temple (Rambam, Hilchot Beit Ha-Bechirah 1:1). There is no contradiction. It will be completely Divine, pure like fire, free of human weakness. It will be the highest form of unity between Israel and the Divine Presence.

Yechezkel arrived to give us hope, and to declare that the Exile will end, and that at the time of the Redemption there will be greater spiritual and material joy. The Exile is similar to surgery which is painful but saves one's life. Its purpose is to remove the evil from within our midst in order to bring the Nation of Israel to its Divine role. We raise our eyes towards this supreme purpose and the more we aspire to it, the more we will understand to repent from our sins and build our future through integrity and light.

Rav Aviner on...

Don't Live off of Loans

[Be-Ahavah U-B-Emunah – Terumah 5773- translated by R. Blumberg]

Don't take loans if you're not sure you can pay them back. That is also a type of theft.

"The wicked man borrows and does not repay" (Tehillim 37:21).

Do not say, "I've got a lot of expenses, and I have no choice." Certainly you've got a choice.

The rule is: Don't spend more than you earn. Spend less!

Less! 1) Because you must return all your loans. 2) Because you need reserve funds for unexpected expenses, pleasant or unpleasant. An example of a pleasant expense is a wedding.

An example of an unpleasant expense is a washing machine that has to be replaced.

You therefore need a reserve fund.

Don't spend money you don't have. That is morally licentious, even morally corrupt – living off the money of others.

Our Sages said that there are four types who are too impossible for words, and one of them is a poor man who is arrogant (Pesachim 13b). This refers to a person of little income who lives like a rich man.

As a rule, don't spend more than you bring in. Towards that end, here are several practical pieces of advice:

A. Don't rely on your intuition. Rather, keep a precise budget that covers annual, monthly, weekly and daily figures. Realize how much each item costs you, as with car upkeep and cellular phones. Knowledge is power. Just as we must spiritually take stock, so must we take stock of our holdings. That, too, constitutes taking stock spiritually.

B. Use cash. Don't use a credit card or checks. Just use cash. That way you'll know whether you have money or not.

C. Limit expenses and cancel unnecessary ones. Don't envy others and don't covet their possessions. Jealousy, lust and seeking honor banish a person from the world. Not just the world-to-come, but this world too. Get by with little. Who is rich? He who is content with his lot (Avot 4:1).

Here are some details:

1. When you make a wedding, there is no obligation to invite so many people or to hire an expensive hall, catering service, band or photographer. Don't take loans that are not based on what you own now.

2. The same goes for the engagement party, the Shabbat festivities before the wedding, the festivities during the week after the wedding, bar and bat mitzvahs, circumcisions, kiddushs, etc.

3. Move to a more inexpensive apartment. Avoid remodeling and expensive furniture.

4. Buy a less expensive car. Or live without a car altogether. It is possible.

5. Limit telephone use. There's no need to talk so much.

6. Buy simple, inexpensive, essential food.

7. Don't eat out. Bring sandwiches, fruit, etc. with you,

8. You can smoke less... You can smoke not at all. Each year 10,000 people die from smoking, with a sixth of them dying from passive smoking, and hundreds of thousands more who get ill.

9. Limit travel expenses.

10. Limit electricity expenses. My late father-in-law, of blessed memory, received free electricity as one of the perks of his important position in the Electric Company, yet he still went around the house turning off every unnecessary light. He taught: "Someone is paying for this!"

11. Buy inexpensive clothing. Second-hand stores have an enormous selection of lovely clothing in excellent condition at rock-bottom prices.

12. During vacation time, expenses skyrocket. Don't spend on anything you feel like. Keep your spending under control.

13. The same applies at holiday time.

D. The Consumer Culture: Steer clear of the consumer culture, and from going on shopping excursions to malls. Don't go in there! It's a place full of unnecessary temptations. If you must, plan in advance and prepare yourself psychologically not to be tempted. Go to less fancy stores. Compare prices. And remember: shopping is not a recreational activity, nor a treatment for depression.

