



Less is More

“Whoever has not seen the Beis HaMikdash has never seen a beautiful building” (Gemora Sukkah 51b). Which Beis HaMikdash is the Gemora referring to? The Second Beis HaMikdash, rebuilt by Hordos. The walls were made of green, blue, and white colored marble, layered in waves. When the light shined on them, they shimmered, like the waves of the sea. Sadly, the Shechina (Divine Presence) never rested on this Beis HaMikdash. The workers who built it were not endowed with Divine wisdom, and the Leviim never served there.

The first Beis HaMikdash was built by Shlomo HaMelech. Its construction took seven years, and utilized a tremendous amount of gold, silver, copper, and precious stones. It was a magnificent structure. The Shechina rested there. Yet, the Sforno zt”l states that Hashem’s Glory shone more consistently on the Mishkan built by Moshe, than on the Beis HaMikdash built by Shlomo HaMelech.

Parashas Pikudei details the quantity of gold, silver, and copper used in the construction of the Mishkan. The Sforno points out that this amount is very tiny in comparison to the precious metal used in the first Beis HaMikdash, which was also dwarfed by the opulence of the second Beis HaMikdash. Even so, Hashem shined His Glory more on this tiny Mishkan, than on the two magnificent Bottei Mikdashim. Why? It is not wealth and grand structure that bring down the Shechina; rather Hashem desires those who fear His words. He will rest His Presence on their holy deeds.

Indeed, we see that Moshe commanded the building of Mishkan, and Betzalel and his workers, the tsaddikim of the generation, who were imbued with Divine wisdom, carried out the construction. Hashem’s Shechina rested on the holy deeds of these holy people. Hiram and his workers from Tsor built the first Beis HaMikdash. Although they had Divine wisdom, they were not tsaddikim like Betzalel and his workers. Still they merited to bring down the Shechina. The second Beis HaMikdash was commanded by Corush, the king of Persia, and was built by the Tsidonim and Tsorim, who had no Divine wisdom therefore the Divine presence did not rest there.

Kinderlach . . .

The Sforno zt”l delivers a powerful message for our times. Hashem is not interested in fancy, elaborate gashmius (materialism). Serving Him does not require the newest car, the most stylish clothes, a luxurious home, the latest super computer, and three sumptuous meals each day. Rather, lavish deeds are the way to serve him. A magnificent tefillah (prayer) will gain His favor. A superlative act of chessed (kindness) gives Him nachas. An intensive learning session will bring the glow of the Shechina onto your face. Minimize the gashmius and maximize the ruchnius (spirituality). That is the way to bring down the Shechina.



Honored Guest

“Chavi, please wash the rest of the dishes. Esti, can you fold these clothes, please? Moishie, kindly make your bed and straighten the books on your shelf. Everybody please hurry. Our guest is coming soon.”

The family busily got to work. Imma put the finishing touches on the delicious food, as the time of the guest’s arrival quickly drew near.

“Kinderlach, please come here. I would like to tell you something”

“Yes, Abba.”

“I would like you to welcome our guest with a big warm smile. It is important to be on your very best behavior for him.”

“It will be our pleasure, Abba.”

The time had finally arrived, and the honored guest entered the home. Everyone felt the holiness of his presence. The entire family had worked so hard preparing for his arrival. Now they could really enjoy his visit.

Rav Weiss zt”l was one of the distinguished Rabbonim of pre-war Hungary. He would treat the Shabbos as an honored guest. Just as you can sense

the presence of a guest in a room, so too you could feel the holiness of the Shabbos in Rav Weiss’ home.

“The seventh day shall be holy for you” (Shemos 35:2). The Ha’amek Davar explains that each Jew must sanctify the Shabbos, in accordance with his means and abilities. He should make all of the physical preparations for himself and his home to honor the holy guest. His actions on the Shabbos Kodesh also bring honor to the guest. He can make the holiness of Shabbos perceivable. The Mishna in Demai relates that one who is not normally trusted to maaser his fruits, may be believed on Shabbos. The kedusha (holiness) of the day is so awesome that he senses it. He would not dare lie on such a day. That is the holiness of Shabbos.

Kinderlach . . .

How do you honor your special weekly guest, the Shabbos? Do you help Imma and Abba with the preparations? Do you dress in your best clothes? Do you keep them clean? Do you greet the Shabbos warmly with singing and prayer? Are you on your best behavior for the honored guest? All this and more are part of honoring Shabbos. Making it a day whose presence accompanies you. A holy day for you.

Parasha Questions

- Was the oil for the Menorah different from other oils? (Rashi 35:14)
- How did the women spin the wool threads? (Rashi 35:26)
- How many boards were in the north wall? (36:25) West wall? (36:27)
- Who made the aron kodesh? (37:1 and Rashi)
- How many posts were on the north side of the chotzer? (38:11) South side? (38:12)
- Why was the Mishkan called Mishkan HaEdus? (Rashi 38:21)
- How many shekalim of gold were used altogether? (Rashi 38:24)
- Which stones were used in the choshen? (39:10-13)
- What work did Moshe do on the Mishkan? (Rashi 39:33)
- What happened after the entire Mishkan and all of its kelim were erected and anointed? (40:34)