



Parashat Vayakel-Pekudei - #273

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On the Haftarah...

Haftarah for Parashat Pekudei

(We read Parashat Ha-Chodesh this Shabbat)

David's Temple

[Ashkanzim: Melachim 1 7:51-8:21

Sefardim/Yemenite Jews: Melachim 1 7:40-50]

"My father David had it in his heart to build a Temple for the Name of the Hashem, G-d of Israel. Hashem said to my father David, 'Because it was in your heart to build a Temple for my Name, you did well to have this in your heart, but you will not build the Temple; rather your son, who is your offspring, will build the Temple for My Name'" (Melachim 1 8:17-19).

If King David was not the one who would build the Temple, why mention him? King Shlomo never tried to change or improve upon his father's creation. On the contrary, he faithfully continued his father's project and never missed an opportunity to mention this fact. He would always refer to himself as Shlomo ben (son of) David, and would not take any credit for this endeavor. It is true that he built the Temple, but the foundation was laid by King David.

Humans do not build anything without the aid of building materials, and the same applies to the building of the Temple. But to construct a building of such great

spiritual standing, a person must first to put his soul into it – immensely and intensely. King Shlomo felt an obligation to emphasize this fact at the dedication of the Temple: "Blessed is Hashem, G-d of Israel, who spoke with His mouth with my father David, and fulfilled it with His hand, for He said: 'Since the day I brought My Nation Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a Temple built for My Name to be there, but I have chosen David to rule My Nation Israel'" (ibid. 15-16).

The Divine instruction to build the Temple was delivered to David, and he received, according to our Sages, a detailed blueprint. He also gathered all of the material, the silver, the gold and all of the other metals (Divrei Ha-Yamim 1 28). David had the architectural plan for the Temple, as he himself testified: "All is in writing from Hashem's hand, and He gave me understanding" (Divrei Ha-Yamim 1 28:19).

Our Sages explain that the Temple's blueprint was given by prophecy, directly through the prophet Shmuel (Yerushalami, Megillah 1:1). According to another tradition, "The Scroll of the Temple" was given by Hashem to Moshe, Moshe passed it to Yehoshua, Yehoshua passed it to the Elders, the Elders passed it to the Prophets, the Prophets passed it to David, and David passed it to Shlomo (Midrash Shmuel chap. 15). King David therefore passed on to his son the role of building the Temple and Shlomo, who was thereby able to exalt his father's honor. A third tradition relates that Hashem informed David of the plan through Gad the Seer and Natan the prophet (Rashi on Sukkah 51a).

But why didn't David built the Temple on his own? There are those who explain that our great king, David, was admonished: "You have shed blood abundantly, and have waged great wars; therefore you will not build a house to My Name, because you have shed much blood on the Land before me" (Divrei Ha-Yamim 1 22:8). But this understanding is surprising: if this was the reason, why didn't the prophets of Israel instruct him to refrain from waging war? Is it proper that a person sacrifices himself for the Nation of Israel, the Land of Israel and the Kingship of Israel, and in the end is told: "This was a mistake"? And isn't there a mitzvah in general to wage an obligatory war? This is conquering the Land according to the Ramban, and protecting Israel from an enemy according to the Rambam. How could a person be admonished when he is fulfilling a mitzvah, and on account of doing so be prevented from building the Temple? And where do we find a law that a soldier may not build the Temple?

The proper understanding is similar to that of Rav Sa'adia Gaon: the obstacle to King David building the Temple was not an ethical-spiritual deficiency connected to wars, but rather a need for him to sanctify his life exclusively to the labor of war. It would not suffice if he embarked on an entirely different mission at the time of his old age; it was more fitting that his young son would be able to sanctify his entire life to this holy project (Rasag, Targum Ha-Tanach Le-Arvavit Le-Divrei Ha-Yamim 129:9).

One must therefore understand that the building of the Temple is the climax and not the beginning. There are three mitzvot that we are commanded to fulfill upon entering the Land of Israel: Building the Kingship of Israel, eradicating Amalek, and building the Temple. They must be performed in this order only (Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 1:1-2). Anyone who is involved in building the Kingship of Israel is therefore also involved in waging war, which is of necessity connected to it, as we see in the wording of the Rambam's title of the chapter which discusses this topic: "Laws of Kings and their Wars" - and this precedes the building of the Temple.

Anyone who fights the wars of Hashem prepares the Temple. And this is what was said of King David: Although you were not involved in the actual building of the Temple, you nevertheless prepared it by the great wars you waged, and now your son is able to build it. Maran Ha-Rav Kook similarly wrote: "Everything that King David, may peace be upon him, did - all the wars that we waged with the enemies of Israel to break the world from around our neck and to expand the borders of our Land, all of this was a preparation and a readying for the ultimate goal of building the Temple" (Ma'amrei Ha-Re'eiya vol. 1, pp. 246-247).

