



THE TEMPLE FOR WHICH WE (ARE SUPPOSED TO) YEARN

Script and Sources for the Illustrated Video Teaching on Tisha B'Av

2

At Sinai, upon receiving our Tablets—the second set that arrived on Yom Kippur—we began to build our *Mishkan* at Moshe's command. This portable sanctuary, called the Tent of Meeting, is the place where God's Presence was most at hand.

The Torah revealed at Sinai (on Shavuot) is not the one in our study halls today. Those Tablets shattered when Moshe, witnessing the Golden Calf, cast them to the ground. HaShem eventually accepted our teshuva and 120 days later (on Yom Kippur) we received their replacement—a second set—related to the first...but different. At Sinai we got the Torah of *Atzilut*—the Torah of Unanimity. A searing revelation of presence engraved the souls of an entire nation with the truth-of-the-universe compressed into a single burst of light. But we couldn't hold on to it. That light receded and on Yom Kippur we received the Torah of *Briyah*—the Torah of dualities—of permitted/forbidden, pure/impure, guilty/innocent, holy/profane.

These two Torahs (the Torah of *Atzilut* and the Torah of *Briyah*) are profoundly different. *Atzilut* is the world that is *kulo Elokut*. Only oneness shines through. There is no opacity, no evil, and no illusion of other than G-d. The Torah of *Briyah* is the Torah relevant to the worlds of separation, opacity, multiplicity and delusion.

The question becomes...what did the *mishkan* look like in the Torah of *Atzilut*.

R. Shlomo Elyahev (Leshem), *HaDrush Olam HaTohu*, *chelek 2*, *drush 4*, *anaf 22*, *siman 5*.

3

This holy Tabernacle accompanied us for forty years as we journeyed to the Promised Land. It continued to serve as the hub of collective worship in the Land of Israel for another 300 years until Solomon completed the First Temple in the heart of Jerusalem. At that point the *Mishkan* became obsolete.

4

Solomon's Glorious Temple, described at length in the Bible, stood for 410 years, until it was sacked, plundered and burned to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar on *Tisha B'Av*, the 9th day of the month of Av, 422 BCE.

5

70 years later, the Persian King Cyrus, allowed the Jews to rebuild their Temple on its original site. This Second Temple stood for 420 years until Roman Legions demolished the holy structure which (like its predecessor) was burnt to the ground. This tragic event also occurred on *Tisha B'Av*, the 9th day of the month of Av in the year 70 CE.

6

One of the central features of our much anticipated messianic golden age is a Third Temple even more spectacular than the previous two. There is an obligation to *tsipita l'yishua*, to actively yearn for redemption, which becomes a massive group prayer with all the potency that implies.

Yet to participate in this collective effort we must sincerely hope for the thing that we are praying for.

TB Shabbat 31a; the 12th of Rambam's *Thirteen Articles of Faith*; *Zohar 1:4a* and commentaries there; *Chizuk Emunah*, quoted in *Chafetz Chaim al Hatorah*, Vayera, p. 56f., note 2. Note also *Torat Ze'ev*, quoted in *Hagadah shel Pesach Mibet Levi [Brisk]*, p. 120: "It is incumbent to await the coming of Mashiach every single day, and all day long... It is not enough to believe in the coming of Mashiach, but each day one must await his coming... Furthermore, it is not enough to await his coming every day, but it is to be in the manner of our prayer 'we await Your salvation all the day,' that is, to await and expect it *every* day, and *all day long*, literally every moment!"

7

Yet for many, the reinstatement of animal sacrifice (which has always been the main activity of the Temple) is...honestly...not so appealing. Does this ambivalence make them betrayers of the cause? Are they sabotaging themselves (and us) by praying for redemption yet pushing it away with their aversion toward what they expect it will bring?

8

Or perhaps they're actually on to something, as the sages say: "The people of Israel, if not themselves prophets, are children of prophets," meaning that there's a real (and potent) trace of prophesy in the collective sentiments of the nation.

TB Pesachim 66b.

In fact, if we examine the matter carefully, we will discover that it is not at all clear what this Third Temple will look like.

9

The rabbis debate whether we received the command to build the Mishkan before or after the Golden Calf. Was the Mishkan (as we know it) always part of HaShem's plan for the people...or perhaps its need only arose after the sin and its consequences.

Ramban Shmot 25:1; Sforno 25:9, 31:18; R. Mordecai Miller, *Shabbat Shiurim, Trumah* p. 118-122.

10

A full 244 out of our 613 mitzvot revolve around the Temple and its offerings. It cannot be that 40% of our mitzvot were actually just an afterthought. In fact, it's impossible for even one of our mitzvot to be characterized as such. They all have eternally enduring value, express HaShem's first choice for us and convey His ideal.

