

"TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE"

Our Sidra and Haftorah of this morning deal essentially with the same theme: the building of a central place of worship for the people of Israel. The Sidra tells us of the commandment to construct the Tabernacle or Mishkan. The Haftorah relates the building of the Mikdash, the Temple. Yet, despite the similarity of subject matter, there are remarkable differences between the Mishkan of Moses described in the Sidra and the Mikdash of Solomon described in the Haftorah. It seems as if the arrangement of this Haftorah to follow this Sidra was intended to teach us a study in contrast; there is a clear message in the juxtaposition of these two different stories of the sanctuaries of Israel.

The Mishkan, as our Sidra describes its construction by Israel under Moses, was a highly popular project, although it was a relatively plain structure, for it had to be portable in order to accompany the Israelites during their long travels in the wilderness. Its construction was a cooperative venture by all strata of society. The men worked, the women weaved, the laborers labored, in a folk project, a community undertaking. The Mikdash, however, despite its architectural grandeur, was not something built by the entire community. It was not the people who erected the Mikdash; it was foreign skilled labor. Professional artisans were imported from Tyre, whose King was Hiram, a friend of Solomon. The contract was sub-let; it was not a do-it-yourself project.

The Mishkan and its construction was something which

captured the fancy of the people. It fired their imagination. They gladly volunteered to serve as the builders of the Tabernacle, and they contributed its furnishings. There was an overflow of enthusiasm, an unparalleled and unsurpassed outpouring of love for this sacred project. Such was the plan at the very inception of the project: מאת

כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי,

"of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take My offering." So successful was this element of נדיבות הלב, of willingness and open-heartedness and love, in the building of the Tabernacle of Moses, that מרבים העם להביא מדי העבודה, the people brought more than was required, so that Moses later had to issue a special request to his people that they cease bringing their heartfelt offerings.

The Haftorah, describing the building of the Mikdash or Temple by Solomon, presents us with an entirely different picture. No outpouring of love here, no popular enthusiasm, no נדיבות הלב. Instead: ויעל המלך שלמה מס מכל ישראל, "and King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel." The building of the Mikdash is a tax, imposed upon the people from without. They are pressed into forced labor, and there is no heart or love in evidence.

Even the Halakhah reflects this difference in mood and temperament between the Mishkan of Moses and the Mikdash of Solomon. Based upon an analysis of the relevant Talmudic texts, that great authority of the last generation, Rabbi Joseph Rosen זצ"ל, known as the "Gaon of Rogatchov," informs

us that the building of the Mishkan and the Mikdash were fundamentally dissimilar. To have a Mikdash was a great mitzvah. However, its building or construction was not regarded as a mitzvah in itself. It was considered only a הכשר מצוה -- a physical act, in itself of no special religious significance, which is only preparatory for that which is religiously important. That is why the building of the Mikdash did not take precedence over the study of Torah; even children studying Torah in their schools may not be disturbed for the purpose of building the Temple. The Mishkan however, was different. Even the very building of the Mishkan is, religiously speaking, regarded as precious. It is not only a הכשר מצוה, it is a mitzvah itself; not only the preparation for a sacred act, but in itself a sacred deed, a holy action. Therefore, the building of the Mishkan takes precedence even over the study of Torah, which may be postponed for the sake of the construction of the Tabernacle. Therefore, too, the dedication (חנוכת הבית) of the Mishkan was permitted even in violation of the Sabbath. Thus the Halakhah reacts to the differences between Mishkan and Mikdash: the significance of building the Mikdash is more limited; the mitzvah of the Tabernacle extends to all aspects of this sanctuary. (צפנת פענח:)
(הל' ח"ח פ"ג ה"ג)

How are we to explain these differences? Why was the Tabernacle a popular project, achieved with love and enthusiasm, whose very building was a very precious commandment; while the Temple was erected by a selected few, even foreigners, without

much evidence of enthusiasm, whose building was not in itself considered a mitzvah?

