



**Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Vayikra / פרשת ויקרא /
Shabbat Zachor / שבת זכור 5779**

A Home For God

After the long process of building the mishkan, the culmination of which is God's cloud resting on the Mishkan occurring at the end of Sefer Shemot, our new book opens with God calling to Moshe from within the Mishkan. The midrash notes that this calling must be understood within the broader context of the previous parshiyot and elaborates by means of a parable.¹

The midrash relates that there was once a king who empowered his servant to build a palace for him. The servant dutifully went about and methodically built each segment. After finishing each part, the servant would leave a note saying that this part of the building was built for the sake of the king.

Finally, the big day arrives, and the king is ready to enter his newly finished palace. The entire county, including the servant, stay outside and the king enters alone. As he walks through the palace and surveys each room, the king realizes that his name is written all over the palace. Overwhelmed with gratitude for his loyal servant he exclaims: "all of his honor my servant did for me and I am inside and he is outside?" The king then invites his servant to join him in the palace.

Similarly, Moshe completely dedicated his energies to build the mishkan "as God commanded Moshe." His utter loyalty and sense of service were apparent throughout the process. Therefore, when the building was complete and God entered the mishkan, He immediately calls to Moshe to enter. That is why our parsha opens with the verse "and He called to Moshe."

While the midrash is responding to an exegetical question, it expresses a general truth about God's various homes in this world. If we want to dwell with God, two things are required: we must build Him a home and it must be done with a sense of utter dedication and loyalty. Only then will God save us from being stranded outside and invite us in.

¹ Vayikra Rabbah 1:7.



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Though we are limited in our ability to build the Beit HaMikdash, this lesson is directly applicable to our relationship with Yerushalayim. The city as a whole serves as God's home in this world. But it is up to us to make it so. We need to fully dedicate ourselves to the material and spiritual advancement of the city, similar to Moshe who worked tirelessly on the mishkan. But, just as importantly, this work must be permeated with a sense of mission - that we are doing this for God's sake and His sake alone. Then, we will merit to not only build a home for God, but for Him to invite us in as well.