



Yerushalayim and Your Shul

This week's parsha introduces us to the mishkan. From the outset, the Torah makes it clear that the purpose of this structure and of the Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim is for God to dwell amongst the people: "and they shall make for me a sanctuary, and I will dwell amongst them."¹

While this verse highlights the crucial significance of the mishkan and the Beit HaMikdash, it raises the question of the status of the periphery. If God "dwells" in the sanctuary, is sanctity attainable in the rest of the camp/Land of Israel/world? What does it mean to feel the divine presence in a synagogue in the diaspora if God's "home" is Yerushalayim?

This question was asked by R. Yaakov of Skili, a student of the Rashba and the author of the Torat HaMincha.² After developing the notion that the Shechina never left the site of the Beit HaMikdash and is currently residing in the Western Wall,³ he asked: "If the Shechina never left the Western Wall, then how can it be elsewhere, even in a temporary fashion?" In other words, shouldn't the centrality of the Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim preclude the sanctity of any synagogue of Beit Medrash in any other location?

His response is that to a degree, the question is correct. Yerushalayim is so holy that no other place in the world can attain *independent* sanctity. However, similar to a sun, Yerushalayim sends out its rays, "and any house that is prepared and directed to the sun, a spark of the sun enters it temporarily." This means that the sanctity of each synagogue and study hall throughout the world can be traced to the central sanctity of the Beit Hamikdash and Yerushalayim.

He continues to explain that this is the reason that Yechezkel and later Chazal refer to a synagogue as a "miniature temple" (mikdash me'at).⁴ This is not an arbitrary formulation, but rather reflects the fact that they are literally smaller versions of the Beit HaMikdash. The sanctity of each

¹ Shemot 25:8.

² Torat HaMincha, Pekudei, derush 34.

³ Shemot Rabbah 2:2.

⁴ Yechezkel 11:16.



Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Terumah / פרשת תרומה / 5779

shul *is* part and parcel of the Beit HaMikdash, similar to the fact that the rays of the sun are geographically distant from each other but are all connected to the actual sun.

This idea is important to keep in mind when praying or studying Torah throughout the world. We pray towards Yerushalayim around the world to express the dependence of these diasporic homes of worship on Yerushalayim. May we soon see the connection between Yerushalayim and all holiness throughout the world!