

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 21

Mishpatim, Sicha 2

The Rambam:

In his laws of the Beis Hamikdash, Rambam writes the following about the ark:

“When Shlomo built the Temple, he was aware that it would ultimately be destroyed. Therefore, he constructed a chamber, in which the ark could be entombed below the Temple building in deep, maze-like vaults. King Josiah commanded that it be entombed in this chamber... as it is said (Divrei Hayamim II 35:3): "And he said to the Levites who would teach wisdom to all of Israel: 'Place the Holy Ark in the chamber built by Shlomo, the son of David, King of Israel... (Hilchos Beis Habechirah 4:1)

The Question:

Rambam's compendium of law is strictly concerned with practical guidance, how is this historical note relevant to halacha?

The Explanation:

Rambam maintains that the ark is not considered one of the implements of the Mikdash, like the menorah or altar, but

rather, it is considered to be part of the structure of the Mikdash itself. This is why he discusses the ark in chapter four which is dedicated to describing the dimensions and process of the building itself.

In this context, Rambam explains that part of the process of building the Mikdash was ensuring its eternity. Knowing that the structure would be destroyed, Shlomo proactively designated a hidden place for the ark, which is part of the structure, so that the Mikdash would never truly be destroyed. This is also underscored by relating that King Yoshiya commanded that the ark be entombed well before the destruction. This premeditated command of a king implies that the ark's subterranean location is considered its valid location, not just an after the fact accommodation of destruction.

The Deeper Dimension:

By designating a place for the ark in the event of destruction, King Shlomo was essentially leaving the possibility of destruction open. Yet it was the destruction that will eventually lead to the building of the third, everlasting Mikdash. The eternity of the ark's hidden residence thus alludes to the fact that the destruction of the Mikdash

holds within it the potential for the eternal Mikdash.

In spiritual terms, the work of teshuva which entails a “maze-like” journey from

darkness to light, is what brings us to the “deep chamber below the Mikdash,” the deepest places of G-dliness.