I suggest that the contrast between the two sanctuaries derives from the fundamental difference in conception and approach by their builders, Moses and Solomon, each of whom were brought a different quality to his task.

Solomon possessed one outstanding virtue above all others: Hokhmah, wisdom. Thus does our Haftorah begin: וְה' נתן חכמה לשלמה "and the Lord gave Solomon wisdom." Moses, however, brought a different concept to the building of the Mishkan. Immediately prior to the commandment by God to Moses to build the Tabernacle, we read (at the end of last week's Sidra): וַיִּשְׁכֶן כְּבוֹד ה' עַל הַר סִינַי , "and the Kavod of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai"; וּמֵרָאה כְּבוֹד ה' "and the appearance of the Kavod of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the Mount"; וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הָעֶנָן "and Moses entered into the midst of the cloud."

What is kavod? Perhaps it might be defined as honor, or glory. It is no simple matter to translate the word. Generally one would say that it is a sense of divine grandeur from which all norms of human moral conduct and ethical behavior as well as religious ecstasy and mystic communion. The Kavod of God is His ineffable dignity, and the consciousness of that divine Kavod is what gives man his own feeling of worthiness and self-respect.

Of course, I do not mean -- Heaven forbid! -- to disparage Solomon or his Hokhmah or his Mikdash. Solomon was, after all, the wisest of all men. Wisdom is a great virtue, especially in

Judaism, in which intellect is so highly prized. Even for the building of the Mishkan itself Hokhmah or wisdom was necessary; for we are told that the builders of the Tabernacle had to be each of them a חכם לב, wise of heart. The Mikdash itself had a precious place of honor in the life of our people. It was our beloved sanctuary, for whose reconstruction we regularly pray. On the holiest day of the year we speak of the Mikdash and we proclaim: אשרי עין ראתה זאת "happy are the eyes that have seen it."

Nevertheless, Kavod is a higher attainment than Hokhmah. Moses is a greater man than Solomon. The Mishkan is a more sublime institution than the Mikdash.

Let us compare these two qualities which were embodied as the fundamental principles in these two sanctuaries.

Hokhmah, as an intellectual exercise, requires no special moral background. Kavod, however, is a kind of dignity that has profound moral dimensions.

Hokhmah may come to a man as he sits, meditating, cogitating, thinking. But no man can achieve Kavod by sitting. It requires, as it did of Moses, ויעל אל ההר -- to climb life's precarious moral heights unto the peaks of human endurance in order to be enveloped by the cloud of divine dignity.

Hokhmah, it is true, is a great virtue. But it can easily degenerate into ערמוניות -- craftiness, cleverness, slyness, shrewdness. It can become the deadly instrument of the opportunist. Kavod, however, is uncorruptible. An old

Jewish proverb teaches that כל הרודף אחרי הכבוד הכבוד בורח ממנו, whoever pursues Kavod with dishonorable intentions, finds that Kavod elusively flees from him. True divine dignity cannot be soiled by the greedy fingers of crass ambitiousness.

Hokhmah resides in a man. It is but one aspect of his personality. It is a function of a specific organ - the brain. Kavod, however, envelops man. He must enter into it as בתוך הענן, as one enters into a great cloud. Hokhmah is within a man; he, the man, must enter into Kavod. It is a spirit and an atmosphere and a mood that must overwhelm him as it envelops him all about.

Thus it is that one entered the Mikdash as one enters the House of God. Of Solomon's Temple we read in the Psalms: מזמור שיר

לדוד, "a psalm, a song for the dedication of the House by David." Solomon, inspired by the vision of David, built a House of God. Whereas the Mishkan was more than a house; it was the Home of God, even as the very name משכן indicates. Indeed, upon entering into the Mishkan the Jew learned not only that he had come to the Home of God but that God Himself had become the home of man's spirit: תפל המשה, איש האלקים

"a prayer of Moses, the man of God": ה מעון אתה היית לנו

בדור ודור, O Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place, our home from generation to generation."

