



Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Vayakhel / פרשת ויקהל /
Shabbat Shekalim / שבת שקלים 5779

Investing in God's Home

When describing the process of building the mishkan, the Torah highlights the role of Betzalel:¹

Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high

Rashi, noting that the construction of the mishkan required the participation of many other people, is bothered by the focus on Betzalel. He explains:

Since he devoted himself to the work more than the other wise men, it was called by his name [i. e., the work is attributed to him alone].

While everyone contributed to the work, the Torah relates the accomplishment to the person who was the most dedicated. Therefore, the Torah attributes the work to Betzalel.

We find a similar midrash regarding the building of the Beit HaMikdash.² Commenting on the verse: “A song of dedication of the House, to Dovid,”³ the midrash notes that in actuality it was Shlomo who built the Beit HaMikdash and not Dovid. Why then is Dovid associated with the dedication of the Beit HaMikdash? The midrash explains that due to his extreme dedication to this goal that God decided to refer to the Beit HaMikdash as Dovid's.

From these two examples we learn about the importance of effort and dedication to a goal. While this can be true about any positive mission, it is significant that both of these passages relate to

¹ Shemot 37:1.

² Bamidbar Rabbah 12:9.

³ Tehillim 30:1.



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creating a home for God. The Torah highlights the crucialness of selfless devotion to the mission particularly in the context of the mishkan and the Beit HaMikdash.

Perhaps this links to the concept of being “Doreish Zion” (seeking out Yerushalayim). When it comes to God’s home, one would think that God would be self-sufficient and not require human input. However, the Torah is teaching that the opposite is the case. It is particularly in this area that God wants human effort. It is we humans who must seek out Zion and selflessly dedicate oneself to the Beit HaMikdash. God, who spans all the heavens and earth, will ultimately only dwell in a home created through human initiative, effort and toil.

This has important lessons for us today. While we are unfortunately impeded from working directly on the Beit HaMikdash, we must tirelessly dedicate ourselves to the material and spiritual betterment of Yeurshalayim. This human “seeking out” of Tzion will initiate the process of God’s dwelling in His holy city and ultimately lead to the complete redemption.