The Rambam explained that the Messiah, the descendant of David and Shlomo, will first wage great defensive wars for the sake of the Nation of Nations and then build the Third Temple (Rambam, Hilchot Melachim - Laws of Kings 11:1). The two roles are not contradictory but complementary. The Messiah will be David and Shlomo in one, victorious Chief of Staff and great spiritual leader.

David thus has a large portion in building the Temple. Although he did not physically build it, his spirit constantly dwelled there. It is thus fitting that King Shlomo remembered him at its dedication.

Rav Aviner on...

Our Duty to Protect the Our Youth's Purity

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Ki Tisa 5773 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Religious youth, say the educators, face enormous difficulties and harsh struggles against the evil influences drifting towards us from the West. It truly is not easy to grapple with those challenges, and there are no tricks that will solve the problem of those constant temptations.

One thing is clear however. It is forbidden for us to embroil our youth in frameworks that contradict Halachah, in other words, mixed-gender youth groups. The existence of a mixed youth group has not been permitted by any Torah-learned decisor of Jewish law. No halachic responsum could rule, based on sources from the Talmud or Shulchan Aruch that this is permissible. Sometimes, however, says Rashba, we need to look the other way (Shut Ha-Rashba 5:238). It is not always possible to rectify everything at once. Sometimes gradualness is needed. If instead of massive corruption we get partial or minor corruption that too can be considered progress.

At first, religious youth were drawn towards secular youth movements, right wing or left.

Ultimately, there arose a possibility of joining a religious youth movement. True, it was mixed, but so were the secular youth movements. Thus, our youth were being saved from a greater prohibition by a lesser prohibition. This is the reason that the Rabbis averted their gaze, and sometimes even viewed this youth movement as a blessing or as progress in the direction of saving youth.

Yet the moment this is transformed to ideology, to something good a priori, we are lost.

After all, shortcomings are found everywhere. There is no person on earth so righteous that he does only good and never sins. There is no youth movement on earth which does only good and never sins. Yet when it admits that it is duty-bound to advance and to improve, then it is worthy of its name. If it calls bad “good,” what will its future be?

There is a ruling in Shulchan Aruch: “A man must distance himself greatly from women” (Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha-Ezer, 21:1). Obviously, this does not apply to a married couple, who must become exceedingly close to one other. This is not the place to elaborate on the meaning of “distancing oneself greatly.” For that we must study Jewish law. One thing is clear, however. A mixed-gender youth group is not an example of males and females “distancing themselves greatly” from each other, but of their “becoming exceedingly close,” something that is forbidden from every possible angle.

Even in the water-drawing celebrations of Succot, there was rigid separation of the sexes, despite such celebrations constituting holy occasions in the Temple, as our sages explained at length at the end of Tractate Sukkah (51-52).

There is no dispensation to allow for mixed youth activities, either in the home or school and certainly not in the youth group. I am not saying that we should take a staff and smite youth who mingle co-educationally, but the situation must be rectified. The first step is to teach that something here requires rectification. It is true that this is not the only thing that requires improvement, but this process of rectification will add much purity and holiness.

Thank G-d, we must rejoice over the constant improvements taking place among religious Zionist youth. There is already a non-mixed youth movement, and even among the mixed youth groups, non-mixed branches are being established where separate activities are run. This is an exceedingly blessed development which must be strongly reinforced.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Halachot of Visiting Museum

Islamic Museum in Jerusalem

Q: Is it permissible to visit the Islamic Museum?

A: No. Islam is heresy, since it claims that the Torah has been nullified. We do not strengthen those who are transgressing (See Rambam, Hilchot Avodah Zarah 2:2. Shut Tzitzit Eliezer 10:1, Chapter 9 #44. 14:91).

Wax Museum

Q: Is it permissible to visit a wax museum?

A: In Eretz Yisrael – no, since it is forbidden to make figures, but outside of Israel – yes (The basic Halachah is that it is only forbidden to make the form of a person's face. Taz 141:15. But at this time people do not worship figures and we do not suspect that they are used for idol worship. Chochmat Adam 85:6. Shach 141:23. It seems that there is no prohibition to

look at them. Shut Aseh Lecha Rav 5:72 in the short Q&A. Nevertheless, it is known that in the museum in Eretz Yisrael the figures of people are crafted by Jews. Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv therefore rules that it is forbidden to visit there since it is a desecration of Hashem's Name to benefit from a transgression, and attending the museum is aiding transgressors. Brought in Shut Avnei Yeshpeh 1:51. Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 3:263. Shut Rivevot Ephraim 3:504. And see Shut Da'at Kohain #65-66 at length. Shut Yabia Omer 3:8).

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