The differences between these two principles were reflected in the two sanctuaries. The Mikdash was built by Solomon upon the pattern envisioned by his father David. Solomon's wisdom dictated to him the necessity for remaining loyal to his father's charge, it inspired him to fulfil his sentimental filial duty to past generations and therefore to build a Temple. Moses, however

built a Mishkan because it was a life-and-death necessity for the moral survival of his people. The Midrash tells us that the Mishkan, residence of the divine Kavod, was built as a כפרה, an atonement, for the sin of Israel in worshipping the Golden Calf. The Mishkan was filled with the Kavod of the Lord because it was built upon the recognition by Israel of its moral failure and inadequacy, and hence upon its deeply felt aspirations for the moral, the sublime, the pure. In the days of Solomon Jews felt they ought to have a Mikdash. In the days of Moses Jews felt they must have a Mishkan.

These distinctions between Mikdash and Mishkan, between wisdom and Kavod, are not confined to the two ancient sanctuaries of Israel. They are most meaningful for contemporary Jewish life and for the general human predicament of our times.

One of the most terrible blights upon the scene of American Jewry today is the disparity between the intellectual attainments of American Jews in all the secular disciplines, and their woeful lack of Jewish dignity and appreciation of Jewish glory. It is agonizing to read time and again of Jewish "intellectuals" -- writers, painters, sociologists, biophysicists -- who wield Hokhmah but yield no Kavod, no Jewish self-worth or self-respect.

The synagogue is called מקדש מעט, a miniature Temple; would that all our synagogues attained such heights. Yet our aspirations must be even higher: we must try to make of them מעטן מעט, miniature Tabernacles. We must strive to fashion, out of our synagogues, not only a House of God but a Home of God, an institution which will embody not only the Hokhmah of the Jew but also his transcendent Kavod. The synagogue must be more than

a holy real estate; it must express for us the real state of holiness.

All Jews must become involved in Jewish life. All Jews must study Torah, not only the professional class known as Rabbis and a few curious legal minds. All Jews must participate in the leadership of the synagogue, not only a few dedicated souls. All Jews must participate in prayer, and not, like in so many modern "Temples," leave the prayer to a professional known as a Cantor and a machine known as an organ. Our service, our observance, must not be done as if it were a spiritual tax, forced service. We must act Jewishly not merely out of a sense of duty to departed parents and sentimental loyalty to a cherished past, but out of נדיבות לב, as it was in the Mishkan: with a sense of religious experience and religious commitment.

Certainly we must never relinquish our old aspirations for Hokhmah or wisdom. We must however combine both great qualities -- and that can be done in the study of Torah. For the study of Torah requires both Hokhmah and Kavod: wisdom in order to plumb its vast intellectual depths, and Kavod which represents the infinite moral dimensions of a life lived in accordance with Torah.

And not only as Jews but as members of modern society must we keep this same principle in mind. In the last fifty years we have amassed more Hokhmah, more science and technology and general knowledge, than in all the years before us. "Wisdom" has proliferated at an unparalleled rate. What has this Hokhmah done for us? It has brought us many blessings; but so many of these blessings have negative features that, together, comprise the greatest threat ever to the life and future of man. I refer not

only to the terrors of the bomb, but also to the kind of human or inhuman future we may have as a result of leaving the determination of that future to scientists and technologists. May I recommend to you Jacques Ellul's The Technological Society, where a perceptive observer warns us against leaving our destiny in the hands of people who are technologically brilliant but otherwise totally mediocre and ignorant -- idiots-savants! As a result of the world-view inspired by Hokhmah without Kavod, by an ethically neutral, amoral pursuit of knowledge only for the sake of knowledge, man has become devalued, his spirit denatured, his uniqueness denied.

