

The Beit Hamikdash will Unite the Jewish People

"They shall make a Sanctuary for Me-so that I shall dwell among them"(25:8). The Mitzvah of building the Beit Hamikdash is analyzed thoroughly and brilliantly by Rabbi Shimshon Dovid Pincus of Blessed Memory.

The Rambam in Hilchot Beit HaBechirah says it is a Positive Mitzvah to build a Beit Hamikdash. He writes, "It is a Positive Command to construct a House for G-d, prepared for sacrifices to be offered within, we must celebrate there three times a year as it is written Exodus 25:8 "and you shall make Me a Sanctuary"." The Rambam essentially is giving two reasons for the Positive Mitzvah.

One is to bring Karbanot and the other is to celebrate the Three Festivals (the Holidays of Sukkot, Pesach and Shavuot). The question then arises as to why these two reasons? Are they connected? What is their essence? Rabbi Shimshon Dovid PincusZ'L says that they are in fact not two separate and disparate reasons. They are actually one reason. Both of these actions (Kurbanot and celebrating the Three Festivals) allow the Shechina (G-d's Presence) to come down to the Jewish People. This is their essence.

Both of the Rambam's reasons for the Positive Command to build the Holy Temple bring the Shechina down to Earth. At Mount Sinai the Jewish People were bound as One standing around the mountain. (Exodus 19:23) "Bound the mountain and sanctify it"). In Exodus (24:3)this concept of Unity is further expressed ("Moshe came and told the people all the words of Hashem and all the Laws and the entire people responded with ONE VOICE and they said, "All the words that Hashem has spoken we will do". Rashi says on an earlier Posuk, the Jewish People were "as one man with one heart at Sinai based upon the words "and Israel encamped there" (Exodus 19:2) The Sinaitic experience was the highest Spiritual point in the Jewish People's existence. It was the highest point of Achdut (Jewish Unity) in our existence as well. Sinai could only occur if the Jewish People were United. The Shechina was able to come down to Earth because of this Unity.

The Sinai experience being the ultimate in G-d's relationship with the Jewish People needs to be replicated. The Beit Hamikdash was commanded by G-d Almighty to try to accomplish and repeat this incredible feat and goal. Sinai is accomplished in various ways today including(partial listing)the Chuppah Wedding Ceremony, Reading from the

Torah with a Minyan, and the Hakhel Ceremony every seven years. Our Neshama (Soul) is derived from the Shechina. G-d Almighty seeks to unite the Shechina with each and everyone's Soul.

This is what happened at Sinai. The Jewish People's Unity was essential. When the Jewish People are United they are like one Body and One Soul. This is, indeed, what happened at Sinai. G-d loves Jewish Unity and seeks it at every turn. The Three Festivals are intended to Unite the Jewish People as they were at Sinai.

The Shechina can then penetrate our Souls as it did at Sinai. It actually works both ways. Unity of the Jewish People brings the Shechina into each and every one of us and at the same time the Shechina brings Jewish Unity as what transpired at Mount Sinai. In Gemara Chagigah (26a) R'Yehoshua Ben Levi brings down the Posuk from Judges 20:11, "And all the men of Israel gathered to the City (Jerusalem) like one Man, "Chaverim". We see from this Posuk that when Jews gather to one Place (Jerusalem) the Torah considers them all "Chaverim". Even Amei Haaretz are trusted during the three annual Pilgrimages regarding the Taharrah of Terumah because they are "Chaverim"-United according to the Gemarah. Of course, Jerusalem and specifically The Beit Hamikdash transforms all Jews into "Chaverim". This is what is intimated by the Gemarah.

There is another proof of the Greatness of Unity. In Tehillim (122) it says "The built-up Jerusalem is like a city that is united together ("Shechubrah"). Jerusalem connects all Jews. The Beit Hamikdash is the Ultimate Connector. Now I will discuss Karbanot. Karbanot have in their Shoresh(root) the word "Karov" meaning to bring closer(Mikarev). Karbanot bring the Shechina closer to the Jewish People.

This is their purpose according to the Rambam. Now we can understand why the Rambam uses The Three Festivals and the Karbanot as the reasons behind the Positive command to build a Beit Hamikdash. He understood the critical importance and significance of Jewish Unity and the Karbanot to bring the Shechina into each and everyone of us.

The Beit Hamikdash acts as the Shaareii Shamayim (Gates of Heaven) as pointed out by Yaakov Avinu (Genesis 28:17) "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of G-d and this is the Gate of the Heavens."(Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Chover Z'TL). The Holy Temple by acting as a conduit to the Shechina unites the Jewish People. The Temple brings us together more powerfully than any other force. The Jewish People will achieve its highest Spiritual level when the Beit Hamikdash is rebuilt.

The World too will reach its highest level. We all pray that it happens speedily in our Day. Shabbat Shalom