11

The question however, is whether HaShem's original vision for our *Mishkan* was identical to the one we actually built in the end (for its construction, by all counts, occurred after the Calf). To answer this we must first understand the function of a sanctuary altogether.

12

It is a fundamental premise of monotheism that God is equally present in every point of time and space—equally present in Jerusalem as Eilat, equally present in a newspaper as in a Torah scroll, equally present in saint as sinner. That's what it means to be one. But HaShem is not equally *revealed* in all points of time and space. And so when the everpresence of Divinity is revealed in a place or in a moment we say that the Shekhina (or Presence) dwells there.

13

A *Mishkan* is a place distinguished by its power to reveal the glory of God—to make that hidden everpresence accessible to the outer (and inner) senses of all who enter.

14

And this is how the rabbis resolve our dilemma. They assert that the original vision—the one HaShem had in mind from the start—was for the community of Israel itself to become a living *Mishkan*. The people themselves going about their God-centered lives would embody the Presence and shine it into the world. Each person's life would be, metaphorically, a thread in the curtain, a beam on the wall, a bolt in the plank, or a curtain ring.

Sforno 25:9, 31:18; *Shem Mi'Shmu'el, Truma* p. 73; Rabbi M. Miller, *Shabbat Shiurim, Trumah* p. 118-122; and a variety of commentaries on Ex. 26:8.

15

Instead we sinned and fell and forfeit our ability to serve at that level. We lost the purity required to host the Shekhina. We needed a refuge apart from ourselves, of wood and cloth and skins—a physical structure dedicated to spirit—that could serve as our sanctuary. And this is how it's been. Our desert Tabernacle and both Temples were of this sort. It's all we've ever known.

Ibid.

16

But the question becomes, what about the Third Temple? Will it be like the previous two? Will it also be of stones and wood and cloth and skins...or will it be more like the originally envisioned Sanctuary, the living community of Israel holding the Presence of God and shining it into the world through the integrity of their God-centered lives.

17

The messianic age (by definition) is the era that emerges when we've healed our souls from the Golden Calf and reversed the damage of the Tree of Knowledge. It is clear (and the Zohar confirms) that our Third Temple will really be the First Temple, meaning the first one to actually embody what HaShem truly envisioned as our Tabernacle.

Zohar 3:220b-221b; Leshem's teachings on messianic times compiled in *Shaarei Leshem* 485-498 (תפח - תצח)

18

And it is likely that in that case, the *Temple's* central rites will be closer to our prayer services today which (for the past two thousand years) have substituted for the thrice daily animal sacrifices and the additional (*musaf*) offerings associated with Shabbat and festivals.

At the point that we repair the damage done from the Golden Calf we will again access the Torah of Atzilut—the Torah of unanimity that transcends the dualities of permitted and forbidden, pure and impure, etc. At that point, the level of consciousness that will infuse the animal kingdom will make it unlikely that they will be used as korbanot in the way they were used in the previous Temples.

Leshem, Shaare Leshem, part 2, siman 2, perek 1.

19

It is also true that as we enter the reward phase of history (associated with *mashiach*), everyone moves up a notch. No doubt there will be other nations who are first transitioning into monotheism and their next step is to confine their animal sacrifices to the One-and-Only-One, and so we will still need a Temple of stone and wood and tapestry etc, to service them

Ibid. *Leshem, Shaare Leshem, part 2, siman 2, perek 1.*

20

Perhaps this is what the midrash means when it says that in messianic times, there will be a Temple that descends from above, and one that gets raised from below.

21

At any rate, it is important to remember that we cannot possibly imagine what will actually be in messianic times. We cannot help but project from the here to there.

There are conflicting opinions about how the messianic times will differ from our present reality. Rambam (and his camp) assert that the only difference will be that the Jewish people will be self-governing, but the world will remain basically the same. Most everyone else asserts that the world will be profoundly transformed in all ways, both material and spiritual. See Yehuda Chiyun, *Otzrot Acharit Hayamim*, chapter 8.

22

And yet there will be so many paradigm shifts, new dimensions and expansions of consciousness that we cannot possibly anticipate, even in our most wild science fiction, what will actually be happening then. Whatever we know (or think we know), it is just the chapter headings. How those words will actually look when they embody themselves in the altered reality of messianic times...we need to humbly admit that we really have no idea.

Ibid.

23

The only thing we DO know for sure is that it will be good, and everyone will be happy with the way it all turned out (carnivores and vegans alike).

Ibid.

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