What has become of modern man, who has been so successful in the pursuit of wisdom and so regressive in the attainment of Kavod? Perhaps the best way to express it is symbolically. Isaac Bashevis Singer, in one of his recent collections of short stories, begins a story called "The Last Demon" with the following words:

I, a demon, bear witness that there are no demons left. Why demons, when man himself is a demon? Why persuade to evil someone already convinced?

Is that not so? Those of us who have chosen not to forget the history of the past twenty or twenty-five years will recognize full well that nations that were distinguished by Hokhmah, by art and literature and science and technology, created a war machine that ruthlessly destroyed a third of our people and took a total of eighteen million lives.

Those of us who have open eyes will realize that a country that is today one of the most prosperous in the whole world, West Germany, a country that boasts the Hokhmah of Universities and libraries, and that is supposedly democratic and "deNazified,"

today laughs at the world. The old demons have risen again. The same country that has caused so much terror and anguish for mankind today proposes a "cut-off date," after which even the most vicious and sadistic and blood-thirsty monsters will go completely free. In this same country, so filled with all the branches of wisdom, a court of law tried two people who were accused of complicity in the sadistic murder of three-hundred thousand Hungarian Jews: one of them was sentenced to but five years in prison and the other was let free completely -- as if they had been prosecuted for something no more serious than drunken driving!

No, there is no need for demons. Demons are now unemployed, for man has taken over -- man who has misused his Hokhmah for devilish ends.

Wisdom cannot and should not be abolished. We cannot and do not want to turn the clock back. The pursuit of knowledge and the accretion of wisdom is a fundamental human drive. But we desperately need Kavod to tell us how to use that Hokhmah, how to restrain us from its misuse. We must learn that Hokhmah must always serve the higher end of Kavod, of divine dignity and the dignity of human life. We must proclaim with Isaiah that כל הארץ כבודו, the whole world is filled with His Kavod; for if we continue to ignore that Kavod, then we shall not be able to refrain from soiling or even blowing up כל הארץ, the whole world.

Let us conclude with one last observation. Just as the Mishkan emphasized Kavod, but also embodied Hokhmah, so the Mikdash of Solomon, while emphasizing the primacy of Hokhmah, did not forget the element of Kavod. Had there been no divine Kavod in

the Mikdash, it could never have attained the holiness and sanctity accorded to it in Jewish life.

Indeed, Solomon later came to realize the need for Kavod above all else. The Rabbis tell us, in a beautiful Aggadah, that after Solomon built the Temple he sought to enter it, but he found the doors barred to him. Standing outside the Temple, Solomon addressed the Temple gates in the words of his father David: שאר שערים ראשיכם והנשאן פתחי עולם, "lift up your heads, ye gates, and open for me, ye doors to eternity." Solomon realized that Hokhmah was not enough; man needs Kavod too. Hokhmah can sometimes be exclusive, and bar other humans from its tight, closed circle. Only Kavod can break out of its narrow confines to cover the whole universe like a giant, benovelent cloud of glory. Hokhmah can sometimes lead a man to imagine that wisdom is self-begotten. A man may think that his Hokhmah is his own. But no man can be deluded into thinking that Kavod comes from himself; all Kavod, all true dignity and worth, derives from God.

Thus did Solomon ask the Temple gates to open, for Hokhmah is not enough: instead, he pleads with them, open up, ויבא מלך, and let the king of Kavod come in. And מי הוא/מלך^{זה}, the hokhmah who is the "king of Kavod?" -- is it King Solomon, that royal personage, that wisest of all human beings?

No, it is not. For there is only one "king of Kavod." ה' צב-אות הוא מלך הכבוד סלה, "The Lord of Hosts, He is the king of Kavod."

May we Jews, who have always aspired to the gift of Hokhmah, continue to cherish wisdom but aspire to the greater virtue of Kavod, and may we teach this new scale of values to an unredeemed world.

May we grow from wisdom to dignity; from the understanding of Solomon to the glory of Moses; from the world of the Mikdash to the world of Mishkan.