E. Admit the truth: If you've got a problem with overspending, admit it. It's a sickness. True, you're not the only one. About half of the Jewish People live in overdraft. Yet that is no consolation. Pal, you're sick! Get a hold of yourself! Nobody will solve this problem for you. Don't expect others to come up with the solution, and not the government, as they do at demonstrations. Rather, the only guilty party is you. Because you are spending money that you don't have.

F. Redemption comes gradually. Save another hundred shekels, another ten shekels, another shekel. One small saving and then another, add up to a great saving. One penny to another adds up to a large sum.

G. No more overdraft. Important rule: Have no overdraft. In the United States, it doesn't exist. If a person there is missing one dollar in his account, a thousand dollar check will bounce. In Israel, the bank doesn't allow overdraft out of kindness, but because it makes a lot of money from it, and your own debt balloons. They say of overdraft that it is sweet at first, but bitter in the end.

H. No loans. Don't take loans. They're not a wonder cure. Loans have to be paid off! Don't keep borrowing to pay off loans. In the end everything will collapse like a house of cards.

I. Not even interest-free loans. Even they have to be paid off. A free-loan is not a gift. Other people are waiting for the money. Don't steal from Free-loan societies. Don't live at other people's expense, not even to do mitzvot, except for a few exceptions. Don't be a beggar. Don't be a Schnorrer.

J. The same applies to your children. Teach your children thrift. Don't give in to their pressuring you to buy them everything their heart desires. Don't submit to extortion. Such submission begets worse extortion. Show them your budget and let them share in the responsibility. Start teaching them from age five, the age when education begins. Handling money is part of education as well. Give your children spending money on a monthly, weekly or daily basis. Let them decide what to do with it, whether to save it or to buy items or to go out on excursions. Let them take responsibility. They can get jobs as well.

Rav Aviner in the News...

Drafting Charedim

[\[http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=303201\]](http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=303201)

Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, municipal Rabbi of Beit El, dean of the Ateret Yerushalayim Yeshiva in the Old City of Jerusalem and another leading figure in the national-religious community, similarly rejected the idea of imposing a universal draft on Charedi yeshiva students but said it was a Mitzvah, a religious obligation in Jewish law, to serve in the army in order to protect Jewish lives, protect the Land of Israel and sanctify God's name.

“We need to gain the trust of the Charedi world and the deans of their yeshivas, in order to get more Charedi men to enlist and we need to be tolerant because coercion won’t work,” said [Rav] Aviner, adding that “men of faith and spirituality” were vital to the state.

The Rabbi refused to comment on the current political wrangling on the issue, however, saying that he would not address the different positions being presented on the issue in the current coalition negotiations.

Rabbi Aviner: I was sent by Mossad to Iran

[www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4345371,00.html]

Rumors surrounding Rabbi Shlomo Aviner's ties to the Mossad have been circulating for years, and on Thursday he admitted for the first time that he was sent by the Israeli intelligence agency to Iran, Yedioth Ahronoth reported.

In an interview with religious website "Kippah," the Rabbi from Beit El recounted the recruitment process: "Following the (Islamic) revolution of 1979, I received a phone call. 'Shlomo, we need you.'" The following day Aviner was sent to Iran with a French passport.

The Rabbi said he was asked to relay a list from Israel to Iran, but he refused to offer any other details. The cover story was that Aviner was visiting Iran as a representative of the French Rabbinate to provide Iranian Jews with matzos for Passover.

"I was terrified and prayed that I wouldn't be checked too much at the passport desk, but they let me pass without asking too many questions," Aviner told the website.

Asked how he managed to relay messages from Iran to Israel, the Rabbi said, "My aunt ran an international chandelier business in France and she exported (chandeliers) to many countries, including Iran. I used public phones to place calls, pretending to be a client, and used code words to relay the information to her."

Aviner returned to Israel and was recruited for another mission after Passover. The Rabbi said he cut short the second mission after noticing he was being followed.

Special thank you to Orly Tzion for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parashah Sheet



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